S. Supomo

Some problems in writing about contemporary life as depicted in the Sumanasantaka


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It is now over thirty years since the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde published the first \textit{kakawin}, the \textit{Siwarāṭrikalpa}, in its newly founded Bibliotheca Indonesica series (Teeuw et al 1969). The publication was the result of the combined efforts of five editors, comprising three well-established scholars – Professors A. Teeuw, P.J. Zoetmulder, and Th.P. Gales tin – and two promising young students – Stuart Robson and Peter Worsley. As stated by the Editorial Board of the Bibliotheca Indonesica on the page following the title page of each publication, the aim of the institute in publishing texts in various Indonesian languages, along with translations and commentaries in English, is to 'contribute further to the unlocking of the treasury of Indonesian literatures for the benefit of international scholarship'. With respect to this aim, the publication of the \textit{Siwarāṭrikalpa} was, to my mind, an unqualified success. The five co-editors of the \textit{Siwarāṭrikalpa} had pooled their expertise in such a way that they succeeded in producing not only a critical edition of the text with a translation and notes to the translation, but also a comprehensive work that deals with various aspects of the \textit{kakawin} in its historical and cultural contexts. The fruit of their collaboration greatly benefits students of literature proper, and the discussion of the various topics dealt with in the text – some briefly, others at length – clearly shows that students from other branches of learning, such as linguistics, history, anthropology and comparative religion, 'may also find much in this literature to enrich and deepen their insight'.

\textit{The Javanese landscape as depicted in kakawin}

One of the topics discussed in the above-mentioned publication is that of features of the Javanese countryside as depicted in \textit{Siwarāṭrikalpa}, in particular cantos 2 and 3 (Teeuw et al 1969:45-51). As far as I am aware, this was the first
time this topic was discussed in an introduction to a publication of a kakawin. Until then, publications of kakawin were usually limited to an edition of the text, sometimes – often much later – followed by its translation with some notes to the translation. If an introduction was provided at all, it was usually restricted to a discussion of the introductory and closing cantos of the kakawin, which sometimes mention the names of the poet and his royal patron, so that the date of its composition can be determined. Another aspect often discussed was the relationship with the Indian original, often on the basis of the underlying assumption that kakawin – with all the names of the heroes and their wives mentioned in them, and of the kings and their ministers and the mountains and rivers bearing well-known Sanskrit names – were nothing more than works of fiction based on Indian narratives. Accordingly, the entire narrative section of the kakawin was simply dismissed as having nothing to do with contemporary Javanese life.

In this respect the Deśawarṇana, ‘Depiction of the Country’, which is more commonly known as Nāgarakṛtāgama, is of course an exception. This exceptional kakawin, which is unique for its subject matter, is always viewed in a totally different light – the kings and the princes mentioned in it are all accepted as historical persons. So, too, the descriptions of the kraton and the surrounding villages and religious establishments with all their inhabitants, as well as of the mountains, the sea and the forest and the creatures frequenting them, are all seen as reflecting real aspects of Javanese scenery and life in fourteenth-century Java in general.

It is to the credit of the Śiwarātrikalpa editors that by discussing features of the Javanese countryside – brief as this discussion may be – they highlighted an aspect of this kakawin that until then had received hardly any attention from scholars in the field of Old Javanese studies, namely that its depictions of scenery were not much different from Prapanca’s in his celebrated kakawin, the Deśawarṇana. Indeed, the editors even suggest that the actual place where the hunter Lubdhaka of the Śiwarātrikalpa lived must have been ‘somewhere in the Pēnanggungan-Arjuna mountain complex, or in the region of Tumapel where [...] [the historical king] Suraprabhāwa may have had his capital’ (Teeuw et al. 1969:46).

The publication of the Śiwarātrikalpa came at a most opportune time for me. I was right in the middle of my work on the Arjunawijaya kakawin for my PhD thesis, to be submitted to the Australian National University, and, having finished with the transcription of the text and the translation, was in search of subjects for the introduction – somewhat frantically, I have to admit, since the deadline for submission of the thesis was fast approaching. Thus inspired by that small sub-chapter on features of the Javanese countryside and, to some extent, the following sub-chapters with notes on religion (Teeuw et al. 1969:51-7), I decided to include a chapter on contemporary life...
as reflected in the *Arjunawijaya* in my own publication, in which I would deal with features of the royal compound, the countryside and religious establishments, as well as with the problem of 'the Lord of the Mountains' in fourteenth-century Java (Supomo 1977:49-82).

In the meantime, Professor Zoetmulder, one of the five co-editors of the *Siwarātrikalpa*, had been working on the same features on a much larger scale, using data from various *kakawin*, including as yet unedited ones. In his *Kalangwan* (Zoetmulder 1974) he included two chapters discussing the poets and the world depicted in their poems, which take up almost a hundred pages, or about twenty per cent of the whole book (Zoetmulder 1974:126-214). Apart from Th.G.Th. Pigeaud's voluminous work dealing with fourteenth-century Java as reflected in the *Deśawarṇana* and other contemporary documents (Pigeaud 1960-63), Zoetmulder's discussion of this topic is the most comprehensive so far, and has helped to dispel any lingering doubt that 'the world of the poem' is not to be located somewhere in India, but in Java. 'Under the guise of Sanskrit personal and place names', Zoetmulder eloquently declares, 'the poet is presenting a picture of his own country and his own society. These men and women with their Indian names are essentially Javanese, acting like Javanese, thinking like Javanese and living in a Javanese environment.' (Zoetmulder 1974:187-8.)

Nevertheless, while such a sweeping statement is acceptable in general, especially as regards the depiction of the physical environment of the *kraton* and the countryside, of times and seasons, of flora and fauna, I often wonder, when reading a number of passages in the *kakawin*, whether those heroes and heroines really are 'acting like Javanese' and 'thinking like Javanese', especially where we know for certain that these passages bear a fairly close resemblance to their Sanskrit sources. Of course Zoetmulder himself, recognizing that a *kakawin* is after all a work of fiction which borrowed heavily from its Indian sources, cautioned us not to accept indiscriminately everything in every *kakawin* as a reflection of Javanese life and manners. 'It would be unwise', he says, 'to rely too much on the *Bhāratayuddha* for a true description of Old Javanese warfare, or to argue from the *Sumanasāntaka* that the *swayambara*, the self-choice of a future husband by a princess among the assembled kings, was practised in that way in Java about AD 1200' (Zoetmulder 1974:188).

This brings us to the main concern of the present paper: the *Sumanasāntaka* *kakawin*.

Since May 1998 Professor P.J. Worsley of Sydney University and I have been working on a project, partly funded by a small grant from the Australian Research Council, to produce a critical edition and English translation of the *Sumanasāntaka* *kakawin*. The project will also involve an examination of the relationship between the *kakawin* version of the story and the version of...
Earlier studies of the Sumanasättaka

The Sumanasättaka is one of the many Old Javanese works that appear not to have survived in Java, disappearing at a fairly early stage in the process of the loss of literary products there. Of the more than twenty manuscripts known to me so far, none hails from Java, nor is there known to be any Modern Javanese rendering of the poem in existence. In fact, not even the principal protagonists have been retained in the collective memory of the Javanese people – their names do not occur in later Javanese literary works, nor do they feature in the wayang tradition. In Bali, however, the poem has not only survived but apparently has continued to enjoy high regard among the population. This is evident from the existence there not only of ten more or less complete manuscripts and a few fragments that have come down to us, but also of a later adaptation of the kakawin in Middle Javanese kidung form, as well as its mention in at least two other kidung (Zoetmulder 1974: 306). From H.M. Creese's recent study it is moreover clear that eighteenth-century Balinese poets continued to use the Sumanasättaka, along with the Ṛāmāyaṇa, as a model for the writing of their kakawin (Creese 1998:45, 47, 144, 424-5).

However, unlike the Ṛāmāyaṇa – the adikakawin that aroused great interest among students of Old Javanese literature for a long period of time – the Sumanasättaka hardly attracted attention. Thus, while the former was edited as early as a century ago (Kern 1900) and was subsequently translated into Dutch, and more recently was re-edited and translated into English (Soewito Santoso 1980), the latter is still waiting to be edited and published – its manuscripts have remained undisturbed since they were deposited in various libraries, only now and then perhaps to be somewhat cursorily examined by cataloguers. And, compared with the large number of in-depth studies of its Sanskrit prototype and include a discussion of some aspects of Javanese contemporary life as reflected in the Sumanasättaka.

2 Seven MSS are kept in the Library of the Leiden University, two in the National Library in Jakarta, one in the Kirtya Library in Singaraja, and four in the Hooykaas Proyek Tik collection (one of them a copy of the Kirtya MS) kept at the University of Sydney, while one is in the possession of Professor S.O. Robson of Monash University. During my visit to Bali in January-February 1999, I located one MS in the Faculty of Letters of Udayana University and one in the Library of the Pusat Dokumentasi Kebudayaan Bali in Denpasar and was able, with the help of Ida I Dewa Gde Catra of Amlapura, Karangasem, to obtain photocopies of five other MSS from various parts of Bali and Lombok.

3 MS LOr 5015, for instance, is described in the catalogues as 'incomplete' (Pigeaud 1967-70 I:183, II:253), while on closer examination I found this to be a complete MS. The error apparently was based on the mistaken assumption that the last few pages of the MS were missing, so that it was said to end abruptly in 168.6e with the words sīndhyā yata (Juynboll 1907:146). After reading the whole of the MS in 1992, I found, however, that the 'missing' leaves were 'hidden' in
the *Rāmāyaṇa* by many different scholars (see, for instance, Poerbatjaraka 1926, 1932; Hooykaas, 1955, 1958; Robson 1980; and Khanna and Saran 1993), the *Sumanasāntaka* can boast of no more than two or three articles devoted to particular aspects of the poem. Considering that the *Sumanasāntaka* has been known to modern scholarship for almost one and a half centuries now through R. Friederich’s well-known preliminary report on Bali, such an oversight is, to say the least, surprising. The more so since; according to Friederich, it is one of the three *kakawin* – the others being the *Arjunaωiwāha* and the *Smaradahana* – which are ‘in a peculiarly good style, and highly esteemed’ (Friederich 1959:24).

Friederich’s report contains no more than one paragraph on the *Sumanasāntaka*, but in this brief description of the poem he manages to include the name of its author, *mpu* Monaguna, and to correctly identify its source, namely the Indian *Raghuvaṃśa*. Friederich’s account admittedly also includes some erroneous observations – such as that ‘Adia’s husband is called Dewindu’ and that the poem was written ‘in Kediri or Daha under *Ayer Langgia*’ (Friederich 1959:24) – but, considering the general level of knowledge of Old Javanese language and history at the time, right at the beginning of the development of Old Javanese studies, such errors are only to be expected. Forty years elapsed before H.H. Juynboll wrote a short article on the poem, in which he corrected Friederich’s errors – noting that Aja, instead of Adia, is the husband, and *dewi* Indumati, instead of Dewindu, is the wife. Juynboll also made a more detailed comparison of the *Sumanasāntaka* and the *Raghuvaṃśa*, sarga V-VIII (Juynboll 1899). We then had to wait another three quarters of a century before the *Sumanasāntaka* was examined again as part of the general survey of Old Javanese literature by Zoetmulder. As in the case of the other so-called ‘major’ *kakawin* described in *Kalangwan*, Zoetmulder provided a detailed summary of the poem and discussed the date of its composition, its authorship, and its relationship to Indian literature (Zoetmulder 1974:298-311). He also drew heavily on the *Sumanasāntaka* for his chapters on poets and poetry and the world of the poem, in particular the sub-chapter ‘Times and seasons’ (Zoetmulder 1974:126-214). According to him (Zoetmulder 1974:306), it was ‘highly regrettable’ that so far the poem had not been critically edited and translated, for ‘it must be considered one of the best specimens of its genre. It is written in fresh and lively language and is full of variety. It has everything a *kakawin* is supposed to contain.’

the middle of the volume. Apparently before Juynboll had a chance to examine this MS, someone had mixed up its leaves and inadvertently inserted the last five, which happen to contain the colophon, in the middle of the volume. The error apparently has been rectified since – the microfilm of the MS which I later obtained from the Library contains all the pages in the right sequence.
More recently, Creese (1981:128-90) has made use of data from the Sumanasantaka and other kakawin for her chapter on 'Marriage in Old Javanese literature' in her PhD thesis dealing with the kakawin Subhadrawiwaha. Moreover, Robson (1983:304-7), in his discussion of kakawin as allegory, has analysed the text and suggested the possibility that the story of Indumati’s marriage to Aja in this poem is an allusion to a marriage between a historical princess of Kaḍiri and a prince attached to the court of the poet’s patron.

Comparison of the Sumanasantaka and the Raghuvamsa

As the name implies, the Raghuvamsa tells the story of the entire 'Dynasty of Raghu'. It begins with the story of King Dilipa, the birth of his son Raghu – who apparently is considered as the founder of the dynasty, hence the title of the work – and Raghu’s conquest of the whole country (cantos I-IV). It then continues with the story of Raghu’s son, Aja, from his birth (V 36), and his participation in a swayambhara in which he wins the hand of Indumati, to his subsequent accession to the throne after the abdication of his father. The couple’s happiness is complete with the birth of their son, Daśaratha, but comes to an end not long afterwards when, in accordance with the curse uttered by a Brahmin in his former life, Indumati dies when a garland blown by the wind falls from the sky on her breast. This episode does have a happy ending, however, when, after Aja’s death some eight years later, they are re-united in the 'pleasure-houses within the gardens of the Nandana forest' (VIII 95). The story of Daśaratha is briefly recounted in canto IX, which is followed by a much longer narrative of the exploits of his son, Rāma, the greatest hero of the dynasty of Raghu (X-XV). The next two cantos contain the story of Kuśa and his son Atithi (XVI-XVII), followed by what is no more than a list of names of the nineteen succeeding kings (XVIII). The text ends with the story of king Agnivarma, who dies of a venereal disease and whose wife then rules the country while awaiting the birth of her child (XIX) (Nandargikar 1971).

The Sumanasantaka, on the other hand, comprises only the story of one particular king of the dynasty of Raghu, out of the twenty-nine occurring in the Raghuvamsa, namely Aja (Raghuvamsa V 36-VIII 95). Moreover, as the difference in the title of the work indicates, the emphasis has shifted. Although Aja certainly still plays an important role in the kakawin, it is...
Indumati who, as Robson has pointed out, is the more important character (Robson 1983:306). Perhaps the strange manner of her death stirred Monaguna’s imagination when he composed his poem and called it ‘Death by the sumanasa flower, rather than, for instance, Ajāyana, ‘The journeying of Aja’, or Ajawiwāha, ‘The marriage of Aja’, in imitation of the two best-known Old Javanese kakawin, the Rāmāyana and Arjunawiwāha, which must have been widely known in his day. As if to emphasize the greater importance of Indumati’s role compared to that of Aja, the poet does not begin his kakawin with the birth and childhood of Aja, as does the Aja episode of the Raghuvamsa (V 36-38), but with an eighty-seven-stanza-long episode of the seduction of the Brahmin Trṇawindu by the nymph Harini and his subsequent curse upon her (Sumanasāntaka 1.3-9.3). This episode is recounted only briefly almost at the end of the Aja episode in the Raghuvamsa (VII 79-81). In the kakawin, these events are followed by the story of Indumati’s birth and childhood and the death of her parents in fifty-one stanzas (10.1-18.2). The whole poem then can perhaps be seen as the story of Indumati in three distinct parts, though of unequal length, starting with the curse of Harini and her subsequent birth as Indumati (1.3-15.8), continuing with her marriage (15.9-158.6), and finishing with her death and her return to her former self (159.1-182.3).

This division of the narrative into three major episodes will be highlighted in the following table of comparison between the Sumanasāntaka and the Aja story in the Raghuvamsa.

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<td>(160 stanzas)</td>
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<td>Part 1. The Birth of Indumati</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3-8</td>
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<td>Indra sends Harini to seduce Trṇawindu.</td>
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<td>Description of the scenery through which Harini passes to reach Trṇawindu’s hermitage and her attempt to seduce him.</td>
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<td>6.6-7.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Trṇawindu puts a curse on her whereby she will be reborn as a human being but this life will be ended by a sumanasa flower (Raghuvamsa: surapuṣpa).</td>
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<td>10.1-3</td>
<td>VIII 92</td>
<td>Harini is reborn in Widarbha as Indumati.</td>
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<td>10.4-21</td>
<td></td>
<td>Indumati’s childhood till the age of twelve.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(209 stanzas)</td>
<td>(40 stanzas)</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>V 36-38</td>
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<td>30.20-32.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>33.2-</td>
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<tr>
<td>39.1-7</td>
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<td>V 64-75</td>
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</table>

(a) Aja's Journey to Widarbha
Aja is born to King Raghu of Ayodhya.
Bhoja decides to hold a swayambara for Indumati.
Preparation for the swayambara/wedding in Widarbha (includes a mention of Jayawaspa and Kawidoça).

Aja's departure from Ayodhya to Widarbha.
Description of the countryside and seasons.
Aja arrives at Narmada; he is attacked by a wild elephant.
The elephant changes into a Widydadhara, Priyambada, who then gives Aja the Sangmohana arrow.
Description of the countryside, the sea and the wooded mountains.
Aja's arrival at Widarbha.
Description of night, dawn and morning.

(b) The Bride's Choice
Pidudukan (preparatory ceremony for the wedding).
The kings assemble at the meeting-ground for the swayambara.
Indumati approaches the king of Magadha; Sunanda introduces him to her but she does not show the slightest interest.
Repertition of the above scene with the king of Angga, with the king of Awanti, with Pratipa,
Susena, Hemanggada, the king of Kalingga, and Pántya.
Finally Indumati approaches Aja and puts her jewelled necklace (Raghuvamśa: garland) around his neck as a token of her choice.

(c) The Wedding
The young couple and guests leave the assembly ground.
Description of the wedding ceremonies, comprising the tawur, the 'tying-together' of the bride and groom,
the circumambulation of the sacred fire, and the praspras; and description of the festivities.
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<td>The other kings take leave of King Bhoja.</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>The ceremonies continue with the warang ceremony.</td>
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(249 stanzas) (40 stanzas) (d) Aja’s Return to Ayodhya

132.1-143.3 — Aja announces his intention to go back to Ayodhya.
Description of leave-taking.
143.4-145.4 VII 32-33. Accompanied by Bhoja for part of the way.
145.5-9 VII 34 The rejected kings are planning to waylay Aja.
145.10-147.3 — Aja and his army prepare for the battle; the women are taken to safety in a place that is difficult of access.
147.1-153.29 VII 35-60 Description of the battle.
153.30-31 VII 61-70 Aja and Indumati arrive at Ayodhya.
153.32-154.3 VII 61-70 Aja and Indumati arrive at Ayodhya.
154.4-157.1 — Description of scenery through which Aja passes as he leisurely continues his journey.
157.2-158.6 VII 71 Aja and Indumati arrive at Ayodhya.

(113 stanzas) (95 stanzas) Part 3. The Death of Indumati

158.1-161.2 VIII 1-23 Raghu abdicates in favour of his son and retires to the forest.
161.3-162.2 VIII 24-26 Raghu dies.
162.3 VIII 28-29 Daśaratha is born.
164.1-168.2 VIII 32 The royal couple are disporting themselves in the garden,
168.3 VIII 33 and Narada arrives there.
168.4-7 VIII 34-39 A sumanasa flower falls on Indumati's breast, causing her death.
168.8-170.17 VIII 40-69 Aja laments and heaps reproaches on the sumanasa flower.
169.1-170.17 — Indumati regains consciousness and bids farewell to her husband; Jayawaspa follows Indumati in death by stabbing herself.
170.18-173.6 VIII 75-91 A sage explains the cause of Indumati's death to Aja (see 1.3-3.21).
174.1 VIII 92-93 In grief, Aja rules for another 8 years.
175.1 VIII 94 Daśaratha eventually succeeds his father.
175.2-182.3 VIII 93-95 Aja and Kawidosha (the latter only in Sumana-sāntaka) end their lives at the confluence of the
Summary of Contents

183.1-2 — The epilogue, in which the author introduces himself as Monaguṇa, a pupil of the renowned teacher Śri Warsajaya.

(1151 stanzas) (293 stanzas)

Depiction of contemporary life in the Sumanasantaka

It is clear from this table of comparison that Monaguṇa has greatly expanded his poem by adding so many features to the basic story of the Aja episode of the Rāghuvaṃśa that, in terms of the number of stanzas, the Sumanasantaka is almost four times longer than its prototype. As a matter of course we find a fair number of familiar descriptions of scenery among these additional passages—such as of villages and rice fields, forests and wildernesses, mountains, rivers and oceans, flora and fauna, and the dawn and evening. Such features are found, in one form or another, in most, if not all, kakawin, and as Creese recently suggested in relation to such descriptive interludes in the kakawin Pārthāyana, they may ‘serve to advance the plot and separate each of the [...] main dramatic episodes from each other’ (Creese 1998:53). It is clear from reading such passages that, although there are differences in details, the scenery described by Monaguṇa in the Sumanasantaka is essentially the same as that described by Tanakung in the Śivarātrikalpa, or by Tantular in the Arjunawijaya, or by Prapaṇca in the Deśawarnana. It seems obvious from the depictions of the landscape in these kakawin that the region through which Harini passes on her way from heaven to Trṇawindu’s hermitage is endowed with the same natural scenery and the same fauna and flora as those witnessed by Aja when he is travelling from Ayodhya to Widarbha, or by Arjuna Sahasrabahu and his queen when journeying around his realm Mahiṣmati in the Arjunawijaya, or, for that matter, by King Raṭasanagara as he is touring the various districts of the kingdom of Majapahit in the Deśawarnana. Since it has generally been accepted that all those places mentioned by Prapaṇca actually existed, and in fact many of them still exist in the central and eastern part of Java, it seems reasonable to argue that, unless it can be proved otherwise, descriptions of the scenery by Monaguṇa in the Sumanasantaka must also have been based on views of actual places which he often frequented, that is, in the region of Kaḍiri, where he may have had his residence in around 1200 AD.

If we accept the proposition that the scenery depicted in the Sumanasantaka is that of the region where Monaguṇa lived, the next question that
may be asked is whether the numerous descriptions of events and activities and their environment in this *kakawin* – some lengthy, others brief – are also based on events which actually took place. This question is harder to answer with certainty than the previous one, but, if we are to use the *kakawin* as a source of information on daily life in ancient Java, has to be resolved. In this regard, the *Deṣawarnana* occupies a unique position in *kakawin* literature, for while other *kakawin* are regarded primarily as works of fiction, with narratives mostly derived from Sanskrit literary works, Prapañca's poem is generally accepted as being based on events and scenes that actually occurred. Nevertheless, we do differentiate – rightly, I believe – between scenes which Prapañca apparently witnessed himself and events which he only heard about from someone else. Thus, while we readily accept, for instance, that Rājasanagara actually visited Pajang, Lasem, Loḍaya and Lumajang, in 1353, 1354, 1357, and 1359 respectively (*Deṣawarnana* 17.6-7), or that he took part in an actual hunting expedition while touring the country (50.1-54.3), we seem to be less inclined to accept Prapañca's accounts of the history of Rājasanagara's ancestors as told by the *mpu* of Mungguh (40.1-49.4), unless such an account is verified by other sources, such as literary works and inscriptions and other archaeological remains.

The question now is: can we apply this way of looking at the *Deṣawarnana* (that is, by differentiating between what the poet himself actually witnessed and what he had from hearsay) to the *Sumanasāntaka* to determine which depictions of scenes of particular activities can be accepted as a reflection of daily life? It is here, I believe, that a detailed comparison, much more detailed than the one presented here, could be of immense help. In principle perhaps we may assume that, like any depiction of scenery in the *Sumanasāntaka* being the result of Monaguna's observation of the region where he lived, any description of events or scenes which has no correspondence in the *Raghuvamśa* most likely also resulted from Monaguna's observation of his surroundings. Unless proved otherwise, therefore, such depictions should be accepted as being a reflection of events or scenes that actually occurred and were witnessed by Monaguna himself. On the other hand, any accounts of episodes or scenes which can be identified as deriving from the *Raghuvamśa* should be rejected in this respect, unless similar accounts are found in other reliable sources. And the table of contents above clearly shows that such descriptions of episodes and scenes which were clearly derived from the *Raghuvamśa* are plentiful. Despite the obvious difference in length as far as their narrative content is concerned, the *Sumanasāntaka* and the Aja episode of the *Raghuvamśa* are the same. The names of the principal characters in both works – Harini and Tṛṇawindu, Indumati and Aja, Sunandā and the seven kings who take part in the *swayambara* – are identical. And, aside from the transposition of the account of Harini's attempt to seduce Tṛṇawindu...
Supomo and her subsequent rebirth as a human being from the last part of the *Raghuvaṃśa* to the first part of the *Sumanasāntaka*, Monaguna faithfully followed the sequence of events in the Aja episode as narrated in the *Raghuvaṃśa* – even including the order in which Indumati scrutinized the seven participants in the *swayambara*. As Zoetmulder has pointed out, even the words spoken by Sunandā in introducing each participant to her mistress occasionally display striking parallels (Zoetmulder 1974:308). It seems reasonable to suppose that in such episodes where a close parallel between the two works can be detected, the scenes depicted in the *Sumanasāntaka* are derived from the *Raghuvaṃśa* and therefore may have no relation whatsoever with any events or activities which took place in actual life in Java.

The *Sumanasāntaka*, however, is a long poem. With its 1150 stanzas, it is the third-longest *kakawin*, and, as Zoetmulder (1974:306) has said, 'It has everything that a *kakawin* is supposed to contain'. Besides the lengthy depictions of natural scenery, the poem abounds with descriptions of backgrounds of human activities – such as ceremonies and festivities, scenes of dalliance and journeys, rejoicing and mourning, counselling and gossiping, fighting and love-making. So, even if we leave out all the scenes that have close parallels with the prototype of the poem, the *Sumanasāntaka* still offers more than many other *kakawin* as a source of information about life in ancient Java. This is most evident in its accounts of Indumati's childhood (10.1-21) and marriage (40.1-131.3).

Marriage is no doubt the favourite theme of the poets of ancient Java – marriages take place in most of the so-called major *kakawin* written in Java. This is probably because stories of marriage provide the poets with an easy opportunity of fulfilling one of the poetic requirements – creating *śṛṇgga-rarāśa*, or an 'erotic mood'. Nevertheless, it is remarkable to find in this poem, which bears a title ending in *-antaka*, 'death', the most comprehensive description of a wedding ceremony, covering a period from the days preceding the wedding, when temporary pavilions to conduct the various ceremonies in are erected, to the day after the consummation of the marriage. As we can see from the table of comparison above, most of the terms used for these ceremonies are Javanese, such as *pidudukan*, *tawur*, *praspras*, and *kran*. Besides, these ceremonies have no parallels in the *Raghuvaṃśa*. So perhaps it is safe to assume that their descriptions are based on Javanese customs in connection with marriage in those days. However, in between the first kind of ceremony, *pidudukan* (40.1-51.9), and the last one, *kran* (127.1-131.3), we also find the *swayambara* (52.1-110.2) and the circumambulation of the sacred fire (111.11-112.2), which have parallels in the *Raghuvaṃśa*. So, although the account of the *swayambara* is arguably the most important part of the poem, and the fire worship rite the key part of the wedding ceremony, unless corroborative evidence for the existence of both of these in Java can be
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found in other literary, historical or ethnographic sources, they have to be regarded merely as parts of the purely literary tradition derived from Indian sources which have no bearing on Javanese reality.\(^5\)

While marriage is a favourite theme in *kakawin*, birth, surprisingly, is not. Heroes and heroines appearing on the stage of the *kakawin* world mostly already are handsome or beautiful young men or women, ripe for amorous encounters. Their birth is hardly mentioned, their childhood even less. And if anything is said about this at all, the poet usually devotes no more than one or two stanzas to it. This is surprising because, like the erotic mood, the 'birth-and-rise of Princes' is also an important theme in poetry (Hooykaas 1958:13). Moreover, in the *wayang* tradition the *lakon* concerning the birth of a hero is as popular as that dealing with his marriage. Thus, although the account of Indumati's birth and her childhood until the age of twelve is only twenty-one stanzas long, the *Sumanasāntaka* still presents us with more information on this phase of life than any other *kakawin*. At least we learn from it about the stages of childhood which Monaguna considered important enough to be mentioned in his *kakawin*, such as the stage when Indumati was still in the constant care of her two wet nurses, who 'treated her gently and nursed the lovely child day and night' (angharis-haris anusuani rahina węngi suputrikā, 10.5c); when 'she lay on her tummy, as she often did, and squirmed about like a baby turtle' (kumureh-kureb kumědal asring aniruniru pura ning pēru, 10.8c); when 'suddenly she was like a god as she sat up quietly imitating the way that Ganeśa sits' (moghdangyang sira yan malunggu arāreäm tumiru-tiru palungguh ing Ġana, 10.9c); when 'she was quick to learn to walk and could toddle about' (enggal wruh tinitah bisdtaratayan, 10.13); when 'she had lost her first teeth for the first time, which was taken as the occasion for her to study the sacred texts with a great sage' (sampun rakwa sirāpupak pinakapūrwaka nirāngāji muniśwara, 10.14b); then when 'quickly she grew more beautiful, just like the buds of asana flowers hearing the thunder' (śighra tuwuh nirāhayu sawang salaga ning asanāṅgṛēngō gērēh, 10.15a); and finally when 'she was fully twelve years of age [and] it was time for her to be presented as a maiden at court' (piṇḍa dwadaśawarṣa kāla ni wijil nira rumara-rara n hanē dalēm, 10.18a). Apparently the latter stage also marked the end of her childhood, and she was now ripe for marriage (*masa ning akarma*, 15.9c).

Besides the principal characters, all of whom originated from the *Raghu-vamśa*, the *Sumanasāntaka* presents additional characters in the form of Indumati's attendant, known by the name of Jayawaspa, and Aja's confidant, Kawidoṣa. Perhaps we may also include in this list the nameless queens of

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Widarba—Indumati’s mother and her sister-in-law—and the queen of Ayodhya, Aja’s mother. These figures are closely related to either Indumati or Aja, and although their presence may not affect the predestined outcome of the narrative, we can learn from their advice, always liberally given to the hero and the heroine, about what was considered proper conduct in various spheres of Javanese life in those days. Such additional characters also occur in many other Indian-based *kakawin*. In the *Hariwangsa*, for instance, we find Keśari, Rukmini’s confidante, and Priyambada, Kṛṣṇa’s companion (Teeuw 1950:89); in the *Bhāratayuddha* we have Kṣitipundari, Abhimanyu’s wife, Satyawati, Śalya’s wife, and the latter’s faithful lady-in-waiting, Sugandhikā (Supomo 1993:294, 298, 299); and in the *Arjunawijaya* we have Citrāwati, the wife of Arjuna Sahasrabahu, and Suwandha, Arjuna’s first minister (Supomo 1977:340, 344). Such characters may have Indian names, but so far we have not been able to identify them with any characters from the Sanskrit works from which these *kakawin* derive, directly or indirectly. It seems most likely, therefore, that these characters were invented in Java. They form part of a process which may be called the ‘Javanization’ of the Indian sources (Supomo 1996:29).

Apart from these principal and additional characters, we also find, just as in any other *kakawin*, an even larger category of figures who perhaps may be called ‘incidental’ characters. They represent the nameless people whose presence may have no impact whatsoever on the course, let alone the outcome, of the narrative. Nevertheless, we always find them there when certain events or activities are taking place. The narrative mentions them in various places—in the *kraton*, on the road, in the village, in the marketplace, at the coast, in the wooded mountains, or in a hermitage. As is to be expected in a work centred around a princess and a prince, we find among these incidental characters a group of women who work inside the *kraton* of Widarba (*wong i dalėm*), many of them as Indumati’s governesses, companions and attendants, apparently looking after her day and night throughout her childhood (10.4-21); we hear them gossiping throughout the night of the *pidudukan* ceremony in order to keep awake (40.1-51.9). There are also people working outside the *kraton*, rendering their services to the king by erecting and decorating temporary pavilions in which the various wedding ceremonies are to take place (19.4-6). Then, during the festivities, we see the whole town thronged by villagers and their families who have come—one even with his pregnant wife, who was ‘carrying a child in the shawl, taking another by the hand […], while nursing a baby, and at the same time searching for another child who was missing’ (*angēmban anuntun āmētēng […] manamby anuswani, aprak-prākan apan hilang sasiki, 52.7*)—to witness the *swayambhara* and enjoy the spectacles (52.6-9, 112.2-15). We also see the entire female population of Ayodhya bidding farewell to Aja with lovesick eyes as
he is about to set out from Ayodhya to take part in the swayambara (27.1-4); a religious community offering Aja hospitality for the night in their establishment (27.1-28.9); and people in the marketplace informing him that his enemies – the rejected suitors and their armies – are lying in ambush on his route back to his country with his bride. And just in case we have gained the wrong impression that life is all feasting and dalliance in ancient Java, the Sumanasāntaka provides a passage showing how hard life could be for the common people in those days – people start working at the washing-places (pamalanṭēnan) and the potteries (pangdyunan) before dawn, by lamplight, while stall-holders start frying the food they are going to sell in the market (29.1-5).

These are just some of the activities about which we can glean information from the Sumanasāntaka – activities which without doubt we will also find described in other kakawin. And since these kakawin often provide our only means of catching a glimpse of the environment in which the poets lived, we have, of necessity, to use this information as best we can if we are to gain an insight into the sort of life they and their contemporaries may have lived. On the other hand, we also have to accept the fact that, although for such a poet kakawin-writing may have had more than one function⁶, providing a full account of his surroundings or of events he personally witnessed for his contemporaries, let alone for posterity, is not likely to have been one of them. Obviously, the picture that we obtain from the consideration of such incomplete data can only be a fragmentary and often a hazy one – the more so if we only have a vague idea, or even no idea at all, of the meanings of particular words or expressions that occur in only one or two kakawin. The Sumanasāntaka contains a considerable number of such words and expressions, which even the most comprehensive and reliable dictionary that is available to us so far (Zoetmulder 1982) often defines in a provisional way indicating uncertainty, for example by adding the words 'the meaning is not so clear' (see ēngēs II 2) or 'one can only guess from the context' (see pēncul); or giving a meaning with a question mark (see aṇīyan, pirus, prećcik); or simply placing a question mark after the word (see pa-hēh-an, kipah, pucang-pucangan); or not listing them at all (for example, bahwan 10.4d, diniwayuh 130.2d, kêtö 113.12d).

I do not think I am far wrong, therefore, if I say now that, even if we are able to complete the translation of the kakawin under discussion, it will still abound with expressions like those used by Andries Teeuw more than half a century ago when he first ventured into this strange world of ancient Java by translating one of the most difficult kakawin, the Bhomakāwya (Teeuw 1946).

⁶ In a recent article I have listed four such functions of kakawin, namely the kakawin as a temple, as an allegory, as a didactic poem, and as an entertainment (Supomo 1996:23-7).
expressions such as 'for the time being no more than pure guesswork', or 'I am unable to make much of this canto', or even 'it is becoming increasingly obscure; the rest of this canto is for the greater part untranslatable for me' (quoted from Zoetmulder 1974:322-3).

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