



PENCAK SILAT PAGAR NUSA SUNAN GIRI: HISTORY, DA'WAH AND ROLE IN REJOTANGAN TULUNGAGUNG 1993-2011

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Abstract

This study discusses the history of Martial Arts Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri which was founded by Moh. Zen Ma'arif in 1993-2011. Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri which is a Sundanese silat has a characteristic activity, namely manakib keliling. The purpose of this study is to find out the history and development of Pencak Silat Sunan Giri and its role in Rejotangan, Tulungagung. The method used is the historical research method, including source collection, verification, interpretation, and historiography. The results of this study contain two points, first. Martial Arts Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri was founded by Moh. Zen Ma'arif who continued his grandfather's struggle in preserving Martial Arts since 1993. Second, Martial Arts Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri has other roles besides in terms of self-defense, such as religious roles, educational roles, ukhuwah roles, potential development roles, and community roles.

Keywords: Pagar nusa; Pencak silat; Sunan Giri.

Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas tentang sejarah Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri yang didirikan oleh Moh. Zen Ma'arif pada tahun 1993-2011. Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri yang bercorak silat sunda mempunyai kegiatan yang menjadi ciri khas yaitu manakib keliling. Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengetahui sejarah Pencak Silat Sunan Giri serta perannya di Rejotangan, Tulungagung. Metode yang digunakan adalah metode penelitian sejarah, antara lain pengumpulan sumber, verifikasi, interpretasi, dan historiografi. Hasil penelitian ini terdapat dua poin, pertama. Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri didirikan oleh Moh. Zen Ma'arif yang meneruskan perjuangan kakaknya dalam melestarikan Pencak Silat sejak tahun 1993. Kedua, Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri mempunyai peran lain selain dalam hal beladiri, seperti peran religius, peran pendidikan, peran ukhuwah, peran pengembangan potensi, dan peran masyarakat.

Kata Kunci: Pagar nusa; Pencak silat; Sunan Giri.

INTRODUCTION

Self-defense is a planned and directed body movement that prioritizes breathing and inner coordination to enhance mental spirituality. Self-defense aspects are movement skills that ensure physical and mental alertness based on a chivalrous attitude and self-control. Indonesia has many types of self-defense, which are divided into two categories: native Indonesian martial arts and foreign martial arts. Karate, Taekwondo, Wing Chun, and Kung Fu are some examples of foreign martial arts and Pencak Silat is one of the original Indonesian martial arts¹. Pencak Silat is diverse, some of which are Persaudaraan Setia Terate, IKSPI Kera Sakti, Perisai Diri, Pencak Organization, Merpati Putih, and one of them is Pencak Silat Nahdlatul Ulama Pagar Nusa.

¹ Lubis Johansyah dan Wardoyo Hendro, *Pencak Silat* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo PersadaJkJ, 2014).

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Pencak Silat Nahdlatul Ulama Pagar Nusa is an autonomous body of Nahdlatul Ulama that helps implement policies in the development of martial arts². Pagar Nusa was founded out of concern and anxiety about the declining interest in pencak silat in *pondok pesantren* (Islamic boarding school)³. Kiai and pencak silat figures such as K.H Suharbillah and KH Mustofa Bisri agreed to meet with Gus Maksum Jauhari, a kiai and pencak silat figure in Kediri. The meeting resulted in the formation of a pencak silat organization under the auspices of Nahdlatul Ulama. The organization was agreed to be established on January 3, 1988, and named Pencak Silat Nahdlatul Ulama Pagar Nusa⁴.

Pencak Silat Nahdlatul Ulama Pagar Nusa is growing rapidly, one of which is in Tulungagung. Pencak Silat Nahdlatul Ulama Pagar Nusa was founded in Tulungagung to avoid clashes between schools in 1987⁵. This problem made the youth want to unite so that a peaceful atmosphere was created. One way to unite the various schools in Tulungagung was by holding a trainer training attended by several members of the school, then also holding a series of events namely "Pagar Nusa Champ" attended by Gus Maksum Jauhari, in the event the members gathered to hold a similarization of moves, moral and mental development and held social services⁶.

The Nahdlatul Ulama Pagar Nusa Pencak Silat in Tulungagung has various styles, including the Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri Pencak Silat located in Rejotangan District, Tulungagung Regency. Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri was founded by Moh. Zen Ma'arif in 1993, which has different characteristics among the schools within Pagar Nusa. The striking characteristic of Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri lies in its traditional activities and teachings, namely the tradition of manakib keliling and Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri has a Sundanese silat nuance. This study aims to understand the history of Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri and its role⁷.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this study uses a historical research method with four steps, namely first, heuristics, namely collecting sources from the strongest to the weakest, which are primary sources, secondary sources, and oral sources⁸. Primary sources include the decree of the AD/ART regulations of Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri and historical actors of Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri such as interviews with the parties concerned, namely Moh. Zen Ma'arif as the founder and professor of Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri. Secondary sources are obtained from articles that raise relevant themes and oral sources obtained from witnesses of the parties involved. Second, verification, namely conducting observations to select the authenticity or validity of a historical source that has been obtained in the field, especially those related to oral sources sourced from interviews, historical writing must be more critical and not prioritize one source over another. Third, interpretation, namely providing interpretation and analysis of facts that have been obtained from the results of verification⁹. The results of the interpretation will find out what is

² Pengurus Nahdlatul Ulama', "Anggaran Dasar Dan Anggaran Rumah Tangga Nahdlatul Ulama Keputusan Muktamar Ke-34" (2022).

³ Lau Han Sein and Ahmad Yusam Thobroni, "Pendidikan Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa Dan Relevansinya Dengan Tujuan Pendidikan Islam," *IQ (Ilmu Al-Qur'an): Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 01 (2022): 18–32, <https://doi.org/10.37542/iq.v5i01.315>.

⁴ Ahmad Ali Adhim, *Gus Maksum Lirboyo Pendekar Pagar Nusa* (Global Press, 2017).

⁵ Akhya', "Wawancara Pribadi Dengan Ketua Pagar Nusa Ke-1, Tulungagung 14 Januari," 2025.

⁶ Sukarji, "Wawancara Pribadi Dengan Wakil Ketua Pagar Nusa Ke-1, Tulungagung 24 Desember," 2024.

⁷ Rizal Ari, "Wawancara Pribadi Dengan Sekretaris Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri, Tulungagung 11 September," 2024.

⁸ Dudung Abdurrahman, *Metodologi Penelitian Sejarah Islam* (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2011).

⁹ Sumargono, *Metodologi Penelitian Sejarah* (Klaten: Lakeisha, 2021).

factual and what is not, the results of the interpretation will show the historical conditions of the development of Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri 1993-2011. Fourth, historiography, namely reconstructing sources that have been selected and then written down in a coherent and clear manner that can be accounted for¹⁰.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The History of Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri's

Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri, founded by Moh. Zen Ma'arif, is the result of continuing from H. Ehsan to preserve pencak silat. H. Ehsan is the grandfather of Moh. Zen Ma'arif. Moh. Zen Ma'arif from a very young age has studied several martial arts such as Jit Tsu, Karate and Traditional Silat passed down from H. Ehsan. The departure of H. Ehsan who lives in Rejotangan, Tulungagung in 1993 made Moh. Zen Ma'arif determined to continue it. Finally, began opening the first training in Rejotangan in 1993. The beginning of the pencak silat training founded by Moh. Zen Ma'arif was still simple. The training facilities were still inadequate and were carried out in an open field. The belt level system had not yet been implemented. In the first year of Moh. Zen Ma'arif's training, he received less support from the community, this was due to Moh. Zen Ma'arif's status as a student at school. The local community calls it the pencak silat training "*ubyak ubyuk*"¹¹.

One year later, in 1994, a belt system was introduced as part of the standard of ability and as a sign of training duration. The implementation of this belt system was a step in structuring the training levels, allowing each member to gradually progress through a structured training process based on ability and experience. The established belt levels are black belt, yellow belt, blue belt, and red belt. Belt levels instill discipline and high responsibility. Pencak Silat, founded by Moh. Zen Ma'arif, previously had no name. Until finally, in 1995, Moh. Zen Ma'arif, as a professor, thought of giving the name "Sunan Giri" to one of the Pagar Nusa styles. The reason for taking the name of the Wali Songo figure "Sunan Giri" according to Moh. Zen Ma'arif is as follows:

The Attitude of Birrul Walidain Sunan Giri

Sunan Giri was a Wali Songo who acted as pandhita ratu (king and holy teacher). His missionary strategy was through trade and Islamic boarding schools. Sunan Giri's missionary work spread beyond Java, such as Kalimantan, South Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara, the Maluku Islands, and Papua. The Javanese Chronicle mentions that Sunan Giri's father was Sheikh Maulana Iskaq and his mother was Dewi Sekardadu. Sunan Giri's birth was considered to have brought a curse in the form of an epidemic, finally, on the orders of the king of Blambangan, the baby Sunan Giri was thrown into the sea¹². Sunan Giri, who was thrown into the sea, was found by Nyai Ageng Pinatih, who then adopted him as her son. After Sunan Giri was old enough, he was sent to the Sunan Ampel Islamic boarding school.

Sunan Giri, who had studied for a long time in Ampeldenta, then continued to Mecca, but on the way, he met Sheikh Maulana Iskaq (his biological father) who ordered him to preach Islam in Java. Arriving in Java, Sunan Giri built a mosque and spread Islam. The Majapahit Empire began to weaken, and many kingdoms broke away. At that time, Sunan Giri crowned himself king (Prabu Satmata) and his kingdom, Giri Kedaton¹³. Sunan Giri had never met his biological father as a baby,

¹⁰ Kuntowijoyo, *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Bentang Budaya, 1995).

¹¹ Zen Ma'arif, "Wawancara Pribadi Dengan Guru Besar Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri, Tulungagung 5 Desember,"

2024.

¹² Husnul Hakim, *Sejarah Lengkap Islam Jawa: Menelusuri Genealogi Corak Islam Tradisi*, 2022.

¹³ Hakim.

but he did not dwell on the past. This attitude was reflected in his gentle speech, polite actions, and willingness to listen as long as it did not conflict with religious teachings.

Sunan Giri's Preaching in Education

Sunan Giri's role as king was crucial in supporting the Wali Songo's missionary efforts. Sunan Giri's missionary work followed Sunan Ampel's, namely through education by establishing Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). His students came from East Java, Central Java, Kalimantan, Makassar, Lombok, Sumbawa, Sumba, Flores, Ternate, and Tidore. Sunan Giri also designed an educational system in the form of tabligh (Islamic outreach). This was done by holding gatherings such as thanksgiving and Islamic events accompanied by the delivery of his teachings. The community naturally accepted Islam and then implemented its values¹⁴.

Sunan Giri was very persistent in seeking knowledge from childhood. Studying and being raised by Sunan Ampel, he then migrated to Pasai to deepen his knowledge of Islam and his missionary work. His sincerity and determination led him to return to Java and establish Giri Kedaton as a center for Islamic education and missionary work. His success was not only due to his intelligence, but also due to his persistence in seeking knowledge and fighting for the advancement of society. Sunan Giri teaches today's children that success does not come easily, but through a process of hard learning and a sincere desire to help others. Based on Sunan Giri's spiritual and intellectual journey, which became the main inspiration for the founding and character formation of the Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri Pencak Silat school, the great master hopes that all members will not only focus on mastering martial arts techniques, but also cultivate a spirit of seriousness in seeking knowledge, both religious and general knowledge. Sunan Giri, an intelligent scholar and leader who has a high concern for the welfare of the people, has noble principles that can provide hope. Therefore, each member is expected to be able to apply their knowledge to help the surrounding community while developing noble ideals, social spirit, and concern for the environment. Thus, pencak silat is not only a forum for physical and skill development, but also a forum for character development and community service in accordance with the teachings and example of Sunan Giri.

Moh. Zen Ma'arif also studied spiritual knowledge with K.H. Anwar Sanusi in the 1990s. K.H. Anwar Sanusi from the Demak Islamic boarding school suggested that religious activities be included while practicing pencak silat. One of the religious activities included was the *manakib keliling* (circular manakib). The manakib readings given to his students were based on his sanad from the Darul Hikmah Demak Islamic Boarding School, which instructed him to read manakib from the works of K.H Mukhtas Nuri along with the dhikr fatihin (recitation of the Fatihin). Finally, from Moh. Zen Ma'arif's meeting with K.H Anwar Sanusi, the manakib activities were carried out during the Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri Pencak Silat training which became a tradition in itself.

Moh. Zen Ma'arif once embarked on a spiritual journey by studying with a mursyid who guided him in the inner sciences and spirituality. In this process, he then met Gus Sauki, under the guidance of Gus Sauki, Moh. Zen Ma'arif not only deepened his spiritual understanding, but also inherited the inherited martial arts from Kiai Mustaqim, known not only as a charismatic cleric but also as a warrior. This martial art is not merely a self-defense skill, but also a means of spiritual preaching deeply rooted in the Islamic boarding school tradition. The martial arts acquired by Moh. Zen Ma'arif have become a distinctive feature of Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri, a Sundanese martial arts school¹⁵.

¹⁴ Hakim.

¹⁵ Zen Ma'arif, "Wawancara Pribadi Dengan Guru Besar Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri, Tulungagung 12 Februari," 2025.

In 2003 when Moh. Zen Ma'arif had become a teacher at MAN 3 Tulungagung, the development of Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri began to grow rapidly. Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri became an additional activity at the school which made its development and existence increasingly known to the public¹⁶. Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri finally formed the Core Troop or PASTI, namely members who have more skills in terms of security and protection who have undergone special training. Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri members who have achieved a red belt are required to take Banser training which will then become the Core Troop of Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri who plays a role in various security and protection activities in the community.

With the increasing number of pencak silat schools in Tulungagung, Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri to differentiate and introduce its existence also created a logo or symbol that became its own characteristic created by Moh. Zen Ma'arif. Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri also actively participated in competitions in 2007 throughout East Java in Malang¹⁷. Active in Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri competitions also emphasizes and pays more attention to its members, finally creating a "Training Center"¹⁸. According to Moh. Zen Ma'arif, previously did not think it could train and teach pencak silat to this extent. From this, finally in 2011 Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri created AD/ART to serve as a guideline for its members' rules, then the belt provisions were changed to use the mori belt as the final belt. The mori belt is not only a sign of rank, but also reflects wisdom, maturity, and devotion to the values and philosophy of the martial art being pursued.

The Role of Sunan Giri's Pagar Nusa

The Role of Religious

Pencak silat is not only a martial art that teaches defense and attack, but also contains strong spiritual and religious elements. Physical training in the pencak silat tradition is often combined with prayer, sholawat (prayer), and *dhikr* (remembrance of God) as a means of self-purification and drawing closer to God. Pagar Nusa, an autonomous body of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) that accommodates martial artists, focuses not only on improving martial skills but also on maintaining and safeguarding strong religious traditions. Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri has a prominent religious tradition, namely the manakib keliling (circular ritual). This manakib tradition is an essential part of the character-building process of silat practitioners, which demands not only physical strength but also noble values, peace of mind, and a high level of spiritual awareness. Thus, pencak silat becomes a path of physical and spiritual training that combines worldly and afterlife qualities in one teaching¹⁹.

The Role of Education

Pencak silat is very important in education to develop character, discipline, and moral values of students, in addition to teaching physical abilities. Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri during training teaches students to respect teachers, maintain sportsmanship, and discipline. Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri activities are carried out according to the predetermined training schedule, and all members are required to be on time as a form of discipline and responsibility. Any violation of the rules, such as being late, usually will be subject to light physical sanctions by the coach, such as push-ups, sit-ups, or running around the training area, in accordance with applicable regulations. For

¹⁶ Jeni Widianto, "Wawancara Pribadi Dengan Ketua Umum Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri, Tulungagung 4 November," 2024.

¹⁷ Ma'arif, "Wawancara Pribadi Dengan Guru Besar Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri, Tulungagung 12 Februari."

¹⁸ Rizal Ari, "Wawancara Pribadi Dengan Sekretaris Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri, Tulungagung 29 Mei," 2025.

¹⁹ Widianto, "Wawancara Pribadi Dengan Ketua Umum Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri, Tulungagung 4 November."

members who are unable to attend, are required to provide a letter of permission or report directly to the coach with a clear and accountable reason.

The Role of Strengthening Brotherhood

Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri always greets and shakes hands with its brothers. The *manakib* activities of Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri are intended to deepen faith while strengthening emotional bonds between each other. A solemn and familial atmosphere, members recite *dhikr*, pray, and share spiritual experiences, thus creating a strong spiritual bond and a sense of mutual care.

The role of *ukhuwah* Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri does not occur between members. reflected in various social activities, such as fundraising for victims of calamities and natural disasters, which demonstrate concern for others regardless of background. Another activity, namely Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri sharing takjil during the month of Ramadan, is a real form of the spirit of togetherness and solidarity, where members go directly to the community to strengthen social ties.

The Role of Developing

Pencak Silat Potential Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri serves as a forum for members to develop their interests and talents in the field of martial arts. Over time, attention to achievement began to increase, until finally in 2011 a special training center or "Training Center" was established at the central Padepokan Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri. The existence of this training center activity is an important tool in developing and honing the abilities of members, both physically, mentally, and spiritually. In addition, this place also functions as a center for developing high-achieving athletes who are ready to compete in various championships, from the local to the national level²⁰.

Role of the Community

The core troops of Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri also play a role in other community activities such as maintaining the smooth and safe running of various religious activities, especially during large-scale religious studies. Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri deploys special members to ensure the situation remains conducive, as well as providing a sense of security for invited guests and the community in attendance. Not only that, the core troops were also alert to accompany the clerics while delivering their sermons from the beginning to the end of the event, in order to maintain the solemn atmosphere and the orderly and orderly continuity of the activity²¹.

CONCLUSION

Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri was founded by Moh. Zen Ma'arif on the basis of continuing his grandfather's struggle in the realm of martial arts and also on his own desire to enjoy martial arts. Moh. Zen Ma'arif also studied spiritual knowledge from KH. Anwar Sanusi from the Demak Islamic boarding school which resulted in the Manakib keliling activity becoming a religious tradition in Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri. Moh. Zen Ma'arif also received pencak moves passed down from generation to generation from Kiai Mustaqim through Gus Sauki, which became a unique characteristic of Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri. In addition to martial arts, Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri also has important roles such as religious roles, educational roles, potential development roles and roles in society.

²⁰ Ari, "Wawancara Pribadi Dengan Sekretaris Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri, Tulungagung 29 Mei."

²¹ Ibnu Dhucaini, "Wawancara Pribadi Dengan Pelatih Pagar Nusa Sunan Giri, Tulungagung 25 Februari,"

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