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## THREADS OF THE UNFOLDING WEB



# THREADS OF THE UNFOLDING WEB

## The Old Javanese Tantu Panggġlaran

Translated by **Stuart Robson**  
with a commentary by **Hadi Sidomulyo**

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#### Cover

Tenggerese ritual bell (*gěnta*), possession of *dukun* Jumat at Kenongo (Gucialit), Lumajang Regency, East Java. *Photo by Hadi Sidomulyo, 2018.*

#### Frontispiece

Decorative panel on the rear wall of a cave hermitage, located in the ravine of Jurang Limas on the northern slope of Mt Wilis, near the village of Joho (Pace), Nganjuk Regency, East Java. Probably identifiable with the cave reported by Verbeek (1891, p. 256, no. 512), who observed an inscription on the left wall, since collapsed. *Photo by Hadi Sidomulyo, 2019.*

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AV	Archaeologische Verzameling
BAKOSURTANAL	Badan Koordinasi Survei dan Pemetaan Nasional
BEFEO	Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient
BM	Bujangga Manik. Noorduynd and Teeuw (2006)
BPCB	Balai Pelestarian Cagar Budaya
DW	Deśawarnana. Pigeaud (1960–63); Robson (1995)
Eringa	Eringa (1984)
GR	Gericke and Roorda (1901)
JBG	Jaarboek Bataviaasch Genootschap
KBW	Kawi-Balinesesch-Nederlandsch Woordenboek. Van der Tuuk (1897–1912)
KITLV	Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde
MW	Monier-Williams (1899)
NBG	Notulen van de algemeene en bestuursvergaderingen van het Bataviaasch genootschap van kunsten en wetenschappen
OJO	Oud-Javaansche Oorkonden
Par.	Pararaton. Brandes and Krom (1920)
Pig.	Pigeaud (1938)
Pigeaud	Pigeaud (1924)
OV	Oudheidkundig Verslag
ROC	Rapporten van de commissie in Nederlandsch-Indië voor oudheidkundig onderzoek op Java en Madoera
RY	Rāmāyaṇa
TBG	Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde
TP	Tantu Panggëlaran
Volk. Mus.	Volkenkunde Museum
Z.	Zoetmulder (1982)

## PREFACE

It was during a workshop at the KITLV branch in Jakarta in 2009 that I first discussed the possibility of a revised, English language translation of the Old Javanese Tantu Panggĕlaran with Stuart Robson, now Adjunct Professor of Indonesian Studies in the School of Languages, Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. The text of the Tantu Panggĕlaran had for many years held a special interest for me, as it belonged, like Prapañca's Deśawarṇana and the Old Sundanese Bujangga Manik, to that small group of literary works which offered a wealth of topographical data. I had already taken advantage of Robson's lucid translation of the fourteenth century Deśawarṇana, published in 1995, when endeavouring to trace the course of King Rājasanagara's journey through eastern Java, and imagined that the same linguistic skills applied to the Tantu Panggĕlaran would help to draw this valuable text out of its vacuum and place it in a firmer historical and geographical context.

Happily, the idea was met with enthusiasm, and our discussion ended with a tentative plan to produce a joint publication, comprising an English translation, followed by a commentary focusing on historical topography. Professor Robson noted, however, that a new critical edition of the Tantu Panggĕlaran would hardly be possible, as the whereabouts of the two principal manuscripts used by Th. Pigeaud for his dissertation were no longer known. Instead, he said, it would be better to work directly from the romanized text of Pigeaud's 1924 publication, which includes all of the variants encountered in the five manuscripts originally consulted.

Although the interest sparked by this initial meeting led to further dialogue over the next few months, there were no concrete developments. Time went by and the communication became less frequent, and then ceased entirely, as various other commitments took precedence.

Such was the condition until 2015, when suddenly, without warning, Professor Robson wrote to enquire whether I was still interested in the Tantu Panggĕlaran, as he had completed a first draft of the translation and was willing to send it to me! This came as an unexpected surprise, and without hesitating I sent an enthusiastic

reply, reconfirming my commitment to our joint project. There were, however, some technical difficulties, as I was at that time fully occupied with an intensive exploration of Mt Penanggungan in eastern Java. Notwithstanding, I allotted some time for the planned commentary and began drawing up some preparatory notes, which were sent annually to Professor Robson for his approval over the course of the next three years.

With most of the preparatory work complete by the middle of 2018, it was time to direct attention to the necessary fieldwork. In compiling my notes for the commentary, I had been able to draw on a fair amount of data gathered during past expeditions in both central and eastern Java. This, however, was insufficient for the task at hand. The specific nature of the Tantu Panggĕlaran, with its focus on isolated communities in mountainous districts, required venturing far off the beaten track, not infrequently following up nineteenth century reports of archaeological sites which appeared never to have been revisited.

In view of the difficulties presented by this kind of field work, coupled with the time factor, it was clear from the outset that a complete survey would be impossible. A decision was thus made to concentrate on the three main highland regions referred to in the text, namely the Dieng Plateau in central Java, along with the Tengger and Hyang Massifs in the eastern part of the island, each of which became the focus of a separate expedition. Taking into account the inaccessibility of these locations during the wet season (between November and March), a plan was drawn up to cover the mountains of eastern Java during the latter half of 2018, and leave the Dieng region until April of the following year.

The first two expeditions proceeded on schedule, beginning with a journey through the Tengger highlands in the company of local guides. Direct observation in the field, coupled with information supplied by a number of Tengger priests (*dukun*), helped greatly towards a mental reconstruction of this region as portrayed in the Tantu Panggĕlaran. The field trip culminated in a ritual ascent of Mt Semeru by way of the sacred site known as Arcapodo, located at an elevation of just under 3,000 m. This was followed by a survey in the Hyang Massif further east, which proved to be no less challenging. Efforts were made to identify some of the archaeological remains reported by J. Hageman in the 1860s, as well as confirm the original find spot of the Batur copper plates, discussed in Part two of this book. The latter were said to have been recovered at the end of a long valley enclosed by steep hills. Unfortunately, the expedition to Batur in mid-November was interrupted by the first heavy rain of the season, and had to be cut short.

Unfavourable weather conditions throughout the first half of 2019 caused the third and final field trip to be delayed until July. The expedition nonetheless had its rewards, serving to strengthen the conviction that the earliest *maṇḍala* communities

referred to in the Tantu Panggĕlaran were situated in the vicinity of the Dieng Plateau. This in turn provided a more certain context for some of the ancient sites to be found on the northern plains of Batang and Pekalongan, where the Supreme Lord Guru was said to have established his initial residence at the foot of the historical Mt Kelāśa (or Kailāśa).

The fieldwork complete, it remained to edit the notes for the commentary and produce a coherent text, as well as work on the maps and illustrations, a task which occupied the last few months of 2019. Professor Robson, in the meantime, made some final adjustments to the translation before the manuscript was submitted for publication.

A few additional comments: Th. Pigeaud's 1924 edition of the Tantu Panggĕlaran has of course long been available to scholars, but access has been limited to those conversant with Old Javanese and Dutch. The new English language version presented here brings this important literary work within the reach of a wider audience, and at the same time offers some improvements on the translation published almost a century ago. As to the commentary, emphasis has been placed on the topographical data preserved in the text, an aspect hardly touched upon in the 1924 edition. It can thus serve as a useful supplement to Pigeaud's own extensive notes, which remain a valuable source for the specialist.

Although directed primarily to the scientific community, this book has from the outset been conceived as a popular edition, designed to draw the interest of the general reader. As such, it provides no more than the groundwork for ongoing research. One important area of study which has not received the attention it deserves is the Śaiwa tradition in ancient Java. Since this constitutes the central theme of the Tantu Panggĕlaran, it is clearly in need of a deeper investigation. The complexity of the subject, however, requires a separate study by a qualified expert.

By way of acknowledgment, I would like to extend my thanks to Terence Chong and Ng Kok Kiong at ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore, for accepting the manuscript for publication, as well as to H  l  ne Njoto for her initial recommendation of a publisher. My two companions in the field, Mas Suaidi and Pak Jayus of Trawas, Mojokerto, deserve a special mention for their loyal support over a period of eighteen months. Lastly, I offer my sincere gratitude to Stuart Robson for his encouragement and unswerving patience in the course of preparing the commentary, and without whose masterly translation this book could never had been written.

*Hadi Sidomulyo  
Tegallalang, Bali  
May 2020*