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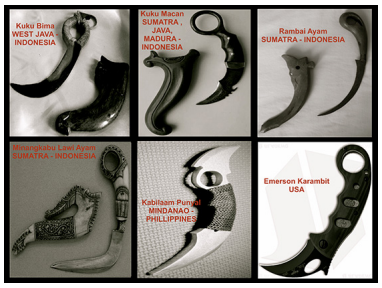
The karambit blade is arguably the most unique, efficient and deadliest blade used in South East Asia's silat fighting arts. This knife can tear through flesh like paper, cut off fingers with little effort and disembowel a human with one swipe.

The karambit originated from the Indonesian archipelago. Some scholars note the karambit emerging from Java while others believe it came from the Minangkabau tribe in West Sumatra where it is pronounced as *"kurambik"*. It was first used as a tool for agricultural purpose, designed to rake roots, gather threshing and plant rice. The blade eventually became weaponized and was moulded with more curve to maximize its cutting potential. Tribal folklore says the blade's design was inspired by the claws of the tiger. Perhaps the most famous blueprint for the karmabit is the *kuku macan* which literally translates to 'tiger claw'.

The karambit is primarily a close quarter weapon that was favored by the *sirkandi* (women warriors). In ancient times, the karambit knife was only inherited within the Minangkabau community by the
Datuk
(clan leader) or the King. Its use in combat was confidential and only shared in inner circles. At first the
kesatria
(warrior class) in the Javanese kingdom held a mutual disdain towards the karambit, as they saw it as a primitive peasantry weapon. But after seeing how effective and deadly it was in combat by the Minangkabau silek warriors they began to adopt the knife into their preferred silat styles.

There are many regional variants of the karambit, across South East Asia. The length of the blade differs from village or blacksmith. Some curve more than others, some have longer

blades, others have jagged edges built into the metal.



The karambit became popular in all silat styles across Indonesia such as Java's Harimau Berantai style, Sunda's Cimande art and the Minangkabau's Silek Harimau system. The knife's popularity spread across into Indonesia's neighboring islands as Malaysia's Bersilat art adopted use of the blade, while the Philippines incorporated the knife into the techniques of their Kali style of silat.

The Filipinos started to modify the design of the knife, they extended the blade, made it sharp on both sides to utilize the blade into the manics of their existing Kali stick and blade combat art. Eventually the Filipinos evolved the blade into the very own karambit or *lihok* design, the double bladed karambit. This version of the knife earned an underground title as the 'death blade', but officially it has a few names such as the back to back knife, the twin blades and the most common phrase, the double knife known in the Filipino dialect as '
kabilaam punyal
'.

The karambit was already a deadly and efficient knife but this variant changed the game and doubled the outcome of the effects the original karambit caused. By adding another blade onto the handle facing the opposite side with both blades sharpened on either side, it makes it very difficult to counter this weapon without sustaining and injury.



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