On a visit to Bali a few years ago, I was asked to identify a painting by the leading classical artist of Bali, I Nyoman Mandra, which featured the monkey hero Hanuman, or Anoman as he is known in Bali. At first the painting was a mystery to me, since it did not show the usual stories involving Anoman, although one scene looked like the visit of Anoman to Sita in Rawana’s asoka garden. Solving the mystery of this painting led me to greater insights into the Balinese iconography of Anoman, and ultimately led me to greater understanding of why Anoman is regarded as a significant figure of power in Java and Bali. While it offers no direct textual insights into the Old Javanese KR, the painting demonstrated the importance of the narrative accretions and variations that have grown around the text.

I Nyoman Mandra (born 1946) is the main teacher of the classical style continued by the village of Kamasan, in Klungkung, and my mentor in the research I have carried out since 1978 on Kamasan art. We have often discussed the fact that there are many narratives in existence in Bali, but only a few of these are commonly known and used by Balinese painters. Nyoman’s interest has always been in utilizing the full repertoire of stories, and he regularly sought out dalangs (wayang puppeteers) and others knowledgeable in such narratives. During the twentieth century Kamasan village had around a dozen dalangs, including many members of Nyoman’s descent group, but they had almost died out by the twenty-first century, the last dalang of Kamasan being Pan Sadera, a neighbour of Mandra’s.

1. The research for this paper was carried out as part of an Australian Research Council Linkage Project Grant, held in conjunction with the Australian Museum and the Batuan Project. The author would like to thank the participants in the Jakarta conference for discussion, Chris Carlisle, Adrian King, and especially Nyoman Mandra, and to Leo Haks for providing Figure 2. I will follow Modern Balinese pronunciation for the spelling used in this article.
Figure 1: Nyoman Mandra, *The Birth of Anoman*, 2004. Private collection