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Kawi and kekawin

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KAWI AND KEKAWIN*)

It is now almost forty years ago that Krom published an article¹, in which he assembled those passages from the *kekawin* known at that time which he considered to be points of contact with ancient Javanese history. As a matter of fact these passages did not amount to much more than an enumeration of the names of kings and high authorities who had been the poets' protectors of the patrons of their poetical work as stated in the initial or final stanzas. The writer had to end his article with the none too cheerful conclusion that this collection of data proved "how little they mean and how small a part provides a reliable basis".

Now this was chiefly due to two reasons, as suggested by Krom: the relatively small number of the published *kekawin*-texts, and our still too defective knowledge of their language. The following years, however, brought some improvement in this respect. But did this result in a proportionate improvement of our knowledge of their historical value? Much less than one might have expected. For, although it is true that since then a number of hitherto unpublished *kekawin* have been introduced to us by Poerbatjaraka,² Gonda,³ and Teeuw,⁴ most of these had already been used by Krom in his article on the *manggala*-stanzas. Furthermore, as regards the knowledge of the language, Teeuw⁵ has

* This article was first published as a separate booklet in the Indonesian language.

¹ N. J. Krom, Over de datering van enige Kawigeschriften, Tijdschrift Bataviaasch Genootschap 57 (1916). pg. 508-521.

² Smaradahana, Oud-Javaansche tekst met vertaling uitgegeven door R. Ng. Dr. Poerbatjaraka, Bibliotheca Javanica 3, Bandung 1931; Nitiśāstra, uitgegeven door R. Ng. Dr. Poerbatjaraka, Bibliotheca Javanica 4, Bandung 1933; R. M. Ng. Poerbatjaraka, Nirartha-Prakreta, Bijdragen T. L.V. 107 (1951), pg. 201-225.

³ Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa, in: Het Oud-Javaansche Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa, Bibliotheca Javanica 5, Bandung s.a., pg. 185-225.

⁴ Hariwaṇśa, Verhandelingen Koninklijk Instituut T.L.V., deel IX, The Hague 1950.

⁵ A. Teeuw, Het Bhomakāwya, Groningen-Batavia 1946, pg. 40.

said: "As in most *kekawin*, the initial stanzas here likewise cause great difficulty".

So for forty years no new material so to speak, has come forth about the mentioning of historical names in the initial as well as in the final stanzas. But does it also mean that no new contributions to history at all are to be obtained from the *kekawin*? That is another problem. For first of all they might be found in the story itself as contained in the *kekawin*, and in the manner of its composition. And secondly an important contribution to history, of which the so-called historical facts merely form the framework, might be obtained through a better knowledge of the manner and the environment in which it arose, of the personality of the maker, the *kawi*, within the framework of contemporary life, and finally by acquiring more information about the conception which the *kawi* himself as well as others had of his function as a poet.

Now it is in this very field that some important essays have appeared after Krom's article. We refer to those by Berg⁶ and by Moens⁷ on the *kekawin* Arjunawiwâha, and furthermore to Berg's⁸ contribution on Javanese historical writing in Stapel's collection. In the Arjunawiwâha both Berg and Moens see a description of historical facts relating to King Airlangga in the form of an Arjuna-story, newly created and adapted in typical Javanese fashion. But their interpretations of this story differ.

For Moens it is only a limited piece of Airlangga's biography, i.e. his association with Teguh's daughter, the princess Śri Sanggrāmawijaya Dharmaprasâdottunggadewi. For Berg on the other hand it is Airlangga's entire lifestory, "driven away from his *kraton* (palace) owing to misfortunes in war, finding a resting-place in a hermitage and living for a long time a hermit's life, and then, persuaded by the hermits to take upon himself the task of restoring order in the chaos prevailing all over Java at that time, struggling to conquer his enemies, and finally triumphantly enjoying the fruit of his endurance and perseverance in a glorious reign".⁹

In an analogous way Berg sees in the Bharatayuddha *kekawin*, —

⁶ C. C. Berg, De Arjunawiwâha, Er-Langga's levensloop en bruiloftslied? Bijdragen T.L.V. 97 (1938), pg. 19-94.

⁷ J. L. Moens, De stamboom van Airlangga, Tijdschrift Bataviaasch Genootschap 84 (1950), pg. 110-158.

⁸ C. C. Berg, Javaansche Geschiedschrijving, in: Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch Indië, onder leiding van F. W. Stapel, deel II, pg. 5-148.

⁹ Bijdragen, pg. 41.

written by mpu Sedah and mpu Panuluh under Jayabhaya, and up to now known as the only *kekawin* which contains a date in *sangkala*-form in the prelude, — an apology put in epical form of the king of Kediri, who is supposed to have fought and conquered his brother, the king of Panjalu.¹⁰

Thus, according to the above-mentioned authors, these famous *kekawin* contain historical data in a form which could be understood by insiders. To some extent they can be considered historical works, but arranged according to a method of historical writing which is far different from that followed in the West since the days of Thucydides.

This theory is attractive. Should we not feel encouraged to go on in this way and investigate other, — perhaps a great many other *kekawin* in search of their historical background? Is there not before us a new field full of possibilities for filling the gap in our inadequate knowledge of Old Javanese history? Will these possibilities not reveal themselves more clearly, in a direct proportion with the development of our knowledge concerning those *kekawin*, as we became more and more familiar with their language, so that they will become more transparent to us, with the result that we grasp their nuances and suggestions more easily?

Optimistic and hopeful prospects! But let us not become overexcited about these future possibilities. For, if this theory is true, shall we then have found sources that can be used to enrich our historical knowledge with *new* facts?

We have said that these poems, from the point of view indicated above, contain certain historical materials, understandable for insiders, and insiders only. Are we, or can we become, insiders to such a degree as will enable us to read this 'secret language'? It would seem to me that we will not be able to reveal their hidden treasure with sufficient guarantee of certainty until we have obtained from other sources the knowledge of the facts which are cryptically indicated in the *kekawin*. If we cannot achieve this, we have to confine ourselves to admiring the ingenious interpretation; we may be charmed by its attractiveness. But this can hardly be called a reliable knowledge of what actually occurred in the past.

¹⁰ About the names of the kingdoms of Janggala, Panjalu, Kediri etc., cf.: C. C. Berg, *Herkomst, Vorm en Functie der Middel Javaansche rijksdelings-theorie*, *Verhandelingen Koninkl. Nederl. Akademie van Wetenschappen, afd. Letterkunde, nieuwe reeks* dl. LIX no. 1, Amsterdam 1953, pg. 117 ss.

The treatment of the two *kekawin* by the above mentioned authorities underlines this. For what do we find there?

We know from evidence beyond the story proper, i.e. from the final stanzas where the poet speaks about his own work, that the Arjunawiwâha was written under the patronage of Airlangga; and we also know from elsewhere a great deal of Airlangga's life. Berg is inclined to deny the first. The end of the *kekawin* in which Airlangga is mentioned, according to Berg has too many peculiarities from the point of view of wording and grammar for us to rely on its authenticity. The possibility of a later addition should be seriously taken into account, so that we might arrive at the conclusion that the dedication to Airlangga could only date from a later tradition of this kind.

We do not agree with Berg as to his linguistic arguments, but this is not the place to discuss these in detail. Furthermore we would be obliged then to accept a *kekawin* without its usual conclusion or with a substitute for the authentic one, made up later; — neither being an attractive hypothesis! At any rate, Berg does not take this conclusion into account. And when he thus bases himself only on the initial stanzas in his assumption of Airlangga as protector and *manggala*, and later sets up his interpretation of the Arjunawiwâha as Airlangga's biography and wedding song, he can only do so because he is familiar with a great deal of the king's life from other sources. If the Calcutta stone had not been discovered, how unstable would be the ground we stand on!

We are very much inclined to accept the idea that the poet of Arjunawiwâha indeed did see Airlangga in his "hero". But what did he really want to say about him? Contemporaries, especially insiders, could have known it; but, what about us? We are neither the former nor the latter. Just because of the difference of interpretation by Berg and Moens we ought to be careful on this point.

The treatment of the other *kekawin*, the Bharatayuddha, is also instructive from this point of view. But here we must confine ourselves to what Berg briefly states in his article on Javanese historical writing, and to the summary in his latest work.¹¹ The article "Jayabhaya and the Bharatayuddha", announced in 1938,¹² has never appeared owing to war conditions.¹³ Berg says: "It could be re-written only if the point of departure be changed".

¹¹ Berg, *ibid.* pg. 24 ss.

¹² *id.*, in Stapel, pg. 480.

¹³ *id.*, Herkomst, Vorm en Functie, pg. 187.

We know much less of Jayabhaya than of Airlangga from inscriptions. Consequently it will be more difficult to reconstruct the "historical background" of the Bharatayuddha in its epic form. Berg assumes that here too the initial stanzas should provide the key along with some Balinese traditional narrative.

"In the first stanza "the hero" is praised, because he accomplishes the martial offering in a perfectly calm way as the priest of the battlefield with the enemy as the sacrificed.¹⁴ This now is to be considered as "an epitome of some part of the contents of the Bhagavadgîtâ".¹⁵ The hero Arjuna receives a philosophical justification for the coming struggle, where he will have to fight his own kindred, which also means a stilling of his confusion and moral objections to a war between brothers. Now the Balinese tradition knows Jayabhaya as the king who becomes involved in a war with his brother and defeats him in the struggle for the hegemony over Airlangga's kingdom which has been divided into two parts. So we must consider the *kekawin* Bharatayuddha as a poetical description and adaptation of the story about this struggle and also as a justification of Jayabhaya's conduct and as a magic countermeasure against its possible harms.

It is practically certain, that by the "hero" of the initial stanza Jayabhaya who a little later is mentioned by name, is meant. We do not think we are far from the truth if we suppose that his knowledge of the Balinese tradition has induced Berg to construct the relationship between this hero and what is narrated in the *kekawin* as he did. This Balinese tradition was the factual material from elsewhere which helped towards the interpretation. The rest was derived from the wording of the *kekawin* itself. And it was solely on the *kekawin* that he finally based the interpretation, when later he arrived at the conclusion, "that Jayabhaya's appearance in the book 'Calon Arang' does not imply at all that this book handed down to posterity its own historical knowledge of the twelfth century".¹⁶

Nevertheless, his conception of the meaning and value of this *kekawin* has remained unchanged: "It can be concluded from the contents of the prelude of the Bharatayuddha that Jayabhaya committed Arjuna's crime in his life, but that he was absolved from the blame for his crime by composing and reciting of the Bharatayuddha, as this provided the desired solution for a parallel case".

¹⁴ Berg in: Stapel, pg. 63.

¹⁵ id. Herkomst, Vorm en Functie, pg. 25.

¹⁶ id., ibid., pg. 24.

So the question is: Do we have here an historical fact, provided by a *kekawin*, while an existing tradition is too unreliable to do so? The basis on which all this rests seems to us weak and unstable to build so much upon. For what does the first stanza of the above mentioned poem tell us? There we find the description of the hero, sang śūra, who devoutly carries out the sacrificial act in the battle, striving for the annihilation of all hostile powers. As sacrificial flowers he uses the hair ornaments of his enemies who have fallen on the battlefield. The jewels from the foreheads of the fallen kings are his grains of corn; his sacrificial fire is formed by the burning cities of foes. And together with all this he sacrifices the enemies' heads, severed from their bodies by the (wheels of the) chariot of the hero who is ever valiant in battle".

So Arjuna's name is not mentioned here. It is the resemblance of this passage to the theme of the Bhagavadgītā which suggested to Berg the identification of the "hero" with Arjuna. But is this resemblance so striking that we have to accept this suggestion as conveying what was really meant by the poet? Nowhere in the Bhagavadgītā the simile of the sacrifice is used by Kṛṣṇa to depict the battle and the annihilation of his enemies. Berg, summarizing Kṛṣṇa's encouraging words with which he urges the hesitating Arjuna to fight, says: "he was allowed to act according to his caste duty, and to do so with a clear conscience, because the conflict between the two parties could at last be brought down to a simple illusion without any reality for those who had reached true insight".¹⁷

This summary would not seem to be very accurate. "Was allowed to" had better be replaced by "was obliged to". And the conception of the phenomenal world as sheer illusion is not yet known in the Bhagavadgītā. This *mâyâ*-doctrine has become familiar only from texts of a much later Vedānta, namely that of Śāṅkara and his school.

I think we can summarize Kṛṣṇa's opinion about Arjuna's scruples as given in the Sanskrit Bhagādvadgītā under these three points:

1. The philosophical point of view: only the body is liable to decay: man is eternal. He is not killed when the body is slain. And for him who has acquired real wisdom life and death as experienced in battle have only a very relative value.

2. The ethical point of view: every man has to perform his own task (*swadharma*) considering this as his highest duty. For him who is born as a *kṣatriya* that duty consists in fighting. It is impossible to make a higher appeal to supposed duties of kinship.

¹⁷ id., in: Stapel, pg. 63.

3. The utilitarian point of view, closely related to the one preceding: fighting he will gain heaven as his reward if he falls; the earth, if he victoriously survives. If he does not fight, only ridicule and blame from the people will await him.

Did the poet of the *kekawin* know this exposition? Certainly, if he, while composing the *Bharatayuddha*, used or knew the Old Javanese version of the *Bhīṣmaparwa*. For there, in the *Bhagavadgītā* section, all these points are extensively treated.¹⁸ Possibly also, of course, if he did not know it. But remarkable is his own treatment of Arjuna's scruples and their solution by Kṛṣṇa in the story of the *kekawin* itself, on the very place where the Sanskrit-version and the Old Javanese rendering have the *Bhagavadgītā*.

The old Javanese poet does not devote more than two stanzas to it (*Bharatay. X 12, 13*):

Mulat mara sang Arjunāsēmu kamānuṣan kasrēpan,
ri tingkah i musuh nirān paḍa kadang taya wwang waneh,
hana pwa ng anak ing yayah mwanṅ ibu len uwānggēh paman,
makādi nrpa śalya Bhīṣma sira sang dwijānggēh guru.

Ya kārāṇa nirān paśabda ri narārya Kṛṣṇātēhēr,
aminta wurunga ng lagāpan awēlas tumon Korawa,
kunēng sira Janārdanāsēkung akon saroṣāpranga
apan hila-hilāng kṣinatriya surud yan ing paprangan.

Translation:

„On seeing this Arjuna was visibly overcome with emotion and sadness, as *these* were his enemies: all his kindred without any stranger amongst them. There were his brothers from his father's as well as his mother's side, his uwa and his paman; and among them first of all king Śalya, Bhīṣma, and the brahmin (Droṇa), his own teacher.

It was because of that, that he directed his words to king Kṛṣṇa and requested that the battle should not take place, as he was overcome by pity for the Korawas. But Janārdana ordered him severely to fight with all his might. For it would be illicit (*ila-ila*, — against the

¹⁸ *Bhīṣmaparwa*, ed. Gonda, *Bibliotheca Javanica* 7, Bandung 1936, pg. 43.

established world order and against the adat which is constituted by it —), if a *kṣatriya* should retire from the battle”.

This is all the Old Javanese poet has to say about the *Bhagavadgītā*-passage: Arjuna, overcome by his emotions and reminded of his duty as a *kṣatriya*. And just to the latter part which gives the solution for his scruples the poet devotes not more than one line and only gives one brief reason: *ila-ila*.

Generally we do not feel inclined to stipulate what a poet, so widely separated from us in time and environment, being moreover his own master, should have said or not have said in a certain case. It is a kind of argument which is sometimes used too abundantly when dealing with Old Javanese literature and history. However, we cannot get help wondering: if the *Bhagavadgītā*-motive were the central motive as well as the key to the *kekawin* *Bharatayuddha*, as is Berg's opinion, why did the poet not make full use of his possibilities at this very place that seems to be the most appropriate for it? The magic absolution and the delation of “Jayabhaya's crime”, which according to Berg would be the chief motive and the principal reason of existence of the *kekawin* seems to be very poorly treated in the description of its epic prototype, the declaration of not-guilty given in advance by *Kṛṣṇa*, on which its strength would rest.

However it may be, there is certainly no positive indication at all of the interpretation suggested by Berg. Nor do we observe it in the composition of the whole story. We do not think that the place occupied by Arjuna is so central as to suggest the identification with Jayabhaya.

Should we then perhaps have to identify sang *śūra* of the initial stanzas with Arjuna, because it is proved by their composition that the poet thought of Arjuna's difficulty and its solution according to the *Bhagavadgītā*, and that he wanted to suggest it? For this view we do not see sufficient evidence either. Even less, as the *Bhagavadgītā* does not contain any illusion to the idea of the battle as a sacrificial act. On the other hand the same idea appears more than once in other works. From the Old Javanese literature, which can be considered older than the *Bhagavadgītā*,¹⁹ two instances are known to us; neither being in direct connection with Arjuna, which would be needed for the above mentioned interpretation. They are as follows:

¹⁹ Also in the *Arjunawijaya*, a younger *kekawin*, we find this representation in song 53 st. 3 and 4.

In the Old Javanese Rāmāyaṇa (XXII, 52-53) Anggada sees his comrades flee and admonishes them to adhere to "the more elevated conception of battle that becomes the true hero" (jñāna sang jāti śūreng raṇa), that it is precisely a *raṇayajña*, a battle-sacrifice. "The battlefield is the sacred fireplace, the enemies being the fire, and the glittering weapons the flames. Your heroism forms the sacrificial spoons. The offering itself is life with the body as the *caru* (offering vessel) and your fivefold use of arms as the fivefold ritual". And in this way many other points of possible identification are mentioned.

Still more detailed we find the idea of the *raṇayajña* described in the Karno-panivāda of the Udyogaparwa (Mahābh. V, 141, 1 ss.) viz. the dialogue between Karna and Kṛṣṇa after the latter's unsuccessful mission to the Kaurawas. Karna gives his vision on the coming struggle as being a sacrificial act on a gigantic scale, where all Pāṇḍawas get their places as offerers in the offering ritual; the various episodes from the great war, where the Kaurawas are to take the part of the sacrificed, are recorded in the picture of this offering in world dimensions. In the Old Javanese version of the Udyogaparwa this description has fully obtained its place, covering about two sides of a lontarleaf.²⁰ It is quite possible that this Udyogaparwa version has been of great help to the poet of the Bharatayuddha *kekawin*. And if therefore we should like to find a prototype for the initial stanza of his work, it would be more obvious to see it in the Udyogaparwa rather than in the Bhagavadgītā. The identification of Jayabhaya with Arjuna would in that case be not quite so certain, and an explanation more in accord with Karna's view would take its place: the inevitability of this fraternal war between Pāṇḍawas and Kaurawas.

However, it would rather seem an exaggeration to assert that this stanza could only be explained in this way, viz. as an epic description of the fraternal fight between Jayabhaya and Jayasabha (as the Balinese tradition calls him) because we must keep in mind that in this first stanza we have nothing but a description of the hero in his ideal attitude to the war in which he conquers his enemies. It is a description suitable for any heroic victory, whoever the victor or victim may be; a description relevant to Jayabhaya, whoever the enemy, the Hemabhupati, might be. In his prelude the poet possibly only intended to say, that his patron possessed in a high degree the jñāna sang śūra, the hero's

²⁰ Ms. 959 a in the collection of: "Het Koninklijke Bataviaasch Genootschap" P. 70 and 71.

wisdom, spoken of in the Rāmāyaṇa. And if it is true that the choice of the Bharatayuddha as a subject was decided by the historical fact of a fraternal war, we can draw this conclusion only from the story itself and not from the prelude.

What we wanted to say in what precedes is this: the conception of the *kekawin* as "historical records" in a highly specific sense is an idea that throws a new light on this part of the Old Javanese literature and on the environment from which these poems have come. It is a hypothesis, possessing many attractions, a great deal of probability, and fully worthwhile using, though only with the necessary care, as there is always the danger inherent in such an hypothesis that in the course of time it may become supposedly established truth, or at least that it may grow in probability in the eyes of those who deal with it without any new evidence coming forth.

Seldom or never according to our opinion, will they constitute sources for new and reliable factual knowledge of history; at the most (and even then they will have to be handled carefully) they may serve to combine and to connect data from elsewhere.

II.

But there is still the second point we mentioned in the beginning of our contribution: the gaining of an insight into the figure of the *kekawin* poet within the framework of Old Javanese society and into the special character of his poetic function.

It is Berg again who has put forward important things about this in his works, especially in his investigation of the two above mentioned *kekawin*, and of the data about poets and poetry in the palace of Majapahit, given by Prapañca in his Nagarakṛtāgama. We think we may summarize Berg's conclusion as follows:

The poet is a "priest of the literary magic". The praise of the king, the description of his power, his victories, his wisdom and his benevolence, (have) the effect that the king indeed will be powerful and unconquerable, wise and benevolent, or, if he already possesses these qualities, that they will appear in a higher degree. Therefore by fortifying the royal (magic) energy he creates the possibility that the environment of the king may experience the beneficent influence of his presence in a higher degree".²¹

²¹ Berg, in: Stapel, pg. 54, 55.

The *kekawin*-poet, at least the authors of the *Bharatayuddha*, the *Arjunawiwâha*, and the *Nagarakṛtâgama*, which are mentioned by Berg, is a "writer of history" to be classed among the priestly figures. The title "mpu", placed before the names of *Sēḍah* and *Kanwa*, indicates this. And many other evidences indicate that for the Javanese of to-day and of olden times there exists a close relationship between the function of the priest and that of the literary man, and implicitly also between the magic power of the latter and the value of the parts of Javanese historical literature he wrote".²²

We hope, that in this short and accordingly very inadequate summary, — but using Berg's own words —, we have given the essentials of his conception of the authors he has studied, among others the *kekawin* poets we are interested in. There is no doubt that in revealing this magical background of literature he has enriched our insight and understanding of it in an excellent way. He has given us some characteristics of the "*kawi*", which are necessary for our knowledge of these poets and their days. That he has meant to touch the essentials of their work can be made out from the words he uses in concluding the chapter concerned: "We are not going to deal with aesthetic values; we are going to confine ourselves to the remark, that formal purpose in the minds of e.g. mpu *Sēḍah* and *Prapañca* (our italics) did not prevent them from writing masterpieces; which in every aspect can match what has been achieved elsewhere in circumstances not too greatly different".²³

Hence their purpose was: the application of literary magic in the field of historical writing. They saw in this their task and the main reason for their existence as "*kawis*". We may suppose the contemporaries for whom they wrote thought the same.

What we still need to ask ourselves is: Are we to see in this the complete, or better, the essential characteristics of the Old Javanese *kekawin* poet?

To avoid misunderstanding we would like to remark beforehand that this is not what Berg states. His argumentation only says: the Javanese writer of history, using the *kekawin* as his medium, was first of all a priest of literary magic. Only a careless reader, fascinated by Berg's argumentation, might come to the conclusion that any *kawi*, or at least the average one, who can be considered as a typical representative of his kind, had this as his main purpose. Berg started

²² Berg, in Stapel, pg. 59.

²³ id., *ibid.*, pg. 89.

from the writers of Javanese history and found amongst them *kekawin* poets; we, on the other hand, begin from the *kekawin* poet and want to know, whether he really must be called a historiographer of the special type as described by Berg. Hence what we want to know here, in general, is: what is the *kekawin* poet like, how does he appear to us, when we study the data of the *kekawin* themselves.

There are a great many places in the *kekawin* where the *kawi* is spoken of, though mostly indirectly. The *kawi* acting as a *dramatis persona* is only known to us from the poem *Wr̥ttasāñcaya*, and even there he is merely a *dramatis persona* who mainly plays his part by being absent. For in this "handbook for the poet" which in *kekawin* form contains a doctrine on metras expressed in examples,²⁴ we have the story of a young lady who languishes because her lover has left her. She sends two birds which she happens to meet, as her messengers to look for the absent one and persuade him to come back to her. The birds finally find the unfaithful lover, enjoying the beauty ('*angdon langö*') on the beach and writing a poem. And when the birds tell him about the painful longing of his beloved and about the sad condition in which she finds herself, he explains that it is not lack of interest in her, but an unconquerable passion to write about the beauty of Nature that forces him to leave her for some time to enjoy that beauty in this very spot.

The story in the poem is not particularly important. The poem has its own goal, apart from the story. The poet, who is described by mpu Tanakung and whom we may suppose to be the ordinary type of poet — anyway mpu Tanakung could do with any poet — is a seeker of beauty, who sees in nature the most suitable place to find it and the most appropriate spot to enjoy it.

So we very seldom come across a poet as a *dramatis persona*, but on the other hand we very often find *dramatis personae* who incidentally act as *kawi*. It is a fact that in almost every *kekawin* we hear of persons, mostly the chief characters, who feel compelled to utter their emotions in poetic form. It is the lonely sufferer who in this way expresses his sorrow. It is the lover who expresses his love in a *kekawin*, of modest size we suppose, describing the beauty of his beloved and his own inextinguishable longing for her; and then, as a rule, he looks for a go-between who has to take this precious writing of his to its destination

²⁴ H. Kern, *Wr̥tta-sañcaya*, Oud-Javaansch leerdicht over versbouw, in: *Ver-spreide Geschriften IX*, pg. 67-189.

in all secrecy, because usually there are unwilling fathers-in-law or jealous rivals to be afraid of.

Out of the many examples²⁵ let us choose the scene from the *Gaṭotkacâśraya*, in which Abhimanyu, being separated from his *Kṣītisundarī*, gives way to his lovesickness, as he thinks he cannot reach her.

..... mahāngikēt ujar tangis ira n angarang.
Wwitan teki turing tulus winaca lagi winalu-waluyan. (16.3)

In his sorrowful longing he wanted to shape his weeping into a poem. He made a start with it, but before it was finished, he read it over and began anew several times.

We hear of the subject of his longing in a description of the beauty of his beloved, three stanzas being devoted to it. And then, "while yielding to his sadness in the form of a *kekawin*" (*kāla nirāngrase tangis irān minimba kakawin*, 18.1), there comes *Sudarpanā*, *Kṣītisundarī*'s confidant, who just at the right moment brings the proof of the unshakable faithfulness of her mistress in the form of a *wilāpa*, a lamentation, which he reads eagerly on the spot. After a thorough deliberation about some plan for the reunion of the two king's children, for whom in a *kekawin* the water is never too deep, *Sudarpanā* goes back carrying with her the "*kakawin karāsikan*".

Another example from the *Arjunawiwāha*:

During his stay in heaven (at the end of the poem) Arjuna is tormented by longing to see his mother and brothers who have been left behind in the jungle in a pitiful condition. He plans to return to them and to leave *Tilottamā*, but he cannot do so without having expressed his sorrow for it in a poem. And the fairy who, hidden behind a tree, sees and hears everything, — for he too reads and re-reads the unfinished work, because he is not yet satisfied with it — mischievously sings a conclusion to it:

"And what is to be called really 'faithful' can be found in you; remaining a poet's wife, — that is the highest degree of faithfulness in marriage".

Yekā satya ngaranya ring kadi kitāniwi kawi wēkas ing patibrata.
(*Arjunawiwāha*, 35.3.)

²⁵ We also mention here the description of the *swayamwara* in the *Sumanasāntaka* (song 63-102), in which all the kings who are found unworthy by *Indumati* express their respective sorrow in the form of *kekawin*.

There are a great many passages where the *kawi* is dealt with indirectly. We refer to the description of wood and mountain, of beach and sea, which form such an essential part of the *kekawin*. For they appear to be the very spots sought after by the poet who can fulfill his passion for beauty right there, a feeling, similar to swooning and intoxication, so that he can find inspiration for his *kekawin*. He even sets up his dwelling-place there, "a hermitage for him where he may cultivate happiness and beauty". (Patapan hañar taruka ning kajēnēkan amagantakēn langö, Bhomakâwya 6.2)

Of a beautiful place on the beach it is said that it is "called upon by sailors who have the beautiful word as their cargo". Here and there traces are still visible which prove that the place has just been left by a poet. His unfinished copies are still lying on the rocks. (Bhomakâwya 3.37: wurung-wurungan ing atanah karing šilâ.²⁶)

About something highly beautiful it is said that it "causes a poet's heart to quiver with emotion". (Hariwijaya 53, 32: angētēri raras twas ing kawi). Flowers stand longingly waiting for the poet to come and to consider them worth admiring, so that he may choose them as a subject for his *kekawin*.

angyam-ayam.... tilingana tēkap ing kawīšwara (Arjuna-wiwâha. 16.4)

And in another place where the other trees have dropped their leaves, there still stands a lonely *walikadēp* blooming, because it is still hoping for a visit from its lover, the poet.

mahyun lawad-lawadēn ing kawipriya kunēng matang nyan asēkar (Bhomakâwya 15.11).

The image of the poet, thus obtained directly or indirectly from the *kekawin*, is that of a person overcome by an inextinguishable desire to enjoy beauty, or of suffering from lovesickness. These are conditions of the soul which both can be attributed to the same *rasa*. All the words which are used to describe both the feeling and the objects which arouse the feeling have one and the same basic meaning: "trance", a state in which one is overpowered by the image of the beauty of the adored, so that for him all else sinks into nothingness. Suffice it here to recall: *langö, lēngēng, lēnglēng* words which are related to Modern Japanese

²⁶ cf. Hariwangśa XXIV 3.

klëngër and *sumlëngër*; and also of: *sang mangö*, *sang angapilangö*, indicating the poet or the one who enjoys beauty.

Such is the image of fiction. Such is the way in which the *karwi* is depicted in the story. Has the poet also characterized himself as he really is? Is the image of fiction also the image of reality? To be more exact: is the *karwi* primarily an explorer and enjoyer of beauty?

It is this question we will still try to answer, making use of those important, but often also very difficult, introductory parts of the *kekawin* which we call *manggala*. It is mainly from these parts that Berg obtained his materials for sketching the *karwi* as the priest of the historical literary magic. We have therefore tried to collect as many *kekawin-manggala* as possible for comparison in order to get an impression of their style and their characteristics. And one of the first things that strikes us in our comparison of some fifty different specimens is this: that the *manggala* of the two *kekawin*, used by Berg, viz. the Arjunawiwâha and the Bharatayuddha, occupy an unusual position. They are somewhat different from the rest in the structure of their introductory stanzas.

Sang paramârtha paṇḍita and sang sûra, mentioned there, most probably refer to the king in the case of the Arjunawiwâha, and almost certainly in that of the Bharatayuddha. It is under his patronage that the poet is about to fulfill his task and it is him he praises as his victorious *manggala*. We may probably find something analogous in the introduction of the *kekawin Kâlântaka*,²⁷ which reads as follows:

Sang siddhânut i yoga dhâraka sêḍeng cûṇṇeng raṇāṅde pati. There, too, is the hero (the king?) for whom the struggle — though it will end in death — is a yoga-practice, by which he strives to be united with the divinity, and who, for that reason, is worshipped by the poet as Śiwa.

But besides the few *manggala* of this construction there are a great many others, in which the poet invokes a god who is directly connected with his work as a poet. To this god he offers the poem about to be written; from him he expects the aid which is necessary; if he wants to make it a real work of art; and what is more, the *kekawin* itself is an act of worship with that god as its object.

Immediately the question arises: Who is this god? Because an answer can make clear how the poet considers himself and his work. If we

²⁷ The *kekawin Kîṣṇakâlântaka* (Lontar property of Kirtya 236) is identical to song 1-40 of the *Kâlântaka*.

expect, however, to find one name, we are mistaken, as the *manggala* show a large variety in this respect. We find Śiwa mentioned by several names: Śrī Parwatarâjadewa in the *kekawin* Arjunawijaya, Girinâtha in the *kekawin* Dharmakusuma, Maheśwara in the *kekawin* Ratnawijaya; probably Śiwa is also found in the *kekawin* Bhârgawaśikṣa as Paramêṣṭiguru and in the introduction of the *kekawin* Pârthayañña: Ong Rudrâkṣa namo 'stu te. We find god Kâma in the *kekawin* Narakawijaya, in the Smaradahana, in the Abhimanyuwîwâha, and in the Râmawijaya. We find goddess Saraswati in the Wṛttasañcaya, the Āstikâyana, the Parthakarma, the Śakraprajaya, and the Hariśraya (A). Wiṣṇu is mentioned in the *kekawin* Hariwangśa and the Nitisâstra; a mahâparamapañḍita, who may possibly be identified with Bhaṭâra Guru, in the Indrabandhana and the Si Wṛta; Bajrajñâna in the Sutasoma. And finally there are still many *kekawin*, where the god who is honoured in the *manggala*, is not mentioned by name, as in the Ghatotkacaśraya, the Hariwijaya, the Sumanasântaka, the Lubdhaka, the Indrawijaya, the Nirârthaprakṛta, the Ambâśraya, and the Wighnotsawa, where we have to guess from the attributes or the description who it is the poet addresses.

Although we have not mentioned all the known *kekawin* in this summary, most of the important ones have been included. Are we to conclude now from the diversity we see there, that it is impossible for us to find an answer to our question? We do not think so, because in most cases this god, whoever he may be: Kâma, Saraswati, Śiwa or "the unknown", is regarded under a quite determinate aspect. And it is this very aspect which, in our opinion, can give us a hint how we primarily have to regard the *kawi*.

In by far the greater number of the *manggala* the poet worships the god who is present in all beauty, in mountain and sea, in flower and woman, and it is he who arouses the aesthetic feeling. It is the god who has his seat in that feeling itself, as felt by the poet or the lover, and likewise in anything with which the poet expresses that feeling: writing instrument, palm-leaf, word or letter. Whether it is Śiwa, the omnipresent god, who is considered under this special aspect, or Kâma, the very god of love and beauty, or the goddess of the beautiful word, Saraswati, is to some extent of minor importance. That may be determined by the devotion of the poet, or, more probably, by the prince to whom he dedicates his poem and who may be a personification of one of these gods.

But what is essential and what the poet primarily sees in the god he

worships we find in the introduction of the *kekawin* Sumanasântaka, which runs as follows:

Sang hyang hyang pinakâdidewa ni karas para kawi,
 (the chief god of the poet's writing leaf)
 makatattwa ng aksara,
 (who is the essence of the letters),
 sang sangkan paran ing palambang,
 (the origin and the final goal of the poem),
 atidurlabha kahanan ira n kawiśwara,
 (extremely difficult to approach in his true dwellingplace, even
 for the king of the poets; or lord of the poets, as he is),
 sang sūkṣmeng kukus ing tanah kinikir ing kuku ri sĕdĕng ing
 angrĕgĕp langö, (who in his subtle and hidden essence unites
 himself with the dust of the writing instrument when sharpened
 by the nail of him who tries to grasp the beauty)
 mâyâkâra winimba.nitya sinamâdhi manurunana caṇḍipustaka,
 (who is shaped in a material, illusory form, when the poet
 unceasingly concentrates his mind on him that he may descend
 in his caṇḍi, the poem).

This praise may be considered typical for the majority of the *mangala*. It could be supplemented and clarified with a great number of parallel passages if space would be allow us to do so. What Teeuw states²⁸ is true: "A special study, collecting and comparing as many materials as possible is necessary". And the more so because through comparison the real sense of the words may become clear. For this is often very special, as it seems to us.

In the first place because we are dealing here with the craft of writing, which knows its own technical terms as any other craft does. It is because they overlooked this fact that Berg and Poerbatjaraka were sidetracked from the very beginning in their translation of sang panikĕlan tanah,²⁹ thinking that the word tanah meant: "land". Now, as far as we know, this meaning is only found in a few places of the Nagarakṛtâgama, while in the rest of *kekawin*-literature it is used a hundred times for "writing instrument", so that we had better think of this meaning first.

²⁸ Teeuw, *Bhomakâwya*, pg. 40.

²⁹ Poerbatjaraka, *Bijdragen* 82 (1926), pg. 115;
 Berg, *Bijdragen* 97 (1938), pg. 23.

But there is still another reason. The last line of the above mentioned stanza of the Sumanasântaka gives us a clue which may be followed up in reading other *manggala*. It is not ordinary praise of the god of beauty which is usually dealt with here. It is not merely the *al hamdu li'llâh* with which the Arab writer begins his work. The phrasing of the *manggala* proves that we are confronted with yoga-practice, i.e. the yoga of the poet, by which he makes himself one with the god (goddess) of beauty.

This god, who in *sūkṣma*-state is present everywhere, is to commune with him in a special way. The poet must bring him down, must give him his *sakala*-state, so that he may become visible. Because of this his worship is not merely an acknowledgement of the greatness and the power of the worshipped god and a confession of his own weakness and littleness before him. It is a form of yoga in which the god of beauty is the centre of his *samâdhi* and, represented in the concentration of his mind as seated in his heart-lotus, is caused by this very *samâdhi* to descend in a special way and to manifest himself to him. And what thus takes place in the innermost and hidden centre of his aesthetic experience, (*sandhi ning langö*), is consequently made visible, because he makes the god descend into his poem as if it were a *caṇḍi*.

So this worship is at the same time a way of mystical union which enables the poet, who considers or at least calls himself a beginner, to 'handle' the beauty as something of his own, because he has completely become one with it. His work is a worship of and a union with the god of beauty, be it Kâma or Saraswati or Śiwa or Bajrajñāna. And many words we meet again and again in these *manggala* stanzas are the technical terms of this *yoga-samâdhi*: *gëlarën*, *minuṣṭi*, *sinamaya*, *pratiṣṭha*, *dhyāna*, *kinëñëp*, *tëllëng ing tutur* etc..

Pûjân ring puṣpa munggwing sarasija

Let him be honoured with flowers, while seated in the lotus.

In these words of the introductory stanza of the *Bhomâkawya* we find the flowerpûjâ to the god, who is seated in the lotus. Teeuw³⁰ wonders, why Kâma is mentioned in connection with the lotus. We might surmise that the similarity of Kâma as the god of beauty and poetry to Saraswati, Brahmâ's daughter, who is represented on a lotus, has been of influence here. At any rate it is certain that in some other place Kâma is represented as hidden in the lotus, preeminently the

³⁰ Teeuw, *ibid.*, pg. 40.

seat of beauty: Ong śrī Manmatha padmaguhya (Ratnawijaya 1.1); and that, when Abhimanyu beseeches Kāma to descend, the latter reveals himself to him "munggu ring padma mas" (Ghaṭotkacâśraya 25.3)

But besides this we have to take into consideration the possibility, that what is meant by the lotus here is the heart-lotus, or one of lotuses in the body, where according to the tantristic yoga the god has or takes his seat. This is made clear in the introduction of the Lubdhaka:

Sthūlākāra sira pratiṣṭha ta haneng hrēdayakamalamadhya nityaśa.
Who in visible form has His seat in the centre of the heartlotus continuously.³¹

Within the limited frame work of this article we cannot go deeper into the matter. What we intended to do was just to indicate the direction to be followed in order that the comparative investigation of the *manggala* might produce further results. But it would seem that now already we are justified in saying that the majority of these *manggala* show us the *kawī* as a servant of beauty, not in the hackneyed sense these words may convey, but in the pregnant sense of an adept of a cult of beauty which has been quite harmoniously integrated into the general religious ideas of those days. His work is primarily a communion with and a poetical reproduction of beauty as it is to be found everywhere, and which is actually nothing but the omnipresent god himself, *sūkṣma* in the deepest essence of all that pleases the senses, and *mūrti* in the outer forms in which it appears.

And this is for him his special way of uniting himself with the divinity: in other words: it is his yoga, just as others can choose their yoga along other ways. The *kawīśwara*, the expert in poetry, king in this realm, is simultaneously a *siddhayogīśwara*, a perfect yogi. And so the goal at which the *kawī* aims is eventually that which every yogi tries to achieve: liberation.

Siddhā ning makasang wulung ya palakungkwācaṇḍya bhāseng karas (Arjunawijaya 1.2)

May he who carries the dark coloured (lontar) case achieve the perfect goal of his striving, that is what I implore, when I build up my *caṇḍi* of language on my writing leaf:

³¹ Compare also Nitiśāstra 1.1.

The god is thus worshipped:

sâdhana sang kawiśwara n asâdhya kalēpasan i sandhi ning
mangö (Gaṭotkacâśraya 1.1)

the practical means for the king of the poets who has final
liberation as his goal when enjoying beauty.

And his poem, in and through which he actualizes the unity with that god, must be the medium, vehicle as well as provision, on his final journey to liberation in the god's abode: silunglunga ning umuliheng smarâlaya (Gaṭotkacâśraya 1.2)

The image of the *kawi* as depicted in the poem itself and that which stands out in the passage where he speaks about himself and his work supplement each other. The seeker of beauty, wanderer along wood and beach, is also a worshipper of the god of beauty; he strives after a union with him, a union which finds its start in his yoga and its definite accomplishment in liberation.

Is he also the priest of the literary magic, as seen by Berg? This is not excluded by the first idea. But whether or not he is a *kawi* does not depend on it; not every *kawi* is necessarily that. But what is really necessary is this: he has to comply with the principal characteristics with which he pictures himself in his work; should he fail to do so, he might be expelled from the guild of the *kawi*.

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