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The Indonesian combat system Pencak Silat has always been surrounded with effective deadly yet attractive weaponry from its culture. Among the bladed weapons and bamboo sticks is the more less than obvious weapon, the sarong cloth of Cindai.

Cindai is the Batik sarong that is traditionally worn by both Indonesian and Malaysian cultures. This attire has been adapted into silat as a defensive weapon. Cindai refers to the generic term for this sarong style of silat, used typically to lock, trap and choke the attackers.

Cindai is actually a cloth originating from the state of Gujarat, in India. It is believed that Gujarat traders brought in cindai cloth to Sumatra, Indonesia around the year of 1450. Since then the spread and use of cindai cloth extended to Bantam Island in Java and Pegu in Burma and onto the Malaysian Peninsula.

In South Sumatra, cindai cloth is referred to as 'Limar' which means to color the yarn. However, when referred to as 'limar cloth', the community recognizes it as cindai cloth. In ancient times, only royalty could afford such fabric but this cloth was also used as a belt attire for pesilats (silat players).

Cindai cloth is very fine and the manufacturing process requires twin tie weaving which makes the cindai cloth durable and capable of resisting weaponry, such as blades. These fabrics can be considered comparable to the use of silk clothes by the Mongol warriors, preventing arrows from penetrating their silk shirts.



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