

by Guru Scott McQuaid

One of the most prominent figures in Indonesian history is that of the Gajah Mada. His name translates to the *'Elephant General'*. I'm sure his infamous appearance had something to do with his naming. According to ancient Javanese manuscripts and folk based poems, this warrior became the prime minister of the Majapahit Kingdom during the rise of the Majapahit realm from the 9th to the 13th century bringing the empire to its peak of glory.

Gajah Mada was said to have been a fearsome warrior that started his career as a commander of the *'Bhayangkara'* which was an elite guard for Majapahit kings. Gaja Mada would known some kind of structured combative silat style, only the generic term of silat that relates to indigenous martial arts from South East Asia was not phrased by then. Some silat exponents speculate that would have been training in a very early form of Bersilat.

This is a very basic style that exists in two-forms. The first is *silat pulot* that is purely for exhibition for ceremonies and state visits, showing the structure and footwork. Then there's the *silat buah*
or fruit which comprises of the techniques and forms used in real combat.





