P. Voorhoeve

Lovers grief or horoscope?

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decker de inventaris op van Oosterse boeken en hss. in de nalatenschap van Isaac Saint Martin en wordt in datzelfde jaar genoemd als translateur. (Gegevens verzameld door Cense uit het Algemeen Rijksarchief en notariële acten, en uit: F. de Haan, „Uit oude notariispapieren I”, in *TBG*, 42, jg. 1900, 297vv.). In 1698 wilde de kerkeraad van Batavia hem, naast Leijdecker en P. van der Vorm, benoemd zien in de commissie die Leijdeckers concept-vertaling zou „overzien”, maar daarvan kwam niets wegens zijn aanstaande repatriëring (Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, IV/2, 86v., op grond van de kerkeradsnotulen d.d. 21 juli en 13 okt. 1698).

⁹ Aldus worden deze twee woorden en hun vertaling opgegeven in Cense's ontwerpbeschrijving van het handschrift. Men kan zich echter afvragen of Mutter zich hier niet vergist heeft. Het ligt nl. zoveel meer voor de hand om in de eerste lettergrepen van de twee woorden de voorzetsels *ka/ke* (= naar) en *di* (= in) te zien en in *pasana* een nevenvorm van *paksana*; dan zou de vertaling dus moeten zijn: „naar het Noorden” en „in het Noorden”. Vgl. het aan het Sanskriet ontleende woordenpaar *paksina-daksina* = het Noorden-het Zuiden, dat in literair Maleis voorkomt (Sw.).

¹⁰ Rossi, o.c., 13 nt. 2.

¹¹ Zeer vereerde Moslimse heilige in Zuidwest-Celebes, die wegens zijn inmenging in het conflict van de sultan van Bantam met zijn zoons door de GG in of kort na 1695 uit Indonesië verbannen was naar Ceylon, later naar de Kaap.

P. VOORHOEVE

LOVER'S GRIEF OR HOROSCOPE?

The late Mervyn Jaspán, professor of South-East Asian sociology at Hull University, did his main fieldwork among the Rejang people in South Sumatra. His doctoral thesis *From Patriliney to Matriliney. Structural Change among the Redjang of Southwest Sumatra*, Canberra 1964, was unfortunately never published. Only about 50 copies were distributed. It testifies to the author's many-sided interest in all aspects of Rejang culture and to his keen gift of observation. Though not a professional linguist, he had a preference for the study of language, of literature and of the literary documents preserved in the South-Sumatran script. He collected a mass of Rejang oral texts and a considerable amount of material for a dictionary. But at the time when Jaspán was in Rejang (1961-63) documents in the old script were already scarce, and he only managed to collect a few specimens. Most of these he published in *Redjang Ka-Ga-Nga Texts* (1964). In a short review in this journal (*BKI* 124, 1968, p. 303f.) I pointed out some difficulties in the ka-ga-nga script which I thought had not been quite satisfactorily solved by the author. I did not go into the problems of transcription and translation, because we were then working together in collecting additional South-Sumatran written texts and I felt confident that the author would in the long run share some of my doubts as to the correctness of his interpretations and review these in due time.

Two of Jaspan's Ka-Ga-Nga texts are included in *Indonesian traditional poetry*, collected and introduced by Philip Ward, 1975, in Jaspan's transcription and "with Jaspan's English versions slightly altered". It seems appropriate now to warn against such a premature popularisation. I shall restrict my remarks to Ward's second poem, entitled "A Lover's Grief". The text and translation are:

Barat lawut	Just like the sea
tunggu maring gunung	on the mountaintop.
meteri keilangan	The princess is lost
sumeui maring gunung	to the tiger on the mountaintop.
meteri kekasi	The princess, my loved one.
ruma ketunun	A house of weaving.
bulan purna(ma)	A full moon.

According to Ward, in this poem, "a youth sorrows at rejection by the girl he loves. With a brevity worthy of a Japanese haiku master, the unknown poet compares his chances of attaining her to the likelihood of the sea's reaching the mountaintop. His rival is mystically strong and powerful, like the ancestral tiger (*sumeui*). The poem ends as it began with a haunting image in few words: 'a house of weaving' refers to his beloved's industry; 'a full moon' is her face."

Jaspan found this text written on a bamboo tile. A photograph of the original is published in *Ka-Ga-Nga Texts*, plate 5b (p. 24). It is clearly visible in the reproduction that the word *tunggu* should be *tungga*, and the transcription *sumeui* seems doubtful. Jaspan had hesitated between *sumur* and *sumeui*, but decided for the latter. He says that it is a Rejang word with no Malay or Javanese equivalent. It is not in his Rejang dictionary. It is not clear what exactly he meant by 'ancestral tiger'. Above the seven lines of the text there are two more lines, containing the ka-ga-nga syllabary with varying numbers of dots above each syllable.

In our search for more ka-ga-nga texts we found three other copies of this same text. All of them have the syllabary with dots or small dashes. There is a great deal of congruence in the number of dots among the copies. Two of the texts are in manuals of divination written on tree bark, one on a bamboo cylinder together with a drawing of a human figure accompanied by disconnected syllables. This is also found in one of the bark books.

In Batak divination books too one finds syllabaries with the numerical value of the letters, and human figures with separate syllables. In addition there is a jingle called *tabas ni ari na pitu*, incantation of the seven days, used as a mnemonic device and widely known in oral tradition.

Might the South-Sumatran text of seven short lines also have some connexion with the days of the week? And might it have been used in divination? Both questions can be answered in the affirmative. One copy of our text mentions the days of the week, and another one has

the word *rasiyanya*, 'its secret', after each line. Perhaps this is meant as *rasiannya*, derived from *rasi* = *raksi*, sign of the zodiac.

The other texts are:

Leiden, University Library Or. 12276, on bamboo, with a copy on paper made in Bencoolen, 1860.

barat di lawut	west at sea
tangga' maring gunung	tree stump towards mountain
beteri keilangan	princess suffering loss
sumui maring gunung	<i>sumui</i> (?) towards mountain
beteri kekasih	princess beloved
rumah ketunun	house burnt
bulan parename	full moon.

Mission Museum, Tilburg, ET 48-2-119, p. 34 of a tree bark book.

jemahat bare lahut	Friday, <i>bare</i> (?) sea
saptu tunggak maring gunung	Saturday, tree stump towards mountain
ha'at menteri kasih	Sunday, minister loving
senin menteri kilangan	Monday, minister suffering loss
selase sumur atas gunung	Tuesday, water well on mountain
rebu rumah ketunun	Wednesday, house burnt
kemis bulan parename	Thursday, full moon.

Mission Museum, Tilburg, ET 48-2-120, p. 17 of a tree bark book.

garang ketunun rasiyenye	things burnt is its <i>rasiye</i>
tunggak maring gunung rasiyenye	tree stump towards mountain is its <i>r.</i>
menteri suke same kasih rasiyenye	minister glad and loving is its <i>r.</i>
menteri kehilangan rasiyenye	minister suffering loss is its <i>r.</i>
rumur maring gunung rasiyenye	water well towards mountain is its <i>r.</i>
rumah ketunun rasiyenye	house burnt is its <i>rasiye</i>
bulan parename rasiyenye	full moon is its <i>rasiye</i>
bangka' rasiyenye	old betel nut(?) is its <i>rasiye</i> .

(I guess that *garang* should be *barang* and I am sure that *rumur* is a scribal error for *sumur*.)

In this last version one line has been added, possibly to make the number of lines fit a divination table in the shape of the eight points of the compass. The orthography of the three additional versions is not Rejang but Middle-Malay. We may conclude that Jaspan's 'Lover's Grief' was once widely known in South Sumatra as a jingle used for divination in connexion with the seven days of the week and the numerical value of letters.

Jaspan has remarked that an 'almost identical' text is used as an incantation in the ceremonies accompanying the gathering of wild bees' honey (BKI 123, 1967, p. 499).

In the divinatory jingle there is no apparent connexion between the

seven lines. There may be, or may have been, such a connexion, which remains hidden to an outsider not initiated in Malay divination. Is it possible that this hidden, or lost, original meaning was correctly ascertained by Jaspan with the help of his Rejang informants? Was it originally a love poem?

I think that the comparison of the four versions makes this extremely improbable. In the first line *barat* is doubtful; if it is correct the obvious meaning of *barat laut* would be north-west, not 'as (*ibarat*) the sea'. In the second line *tunggu* was a slip of Jaspan's pen, which he corrected in BKI 123 to *tungga*, but he did not adapt his translation to this change. *Tungga* or *tunggak* is in all the versions; it means tree stump. In the third and fifth lines the Rejang princess (*meteri*, Rej. pronunciation *meterai*) is confirmed by one Middle-Malay *beteri*, but two versions have a minister (*menteri*). In the fourth line the word *sumeui* or *sumui* remains suspect. In Jaspan's text and in the Leiden MS. the diphthong is expressed in writing by a combination of the *u* and *ai* signs. This is very uncommon in *rènychong* script. It seems much more probable that in these two MSS. the sign above the syllable means *-r*, not *ai*, just as the slightly different sign in the two Tilburg copies. Thus *sumur*, a well, would be meant in all the versions. In the sixth and seventh lines all the versions agree. Jaspan's translation 'a house of weaving' is out of the question, because *ketunun* (from Jav. *tunu*) means 'burnt' and has nothing to do with *tenun* (weaving). The full moon in the last line fits astrology as well as poetry.

I am afraid that Ward's 'unknown poet' was born in 1961 during Jaspan's consultations with his Rejang informants and did not inspire the *dukuns* who wrote divination manuals a hundred years earlier.