

The magickal Kris.

Colofon

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Ger Giesen

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The magickal Kris.

Misunderstood weapon and magickal talisman.

By Ger Giesen.

Uitgeverij Eigen Boek

Alkmaar - Netherlands

Dedication



This book is dedicated to all Empu.
That were, are, and will be.

And to my wife Mieke
Who always finds a place for
“just one more”

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Part 1.

Misunderstood weapon.

Introduction:

In the past much has been written about the Kris and even now new books and articles appear on a regular basis. And rightly so, the Kris is in many ways a unique object for studies. Everyone who looks at a well preserved old Kris can immediately see that this is no ordinary dagger. The eye-catching curves that a lot of them have, combined with its patterns of different metals that can be seen on the blade in black and silver, make sure of that. Many people have also heard about the magick of the Kris by reading stories of supernatural things happening by way of a Kris. Most of the existing articles and books deal with the outward appearance of this weapon and some even add a couple of hard to believe folk tales. The more serious studies try to give background information about subjects such as age, origin, cultural value,

symbolism and the way a Kris fits into the way of looking at the world, and even at the universe, by the Indonesian people of old times. The magickal powers attributed to the Kris are part of the latter issue.

What I miss in all these writings is a closer look at the Kris as a weapon. Only some writers go into this aspect of the Kris but they only say that the Kris is a weapon made for stabbing and thrusting. In addition most of the time they write that it is not even a very good weapon for that either. David van Duuren writes in “DE KRIS een aardse benadering van een kosmisch symbool” (Dutch for “THE KRIS an earthly approach for a cosmic symbol”):

“Indonesië is het land van de blanke wapens, en vele kleine lijfdolken, sabels en hakmessen laten de kris in dodelijke effectiviteit ver achter zich.” (Indonesia is the country of bladed weapons, and a lot of small daggers, sabers and chopping knives leave the Kris far behind in deadly efficiency.)

Even among practitioners of the various styles of Pencak Silat, the Indonesian art of self defense, there are many who think the same. They train with

all kinds of different weapons but hardly ever use the Kris. To say the least this is rather strange when you take into account that the Kris was the weapon that the Royal Javanese men carried in their sash almost always or at least very often. Isn't it illogical that in a country such as Indonesia where a multitude of different sizes and shapes of bladed weapons were and still are made, such an ineffective weapon would get a paramount place in traditional clothing, folklore and rituals?

Or is there more that meets the eye here? Is the Kris really as unimportant as a weapon or is this just the idea of people who don't know anything of its true meaning? Because technically they only see the Kris as a variation of the simple dagger or knife? Or is it due to the supposed magickal power, apart from the fact whether this really exist or not, that the Kris never gets his deserved place as a weapon?

From personal experience I know that a lot of people who believe in the power of the Kris don't know how to handle a Kris and for that reason prefer to stay away from it. Many heirlooms are neglected for this reason or even thrown away! It

is also a fact that people are often so precarious with this holy object that they cannot see an effective weapon in it or train with it. What I want to achieve with this book is to give people who are interested enough information, about not only the Kris as a weapon but also as a magickal charm, so they will know what they can and cannot do with their Kris.

I believe that this practical knowledge will add something to the already existing books and articles. In this way I hope to give the Kris his rightful place as a weapon (particularly in the Pencak Silat community) and in conjunction to this as the magickal talisman that it is as well.

The Kris as a weapon in literature.

As I wrote in the introduction; in the existing (especially European) books on Kris there is hardly a mention about the Kris as a weapon. The authors do write that the Kris is a thrusting type of weapon that was used in close quarter combat or during ambushes and for sneaky murders in times before firearms got in vogue. It had

the reputation to be a weapon for sudden assault and much less for a fair fight. After the introduction of firearms this function was said to be replaced by the function of symbol of status and Pusaka (heirloom to which magickal powers are often attributed). Even in Indonesia itself there is not much written about the Kris as a weapon. But there are stories and books in which the Kris plays an important role. In the *Babad Tanah Djawi* (history of the land Java) we can read examples of the use of the Kris. In these writings we can find the afore mentioned functions. A few illustrations from the Dutch translation, dated 1941, of this book:

“Onderweg werden ze door twee stuikrovers overvallen. De beide struikrovers werden gedood door Raden Bondang-Kedjawan, doordat ze gestoken werden met de Kris Malela”. (On the road they were attacked by two robbers. Both where killed by Raden Bondang-Kedjawan, because they were stabbed by the Kris Malela)

“De pen, waarmee hij schreef, wierp hij neer en hij bad tot God. De neergeworpen

pen veranderde in een Kris, die uit zichzelf tot den aanval overging”.

(The pen with which he was writing, he threw down and he prayed to God. The thrown away pen changed into a Kris, that attacked by itself)

“Daarop zond hij een van zijn harembewakers, Rangkoed geheten, uit om soenan Prawata te vermoorden. Rangkoed ging op weg. Aangekomen in Prawata trof hij de soenan in zijn paleis. Soenan Prawata was juist ziek en leunde tegen zijn vrouw. Toen hij Rangkoed zag, vroeg de soenan Prawata: ‘Wat ben jij voor iemand?’ Rangkoed antwoordde: ‘Ik ben een bode van arja Panangsang en heb de opdracht U te vermoorden.’ Soenan Prawata sprak: ‘Ga je gang, maar laat ik de enige zijn, dien gij doodt, doe geen ander er in delen.’ Rangkoed stak daarop met alle kracht. De borst van de soenan Prawata werd doorboord tot op den rug en ’t wapen doorboorde ook de borst van zijn vrouw. Toen soenan Prawata zag, dat zijn vrouw gewond was trok hij snel zijn kris, geheten Kjai Betok, en slingerde die naar Rangkoed. Rangkoed werd geschramd door de kem-bang katjang van de Kris, viel

op den grond en stierf. Ook soenan Prawata en zijn vrouw stierven."

(On which he send one of the guardians of his Harem, Rangkoed by name, to kill soenan Prawata. Rangkoed went on his way. Arriving in Prawata he found the soenan in his palace. Soenan Prawata was ill at the time and leaned against his wife. When he saw Rangkoed soenan Prawata asked: 'Who are you?' Rangkoed answered: 'I am a messenger from arja Panangsang and have the order to murder you.' Soenan Prawata spoke: 'Go ahead, but let me be the only one, who you will kill, don't let someone else share in it.' Upon this Rangkoed thrust with all his might. The breast of soenan Prawata was stabbed through until his back and the weapon also stabbed the breast of his wife. When soenan Prawata saw that his wife was wounded he quickly drew his Kris, named kjai Betok, and threw it at Rangkoed. Rangkoed was scratched by the kembang katjang of the Kris, fell on the ground, and died. Soenan Prawata and his wife also died.)

"Sultan Padjang trok snel zijn tweede Kris"

(Sultan Padjang quickly drew his second Kris)

"Ki Botjor dacht: 'Ik ben niet bereid mij onder Senapati te stellen, zoolang ik zijn magische kracht nog niet op proef heb gesteld. Des nachts maakte Ki Botjor zich gereed om Senapati te vermoorden. Hij probeerde de scherpte van zijn Kris: op de snede legde hij wat kapok, waarop hij blies, en de kris ging er doorheen.

Daarop ging KI Botjor het paleis binnen. Senapati was juist aan het eten en zat met den rug naar de paleispoort gekeerd. Ki Botjor viel hem aanstonds aan en stak naar hem. Senapati werd niet gedeerd en keek niet om, hij bleef gewoon rustig dooreten. De punt van de Kris van KI Botjor was bot geworden. Ki Botjor was moe, en viel op zijn knieën op den grond, zijn Kris stak in de aarde. Hij was volkomen uitgeput."

(Ki Botjor was thinking: 'I am not prepared to put me under Senapati, as long as I did not yet test his magickal powers. In the night Ki Botjor prepared himself to kill Senapati. He tried the sharpness of his Kris: on the cutting edge he laid some cotton, on which he

blew, and the Kris went right through it.

Upon this ki Botjor entered the palace. Senopati was just eating and sat with his back turned towards the palace gate. Ki Botjor attacked him at once and stabbed at him. Senopati was not harmed and did not look back, he quietly kept on eating. The point of Ki Botjor's Kris was dulled. Ki Botjor was tired, and he fell on his knees on the ground, his Kris stood in the earth. He was totally exhausted.)

"Toen hij voor de vorst verscheen werden hem de hoofden van Pasingan en Agra-joeda toegeworpen. Pangerang Alit trok snel zijn Kris en stak er mee in beide hoofden."

(When he arrived in front of the king they threw the heads of Pasingan and Agra-joeda in his direction. Pangerang Alit quickly drew his Kris and stabbed in both heads with it.)

"Pangerang Alit was woevend en stak den dipati van Sampang zijn Kris in den nek, zoodat deze stierf. De Kris van den pangeran heette Setan-kober. Toen de sampangers hun heer dood op den aloen-aloen zagen liggen, vielen ze met hun allen op pangeran Alit

aan. Men stak naar hem met vele wapens, doch hij onder-vond er geen hinder van. Vele Sampangers werden door den pangeran gedood. Doordat pangeran Alit moe werd, raakte hij zich met zijn eigen kris en kreeg een schram aan zijn dij, zo groot als een luis. Pangeran Alit stierf."

(Pangeran Alit was furious and stabbed the dipati of Sampang his Kris in the neck, so he died. The kris of the pangeran was called Setan-kober. When the people of Sampang saw their lord lying dead in the aloen-aloen, they all attacked pangeran Alit. They stabbed at him with a lot of weapons, but he did not have any hindrance from it. A lot of people from Sampang were killed by the pangeran. Because pangeran Alit got tired, he touched himself with his own Kris and got a scratch on his thigh, as big as a lice. Pangeran Alit died.)

From these examples one can deduct that the Kris is indeed a stabbing weapon and that the Indonesian people attribute magickal powers to it. Even the use as a weapon for ambush is clear. But furthermore you can see that in Indonesia people do consider the Kris as a weapon that can be used in a fair fight

and even against multiple opponents. It also seems possible to draw the Kris very fast in case of an emergency, and to thrust hard enough to go right through someone. That is about all that can be found in all the examples mentioning the use of the Kris in a confrontation as written down in the *Babad Tanah Djawi*.

So to find more about the Kris as a weapon one should not search in the existing kris-literature or in classical Indonesian writings. Maybe in books about martial arts? Donn F. Draeger attributed a relatively large number of pages of his book "The weapons and fighting arts of Indonesia" to this dagger. Some quotes.

In Indonesia, by reputation, there is no sanguinary a bladed weapon than the Kris, that strangely shaped, double-edged dagger designed primarily for thrusting. The Kris is at once a weapon, an ornament, and an object of cult.

He goes on...*The Kris is a very real weapon. It can be said to be the national weapon of Java.*

...The Kris is used in thrusting fashion, straight- line jabs from close to the body with the elbow kept bent; if the arm is fully extended on the thrust, the

Kris cannot be delivered with its best efficiency. It is thus a highly suitable weapon for quick stab-and-thrust actions in close combat in confined places.

Mr. Dreager was an authority in the field of oriental martial arts and was highly graded in a lot of them. The fact the he describes the Kris as a very real weapon is to be taken serious. But even so in his already classical work he goes on by sharing his doubts about the efficiency of the Kris as a weapon compared to swords, spears and the like.

The American Pencak Silat Pendekar (grand master) William Sanders documents in his very good book "The mystical Kris in combat and magic" the use of the Kris in combination with its sheath. Here for the first time the Kris gets the recognition as a weapon it deserves. Unfortunately this book is only obtainable for his students. A lot of the information that the book gives is also explained in this present book (with his permission), be it in a different form.

The components of a Kris.

It is outside the scope of this book to give a detailed description of the components of a Kris. Much has already been written about this and I like to point the readers who want to know more and in greater detail to the end of this book where a large bibliography is presented. But what I must do, to make the remainder of my story clearer, is give a short explanation of some aspects of the construction of a Kris that are important for the use as a weapon and that are also applicable in the part of the book about magick. I will not go into details that come forth from the region of origin of different Krisses but I keep it very common. The names I use for the different parts are the Javanese names used by most Kris collectors.

Before going into the elements separately I want to point out one very important part in the construction of a Kris. This is the *Peksi*, the pin that joins the blade with the handle. This part is probably the main reason why many writers see the Kris as an ineffective weapon. The Peksi usu-

ally is nothing more than a nail-thick pin that is attached to and forms a whole with the blade. The handle is put over it and most of the time it is only fastened with some cloth or hair. This makes sure that the handle is fairly secure but of course there is no comparison to a handle that is fastened by glue and a rivet of some sort.

The peksi is not strong enough to use the weapon for chopping or cutting with some power. By sideways forces it can easily bend or in the worst case even break. The not too sturdy handle also does not contribute to having faith in the usefulness of the Kris as a fighting weapon. People who are used to knives and swords to fight with and who compare the Kris with these may come to the wrong conclusion that the Kris is not effective.

But should the Kris be compared to the common knife? For sure the Kris belongs to the bladed weapons. It has a blade that principally can cut and stab and it has a handle attached to it. But there the comparison ends! If someone considers the Kris as an ordinary knife one sees only a strangely shaped, awkward to hold thing with a handle that is often too small and too loose. But as can

be seen in the chapters about the magickal connection nothing, and I mean nothing, about the design of the Kris is left to coincidence. Everything has a reason! As an example I would like to point out that a Kris is made on purpose in a way that only allows stabbing. This indeed makes the Kris an ineffective weapon for someone who was not taught to fight with it. In its early times the Kris was the sole possession of the royal families and only they knew how to handle it. If a laymen could get hold of one and wanted to hit with it he would soon find himself with only a handle in his hands. On the battlefield or in a man to man encounter this would mean certain death. This same reasoning was also true for the Dutch soldiers who confronted the Indonesians...

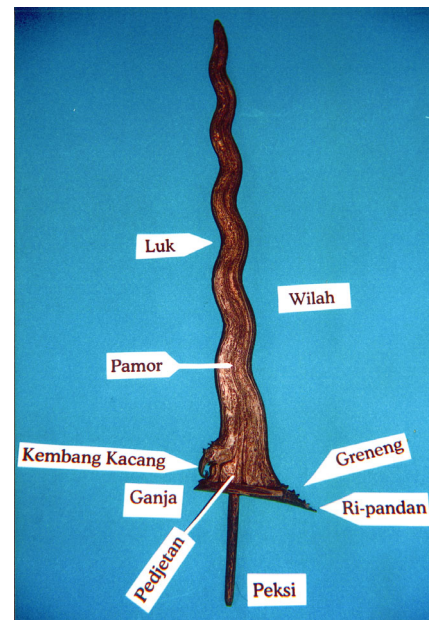
That a Kris was meant as a stabbing weapon only also has to do with its comparison to the *Naga*, the mythical King snake. But more about this later.

The other names of the parts of the Kris that are important for this work are:

Ganja: The base of the Kris blade. This usually is a sepa-

rate made piece. In such cases the peksi is put through a hole in the ganja which is then fastened to the blade. Seen from above the ganja has the shape of a *cikcak* (a kind of lizard) without its legs.

Ri-pandan: The pointed end of the ganja.



Greneng: Serrations on the ganja on the side of the ri-pandan. Sometimes even going on on the blade itself. Greneng is not found on every Kris. Among other things it makes sure the Kris of an opponent cannot glide off to the own hand during contact.

Pedjetan: Dent in the base of the blade on the short side of the ganja.

Kembang Kacang: A small piece of metal that looks like it grows out of the blade. Often in the shape of an elephant snout but sometimes also just a short thorn. Not every Kris has it.

Wilah: The blade itself.

Luk: The curves of a Kris. This is always an odd number and one starts to count just above the kembang Kacang or the place it should be if the Kris has none.

Pamor: The soul of the Kris. This is the design that comes forth out of the way of forging with the different kinds of metal used in making a Kris. Usually steel, iron and nickel holding iron. In the part about the magick of the Kris I will elaborate on this aspect. The same holds true for the other components described above.

A chapter on the parts of the Kris is not complete without a section about the clothes/co- vers of the Kris; the handle and the sheath. The Kris itself is complete only if it is properly

dressed. The sheath and the handle together with the blade make the magickal working Kris. In the part on magick I will explain the symbolical meaning of these parts. But they are also important for the fighting Kris. Off course there is no good grip possible without a handle, and the sheath can be used as a shield!

The sheath or *Wrangkah* usually is made out of tree components:

The Gambar or mouth of the sheath is usually standing at almost a 90 degree angle to the Gandar, the long part that holds the blade. This combination is only seldom made out of one piece and if this is the case then it is almost always made out of rare and/or beautiful wood and then it is relatively precious. Most of the time the Gambar is glued to the gandar.



Over the gandar one can often find the *pendok*. A metal cylinder that often is decorated with engravings or chiseling. Despite big regional differences in shape, decorations and used materials the above description holds true for most Kris-sheaths.

Only the so-called *Sandang walikat* sheaths do not possess these characteristics. These sheaths are actually meant for storing the blade and not for carrying. They miss the characteristic Gambar that makes a Kris in its sheath look like a cross. Sheaths that are meant to carry the Kris with you do have this crosspiece because it is

part of the traditional dress and serves to identify the social status of the wearer, and it is an important piece when it comes to a skirmish. Off course it is possible that occasionally a Kris is carried hidden away in the clothes and in that case the sandang walikat sheath would also be used, but this was an exception to the rule in olden times... Especially small or very old blades can be seen in these sheaths. The picture shows a 1000 year old Kris with *Jalak budho* dapor (shape) and a fairly recent small talismanic Kris that is carried up to these days by people in the kampung (small villages or areas in a bigger town).



The handle or *Ukiran*, also called *Hulu keris*, is the next part to be looked at. Ukiran actually means woodcarving and so most handles are beautifully carved. This is also a detail for which I like to point to

the already existing documentations. About the name Hulu Keris I like to mention that Hulu does not only mean handle or top-piece but also head. This will show itself very important in the part about magick!

Often a Kris handle feels too small in our western hands (with the exception of the big Balinese handles). They also feel awkward because somewhere in the middle there usually is a curve. But here also this is something that is very common. Almost all the variations, whether Javanese, Sumatran, Madurese etc. have this bend and are rather small. Later in a separate chapter I will show that this is a very ergonomical shape.



Under the handle there is a kind of ring around the peksi called Mendak. This mendak fits between the handle and the ganja and is nowadays usually

seen as decoration only. And indeed there are beautiful ones made out of gold with precious gems. But in times gone by the purpose of the mendak was to make the length of the handle exactly the way one wanted it to be. By using a thinner or thicker mendak you can set the handle in precisely the right height that fits the hand of the owner. Again very ergonomical.

As last part I want to mention the Selut. This is another kind of ring which is not situated under the handle but around it. The base of the selut rests on the mendak and the rest fits tightly around the base of the hilt. The selut from Java is always very decorated and seems to be made only to impress people.



Most of the time it are the very expensive clothes that are combined with a selut. But if you take a look at Sumatran krisses you can clearly see the original purpose. The selut simply makes sure that the handle cannot split in the heat of a fight.

In the picture you can see how the selut from a Sumatran Kris (on the left) covers the base of the handle. With Sumatran krisses there is not even a mendak since its function is also fulfilled by the selut. The same is true for the middle Kris that is of Buginese origin.

A big Moro-Kris or Sundang also always has a metal band around the base of the hilt. This is even simpler in shape and decoration and here we clearly see its purpose. These kind of krisses are also called sword-Kris and are generally accepted as real fighting weapons, to hack, cut and stab with.



A mendak is not needed because the whole hand should be able to hold the hilt. That they have

a kind of selut just the same proofs the necessity of such a ring.

The ways to wear a Kris.

There are a lot of different ways to carry a Kris and which one to use depends on the situation. Off course there again are regional differences but in general these are not that big. As an example I like to mention the most known way to wear a Kris and that is with the Kris in the belt, slanted, on the back, with the handle to the left. This way to wear the Kris is so common in use that from this the high Javanese name for Kris is derived *Wangkingan*. This word has its origin in a verb that means something like “to wear something on hip height on the back”. On Bali a name just like this is traditionally used. Because it is considered rude to mention a Kris by it's real name one often calls it *Kakadutan* which is derived from the word for belt.

In Yogyakarta and Surakarta alike this is the most frequently used method of wearing the Kris and although at first sight it looks the same in both *Kratons* (palaces), there is a subtle difference. In Yogya the Kris is stuck between the *Sabuk lontong*, a belt that is turned around the body five times, and the shirt. While in Solo the Kris is stuck between the second and third fold of the belt.

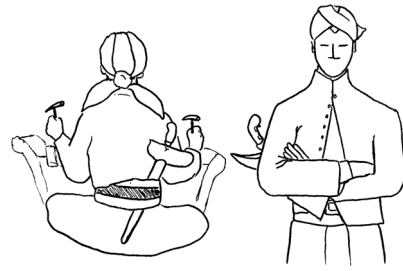
Below are descriptions of the most commonly used way of wearing. Discussed here is the carrying of a single Kris. Sometimes high officials carried two krisses at the same time. A beautiful picture exists, dated 1897 from Susuhunan Pako Buwono the tenth of Surakarta and Resident De Vogel. The Susuhunan has two krisses with him. One he carries in the way prescribed above and the other in a holster, called *Anggaran*, hanging from his belt.



Soldiers sometimes even carried three krisses. On their back they had their *Pusaka*, the family heirloom, on the right side their own personal Kris and on the left side the Kris they received from their father in law at their wedding.



If one carried the Kris at the back with the hilt to the left and slanted so that a part of the grip and the sheath was visible while facing the wearer this was called by different names. In Yogya it was called *Klabang Pipitan* and in Solo *Ogleng*. As mentioned earlier this was the most common used method in the most important Kratons. One carried the Kris like this during official dealings but also at informal meetings or celebrations.



They say that this way the Kris is not easily drawn and so it cannot form a threat. But nothing is further from the truth! In a lot of Pencak Silat styles it is possible to find special steps that enable a practitioner to deflect an attack and quickly draw the Kris in the same move. From the upcoming position it is easy to stab very fast. Off course these steps were only taught to some and so most people thought that this way of wearing the Kris was not suited for fighting.

Another point to think about considering this way of wearing is the fact that the Kris gave magickal cover against attacks from the back by humans, black magick or ghosts alike!



On Bali they carry the Kris high on the back and in fact this is just a variation of the tradition mentioned above. Because on Bali one carried the sarong higher than on Java the Kris simply moved to a higher place. This also makes it possible to sit on the ground with the larger Balinese Kris.

If you visited someone of high status in the area of the Javanese Kraton or went to the mosque or a graveyard the Kris was



placed straight down on the middle of the back. In that case also with the hilt to the left. This showed respect and was called *Dederan* in Yogya and *Andoran* in Solo. The *Dalang*, the puppet player, carried his Kris in the same way. This way it is really impossible to draw the Kris quickly!

Anggangar it was called when the Kris was carried in a holster hanging from the belt *Epek*. The Kris was hanging straight down on the front-side above the left thigh. Only the commanders of the kraton used such a holster for their Pusaka Kris. This was always combined with another Kris carried in another style.

Another way for soldiers was *Munyuk Ngilo*, the Kris was on the back with the hilt to the left and also slanted to the left so



the grip was on this side. This made it possible to hold a gun on the right. But not only soldiers had their Kris like this. Civilians going for a walk also used this method.

At funerals the Kris was worn like the first method with the difference that the *gandar* was hidden in the sarong and the belt. This was called *Sunkeman*.

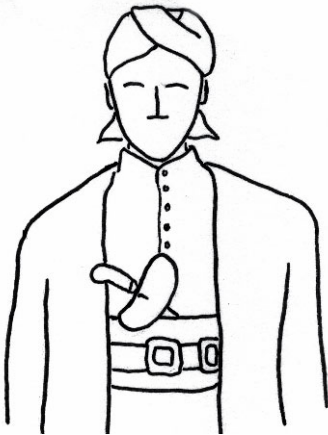
There were still other ways of carrying that looked like *Ogleng* but this time with the hilt to the right, what was seen as

more threatening. This was a sure sign that one did not thrust the people one was with at the time. Also the Kris was sometimes put in the belt on the side, for example on the right with the grip directed upwards or left with the hilt downwards. All three positions make it possible to draw the Kris very fast so that the process of getting it out of its scabbard and stabbing are one smooth flowing movement.



Just the same the most commonly used way in times of war or in places where one was not sure of his/her life was the *Sikep* or *Anyikip Pusaka* style. Now the Kris is stuck in the belt on the belly with the hilt to the right and turned down. I do not need to explain that even an untrained fighter can draw his Kris quickly this way. Even so also spiritual leaders had their Kris often in this position because they usually wore a

long robe, that was open to the front, over their clothes which made a different way of wearing the Kris impossible. There is a drawn portrait of Prince Diponegoro in which he has his Kris with him in this style. If a Raja (king) in the wayangplay carries his Kris like this he is called *Raja Prajurit* and this means he is not only a king but also a very good warrior. If a puppet that represents a God is armed this way it proofs that he will enter the battlefield, and if others wear their Kris like this it simply means they are very suspicious.



Another clear proof of the value of this method of carrying during war comes from a very unexpected corner; the classical Javanese dances. In Yogya as well as in Solo one knows a

dance called *Bedaya Ketawang*. In this dance nine girls represent the soldiers of Ratu Kidul, the queen of the south-sea. For this reason they wear a Kris in the Sikep style and even make fighting moves with the blade. In Surakarta this dance is considered sacred and they only perform it when there is a new Sultan or if the land is in danger. In olden times this dance was performed in public during times of war, to give the people courage and to frighten the enemy with the legend that the armies of Ratu Kidul would always help the king of Mataram (old Javanese kingdom). The female dancers of Yogya do not only have a Kris but also carry a strange kind of shield, the *Dadap*, on their left arm.



The name derives from the dadap plant whose curled leaves were the inspiration for the shape of this shield. On Bali a kind of shield like this was also used. Nowadays just as in Java, in Bali this shield is only to be seen in dance performances. In this case a special kind of *Baris*.

There is little written about the Kris carried by women. In literature is only mentioned that women from high birth sometimes carried a Kris. If women carried a Kris it usually was a so-called *Patrem*, a small Kris that could be easily concealed under the garment. When women went out at night or if they traveled far, they took a Kris with them to serve as a talisman to avert evil more than as a real weapon. The carrying of a *djimat*, or amulet, to which a kris can be counted, was also common among female amazons and warriors in the army of some Sultans and queens, just as with the army of Ratu Kidul.

The way to hold the Kris, the basic fighting stance and the possibilities as a weapon.

As said before the shape of the Kris is very ergonomic. The fact that the makers made so much effort to make sure that the Kris was easy to hold and to handle is again proof that the Kris was indeed meant as a weapon. In fact the Kris as a weapon is a technical wonder, certainly if you think about the age of the basic designs. By the way of holding the Kris in the manner detailed below some very important points for a weapon are highlighted. The reach of a Kris is bigger than that of a knife of the same length and the wrist is in a very natural position while thrusting. To stab straight to the front with a conventional knife one has to bent the wrist in a unnatural curve but with the Kris this is not necessary. It almost seems as though one only has to point with the Kris. The blade seems like an elongation of the index finger and is just as easy to aim. The force of a hit is distributed evenly over the hand and is only

slightly more to be felt in the palm of the hand. Were the bend of the handle presses in the palm a little bit more of the resistance is taken. This makes sure that the Kris will not slip from the hand during a thrust that connects, but is even easier to hold! The force that is put into the attack is used to the maximum like this.

The following pictures show the right way to hold the Kris to get all these extras.

In the first picture you see where the bend in the handle should be situated. This makes sure of the perfect hold. As mentioned before the right place can be achieved with a mendak that is of the right seize for your hand.



The second picture shows the position of the index finger that must be almost straight along the ganja. The Ukiran is held with three fingers only.



The last picture shows the result. The index finger is along the ganja, the thumb rests in the Pedjetan and the other fingers keep a firm grip. The hand is in a natural stance and pointing is enough to aim. By momentarily bending the wrist up or down one can even make the force of penetration bigger.



There are two basic positions to make it possible to use the Kris as a stabbing weapon. In fact the difference between the two is only minimal because there are some principles that must be included in a good fighting stance with a Kris. As said before the Kris is not strong enough to chop or slash with.

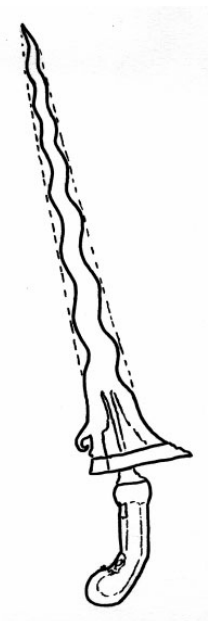
So it is logical that a Kris is also not strong enough to engage with or stop a heavy blow. That is why a Kris is never to be held in front of you. If you do this you are risking a blow on the weapon that might break it. So the Kris must be held close to the body. It is also very profitable to make sure a stabbing weapon is always aimed at its target. This makes the movements faster and shortens the reaction time. So the basic stance used in conjunction with a Kris looked like this:



With the left leg forward one faces the opponent while the right-hand with the Kris rests on the right hip. The Kris is aimed to the front with the blade held horizontal and the point slightly tilted up. The left hand moves freely and eventually holds another weapon, a shield or the sheath.

This stance makes sure that the Kris is out of reach for the opponent and even makes the Kris almost invisible for the enemy! The blade is held horizontally, so not with the cutting edge but with the flat side towards the floor, because during a stab from this position the Kris glides more easily between the ribs. The bend a Kris-blade makes in relation to the handle helps so that a thrust is always aimed to the middle of the body being hit. They say that the waves of a Kris also help to stab between the ribs and that in general they make sure that the Kris will more easily go through tendons, ligaments and joints without getting stuck. Because I lacked volunteers I could never verify this statement. Even so, it is a fact that a Kris with waves makes a bigger stabbing-wound than a straight weapon with the same measurements. To make a wound just as big

with a straight knife one has to use a much broader (and heavier) blade.



As far as the use as a weapon concerns the waved Kris is much preferred to a straight one. On Java they even say that a Kris gets more dangerous with every wave it has more.

In the picture below you see an incense-burner dated from the fourteenth century. It was carried mounted on a stick and represents a warrior armed with a Kris. This antique piece is one of the very scarce proofs that the above mentioned position was already in use at that time.



The second basic fighting stance differs from the foremost mentioned one only in the placement of the right hand and the angle in which the Kris is held. The right-hand is now placed not on the hip but behind it and the Kris is held with its flat side against the body. This hides the Kris even more and gives more freedom of movement to the left-hand, especially when a large Kris is used. The actual stab is done with the cutting edges of the Kris in the same position, above and below. To make the thrust just as effective as the previous one the fighter should be cautious with his targets. A stab to the ribs like this is seldom deadly unless much more

force is used so that it goes right through the bones. This is never the first choice because the Kris might get stuck and in a Kris-fight swiftness and movability is much more important than force. As said before it is not important to use power and if this is done it will take its toll on the quickness needed to change the angle and aim of an attack. As will be seen in the next chapter this is essential for a good defense and attack.



The third basic fighting stance is another variation to the first one and is mostly used in Bali. The right hand is now not placed on the hip but as high as possible against the side of the ribs. This stance gives more tension on the arms and because of this it automatically gives more power to the attack compared to the previous stances. It seems as though this is contradictory to my comments just a few lines ago

but this is not really true. The Balinese Kris is usually bigger and heavier than the krisses from other regions and the Balinese people themselves are often more direct than for example the Javanese. This can also be seen in their way of fighting. In cases where the Javanese will evade the Balinese will jump to the front without any hesitation and then a bigger Kris and more powerful attack are very helpful. Also a furious looking opponent with a Kris held high looks more impressive than a seemingly relaxed one with a Kris hidden away out of sight. It is a matter of personal preference which image of yourself you want the enemy to see!



Ways to draw the Kris out of its sheath quickly.

To pull the Kris out of its sheath in case of an upcoming fight one holds the grip with the little-finger, ring-finger and middle-finger. By pushing on the *Ri-cangkring* (see picture of a sheath in chapter 2) with the thumb and using a fast upward bend with the wrist the Kris will come loose and it can be held correctly by positioning the thumb in the Pedjetan and the index-finger along the ganja on the other side. Then one only has to pull it straight out of its sheath and the Kris is ready for stabbing or to position it on the right side.

In this chapter I will explain some techniques that are almost comparable with the Japanese art of Iai-jitsu, the classical art of drawing the sword followed by an immediate attack. At this place I like to remind the reader that in the past authors wrote that the Kris was usually used for sneaky attacks or even murder. Maybe this reputation came about because of techniques such as these that really can be done very, very fast. If this is done out of

personal defense this is great, off course, but the attack can also come from the Kris-fighter who stabs at an unexpected enemy...

The first method is used out of the “normal” way of carrying or Ogleng. In principle this is always a defensive technique as will be clear from the example. In the first picture two people face each other and they have no friendly feelings. One of them even attacks the other one with a kick (this can also be a knife attack etc.) as can be seen in picture two.



The defender parries to the outside with his right hand and simultaneously steps back with his right leg crossing the left one.

Almost at the same time he grabs the Kris-hilt with the right-hand that is now in a good position to do so.

While drawing the Kris he turns and circles his left-leg to his left (picture three). Then he steps to the attacker with his left or right leg and stabs. End of fight!



The second method I want to show is used out of another way of wearing the Kris. Now the Kris is carried on the right-hip with the handle turned up. The attacker is armed with a golok (cleaver) and tries to hit the head of the defender with a diagonal slash. This is evaded by stepping to the left and instantly drawing the Kris. The stretching of the arm is enough to let the Kris do its deadly work.



During the third and last method I will describe the Kris is located in the sash at the left-side with the hilt to the front. The attacker stabs with a Tombak (spear) to the abdomen. A step to the right makes sure that the defender is not hit and here the Kris is drawn simultaneously. The shaft of the spear is parried at the same time as well. The Kris can now be used from down up or simply by turning the wrist in a natural manner and pointing slightly down.

These are but a few examples, off course there are many more but it is not my aim to describe them all in this book.

According to my opinion to illustrate the fact that a Kris really is a deadly weapon I only have to show some techniques to explain the principles involved. Otherwise it will become too technical and then the book only makes sense to exponents of the martial arts, which is not my intention. Even so in the next chapters more techniques will be shown but here the same holds true. I will try to illustrate the principles without showing too many different sophisticated movements.

Target areas.

In reality this chapter can be very short; the whole body is target for a Kris-attack. But there are certain parts of the human body that are more “sensitive” for a stabbing-wound. These are the belly, kidneys and the throat. A hit in one of these places usually if not always means death to the receiver. So these are the main targets in a real fight. But I would do the Kris and Kris-fighters of olden time great injustice to name these targets as the only ones available. I already wrote that in one of the basic stances the Kris is held with the flat side parallel to the floor to make it possible to thrust the Kris in-between the ribs. From this one can conclude that the chest was a suitable target too. A stab right through the torso results in perforated lungs or a stab to the heart, both deathly enough. As is the case in many martial arts from Indonesia a stab is considered deathlier than a cut or chopping wound. Not only because a stab will make easier contact with a vital organ and in this way end the fight more efficiently, but also because in earlier times the chance of dy-

ing from an infection was prevalent. Especially when the infection was situated deep in the body instead of in a cut on the surface which could be treated quite well.

There were other less obvious targets that were used to end a fight quickly. The armpit for example. There are so many veins situated in the armpit that one easily bleeds to death, or at least goes into a shock, after a stab here.

Also, everything you could reach would give you more time to hit more vital targets.

Take in mind the first technique I described as an example of a fast-draw action. When the attacker would strike or slash with a weapon immediately after the initial kick the defender might not have the room or time to aim at a main-

target. No need to panic: a stab to the attacking limb, for example the arm holding the weapon, will paralyze the limb enough to give the chance to end the fight in the defender's favor. However, there is a rule that should be kept in mind. You cannot thrust in right angles to the line of power of the approaching arm or leg. To do so would knock the Kris out of your hand because of the force

of the attack. So you have to stab from another angle or you have to stab as close as possible to the base. At the base the arm or leg moves slower and that way has less force than at the end (hand/wrist, foot/ankle).

It should now be clear that the whole body might function as target and with this in mind in the next chapter I will delve more deeply into possible fighting-techniques.

The Kris as a weapon.

I will try to explain the principles of fighting with a Kris by way of three different moves i.e. techniques. Of course there are many more possibilities and at the end of this chapter I will list some names of other ways of thrusting. But first I will describe the methods that are important for this book. The first stab begins from the basic fighting stance with the hand holding the Kris on the right-hip.

One turns the hand so the palm will point down while somewhat straightening the arm to the right and down.



From this stance one stabs diagonally up into the belly or throat of the opponent.

The second method starts from the same basic stance and from there one brings the right-hand to the left-shoulder. The palm of the hand is now turned up. By straightening the arm without moving the elbow too much one thrusts from left to right.



The third technique is not a stab but a cutting move. Up to this point I have always said that it is impossible to slash or chop with a Kris, and that is true, but you can cut with it. If you stab with a Kris, or if you pull back the Kris after a stab you can cut with the same move. It looks more as though the Kris hits something in its route by accident. By cutting in this manner there will hardly be any pressure on the peksi. The force will run parallel to this pin so that it has nothing to suffer from angular forces. The cutting action we will see comes from an arm straightened to the front pulled back to the right-hip in a small circular move.

How does one use these techniques in a real fight? How are they made practical and in which ways are they useful? Imagine two people in a fight. One grabs a weapon and threatens the other who is armed with a Kris and draws it. But the attacker is too far off for an immediate hit or one wants to be sure that the attacker is serious about his threat before krissing him.



The stab does not immediately have the result searched for and the Kris is pulled back to the starting position of technique number one as fast as possible. This thrust is then aimed at the abdomen.

The real fight starts with an attack by the aggressor. He starts with a diagonal slash to the head of the defender. The defender evades to the left and stabs with technique number two at the neck of the attacker who I will call A from now on.



In this scenario we can see how important swiftness is and that the force of the opponent is evaded. The Kris is not strong enough to stop a heavy blow so one has to get away from a slash. The Kris of B (the defender) does not even touch A's machete. Good and fast evading is done with good footwork and fast moves combined with strongly developed

intuitive reactions. Swift changes in the angles of attack with the Kris make sure A does not know where the Kris is at a certain moment and confuses him. Even more so when he is hit several times in a few seconds. Even if all those hits don't cause deep wounds the psychological effect will help the attacker to be able to make a final finishing move.

The pulling move was not yet a cut here but could have been. If for example B would have bent his knees after his initial counter he could have cut A below the ribs.



In the next example B does cut. If the beginning position is the same as before but A has a longer sword or due to his own mistake he is too far off to be able to make contact the situation does not really change for B. He can use the same techniques, he just has to aim at different targets. The first stab

after the evading action now can not go to the throat because this area is just beyond reach. So B stabs at A's upper-arm. Even during a fast attack the upper-arm moves not half as fast as the hand so it is much easier to hit. Also this way you stab along the line of A's motion so the Kris will not be damaged.



The pull-back movement changes into a cut to the under-arm and as soon as the point of the Kris loses its contact with the arm the Kris is ready to stab again.





It is true that most krisses are not razor-sharp. A cut with a Kris will therefore usually not be very deep but it will occupy the enemies senses by which you gain time! At the same time by performing a cut like this you can control the opponents arm. If you suddenly feel the pressure building this means the enemy wants to strike again and in effect already started. By thrusting immediately the Kris will glide over the arm like a saw and will hit A's body after coming free from this initial contact. A will not get the chance to finish his strike, but to be save B has to guard his side just the same.



If B loses contact with A's arm after the cut he can stab immediately but if A has already started a new strike B has to make sure he will not get hit. This is possible by catching A's arm with the point of the Kris. After the cut the Kris is again in the beginning position on the hip and with a slight turn of the wrist it can be aimed at the attacking arm. The aggressor pins his own arm on the Kris. During this technique the force of the attack is not evaded but it can be done because the angle is right; the forces are distributed as during a stab. Also the Kris-hand is

held against the own hip or the ribs which gives extra support and makes sure the Kris is not knocked out of the hand. This way it is even possible to catch a hard kick or a slash from a very heavy weapon. But keep in mind that this needs to be done as close to the hip or shoulder as possible. Here the speed and force of the attack are the smallest.



These examples derived from a defensive attitude. But everyone knows the old saying that the best defense is a strong attack and this is true in this case as well. The same techniques in the same order of execution can be used as an almost unstoppable attack. If the first stab to the neck is executed with sufficient surprise for the recipient this should be enough to put some persuasion into the discussion. Because of the angle of this attack it is

very hard to stop. The Kris seems to circle the defense.



If the opponent tries to block the thrust it doesn't even matter whether he succeeds or not. If he is too late then it is too late for him too. If he times the block correctly he will be cut in his arm. As soon as the attacker sees that B's arm goes up he pulls back the Kris and cuts the blocking arm in the same motion.





This off-course is followed by the already familiar stab to the belly area. Here again it's the speed and the changing of the attack-angle and height that will do the trick.

Even if B does not block but evades the attack and makes an immediate counter-attack this combination still works. If B goes to the left you follow him with the pull-back/cutting move and you can still make contact; or you check one of his arms again in the way mentioned earlier. Then you either stab at him or at his attacking arm.

If he evades to the right you can do the technique exactly like in the first attacking example. The only difference is that you have to make a step to stay close to him.

The techniques described above speak of the point and

the cutting edges of the Kris. However the Ri-pandan, the pointed end of the ganja can be used in a fight. For example it can be used to stab with if the



real attack is evaded. If the opponent tries to hit the defender and the latter evades this attack

the Ri-pandan can impale the hand of the attacker with a swift move of the wrist.

A wound made this way is only superficial because one cannot put too much pressure on the peksi but the stab immediately following is deadly.

Of course these are just a few examples and even with these few movements it is possible to think of an uncountable amount of variations. Everything depends upon the reaction of the opponent and on how fast the changing situation is dealt with. But I think that by now I made clear what a dangerous weapon the Kris can be. Even, or maybe especially, against longer and heavier weapons. If you look at the

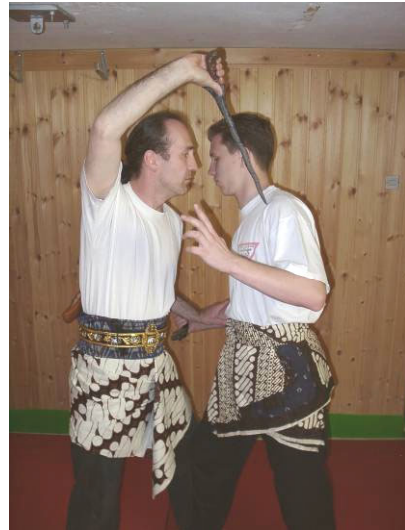
Kris like it was meant to be, as a stabbing weapon, then it is surely not ineffective. Think about the fact that in Europe in time the stabbing and thrusting weapons won from the slashing and cutting ones. When fire-arms came into being and armor did not give adequate protection against these modern developments the swords also changed drastically. Against someone without protection stabbing-weapons like rapiers proved much more effective than a sword. A slashing weapon needs bigger movements and during the execution of these cuts you are practically without protection. A swift thrust could easily penetrate an attack like this and soon long-swords and cleaver-like weapons became extinct.

The way of fighting changed as well and slashes became short chops and hard blocking became parrying, the leading away of the opponent's weapon. This automatically leads us to the next chapter because up until now I only wrote about the possibilities of the Kris itself. As a weapon it even became better and more deathly if it was used in combination with the left hand.

But first as promised some more names of Kris-fighting techniques.

Tikam Tunggal: The stab to the lower abdomen. This name is also used if there was only one stab needed to end the fight.

Tikam Air Terjun: Waterfall. A stab from high to low usually aimed at the neck



just above the shoulder or collarbone. But also for example to the upper-leg if the kris-fighter is seated or in a crouch.

Tikam Sembor Anak: Camouflaged stab. One starts this attack with the left hand in front of the blade so the enemy

will not see it coming. (See next chapter)

Tupei Terjun: A stab during which at the moment of impact the little-finger and ring-finger are tightened while the wrist is bent upward in a short, fast motion. This drives the weapon deeper into the target. The same effect is also applicable with the reversed motion. Now the wrist is bent down which drives the Kris upward. This technique is used if one for example uses the second basic position and from there attacks the belly of the opponent.



Tupei Kalajengking: Scorpionsting. Here the opponent is on the side of the left shoulder. The attack is executed with an arc over one's own head whereby the eyes, the shoulders and the spot behind the collarbone are the main targets.

The sheath as shield.

The Kris as a weapon became twice as dangerous when it was combined with another weapon which would normally be used in the left hand. But even without a second weapon the Kris was usually not the only tool for defense that was available. Someone who carried a Kris was also carrying a sheath for it. And this was used as a kind of shield in case of an emergency. The following chapter will explain how this was done but first I like to make the reader aware of the fact that everything that could be done with the sheath can also be applied to a second weapon. If this was a common knife, a stick, a sword or whatever, all possibilities that were available for the sheath in a real fight were shared by a second blade. And a blade can do even more of course. This book would dug too deep into this material if I would say more at this point. Then it would really be a book full of techniques and as told before that is not my intention. At this point it is sufficient to realize that the forthcoming techniques can also be applied to a knife of some sorts.

As said before the sheath is made out of three components. The gambar, the gandar and the pendok. The pendok is shoved over the gandar.

If you would hold the sheath by the gandar and would strike, the gambar

would surely break off right-away. Think about the fact that the blade goes right trough it when the Kris is in its resting place. So the amount of wood at the joining point of the gandar and the gambar is minimal. The outcome is a vulnarable location.

Then how can you expect that one catches a blow with the sheath? Here the same story holds true as with the Kris itself. You have to try to evade



the force of an attack instead of meeting it head on. Only the evading is now changed into parrying. A kris-sheath can take some outward pressure when the forces working on it go from the top to the lowest point. If the pressure comes straight in a right angle to the gambar and in the line of the gandar then the fragility of these parts is not such a big issue. But of-course it will never be strong enough to stop a hard blow, especially not from a sharp blade. The sheath is for the most part, or even completely, made of wood. If it would be hit by a cutting tool it would be damaged very easily. So parrying or leading away the attack is the only safe way to do it.

To do this one would hold the sheath directly under the gambar. The place where the mouth of the sheath and the gandar come together is never immediately under the wide part of the Gambar. It is always a little bit lower so that if one holds the sheath for fighting one always has both parts included in his or her grip. The gandar can be placed against the under-arm.

If a metal pendok is used this means that a sheath in this po



sition can even deflect a sharp blade a couple of times without breaking completely. At least if the blow is not caught death-on but is led away.

In the basic-fighting stance the sheath is held in front of the Kris so it becomes really invisible for the opponent. This way the Wrangkah is also held between the attacker and the defender and is immediately functional as a kind of shield.

The position of the Kris stays almost the same during a confrontation, that is until it is really put to work. But this certainly is not the case with the sheath! Slow hypnotizing moves are interrupted with fast,

short changes of height and all this is done to elude the opponent and to try to distort his or her timing. To be able to do so, one has thought out several designs of movements in which the sheath is waving and weaving and influences the mind of the opponent. In Indonesia one also knows the twofold powers of the universe that is known as the male and female forces (just like yin and yang in China). The Kris now represents the male force that is sent away and the sheath represents the female force that is more recipient in nature. So the Kris gives energy (which is so strong that it can cut the life force of someone who is stabbed with it) and the sheath absorbs energy by drawing in the concentration of the enemy for example. In a lot of fighting-styles of Indonesia one knows the terms *Kembangan* or *Bunga* which both mean flower. The terms refer to the beautiful gracious movements that are executed while one circles around an opponent to try to judge his strong points and weaknesses. The other purpose of these moves is to draw in the energy of the opponent. The whole repertoire of moving patterns with the shea-

th belong to this *Kembangan*. The attention is drawn by the flower but what really is important is the fruit! One can really nourish himself on the fruit or in the case of a Kris-fight, the stab is the fruit, the *Bunga*. This makes sure one survives. The flower draws and gets the attention and by doing so it makes sure the fruit, the deathly thrust, can come forth.

The patterns in which the sheath is moved are designed so that the sheath will be in front of the body all the time and also a lot in front of the Kris so it remains hidden, just like in the previously described stance. Mostly the patterns consist of squares, triangles and figure-eights that flow into each other and are used three dimensionally. The sheath seems to “dance” up, down, to the left or right, to the front and back and diagonally. The effect brought forward is hardly to be described in a book but it is very dynamic and indeed hypnotizing, certainly if a shiny pendok is used.

But all this is put into effect before a real attack has taken place. If this happens one can hit the blow aside by pushing against the arm or weapon in a straight angle to the line of attack. Here also the moving

patterns prove their use because by practicing one learns to respond from every position and to use the right angle of defense.

Let me use the first described technique for a Kris-fight as an example.

If the attack is a diagonal slash and one evades to the left one can push the sheath from left to right against the attacking arm. By doing so one multiplies the chance of evading the blow successfully and one keeps the opponent busy long enough to launch a counter. In the best case this counter will go out simultaneously with the parry. Because the sheath will push against his arm the enemy cannot block or parry the Krisstab.



The same technique can be used against a straight attack no matter the height of it.

This scenario is easy to follow when the defender's left arm is on his left-side. But what if the attack occurs at a time this is not the case? I wrote the left-hand moves to all angles all the time. Put even stronger; the attacker is likely to try to time his attack at a moment the sheath will be to the right of the defender. Then there is no "shield" in the way. It is impossible to stop this kind of attack from right to left because this would go hard against hard and the Wrangkah will loose this fight because of its weak points. The solution is very simple: by constant practice of the moving patterns the defender is capable to make a very fast half figure-eight move out of every position which in this case will go below the slash and then will still hit from left to right or in the worst case from below upwards. The latter is not ideal but effective enough when it is combined with evading. To do no damage the attack only has to miss by an inch!

Another possibility to use the sheath in a fight is by hooking the weapon-hand of the opponent. If the opponent's hand is pushed aside with the Gambar (as in the previous picture) one can pull it aside by letting the

gandar slide over and around it. Then the sheath will function as a hook that leads the arm away.



One can also hit with the point of the sheath. If you look at the construction of the sheath you can see it is possible to hit with the point. For example after leading away an attack. If one has parried to the right, so that the sheath is in a horizontal position in front of your body, you only have to bend your wrist to let the point of the sheath be pointed to the enemy. A quick hit is enough to stop him or to unbalance him. The targets for a blow like this are: the

throat, the face and especially the eyes, the solar plexus and the groin.



About this kind of use of the Kris I have one more comment. The late Mr. Tammens who wrote some very workable books on the Kris once said during a lecture that the age of a Kris was also to be guessed by looking at the sheath. If the point was very dented, according to him, this would mean that the Kris was much used and so it would be old. According to him these dents come from repetitively sitting on the ground so the sheath would hit the ground every time and eventually would get these dents. This seems reasonable but the sheath could also be dented by a blow in the manner stated above. In that case it would mean the Kris was used in a fight, which would prove the old age of the Kris as well. In Java people gave me this

explanation of the dented sheaths and they proved it to me by showing there are very few "in between dents". By this I mean pendok that were just a little bit dented or only scratched. Most of the time it was a big dent or none at all. Thinking about the fact that a Kris-sheath is always put in the sash but not tied to it, when it really would hit the ground it is more likely that it would rather move up a little than to get badly damaged.

As a last example of the use of the sheath in a fight I want to show the way to immobilize an arm with it. If you are close to the opponent and you can push against his upper-arm this gives you the chance to launch an attack of your own. The best way to do so is by pressing his upper-arm hard against his body so that not only his arm is hard to move but also his balance is disturbed. Physically and mentally the opponent will lose his freedom to move.



Conclusion.

With everything written above I think I made it clear the Kris was everything but an in-efficient weapon. On the contrary, if one knows how to use it, a Kris becomes a very deadly weapon that can do its job very fast. Most of the time one or two attacks are enough to end the confrontation in favor of the kris-fighter. And not only against opponents armed with knives. Against longer weapons the Kris remains effective, contrary to popular belief and the opinion of many writers before me who never researched the matter sufficiently. The ergonomically design of the Kris makes sure the length of the blade and the power of the stab is used to the maximum. These facts combined with the knowledge that the whole body is a good target makes efficient use possible. If the deadly targets are too far off one attacks the hand that holds the weapon and after that goes for the body, if it is still necessary.

In the following chapters I will elaborate on the why and how of the Kris as a beautiful piece of art, because for certain

a Kris is this also. The design is not only very ergonomical but very beautiful and magickal as well. Every part of it does not only have its merits in a fight but also has its magickal meaning of the Kris as a weapon and talisman.



The picture shows a statue of Bhairawa. From around 1300.

Look at the Kris, surely a Jalak Buddha.

Part 2.

A piece of history.

Judging the age of a Kris.

The subtitle of this chapter could be: A tricky business. For that is what it is. Even for people with great knowledge and experience it is sometimes hard to tell the age of a Kris. There are many variables that have to be taken into account and some of these might be impossible to see. Even so, I like to write a chapter that provides guidelines for judging the age of a Kris. Not so much to make the readers an overnight expert on the subject, which is impossible, but to give some common sense assistance if you want to buy a Kris and you are not sure about its origin. Moreover this chapter will help you put a certain Kris in its historical context, an aspect I like, and I think many collectors like it as well. Even if you are not a collector but you do own a Kris or you want to buy

one for your training and for magickal purposes it is vital that you understand at least a little bit about judging the age of a Kris. This way you will not be misled into buying a new, untraditional one, which is only great for physical training.

Let me begin with a little history. The island of Java where the Kris originated has had a history filled with a lot of different kingdoms and courts. Some of these were present at the same time in different regions. Almost all of these areas have their own characteristics worked into the blade but the differences are so small that these fall out of context in this book. In the present time the timetable of Java's history is seen as follow.

Before the year 1000 of our timetable there was the kingdom of Mataram, this is probably the time of birth of the first Kris recognizable as such. In 1019 the era of Djengala started and this lasted until about 1250. Djengala was followed by Singosari in 1268 until 1293. At this time Singosari fell apart and broke up into Padjadjaran (1200 – 1400) which was situated in West Java and Madjopahit (1294 – 1520) in Central and East Java. At the end of the great Mad-

jopahit Empire there were several other kingdoms with great influence. For example around 1500 Sedayu, Tuban (1500-1600) and Pirang or Blambangan. Out of the latter came the royalty that fled Java to keep their Hindu religion and went on with their own art and weaponry in Bali. Also the kingdoms of Demak (strongly Islamic) and Pajang came into play. Both of these kingdoms made war against a newcomer; Mataram, named after the first Mataram kingdom some 600 years before. Mataram won and lasted from 1613 to 1703 at which time it became the era of Kartasura (1705-1749). This split up in Surakarta (1745 –present) and Yogyakarta (1755-present).

To summarize: from the 10th to- 12th century there were the areas and kingdoms of Segaluh, Singosari, Padjadjaran and Djengala.

From the 13th to the 15th century there were Madjopahit, Tuban, Madura and Blambangan.

From the 15th century to the present time there were; Cirebon, Mataram, Pajang, Demak, Kartasura, Surakarta and Yogyakarta.

This is a rough description but it serves my purpose. These

are the three eras I wish to focus on. As said before all of these areas had their own characteristics. For example Tuban concurred with late Madjopahit. There are a lot of characteristics that place blades from these two courts in the same time yet they are very different. Tuban blades are heavier and broader than Madjopahit blades; there was more raw iron involved in making a Tuban blade. The fact that Madjopahit blades are often more valued has a historical reason. Madjopahit was a big dynasty that ruled almost all of Asia at the time. Therefore Madjopahit blades are considered more powerful than Tuban blades by present day collectors and old royalty from later kingdoms alike.

In estimating the age of a Kris there are some factors that ask our attention.

First of all Dapur, the overall shape of the Kris and its incrustations and ornamentations.

Then Pamor, the way of forging and blending different kind of metals. In this case especially the nickel content and the design it produces on the blade.

Third, the type of iron used as raw material and last but not

least the attention given to making the blade and the way it is corroded.

It is this combination of factors that makes it possible to determine the age of a Kris. No one factor can do the job by itself. For example there are still Kris being manufactured with a Dapur that is similar to the one of a Madjopahit keris. And maybe this is easy to see due to the newness of the blade and the fact that it has no signs of rust or use. But what about a Madjopahit shaped blade made in let's say 1700? This might well have been completely rusted over at some time or even been used in battle. That is why I choose to look upon these factors by themselves and not give descriptions of how a Kris from this or that era should look like. Make your own combination and judge for yourself. This is the best way of learning.

Iron

Let's start with the raw material; the iron used in making the Kris. This is one of the most difficult aspects and one of those that is often not even visible. If a Kris is freshly cleaned and colored black no-

thing of the characteristics of the iron is visible. The modern tendency to make a Kris really black so that the nickel contrast is as high as possible blocks the possibility to see the color of the material. That is why I personally am more attracted by blades that are less colored even though this way the Pamor-pattern itself is slightly less attractive. The only iron used in forging a Kris that can be easily recognized by someone who didn't study hundreds of keris are:

Pamor Pulohsane, it has a real silvery color with a touch of Grey and a blue glow. Especially this last attribute makes it easy to detect. It is the only material that looks bluish. If you rub it it sounds like, *sing sing*. It is used mainly at the end of Madjopahit and during the age of Padjang.

Karanghijang, always looks like silver dots in a black field. Not as though the dots are small nickel parts but as if the iron itself is colored differently there. It does not follow the way the blade is forged. These Kris are relatively new, from about 1700 and on. It sounds like; *tingih* where the last syllable goes up in tone.

Menkankan Jalak is the next kind of iron which stands for a background that is always dark even if it is not colored by the use of arsenic. It also has a distinct dark-red aura when it is cared for properly. This iron is used a lot in the Madjopahit era, especially around the area now known as Yogyakarta and the coastline below.

Terplanting besi kuning, gold-colored dots or a stripe, Late Madjopahit, Padjang and early Mataram.

Besi Kling, black brown, looks like sand, porous, oil turns dark. Usually used for making Sajen, Kris that are sacrificed and put in the ground. Used mostly during Djengala period and early Madjopahit.

Besi kuning, looks like gold. If you obtain this you always get a sign first. It is the best kind of iron used for making Kris and is used from Madjopahit era until now.

Pamor

The second point of consideration is the Pamor. The real old blades of Djengala are made of iron that does not have a homogeneous structure. This way they sometimes look as

though they have Pamor, which in fact they don't. There are dark and light stripes or spots on them but this is not nickel but less polluted iron.



A Kris dapur Jalak Buddha from around the year 1000.

Nevertheless this effect probably made Empu experiment with different kind of metals resulting in real Pamor. Later Djengala blades have a substantial nickel content. In fact they look as if they almost contain no iron. It is nickel all over. Whatever the source of this nickel in the beginning of

the Madjopahit era, they ran out. Madjopahit Kris contain only a little nickel. There are some dots or very thin lines of nickel to be seen. Around 1600 nickel became easy to purchase due to trade with Europe. Demak was a trading kingdom and Kris from this area where the first to contain an abundance of nickel again. But this time it was more intricately forged and the patterns had many more variations than in the Djengala era. Padjang also used a lot of nickel and here it has the tendency to look like clouds at about one third of the length of the blade. In the Kartasura period pure nickel is being used, which results in pitch-black blades with silvery Pamor that has no inner life. I mean it looks the same everywhere while older blades contain many darker and lighter places within the nickel itself.

In all times from Padjadjaran on Meteor was used if available. So even Madjopahit blades can sometimes contain a great quantity of nickel. These are always royal Kris for only royalty was capable of obtaining meteor. Meteor nickel always feels sharp. You can feel the layers of nickel in the iron and it feels rough.

The patterns of the Pamor became more and more ornate and difficult to make. Also repetitive patterns came in vogue especially from the Mataram era on. No Madjopahit blade has a really beautiful Rongenduru pattern! (a Pamor design that looks a little bit like a feather)

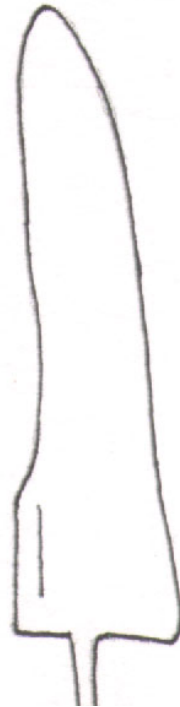


from left to right: Early Djengala, Madjopahit, Demak, Kartasura.

Dapur

The shape of the Kris had a long process of development and is in reality still developing. To illustrate the points I want to make I start with the

simplest form of Kris recognizable as a Kris. This is the Dapur known as *Gumbang*. It was made during the first period of Djengala and is a thin, broad blade with a thick Ganja (crosspiece) or ganja iras (crosspiece in one piece with the blade) and a dull point. It has a thin gandik (front of the blade on the short end) with a rudimentary Pedjetan (hollow beside the gandik).



This shape is also known as *Brodjol* but actually this is wrong. Dapur Brodjol developed out of Gumbang and we

will see how next. (the Krisses on the previous picture are all Brodjol with the smallest very near to Gumbang))

The first blades where really thin and flat. During Madjopahit they became thicker but still looked flat or a bit rounded. At the end of Madjopahit and during the Padjang era the *Ada* started to develop. This was at first just the thickest part of the blade but becoming a round backbone during the previously mentioned periods. In the Padjang era a lot of blades were still relatively flat but more and more had a real Ada on the first third of the blade. Entering Mataram the Ada became a sharp ridgeline just as all the decoration became more angular. Halfway true Mataram this ridgeline became even more prominent by hollowing out the flat areas of the blade. Nowadays all these possibilities are used. For an overview of this look at the drawing.

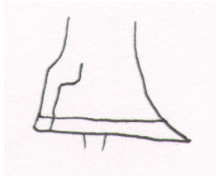
became bigger and better cut out. But it still was not a well-bordered dent. During Padjang it was. At one side the Gandik came out of the hollow and above there was an elegantly curved line. But still everything was rounded and graceful. At the beginning of Mataram these lines too became angular. The Gandik got an almost sharp front and sides that fell straight into the Pedjetan which was a rather large pit by now. The top of it was angular too now. Nowadays they still use this style. Sometimes you can find a modern blade with the graceful curve of a Padjang blade but mostly it's the sharp Mataram variety.



Djengala Madjopahit Padjang



The Gandik and the Pedjetan had a similar process. The Gandik became thicker during Madjopahit and the Pedjetan



Mataram

As said before the first blades were thin and as seen with the Ada the blades became thicker in time. This made them also heavier and bigger. The usual Madjopahit Kris was slender or at least not broad while the Padjang Kris was bigger and broader. Still the Padjang Kris was always elegant. During Mataram this was going further. The blades became heavier, sturdier, stronger too and because of their angularity the grace was gone. In the Kartasura period this went so far that the very harmony of a nice Madjopahit keris was gone altogether. Often you can see blades with a ganja that just seems to be too short for the length of the blade; they look as tough the shape of any part does not belong to the other parts. During the turn of the last century (1890-1940) the Kris becomes real heavy with a dull point and strong Luk (waves).

During Djengala a Kris was straight or had three luk. A Madjopahit Kris has up to 7 or

9 luk (usually) and a Padjang Kris goes until 13 luk. Mataram hold on to these 13 luk as well but in the Kartasura period a lot of Kris with more then 13 luk were made. Off-course the more luk on a blade the more crowded it gets so a Kris with more then nine luk is less graceful. The luk become more angular and this is easy to see on Mataram blades. Until Padjang the waves look as tough they really are a snake meandering thru the grass, during the second half of Mataram this changes into corners instead of waves (even with less luk).

There are some varieties of points on a blade. I already wrote that Djengala had dull points and the latest Kartasura blades also. In-between everything was possible. But During Padjang there was a shape used that immediately reveals this era. One side is straight and the other rounded. The drawing is a copy of a point of one of my own Kris and it shows exactly what I mean.



I hope this short introduction into judging the age of a Kris can help the reader to find its way in a most difficult task. As I said before you will not become an expert (neither am I, this is almost all I know about it, experience will teach you more). Rests me to reveal some faults people make in making a new Kris and selling it as old. The first one is that new Kris often feel like a file, not only are there file marks on the blade but the Pamor looks beaten flat and laid on the iron. Another kind is the kind with a flat blade but a thick raised Ganja. If the blade doesn't flow to the ganja smoothly it is probably a fake. Next is the new Kris with wrong details. This is harder to see but as you see more and more blades it becomes easier. An example can be the elephant trunk on the gandik. If the inside of the trunk is not corroded and the rest of the blade is than it is corroded mechanically or with the aid if acids or urine of a pig. The same holds true for the Peksi (the pin inside the hilt). If the Kris looks old and the peksi is not corroded it is either a fake or it has a new peksi. The later makes it impossible to use the Kris for magickal purposes.

To finish I like to tell a story which happened to me some years ago. I was in Surakarta and was shown a Beautiful Madjopahit Kris. I wanted to buy it until the seller asked me what I thought about the Ganja. Wasn't it great? He had made it himself! I had not seen it...

Part 3.

Background information on the belief system surrounding the Kris.

The Kris and his meaning in the Javanese culture.

The following chapter is not written by me. It is a translation of a paper written for a study of anthropology by the Dutch student Hilga Prins. I left out some parts that were not correct according to me and changed some other parts to suit this book, but essentially it is her writing not mine. I use it because it is to the point and very good background information on the Javanese Kris and his world in general.

The *Javanese* worldview.

Human beings are born with a tendency to organize and classify their surroundings. This is done to bring structure to their lives, which helps to develop guidelines to which one needs to conform. These guidelines are the minimum obligations to make it possible for people to live together as individuals and as part of a society.

Stutterheim (1927:184) believes that according to the Javanese, nature does not consist of a number of independent powers that act as humanlike spirits. The Javanese basically feel that everything that happens, all development and all decay is the reaction to a magickal power that is present everywhere.

There is a symbolic relation of mutual dependency and influence between men and nature and between men and non-humans. Everything in the material world is filled with magickal power. This power can be transferred from one object onto another. The magickal knowledge can not be transferred just like that. But one way to receive and keep it is by living secluded and to abstain

from food and drink in many different ways. This is done by kings and Empus and many Hermits who try to attract and hold on to these powers by practical meditation. The fact that supernatural powers are attributed to the Kris stems from this magickal thinking by the Javanese. Gardner explains clearly that one believes that the Kris has a soul. This soul, *Semangkat*, is derived from the pre-Hindu god *Sma* whose spirit inhabits all things. The motives that are used to decorate and beautify the kris can perhaps explain this reasoning further. These motives will be explained in greater detail later.

The principle of a substance that acts as life force and energy is also used in New Guinea cultures. Individuals within such a society are focused on retaining enough life force, in this way the body and mind stay healthy and make life worthwhile. By doing so men are geared to survive. Rules exist that make sure of a perfect balance of this life-essence if one keeps to them. These are the taboos that are in order for different social categories. The keeping of this life force, often seen as 'limited good', is not only important for

the individual, but also for the society as a whole. The balance guarantees a harmonious living together for the members of the society and will prevent natural disasters and diseases. This is almost the same in the Javanese culture. In their way of thinking the Javanese make a distinction between different classification-types that provide the necessary means to a way of life aimed at survival, in the broadest meaning of the word.

The Javanese divide the cosmos into three vertical planes that look like this:

- 1.the upper world, where the gods and ancestors dwell.
- 2.the middle world, the place for humans.
- 3.the underworld, for demons.

The gods and ancestors dwell in the woods and on far away mountaintops, from there they watch human life.

The idea of immortals living on higher ground demonstrates a ranking-system that puts gods and ancestors above humans. This means that ordinary men

have to pay respect to the immortals.

If someone wishes to get in touch with the upper-world, he or she goes to the woods or mountains to feel the presence of the gods and ancestors after meditation. (Royalty, hermits and Empu)

The three worlds mentioned above are in close relation to each other because the inhabitants of the upper world and those of the underworld are in constant war and this war is carried out in the middle world.

The Javanese idea of what the cosmos looks like is reflected in a mirror image that shows the deviation of the cosmos in three worlds in their material world. In agreement with their ideas about the universe they live according to certain rules and habits that are in harmony with what one believes.

All this not only happens to make the universe more understandable, but also to create a minimum basis to be able to cope with situations that can arise in their nearby surroundings. At the same time these guidelines make rules that are necessary for people to be able to live together as individuals and society.

The symbolic meaning of the war between the upper world and the underworld that takes place in the middle world is the always-present question between good and evil that exists in every individual and society. The answers to this question is the starting point for the making of rules and guidelines that have to make sure of the right balance between these two opposing forces.

The two-three deviation.

The way of looking at the world forms the basis for systems of classification that can be used in all kinds of fields and give guidelines to live life in a proper way.

In fact one can speak of a two-three deviation. Two opposing points come together in a third central point.

The classification system that comes forth out of this view about the cosmos contains different social categories that are unified by points they have in common. Think about male opposite to female for example. This can be seen in other things as well, such as in light/dark, heaven/earth, dry/wet, etc. This deviation is used in many cul-

tures and is noticeable in all aspects of society. The community as a whole carries this deviation in itself, but it becomes clearer on the plane of men, animals, plants and objects. All living and lifeless beings carry this deviation inside themselves as well. Every human being has male and female aspects inside, good and bad virtues etc. This is true for all elements within a culture where this deviation is used as a classification system. This dualism that is present in every individual, not only points to a antagonistic opposition, but this fundamental deviation is also an expression of the oneness in duality, that is typical in the community of mankind. This way the totality of the community is symbolized in a cosmic sense. Even-though the different characters are each-other's opposite, they are also each-other's completion. What is true for individuals will possibly also be true for objects. If this is really so this will also be true for the Kris. By examining the ornamentation that can be found on a Kris, this will be investigated. The deviation that the Javanese make in their surrounding is described below. Important within this classification is the opposition be-

tween "even" and "uneven", that is much used especially in Javanese magick.

The deviation as used in Indonesia looks as follows:

Light	Dark
Garuda	Snake
Upperworld	Underworld
Dry	Wet
Heaven	Earth
Sun	Moon
Infertile	Fertile
Male	Female
Superior	Inferior
Uneven	Even
Active	Passive
Public	Domestic
Hard	Soft

The female part is being associated with the dark, wet, earthly, the inferior, while the light, dry, heaven and the superior belong to the male side. As said before this duality is used in my of cultures. Earth as well as dark and wet are associated with woman and fertility. This seems logical when one considers that new seeds are planted in dark fertile earth and sprinkled with water frequently to let the growing process evolve. The earth is the mother of new life so to speak. This is the same as a woman being capable of delivering children and to give new life in this

way. Even though a man is needed to conceive children, he is seen as the least fertile since he himself is not capable of growing life inside of him. The superiority of man is being expressed in the association with the air and the upper world that are on a higher plane than are earth and the underworld. The light as being male in nature can be explained by the sun, which is up in the sky and rules the day. The moon is female, which belongs to the night, the period of darkness.

At this point it might be necessary to point out that this duality is not always just as strict. It is not always purely attributed to the two social groups of men and women. Things can change during the life cycle of both sexes.

The classification explained above seems more likely than the one Rassers made. With the interpretation of a myth about the coming to the world of Java he tried to analyze the social structures of the Old-Javanese society. This myth tells the story of a young male hermit who impregnates the daughter of a king with his supernatural glow.

She gives birth to a son and as a reminder of his birth the father turns his penis into a Kris and gives it to his son. The son is a good hunter and one day while hunting he discovers angels bathing in a pool. He takes the clothes of one of them and hides them and hides himself. When the heavenly creatures come out of the water one of them, *Nawang Wulan*, is not capable of returning to her home because she cannot fly without her clothes. *Jaka Tarub*, the young hunter shows himself, offers her other clothes and forces her to marry him. The angel stays to live on earth and gives *Jaka* a child. One day she finds her own clothes back and returns to heaven leaving the child behind with *Jaka*. It is said that she feeds the child when the smoke of a rice offering raises to heaven as a cry for help.

From this story Rassers comes to the following categories:

Man / Woman
Earth / Sky
Hunt / Agriculture (rice)
Kris / Clothes

Unexpected is the fact that these associations of the male

and female with different aspects are exactly the opposite of the more usual system. We already saw that women are associated with earth, while men where seen as one with the sky.

Rassers also gives new opposites, like clothes opposite to weapons and hunting versus agriculture. This dualism is expanded to the layout of the Old-Javanese house. In the front-part of the house, the open veranda, the *pendapa*, male guests are invited. This is the place of the men, where also the wayang- and gamelan-plays are being held and stored. The *pendapa* is next to the so-called woman-part, the *kobongan*, the back part of the house. At the back-wall three rooms are located of which the middle is seen as a holy room. In this room women and men alike honor the goddess of rice and fertility *Sri*, and male gods as well.

The Javanese house is seen as a front-gallery bordered by the middle part. This middle part is attached to the back part. Bride and groom ask the help of *Sri* in the middle room at the back of the house, so their marriage will be blessed with many children and will also be fertile in other ways.

The raising of the children takes place in the middle part of the house. The back part not only affects the middle part literally but also as a matter of speech. The children are being raised to consider the spiritual and social life as one and in such a manner that the spiritual part provides guidelines to the social part. The care for the children takes place under the eyes of the gods (the sacred back-part) fellow humans and social life (the front and middle part).

So even in raising children the immortals and mortals are involved, as two categories that are to be respected in the entire further course of life.

The four-five devision.

Aside from the two-three devision a simular devision is visible on the level of the middle world. But the three points are changed into five points consisting of four directions that come together in a central fifth point. The two-three devision and the four five devision overlap each other. The same elements can be found in a different and more elaborated way. This devision comes

forth out of the so-called MONCA-PAT model. This is the basis of a classification system which is used by the Javanese to structure and organize their own surrounding and the upper- and under-world in detail. The MONCA-PAT model can be found all over the Indonesian islands. In Java four *Desa* are gathered around a fifth central village. Even the government used the same four-five division in their hierarchical structure with one head and four assistants.

The compass with its four directions is a much used motive on handmade objects in Javanese art. The kris is one of them. Also the *Meroe*, the holy mountain, is often presented as one central high point with four lower points surrounding it. It is seen as the axis of the world.

The MONCA-PAT has already been mentioned. But the four-five division goes further than that. All aspects of society are fitted in a system that consists of four directions that lead to one central point in the middle.

Each of the four directions (West, East, South, North) has certain aspects of culture associated with it. In this way they form a category according to

mutual attributes. For us it will not always be clear why certain elements are put together, because according to our culture there are no ties between them. Working according to such a system has no prominent place in the Western world and often happens in a less conscious manner, but there are still remains to be found in astrology, divination and a sense of symbolism.

To return to the Javanese classification system: white is the color of the east, the place where the sun rises and is the sign of a new day, a new life. The

clothes of priests are white just like the ones of the Empu. White is seen as the color that is linked to the first period after birth.

The east is followed by the south with its overruling color of red, the color of ripening, the reaching of full maturity. A human being is at the

peak of its power. The sun also has his highest point here. The west is associated with the color yellow or gold, the period that starts with the middle age.

Black is the color of the north and means the end for mankind or death. The middle is multi

Directions	East	South	West	North	Middle
Colors	Black	Red	Yellow	White	Multi
Metals	Iron	Suwasa	Gold	Silver	Mixture
Days	Legi	Pahing	Pon	Wage	Kliwon
Character	Encompassing	Greedy	Proud	Thinker	Well-tongued
Profession	Farmer	Tradesman	Palmwine maker	General	Royalty
Goods	Food	Money	Liquor	Meat	
	Pendapa	Stable	Kitchen	Mosque	House
	Water	Earth	Fire	Air	Spirit
	Ocean	The Eart	Animals	Sky	Gods
	Idea	Work	Aim	Fulfillment	Worth
	Squared	Relaxed	Angry	Unattached	Harmonious

colored and is the core that contains all things, everything resolves around it.

The middle holds all colors and encompasses the whole of human life. Here you can find the principle of totality that is hidden in the four-five deviation. Within this classification of different areas in life such as colors, professions, moods, metals and days is everything that one can encounter in daily life. The entire cosmos is within this classification.

(Note: this list is not the same everywhere. Different areas have different points of view.)

With these kind of classification systems people select the

right partner, good dates for feasts etc. According to the

same system the Empu searches for the right working order and data for forging a new Kris. Every important act a Javanese does is thought over in great detail beforehand, so that the planned act will not have a bad influence on his future life.

Rassers found the four-five divination repeatedly in the story of Pandji, a cultural hero. In this story there are royal families with four sons and one sister. The sister is the oldest and remains unmarried. She lives secluded and dedicates here life to chastity and honoring the gods. Rassers sees in this the theme of the four direc-

tions coming together in the fifth point as a sign of totality.

The motives.

As said before the Kris is made of several parts that will be described more or less in depth, relevant to the importance of the part in relation to the subject of this chapter.

The blade of a Kris can be straight or waved. The first weapons that look like a Kris and can be found on sculptures are straight. The waved blade is thought to originate in India and it came to the Indonesian Islands together with Hindu influences.

During the making of a Kris different kinds of metal are used. One of these metals is supposed to contain a percentage of nickel. Because nickel is light colored, at the end of the process the motives on the blade can be seen. When the blade is ready, it is soaked in lemon juice and arsenic, so that the dark iron is slightly etched so that in turn the motives are often in relief. During the making the metals are torqued, flattened, mixed, hacked to pieces and combined again, in a way that is carefully

planned by the smith or Empu to get a desired motive. As seen in the previous chapter at the beginning of the art of making krisblades those motives where probably pure chance, but in later times Empu learned how to produce certain motives on command. These motives are called "PAMOR", which is also the name for the nickel holding metal, because it really means mixed metal, a blending.

The Pamor-motives on the blade all have a special meaning. They should match the personality of the future owner. Not only the decoration of the blade should be in harmony with the owner's personality, other parts of the Kris have to stand up to certain criteria as well, if the Kris is to blend with its wearer. If this is not the case, the Kris will bring no luck, but instead will turn against its owner. Also people of certain rank could only wear a Kris with selected motives. In the Encyclopedia about krisses, published in 1988, the Pamor Sekar Pala is written down as having the power of making the owner known and famous and Blarak Ngirid means more authority and leadership. The Beras Wutah design has a constructive power to make sure

no one in the family will get hungry and is suitable for everyone.

Beside this Pamor, there can be other decorations on the blade. These are different kinds of engravings, serrations etc.

Directly under the Ganja, the separately made, long asymmetrical part at the basis of the blade, there can be some of these ornaments. At the dull end of the ganja they are called lambe gadjah and belalai gadjah or kembang kacang, elephant's lip or snout or sprout of the kacang flower. If the Kris was worn by a royal person, it could be that the so-called snout touched the lip, in this way a hole was made.

Krisses that belonged to ordinary people always had an open space between the blade and the point of the snout. According to some this decoration was used for hanging the Kris near the sleeping place of the owner, so he would have the blade nearby in case of danger. This doesn't sound very probable however. In the first place there are many Kris without this decoration, so these Krisses would be impossible to be hung on the wall.

A second practical point is that the round end of the

"hook" is facing the grip. If it was used as a hook to hang the Kris, it should be the other way. To hang a Kris on a wall, in his sheath, there are wooden boards and even the Anggaran (the belt holster) could be used for this.

Besides these practical arguments we cannot ignore the belief system of the Javanese. Their belief in the supernatural powers of the Kris would make it very unlikely that the owner would hang his Kris in the open next to his bed. This way everyone in the room would become vulnerable because of the powers of the weapon, which could be dangerous for someone not knowing about the Kris. It is also known that a Javanese will not draw his Kris in public unless in urgent matters. The Kris is so much surrounded by mysticism, especially the blade, that it is very unlikely indeed that it would be hanged on a wall without its sheath.

According to legend the Kris will warn his owner of danger by rattling in his sheath or to fight for him in case of an emergency. Such stories clearly demonstrate how great the faith in the supernatural powers of the Kris is. The curls near the beginning of the ganja

do not have a practical function. The meaning can be found in the symbolical meaning it has for the wearer of the Kris. The elephant is an animal that played an important role in the mythical world of the Javanese as an animal of great strength and power. It was the riding animal of members of the royal family during their life, but also in death. With this curl, associated with the elephant, the powers of this animal are transferred into the blade.

At the sharp side of the ganja there are small serrations to be seen that sometimes continue on the actual blade the so-called Greneng. They are told to be snake teeth. This is very well possible, because the snake has great meaning in Indonesia. The blade of the Kris is associated with the Naga-snake. The straight blade being a resting or meditating snake and a wavy blade a snake in action.

In the encyclopedia about the Kris (1988) is written that according to some Kris lovers the teeth are to be seen as a signature of the Empu. A third meaning I heard was that the teeth were similar to the letters of the old Javanese alphabet and they could be a spell. This last idea would make an

interesting subject for future study. Of course the maker of such a study has to be well versed in Old Javanese. Because this is not the case with me I can only name the possibility.

By giving attention to the various motives chosen to decorate the Kris one can learn a few things about the meaning of the Kris within Javanese culture. The way of looking at these motives will be done with the assumption that within objects there is a dualistic separation from opposite virtues that nevertheless belong together. Also there will be attention for the fact that the Javanese attribute supernatural powers to the Kris.

The mountains and the sun.

To involve the mountains in a piece about the role of the Kris within Javanese culture one must search for their meaning in this culture.



If one links the Kris to the *kayon* and this element of *wayang*-play is identified as the Heavens Mountain and wishing tree, then a line can be set out from the Kris to the Life/heavens Mountain. (Note from the writer of this book: Here the writer makes a jump in her thinking. She does not say that this idea of linking the Kris to the *kayon* comes from Raffles who wrote a piece about the *Pandji* story, which is frequently used in *Wayang* play.) The mountain as a sym-

bol can be seen on the Kris in the shape of *Tumbal*-motives (the triangle) on the *mendak* between blade and grip. We already saw that the Empu has his workplace in or near the mountains and that this is the place where he meditates before starting to make a new piece. By way of meditation he contacts the Gods and can ask for their favor during the making process.

The holy mountain *Mahameroe* has brought about a big turn around in Javanese culture. Myths tell that the Gods brought this mountain to the island Java that had been too long in darkness and barbaric costume. The cultivation of Java and its membership to the orderly way of the world started with the placement of the holy mountain on this island. Since that time this occurrence is symbolized and remembered with the daily rising of the sun. Cultivation is thus seen as the light that is brought by the Gods. Because the sun brings the earth out of the darkness the connection between mountains and the sun is not a surprise. This also explains the solar character of the *kayon* as a life-mountain or life-tree. That the cultural hero *Pandji* is associated with the sun, which

symbolizes Javanese society, is now also clear to see. Pandji is been credited with bringing the most important cultural elements: the Kris, the gamelan and the wayang and he is seen as the great ancestor of all Javanese. In this way he is standing at the threshold of civilization.

The sun is not only a natural source of light but gives warmth also.

As a heating source the sun comes back as a symbol in the fire the Empu uses during the forging of a Kris to soften the iron. The fire is not only important to make the metals pliable, but also contains the power to set the souls of the ancestors and Gods free. This is the way they are given the opportunity to move into the blade of the Kris and come into contact with men. The flame is seen as very magickal. Wood with flamelike motives in it is often being used to make kris-sheaths.

The fact that the sun has such a important place in Javanese culture may be concluded from the fact that there are special honoring rituals with the purpose of transferring the life force which the sun radiates so strongly into the human body.

Sun-feasts are held at the beginning of the rainy season, spring, the time at which the sun comes out again and takes the function of giver of new life.

The idea that the magickal powers of the sun can be transferred into elements that are part of the material world originates in the pre-animistic magickal thinking of the Javanese.

But the sun has two sides. It is a natural source of warmth, light, cultivation and life force. The "sunny" side is of the utmost importance for humans. Especially the ability to transfer the life force out of the sun is necessary for the inner balance of the human body and its spirit. This balance can be measured with the body temperature that rules all life functions and thus is a condition for the survival of men. The other side of the sun creates shade, the shadows in life. The same fire that is the medium of transformation of the souls of the ancestors and Gods and in this way brings life to a kris also has the tendency to destroy and burn. The sun can give life, but on the other side can also scorch and dehydrate. Too much life-warmth can be life threatening (fever).

With the sun as the prime example of the unity of the light- and shadow-side, we will look whether the same holds true for the motives that beautify the Kris.

If this is the case than the Kris can be seen as equal to the sun.

There are some motives that really are sun-symbols and are directly related to the sun. They will be looked at first.

The sun- and “shadow”-motives.

Peacock and Garuda

On several pendok of Kris- ses you can see a peacock between the leaf motives. This firebird turns, its head raised, towards the sun and greets it with great dignity. This peacock is even more often seen in the shape of the bigger and more divine bird, spoken of as the Golden Peacock, Garuda. This mythical sun-eagle can be found in a more or less recognizable shape in or on a hilt. The Madura hilt is the best example. Under the leaves and curly decorations the Javanese sees this Garuda-bird in pure or combined shape. The sun-eagle is living in the upper-world and

is the riding animal of *Wisnu*, the Hindu god who's task it is to keep and protect everything that lives. He is the ruler of water, the keeper of all nature's force, all wisdom and the present time. Because the Garuda is in touch with the gods, he is known as the godlike bird that has his home and his friends in

the upper-world. Positive and supernatural powers are attributed to this bird, because he fights at the side of the good gods in the big fight between under- and upper-world. Even though they are half-brothers, the Garuda is the opposite and biggest enemy of the Naga-snake, living in the underworld and friend of the demons. In the everlasting fight between good and evil the balance of power between bird and snake is almost always even.

If the sun-bird is in battle then he changes in a destroying power and loses his sunny character, but he uses his evil attributes to serve all that is good. The appearance of the mythical Garuda is rather remarkable. It is a four colored bird. Yellow is the color from his feet too his knees, white the thighs too his bellybutton, red the color from his chest too his throat, black the color of his

face and beak. These colors are the same as those attributed to the four directions west, east, south and north.

The Sembrina



A third sun-symbol is the:

SEMBRINA, the winged horse. You can find it on the so-called Madurese hilts in combination with the mythical Garuda. In these cases it has two wings on his back and a sun-aura around his head. This animal is just like the Garuda a riding animal of the gods, especially the sun god *Surya*, but

also of *Shiva*, the highest Hindu-god. He is the ruler over life and death, but is mostly associated with the latter. In the contradiction between the characters of these gods for which the Sembrina is the riding animal you can see the twofold symbolism of this decoration. On one side the animal is associated to the sun with its wings and aura, on the other hand we see that the god of death is associated to the animal. In the sculpturing arts this animal is often flanked by the *acwin*-animals. These animals are also present on the *kayon*, here they stand at the roots of the tree of life in hostile postures opposite of each other.

The *acwin*-animals have a catlike/wild look and have long ears that look like wings. In these cat forms they are to be found in old Javanese houses at either side of the entrance of the holy room in the back of the house. They are the servants of the fertility- and rice-goddess *Sri*, who is being honored in this room, because she protects the rice harvest against mice, the big rice destroyers.

The Kala.

A motive that strongly accentuates the shadow side of the sun is the symbol of the fire of heaven and time: the *Kala*. This figure is present on the Kris handle in the stylized shape of two masks. This being Kala-heads is one explanation of the little figurines on the inside of hilts in the kraton style. It is also said that these are representations of the groin and face of a man. As always it is probable that not just one explanation is the right one, but the importance of the kala-design can not be questioned, because these heads are also present as decorations of many sheaths. The Kala-design as the fire of heaven is symbolic for the creating, positive force of the sun. At the same time, however, this figure is been seen as the same as Shiva as God of the always proceeding time that eventually will meet death. On the kayon the stylized kala-head is the figurative presentation of the problems any living being can meet on his or her road in life and as such it has a negative ring to it.

The Naga.

Maybe the most important symbol of the Kris is the *Naga*-snake. This animal is also connected to the sun, even though this is not likely on first sight. The blade of a Kris has the shape of a resting, meditating snake (straight blade) or of a moving snake (wavelike shape). To give the Kris not only the look of a snake but also its poisonous attributes, the blade is often dipped in the brains or the poison of a snake. Also as a decoration on the blade and the pendok this animal is often used. If there are two Naga entwined with each other this is probably done to express the dualistic unity.



The snake is foremost associated with the realm of the demons, the underworld, as we already have seen in writing about the Garuda design and the classification system. But this animal is nevertheless also connected to the light and heat bringing sun. In early history the snake changed in appearance and since that time it is illustrated as a dragon or *Naga*, a combination of both animals. It is this mythical Dragon/snake that is represented on and by the Kris.

The dragon=snake is being honored as a symbol of spring-time with rituals that take place at the beginning of the rain season. In this period the sun is showing itself as the ruler of nature and brings God's creation back to life.

Next to his evil, demonic attributes, the snake also possesses creating and positive powers and can even be a symbol of new life. That this is true in the eyes of the Javanese is clearly shown by the fact that within the classification system the snake is classified with the female and (her) fertility.

As seen above one can conclude that the sun takes an important role as natural creator

and keeper of life. In all kinds of appearances she comes back regularly in Javanese culture and the meaning system of the Javanese. With this the role of the Kris as an object with protective power becomes clearer. The Kris should give his owner positive, supernatural powers, that can be used for the good. In this way the Kris is a symbol of life itself. This aspect of the Kris is being articulated by the comparison with the tree/mountain of life.

The tendency to a two-sided interpretation in the symbolical meaning of the designs has been shown. All the designs explained until now not only have a positive, creating force that brings and maintains life, but also has a shadow side; a destroying power and even death, the end of all life.

But not all the motives that can be seen on the Kris have been studied so far. The elephant and the lizard have no place on the Kayon like all the above examples, but they play an equal important role in interpreting the meaning of the Kris.

Ganesha

The elephant is recognizable by his trunk and lips that are represented on the Kris by the stylized but elegant carvings under the dull end of the ganja. On the hilt the head of *Ganesha* is also sometimes to be seen. According to the Javanese the mythical Ganesha, with his human body and elephant head, is the son of *Shiva*, the highest Hindu-God, the god of the universe, of life and death.

Because of this it will surprise no one that in Indonesia elephants are honored as the riding animals of not only the living members of royal families but their ancestors as well. With their extraordinary force they are symbolic for the ruling of the world, in this way they are a sign of the power and status of the ruler. The souls of the deceased stay present in the realm of humans but are invisible. This is why they are considered habitants of the upper world, where the gods dwell also. The fact that ancestors choose elephants as their riding animals means that elephants belong to the upper world and the realm of the death.

The lizard

Another animal that can be found on the Kris has an important symbolical meaning. It is the lizard. If one looks at the Ganja from above it is as if you look onto the back of a lizard of which the legs are missing. The lizard is a "low" animal that belongs to the crawling inhabitants of earth and to the underworld. Just like the elephants, lizards live in two worlds at the same time. They carry the souls of the ancestors that have to be transmitted from the realm of the living to the realm of the death. The realm of the death is probably not a well-chosen term, because according to the Javanese the souls of the ancestors stay near the living family members to keep watch over them. It is better to speak of the realm of the immortals, while the realm of the living can be said to be the everlasting world.

Kris and Gender

When one sees the available literature it seems as though the Kris is only worn by men. It is taken for granted that weapons and among them the Kris belong to the male domain.

Just occasionally women are mentioned as wearers of a Kris. These texts are never long and there is never given a reason why these women wear Krisses. There are some examples of female dancers that carry a Kris as part of their attire. Very short it is written that women that wore a Kris, were women of high birth. They would carry a Kris if they were away from home for a long time or if they had to travel at night.

Despite these examples, the only attention given to the Kris is from a male point of view and explanations.

Does this mean that the Kris is to be considered as purely male?

To give an answer to this question one has to look carefully at the culture where the Kris belongs to, but also at the Kris itself. We have to look at what the objects have to tell us. They are an essential part of a culture and can be a guide and pointer to a direction for those who investigate this culture. The material culture can give a lot of information about certain social and cognitive structures that are present within a society, and that in fact are the core of that society. It can make these structures visible. To be

short, one has to have an eye for the language of things. This is why one can look at the Kris as an object that through his role in Javanese culture has many things to say about its cultural environment. Because of that, you can possibly answer the above question. Vice versa our knowledge of Javanese culture can help to interpret the various designs and motives that can be found on the Kris and at the same time assist in searching the true meaning of the Kris within this culture.

That the Kris has female aspects even though the kris belongs almost exclusively to the male world, can be seen in the following part.

Why is the Kris always associated with the male gender and are the female aspects put aside?

***“A legend divine ancestor
Sunan Benang, an orang
Wali, would not
beget children and re-
frained from sexual inter-
course, He removed
his sexual organ and made it
into a Kris Kyai Kala Mun-
jeng which
was thenceforth a family
heirloom.” (Dreager 1972)***

As the story goes the Kris came forth out of a penis. This part is most certainly male and this is a clear statement for the Kris to be purely male in nature. In other stories the great grandfather of the Javanese is born with a Kris on his side. Pandji, the cultural hero is been seen as the inventor of the Kris and the first Empu. Also there is only one story known about a female Empu, that made a Kris with her fingers and cooled the hot iron in her vulva to compete with male Empu. Until now there is little reason to think that the Kris has female aspects. This is even more so because of the way that different Indonesian tribes see the Kris. The Kris is the prove of the male identity and is like a brother to him. The Kris will be with the initiated man like a shadow, a twin brother. To the Buginese, the Makassaars and the Birmanese for example the Kris is the missing left rib of a man. If a Javanese is asked what makes him a happy man, he usually answers with: ***“Kuda, wanita, tjurga, wisma, kukila”***

What can be translated as: a horse, wife, weapon, house and singing bird. The Kris is for Javanese men one of the things in life he cannot miss. Within a

family the Kris is always carried from generation to generation, from father to son. This happens after the initiation of the boy, and by doing so the Kris becomes a symbol of reaching adulthood. A sign of a new identity, that the boy will have during the rest of his adult life. A second Kris will be given to him by his father in law during his wedding, the beginning of a new social status of the man and woman alike.

So far about the general impression of the ties between men and Kris. To get a full view one has to look at the Kris itself.

The blade of a Kris can be straight or waved. In the latter case the number of wave are always uneven. Once in a while one can see twelve waves because twelve is the number of totality. But generally the number is uneven. The uneven, the undivideval number is being associated with the male part in Javanese magick, while the even number is female, because it can be divided and is fertile. Because the Kris seems to be carried by men in almost all cases it is not strange that the blade, the most important part of the Kris, has this manly aspect. The Kris should be matched to his wearer in seize,

Pamor-design and hilt. But if this is true then the blades for women should have an even number of waves. If this is really the case is difficult to say, because there was not enough material available to the investigator to make this comparison. In literature there is no mention of it. (Note of the translator: Patrem, female Krisses have an uneven number of waves.)

About the designs it is already written that there are a number of animals to be found on the Kris that belong to the upper-world. These are the elephant, the Garuda and the winged horse. In the worldview of the Javanese they belong to the same category as the male. These motives can be seen as the male aspects of the Kris, what can be taken further with the heavenly meteorite out of which the metal was taken to forge the Kris.

There are many elements that plead for the Kris to be a masculine weapon, but there also are some that speak against it. Next to the designs that are dominantly male you have the lizard and snake as their feminine counterparts, while the earthly iron that is used in the blade also belongs to the female part. The difference be-

tween the male and female designs is the same as the one between the sky and earth, if the scheme from Rassers is put aside. This scheme will be treated later.

Remarkable is the fact that precisely the blade, the stylized form of the meditating or walking snake, seems not purely male now, but also has a feminine side. Considering the designs and parts of the Kris there seems to be a mixture of male and female aspects, were none seems to be represented more frequently than the other.

Even though in literature it is taken for granted that the Kris is given from father to son, the anthropologist Geertz (1959) has witnessed a ritual on Java that took place during the seventh month of pregnancy of a young woman. According to him the Kris her husband used to cut the *lawe*-sash from the tail of his wife, was a Kris that belonged to the ancestors of the mother of the wife. This would mean that this Kris was given from mother to daughter. Geertz is the only one to mention this but it could point to the existence of both patri- and matrilineal lines that were considered important for tracing back to the ancestors. Rassers

indeed speaks about an old Javanese system that must have been belineal.

In the old Javanese houses the male part of the house is the *Pendapa* where the male guests are received, the place where all the valuable *gamelan*-instruments and the *Wayang*-dolls are stored. In this part the *Wayang* plays are performed with the use of *gamelan* music. This is why it is strange to hear that the *Kris* is not to be found between these cultural objects. The (Pusaka)-*Kris* is carefully kept in the back part of the house that belongs to the women and where family life takes place.

Rassers says that cleaning the *Krisses* is only done by men and that the back part of the house is changed into a *kayon*-temple for the occasion. This seems not to be the full story. Rassers mentions that women are not allowed to be present but this is not in agreement with other tales.

In Yogyakarta the cleaning of the family heirlooms took place in the *Kraton* once a year and was done by the sultan himself, while the women had the care for the *Krisses* the rest of the year. According to another source young women are

indeed permitted to clean the *Krisses*, unless they menstruate at the time. The holy chamber where the family altar is located and where the honoring of *Dewi sri* and other gods take place is also the room where the *Kris* is stored and it is only kept clean, guarded and taken care for by a female member of the family that has reached the post-menopause period of her life.

The stating of conditions for women to be permitted to interfere in such things as the cleaning of *Krisses* and the ruling over the sacred rooms illustrates the existence of taboos and rules in life.

During the lifetime of the Javanese several changes of social status take place, as written before in this paper. With these changes the amount of impurity of the involving person gets larger or smaller. This is the outcome of the changes in the balance between the opposite forces and attributes within every individual. The woman is mostly seen as more impure than the man, because she gets children and menstruates, periods where a lot of (impure) blood flows. That is why in these periods she is very impure herself and taboo for the men. As all powers and

attributes can transfer from one object to the other according to the magickal thinking of the Javanese, the impurity of the female can be transmitted to sacred objects if she comes near them or touches them. But as soon as she reaches the post-menstrual period, and she can receive no more children and does not menstruate anymore, she is equal to men in status and is not unpure anymore. Then she is allowed to touch and handle holy objects, such as the Kris.

That the Kris is stored in the back part of the house can be partly explained by the fact that this is where the sacred room is where the gods and ancestors are called for and are being honored. The Kris is an object that has a close connection with the sacred world. A practical reason for the place of the sacred room can be that to get in touch with the gods one needs quiet and this is more to be expected at the back side than at the front of the house.

Another suggestion about the storing of the Kris in the female part of the house can be that the Kris has above anything else a protective function. By storing the Kris in the part of the house where family life takes place, the powers of the

gods and the souls of the ancestors are in direct proximity to the family, in this way they can protect and offer help immediately. In this way there is always a Kris present in the house that is left behind by the man if he goes to work etc. He himself always carries a Kris, so he can be sure of personal protection. The head of the family is considered responsible for the care of his house and all the people in it.

“The father of the family must take care of the Pusaka-objects.

It is a way to keep equilibrium in the fixed relationships between

Himself and the cosmic and social order...associations with the

Concepts of idealized ancestors provide a religious emotion and a

Feeling of security” (Koentjaraningrat 1957).

In order to take care of the family and life itself a balance in the contact with the ancestors is of great importance.

The existence of opposites in the designs on the Kris can, in regard to the male and female meanings of these designs,

reinforce a point made earlier in this chapter. The whole cosmos exists of opposite forces, which diminish and reinforce each other, but never expel. The one element of such a pair of forces cannot exist without the other. Men need women to get power. Men and women need each other to give birth to children, and consolidate their future. The blade of a Kris is forged with different kind of metals, in which different colors are present. One kind of metal shall have a certain nickel content and be light in color, while the other part will consist of various darker metals. Both, light and dark have to be present to get the Pamor design. Not only male and female, but all opposing forces are dependent on each other in matters of their own existence.

To return to the system made by Rassers that deviates from the more common worldview, a small remark. In his system the female is associated with the air, which is superior. This seems not logical when one looks at the previous remark that the woman is more unpure than the man and because of this has a more inferior position than the man. The careful reader will have noticed that I

never wrote that the woman is always inferior to the man. In a lot of societies there is a second layer under the first ideological one that is slightly different from the first which is more noticeable. This second layer is often more geared toward women. The wife is seen as fertile, the man as unable to reproduce himself, while fertility is one of the most important aspect of existence. The male often envies this positive attribute of the female. In New-Guineas cultures it is seen that men in secret imitate pregnancy and menstruation. Here we can see that at least in this aspect of life the superiority of the female is agreed upon. A careful suggestion of this can be made which concerns the mythical story that Rassers used for his analysis. By connecting the woman in the story to the sky and air a piece of superiority is given to her.

Conclusion

A very great lover of Krisses, David Povel, explained the Kris as follows:

The blade is the part of the Kris that is actually in the unseen world, the world of

thoughts and supernatural mystic. The Pamor designs on the blade in the shape of clouds represent clouds of thoughts that float from the tip to the ganja. The first cloud on the tip is the most important. This is the first thought of the owner. The base of the blade, the ganja, is a phase of transformation to the material world, the world of humans. This phase is symbolized by the ganja in the shape of the lizard, the carrier of the souls of the deceased and the animal of incarnation. The hilt with his bent-over stature symbolizes the representative of the seen world, a human being honoring the ancestors and the gods. The strong backbone of men in his own world is the *peksi*, the iron pin that is forged out of the blade and on which the hilt rests.

Not only is there a boundary between the invisible and visible worlds, but also a connection. If the Kris is held and the arm is extended, it is remarkable that the blade of the Kris (the straight one and the one with waves) makes a slight bend. This bend is the repetition of the curve at the elbow that is always present in our extended arm. With this it is

symbolized that the Kris is an extension of his owner and that the invisible world is also an extension of the visible world.

This explanation gives a clear view of the role that the Kris takes within his cultural context. Within itself the Kris has brought together the entirety of the Javanese culture.

The cosmos can be divided in the unseen world of the gods, demons and ancestors and the visible world of humans. The constant battle between the inhabitants of the underworld and those of the upper world is being carried out on the material, earth plane. This is an expression of the duality that is present in all human societies, the duality between good and evil. The elements associated with the negative forces will disturb happiness, endanger life and finally lead to death. The positive aspects within the culture are the keepers of life and can even make it last longer. To be able to see and separate these opposing elements every culture makes his own view and classification of the cosmos. With this classification in mind rules are made by men that give him/her the possibility to bring structure to life and find the right balance between good and evil by living

according to these rules. The interpretation of the cosmos is done by using a classification that includes all aspects, elements and objects from this culture. The result of this is the two-three devision and the more elaborate four-five devision. The Kris represents these classification systems.

The Kris has the appearance of a cross that is made up out of the four directions that come together and come out of one central point (ganja) and as such agrees with the four-five devision.

This classification in which the directions are used along with their colors, occupations, metals etc. imparts the whole cosmos and gives insight into it. For human beings this makes it easier to understand and know his/her visible surrounding, and especially the invisible world. This will also make it easier to improve the communication between men and these two worlds.

The two-three devision is a kind of simplified four-five devision, but can be seen as just as important and complete. The opposing pairs that make up this classification are to be found in the designs on the Javanese Kris. Through the representation of these two

classification systems within the Kris this cult object encompasses the entire cosmos. This idea is illustrated by the comparison, by the Javanese themselves, of the Kris with Pandji, the ancestor and founder of Javanese culture. A comparison of the same kind can be made between the Kris and the important wayang-element, the Kayon. The tree of life that is drawn on it is a representation of Pandji and as such of the Kris. The designs on kayon and Kris are largely the same and make the comparison between these two cultural elements easier. The Kris can be interchanged with the kayon: The intro to the adventures of Pandji, the cultural hero, and as such the intro for the life of the Javanese, who see themselves as the heir of this Javanese prince.

The Kris provides the context in which important things in the life of the Javanese are done (circumcision, initiation, marriage, death). Within this life, created by the Kris itself, the Kris symbolizes the dualistic unity of the opposition pairs that, even though they are opposites cannot exist without the other.

The Kris is an essential part of the chain between the mate-

rial and upper world. The weapon has many dualities in it and because of this represents the cosmos. Without day there is no night, if there would be no water, the earth would not be recognizable as such. The male force finds its opposite in the female magnetism and cannot prove itself as male without it. The most important opposition pair is not male and female but men and ancestor.

The Kris is a reminder of the fact that humans can never exist without their counterparts in the world of the immortals.

The Kris moves with its blade in the unseen world, with its grip in the visible world and its ganja on the boundary of these two worlds. As such it acts as a center of contact through which the Javanese can communicate with their ancestors and where this contact can be renewed and maintained.

The cultural hero Pandji from the wayang stories is the personification of all Javanese people. In his adventures, in which all aspects of life are used (birth, initiation, pain, sickness, marriage, power, happiness) one can read the morals of life for the Javanese that are constantly repeated to him/her. In the stories much

attention is given to the role of the gods and ancestors that are brought to life in the supernatural powers that help Pandji (through his Kris). The tree of life or mountain of life, the kayon from the wayang play shows the boundaries and the context for Pandji's life and by this for the life of the Javanese. The Kris that is at the same time Pandji as well as the kayon, represents the boundaries of life, the cosmos, and life itself.

So far this translation of the study by Hilga Prins. What is following is completely mine again.





Part 4.

The magickal birth of a Kris.

Magickal Tal- isman.

(I know the word Magickal is not written right. I write it this way following Pendekar Sander's lead to distinguish the real Magick from stage-magic. Both should not be confused)

In this chapter I want to try to give you some insights into the making of a magickal Kris. I'm well aware of the fact that this account is by no means complete but on the other hand I'm sure it covers more knowledge than even some Empu in the old times had. Not all Kris contain a magickal power, and those who do are not equally strong. This has everything to do with the way of making the blade and empowering it.(And off course with the way this power is taken care for during the lifetime of the Kris). This

chapter will go deeply into the magick and mantras involved in making a truly powerful Kris that will serve his owner well in the way it is supposed to do. If any part of this process is not used or incomplete the power of the ready Kris will not be so strong.

Like I already said, this chapter is not complete but it does contain all the steps in the making process. Sometimes I make a difference between a Hindu and an Islamic Kris because even though the steps are the same, the way of fulfilling them may differ. The same holds true for differences due to the area where the Kris is made. Details may be different and that is why this chapter can never be complete, it would take a lifetime (no 10 lifetimes) to know it all.

This said let's start with the real interesting part.

The ordering of a Kris.

If someone wanted a Kris for a special occasion or a special purpose then he or she would contact an Empu. One can assume that everyone would want the best Kris possible so the best Empu that you could

afford was the logical choice. A commoner would go to an Empu with a lesser-known name than a prince. The best Empu were almost always employed by the courts, especially in the old times. During the Hindu era all Krisses made were for the courts. Later on this changed and even commoners could contact any Empu one could afford. What I said above is very clear here. Not all Kris smiths were real Empu, with all the magick involved. But for this article we will go on as though all were.

The actual way of contacting the Empu could vary according to the social position of the person and the name of the Empu. Because this is not our concern now I will not go in it more deeply.

After contacting the Empu the future owner and the Master smith would try to get an agreement on the shape and Pamor design the Kris should have. Both are very important for the way the Kris will do his work. If for example someone orders a Kris for his future son in law it would often be a Dapur Brojol with a Beras Wutah Pamor. This would make sure that the daughter of the one who ordered the Kris would give birth without problems

and would never be hungry. All this because Dapur Brojol helps with giving birth and Pamor Beras Wutah makes sure that there will always be enough rice to eat.

The reasons and purposes of the ordered Kris can be anything and the Empu knows exactly what kind of shape and Pamor can be used for any of these. Also he has to make sure that the Kris will fit his future owner. So the personality and social status has to be evaluated too. It would do the owner no good to have a humble Kris if he is already very humble; a little bit of aggression might do the trick! On the other hand an aggressive fellow with the desire to get a certain woman could perhaps use a Kris to make himself more subtle. This kind of evaluation would go beyond the knowledge of the owner off course.

After deciding which Dapur and Pamor will be used the Empu would usually withdraw for some time to find the best day to start the work.. To do this he would read in his *Primbon*-book (*Wariga* in Balinese). In this book among other things one can also find the days according to the two systems of counting days into weeks used in Indonesia. One

kind of counting has a week of five days and the other kind a week of seven days. The combination of those two stands for different magical meanings. (One can also find the best day for a marriage this way. The writer married on Bali and arranged his marriage there on a certain good day according to his calculations. The fact that he was right was proven by the number of marriages in the same small village that day; 7!)

Good days to start working on a new Kris would be: Ahad-pahing, wuku pahang if it is the first day of a new month; or Djumat-pahing, wuku pahang on the first or sixth day of the month. Also Selasa-Legi, woe-koe Wajang on the seventh day; Kemis Wage, wuku Mada-dang-kungan on a fifth day; Senin-kliwon, wuku Landaep on a first day and Ahad-legi, wuku Merakih, on a first day also. (These days and their dates can be found on a so-called Passar-calender which can be bought easily in Indonesia and even in The Netherlands)

When the Empu returned to his guest or when the orderer returned to him at the agreed time the final date would be set. This was also the time to talk about the money involved.

There were a lot of ways to pay for a Kris. It could be money, land, rice, a woman or even a piece of meteorite. The last could be the case if the Empu had to make a royal Kris from a well-known meteorite. He could then ask for more material than he needed and this would be his fee. Of course the real gain would be in the Kris he made from this Material. He could sell a Kris made from the same stone as the royal Krisses for a huge amount of money.

After this the future owner often had to meditate together with the Empu. They would ask the Almighty (Allah or any Hindu God they liked) for the power of the Kris and that the Kris may never harm his owner (or others, if appropriate). This meditation would take a whole day and night without sleep or food. Only some water was allowed. On Java this custom was called *Tirakat*.

Getting started.

After the *Tirakat* the Empu would start *Tapabrata*, another kind of fasting and meditation. This also involved not sleeping and no food but also no sex or

only on certain times. This was done to get ready to ask the gods and ancestors for information about how to make the Kris. This could be done at home or the Empu could go to the woods or to a mountain. If done at home it was called *Bersamadi* and if the Empu went to a more secluded place it was called *Bertapa*. The term Bertapa was mostly associated with being a kind of Hermit. So it seems logical that this would take a longer time. In the old times Bertapa was more common than Bersamadi. The Empu would even live in a place far from civilization. This to make his contact with the gods and ancestors more easy. In the Hindu era the last was surely commonplace but later when Islam took over the Empu would move nearer the Kration. In Bali even around 1906 it was still the rule that an Empu lived in the palace as long as it took him to make a Kris.

Now, the Questions involved during Bertapa or Bersamadi could be anything that was important during the making of a Kris. What kind of raw material was to be used? Every kind of metal has its own magickal potent. So which Iron and which kind of Pamor material would be the best? Sometimes

the Empu would even be asking where to get it. What kind of incense is needed or to what God (if Hindu) the Kris should be devoted. Etc. Etc.

All this was done while giving offerings to the Gods and ancestors involved. These offerings always consisted out of food, incense and good intention. Two kind of incense have always been used. Menyang to bring the essence of the food to the Gods, and in the center of the offering there are always two sticks of Sandalwood incense. These have to point straight up and bring the wishes of the Empu up.

After the Empu came back from his meditation and before starting the real work he would give a Slamatan; a shared dish of which the essence is meant for the Gods. Participating where all people whom would be involved in making the Kris. Most important of all his assistants.

Together they would eat and pray for a good Kris and then the Empu would instruct his Assistants.

After the Slamatan the *Besalen* was prepared. This was the actual forge where all the work would be done. Usually it was decorated with branches of a palm tree or something that

symbolized these same branches. This way the place would look like, and symbolically would be, a place in the Forest where all Gods and Demons dwell. Only this way could the good spirits help in making a good Kris and even be manipulated to inhabit the Kris later on. The Besalen was then ritually cleaned to make it a proper place to invite these spirits to. This again takes loads of incense, usually Dragon blood. Outside the Empu would hang a small kind of tent, the *Tarup* that is in fact a model of a temple. All this would make the Besalen a holy place.

Before the real work started there where more prayers and offerings. The Islamic Empu would again pray to Allah for a good working Kris that would also be well made and without flaws. One of these prayers goes like this:

**Bismillahir Rakhamannir
Rakhim**

*Assalamu'alaikum,
wa'allaikum salam*

Asale wesi saka irenge mripat

*Asale waja saka putihe mripat
asale pamor saka
kuninge mripat*

*Alsale sepuh saka banyune
mripat*

*Pangerane braja ngadeg ana
satengahing mripat
Kang mengku sadaya wesi aji
iya Guru Sejati.*

A Hindu Empu would do it totally different. During the whole process of making the Kris he would use the mantra: "Hang, hang, hang, hang, hang, hang, hang, hang, hang." This three times a day, in the morning, at noon and at night. During the speaking out loud of this mantra he would visualize that fire would come out of his nine body openings, *babahan sanga*, which consist of both eyes, ears, nostrils, the mouth, anus and urine channel.

This fire will fill the whole world and burn everything that could come between him and a good Keris.

If this visualization is accomplished then the Empu would think about holy water while uttering the mantra: "Hoeng, hoeng, hoeng, hoeng, hoeng, hoeng, hoeng, hoeng, hoeng." Meanwhile he would visualize that this holy water would flow from his arms and legs while taking away and drowning everything that could be harmful to the work ahead.

If this is done than the Empu would still visualize all evil as a person whom he will give the holy water to drink while praying: "Ong, Oeng, Mang mertâ janamah."

But even then the real work cannot yet start. First all the tools used for the making of the Keris have to be blessed too. These also have their own Mantra.

The *Palu* or big hammer is blessed with: "Kerta sara janamah".

The *Supit* or fire pincher: "Mari mara janamah".

The *Tulik*, the iron rod to rake the fire, with: "Tata geni ludra wisia janamah."

The *Petok*, small hammer, with: "Pageh paku tutan depa wenang janamah."

The *Penanges*, chisels with: "Surat surit guna wisesa teg janamah."

The file : "ong sang kerdadnjana sarwa loka ri guna wisesa teg janamah."

Etc.

If during the hardening of the finished blade salt and water is used then this is blessed by saying: "Ong, ong sara guna geni lodria sara guna wisesa atmane danda dupa maksala badjara cakra jat mana nama prekerti urip hamepeki kara

sika tri guna, Ang, Ong, Mang pasupatia.”

Offerings.

After all these meditations and mantra the real making process starts but there is one thing more to do; Offerings. At certain times during the whole period of making a Kris offerings are essential. I already spoke of the Slamatan but do not forget the start of the real forging and the time of tempering which is equally crucial. And not in the least the time to empower the Kris.

What do these offerings consist of and what is the symbolical meaning of some of these ingredients?

There are a lot of different kinds of offerings from simple flowers to very complex. All are meant to get the help from the good spirits or *butahs* by drawing them near and to repel the bad luck from the bad spirits or *Setan* by giving them food so they behave. These spirits feed on the etherical essence of these offerings, *Sad-jen*, while men can consume the material part later. By the way, some of these may not be eaten by woman.

All offerings have at least some flowers in them. The meaning of these flowers can

be broken down into four categories; religious, according to the meaning of the name, the scent and the color.

For offerings made for the making of Krisses the most important are the *Kanthil* which is the Javanese name for the *cempaka*. *Kanthil* means to get stuck on something. It is used by marriages and also to draw the power of the Kris to it and seal it there. So it is used in all Kris offerings during the making process.

The *melati* is also important. Its name means lips and by using these flowers the spoken wishes can go to the divine. They accompany various mantra.

The rose or *mawar* is also frequently used because of his lovely smell. The gods and good spirits like this and that is why the rose is a good link between this world and the other.

The colors of the flowers used are mostly red and white in simple offerings. Red is associated with the female part of the divine power and with earth, while white is associated with the male side and heaven.

Other color combinations are associated with the four directions and they include white for the east (Hindu god Iswara)

the beginning of life, Red for south (Brahma) the grown-up, Yellow for West (Mahadewa) middle-age, Black for north (Vishnu) death, and multi-colored (Shiva) for the everlasting power that gives and takes and which encompasses everything.

Within the different kinds of food one can see the same colors with the same meaning. Used many times is the combination *Gula Kelapa*, red palm sugar and white coconut.

Sadjen for the beginning of the forging are mostly the biggest ones. For a real good Kris ordered by a Wealthy person these offerings consist of:

1. *Gagar majang*, lots of flowers. The magickal meaning of these may vary according to the previously mentioned categories.
2. *Rasoelan*, two dishes of spices for the prophet Mohammed. Off course only with Islamic Krisses. As can be seen later in Hindu Bali a lot of the offerings are the same as in Java. They also have the same meaning.
3. *Toekon Passar*, a dish with on it things bought on the market like; bananas, sirih-leafs, flowers, boreh (a yel-

low paste used to make up the face of a bride and groom), *menjan* incense, an egg of a duck, bananas, *krukup*, red peppers; all things bought at the market. All these are for the bad spirits so they do not talk (which means they cannot curse the process).

4. *Djenang warni sanga*, nine differently made porridges. To feed the good and bad spirits so they will give a sure victory in a fight. For general well being also.
5. *Toembeng robjong*, two mountains of white rice with several kinds of vegetables stuck into them. To get a sharp cutting edge.
6. *Toempeng megana*, two mountains of rice filled with vegetables and *sambal*. To be sure that the blood of the owner will not flow.
7. *Toempeng goendoel*, two mountains of white rice. To symbolize the good intentions and make sure that the owner will not be seen by the enemy.
8. *Toekon passar, Kendi*, palm sugar (*gula jawah*), coconuts, a small lamp and a jar with fresh water. A second kind of things from the market to draw the spir-

its to the place of birth of the Kris.

9. Two chickens. To feed the bad spirits.
10. *Ketan warni putih*, two dishes with seven kinds of *ketan*. So the weapon will recognize his enemy.
11. *Djenang abang putih*, red and white porridge from rice. Also to obtain victory.
12. *Gula kelapa*.
13. *Laweh*. Two dishes of rice with fried meat and vegetables. For complete victory and to be sure you are not cheated.
14. *Sekoel galong*. Two dishes of rice balls. The protecting spirits will always stay alive.

The menjang is always present and is to make sure that everything will succeed.

In Bali the offerings are usually not so much. A bowl of red rice, a handful of un-boiled red rice, a red rooster, weaved figures from coconut leaves, some rasped coconut, eggs, a dot of rope and white and red *ketan* sticky rice together with the incense and flowers are usually considered enough.

The real work starts.

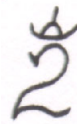
The real work with the iron starts by heating the iron and

hammer it flat. Then the Empu should write several mantra on the different materials used. The core of a good Kris is mostly made of steel around which a mixture is welded made out of iron and some kind of nickel holding metal. This mixture is later visible as the pamor. The writing is done with a golden needle or even with a simple pen and ink. It is not the aim of the Empu to put this mantra (or in a later stage a drawing) on the blade permanently. It will disappear during the process but it is believed that the magic of the mantra or drawing has then entered the blade.

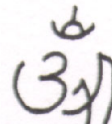
For the steel portion the mantra is spoken as *HANG* and the corresponding word is to be seen in the drawing. Hang is associated with Sangyang Berahma or the fire element.

For the iron *HUNG* is the word. Hung is associated with the god Sangyang Wisnu or the water element.

The nickel holding metal is associated to Sangyang Isowara and its mantra is *MANG*.



hung



hang



mang

These examples are from Bali with its from Hinduism derived Gods, but the same elements are used in Java only they call it by different names which are influenced by Islamic belief.

Notice the absence of the earth element in these mantra. This is done on purpose. As seen in previous chapters this weapon is primarily associated with the male forces of creation. Since earth is the female force (mother earth) this is not used in the making of a Kris blade. The earth element is more to be found in the sheath and the handle. The clothes of the Kris.

If the material is made according to the wishes of the Empu than he starts to make aKkris out of it. The pamor material is mixed with the iron in a way that makes sure that the desired design will show on the ready blade. It is been forged together, flattened, turned, twisted, folded etc. Whatever needs to be done. Then a part is separated from this mixture so that it can be made into the Ganja later on. The rest of the material is folded around the steel core and made into the Kris. Some-

times the *Peksi* (tang) is made separately and sometimes it is forged out of this almost ready blade. But no matter how it is made the peksi needs a mantra of his own. This part of the blade is the part that makes sure the owner is in control. Its power is in our world and as such it is the part of the Kris that can be manipulated, not only by means of the hand in fighting but also by means of the spirit in magick.

Next is the ganja. It is made to fit the upper-part of the blade and a hole is drilled that fits securely around the peksi. Now in a not too good Kris the ganja is made immovable by means of a wedge. In a good Kris this is absent. The ganja is fixed to the rest of the blade by meditation. At one point a mantra is used using the fire element and then a magickal flame (lightning) fuses the two halves. Look at a Kris and notice that the ganja will not move even though rust and corrosion made a whole between the peksi and the ganja, which is frequently the case.

The ganja and its separate mantra make the contact from this world to the world of the ancestors possible. This is why the ganja needs to be whole and attached to the blade. If not

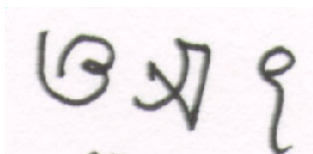
the mantra has lost its power and the Kris can not be used for magick. It will simply not listen to the orders given to him.

Finishing the labor.

After the forging the blade needs to be tempered. This is one of the most important phases in the making process and so it is accompanied by lots of offerings and mantra. The best days for this work are *Selasa wage*, *selasa pahing* and *selasa pon*.

On the point of the blade the Empu writes the mantra *Hang* thinking on the fire element.

At the other end he writes *Ah*, thinking on the water element.



In the middle he will write *Mang*, *Hoeng*, *Hang*. While writing this he thinks on wind, water and fire of which the power and forces are taken in by the blade. Only this way the blade can be perfect.

After the tempering the blade is finished by way of filing and polishing. Then it is treated

with arsenic or another chemical substance to make the iron and steel black and the nickel to show itself. Only then can the Empu see if his work was successful. Is the desired pamor design there or not? Or are there more good pamors then hoped for?

After this the blade is finished and needs clothes. Without them the Kris is not complete and will not work. As said before the clothes represent the earth element and without them the Kris is not complete in power. It needs all elements to have real magick.

Filling the Kris with a spirit.

All the work done before this part makes a great work of art but not a real Kris. To make the blade a real Kris it has to be bestowed with a spirit of his own. This is done in several ways according to the possibilities of the Empu.

The most simple one is by means of concentration by the Empu. The Kris is only filled with the intentions of the Empu. This kind of *Isi* (content) is very temporary and will be lost if the Kris is not given his offerings in two months time.

A real *yoní*, a spirit of his own, is given to the Kris by invoking an elemental (a kind of nature spirit) and giving it offerings and promises of more offerings to come if it will inhabit the blade. This is done in the following manner.

The usual offerings are the same as previously described together with a white duck and a black chicken. Holy water is made by the Empu or a priest and this is sprinkled on the offerings. This is done to make the offerings pure. Mantra are used for this. Then the Empu asks the guidance of KALA-RADJA-ASTRA and ask if this deity will give his power to the blade. Kala-radja-astra is the supreme ruler over the spirits of nature. He is given several offerings for himself and then a particular spirit is asked to inhabit the blade. He can do this only if Kala radja-astra agrees. The spirit invited is one that has the power to make the pamor of this blade work. For example if a blade has a kind of pamor that is good for a warrior so he will fight bravely and will not be harmed, the spirit invited will be one that likes to fight or to compete. (I for example have a Kris inhab-

ited by a kind of lion with red hair and yellow manes.)

If meditation is the purpose than a spirit that is close to the wholeness of nature is invited. Like the spirit of an old tree. And so on.

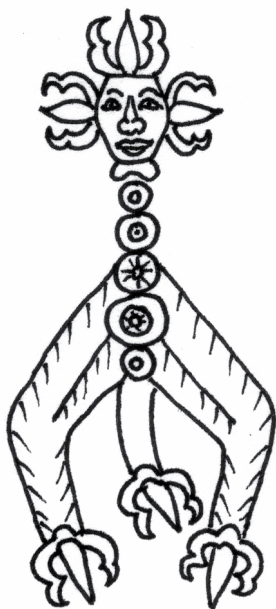
The invitation is done by burning incense to be used as a pathway for the spirit. The Empu oftentimes inhales the smoke of the incense and by meditating and visualizing he invites the spirit in his own body. (Just as an animal spirit in Silat training.) Then he asks the spirit to go and inhabit the blade and promises the spirit that in the future he will be well attended for. If the Empu believes this was successful he than will give final offerings and he will invite the future owner to prepare some offerings himself. For the last time incense is burned and mantra are spoken to be sure that the spirit is linked to the owner of the blade.

Conclusion.

I tried to give a good account on the birth of a magick Kris. I hope all readers will enjoy the chapter and take it for what it is; a short explanation of the

steps used in the process. I have just one thing more to add to illustrate some of the things I left out due to the general nature of this chapter.

There are more kinds of magickal drawings available to an Empu. In various stages of the making process these can be used. They can make the power of a Kris stronger or help to aim the power at one point. An example is the drawing below.



This drawing is called *Koelasedana* and it makes invulnerable for other weapons. Its mantra is: *Hong sanghiang Kala sedana ri Empoesakena*

sakoewehing ngala paksane ring awak sarirankoe, asing teke rimpoesen teke rep sirep, ngindjeng.

May Sanghiang Kala Sedana and Empoesakena tie the hands of all evildoers that want my bad luck and oppose me, so they cannot move and will be very afraid.

An introduction to the magickal use of the Kris.

There are a lot of stories about the magickal powers of the Kris. Most of them talk about the dangers involved in handling a Kris in a wrong way. Even a lot of people from Indonesian decent are afraid of their own heritage because in all those stories it seems as though a Kris is possessed by an evil spirit that punishes everyone who doesn't treat him/her well. If this were true it would mean that Indonesian people were and still are very stupid since they made those dangerous daggers for hundreds of years.

Let me tell you that the first thing I ever learned about the Kris was the fact that ignorance is never punished. If someone

makes a mistake there is nothing to fear. This is nice to know but also a problem. When you have read this chapter you will not be ignorant anymore. So before reading this piece I suggest that you think about your purposes in reading about the Kris. Do you own one (or more) and want to handle them in the traditional way, do you want your Kris to work his magick for you, then please, please read on.

But anyhow, even if you read the article and don't take care of your Kris the way it should be, even then the possibility of real dangerous situations is very small indeed. Most Krisses you can buy are "sleeping" and if you don't wake them there's nothing wrong. As seen before it is also not true that all Krisses have a "ISI", a content so to speak. And even if your Kris is very active this doesn't mean that it will bring you troubles. A Kris is made to help his owner and not for harassing him. With the following story I will try to learn you more about the background and magickal use of the real Indonesian Kris.

NAGA.

Everyone who knows at least something about the Kris agrees that the Kris blade represents the mystical Naga. A straight Kris is the Naga in rest or meditation and a curved one represent the Naga in motion. Pendekar Sanders told and wrote about the meaning of the Naga in fighting in his excellent video and booklet on the matter. He wrote that the Naga represents the male force that can be send away, which would be a good thing for a weapon. Because the snake attacks in a straight line the dragon-shaped Kris has to be used in a straight line too. This would make the use as a trusting weapon very logical.

But there's more to it than that. First of all; what is this Naga and where does it come from. According to Hindu beliefs Batara Surya, the god of the sun, had two wives. One was Dewi Ngruna and the other Dewi Ngruni. Both laid an egg and out of the formers egg came the Garudas, who would become the rulers of the sky. Out of Dewi Ngruni's egg came the Nagas, who became the rulers of the earth ea. Underworld. The Nagas where responsible for everything connected to mother earth. Their

powers made the earth fertile, they gave rain and they cured diseases. As such they are the symbol of springtime, new life and the lifecycle of birth, growth, dead and rebirth. A Naga could bring richness and prosperity and could fulfill all wishes. One of them, Naga Basaki was known for giving safety and his brother Anantaboyo gave the people food, clothing and a roof over their heads. All in all the Nagas can fulfill all earthly needs people might have. And as we will see this is exactly what a good Pusaka Kris is supposed to do. That is the other reason for the Kris blade being connected with the Naga apart from what Pendekar Sanders wrote earlier. (And apart from what Hilga Prince wrote in her study, represented in her chapter)

As said before there are also other animals associated with the Kris. Of course the earlier mentioned Garuda is often found on Kris sheaths and also the elephant is often clear to see. Both are not essential to this chapter so I will not write more than I already did about them know. But one animal always seen on a Kris is important. In fact only the Naga and

this animal are always present in a Kris blade. This animal is a small lizard called Cicak. It is a rather white almost transparent animal which feeds on insects.



In Indonesian folklore this animal carries the spirit of a dead person to the realm of the dead. It is an animal living in the material world and at the same time in the world beyond. As such it is a good carrier for messages to for example ancestors. You can find the Cicak on every Kris as the shape of the ganja seen from above. There is a shape like a lizard's body only without the legs. Elaborating on what is written in previous chapters I would say that the Kris blade is in contact with the unseen reality, the handle is symbolic for the material world of us humans with the Peksi as its spine and the Ganja is connecting them to each other.

Putting those two animals together in a blade, or any object, will give you something that can help you cross the boundaries of the touchable world we live in to bring your desires to the spirit realm in which a wish can come true. If this is done there it will surely come true in our world also.

Pamor.

As seen above with the Kris you have an object capable of fulfilling your wishes. But a manmade thing can never be so strong that it can do everything. So there had to be some

thing more than the Naga and Cicak. Something that could point the way for the Nagas power. Get it in the good direction so to speak. This something was found in stones. Whatever your idea of God is there are certain signs found in rocks and gems that Indonesian People consider a message from God, signs that are Gods gift to mankind. These originals made by God (the gods or whatever) are named KODROD. Pendekar Sanders wrote in his book "The use of magick in the martial arts, the means to the end. Volume 2 pag.20:

'I was taught a type of Animism sympathetic magic. What something looks like, even a little, is what kind of magick the contained spirit can accomplish.'

This is exactly the same as what I'm talking about. If you find a rock with a certain pattern then this rock has the ability to work magick in a way that is represented in the pattern. There is no system to deciphering the meanings of those patterns although there are some guidelines. All the knowledge about the meaning is accumulated through hundreds of years of experimenting and meditation.

Pamor is nothing more than these patterns made by man after the example of Gods gifts. These manmade patterns are called IROGDAD. So Pamor is a manmade recreation done by prayer and meditation with the help of God.

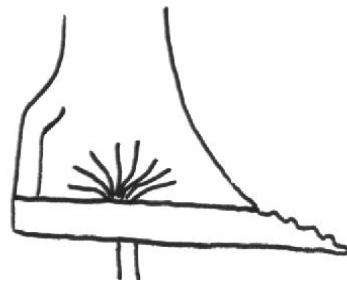
It's easy to understand that a manmade Irogdad is easier to get than a God made Kodrod. The real Empu was capable of recreating a lot of these patterns and knew its meaning. So if someone came who wanted a Kris being made with a certain magickal power the Empu could make it if he chose to and if God was willing to let it

happen. So the Empu could make a lot of patterns that would use the whole blade. For example Rante, Adeg or Beras Wutah. This was his technical knowledge. But often in making a Kris other patterns would show up. Sometimes big, sometimes only very small. These were patterns not planned beforehand and were considered a gift from God. These also can be found in rocks. Now if you have a certain Kris and you know its most important Pamor (mostly not the big manmade one but the small God gift) and you can find a stone with the same pattern then you can multiply the magickal powers of both of them by using them together. This is a well kept secret but I consider it a duty to have it printed somewhere since even in Indonesia almost no one knows about these things anymore.

Now about the guidelines in telling what a Kris is for. Straight lines in a Kris always have something to do with Authority. One straight line gives a man authority in dealing with other humans. The whole blade covered with straight unbroken lines gives authority over spirits and even fires and such.

There are numerous kinds of straight lines and it would take another volume to write about this so I leave it here. Circles in a blade or stone always represent wells of happiness. A very well known example is a blade covered with small one-layered circles called Udan Mas, golden rain. This brings money to its owner. The rule is that the more layers a circle has the better it's workings. A circle with seven layers for example is for inner well-being. A lot more important than money isn't it?

One Pamor I like to share with you. It is an example if a Kodrod. It looks like a sun raising on the horizon with many rays coming out of it. If you find a Kris like this, buy it and cherish it. This Pamor is called Soreo (raising sun) and it is one of only a very few that can accomplish everything you could want.



Isi.

There are a lot of new Krisses on the market today. Some are just souvenirs and others are very well made. If you look at a new Kris you can see it was made in almost the same way as the old ones are. Often a new Kris is even more beautiful than many of the antiques are or have ever been. They have the Naga shaped blade, the cicak ganja and wonderful Pamor but are nevertheless no real Krisses. What they are missing is TUAH, the magickal power a good Kris should possess or has possessed in the past. When one speaks of the Tuah of a Kris one often means its ISI, its content. This Isi is what makes a Kris magickal powerful. There are numerous theories on what this Isi consist of. As seen before it can be a spirit bound to the blade by the Empu by means of prayers and offerings. Others say its the ghost or the soul of an ancestor. Another theory believes its only a vibration come forth out of the Naga-shape and the Pamor. Or maybe its the power of the Empu put into the blade.

I believe all of these thoughts are sometimes true. Only one observation is necessary about this theme. It is never true that the whole spirit of an ancestor

is bound to the blade. Only a part of it is, mostly a kind of willingness to protect, a piece of willpower of the ancestor. In that way the spirit of the ancestor stays free to go its own way.

Whatever the content of a Kris consist of, if you treat it well the Tuah stays with it and you can use the Kris for the purpose it was made for. I have to say more about this statement. If you do not treat your Kris well the power could fade or the Kris could go to "sleep".

It is not true that every Kris you buy or see is magickally potent. If a Kris is only filled with the willpower of its maker then this is lost within a year if the Kris is not treated well. Similarly the Kris is "sleeping" if the Djin, spirit, living in it is not fed regularly. The same hold true for all the other kinds if Isi. You can only use a Kris in the way it is what made for because of its Pamor design. This channels the energy in a certain way. If you order your Kris to do something that it was not made for it wants to work for you but since it cannot do what you order it the Kris will do something else. You never know what, and that's why all those horror stories are around. A Kris for

meditation that was asked for money cannot provide this and will give you dreams about money (or the absent of it, which can become a nightmare) etc.

Wutuh.

If you want to use a Kris for magickal purposes be sure it is Wutuh, which means whole. The tip and peksi may not be broken, the kembang kacang must be original, the Pamor must not be disturbed by mechanical cleaning etc. It is also important that the ganja is not loose. If either of these is wrong you cannot use the Kris because one of the mantras used in making the Kris is gone. If this is the case then the Kris can still have its Isi and Tuah but you cannot aim it anymore. It will not listen to you. A little word of warning: If you own a Kris that is not Wutuh or without Isi, do not place it in a room where you burn incense. This could invoke an unknown spirit to come to live inside your Kris.

Before using a Kris you have to give it a name. This can be done in various ways. You name it Kyai (which means respected old man) if its a male Kris, or Putri (which means

girl or princes) if its a female Kris. You know this by inspecting the Pamor, not the size of the Kris. If the main Pamor is on the male side it is male; otherwise it's female. The male side is the side you see on my drawing of Pamor soreo. If you hold the Kris in your right hand with the point of the ganja to the right, then you are looking at the male side.

After this you search the personal name of the Kris according to Dapur, Pamor or meaning. For example; I own a Kris with dapur Tilam Upih, Pamor Alis Tenoeng. I name the Kris Kyai Pengasih because this is the meaning of Pamor Alis Tenoeng. Pengasih means that people will like you. I could also have named the Kris Kyai Tilam Upih or Kyai Alis Tenoeng. I didn't do that because I have more Krisses with dapur Tilam Upih and even one more with Alis Tenoeng but on this one this is not the most important Pamor. Of course if you have a Kris which already has a name you use this one.

How to take care of a Kris used for magick.

If you take a Kris out of its sheath you have to greet it. This can be done by saying: JA HEDI, BROJO HI, DATA LU LAHI. Roughly translated this means; I get you out for a peaceful purpose. You can also say this in your own language. Also tell the Kris why you take it out of its sheath. This because otherwise the Tuah will start working. While putting the Kris back in its sheath you have to greet it again for example by saying: BESMILACH HIROCHMAN HIROCHIM.

You have to avoid treating the Kris impure. Do not take it to the bathroom or toilet, don't step over it or put it directly on the floor, don't put it on the flat of a chair, don't hold it between your legs etc.

If you take a Kris with you put it in a bag lined with yellow or black and white checkered cloth. This will keep the impurities away so you can now take it with you if you have to go to the resting room.

Store the Kris at minimum waist height for the same reason. If you want a Kris to work properly you should not keep it

within one and a half-meter distance of another Kris. Kris stands for multiple Krisses are for display only, not for working Krisses.

Put them in a straight up position or slightly slanted as if it is worn on the back.

At least every five weeks on Friday Kliwon (this means on Thursday after 18.00 hours) feed the Kris. This is done with incense, coffee, water, oil and anything else that comes to mind. The incense is for bringing your orders and wishes to the other side. You can use the following mantra: WESSI LOEMATH SELOEMATH. WESSI ADJI, WESSI PULOSANEH, WESSI KOENING, GOEROENING WESSI ADJI. KOELOH ATOERACHKAN DAHAR SEKOEL HAROEM ANGODOPING MELATI. DENGHAN NAMA ALLAH.

Wessi means iron and in short this mantra means that the kris should take the powers associated with these holy kinds of metal.

The coffee is a sign of hospitality toward your Kris, the water is symbolic of your pure intentions and the oil is food and protects against rust. If you cannot obtain real minyak Keris (Kris oil) then you can

use ethereal oil of your liking. Classic would be clove oil or ylang-ylang. The later is the same as Kenanga, a frequently used base for Kris oil. Apply very sparingly! You can also dilute the pure ethereal oil with coconut oil. This is often done when real expensive oils are used or to not overfeed the Kris when it is not working for you.

If you obtain a rusty Kris, do not clean it yourself! You can clean it a little with the previously mentioned oil by rubbing it with a brush during a couple of days, but do not clean it more. You could destroy the Pamor or worse the Kris could take your energy because a rusty Kris, which is awakened, takes food wherever it can. (In a later chapter I will explain how to do it yourself. I decided to teach this because I know lots of people who did clean their Kris themselves and destroyed it or had “accidents” of some sort. So if there are people who want to do it then better do it the right way.)

The magickal use.

For using a Kris it is necessary to know its purpose. You

can ask an expert if you know one and if so get his/her meaning in writing. This way his/her name is attached to his opinion and it will be less likely that he is saying something just to please you. If this is impossible search for the Pamor and its meaning in books. Sleeping with the Kris should enhance both methods. Place it under your pillow for three nights in a row and write down your dreams. This should give you an idea of its purpose and if the Kris is suitable for you. If you have nightmares put the Kris in yellow cloth and get it out of your house, try again some time later and if the same happens again clean it ritually or get rid of this particular Kris. Someone else will be pleased with it, don't throw it away! Before sleeping get clean sheets, wash yourself and feed the Kris. During the burning of the incense tell it to show itself.

If you know the purpose of your Kris then you can give him orders. Do not ask your Kris to fulfill your wishes! ORDER IT to do something. You are the master and a Kris is a servant. Never ever worship a Kris because then it will drain your energy.

Now lets say you own a Kris which can help you to obtain respect and friendship. Don't order it to help you to get even with someone who did you wrong. Neither order it for money or anything else. It was made for one purpose, this is what you can order. If you want something else try to get another Kris. I have made the experience that if you really need something which would cost you a lot of energy to accomplish yourself, a suitable Kris will come to you, or you already own it.

To order a Kris you hold it in incense smoke while saying the following mantra: WESSI ADJI, WESSI PULOH-SANEH,...NAME OF THE KRIS. KAWOELOEH MANJING ONOING GOESTI, GOESTI MANJING ONOING KAWOELOEH. IROGDAD BERKAT MOHO ESSA SOE-KOMMAH KEWEKASSAN MANOE KERSANING ING-SOEN. YAHOE....YAHOE...YAHOE. The last words are spoken with a vibration in your troath. After this you speak you order.

It is very important to have a clear picture of what you want to obtain. If your picture is not precise you will not get the precise reaction. Therefore

before trying any of this I recommend doing exercises to develop your willpower and visualization.

A last word.

Of course I can only scratch the surface of something like the magickal Kris. So please do not be disappointed if you missed something. The possibilities are endless but a book isn't. If you have any question I will be happy to answer them.

How to clean Pamor blades.

How to clean Pamor. Only to be done if the blade is rusty or if there are bad influences.

If a Kris is really rusty then it is not enough to clean it with coconut oil as mentioned in the previous chapter. It can also be the case that you have bad dreams or think the Kris has a bad influence on its surroundings. Mostly this is because during its life time it was treated bad or there were evil things done with it. This leaves a kind of trail that attaches itself to the Kris. To clean it from both you can do the following cleaning procedure. But before starting cleaning a Kris

make sure you did a lot of meditation to develop your will-power for this will protect you in case the evil influence will try to get to you or in case the starved Kris tries to get food (Your energy). If you feel anything like this happening visualize it to go out of your body and home into the universe and afterwards take a long cold shower and visualize the water streaming all bad influence off of you.

Needed:

- A big bowl of flower water.
 - A container big enough to hold the Kris.
 - 12 lemons (jeruk nipis) yellow.
 - 1 small green lemon. (if possible)
 - 5 kind of flowers.
 - Brush from natural fibers or hair (non pig).
 - Incense. (menyang)
 - Keris oil. (Sandal and Cendana)
 - Arsenic if you want.
1. press the juice out of two lemons and put the arsenic in. If you have chemical arsenic it will take two weeks to resolve.
 2. Friday kliwon after 6:30 in the morning. Hold the Kris in the incense from peksi to point and aim the incense to the creator. Ask the Kris permission to bathe it and clean it. Then ask the Yoni to go and take place in the bowl of flower water until all is finished.
 3. Rub the Kris with a slice of lemon. 3 times.
Pour flower water over the blade with your hand. 9 times.
Repeat this three times.
 4. Put the blade in pure lemon juice with the green lemon. (you can also use water from a young coconut or even water with dishwasher soap with lemon in it.)
 5. Every two hours brush the blade from peksi to point until the rust is gone.
 6. Get the blade out of the juice and dry it really well. (9 times flower water over it and dry again.
If the blade becomes yellow because the juice was too strong than dilute the juice with water and let it soak for another two hours.
 7. If you got arsenic and want to color the blade then put the blade in the sun to warm up. Keep brushing the arsenic on the blade un-

til the color is to your liking. Remember this is just “for the eyes”. It has nothing to do with the cleaning itself. It’s just make-up.

8. Dry the blade. And pour flower water nine times. While thanking the blade and the creator.
9. Ask the Yoni to again take place in the Kris while feeding it with at least a new bowl of flower water, a glass of fresh water and a cup of strong coffee and off course incense.
10. Before putting it back in it’s clothes burn incense for the creator and oil the blade. Next Tuesday give an order.
11. To wash the blade should feel the same as washing a human being. So with respect and without mechanical cleaning, grinding etc.

Making an “Antenna” for contacting the “Isi” of a Kris.

There are different ways for trying to contact the spirit of a Kris. You can meditate with the Kris , sleep with the Kris under your pillow etc. The latter is one of the best ways ac-

cording to me since this will enable the Kris to contact you in a very direct manner. When you meditate with it your wishes and ego will always be there to interpret what you get trough so you are already putting the new knowledge in a perspective you understand. Not the best way to learn! Your mind is not open to all the possibilities.

Irrelevant of the way you use to contact your Kris there is something that can help you. I call it an antenna because that’s just what it is. If you want to watch television you need a working television set and cable or an antenna. The television translates signals to an image we can see and relate to. To do this it needs to pick up those signals and that’s what the antenna does.

With a Kris it’s the same. The Kris is sending signals but our mind (the t.v.set) cannot pick them up easily without help. We need an antenna. As with everything else there are a lot of different ways to accomplish something and this is just one way to make such an antenna. I picked this one because it’s easy to make and works very well.

To make an antenna you will need:

- 1) A young coconut (Kelapa muda)
- 2) A big old tree (preferably near your home, best with it's branches over your roof. It would be nice also if it's in an area where not much people will see you.)
- 3) A fresh egg.
- 4) Three kinds of flowers.
- 5) Three kinds of incense.

If you found a suitable tree dig a hole between it's roots about 40 to 50 cm deep. Put the coconut (symbolic for your body) in the hole. Refill the hole a bit with sand. Put the egg (symbol for your soul) on top of this. Again refill with sand. Then put the flowers on the sand (symbol of your spirit). Sand again. At last the incense unburned (To lead your wishes to where they have to go). Then fill the hole completely with the rest of the sand. To finish burn incense say the next mantra aloud.

Besmilach hirochman hirochim

*Jamudiluh koeloeh jabarin
Amidin bikaril y djati wahl-
soedonihi.*

What you accomplish with this is creating a link from your spirit to the spirit of the tree. Since trees are accumulation points of energies and knowledge about the area they live in it is easy for the tree to feel the presence of a Kris spirit. Because of the created link it will be easier for you too to "feel" its power, purpose and wishes. The tree can also be used to give you new energy when you are down or drained etc. Sit against it and try out the possibilities.

A final word .If you have made an Antenna be sure to make a walk trough a park or forest. You will have an instant deeper contact with all the nature around you. This feeling will fade after a while because you will get accustomed to it. So... enjoy it while it is new and fresh!

*A Kris with handle and sheath out of Sono Kem-
bang wood from the writers own collection. All the
Krisses in this book are owned by the writer except
the Javanese Kris with the silver selut on page 14.*

All drawings by the writer.



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