

Silek and Local Perspective of Management of the Body, Mind, and Spirituality

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Abstract

Silek is the ancestral heritage of the Minangkabau people, one of the oldest tribes inhabiting the western region of Sumatra Island. The influence of Minangkabau *Silek* can be found in several other areas in Indonesia which bear similarities to the Minangkabau *Silek* style which is the core technique of all styles of *Pencak Silat* in Sumatra, in fact very few forms of Indonesian *Pencak Silat* are untouched by the Minangkabau *Silek* style. However, there is very little information about Minangkabau *Silek*, and it tends to be shrouded in various myths and mysteries. The information about the origin of Minangkabau *silek* comes only from tambo, namely the oral history of Minangkabau ancestral heritage which is often regarded as an imaginary story or a myth that cannot be proven true. In addition, Minangkabau *Silek* is considered mystical and magical knowledge because it is related to the *Tarekat*. This article aims to reveal the myth of *Silek* and explain the local wisdom and traditional values behind it. This research applies a qualitative study using the interpretation in formulating the research results with the research designs that were flexible and experienced developments in the research process carried out in field studies. The data were collected through observations, interviews, and literature studies. The results of the study revealed that *Silek* is a system of knowledge which teach a lesson on the management of body, mind, and spirituality that shapes Minangkabau personality. The knowledge system can be found in the concept of *Silek* as a self-defense skill, *Silek* as character education, and *Silek* as source of wisdom and science.

Keywords: *Silek, Minangkabau, Management, Body-Mind-Spirituality.*

INTRODUCTION

Silek is the ancestral heritage of the Minangkabau people, one of the oldest tribes inhabiting the western region of the island of Sumatra. It spreads along with the Minangkabau population who went abroad and spreads their culture to various places in Southeast Asia, even to several Western countries (Abdullah, 2020b). The influence of Minangkabau *Silek* can be found in several other areas in Indonesia which have similarities with Minangkabau *Silek*. It spread outside the Sumatra Island and adapted to local culture as it can be found in the

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Betawi and Sundanese tribes where they call it *Silat* or *Pencak Silat*. In the areas of South Sumatra, Lampung, and Kalimantan, the Kutau or Kuntau martial arts are developing, which are supposed to come from Minangkabau. A study explained that the main styles of *Silek* found in Sumatra were mostly centered in the area of West Sumatra where the Minangkabau *Silek* style developed and became the core technique of all styles of *Pencak Silat* in Sumatra. It was further explained that there were very few forms of Indonesian *Pencak Silat* that were not touched by the *Silek* Minangkabau style (Hijriani, 2019).

Clearly, the meaning of the word *Silek* in Minangkabau society is not the same as the term *Pencak Silat* in Indonesian. Minangkabau *Silek* is not just a martial art or a sport as understood in the term of *Pencak Silat* which is explained in several references to *Silek* in Indonesia. The Minangkabau people distinguish the term *Pencak* from *Silat*, as stated by Navis that *Silat* in Minangkabau refers to two roles, as a game it is called *Pencak* and as a martial art, it is called *Silat*. Moreover, the term *Basilek* or *Bamancak* is also known. *Basilek* means doing *Silek*, while *Bamancak* means doing *Mancak* or *Pencak* (Navis, 1984). *Silek* is also referred to as a representation of Minangkabau customs and culture whose manifestations can be seen in all aspects of their life and are reflected in the attitudes and behaviours of the Minangkabau people (Patih, 2021).

Even though it is known as one of the oldest types of martial arts that influences the forms of self-defences that developed in Indonesia and the Southeast Asian region as well as being a representation of the culture of the Minangkabau people, the information about Minangkabau *Silek* is very little and tends to be shrouded in various myths and mysteries. The information about the origins of Minangkabau *Silek* is only sourced from *Tambo*, namely the oral history of Minangkabau ancestral heritage which is conveyed in the form of stories or *Kaba*. *Tambo* explained that *Silek* was an ancestral heritage passed down by *Ninik Datuak Maharajo Dirajo* who then passed it on to *Datuak Suri Dirajo* and *Anjing Mualim*. *Silek* was then perfected by *Cati Bilang Pandai* and developed by four main characters, namely *Harimau Campo*, *Kambiang Bhutan*, and *Anjing Mualim*, and *Datuak Tantejo Gurano*. Furthermore, it is explained about the area of origin of the Minangkabau which is referred to as *Tampraparna*, the golden peninsula, or *Minangtamuan* which means the peninsula between two large waters, or some sources call it *Swarna Bhumi* or *Swarna Dwipa* (Abdullah 2020a; Jamal 1986; Navis 1984). *Tambo* has hinted that *Silek* is an ancestral heritage whose existence has existed since the ancestors of the Minangkabau people set foot in the Minangkabau area on the Sumatra Island. However, the absence of time information causes the story of Minangkabau *Silek* to only be considered a myth that cannot be proven true. *Tambo* is considered a fictional story from ancient people because the story is considered absurd. Historians even say that there are only 2% of historical facts in *Tambo*, which are immersed in 98% of mythology (Hum and Yendra 2016).

In addition, the development of Minangkabau *Silek* has a connection with tarekat, namely *Tasawuf* groups which tend to be closed and alienate themselves. *Tarekat* is understood as the way or path taken by a *Sufi* towards the highest spiritual attainment which includes self or soul purification (Riyadi 2016). This connection can be seen from the understanding of *Silek* itself as a science that includes *Silik* and mysticism. *Silek* is the study of the outer self, while *Silik* is the study of the inner self, and mysticism is the study of the inner and outer self. The word *Silek* is also associated with the words prayer and silat-urrahim, (establishing good relations with fellow human beings), in which the three words have the same root, consisting of three Arabic letters (Patih 2021). The influence of the tarekat can be found in the *Luambek Silek* performance, which displays two people competing in strength in playing *Silek* without touching because what is happening is a power struggle with inner strength (Ediwar 2006). It can be concluded that Minangkabau *Silek* contains spiritual and mystic values, which are based on their religious basis, especially Islam (Patih 2021; Draeger 2012).

The closeness of *Silek* to the *Tarekat* then causes some people who do not understand the essence of the tarekat as a *Tasawuf* practice, to see *silek* as a mystical or magical practice related to the supernatural world. During the *Tuo Silek* Deliberation event on 4-6 June 2022 ago in the city of Payakumbuh, *tuo silek* or Minangkabau *Silek* figures gathered to discuss today's *Silek* condition. In the discussion, a number of *Tuo Silek* expressed their disquiet regarding the regeneration of Minangkabau *Silek* where fewer and fewer young people are learning *Silek*. One of the factors is the existence of negative views in society towards traditional *Silek* which causes parents to be reluctant to ask their children to learn *Silek*. Some religious circles also accuse *Silek* of teaching heresy (West Sumatra *Tuo Silek* Deliberation, Payakumbuh, 4-6 June 2022).

On the other hand, *Silek* is starting to be glimpsed by the world film industry as a type of martial arts that appears in fight scenes in action films. Gareth Evans is a British director who brought *Silek* to the international world through his action films *Merantau* (2009), *The Raid* (2011), and *The Raid 2* (2014). In the film *Merantau*, Evan performed *Silek* in his homeland, namely in Minangkabau, starring Iko Uwais, a martial artist who later became an action film actor. The opening part of the film showed Iko Uwais practicing his Tiger *Silek* moves, one of the Minangkabau *Silek* traditions in the Sianok Gorge valley, using a *Kurambik* weapon, a weapon with a reverse blade that is usually used by *Silat* fighters in Minangkabau to paralyze opponents (Mulianti 2012; Draeger 2012). Iko Uwais has also appeared in several Hollywood action films such as *Mile 22* (2018), *Snake Eyes* (2021), and *Fistful of Vengeance* (2022).

In fact, the appearance of *Silek* in Western films shows the entertainment world's considerable interest in *Silek* as a type of martial art that is unique and different from other previously known types of

martial arts such as Kungfu, Judo, or Karate. However, the depiction of *Silek* in fight scenes in Western films tends to present *Silek* as an exotic martial art, originating from an unknown country, and performed by characters who have small stature, which is different from Westerners who have large stature. Not infrequently *Silek* is used by antagonists to attack or kill opponents for the purpose of crime. These symptoms indicate a misunderstanding about *Silek*, especially Minangkabau *Silek*. In Minangkabau society, *Silek* is not intended for conflict or fighting because the real purpose of learning *Silek* is to establish friendship or brotherhood with many parties (Abdullah 2020a; Muliati 2012).

This erroneous view of Minangkabau *Silek* which is covered in myths and heresy shows a lack of knowledge about what Minangkabau *Silek* is. Previous studies have focused more on *Silek* in the context of traditional performances in the form of *Randai* and traditional dances, or *Silek* in the context of contemporary dance (Pauka 1996; Utama 2016; Harun 1992; Rustiyanti, Listiani, and N 2023; Muliati, Udasmoro, and Murgiyanto 2017; Murgiyanto 1991). However, the studies about the values of local wisdom contained in *Silek* are still doubted. Pesurnay argued that local wisdom in Indonesia is understood as the ability to adapt to, organize, and cultivate the influences of the natural world as well as other cultures which then become the driving force for cultural diversity in Indonesia. Furthermore, local wisdom is seen as a social and communicative system that produces a kind of self-organization (autopoesis) within a culture (Pesurnay 2018). This theory shows that the study of *Silek* as local wisdom can reveal how the Minangkabau people adapt, regulate their culture, and process external influences as a communication and social system aimed at maintaining the continuity of the culture itself. This paper is intended to explain *silek* from the local perspectives which contain the management concept of body, mind, and spirituality. The local perspective from traditional society in many cases provide values for life management and humanity (Messerschmidt 2019; Kennedy 2002).

METHODS

This research was a qualitative study using the interpretation in formulating the results. Qualitative research designs are flexible and experience development in the research process. The data were collected through observations, interviews, and literature studies. The field studies in the form of observations and interviews were carried out in two Minangkabau cultural areas, namely in *Luhak Nan Tigo* and *Rantau Nan Duo* as the cultural domains of *Silek* distribution in West Sumatra Province, Indonesia. The observations were made to observe the development of *Silek* in the cultural realm of Minangkabau, especially in a number of *Silek* and *Surau* targets as places where *Silek* is taught, and performance arenas where it is performed as a folk game in several cultural events. It aimed at getting an overview of the development of *Silek* in the Minangkabau people, especially the knowledge behind the *Silek* practice. Furthermore, interviews were

conducted with *Tuo Silek* (*Silek* teachers), *Anak Sasian* (*Silek* students), and traditional leaders to explore knowledge about *Silek* as local wisdom. In a field-research, it was quite difficult to find *Tuo Silek* who could explain *Silek* of a knowledge system. The researchers went to villages in the interior to interview *Tuo Silek*, whose numbers were decreasing and most of them were elderly. Furthermore, the documentation was carried out to obtain the data in visual and audio-video form using recording equipment such as recorders, cameras and video devices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Origin of Minangkabau *Silek*

Tambo or Minangkabau oral history explains that *Silek* is an ancestral heritage passed down by Ninik Datuak Maharajo Dirajo who then passed it on to *Datuak Suri Dirajo* and *Anjing Mualim*. *Silek* was then perfected by *Cati Bilang Pandai* and developed by four main characters, namely *Kuciang Siam*, *Harimau Campo*, *Kambiang Bhutan*, and *Anjing Mualim*, and *Datuak Tantejo Gurano*. Ninik Datuak Maharajo Dirajo was known as a wise man, a scholar who was described in Minangkabau expressions as *lubuak aka*, *lautan budi*. This expression means someone who masters knowledge and at the same time becomes a role model. The personality of *Ninik Datuak Maharajo Dirajo* later became the personality of the Minangkabau (Abdullah 2020b; Jamal 1986).

There are five Minangkabau *Silek* schools based on the names of the figures who developed them, namely: *Harimau Campo*, *Silek Kambiang Bhutan*, *Kuciang Siam*, *Anjing Mualim*, and *Datuak Tantejo Gurano* schools. First, *Harimau Campo* style has a characteristic in immobilizing an opponent which is similar to the movement of a tiger which pounces on its prey by attacking points which quickly paralyzes the opponent. Attacks are usually carried out in a circular manner and then attack when the opponent is off guard by striking a deadly pulse point. It generally developed in *Luhak Agam*. Second, *Kambiang Bhutan* style is with a peculiarity in the movements that are difficult to predict. When pressed, *Silek* fighters usually lure their opponents into difficult areas so they can attack more freely. This type of *Silek* developed in *Luhak Lima Puluh Kota* area as a symbol of a tough and intelligent community. Third, Siamese cat, which has a gentle style, is like the nature of a cat, which has soft, light and flowing movements. The nature of this style is to toy with the opponent and not immobilize it immediately, but all attacks are carried out with full calculation. The cat later became the symbol of *Luhak Tanah Datar* as a symbol of wisdom. The other two *Silek* schools, namely *Anjing Mualim* and *Datuak Tantejo Gurano Silek* schools are not as popular as the previous three *Silek* schools, but the characteristics of these two schools are still found in the types of *Silek* that developed in Minangkabau (Abdullah 2020b).

Silek then has developed to this day throughout the Minangkabau cultural area, in *Luhak* and *Rantau*, with the names of style that refer to

several aspects such as: the source of inspiration for movement (*Silek Harimau*, *Silek Kuciang Siam*, *Silek Buayo*), or where the *silek* developed (*Silek Lintau*, *Silek Sungai Patai*, *Silek Pangian*, *Silek Sitaralak*, *Silek Pauh*, *Silek Luncua*, *Silek Koto Anau*, *Silek Sungai Pagu*, *Silek Sunua*, *Silek Pasisia*, *Silek Bayang*, *Silek Paninjauan*, or *Silek Gunuang* (Sati, Rustim, and Ediwar 2022; Muliati et al., n.d.).

In ancient times, *Silek* was taught to boys in the *surau*, while girls learned *Silek* privately under the guidance of a *mamak* (mother's brother) at *Rumah Gadang*. For men, learning *Silek* is a provision to survive since in Minangkabau culture, men are supposed to go *merantau* or migrate to a better place to be a successful person (Muchtar 1979). While for women, *Silek* is a provision so they can defend themselves.

Surau is a traditional education centre where boys who are considered to have reached puberty live and study Islam, custom and *Silek*. In the *surau* they learn or recite the Koran, customs, *Silek* and also traditional arts. *Silek* is usually taught in *Surau* or *Sasaran* that have a large enough yard. The exercises are usually carried out under the guidance of a *Tuo Silek* (*Silek*, figure) after the process of learning the Koran is finished at night. The results of *Silek* practice are usually performed as a game by the village children in events such as the appointment of the prince, the celebration of religious holidays, or other events. *Silek* as a game, commonly referred to as *Pancak* or *Makcak*, is intended to display the aesthetic aspects of *Silek*, so it is also called the *Silek* dance or performance *Silek* (Utama 2016; Muliati 2019; Mason 2016; Pauka 1998; Natsir and Hufad 2019).

***Silek* as a Self-Defence**

Silek is structured as a concept that originates from the human instinct for survival and self-defence in living life. This instinct develops along with the experience that is passed in the culture and natural environment, knowledge contexts, which are then strengthened by spiritual aspects. *Silek* is a skill that is prepared to survive under pressure, as the Minangkabau expression stated, *musuah indak dicari, basuo pantang dielakkan*, which implies *Silek* is not to seek hostility but if it is urgent, it is abstinence to be avoided. *Silek* passed down by the ancestors of the Minangkabau people as a body of knowledge which was formulated in steps as a reflection of personality. *Silek* is produced from the extensive knowledge and a deep understanding of the universe and life, arranged in the form of a formula with symbols (Muliati et al., n.d.).

The movement character of Minangkabau *Silek* reflects the life of an agrarian society, which depends on farming activities, which is marked by the strength of the body which rests on the feet. This character can be found in *Silek tuo* from Nagari Pariangan as the oldest Nagari in Minangkabau which is located in *Luhak Nan Tuo*. *Silat Tuo* prioritizes defense rather than attack, so that the hallmarks of this *Silat* lies in a solid *pitunggue* (stance), quick and agile evasion (*gelek*) abilities, and variations in the movement of the arms in front of the

body to protect the body which is considered vital. *Silat Tuo* is taught as a tool for self-defence, not to injure or destroy opponents (Utama 2017).

The description of Minangkabau *Silek* in a fight can be explained from the confession of a street fighter who is known to have never been defeated when he met a Minangkabau *Pasilek*, as recounted by Zuari Abdullah as follows:

"At first, I didn't believe that I would face an unbalanced opponent, the opponent was small in stature with a very soft movement style. Seeing my expression, that person smiled as if to warn me. But with the enthusiasm to finish the fight, I finally advanced to the battlefield. In short, with his soft moves, in just three moves, I was defeated easily. I can't get up from the floor. The last punch seemed very slow and gentle, but I felt the impact of the punch shatter my chest until I fell and couldn't get up. In the end, I was rushed to the hospital," he said. After a few months later, dissatisfied, I searched for it until I found it in a hermitage. At that time, he was training small children. Seeing my arrival, he immediately greeted and invited me to come in and serve drinks. Without long chit chat, I challenged him again. But he answered with a smile and said that martial arts are not to find the strongest, but the essence of martial arts is to control emotions. In fact, you have lost before starting the fight. Hearing these words, I immediately stood up and challenged me to fight in a sporting manner. But he stood up with a smile he said, "You won't be able to withstand my attacks in this emotional state." Then, I immediately hit him and gave him a series of attacks and he only moved a little to avoid the attacks. The successive attacks and light evasion made me feel even more humiliated. Finally, he gave two counterattacks which made me fall to the floor I felt dizzy and my whole body became paralyzed. Then, he helped support me to stand up and sat me on a chair. Then, he said, "The essence of martial arts is calm and emotional control, not the strength and agile technique that you have been relying on." I was silent and I finally learned Minang *Silek* from him" (Abdullah, 2020b, 134–35).

The story of this fighter illustrated the essence of Minangkabau *Silek* as a martial skill that did not solely rely on body strength in fighting because *Silek* is not intended to seek recognition as to who is the strongest. *Silek* is how one can control one's emotions or self-control because if one cannot control his emotions it means that he has lost before fighting.

In *Silek*, one is taught to understand the anatomy of the human body, that humans have three main cavities in the body which are named the upper cavity, middle cavity, and lower cavity. To find the self-balance, the three cavities must be filled with complete knowledge covering the three intelligences, namely: intellectual intelligence, spiritual intelligence, and emotional intelligence. Intellectual intelligence is contained in the upper cavity or cavity of the head which is the seat

of the brain, becomes the centre of the mind which is God's gift to humans. The mind is the difference between humans and other creatures of God. The mind becomes the terminal that controls every movement of the body's limbs, to produce effective and maximum movements, the mind must be filled with breadth of knowledge that organizes oneself and personality as an intelligent, intellectual person.

Meanwhile, spiritual intelligence is found in the middle cavity or chest cavity as a place for the internal organs which are the centre of life, just as the heart is the terminal of life. The heart is the centre of feeling which weighs knowledge. The middle cavity must be filled to complete self-balance, the heart which is the centre of feeling, absorbing the nature and essence of knowledge based on truth. It can be concluded that the central cavity is the key to the essential balance of life which in the Islamic beliefs adhered to by the Minangkabau people is forged by worship as a form of obedience to God Allah SWT. Moreover, emotional intelligence is found in the lower cavity or abdominal cavity, describing emotions, desires and desires that encourage humans to try, and to always act to achieve dreams and goals. The lower cavity is a sign of lust that gives enthusiasm to reach dreams in the life of the world. The desire to own, to control things in the world. If this intelligence is not controlled, it will lead humans to act beyond the limits of humanity (Abdullah, 2020b). The three intelligences are described in the following table.

Table 1. The Anatomy of Human Body in Silek Teaching

Body Anatomy	Type of Intelligence	Description
Upper Cavity (Head)	Intellectual intelligence	The central mind, controls every movement of the limbs, to produce effective and maximum movements. Intellect must be filled with breadth of knowledge that organizes oneself and personality as an intelligent, intellectual person.
Mid Cavity (Chest)	Spiritual intelligence	The center of life, serves as a counterweight or self-balance, as well as a sense centre that weighs knowledge.
Lower Cavity (Abdominal)	Emotional intelligence	The center of emotion/lust/desire, encourages people to achieve dreams in life, the desire to own and control various things in the world.

Source: Ediwar et al. (2023)

An understanding of intellectual, spiritual, and emotional intelligence will form a wise and prudent person, which is evident in every attitude and action. Individuals who have social intelligence as described in the expression, "*lamak dek awak, katuju dek urang, awak mandapek urang indak kahilangan*", means individuals who are able to maintain togetherness to create a harmonious life so that the ecosystem of life is maintained.

Understanding the three types of intelligence is important because the raw material for *Silek* is movement which includes both outer and inner movements. *Garak* is a term used to refer to an inner movement in the form of a sign, hint, or hunch about something, while *Garik* is a movement that can be followed with the eyes or the outside so that *Garik* can be dodged, parried, circumvented, caught, and locked. A *Silat* or warrior is someone who knows *digarak jo garik* or *diangin nan bakisa*, which means to know the physical and mental movements of the people they face, to know the changes that will take place (Jamal 1986).

Silek as Character Education

Silek as an ancestral heritage, teaches local wisdom which is the guideline and way of life of the Minangkabau people. Rusdian Lubis, a martial arts figure and observer of Minangkabau's *Silek* explains how complex Minangkabau *Silek* is, as explained below:

"I have no doubt that Minangkabau *Silek* is an extraordinary character formation. *Silek* is all around: for the physical, mental, spiritual, etc. *Silek* covers many things, aspects of character, treatment, medical, lifestyle, nutrition. With *Silek* we can regulate chi/energy. *Silek* is very potential for that. So, the character building is only one phase of Minang *Silek*. Other aspects such as herbs, for example, have not been exposed to Minang *Silek*" (Interview with Martial Figure Rusdian Lubis, Payakumbuh, 5 June 2022).

This statement explains how complex *Silek* is as a local wisdom inherited from the Minangkabau people. *Silek* is a classic educational method, not only teaching bodily skills for survival or self-defence, *Silek* also teaches manners or *Adab*, and spirituality.

Silek as a reflection of Minangkabau personality, upholds noble character or character, as Minangkabau civilization as a whole makes ethics, character or morals the measure and value of one's personality, as expressed in the following rhymes;

Dek ribuik rabahlah padi, di cupak Datuak Tumangguang
Kok hiduik indak babudi duduek tagak Kamari cangguang
Elok rumah karano sandi, rusak sandi tiang binaso
Elok banso karano budi, rusak budi hancuelah banso

This rhyme explained the importance of character in life. Someone who is not virtuous is described as someone who feels awkward and has difficulty adapting. Furthermore, a corrupt person is a threat to the destruction of a nation. In other rhymes, it was explained how a person's dignity is determined by attitude, honesty, and manners as in the following expression, *nak luruih rantangi tali, nak mulie tapati janji, nak tuah jo budi baiek*, which means one's authority and dignity is determined by an attitude based on truth, honesty and manners.

Silek teaches ethics through the concept of attachment with the belief that what you do will have an impact on yourself, the

environment and the natural surroundings. To foster knowledge and understanding of ethics, *Silek* teaches an introduction to oneself, the environment, nature and all its contents.

Ethics is taught from the first time a child learns *Silek*, a phase known as the *baraja malangkah*. To be accepted as *anak sasian* (student), a student is required to fulfil a number of requirements requested by *tuo silek* (*Silek* figure or teacher). The requirements include: a chicken, a knife, lime, chili, salt, sugar and a roll of *sakabuang* cloth. Each condition holds a moral teaching related to the *Silek* learning process, which can be explained as follows: the chicken symbolizes the animal nature in humans that must be controlled; the knife symbolizes sharpness in the process of learning *Silek*; the lime represents purity of heart; the chili, salt and sugar represent life; *sakabuang* cloth is as a tribute to teachers who provide knowledge (Muliati et al., n.d.). The fulfilment of the conditions is thus the first moral lesson received by *anak sasian*. By fulfilling these requirements, they are taught to make a commitment and be serious about starting to learn *Silek*.

Ethics is also something that is always instilled in every training process. Simultaneous exercise of *Silek* steps is an exercise of manners. When practicing with a *Silek* teacher or with fellow *anak sasian*, respect is always the opening and closing ritual of the practice. The exercise always begins with respect or is called *sembah* (*sambah*) which is done in a squatting position. But the main goal in learning steps is to find a balance which is the initial basis of the *Silek* movement. Then the *Silek* step is an attitude of respect for others, guests who come, respect for nature and in essence respect or worship to God.

Silek teaches ethics towards God and fellow human beings as is the essence of learning *Silek*, namely "*lahia silek mencari kawan, batin silek mencari Tuhan*." This expression explains that the main purpose of learning *silek* is to form a mental and character that has social and spiritual intelligence. Therefore, the teaching of *silek* always goes hand in hand with learning Islamic customs and religion. In the past, children studied at the *surau* where they learned not only the Koran and prayers, but also the sayings of *pepatah adat* (oral wisdom) and *Silek*. In addition, *silek* also teaches ethics towards the environment because nature is the best teacher for humans. Therefore, in the process of learning *Silek*, *anak sasian* also learn about how to survive by learning how to grow crops in rice fields and fields, process food, and also maintain the sustainability of the natural surroundings.

By ethics and manners, someone who will be able to mingle and adapt to his social environment, as the saying goes, "*dima bumi dipijak disinan langik dijujuang, dima rimbo dijajak, disinan kayu dikapak, dima rantiang dipatah disinan aie disawuek*." This expression means that with good manners a person will be able to adapt to various situations, cultures, customs where he is. This is a sign of the richness of the *Silek*'s flexible steps, able to adapt to various situations and circumstances.

Silek as a Source of Wisdom and Science

The ancestors of the Minangkabau people had a philosophical concept that made nature a teacher, *alam takambang jadi guru*. Nature is believed to be the embodiment of God's power, so that nature is used as a guide, role model and teacher who always provides knowledge. The Minangkabau people then named their homeland *Alam Minangkabau* and passed down their teachings and views on life which were exemplified in the sayings of *petitih*, *pituah*, *mamangan*, and so on by taking expressions from the forms, characteristics and life of nature. This natural philosophy is described in the expression, “*dibalun saleba kuku, dikambang saleba alam, walau sagadang bijo labu, bumi jo langik ado di dalam, alam takambang jadi guru, bumi jo langik kataladan*”. The meaning of this expression is that the concept of science is likened to being folded/wrapped it will be as wide as a fingernail, but if it is expanded it will be as wide as this vast nature. Then, it will also be possible for knowledge to be folded into the size of a pumpkin seed but the earth and sky are within it (Abdullah 2020b; Navis 1984).

The philosophy *alam takambang jadi guru* is that being a teacher is the cornerstone of Minangkabau *Silek*. Minangkabau ancestors taught that the universe was created with the concept of attachment and served as the basis of knowledge. There are traditional philosophies that emphasize this as a philosophical expression: “*kok tangan mancancang, bahu nan kamanyandang*” means: what we do will affect the surrounding environment and return to ourselves as the responsibility of every action. This shows that the universe is in a bond which is used as the basis of knowledge, the balance of life which is used as the basis for producing patterns of harmony and is used as the main pillar in establishing the concept of *silek* to produce martial arts that are harmonious, moving flowing like water following the harmony of life in the ecosystem of the universe.

The manifestation of the concept of *alam takambang jadi guru* can be found in the naming of *Silek* schools which are influenced by the surrounding natural conditions. In *Darek* areas where nature consists of jungle forests, the *Silek* that develops is generally the *Silek Harimau* with movement characteristics resembling the movements of a tiger as an animal that lives in forest areas and is believed to have mystical powers. Meanwhile, in coastal areas with swampy nature, *silat luncua* develops, which resembles the movements of a smooth and tough eel (Utama 2017; Jamal 1986).

Nature thus provides a variety of science for humans whose manifestations can be found in *Silek* movements. Among the types of sciences obtained from nature and developed in *Silek* can be explained as follows:

1. Philosophy (*Pepatah-Petitih*)

Philosophy in the form of *petatah-petitih* is the result of searching for ancestors through reason and experience, in Minangkabau philosophy is the formulation of scientific concepts passed down by ancestors as a reference and guide for each generation to live life. To

understand and develop various scientific concepts, one must refer to the legacy of philosophy as a framework for thinking, so that thoughts are not wild and easy to find understanding. In studying *Silek*, almost all philosophy is taught, such as the following sayings which form the basis of science:

*Dibalun selaba kuku,
dikambang saleba alam
Alam takambang jadi guru,
bumi jo langik kataladan.*

These *petatah-petitih* explain the method of seeking knowledge with a pattern of formulating, observing every side, paying attention to every event and then concluding to gain an understanding, this is what is meant by the expression "*dibalun saleba kuku*." Then the understanding of the formula is parsed again, compared with various other events so as to find a broader and deeper knowledge, and this is what is meant by the expression "*dimbang saleba alam*." These two concepts are used as a reference for understanding various signs and natural phenomena to understand the truth, and this is what is meant by the phrase "*alam takambang jadi guru*", every incident provides wisdom for anyone who wants to take lessons that can be used as guidelines for managing a better future. well, this is what is meant by the phrase "*bumi jo langik kataladan*".

2. Strategy or politics

Various martial arts techniques that can be found in *Silek* include: *gelek*/ how to dodge, attack, punch or hit, kick/ *simbek*, elbow, brush, lock, how to unlock, know the point of attack/ study of conditions known as "*sajangka duo jari*," and so on. Various techniques that are taught in the context of martial arts, all start from the concept of balance, namely: balance of mind, balance of the soul, and balance of movement. To produce maximum movement requires a balance of mind supported by intelligence in calculating various situations and conditions to determine attitudes and actions, so as to produce actions that are wise and on target. For example, to produce a maximum punch, one must know the point of attack as the opponent's weak point by calculating all situations and conditions including one's own condition, a good punch is a punch that appears from the right position with good technique and movement must be in harmony with all body movement. This learning is a concept of knowledge to be applied in life, where every attitude and action must result from various calculations, calculating one's own abilities, situations and conditions, arranging harmonious movements to produce maximum action so as to win a life competition and come out as a winner in a broad sense.

3. Mathematical Sciences and Physics

Mathematics is taught to *anak sasian* to be able to count every inch of situations and conditions, where *tuo silek* uses classical measurements by using body measurements such as: *seruas jari*, *satu jari*, *dua jari*, *tiga jari*, *satampok*, *sejengkal*, *sedapa*, *sehasta*, *sepangkuan*, *sapacik/segenggam*. These measures are used to calculate

various situations and conditions and to produce appropriate attitudes and actions. These measurements are also used by Minangkabau classical architecture to construct buildings to *rumah gadang*, as well as in concocting traditional medicinal ingredients. Size techniques are also found in sizes of various sizes, rice sizes commonly known as *ganging sapadi*, to *sa-angin* sizes, to determine a certain size. Various arithmetic including measurement, addition, multiplication, division, subtraction and so on to find the right result, are all taught in *Silek* as a basis for calculating various situations and conditions to produce wise actions and attitudes.

4. Neuroscience

In neuroscience, *Silek* teaches a number of conditional points that are useful for immobilizing an opponent. Recognizing the point of attack to paralyze the enemy, one must attack the vital points of the body's motor nerves, this study is known as "*sajangka duo jari*." This knowledge teaches about nervous tissue, nervous system, organ systems to the vital nervous system as the movement of organs and limbs, this knowledge is still used today in the world of classical medicine such as massage and acupressure nerves. This study also includes the study of energy in the body, where nerves are classically believed to be the embodiment of natural elements, where nature is manifested from the four main elements, namely wind, water, fire, and earth, and nerves are embodiments of wind which deliver energy and become the central energy in the body.

5. Anatomy

Silek teaches knowledge about calculating the composition or structure of the body to the organ systems where tall people are usually the weak point is by attacking the lower parts, because when a tall person faces a short opponent then the balance of his body structure becomes disrupted. *Silek* also has an impact on organ function, where the body's resistance will be maximized when a person holds his breath, but when the breathing process is rising it tends to reduce the body's resistance, this knowledge determines when to attack and so on. Classical astronomy or astrology is taught to read various omens, to determine good days and so on, in *Silek* astrology is taught to calculate and analyze various situations and conditions including predicting the weather and so on. The science of astronomy is also known as "*ilmu palangkahan*" which is to predict and find an auspicious day to carry out various purposes or activities.

6. Health Sciences

In terms of health science, *Silek* teaches various signs and symptoms of disease to diagnose various types of diseases, and determines the treatment and treatment process. There are various causes of health problems that can affect anyone, classically in Minangkabau it is introduced with various terms such as *tasapo*, *kataguran* and so on. This disease occurs due to a lack of self-preparedness to face various situations and circumstances so that it disrupts the systems and workings of the organs of the body that can

cause disease. Clearly, this disease is introduced with the term interference from spirits, but the essence of the disease is a disturbance that attacks the system and the workings of the organs of the body. Then the handler that must be done is to restore the disturbance or shock that occurs in the body by providing peace in the soul. Various types of health disorders are taught in *Silek* to treatment methods and methods of treatment, classically using various methods and materials with various types of medicinal plants to certain animals.

For example, the *pasak bumi* plant which is beneficial for body fitness, improving blood circulation and increasing stamina. For certain diseases, the *pasak bumi* plant is mixed with other plants and other ingredients such as honey, chicken eggs and so on, all of which are taught with measurements and how to read and diagnose diseases to determine the right course of action. The skill of concocting medicinal plants is a knowledge passed down from the ancestors that teaches the ingredients of each type of plant used in medicine.

7. Agricultural Science

In agricultural science, *Silek* teaches how a fighter learns the science of farming through the *Silek* training process. *Anak sasian* usually help the teacher with daily work matters such as agricultural problems, such as how to hoe fields, plant rice, and cultivate other crops in the fields. In learning to hoe, *anak sasian* also learn to practice body position and understand the principle of balance. In cultivating land, fighters are taught to produce maximum and sustainable products without damaging the environment, as the philosophy says,

*nan leriang jadikan parak,
nan munggu jadikan ladang,
nan data jadikan sawah,
nan bancah jadikan tabek*

This phrase teaches managing the environment without destroying nature by using it according to the existing culture so that it can produce sustainable agricultural products as a concept of environmental cultivation.

8. Social Sciences

Social studies are the culmination of *Silek* learning, where personally each student has to practice a sense which can be seen from the concept of tolerance, in step motion exercises, fellow students must be protected from various problems. *Tuo silek* often conveys the message never to embarrass a friend at the target, this is one of the social concepts that must always be maintained. The *Silek* philosophy also conveys: *lahie silek silaturrahmi, batin silek mangana diri,* meaning that the purpose of learning *Silek* is the concept of life which maintains harmony, peace with order so as to create a harmonious life. This is the culmination of *Silek* teaching which teaches about the relationship between humans and God, the relationship between humans and others and the relationship between humans and the environment and the natural surroundings.

9. Management Science

Furthermore, *Silek* teaches knowledge that is relevant to the science of management where *Silek* teaches about the harmony of steps, togetherness and division of tasks according to their respective functions. A *Pasilek* acts as a manager in life, where he is involved in managing, planning, organizing or dividing tasks according to functions and responsibilities and coordinating with each other in a control with wisdom so that it is easy to paralyze enemies or easily achieve targets or targets effectively and efficiently.

Silek as a source of wisdom and knowledge thus teaches various knowledge needed in living life. This is in line with the true purpose of *Silek* as a martial art, which equips oneself with various knowledge as a provision to live all the romance of life. Therefore, a *Pasilek* or known as a real person is a representative of the Minangkabau personality who is intelligent, civilized and knowledgeable.

CONCLUSION

The study on Minangkabau *Silek* reveals the misleading myths behind Minangkabau *Silek* which causes a lot of information about it as a local wisdom to become buried and not conveyed properly. This study showed that *Silek* has a strategic position in the life of the Minangkabau people. It is an ancestral knowledge system that holds extraordinary wisdom. In addition, it is a manifestation of the knowledge system that forms Minangkabau personality, a personality taught by *Ninik Datuak Maharajo Dirajo* who is known as a wise man.

This study summarize that *silek* is a method to create an excellent personality of Minangkabau people. People who study *Silek* are those that have the ability to manage his/her life since *Silek* teach about the management of body, mind, and spirituality. The concept of management can be explain in three forms of *silek*: 1) *Silek* as a self-defence skill, 2) *Silek* as a character education, and 3) *Silek* as a source of wisdom and science. *Silek* as a self-defence skill is a method of self-defence that teaches three types of intelligence namely intellectual intelligence, spiritual intelligence, and emotional intelligence. Meanwhile, *Silek* as a character teaches humans to establish a relationship with God, humans, and nature. Furthermore, *Silek* as a source of wisdom and science based its learning from the philosophy of *alam takambang jadi guru* (nature as teacher) which manifestation can be found in philosophy, politics, mathematics, physics, management, agriculture, animal husbandry, food processing, social sciences, management, and others.

Silek is thus a system of knowledge that based its learning from empirical practice, reason (mind), and spirituality as a method for shaping Minangkabau personality. These findings break the myth which states that Minangkabau *Silek* teaches things that are mystical and unreasonable. *Silek* instead teaches local wisdom which contains

noble values inherited from the ancestors of the Minangkabau people, a local perspective about the management of an excellent personalities.

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