

Arts of Asia Lecture Series Spring 2015
Masterpieces and Iconic Artworks of the Asian Art Museum
Sponsored by The Society for Asian Art

Getting a grip on the demonic: exploring an Indonesian dagger handle
Natasha Reichle, Associate Curator of Southeast Asian Art, AAM
January 30, 2015

Key Names and Terms

kris (also spelled *keris*) an asymmetrical dagger that widens toward the hilt, found throughout island Southeast Asia and Malaysia

sekala (seen, conscious) and *niskala* (unseen, subconscious)

empu – honorific title for artists especially kris makers and court poets

pamor - pattern formed by the mixture of metals and etching with acid

Candi Borobudur, 9th c Buddhist monument in Central Java

Candi Prambanan, 9th c Hindu temple in Central Java

Candi Sukuh, 14th-15th century Javanese temple

rakshasa (*raksasa*) - demon

Bhima (Bima) – one of the five Pandava brothers, heroes of the Mahabharata

Vayu (Bayu) – the god of wind

One-eyed *kala* (*bintulu*) – decorative motif

Selected further reading

The World of the Javanese Kris, Garrett and Bronwen Solyom (Honolulu: East-West Center, 1978)

The Kris: An earthly approach to a cosmic symbol, David van Duuren (Wijk an Aalburg: Pictures Publishers, 1998)

Bali: Sekala and Niskala, Fred B. Eiseman, Jr. (Berkeley: periplus Editions. 1989)

Desire: Divine and Demonic, Michele Stephen (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. 2005)

Visible and Invisible Realms, Margaret Wiener (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995)

A dramatically embellished but pretty true to the process video of kris production:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3jZm1sPMDc>