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Kujang--the Talismanic Sickle

There is a unique weapon that originates in Western Java, in the Pasundan (Sundanese) region. This weapon is called "kujang," (pron. "koo-jaang.") Lacking the proper English equivalent for this we have used the term, "sickle," even though its form somewhat deviates from the true shape of a sickle. Neither does it resemble the "scimitar" which curves convexly. In Indonesian a sickle is actually called "chelurit." The Javanese living in the eastern half of the Java island refers to the kujang as "kudi." To those who are uninformed, the indigenous people of the island of Java are not all "Javanese." The western part of the island is populated by a major ethnic group called "Sundanese." The kujang is the sole monument of the city of Bogor here in Indonesia.

The kujang is filled with mysteries. It is said that it carries within its form a magickal force with a mystical purpose. Embodied within its original figure lied the philosophy of the ancient Sundanese with its Hindu heritage. It is evident from the foregoing that this mystic blade was created to be more of a talisman, a symbolical objet d'art, rather than a weapon. This is especially so regarded in contemporary times.

The original creation of the kujang was actually inspired by a utensil used in farming. This utensil was widely used in the 4th to 7th centuries AD. The newly created kujang differed slightly from the tilling implements fashioned by the famed blacksmiths, Mpu Windusarpo, Mpu Ramayadi, and Mpu Mercukundo, as can be seen in the local museums. It was only in the 9th to 12th century that the form of the kujang took the shape that we are so familiar with today. In the year 1170 there was a change in the kujang. Its value as an amulet or talisman was gradually being recognized by the rulers and nobilities of the Pajajaran Makukuhan kingdom, especially during the reign of Prabu Kudo Lalean. During one of his spiritual retreats, Kudo Lalean was instructed through a psychic vision to re-design the form of the kujang to conform to the shape of the island of "Djawa Dwipa," as Java was called in those days. Immediately the sovereign king commissioned the royal blacksmith, Mpu Windu Supo, to fashion the blade seen in his vision. It was to become a weapon embodying mystical qualities and a spiritual philosophy; a magickal object, unique in its design, one that future generations would always associate with the Pajajaran Makukuhan kingdom.

After a period of meditation, Mpu Windu Supo confirmed the vision of Kudo Lalean and commenced with the fashioning of a prototype of the Kujang. It was to have two prominent characteristics: the shape of the island of Java and three holes or round notches somewhere in the blade.

Constructing the kujang blade into the shape of Java was interpreted to mean the ideal of unification of all the petty kingdoms of Java into a single empire, headed by the Makukuhan king. The three holes or round notches was to represent the *Trimurti*, or the three aspects of the godhead of the Hindu religion, of which Kudo Lalean was a devoted votary. The three aspects or gods referred to are Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. The Hindu trinity was also represented by the three major kingdoms of that era, respectively, the kingdom of Pengging Wiraradya, located in the east of Java; the kingdom of Kambang Putih, located north-east of the island; and the kingdom of Pajajaran Makukuhan, located in the west..

The shape of the kujang evolved further in later generations. Different models appeared. When the influence of Islam grew upon the masses, the kujang was re-shaped to resemble the Arabic letter "Syin." This was largely the stratagem of the sovereign of the Pasundan region, Prabu Kian Santang, who was anxious to convert the populace to Islam.

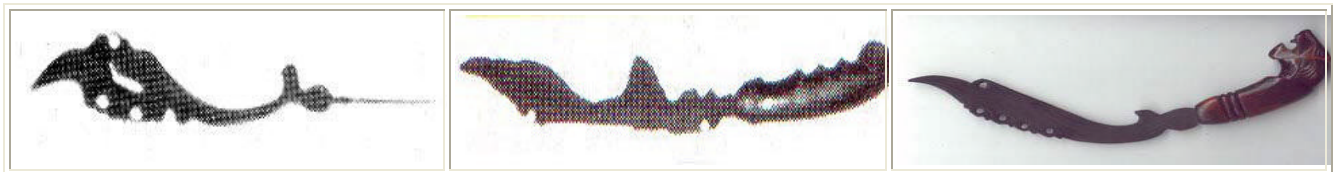
Knowing that the kujang embodied the Hindu philosophy and religion of the existing culture, the muslim rulers, imams and teachers, anxious to propagate Islam and disseminate its doctrines, re-modeled the kujang to represent the basis of their religion. Syin is the first letter of the syahadat verse of which one testifies to the witnessing of the sole God and the Prophet Muhammad (blessed in his name) as the messenger. By reciting the syahadat verse, one is automatically converted to Islam. The modification of the kujang broadened the area of the blade which geographically corresponds to the Pasundan or western region of Java to conform to the shape of the letter Syin. The newly-designed kujang was supposed to remind the possessor of the object of his allegiance to Islam and to the obedience of its teachings. Five holes or round notches in the kujang replaced the three of the Trimurti. They represented the five pillars of Islam.

With the influence of the Islamic religion, some kujang models portray the inter-blending of the two basic styles as designed by Prabu Kudo Lalean and Prabu Kian Santang.

Nowadays, the kujang is often decorated in homes as it is believed to bring about luck, protection, honor, etc. They are displayed in pairs on walls with the inner edge facing each other. There is a taboo, however--no one is to be photographed standing in-between them as this would somehow cause the death of that person within a year. I have been assured by a senior practitioner of Kejawen the truth of this, as he had witnessed this himself. Why this occurs is not known for certain, we might shrug it off as superstition, coincidence or synchronicity but behind every phenomenon cosmic laws and intelligences are at work; we just need to discover what those laws are and the mind-set of those metaphysical intelligences directing those laws to know the reason for the anomaly.

From the occult side, like the keris, another weapon used by the indo-malayan natives, the kujang was often consecrated with magickal power and familiar spirits attached for specific purposes, such as the protection against psychic attack. Because of the inherent power of the kujang in conjunction with the presence of its spirit guardians, the well-informed natives revere them as sacred objects.

Below are some variants of the kujang:



The Talismanic Sickle (Code: ATHAMES08) or kujang sold in our website is a miniature representation of the normal-sized version, which can be as long as one's forearm. Its talismanic nature is further emphasized by the presence of a sacred verse embossed on one side in Arabic script and the seven occult symbols of King Solomon on the other. It is made of brass and is 7.5 cm long.

Later on we will offer a larger-sized kujang for sale.

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