

Chapter I

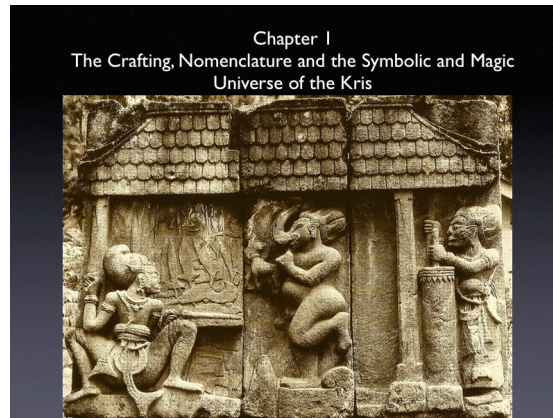
The Crafting, Nomenclature and the Symbolic and Magic Universe of the Kris



The Krisdisk

Kris (Keris)-types by Karsten Sejr Jensen

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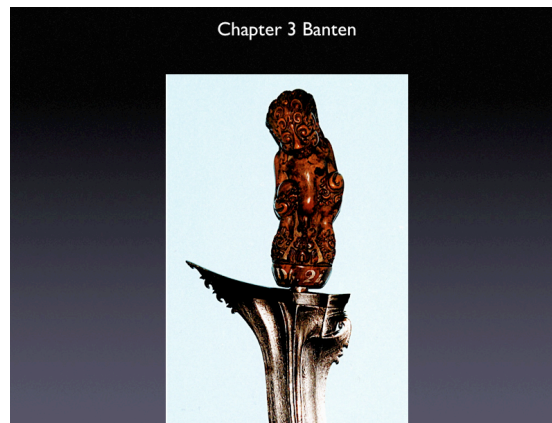
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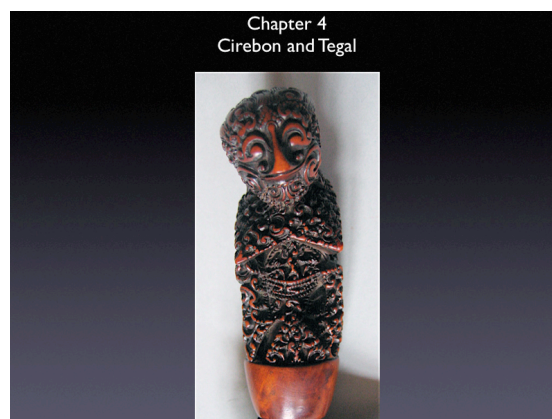
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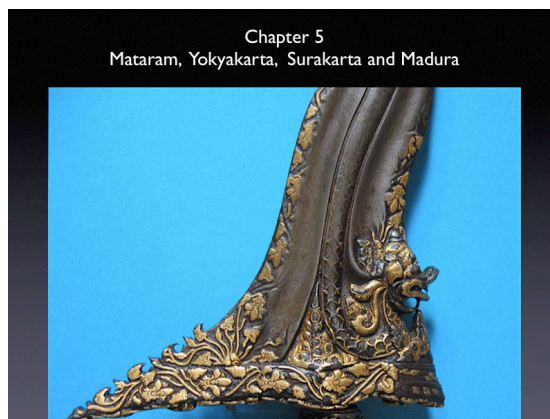
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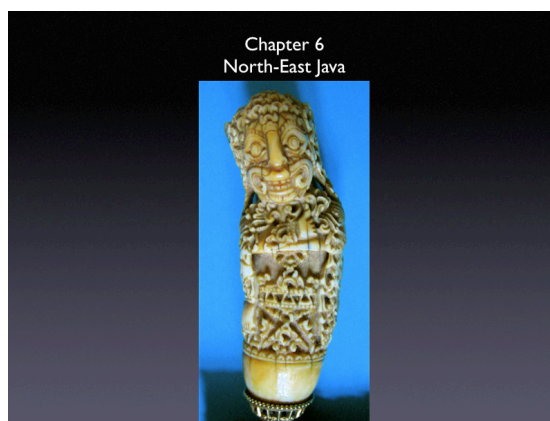
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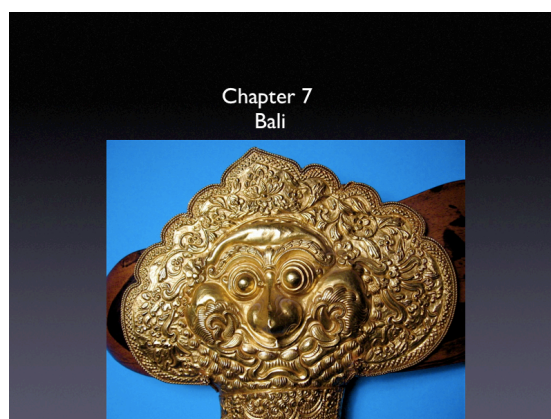
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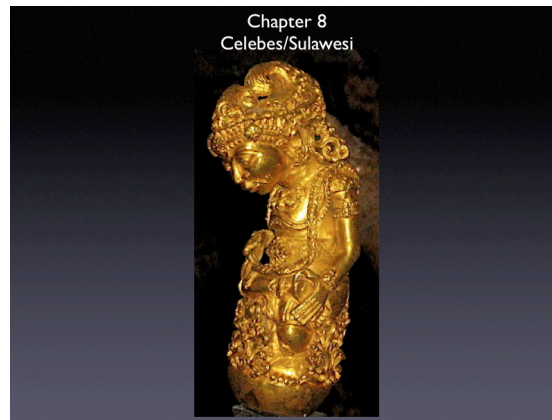
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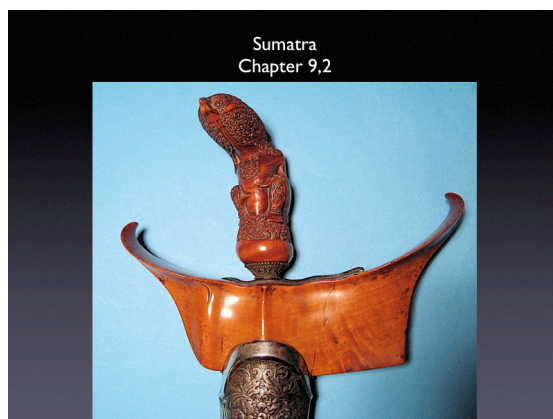
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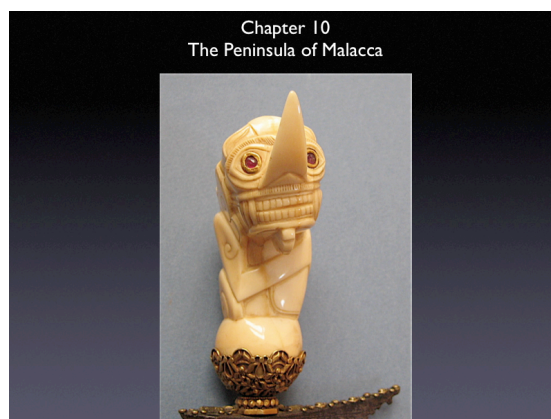
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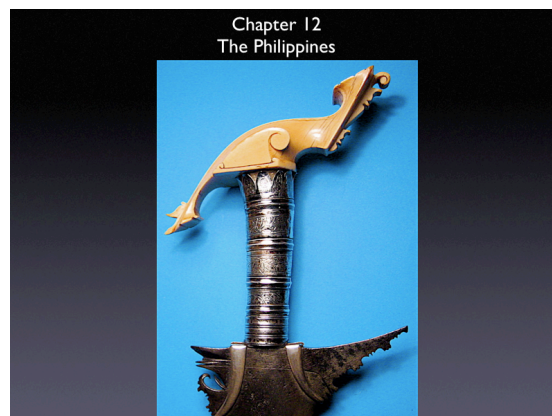
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Preface

On 25 November 2005 the Indonesian kris was proclaimed as *Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity*, by the Director-General of Unesco, Koichiro Matsuura.¹ My krisdisk is a tribute and dedication to this declaration, which finally places the Indonesian kris among the masterpieces of human heritage.

In 1998 my book "Den Indonesiske kris - et symbol og våben - København 1998" was published. Since then many people have asked me to rewrite my book in English, but as it was not possible, I have chosen to make another kind of "book" - a kris-disk which is meant as a guide to the locations of the different kris-types of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines and if possible to date the different types. Some of the material is from my book, but it is supplemented by a lot of new material.

I have chosen to make the kris-disk as a kind of picture book according to the old saying that a picture tells more than a thousand words. So the disk is meant as a collector's guide to the history of the kris and a guide to the different kris-types, assigned to time and area. Chapter 1 gives a description of the distribution, the definition and the crafting of the kris. Further it gives a description of the symbolic universe of the kris, explaining the symbolic meaning of the different parts of the kris.

Chapter 2 gives an account of the sources of the origin of the kris and its ancient history, the main different theories about the origin of the kris and a description of the early krisses and the theories about their use. It further gives a description of the characteristics of the the 15th-17th century krisses of Banten in Western Java. A description of the magic of the kris is also included.

Chapter 3 is a description of the early krisses from Banten in Western Java.

Chapter 4 is a description of the krisses from Cirebon and Tegal.

Chapter 5 is a description of the krisses from Central Java: Mataram, Yogyakarta and Surakarta and Madura.

Chapter 6 is a description of the krisses from North-East Java.

Chapter 7 is a description of the krisses from Bali.

Chapter 8 is a description of the krisses from Celebes/Sulawesi: The Buginese and the Makassar-Gowa krisses.

Chapter 9,1 and chapter 9,2 and chapter 9,3 are descriptions of the krisses from Sumatra.

Chapter 10 is a description of the krisses from the Peninsula of Malacca.

Chapter 11 is a description of the krisses from Nias and Borneo.

Chapter 12 is a description of the krisses from the Philippines.

Each chapter is to be seen as a separate entity, so each chapter begins with page 1.

References to different parts of the Krisdisk refers first to the chapter and next to the

¹ The Indonesian Kris, Tradition, Social function, art, Philosophy, Mystique, Unesco Office in Jakarta 2006.

number of the figure or the number of the page. Many areas in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines have their own special nomenclature of the different parts of the kris. I have, however, chosen mainly to use the Javanese names, which are the most used terms, to give the Krisdisk a common and uniform nomenclature. To the classification of the Dapor and Pamor of the Kris I mainly refer to Ing. G. J. F. J. Tammens: *De Kris, Magic, Relic of Old Indonesia*. Vol 1-3.

Acknowledgments

I want to adress a special thank to Curator Petra Martin, Konservator der Bildsammlung, Irene Godenschweg and Director Dr. Claus Deimel at the SES, Museum für Völkerkunde, Dresden, for letting me publish the pictures of the old krisses from the collections of the museum free of charge. The same goes for Monique Koek at the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, Mr Shoichiro Sakai at the Sendai City Museum in Japan, Dr. Reinhardt Sängler at Badisches Landesmuseum Schloss, Karlsruhe, Curator Monica Lindström and Curator Bengt Kylsberg at Skokloster castle in Sweden, Curator Bente Wolff at the National Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen and Curator Ruth Barnes at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. I further want to thank Curator David van Duuren and Ingeborg Eggink at the KIT, Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam for letting me publish pictures from the collections of the museum at a reduced charge and I want also to thank Mrs Ilse Jung at Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, Dr. Thomas Psota and Mrs Ursula Mollet and Ethnografische Sammlung am Historischen Museum Bern and Mrs Catrin Eisert and Mrs Yvonne Brandt at Rüstungskammer, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden for letting me publish pictures from their collections, too.

A special thanks goes to the private collectors who kindly have let me publish pictures of krisses from their collections:

Mr Martin Kerner, Mr Michael Marlow, Mr Sten Strømberg, Dr. Paul Vermeiren, Mr Jan van Den Born, Mr Gert Wallrapp, Mr Kai Wee, Mr Shahrial Bin Tahar, Mr Cedric Le Dauphin, Mr Birger Sixten Petterson, Mr Paul de Souza. I further want to thank Mr Achim Weihrauch for letting me use his photos of krisses and Mr. A.G. Maisey for letting me use photos and material from his article on "The Origin of the Kris" and the same goes for Mr Martin Kerner, who freely let me use all of his material. I specially want to thank Mr Kai Wee and Mr Michael Marlow for their assistance with chapter 10. I also want to thank the artist Thomas Stensager for producing the drawings, the designer Peter Waldorph for producing the cover, booklet and disclabel of the Krisdisk and the publisher Mr C. Zwartenkot in Leiden for his assistance.

I want to adress a special thank to my wife Ingrid Røder and Mr Michael Marlow who both have looked through my text and assisted me by word and deed.

Introduction

My fascination of the kris started when I was twelve years old. I was looking in an old album called "Around the World" and suddenly I caught sight of a rather simple drawing of a kris. I was fascinated. I got to have a kris, I thought. So some days later I took the train to the center of Copenhagen to search for a kris in all the antique-shops there. I looked and looked and I could not find any, until a kind antique-dealer told me to go to Store Regnegade to a shop called Etnografica owned by *Mr Laurits Sunde*. He had a big jar full of krisses. I chose one and I have been collecting krisses ever since - it is now 50 years ago.

The kris is a weapon, which always has been and still is surrounded with more projections

than almost any other weapon. It is bound up with the history of the kris, its use and the many symbols connected with the kris. The origin of the kris is faded into mystical mist. It has, however, always been associated with a strong touch of religious, magical and mystical qualities. It is both associated with animistic beliefs, the worship of ancestors and Tantric Hindu/Buddhist belief and it was and is an object of meditation which connects you with the spiritual world. The kris has a soul or a spirit of its own. The belief in the special spiritual powers of the kris is, however, not a belief only belonging to the past. It is still living in Indonesia and also in Europe as well among Europeans as among Indonesians. The reason why is the strong symbolism which the kris contains, which makes it a very suitable container of projections of religious as well as psychic capacities. It has a formidable symbolic scope, which ranges from earth to heaven and to the underworld. Even the production of a kris is associated with religious rites. This process needs a special person, the *Empu*, who is able to control the spiritual powers as well as the forging process.

The kris is a weapon of high artistic and craftsmanlike quality. Even an ordinary kris is a quality product, which has needed the efforts of various experts during a longer period of time. Further the kris is one of the weapons, which is most closely related to its owner. A kris must match its owner - be his alter ego. If not so it is dangerous to have it. The kris may also be the container of the history of a family. The so-called *Pusaka-kris* - a sacred heirloom - inherited from father to son through generations - contains the history of the family and the spirit of the family. Unfortunately this knowledge is lost when a *Pusaka-kris* loses contact with its family. However, you are able to understand quite a lot about a kris, when you know its symbolism. You may fixate it, put it into its historical context and see from which part of Indonesia it comes.

The area of distribution of the kris is both as to time and locality very extensive. But fortunately the krisses show differences, which often makes it possible to tell from where and in a lot of cases from which period it comes, too. These identifications may be made from the blade (*Wilah*), the hilt-ring (*Mendak/Selut*), the sheath (*Wrangka*) and the hilt (*Ukiran*). The blade, however, is the most difficult to identify, partly because a lot of the blade-types are spread over wide areas, and partly because the blades were exported or moved with the persons around Indonesia. The dating of a blade is very seldom done with certainty, unless the kris has a date inscribed or the history of the kris is known. The problem is partly that kris-blades through the centuries have been made and shaped in the same way, as the tradition of forging has been inherited from father to son, and partly because the blade may be much older than the rest of the kris and from a different part of Indonesia than the rest of the kris. Even though the blades are different, the subject are still not properly looked into, so my indications of locality and dating from the blades are only to be seen as rough lines of directions. In contrast to this the hilts, *Mendak/Selut* and sheaths are consistent with the locality of the kris. Therefore the accessories of the kris are well suited to identify its last locality/residence. The hilts, however, are the most reliable, because they differentiate more distinctly from each other than the sheaths and the *Mendaks/Seluts* and furthermore they deliver the best informations about the ideas that influenced the Indonesians. Moreover the hilts have certain details, that differentiate them from hilts produced in a later period and at other places in Indonesia.

The *Krisdisk* is published and written by Karsten Sejr Jensen. (E-mail: k.sejr@comxnet.dk)

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Area of Distribution, Definitions, the Crafting of a Kris and the Symbolic Universe of the Kris.

The Distribution

The Indonesian kris is widely spread in the archipelago that includes about 13000 islands in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

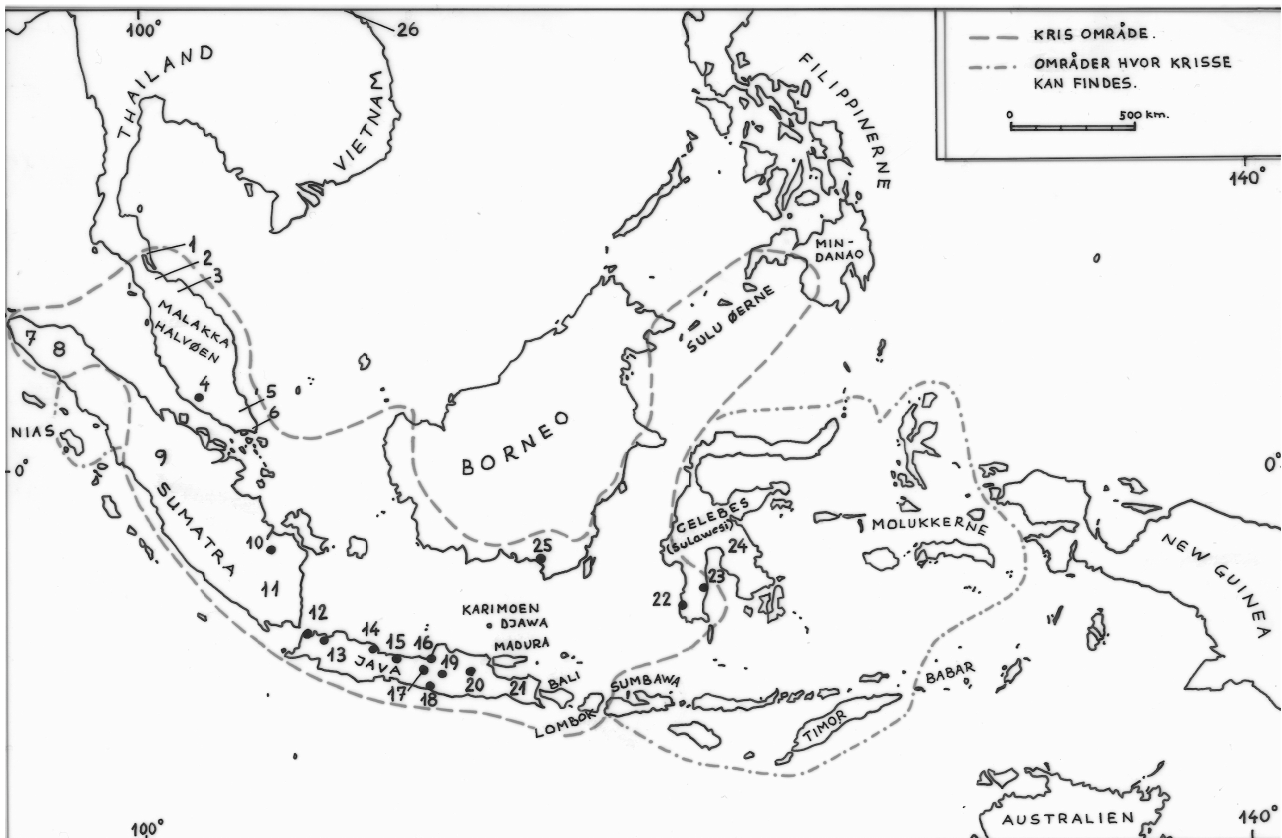


Fig 1) The areas where krisses are found. The line marked: - - indicates the main area of krisses.
- - - indicates the area where krisses may sometimes be found.

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1) Pattani, Songkhla | 14) Cirebon |
| 2) Kelantan | 15) Tegal |
| 3) Terengganu | 16) Demak |
| 4) Malacca | 17) Mataram |
| 5) Johore | 18) Yogyakarta |
| 6) Singapore | 19) Surakarta |
| 7) Aceh | 20) Majapahit |
| 8) Gayo | 21) Balambangan |
| 9) Minangkabau | 22) Makassar-Gowa |
| 10) Palembang | 23) Bone |
| 11) Lampung | 24) Luwu |
| 12) Banten | 25) Banjarmasin |
| 13) Jakarta | 26) Dong-Son |

Definition of the kris

The Blade

The kris² is of Indonesian origin. Its central area is Java, which in all probability is also its “place of birth”. This unusual dagger may be found in a number of lengths ranging from about 10 cm to 75 cm. Its double edged blade (*Wilah*) tapers towards the point and has a peculiar asymmetrical base (*Ganja*), which mainly gives the blade its characteristic appearance. The blade is either straight (*Dapor Bener/Leres/Lurus*) or sinuous (*Dapor Lok/luk/Parong*)³ and is worked out in intricate details (*Prabot*) with a surface damascened (pattern-welded) in certain patterns (*Pamor*). The *Prabot* (details) may be covered with gold (*Kinatah Emas*) .

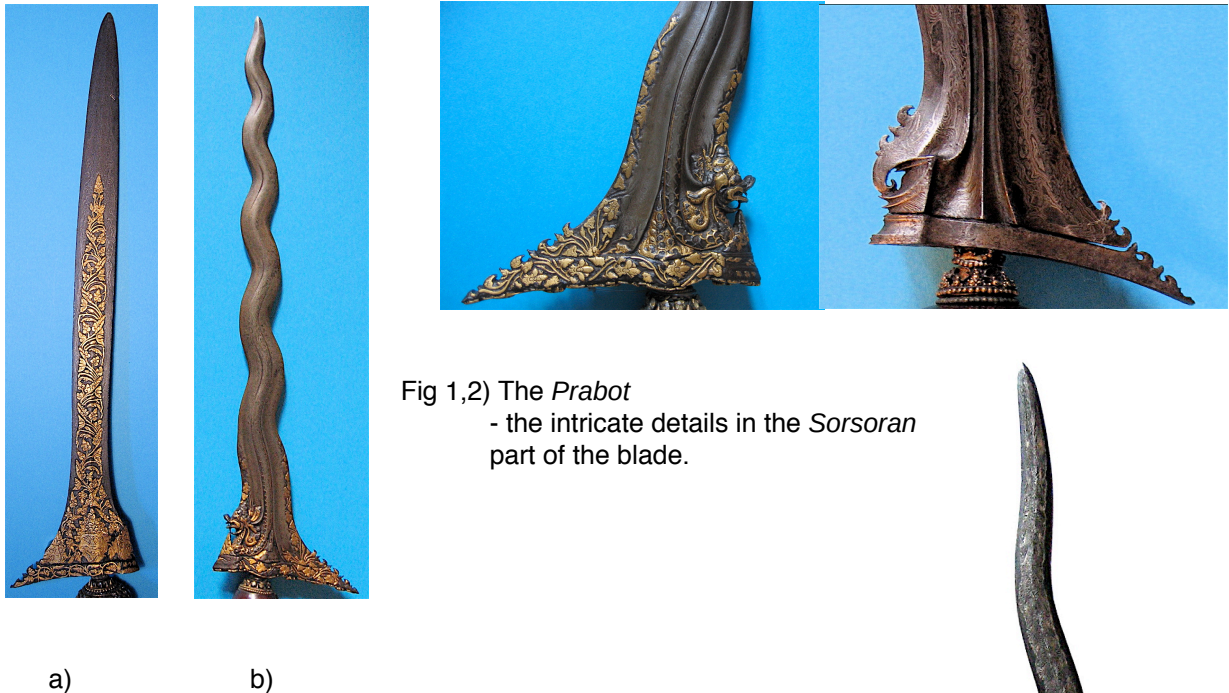


Fig 1,2) The *Prapot*
- the intricate details in the *Sorsoran*
part of the blade.

Fig 1,1 a,b)

a) *Dapor Bener*.

b) *Dapor Lok*.

Both have an elaborated *Prapot* covered with gold (*Kinatah Emas*)

Fig 1,3) The *Pamor* of the blade



² The origin of the word kris or keris is uncertain. *Moerbirman* thinks that it comes from the word *ke* = to go, going to and *iris* = very thin slice, which indicates a cutting tool. In common language it is called *Keris*, but in high Javanese it is called *Duwung* and in the written language *Kawi* it is called *Curiga*, which means to be suspicious. It might indicate that the kris is ready to eliminate any suspicious person. The kris is called a *Tosan* (iron) *Aji* (respected) (the name of iron Pusaka items) which means respected iron. In other parts of Indonesia they have different words fx : Bali= *Kadutan*, Minangkabau= *Kerich*, Sulawesi= *Sale* or *Kreh*. Hari Badiarti: *Kris and Other Indonesian Traditional Weapons*. Arts of Asia vol 33 no. 5, p 73.

³ There is much uncertainty as to how many Dapors there are. Both Indonesian and European estimates vary a lot, from 51- 745. See Karsten Sejr Jensen: *Den Indonesiske Kris*, 1998 p 13 note 28.

The Mendak and Selut

Between the hilt and the blade is a kind of cup, *Mendak*. If it includes the lower part of the hilt (*Bungkul*), it is called *Selut*. They both symbolize the Lotus flower.



Fig 1,4 a) *Mendak*



Fig 1,4 b) *Selut*

The Hilt

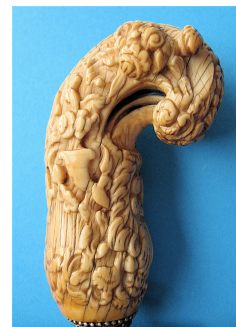
The hilt (*Ukiran*), which mostly pictures a squatting figure (ancestor - *Raksasa/Yaksha*) or a *Garuda bird*, is mostly mounted by covering the tang (*Peksi*) with cloth and compressing it down over the tang. It is then possible to turn the hilt into the most convenient angle.



a)



b)



c)



d)



e)



f)

Fig 1,5 a, b, c, d, e, f) a, b, c) The *Raksasa/ Yaksha/ancestor* hilt in naturalistic and stylized shapes:

- a) Banten,
- b) Mataram.
- c) Madura.

d, e, f) The *Garuda* hilt in naturalistic and stylized shapes:

- d) Songkhla/Pattani.
- e) Celebes, Sumatra and Malaysia.
- f) Sumatra and Malaysia

The Sheath

The sheath, *Wrangka*⁴ consists of two parts, the upper boat-shaped part called *Gambar/Wrangka* and the lower part called *Gandar* (the stick). The sheath is usually formed by gluing the *Gambar* and the *Gandar* together, but occasionally the sheath is made in one piece, *Wrangka Iras*. This indicates that it is a precious kris. Sometimes the *Gandar* is covered with a metal oversheath, *Pendok*. If the *Pendok* is open to the front it is called *Pendok Blewah*. If a decorated piece of metal is fitted into the opening it is called *Pendok Slorok*. If it is without an opening (slit) to the front it is called *Pendok Bunton*. If the slit is closed at the top it is called *Pendok Topengan*. There are 7 main types of *Wrangkas*: 1) *Gayaman*⁵ with the nut- or kidney-shaped *Gambar* is the informal sheath. 2) *Ladrang* is the formal sheath with its curved front and back part like an old ship. 3) *The old Ladrang type*, which you may still find in Bali, has a less curved front part. It goes back to the 15th century and is the oldest sheath-type. 4) *Sandang Walikat* is a simpler sheath form. It might be used as a way to wear a kris hidden away from view or for storage. But the larger Balinese type may be worn with formal dress in Bali and Lombok. 5) *The Makassar-Gowa (Ladrang) type* is a mixture of the *old Ladrang type* and the *Tanggah* type. 6) *The Tanggah type* has a rectangular *Gambar*. 7) The Crescent-shaped type, *Gambar-Tanggala*.



Fig 1,6) (See text on the next page.)

⁴ The word *Wrangka* may refer to grand vizier or prison. It means that the sheath like a grand vizier protects the kris against hostile influences, guides the power of the kris in the right direction and like a prison protects the outer world against its power. Garrett and Bronwen Solyom: *The World of the Javanese Keris*, Honolulu, USA 1978, p 40.

⁵ *Gayaman* is the name of an edible nut. Gayam is an *Inocarpus* tree with pulpy fruits eaten cooked.



e)

f)

g)

h)

Fig 1,6 a, b ,c, d, e, f, g, h, i)

a) Gayaman with *Pendok Slorok* painted red (*Pendok Kemalo*), Yogyakarta.

b) Gayaman with *Pendok Slorok*, Surakarta.

c) *Ladrang* with *Pendok Bunton*, Yogyakarta.

d) *Ladrang*, *Wrangka Iras* with *Pendok Blewah*, Surakarta.

e) Old *Ladrang*, *Wrangka Iras*, Mataram.

f) *Sandang Walikat*, *Wrangka Iras*, Surakarta.

g) *Makassa-Gawo Ladrang*, Celebes.

h) *Tanggah*, Celebes.

i) The Crescent-shaped type - *Gambar-Tanggala*, Sumatra.



i)

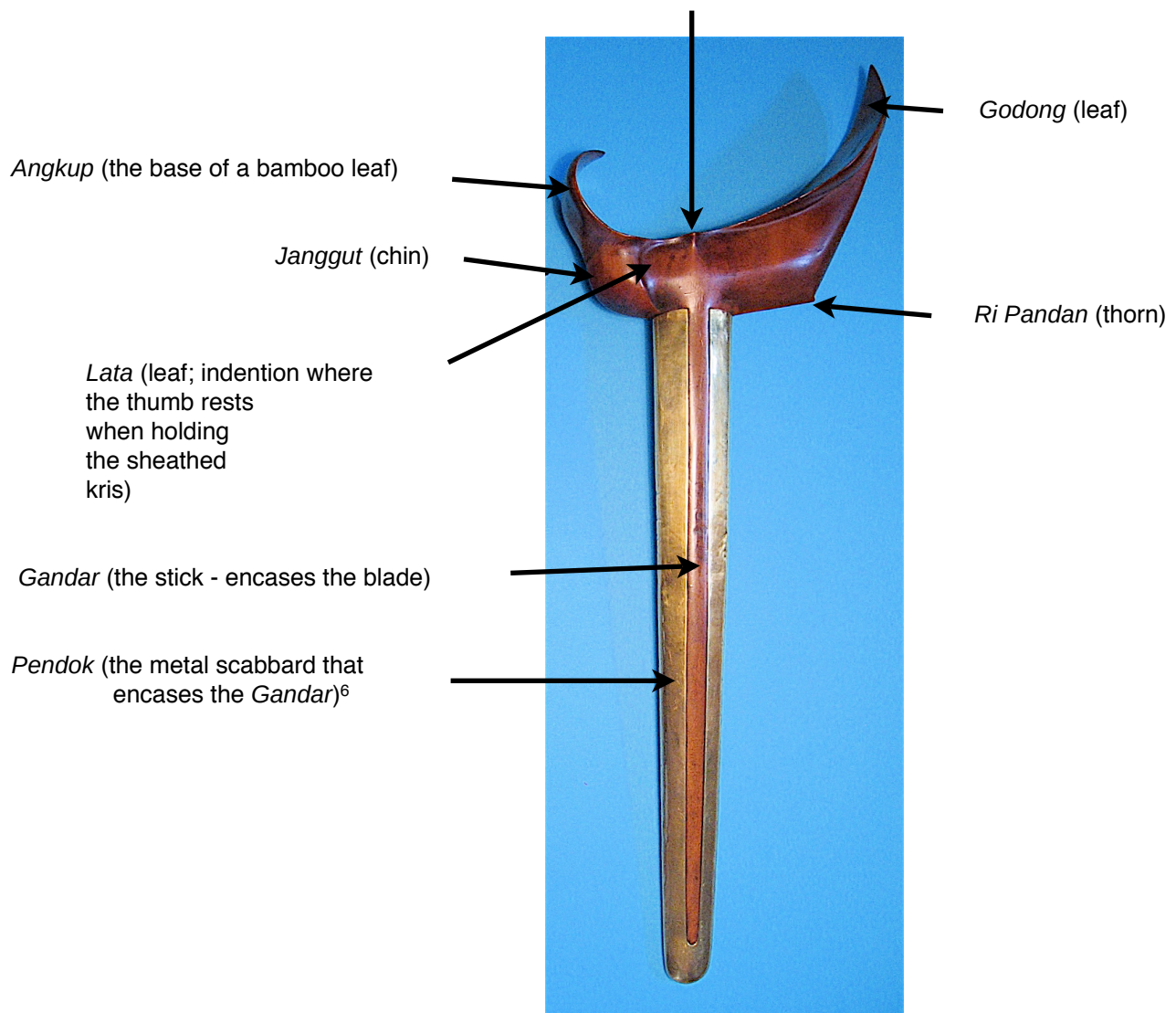
Ricangkkring (Erythrina thorn)

Fig 1,7) The terminology of the sheath. *Ladrang, Wrangka Iras* type from Surakarta.

⁶ The *Pendok* of this kris is in gold and undecorated. But often the *Pendoks* are decorated with motifs from nature and mythology, such as mountains representing *Mount Meru* - the axis of the world, animals, vegetation (symbolizing the tree of life), flames (symbolizing strong spiritual power), *Tumpals* (symbolizing the phallus or mountain), stylized *Garudas*, *Nagas*, *Raksasas* and *Kala-masks*. All in all these elements symbolize *Gunungan*, the tree of life - the cosmos that encases the sheath and the kris. The Javanese groups the patterns into 4 categories: 1) Geometrical decoration 2) Flame decoration (*Lidap Api*), 3) Vine decoration (*Lung-Lungan*) and 4) Vegetation and animal decoration (*Alas-Alasan*). Achim Weinrauch: *Der Kris in Indonesien*, Basel 1996, p 127-135.

The Crafting of a Kris

When a man acquired a kris, it was extremely important that it was made to conform to his personality, as an “alter ego”. The kris of the groom *fx* might be sent to his wedding, if he was not able to participate himself. An Indonesian, who wanted to have a kris made, had to carefully watch his dreams and the prophecies, he might have had from a *Dukun*⁷. He therefore often came to the smith (*Empu*) with a lot of instructions on how to “marry” (tailor) the kris to his personality. It was important that the buyer of the kris had the right spiritual character and power to handle the kris made for him. It might have a very bad effect on the buyer of the kris, if the kris was charged with too much power in relation to him. Because of that krisses were seldom stolen. The thief might be in mortal danger and most probably he could not sell it to anybody as nobody would dare to buy a kris with a power which was unknown to him.

It would last about 6 weeks to produce an ordinary kris. But special krisses might take years to make. Crafting krisses were reserved to a special group of men with a long family tradition of kris-crafting. The blade-maker’s title, *Empu* was only given to men with special gifts. The title was further preserved to sages, priests of wisdom and court poets. He was looked upon as mediator between the gods, ancestors and man. He was able to communicate with the gods and the spirits of the ancestors and inject their power into the blade⁸. In Bali *fx* blade-makers (called *Pandé Wesi*) ranked as priests, who were allowed to prepare the holy cleansing water, and they were the only craftsmen that had their own temple in *Bersakih*, the most holy and largest temple complex. According to their holy scriptures they were all related to *Brahma*, the creator god himself.

The *Empu* was closely attached to the prince. He usually received land from the prince and was exempted from paying tax in return for crafting the prince’s weapons and guarding him and his life. The *Empu* had to have extensive technical knowledge, but also knowledge of human nature and knowledge of the occult.

The making of krisses was considered a sacred act that demanded many sacrifices. The forge had to be consecrated and transformed into a sacred place - a temple. Before the process began, the smith was supposed to refrain from sex for a lengthy period of time and he would withdraw to the mountains for meditation. It was a very vulnerable process as evil spirits lurked everywhere wanting to spoil the process. He therefore might try to divert their attention by first making a simple tool from the iron and steel which were intended to be used to manufacture the kris. As the evil spirits had no interest in such a tool, they would soon loose interest in the process and at a suitable day, astrologically determined, the *Empu* could begin to reforge the tool into a kris.

⁷ The *Dukun* was a kind a shaman and healer.

⁸ The spirit or the will of the kris was called *Hantu* (ghost), *Isi* (contents) or *Tuah* (magic power). See page 52.

Pamor

The kris consists of three layers. A central core of steel surrounded on each side by a layer of *Pamor*⁹, an iron mixture containing nickel. Iron of meteoric origin¹⁰, which contains nickel was preferred for *Pamor* making. This material was difficult to obtain, as the only place to get it, was from the palace of Surakarta, which kept and still keeps the *Prambanan* meteor in its courtyard. It was so expensive that 30 grams in 1935 costed as much as 60 grams of gold.¹¹ So it was only the rich people who could afford a kris with *meteoric Pamor*. The poorer people had it made from iron from *Luwu* from Celebes.

From the beginning of 1900 it might be made from the pure nickel that the Europeans imported to Indonesia. It was of course much cheaper, and although the *Pamor* produced with pure nickel was very bright and beautiful, it missed the magical power of the *Prambanan* meteor, which was essential. The *Pamor* is the essence/soul of the kris. It fastens the soul and the power of the kris. You might say that the *Pamor* contains the energy the *Empu* has placed into the kris. The patterns of *Pamor* are found in nature fx in the grains of trees, the veins of stones, in the streams of water and in the structures of vegetations. That is why many *Pamor-patterns* are named after natural phenomena. So the *Pamor* is regarded as certain patterns of energy, which has some resemblance to the *Taoistic* patterns of *Chi-energy* - the cosmic vital energy¹². In a similar way the Indonesians think that the universe is pervaded by an energy, which lies behind all material forms in the universe. The patterns create pictures - they are talking to your unconscious and phantasy. So if you look at a *Pamor-pattern* and let your imagination work, you may see pictures of the most different kind. There are many patterns. How many there are, is however uncertain¹³. But to the Indonesians each pattern has a certain meaning and power, which you must be able to control, if the kris of yours is to bring you luck.

⁹ *Pamor* is a Javanese word. The word derives from the word *amor* or *awor*, which means a mixture without a complete fusion. Groneman, Dr. J.: *Der Kris der Javaner* xlx p 130. *Int. Arch. für Ethnographie* 1910, 13, 19, 21. It is a welter - and not a pattern ingrained in the structure of the steel as the Indian and Persian *wootz* patterns.

¹⁰ A good kris is said to contain at least seven different kinds of iron from different places. The kris of *Huang Tuah*, the Malay hero, is said to have contained 20 different kinds of iron. So the more different kinds of iron a kris contained the stronger its power. To be really potent it had to contain a mixture of the iron from heaven, that is meteoric iron and iron from the earth. In this way heaven was "married" to earth. Some writers say that it is a myth that old krisses contain meteoric iron, as the only evidence of krisses containing meteoric iron is from the 18th/19th century. Some Indonesian writers insist that the old krisses contain meteoric iron with *titanium* and not nickel. Now according to the world famous expert on meteors *Dr. Vang Fabritius Buchwald*, *titanium* is only found in meteors as very small tracks of *titanium*, but the content of nickel might be up to 20%. The *Prambanan* meteor contains 9,4% of nickel and no *titanium*. But it is still an open question whether the old krisses contain meteoric iron. It is known that the iron from *Luwu* in Celebes, which in older times was used in the kris production, contains a small amount of nickel (0,4 %). Because of that the *Pamor Luwu* is rather grayish and a little dull compared to the *Pamor* which was produced from the *Prambanan* meteors, found in Java near *Surakarta* in the 18th century. One was found in 1784, but was soon used up and the other in 1797, which was much larger, still exists in the kraton of *Surakarta*.

¹¹ Bambang Harsrinuksmo : *Ensiklopedi Budaya Nasional*, Jakarta 1988, p 133

¹² The Taoism is a Chinese philosophy, which sees the world as patterns of energy formed by the interaction between two cosmic energies, *Yin* (the feminine) and *Yang* (the masculine). *Chi/Qi* is the Chinese name for *Prana* (Sanskrit word meaning breath) which is understood as the vital life sustaining force of the universe.

¹³ *Dr. J. Groneman* thinks that there are 24 patterns, others mention 60 and *Drs Hamzuri* mentions 122. *Ing. Tammens* enumerates 216. *Dr. Groneman* reduces the amount of patterns to only 5 basic patterns from which you may deduce all patterns.



Fig 1,8 a ,b, c, d ,e) Different kinds of common *Pamors*.

a) *Pamor Adeg* (straight). This Pamor is a Pamor *Mlumah* and *Rekan*¹⁴. It consists of more or less parallel laminations along the blade. It is one of the oldest Pamors - it is often found on the old *Majapahit* blades. It is said to have a very strong power (*Tuah*) and to be able to prevent disasters caused by bad spirits.

b) *Pamor Beras Wutah* (scattered rice) is the most frequently found Pamor. It is a Pamor *Mlumah* and *Tiban*. The Pamor appears as cloud like winding formations along the blade. It has a good *Tuah* and might be used by anyone.

c) *Pamor Bendo Segodo* (boiled fruit) is a *Mlumah* and *Rekan*. It consists of lumps or circles of Pamor placed along the middle of the blade. There is an interval of a half to one cm between the lumps/circles. Notice the line (*Wengkon*)¹⁵ which delimit the Pamor towards the edge. *Bendo Segodo* is considered to have a positive influence in many areas, varying from financial advantage to happiness in the home.

d) *Pamor Kulit Semangka* (rind of the watermelon). It looks like *Beras Wutah* but is coarser. It is both a Pamor *Mlumah* and *Tiban*. It is considered to have a positive and friendly influence, which will suit every one.

e) *Pamor Blarak Ngirid* (dried coco-leaf). It is a Pamor *Mirring* and *Rekan*. Its laminations are aligned at an angle to the surface of the blade. It looks like the ribs of a dried leaf. It is considered to be very powerful and to augment your authority and qualities of leadership. It is not for everyone to have.

¹⁴ *Mlumah* in which the laminations remain parallel to the surface of the blade. It is distinguished from *Pamor Mirring* where the laminations are aligned at an angle to the surface of the blade. *Rekan* means that the *Empu* has meticulously worked out this Pamor. The opposite is *Pamor Tiban* which is not as meticulously designed as *Pamor Rekan*, it is more or less left to chance.

¹⁵ *Wengkon* as a line that is considered to keep the power of the Pamor inside the blade.

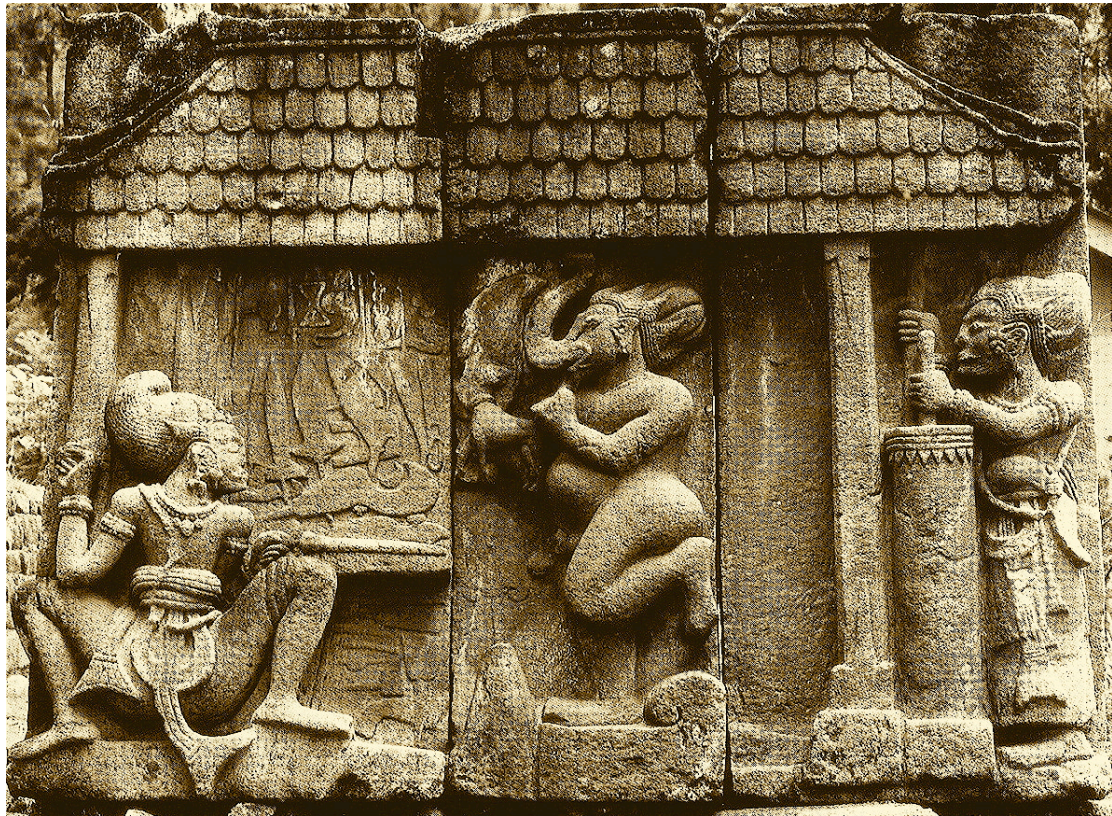


Fig 1,9) The forging process. The *Pandawa Bima* ¹⁶ is forging a kris with his bare hands, which indicates his great spiritual power. Behind him there is a presentation of the different tools and the types of weapons, ritual implements and tools he is able to forge. On the left side the *Pandawa Arjuna* ? as *Panjak* is operating a double-piston bellow. In the middle *Ganesha*, the son of *Siva*, is presented in the middle of a ritual dance (the dance of the flames). Notice at the right foot of *Ganesha* the protruding end of the pipe that leads the air from the piston to the fire of the forge. In his right hand he holds a dog surrounded by flames. *Ganesha* is the god of the threshold, the god that guards transformations and the god that eliminates all obstacles. The dog is a symbol of *Siva Bhairava*¹⁷. So *Ganesha* holds the flaming dog, the fire of *Siva Bhairava*, which transforms and purge the iron and he is the one who guards and controls the fire (fx keeps the right temperature) and removes all obstacles from the forging-process. His phallus is shown (seldom seen in Indonesian art) which indicates the phallic power's necessity to any creative process. So the relief depicts the forging process as a kind of *Tantric* transformative rite in which the participation of the gods is necessary. *Candi Sukuh*. Central Java, 15th century.

¹⁶ Stanley J. O'Connor: *Iron Working as Spiritual Inquiry in the Indonesian Archipelago*, *History of Religions* vol 14, Chicago 1974, p 57.

¹⁷ *Siva* is the god of creation and destruction. *Bhairava* means the terrible and is the destructive transforming aspect of *Siva*. The fire is an element that *Siva* uses to destroy and purge, an element that is necessary for the process of creating something new, fx a kris. The dog is the vehicle of *Siva Bhairava*. Gerhard J. Bellinger: *Mytologisk Leksikon*, Copenhagen 1993, p 63 and 355. Jan, Fontein: *The Sculpture of Indonesia*, New York 1990, p 175-76.

The Forging Process

The *Empu* had four helpers, called *Panjak*. Two for the forging process and two for operating the bellows. At first the iron had to be cleansed from impurities and carbon. It was done by heating the iron and hammer it out again and again until all impurities were removed. During this process (*Masuh*) the weight of the iron was reduced from 18 kg to about 8 kg. Then it was time to weld the iron and the *Pamor-material*. The iron was heated and hammered out into a long rectangular plate, which was the double length of the length the kris should have, when it was finished. The plate was then bent into an U-form and into the cavity of the U-formed iron plate, the *Pamor-material*, was placed. Then the U-form with the *Pamor-material* in the middle was hammered flat and again hammered out into the same length as before. This process was repeated several times. Thereby the iron and the *Pamor-material* formed layer upon layer. Generally 64 layers were formed, but an exceptional kris might have thousands of layers. During this process it was most important to keep the right temperature to weld the *Pamor-material* and the iron. If it was too high the *Pamor-material* would dissolve into the iron and the separation between the iron and the *Pamor-material* would be diffuse, which would cause the pattern to be blurred. When this process was finished, two pieces were cut off the material to produce the *Ganja* and the *Peksi* (the tang). The *Pamor-piece* was then cut into two pieces of equal length. Inserted between the two *Pamor-pieces* a flat piece of steel was placed, the edges of which protruded from the *Pamor-pieces*. The steel and the *Pamor-pieces* were then welded and the protruding edges of the steel formed the edges and the point of the blade¹⁸. After this process the *Empu* could make the final shape and details of the blade. He drilled a hole in the top of the blade and fastened the round *Peksi* (tang) into it. If the blade was to be waved, he heated the blade again and bent it into the number of waves it was meant to have¹⁹. He filed the details into shape and formed the *Ganja* from the material, he had left for it and drilled a hole into the *Ganja* for the *Peksi* and fastened it into the blade. Finally he polished the blade. Now, it was ready for the hardening process. It was heated to the right temperature and was quickly lowered into a bamboo-cylinder with coconut oil. Then it was time to see the result: How did it look when it was drawn up again? Had it kept its shape? Maybe it was twisted and the whole process had been in vain. But if it was alright the *Empu* could go on to “evoke” the *Pamor-pattern*, which was invisible. This was done by etching the blade in a caustic mixture of arsenic and lemon juice. Whereas this corroded and darkened the iron, the nickel component was resistant and stood out in pale silver tint.

To evaluate the blade the *Empu* had to consider three major aspect of the blade: The *Dapor*, the contour of the blade, the *Prabot*, the details of the blade, and the *Pamor*. Did they form a harmonic wholeness? Every individual part of the blade had to be in consistent with the traditional shape (*Wujud*) and at the same time harmonize with the rest of the blade (*Udawadana*). This aesthetic evaluation was called *Keris Agaman*. Then he evaluated the magical power of the blade, its *Tuah*. This evaluation was called *Keris Tayuhan*. Finally he considered how the aesthetic (*Keris Agaman*) and the *Tuah* (*Tayuhan*) of the blade was related to each other - called *Pusaka* or *Guwaya*²⁰. A special evaluation

¹⁸ The described process is the most simple. The *Empu* might twist, make holes in the material etc. to produce the special *Pamor* pattern he intended to produce. See fx J. Engel: *Geschiednis en algemeen overzicht van de Indonesische wapenkunst*, Amsterdam 1980, p 28-56.

¹⁹ The blade seldom has more than 13 waves. If it has more it is called *Kalawija Keris*. In Surakarta they are only worn by men with certain characteristics and qualities, such as artists, scholars, eccentrics and people with physical defects.

²⁰ Garrett and Bronwen Solyom: *The World of the Javanese Keris*, Honolulu, USA 1978, p. 15.

was to flick the blade to hear the sound it made. If it produced a clear ringing sound it contained positive powers. But if it produced a buzzing and hissing sound you had to be on your guard, as it might contain negative powers. If there were any flaws in the blade, it meant that the blade was unable to hold and control the powers it was imbued with, and it might be a dangerous blade.

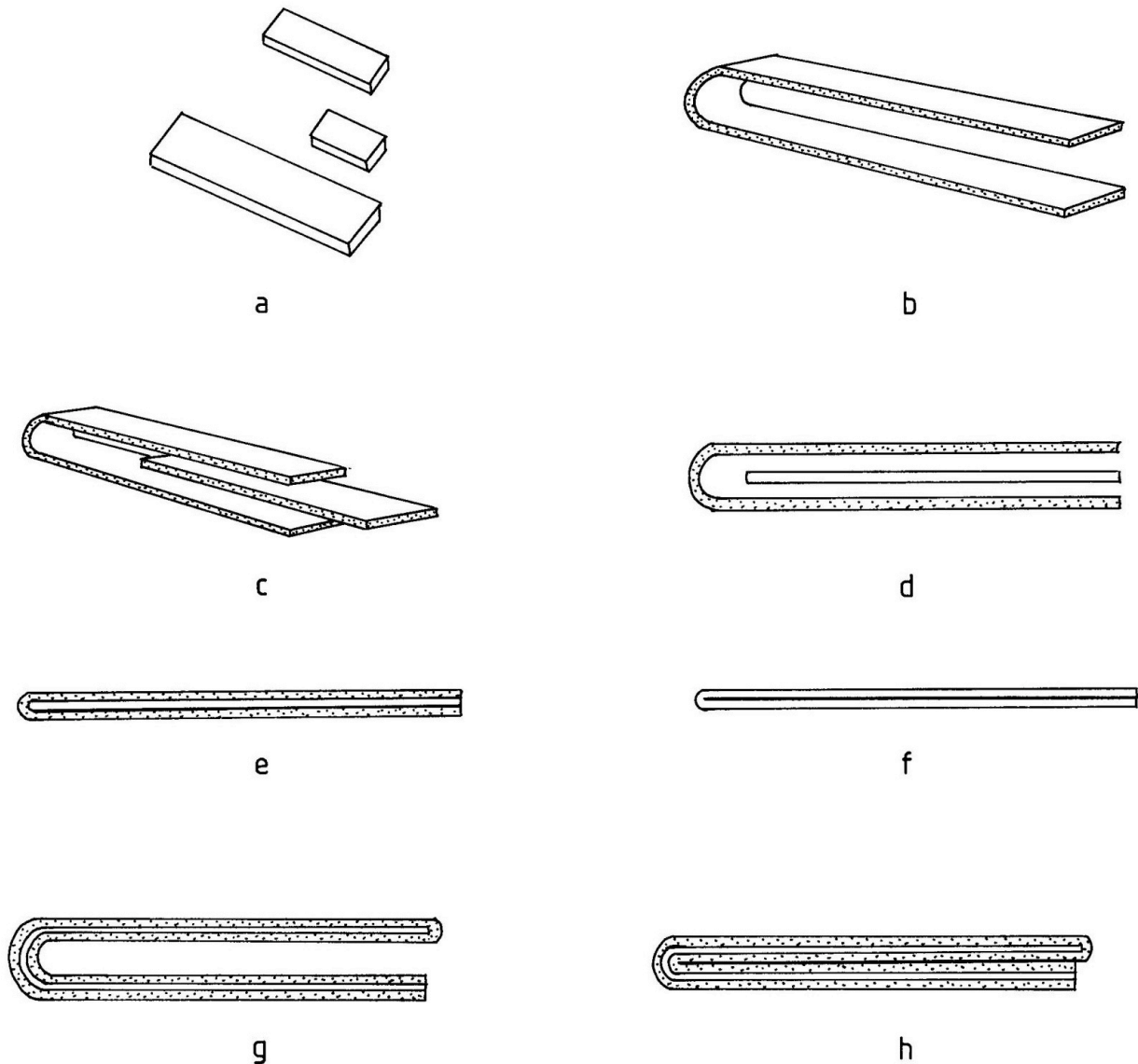
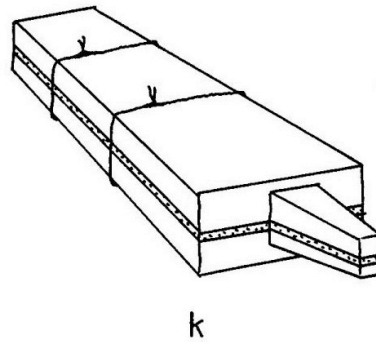
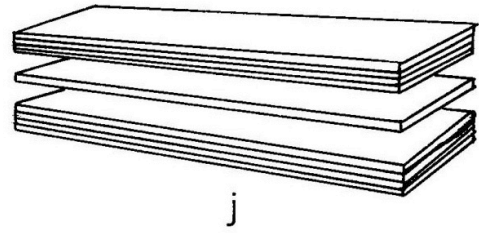
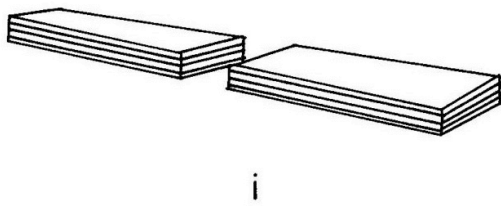


Fig 1,10, a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k) The forging process:

- a) The raw materials for making a kris: Iron, steel and *Pamor-material*.
- b) The iron is hammered out into the double length of the blade and then bent into a U-form.
- c, d) The *Pamor-material* is slipped into the cavity of the U-bent iron plate,
- e, f) heated and hammered out into double length of the blade.
- g) Then it is bent into the U-form again and
- h) hammered out into the double length of the blade and bent into a U-form again, heated and hammered flat again. This is done several times - each time doubling the *Pamor-layers*. First time 2 layers, second time 4 layers, third time 8 layers and fourth time 16 layers etc. until as many layers of *Pamor* and iron as wanted are obtained.



i) After this the iron with *Pamor* is divided into two pieces, each of the length of the blade.

j) The piece of flat steel is then placed between the two pieces with iron and *Pamor* layers, heated and welded.

k) The blade is shaped into its raw form (*Kokodan*) with the *Pamor* and iron layers on each side of the steel core, which is in the middle²¹.

²¹ Bambang Harsrinuksmo: *Ensiklopedi Budaya Nasional*, Jakarta 1988, p 27-28.
Bambang Harisrinuksmo: *Ensiklopedi Keris*, Jakarta 2004, p 38-39,

The Terminology of the Blade - the Wilah

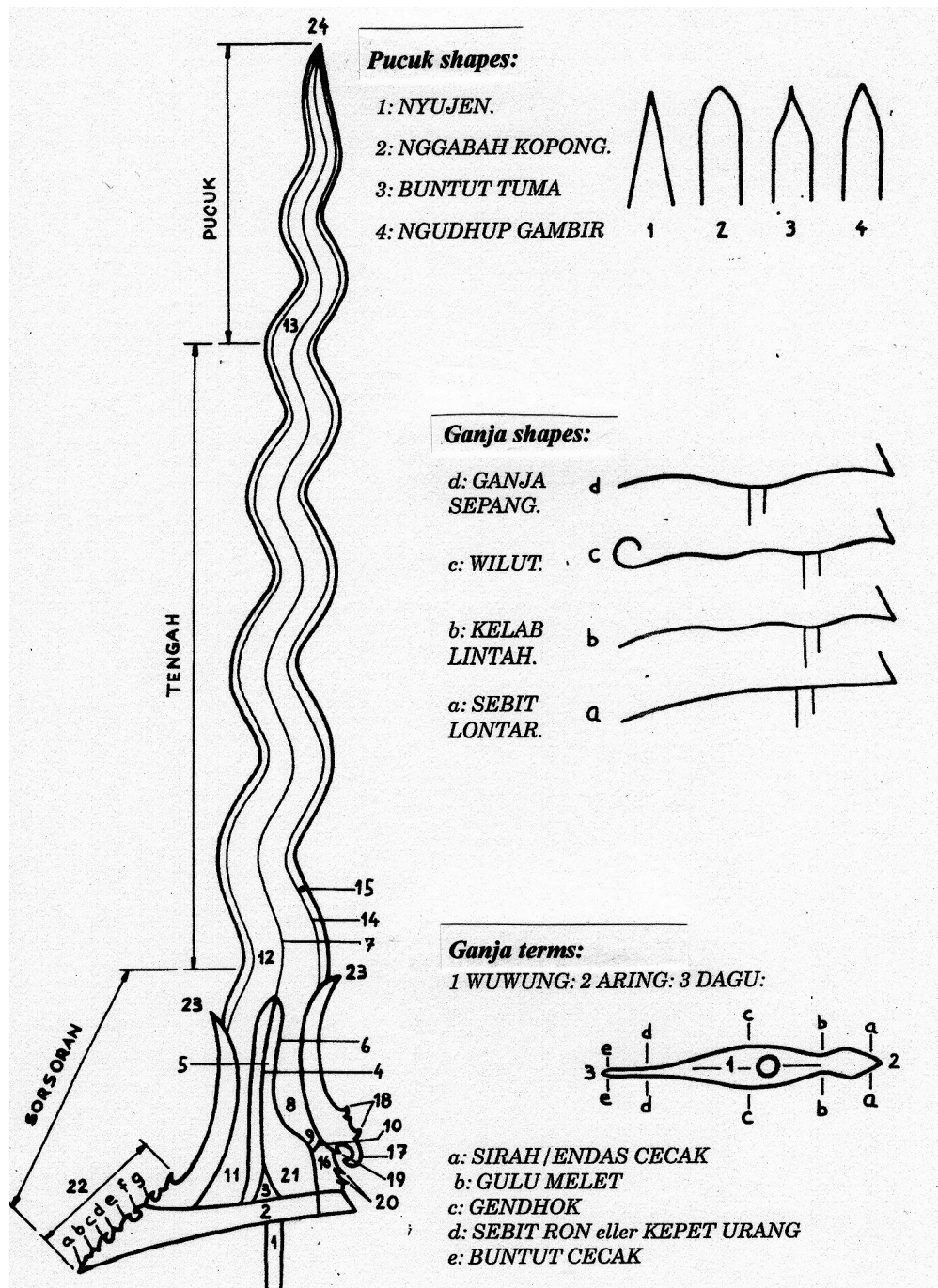


Fig 1,11) The *Wilah* (blade). The blade is divided into three sections. The lower part is called *Sorsoran* (subordinate). It is here most details (*Prabot*) are found. The middle section is called *Tengah* (middle) and the third section is called *Pucuk* (point, or top), where the point is found.

1) *Peksi*: The round tang. It symbolizes the phallus of *Siva* (see Fig 1,14 b)

2) *Ganja* - if the *Ganja* and the blade are not separated or there is a continuation of the *Pamor-pattern* of the blade on the *Ganja*, it is called *Ganja Iras* (*iras* means in one piece). It is mostly seen on old blades. Seen from the top the *Ganja* looks like a lizard or the genitals of a woman. So the union of the *Peksi* and the *Ganja* symbolizes *Lingam* (*Peksi*= the phallus of *Siva*) and *Yonin* (*Ganja*= the genitals of *Pavati*, the wife of *Siva*). The upper side of the *Ganja* is called *Wuwung*. The front is called *Aring* and the back is called *Dagu*. As it illustrates the lizard (*Cecak*) it has different names for the different part of the lizard's

body. The meaning of the *Ganja* is to function as a kind of guard to fend off blows and to confine the spirit of the kris within the blade²². (see Fig 1,14)

a) *Sirah/ Endas Cecak*= the head of the lizard, b) *Gulu Melet*= the throat. c) *Gendhok*= the hip - stomach. d) *Sebit Ron/ Kepet Urang* = the tail. e) *Buntut Cecak*= the end of the lizard. The different shapes of the *Ganja* - see the figure above.

3) *Bawang Sebungkul* (knobbed onion): The round knob just below the *Ganja* in the middle of the blade.

4) *Janur* (the spine (of a leaf)): The rib between the *Sogokans*.

5) *Sogokan*: The deep groove beside the *Janur*. *Sogokan Kalih*: two grooves - one on either side of the *Janur*. *Sogokan Ngajeng*: The *Sogokan* in the front. *Sogokan Wingkin*: The *Sogokan* in the back.

6) *Adeg* (something standing, edge, rib): The edges around the *Sogokan*.

7) *Ada-Ada* (the main rib of a leaf or spine): The rib in the middle of the blade.

8) *Wideng* (shrimp): The comma shaped groove in front of the *Sogokan Ngajeng*.

9) *Mata* (eye): The groove in the bottom of the *Wideng*.

10) *Tikel Alis* (eyebrow): The curved rib under *Mata*.

11) *Srawejan* (to wind): The groove behind *Sogokan Wingkin*.

12) *Kruwingan* (packed): The groove that runs further than *Sogokan Wingkin*.

13) *Gula* (sugar) *Milir* (to go down to the sea or to go down to the city from the outskirts): The groove that continues to the point.

14) *Lis-Lisan* (frame): The line that marks the delimitation towards the edges.

15) *Gusen*: The area between *Lis-lisan* and the edge.

16) *Gandik* (cylindrical pestle stone, golden ornament worn on the forehead of a bride - it may symbolize the phallus of *Siva*): It is placed on the front of the blade just above the *Ganja*.

17) *Telale Gajah* (the elephant trunk) or *Kembang Kacang* (bean flower) or *Sekar Kacang* (peanut flower). I prefer *Telale Gajah*, because it is more in agreement with the original symbolic meaning of the blade. I think the flower names are a later adjustment to Islam to hide the original Hindu origin of the kris (see Fig 1,15 and Fig 1,16)

18) *Jenggot* (beard): The hooks on the front of *Telale Gajah*.

19) *Lambe Gajah* (elephant lip): The slightly curved points below the *Telale Gajah*.

20) *Djalu Memet* (cock-spur): The small slightly curved point(s) on the lower part of the *Gandik*. There may be one or two.

21) *Pejetan* (imprint (of a finger)) or *Blumbangan* (fishing pond): The groove behind the *Gandik*.

²² Robert Cato, *Moro Swords*, Singapore 1996, p 64.

22) *Greneng*²³: The points on the backside of the *Ganja* and the *Sorsoran* part of the blade.

a) *Greneng Jangkep* (complete): more than 5 points.

b) *Greneng Rangkep* (many, double): *Greneng* as well at the *Ganja* as at the blade.

c) *Greneng Sungsun* (stacked): The whole *Greneng* area.

22 a) (*E*) *Ripandan* (the thorns on the Pandanus leaf): The three first (very small) points at the tail of the *Ganja*.

b) *Greneng*: The fourth point.

c) *Randa Nunut* (the widow, that rides/go along with): The fifth point. The Indentation is shaped like the letter "da" in the old Javanese alphabet.

d) *Greneng*.

e) *Randa Nunut*.

f) *Tungkakan* (the one left over): If here is only one point on the lower part of the *Ganja* (just below the blade).

g) *Tingil* (sprouting seed): If there is only one point on the blade just above the *Ganja*.

23) *Pundak Sategal* (shoulder blades): Leaf shaped protrusions on each side of the blade at the end of the *Sorsoran* area.

24) *Pucuk*: The point of the blade. It is found in four different versions (see the Fig 1,11)

²³ The *Greneng* forms some patterns that might look like the letters of the old Javanese alphabet. They might be interpreted into a whole sentence and they might be seen as the signature of a certain *Empu*. Garrett and Bronwen Solyom: *The World of the Javanese Keris*, Honolulu, USA 1978, p. 15 fig 49. Bambang Harsrinuksmo: *Ensiklopedi Budaya Nasional*, Jakarta 1988, p. 76.

The Decorations in Iron and Gold

The most exquisite krisses were decorated with different designs covered with gold called *Kinatah Emas*. So the *Empu* was not only a smith, but also a sculptor. Besides carving the intricate blade details he might also carve in high and low relief a variety of animals, plant motifs etc. The blade might instead of *Telale Gajah*, have for example a *Naga-head* covered with gold. Then the blade has *Dapor Naga Seluman* (the thoughtful/dreaming *Naga*). If the *Naga* has its mouth wide open, so you are able to see its teeth and it has a fold on its throat, it is called *Naga Seluman Kentji* (*Kentjo* = fang). Does the body of the *Naga* follow the middle of the blade, it is called *Dapor Nagasasra*. If the neck of the *Naga* is equipped with wings, which is rarely seen, it is called *Dapor Lar Munda* (*Lar*= wing and *Munda*= snake). Is there a lion on the *Gandik*, it is called *Dapor Singa* (*Singa*= lion). Furthermore an exquisite kris may on the *Ganja* and the *Sorsoran* have a relief of floral motifs covered with gold. It is called *Lung Kamarogan Kinatah*. If that is the case the upper side of the *Ganja* (*Wuwung*) may also be decorated with the same design and sometimes with animals. They often represent an elephant and a lion placed on either side of the *Peksi*. Such a decoration is said to have been conferred upon persons, who honourably had participated in the war against the *Majapahit* princes in the beginning of the 16th century. Ing. Tammens thinks that it was *Sultan Agung* (1613-45), who conferred this symbol on the krisses upon people, who had participated in the war against the *Majapahit* kingdom with honour. But it does not seem likely, since the war against *Majapahit* happened a hundred years earlier, so all of the participants in the war must have died at the time *Sultan Agung* ascended the throne of *Mataram*²⁴. He further asserts that the use of gold on blades first happened in the beginning of the 17th century. But it badly fits in with the fact that the kris on the *Lingam* from *Candi Sukuh*, which dates back to the beginning of the 15th century has *Kinatah Emas* on its blade (see chapter 2 Fig 16). Furthermore *Tomé Pires* as early as 1515 relates, that the nobility uses many kinds of krisses, swords and spears all mounted with gold. Generally speaking you might say that the more elaborated and detailed the gold decorations are, the older they are.

²⁴ Ing. Tammens: *De Keris*, Eelderwolde 1991, vol 1, p. 109



a)

b)

Fig 1,12 a, b, c)

a) A *Dapor Nagasasra* blade with *Kinatah Emas*, decorated with a *Naga* with his undulating body extending in the center of the blade. The winged high tiered crown of the *Naga* indicates he is a *Raja Naga* (king of the underworld). He rests his chin on a *Tumpal* decorated with a *Bintuli* motif (the one eyed *Kala*, that symbolizes the burning sun). Behind him in the *Bawang Bungkul* area is a *Tumpal* decorated at the bottom with a reversed *trisula* (symbolizing *Siva*) and at the top a flame (symbolizing spiritual power). The *Sorsoran* and the *Ganja* is decorated with *Lung Kamarogan Kinatah* (winding floral motifs).

Date: Presented to *Frederik August the 2nd of Poland* in 1714. SES, *Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden* (inv, nr 2880).



b) A *Dapor Singa* blade with *Kinatah Emas*. A *Singa* (lion) is placed at the *Gandik* (a royal symbol - the guardian of the blade). The *Sorsoran* area and the *Gandik* are decorated with *Lung Kanarogan Kinatah* (winding floral motifs). Date: 1718. SES, *Museum für Völkerkund Dresden* (inv, nr 2882).²⁵

c) The *Wuwung* (upper side) of a *Ganja* decorated with very fine and elaborated *Lung Kanarogan Kinatah* (winding floral motifs). Notice the little bird at the left side of the *Endas Cecak* (the front part of the *Ganja*). Date: The 17th century²⁶. Private collection.

c)

²⁵ For further information on 1,12 a,b, chapter 5 Fig 37 b, c and Karsten Sejr Jensen: *Den Indonesiske Kris* 1998, p 114-116 Fig 74 and 75.

²⁶ See chapter 5 Fig 32 d.

The Symbolic Universe of the Kris

The kris has preserved many layers of the Indonesian culture and history, that is why many symbols from the different religious conceptions may be retrieved from the kris. The original Indonesian religious picture of the world divided the world into three worlds: The upper-world with the gods and ancestors, the middle-world with the human beings, the animals, the vegetation etc. and the underworld with its gods and demons. The tree of life, the mountain, the phallus, the ancestor/guardian, the ship and the lotus flower are all ancient symbols, which unite these three worlds. In the kris we find all these symbols besides other basic symbols such as the triangle (*Tumpal*), the snake, the lizard, the elephant and the bird. Symbols do not have a once given and defined meaning, but are images, which simultaneously may refer to many things. Therefore the interpretations, that I give them, are only possible interpretations and there may be many layers under and above the meaning that I indicate. I am not saying that everything apply to a symbol. But it always refer to a certain area and according to the context a definite interpretation will be the most likely. It is important to note that the Indonesians had a “pars pro toto” way of thinking. It means that only a part of an object might represent the whole object.

The Tree of Life

The tree of life is a central symbol of the Indonesian culture - the symbol of life itself. It is connected with the whole cosmos and all its worlds. Its roots are in the underworld, its middle in the middle-world and its top is in the upper-world. In the old shamanistic religions the tree of life provided the shaman with the connection to the upper and the nether world. By means of it he was able to undertake his spiritual travels²⁷. The connection of the kris with the tree of life is symbolized by its floral decorations, which are often found on the hilts, and the *Gandar* of the sheaths. It is also symbolized by the many names of plants given to the different parts of the kris, fx to its *Pamor* patterns and the floral decorations on the blades. On the hilts it is especially symbolized by the floral decoration in the *Tumpals* of the throne the *Raksasa/Yaksha* figures are sitting on. These and other parts of the *Raksasa/Yaksha* figures are often decorated with floral designs, in which the sprout motif is especially prevailing. This, which symbolizes the growth in its making, is connected with the tree of life, too. In the Indonesian tradition the sprout has a long history, which dates back to the *Dong-Son Period* (about 500 B.C to 200 A.D). The earliest example is found on a bronze vessel from Madura which dates back to about the birth of Christ²⁸. The symbolism of the tree of life on the sheath is supported by the so called *Bonaspati-mask*, which sometimes is found on the sheaths from Bali, Madura and Eastern Java. This mask is found in the upper part of most tree of life representations from the *Wayang* theatre²⁹. Here the mask is represented as the lord of the wood in his terrible aspect, that is the

²⁷ The shaman in a trance was via the sacred *Waringin-tree* able to travel to the upper or nether world. At the same time the souls of the dead people and the ancestor were able to descend by this “Jacob’s ladder” and used the shaman as a medium by speaking through his mouth. In this way special trees, mountains and stones were regarded as crossings between the human world and the world of the spirits and ancestors.

²⁸ Jan, Fontein: *The Sculpture of Indonesia*, New York 1990, p 118.

²⁹ The *Wayang* theatre is a very old Javanese shadow play using leather puppets. Its recorded history goes back to 732. It is said to have been introduced by the cultural hero *Panji* along with the kris. The *Wayang* theatre plays the old stories from the *Ramayana* and other stories of mythical and ritual content. *Gunungan*, the tree of life is always introduced in the beginning and in the end of the play, symbolizing that it contains all stories and all life. Pandam Guritno: *Lordly Shades*, Jakarta 1989, p 16-18.

wrath of *Siva* or the *Kala* (demon) symbolizing the all devouring time. It is the mask you see above all entrances to Hindu-Javanese temples and representations of gods³⁰. It is the guardian of the sacred. So both the blade, the sheath, and the hilt may contain symbols of the tree of life and thereby the world of the human beings with the world of the spirits, gods and ancestors are represented.



Fig 1,13 a, b) (see text at the next page)

³⁰ The name *Bonaspasi* is in Eastern Java given to the *Kirttimukha-head* (the face of glory and pride). In the old Indian mythology it was the name of an emanation of the wrath of *Siva*, which burst from his eyebrows (his third eye) in the shape of a monster with insatiable hunger. It was created to eat the demon *Rahu*. However, when *Rahu* saw the monster he fell down and worshipped *Siva* and thereby ensured the mercy of *Siva*. So the monster was unable to eat him. Then *Siva* ordered the monster to eat his own body. He ate it all, but naturally he could not eat his own head. *Siva* decided, maybe as a compensation, to honour *Kirttimukha* by placing his picture above every temple-entrance. So this monster-head, which is placed above all temple-portals and recesses in Java and Bali, became an honoured guardian. In Central Java it is known as *Kala* and in Eastern Java and in Bali as *Bonaspasi*. According to Bosch *Kirttimukha*, *Bonaspasi* or *Kala* are associated with solar symbolism, especially the sun in zenit. The meaning of the word *Kala* in sanskrit is the all devouring time, as the sun is the ruler of time. Maybe it is related to the *Medusa-head*, symbolizing the sun eating the moon. F.D.K Bosch: *The Golden Germ*. 1960. Claire Holt: *The Art of Indonesia*, New York 1967, p 107.

Fig 1,13 a) The *Gunungan* - the tree of life from the *Wayang* theater and a Balinese kris with a golden *Pendok Bonaspati*.

On the *Gunungan* two demons (*Dvarapalas*) are sitting guarding the entrance to the temple just like the *Raksasa* on the hilt of the kris is guarding the kris. At the roof of the temple two *Nagas* with open jaws are guarding it, too, like the *Naga* on the blade guards the kris. The crown of the tree is symbolized by the winding floral motifs on the *Gandar* of the sheath. In the last section of the tree a *Bonaspati* head is seen, symbolizing the lord of the woods - *Siva's* wrath as the protector of the world. The same head is seen on the top of the sheath, protecting the kris, its owner and his world (Fig 1,13 a, b). So in a way the kris is also a tree of life and a shrine guarded by a *Raksasa* (the hilt figure) and *Bonaspati*.

The Mountain

The mountain is closely related to the tree of life, both symbolizing the axis-mundi (the centre of the world), and it is like the tree of life also closely related to the phallus, gods and ancestors. The mountain is the place where ancestors and the god *Siva* reside. From the mountain the water streams down as the water of life, which fertilizes the land. It is a symbol that unites the fertilizing phallus with the spiritual principle³¹. The mountain is synonymous with the tree of life - the *Gunungan*³² piece from the *Wayang* theatre (see Fig 1,13). In Java you see a lot of rice terraces on the hillsides. They are so fruitful, filled with nourishing vegetation that the tree of life and the mountain unites right in front of your eyes. At the same time the mountain represents the destructive side of *Siva*, too. Many of the mountains in Java are still active volcanos, which might suddenly start an eruption and thereby destroy all around them. This is symbolized on the back side of the *Wayang Gunungan* picture, represented by red flames that devour the tree of life. This symbolism fits in with the blade of the kris, which on the one hand symbolizes the *Lingam* (phallus) with its creative power, but on the other hand has the power to destroy life. The forging-process is also related to mountains. The first *Empu Brahma Wisesa* was a hermit, who lived in the mountains, where he produced weapons (like the Greek smith-god *Hefaistos*). Because of that the *Empu* is closely connected to the mountain and it is to the mountains the *Empu* would withdraw to meditate, before he will begin to forge an important kris.

Lingam-Yonin

The mountains are as mentioned above connected with *Siva* and fertility and so is the blade of the kris that is connected with the *Lingam* (phallus) the symbol of *Siva*. The phallic meaning of the blade is made clear, when you look at the big phallus erected in the *Candi Sukuh* temple in Central Java (Fig 1,14 c). This phallus has an upturned kris-blade, which like an erected phallus stands like the period of the following inscription: "The sign of manhood/ manliness is the essence of the world " (dated 1440)³³. So the blade of the kris is certainly masculine having its origin in the godly ancestor's phallus³⁴. Since the sheath

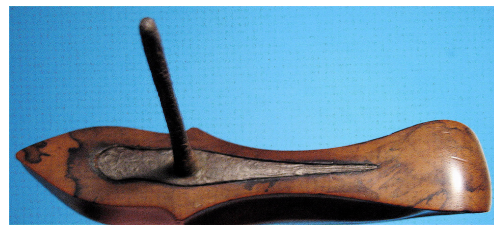
³¹ Helen Ibbitson Jessup: *Court Art of Indonesia*, New York 1990, p. 50 ff.

³² Gunung means mountain .

³³ Ann R. Kinney: *Worshipping Siva and Buddha*, Hawai 2003, p 268

³⁴ In marriage rites in Bali the groom still stabs the kris through a small bamboo mat to symbolize the sexual relation between husband and wife. M.J. Wiener: *Invisible realms*, Chicago and London 1995, p 66

represents the *Yonin* (the vagina) the blade in the sheath represents *Lingam-Yonin*, the most central symbol of Sivaism - the union of the masculine with the feminine, the origin of all life³⁵. The *Peksi* (the tang), which pierce the *Ganja* contains the same symbolism, which is no wonder as it looks like the *Lingam-Yonin* symbols you find in all *Sivaistic* temples³⁶ (Fig 1,14 a, b). The symbolism is emphasized by the fact that the *Ganja* represents a lizard, which among other things may symbolize the uterus³⁷. Looking at the kris under the aspect of the symbolism of the tree of life, the blade in the sheath corresponds exactly to the inscription on the *Lingam of Candi Sukuh*. The sheath is the tree of life - the world and the blade is the sign of manliness - the phallus, which is the essence of the world.



a)

b)

c)

Fig 1,14 a, b, c)

- a) *Lingam-Yonin* in stone. It represents the union of *Siva* and *Parvati* (his wife) - the origin of all life. The *Lingam* also symbolizes the pestle stone (the *Gandik* of the blade - see Fig 1,11: 16) and the *Yonin* the mortar. The basis of food production. Area: Eastern Java. Date: 13th-15th century. Private collection.
- b) The *Peksi* in the *Ganja* has the same symbolic meaning as the *Lingam-Yonin*. The *Peksi* symbolizes the *Lingam* and the *Ganja* the *Yonin*. Furthermore the blade in the sheath has a similar symbolic meaning, as the blade symbolizes the *Lingam* and the sheath the *Yonin*.
- c) The phallus from *Candi Sukuh* about 1440. It has 2 *Palangs* inserted (see chapter 2, Fig 15 a and Fig 16).

³⁵ Garrett and Bronwen Solyom: *The World of the Javanese Keris*, USA 1978, p. 53-54.

³⁶ Bambang Harsrinuksmo : *Ensiklopedi Budaya Nasional*, Jakarta 1988, p. 56.

³⁷ Dr. Andreas Lommel: *Vorgeschichte und Naturvölker*, Gütersloh 1967, p. 104

Ganesha

The connection of the kris with Sivaism is supported by the fact that the blade contains another central *Sivaistic* symbol, the son of *Siva*, the elephant-god *Ganesha*. It is symbolized by the *Telale Gajah*, the elephant-trunk at the *Gandik* of the blade. This god connected with wisdom, science, and literature is able to conquer all obstacles. By this symbol a mighty power is added to the kris. A power able to remove all that might stand in the way of the owner of the kris. The elephant is also the icon of the *Majapahit* kingdom. So it may illustrate the strong connection of the kris with this kingdom and its expansion³⁸.



Fig 1,15) Right: *Ganesha* figure.
Area: The Prambanan Temple, Central Java,
end of the 9th cent,
Left: Balinese blade with *Telale Gajah*.

Below: Balinese blade with a *Ganesha* head.
Notice: Its *Naga*-body.



The Lizard

The *Ganja* represents a *Cecak*, a lizard (Fig 1,11:1 and 1,14 b). In addition to the uterus it symbolizes patience, slyness and swiftness. This animal complements the elephant in the best way by being small, adroit and quick. It has the ability to penetrate all the places where the elephant in spite of its might and power cannot enter and endows the kris with the ability to be a totally penetrating and swift weapon.

³⁸ Maybe it was the *Empus* of *Majapahit* who added this symbol to the kris.

The Cock

The favourite bird of the Indonesians, the cock, is symbolized in the shape of *Djalu Memet*, the cock spur(s) on the *Gandik* of the blade. To the Indonesians the cock spurs symbolize the courage and the fighting spirit of the fighting cock and by depicting them on the blade transfers these qualities to the kris. (see Fig11,1:20)



Lambe Gajah

Djalu Memet

Fig 1,16) The two *Djalu Memet* under the *Telale Gajah* in the *Gandik*. Just below the trunk you find *Lambe Gajah* - the lip of the elephant.

The Naga

The blade of the kris contains another important symbol, the snake - *the Naga*. It is a very complex and universal symbol³⁹. It is found in two main versions. The straight blade (*Dapor Bener/Leres*) symbolizes *the Naga* at rest and in meditation and the waved blade (*Dapor Lok*) symbolizes the snake in movement. I have already mentioned the phallic meaning of the blade, which naturally is close to the snake as the representative of the phallic power of the earth. Simultaneously the snake is seen as a symbol of rebirth and renewal of life⁴⁰. *The Naga* is at the same time deadly and life preserving, as its poison kills, but with the right dose cures⁴¹. The cult of the snake can be traced back to prehistoric time and was transferred to the Hinduism as the *Naga cult*. In the Indonesian Hinduism *the Naga* is seen as the guardian of the water. It may hold it back or it may change it into rain clouds, which provide fertilizing rain. In this context it is connected with the *Soma* liquid or the *Amrita*, the drink of immortality, which it was participating in producing.⁴² Just like it guards the water it guards the roots of the tree of life, the treasures hidden in the earth and the deepest wisdom, too. On the top of its head it often carries the wish-fulfilling jewel (*Cintámana*), which represents its power to restore life⁴³. From the early Hindu time *the Naga* is connected with the royal power. The king of *Srivijaya*⁴⁴ called himself the king of *the Nagas*. *Malini* a snake princess is considered to be the primeval ancestor of the Balinese people. The *Karo-Bataks* in Sumatra think they are descended from a huge snake. In Java this connection with the royal power is fx symbolized by the entwined snakes. It is often used as a motif in the kratons (the palaces) and in the regalias of the prince of Yogyakarta it is presented as *Hardawalika* the snake king as a symbol of power,

³⁹ In sanskrit *Naga* is a masculine- and *Nagini* a feminine snake.

⁴⁰ The snake sheds its old slough and is reborn.

⁴¹ The poisonous medicine will kill in too large a dose, but in the right dose will cure. The god of healing *Aesculapius*'s sacred staff was a staff with two snakes entwining it.

⁴² The snake *Vasuki* was used as a driving belt, when the gods and the demons churned the milky ocean and among other things produced the *Soma/Amirita*.

⁴³ N. Chutiwongs: Indonesian Bronzes in the Domola Nieuwenhuis Collection, Amsterdam 1990, p 68.

⁴⁴ *Srivijaya* was a Hindu kingdom in Sumatra from about 600- 1200 A.D.

strength and responsibility⁴⁵ (see chapter 5 Fig 40 b). It is probably the same symbolism, which the krisses with *the crowned Naga* represent - the so called *Nagasasra krisses*. But the snake is more than that. In the *Tantric* belief, which the Indonesian Hinduism is permeated with, it is a symbol of the very *Kundalini* power, the energy which produces the whole universe. It ascends from the lowest *chakra* (psychic center), the underworld to the highest *chakra*, the heaven to produce the union of the masculine with the feminine and so conquer all illusions, so that you may enter *Nirvana*. So the snake is a symbol like the tree of life which unites the upper-world with the underworld and with the transcendental. A different symbolism refers to the tension between the heaven and the underworld, which makes the life unfold. It is represented by the ancestor as the representative of heaven and *the Naga* as the representative of the underworld or by the eternal fight between *the Garuda bird* and *the Naga*. In relation to both the kris is an adequate symbol. As well the ancestor as the *Garuda* bird are represented as kris-hilts. It illustrates on one hand the control of the powers of the underworld by the human spirit (the ancestor) and on the other hand what it leads to - the attainment of the highest realization.⁴⁶



Fig 1,17) The left: A *Dapor Nagasasra* blade. The body of the *Naga* follows the windings of the blade. It symbolizes royal power.

The middle: A *Raksasa* figure that guards the kris is sitting in the squatting *Pralambada* position of an ancestor. It illustrates the guarding *Raksasa* as well as the protecting ancestor and the union of the upper world with the underworld.

The right: A kris with a *Garuda* hilt (*Jawa Demam*). It illustrates on one hand the tension between the underworld of the *Naga* and the *Garuda* of the upper-world who fights the snakes and on the other hand it illustrates the guarding ancestor, as the *Garuda* is sitting in the same squatting position as the ancestor.

Notice the resting deer behind the *Naga* in the *Bawang Sebungkul*. It belongs to the symbolism of the tree of life and *the wheel of Buddha*. It symbolizes swiftness, meditation, meekness and gentleness. It compensates the aggressive and ferocious nature of the *Naga*.



⁴⁵ Art van der Beek: *The life in a Javanese Kraton*, Oxford 1990, p 48.

⁴⁶ The highest realization, which leads to liberation from this world and attainment of *Nirvana*, may be symbolized by the admission of the *Garuda* or the ancestor to the world of gods.

The Ancestor/Raksasa/Yaksha

The symbol of the *Lingam* is closely related to the ancestor, who was regarded as the original human representative of fertility. He is like the tree of life and the mountain a symbol which can be traced back to neolithic time as being the central symbol in the so called *Megalithic Cultures*. The symbol of this figure we find in the hilt of the kris. All original kris hilts represents a person sitting in a squatting position, which applies to the most naturalistic as well as to the most stylized versions of hilts. The ancestor sitting in a squatting position is found again in the early Southeast Asian cultures, the Indonesian, Philippine and Melanesian agricultural cultures and in the cultures which still have remained on this level like for example some Indonesian cultures⁴⁷. The position may symbolize several things - first of all death and rebirth since it was in this position the *Megalithic Cultures* buried their dead, but at the same time it is the position of the foetus. In these cultures they believed that they lived under the surveillance of the spirits of ancestors. It was the ancestor who had passed on life and it was he who guarded the pool of life, into which each single human being had his share. Therefore the relation to the ancestors and fertility was so central. Through the fertility of their descendants the ancestors lived on in this world and by their allotment of fertility, the life of their descendants was blessed.

The sitting position, however, also gives cause to another interpretation. The figure sits on a throne with his legs straight down in front of him. This is the *Pralambapade* position, which many Indonesian *Buddha* figures assume (See Fig 1,18 b). However, the figure assumes a more bent position than the *Buddha* figures, as the head is bent a little forward to the right. Its right hand catches hold of the leg below the right knee while the left hand catches hold of the left knee, a position a *Buddha* figure would never assume. Moreover the naturalistic figures have a facial expression far from the peaceful expression of the *Buddha*. They are often grinning and sometimes very aggressively. They represent *Raksasas* or *Yakshas*, which are demonic figures connected with *Siva Bhairava*⁴⁸ and they may even represent *Siva Bhairava* himself. So the *Raksasa/Yaksha* hilt figure may be seen as an ancestor and a representation of *Siva Bhairava* and *Buddha* merged into a single representation.

The Indonesian culture contains simultaneously like the kris many layers. Indonesia has been a melting pot of many different religions and ideas. For example the belief in ancestors has lived beside *Hinduism*, *Buddhism* and *Islam* without any of them has dominated the others. Quite the opposite happened, they merged⁴⁹. *Buddhism*, *Hinduism* and ancestor- beliefs have merged with *tantric* conceptions and the worship of ancestors did not disappear with the introduction of the high religions. The influence of the ancestor worship seems to have grown during *The Eastern Javanese Period* (930 A.D. - 1528 A.D.). It is reflected in the statues of the divine shape of a prince, which were set up 12 years after his death⁵⁰. Most often he/she was represented as *Siva* or *Buddha*, or whichever god or goddess he/she favoured. It represented that now he/she was reinstated in his/her original place in the

⁴⁷ Dr. Andreas Lommel: *Vorgeschichte und Naturvölker*, Gütersloh 1967, p. 103.

⁴⁸ The name *Siva* means the benign and gracious, but *Bhairava* means the terrible. So *Siva Bhairava* means the terrible *Siva* or the terrible benign.

⁴⁹ One of the most important developments during The Eastern Javanese Period was the merging of Hinduism and Buddhism, not as a syncretistic belief combining elements of both religions, but as two separate paths within an overall system. Ann R. Kinney: *Worshipping Siva and Buddha*, Hawai 2003, p 24.

⁵⁰ A period of twelve years passed after a person's death before the person returned to his/hers divine origin. Ann R. Kinney: *Worshipping Siva and Buddha*, Hawai 2003, p 25.

spiritual hierarchy⁵¹. In that way he was regarded as well as an ancestor as a god, who maintained for his descendants and subjects the connection to the ancestors and the spiritual world.⁵²

The kris hilts with their demonic appearances are probably a special version of the maintenance of this connection. Gods of this kind are represented in *Buddhism* by the so called *Dvarapalas*⁵³, the guardian-gods. They are ancient violent gods, which were connected with the chthonic powers of nature. Such a violent god was *Siva*. He was originally the lord of animals (*Pashupati*)⁵⁴, the ruler of nature, the guardian of fertility and the god of storms. He became the central god during *The Eastern Javanese Period* - in the same period the origin of the kris is to be placed. So the god/demon figures of the early hilts are manifestations of *Siva* or gods related to him such as *Raksasas/Yakshas*, who represent the old layers of gods, who controlled nature and the destructive demons. This interpretation is supported by the fact that several of the old types of these hilts exhibit a phallus and by the fact that the blades at the same time represent the phallus, the symbol of *Siva*. A common feature of nearly all old cultures and the contemporary primitive cultures is that destructive demons cannot stand to be confronted with the phallus or the vagina (the sheath and Ganja represent the vagina, see Fig 1,14) ⁵⁵. The aggressive expression of the *Raksasa* hilts, however, has the same intention to frighten off the destructive demons⁵⁶. At the same time the bent head of the figures shows that they possess the virtues the Indonesians cherish most, which is patience, devotion and a firm character - which the demons are unable to conquer, too⁵⁷. Their nakedness or the very few clothes they may wear and their long hair hanging down their back show that they possess other great virtues such as asceticism and meditation. These virtues were to the old Indonesians the way to achieve the greatest spiritual and psychical powers and the final unity with god. So the *Raksasa/Yahsha* hilts are the guardians of the power of the kris. They guard the owner of the kris and make him able to handle the *Naga* power of the kris and they guard the kris as such, like the *Dvarapalas* guard the temple⁵⁸.

⁵¹ The prince/king was regarded as a kind of *Bodhisattva*, that is a person who has obtained the status of a *Buddha* and therefore admission to *Nirvana*, but because of his compassion with the suffering humanity has chosen to reincarnate to help the human beings. Ann R.Kinney: *Worshipping Siva and Buddha*. Hawai 2003, p 25.

⁵² P. Scheurleer: *Ancient Indonesian Bronzes*, Leiden 1988, p 11 ff

⁵³ *Dvarapala* (Sanskrit: *Dvar*= entrance/gate and *pala*= guardian) means the guardian of gates and entrances. Helena A. van Bommel, Rotterdam 1994, p 1 and p 132. In the *Tibetan Tantric Buddhisme* they were gods, who originally represented the natural forces or old fertility gods of a violent character - the *Dharmapalas* - those who protect *Dharma*, the doctrine, the religion.

⁵⁴ His first representation is found on an Indian seal from 2500 B.C.. Alain Daniélou: *The Phallus*, Vernon 1995, p 51.

⁵⁵ In many cultures the demons envy the sexuality and the fertility of human beings. They try to destroy it, but at the same time they fear it, as they know it will conquer them. That is the reason why the male and female reproductive organs have been regarded as an evil averting symbol. Jørgen Andersen: *The Witch on the Wall*, Copenhagen 1977 and Eibl-Eibesfeldt: *Det Præprogrammerede Menneske*, Copenhagen 1975, p. 233.

⁵⁶ The demon *Rahu* was frightened by the aggressive face of *Bonaspasi*.

⁵⁷ Clair Holt: *Art In Indonesia*, New Haven and London 1967, p.142

⁵⁸ Two *Dvarapalas* were placed in front of the Javanese temples like the ones placed at the entrance to the *Gunungan*. See Fig 1,13.

Fig 1,18 a) (left) A *Dvarapala* figure in stone who guards the temple of *Kalasan*.
Area: Central Java.
Date: 8th-9th century.

(right) A *Dvarapala* in bronze.
He has a *Naga* as *Upavita* (the initiation cord) around his left shoulder.
Area: Central Java.
Date: 9th-10th century.
Private collection.



Fig 1,18 b) A *Yaksha-/ ancestor* figure (type 1), sitting in the *Pralambapada* position on a throne of *Tumpals* decorated with floral design. Notice the phallus with a *Palang* inserted, which indicates his connection with fertility and *Sivaistic tantric* rites. His nakedness and long hair indicates he is an ascetic hermit, who meditates.
Area: Banten. Date: 17th century. (ivn.nr EDb 21). *The National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen*.



Central Javanese
Buddha-Vairocana figure
in bronze sitting in the
Pralambapada position.
The 9th century.

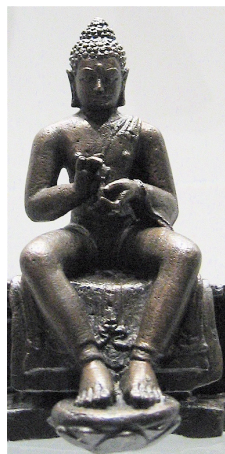


Fig 1,18 c) A *Raksasa*-/ancestor figure (type 2), who assumes the same position as the figure Fig 1,18 b. He is an ascetic hermit, too, but his grinning mouth with the long pointed teeth shows that he is an aggressive *Raksasa*⁵⁹. His phallus has a *Palang* inserted, which indicates his connection with *Sivaistic tantric* rites, Area: Banten.
Date: 17th century,
(inv.nr 2887). SES, Museum für Völkerkunde, Dresden



Fig 1,18 d) A *Siva Bahirava*/*Raksasa* prince (type 3) with an aggressive appearance sitting on a throne with alternating, reversed florally decorated *Tumpal* figures. The body and the face is painted red, which indicates aggressiveness, but it is balanced by the traces of gold on the hair, eye, teeth, necklace, *Tumpals* and the blue colour on the flower, which cools it down. A *Palang* is inserted in his phallus. In his left hand he is wearing a *Nagasari* flower (representing the tree of life) and his right hand is held in the position of the *mudra abhaya*⁶⁰.
Area: Banten
Date: 17th century
(inv, nr, EDb 16). The National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen.



⁵⁹ The *Raksasas* are Hindu spiritual demonic beings. They may be either friendly or unfriendly to gods and human beings. The *Yakshas* are often related to trees or springs in nature. They are half divine and half human beings. They are guardians of fertility and the hidden treasures in the underground. They, too, may be either helpers and friendly to human beings or they may be the opposite. Both are connected with *Siva*.

⁶⁰ The *mudra* symbolizes renunciation and means "have no fear".

The Stylized Ancestor/Raksasa/Yaksha

The demonic ancestor/god figure has many shapes. In its most stylized version it is represented by a sprouting plant or flower. The Central Javanese hilt *Nunggak Semi*, which means the trunk that sprouts again, shows a combination of a guardian, ancestor and plant. If you look at side-face of the hilt it has the shape of an ancestor in a squatting position. Its demonic guardian aspect is illustrated by the two demonic *Patra-Patra* masks, which are seen on the front of the hilt (Fig 1,19 a). The name of the hilt indicates that it is a tree - the tree of life, which sprouts again, a symbol of rebirth. The rebirth/resurrection motif belongs to the basic experience of the agriculture cultures, the plants which dies and are reborn like the ancestor is reborn through his descendants⁶¹. On certain hilts from Madura the symbolism of plant are even more evident (Fig 1,19 b). These hilts are shaped like the flower *Kembang Temu* (wild ginger flower)/ *Gaya Kembang* (energy flower) just about to unfold. Again in profile you may see the silhouette of the squatting ancestor. So the connection between the ancestor, death, reincarnation and the sprouting power is clearly symbolized here. Many researchers have meant, that the stylization was an indication of an *Islamization*, since you have a prohibition in Islam against depicting human beings. This is indicated by the fact that the North Javanese hilt figures become more and more stylized the further eastwards you go⁶². It was from the North Eastern Javanese seaside towns the *Islamization* of Java spread. However, it was not the original orthodox kind of *Islam* that became generally accepted in Indonesia, but the mystic *Sufic* kind. It had the same purpose as the *Sivaistic Tantrism* that was a mystical merge into God and it did not stress formalities. Because of that the naturalistic figural hilts continued to exist after *Islam* had taken over. In the most orthodox areas - the North Javanese seaside towns and the Central Javanese principalities - you might see the stylized hilts as a bending knee to the *Orthodox Islam*. But on the other hand this sprouting figure accentuated another very old original layer in the Indonesian culture, the symbolism of the tree of life. This is supported by the fact that the symbol of the sprout, which the stylized hilts often are depicting and/or covered by, can be traced back to the *Dong-Son Culture* (see p 32).



Fig 1,19 a) *Nunggak Semi* hilt from Surakarta. Notice the stylized silhouette of the squatting ancestor and the demonic *Patra-Patra* masks.

⁶¹ In relation to this it might be mentioned that the goddess of love and germinating life *Shri* is also the goddess of death. W.F. Stuttenheim: *Studies in Indonesian Archaeology*. Hague 1956, p. 80 note 33.

⁶² With the exception of the most Eastern part of Java - the *Balambangan* area which remained *Sivaistic* until 1720.



Fig 1,19 b) Hilt from Madura. It represents *Kembang Temu/Gaya Kembang* - the ginger flower/energy flower just about to unfold and a stylized *ancestor/Raksasa* in a squatting position. It also has some similarity to a phallus.

The Tumpal.

The throne, the naturalistic *ancestor/Raksasa/Yaksha* figures are sitting on, emphasizes the great power they control. It is composed of alternately reversed triangels, *Tumpal* figures, which are a very old Indonesian symbol. They symbolize the mountain and the tree of life, which is supported by their floral decorations. On one hand it is a symbol the origin of which can be traced back to neolithic time and on the other hand it is one of the basic symbols in the *tantric* world of ideas, which in *The Eastern Javanese Period* imbued the Indonesian culture. Here the upturned triangle represents the *Lingam* and the downwards turned one, the *Yonin*. In other words it symbolizes the two powers that keep the world going, the masculine and the feminine power. So the *ancestor/Raksasa/Yaksha* figure sits on the foundation of the world and guards it.



Fig 1,19 c) The throne composed of alternately reversed *Tumpals*, which the *ancestor/Raksasa/Yaksha* sits on. Notice the floral and sprouting design that indicates it is composed of the *Gunungan* symbol - the mountain/the tree of life. Further the alternately reversed triangles symbolize the *Lingam* and the *Yonin*.

Garuda

Another basic type of hilt is the bird-like squatting figure with folded arms. On one hand this figure is said to represent *Jawa Demam*, which is a person suffering from “Jawa fever” (probably a malaria attack) and on the other hand it is said to represent the bird *Garuda*, the steed of the god *Vishnu*. The legend about the origin of the *Jawa Demam* hilt is as follows: A prince told his maker of kris hilts to make/invent a hilt different from all other hilts, he or other hilt makers had ever produced. If he was not able to do so the prince would have him killed. The poor maker of hilts (*Imandihardjo*) could not come up with anything. But in the evening he happened to see the prince sitting crouching and shivering during an attack of fever. It inspired him to carve a hilt that pictured the prince in this position. When the prince saw the result, he became very enthusiastic about it and the hilt maker saved his life and was rewarded by the prince⁶³. It is difficult, however, to tell if there is any truth to this legend. But in any case the hilt is said to represent a prince and if it represents a *Garuda* bird, too, it is in accordance with the East Javanese tradition of representing the prince as an ancestor and god⁶⁴. So the hilt type is in line with the *Raksasa/Yaksha* type of hilt. *Martin Kerner* regards the *Garuda* hilts as a further development of the naturalistic *Raksasa* hilt. Its nose has been more and more accentuated until finally it appears as a beak⁶⁵. Several of the hilts, however, look too distinctly like birds to this explanation can be satisfying. The *Garuda* is the steed of the god *Vishnu*. So you might think that the areas, where this type of hilt is prevalent, might have been areas where *Vishnu* was worshipped in preference to *Siva*. This accentuation of one of the three Hindu main gods, *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Siva* in preference to one of the others has been rather common within *Hinduism* and especially *Siva* and *Vishnu* have struggled for the leadership. You might therefore think that *Sumatra*, *Malacca*, *Celebes*, the southern part of the *Philippines*, *Kalimantan in Borneo* and the Eastern islands, where the *Garuda* hilt was in prevalence, had been especially influenced by *Vishnuism*, whereas *Java* and *Bali* had been influenced by *Sivaism*. It is possible, but unfortunately no sources exist to support the assumption that *Sumatra*, *Malacca* etc. has been especially influenced by *Vishnuism*.

A different explanation is that the *Garuda* hilt is connected with the propagation of *Islam*. That is to say the *Garuda* hilts are especially common in *Sumatra* and *Malacca* where *Islam* first gained footing in Indonesia and with the merchants spread eastwards to *Celebes*, *Borneo* and *Sumbawa*. There might be several reasons to prefer the *Garuda* hilt. Within *Sufism* you have a big mythological bird, called *Simugh*⁶⁶, which symbolized the highest spiritual element of the human being. It became known in India with the introduction of *Islam* and became assimilated to the *Hindu Garuda*. Because the *Garuda* as early as the *Hindu time* in Indonesia was a popular symbol, which also symbolized the

⁶³ According to a *Malay* legend the hilt is related to an incident during the reign of *Sultan Mansur Shah* in *Malacca*. The hero *Hang Tuah* was attacked by a *Javanese* who feigned sickness or fever until *Hang Tuah* came within striking distance. Needless to say the assailant was quickly dispatched by our hero. David Henkel: *The Malay Peninsula Keris: Peninsular Kereses on the internet*.

⁶⁴ W.F. Stuttenheim: *A thousand years old profession in the princely courts of Java. Studies in Indonesian Archeology*. Hague 1956, p 66. See p 27-28.

⁶⁵ Martin Kerner: *Keris-Griffe*, Zürich 1996, p 15

⁶⁶ It is described in the Persian epos *Shah-nama* written down about 1000 A.D. It is called *Simugh*. Keld von Folsach: *Fabel væsener fra Islams verden*, Copenhagen 1991, p 4 and 21.

deliverance of the soul⁶⁷, it is easy to understand why it might have been easily accepted by the Indonesians who had converted to *Islam*. Further the squatting figure of the hilt preserved the link to the deep-rooted Indonesian ancestor cult, which matched well the *Sufic* idea of the *Garuda* representing the highest spirituality of the human being. At the same time it was a suitable symbol of the travelling merchants who spread *Islam*. They travelled fast around from place to place like the bird represented on the hilt. But why did the *Javanese* not use the *Garuda* hilt, too, when they converted to *Islam*. The explanation might be that *Sivaism* was too deeply rooted in the *Javanese* culture to be supplanted by the *Garuda*. Mubin Sheppard offers another explanation⁶⁸. He thinks that the *Garuda* hilt comes from another tradition, that is the tradition of the *Cham people* in Southern Vietnam. They are said to have produced krisses with *Garuda* hilts, that may have influenced the Malays. The *Javanese* did not have this influence and moreover they had a long tradition of the *Raksasa* guardian figures at their temples. That might be the reason why they kept the *Raksasa* hilt after the conversion to *Islam*. In addition to that the *Javanese* were not a travelling people like the *Aceh people* in Northern Sumatra, the *Buginese* in Celebes and the *Malays*⁶⁹ in Malacca, who all had krisses with *Garuda* hilts. So the *Javanese* stuck to the symbol connected with earth and land, the *Raksasa* hilt.



a)



b)



c)



d)

Fig 1,20 a, b, c, d) Four different versions of the *Garuda* hilt:

- a) A *Jawa Demam* type in ivory from Central Sumatra/The Peninsula of Malacca.
- b) A *Jawa Demam* type in rhino horn from Aceh, North Sumatra.
- c) A *Pangulu* type in ivory from Celebes.
- d) A *Tajong* (kingfisher) type in ebony wood decorated with suasa and gold ornaments from Pattani, the northern part of the Peninsula of Malacca.

⁶⁷ The *Garuda* bird stole the *Amrita* (the drink of immortality) from the gods to give it to the *Nagas* as ransom to deliver his mother from their captivity. It was seen as a symbol of the deliverance of the soul from its earthly captivity. *Garuda* was the arch-enemy of the *Nagas*.

⁶⁸ Mubin Sheppard: *Taman Indera, Malay Decorative Arts and Pastimes*, Oxford 1972, p 128

⁶⁹ Malay means travelling people.

The Ship

The kris as a link between the world of the spirits and the human beings is further supported by the symbolism of the upper part of the sheath, which has the shape of an old fashioned ship or boat⁷⁰, the moon boat, the abode of the cultural hero *Panji*⁷¹. In the Indonesian language it is called *Gambar* or *Wrangka*. The word *Wrangka* is close to the Proto-Austronesian word *Wanka*, which means canoe⁷². The ship has always played an important part in Indonesia, since Indonesia is a realm of islands. Its great importance is supported by the many myths about how the first ancestor, male or female, prince or princess, who founded the dynasty, arrived from far away onboard a ship. The boat of the kris sheath was seen in the same way as the spirit or soul ship that carried the ancestor to the world of the human beings. So like the tree of life the *Wrangka* - the boat of the kris was a mediator between the world of the spirits and the world of the human beings. The kris depicts this situation when it is in its sheath. Then you will see the squatting hilt figure sitting in his boat in the same way as the ancestors are depicted in the old original - and the more primitive cultures for example in the Babar archipelago in Eastern Indonesia.



a)



b)

Fig 1,21 a,b,c,d) a) A *Raksasa/Bima* in his soul boat, Area: Tegal, North Western Java.

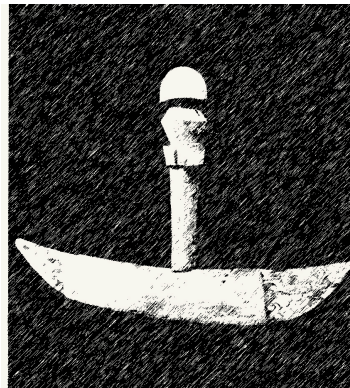
b) A stylized *Raksasa/ ancestor* in his soul boat. Area: Mataram, Central Java.

c) An ancestor in his soul boat. Area: The island of Babar, East Indonesia.

d) A stylized ancestor in his soul boat. Male grave marker Area: The Sulu Archipelago.



c)



d)

⁷⁰ W.H. Rasser: *Panji, The Culture Hero*, Hague 1959, p 287-88 .

⁷¹ *Panji* is a cultural hero who is said to have brought the kris and the *Wayang* theatre to Indonesia. He is supposed to have reigned the Kingdom of *Jenggala* in the end of the 12th century. Endang Sri Hardiari and Pieter ter Keurs: *Indonesia, Discovery of the Past*, Leiden 2005, p 109.

⁷² Jerome Feldman: *Arch of Acestor*, Los Angeles 1994, p 24

The Lotus

The lotus is a basic symbol as well in *Buddhism* as in *Hinduism*. It symbolizes cosmos in the shape of the female womb from which all life is born. Probably it can be traced back to the matriarchal religions, which the later *Aryan* religions had to combine with⁷³. In the Hindu mythology the first lotus flower grew from the water of eternity with the god of creation, *Brahma*, in its womb and because of that it became the progenitor of all creation. That is the reason why the lotus is placed under all godly manifestations. A lotus flower with four petals may be painted around the mouth of the sheath. In this version it symbolizes the four corners of the world. The blade fill in its center and represents the union of the female and the masculine (*Lingam-Yonin*) as a symbol of fertility and regeneration and with the ancestor figure sitting in the middle as the ruler of the world. The most usual representation of the lotus on the kris, however, is the *Mendak/ Selut* in or on which the figure of the hilt rests, symbolizing the *Yaksha/Raksasa/ancestor* resting in the womb from which all life is born.



Fig 1,22 a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i) Different types of *Mendaks* and *Seluts* from different part of Indonesia and the Peninsula of Malacca representing various version of the lotus flower:

Mendaks:

- a) Banten,
- b) *Parijoto* type from Yogyakarta/Surakarta.
- c) Madura.
- d) *Angkup Randu* type from Madura.

e) Celebes

f) Sumatra/Malacca,

Seluts:

- e) Surakarta,
- h) Pattani, the northern part of the Malaccan Peninsula.
- i) Balinese *Selut* and *Mendak* (ring)

⁷³ The matriarchal religions are the original Indian religions. The female was prevailing in these religions before the invasion of the *Aryans* about 2000 B.C. with their male gods.

The Rice

The rice is the material foundation of the whole Indonesian culture. It is symbolized by the the granulated filigree decorations on the *Mendaks/Seluts*. The most common type of *Mendak* from Central Java is further named *Parijoto* (see Fig 1,22 b) which means swollen rice. So the *Mendak/Selut* is loaded with the fertility of the rice, which so to speak forms the basis of the ancestor hilt figure. In this way it symbolizes that the basis of the ancestor is to be the one who delivers fertility. At the same time the *Mendak/Selut* is the connecting link between the upper-world of the ancestors (the hilt) and the underworld of the *Naga* (the blade). So the *Mendak/Selut* also symbolizes, that fertility is both connected with the underworld and the upper-world and that it needs both to grow. In addition to that the most common *Pamor* pattern is named *Beras Wutah*, which means scattered rice. So you may say that the kris is a symbol of both the spiritual and the material fertility.

Tantrism

The kris is not only a weapon, but an object of meditation to get into contact with the ancestors and the world of spirits, too. Its symbolism indicates that it is connected with *Tantric Sivaism*⁷⁴. The *Tantric* doctrine is a ritualistic doctrine. It stresses magical formulas, ritual practices such as ritual sexual intercourse and via meditation on images of gods, ritual words (*mantras*) and symbols to unify with the highest male and female principles and thereby extinguish the duality of the world to attain release (*moksha*). During the last decades of the Central Javanese Period (the beginning of the 10th century) the *Tantrism* imported from East India gained a strong foothold in as well *Buddhistic* as in *Hindu* religious practices⁷⁵. However, it was especially in the 13th century that a special kind of *Tantrism* gained progress, the *Siva Bhairavaism*. Now, the terrible aspect of Siva was worshipped through rituals that contained meditations in graveyards, the sacrifice of animals and human beings, ritual sexual intercourses etc. In this way they tried to unify with *Siva Bhairava* and thereby attain his power to conquer demons and enemies. This shift is clearly seen in the Eastern Javanese art, where the demonic aspects became conspicuous as well in visual arts as in literature⁷⁶. This helps to explain why the krisses fx have demonic hilt figures and why the blade of a kris is seen as a phallus and a *Naga*, which all are central symbols of the *Sivaistic Tantrism*. Furthermore it indicates the period of the origin of the kris. By and large the *Naga*, does not appear in the Indonesian art before The Eastern Javanese Period⁷⁷ and because the *Naga* is such a central symbol of the kris, it indicates that the kris may have had its origin during this period.

⁷⁴ The polarity of the male and the female principles, which the kris is imbued with.

⁷⁵ Jan Fontain: *The Sculpture of Indonesia*, USA 1990, p 50.

⁷⁶ The threat of the invasion of Indonesia by *Khubilai Khan* (1215-1294) who had converted to *Tantrism* is said to have especially started the conversion to *Siva Bhairava* in Indonesia.

⁷⁷ The East Javanese Period is from 930 - 1528 A.D.

The Kris as a Symbol of the Culture and the History of Indonesia.

From the description of the symbolism of the kris above, it appears that the kris is a central symbol in Indonesia. The kris with all its symbolism penetrates through the many layers of the Indonesian culture uniting hundreds of years of different beliefs and attitudes going right from the worship of the tree of life, the mountain and the ancestors in the *Megalithic Period* to the *Buddhistic* and *Hindu* gods and finally to *Islam* unified with *Tantrism* in the *Garuda* figure. It may be hard to understand how the Indonesians were able to include so much into one item, the kris. But to the Indonesians the belief in an inviolable, mystic and divine power or energy is quite central. This power pervades the whole universe and it is able to assume any shape from the most crude to the most subtle. It is the reason why there is not any sharp difference between organic and inorganic material, because everything is maintained by the same indivisible power⁷⁸. It causes that the primitive belief in spirits, demons and ancestors, the shamanistic beliefs, *Tantric* mysticism, *Buddhism*, *Sivaism* and *Islam*⁷⁹ are able to unite as a whole, which the kris is able to embrace and transmit. Simultaneously the kris is especially connected to *Siva Bhairava*, since the very central symbols such as the *Naga*, the *Raksasa*, the *Bonaspati head*, the mountain, the *Lingam-Yonin* and *Ganesha* all are symbols which have him as the common denominator.

⁷⁸ Helen I. Jessup: *Court Arts of Indonesia*, New York 1990, p 84.

⁷⁹ *King Airlangga* (1019-1049) who established the East Javanese *Kingdom of Kahuripan* in 1019 made a decree, announcing that the three religious persuasions, the *Mahayana Buddhism*, the *Tantric Hinduism* and the cult of the ancestors were equal. This attitude has been maintained through the history of Indonesia and helps to explain, too, how the Indonesian art and culture have been able to contain so many elements from so different religious persuasions. Martin Kerner: *Ursprung der frühen Kerise*, Kirchdorff 1998, p 9.

The Magic of the Kris

A magical object is an object that via the symbolism the object contains is able to create a connection to strong unconscious inner images, suggestions, impulses and fantasies, which will influence and maybe flood the consciousness of the persons, who have a belief in the scheme of things which the object suggests. The Indonesian kris is such an object loaded with symbolism and connected with the oldest and deepest layers of Indonesian beliefs. Because of that it is no wonder that it is so deeply connected with magic and religious belief.

In the belief of the Indonesians the world is filled with creative energy which may come in different forms. This idea brings about that the belief in spirits, ancestors, magic, *Buddhism*, *Hinduism* and *Islam* can unite without causing problems. Through sacrifices to the gods and various magic rites, they can achieve contact with this invisible world and influence it in the direction required. The kris because it contains so much symbolism is an important instrument used for achieving this contact. In each and every kris this energy/power manifests itself in a special form.

The Magic Design of the Kris

The power of a kris is seen from its design (its *Dapor*, *Prabot*, and *Pamor*), the colour of the iron and steel, special markings or cracks in the blade, the sound that is heard when one gives the blade a flick with a finger, the grains in the wood of the hilt and the sheath⁸⁰. It all tells you which kind of power the kris contains, what it is good for and how to relate to it. The Indonesians use the word *Tuah* or *Isi* to describe the special power of the kris. *Tuah* means good luck, good fortune and magical power and *Isi* means contents or substance. To the Indonesians it may mean that a special kris is able to relate to a special kind of power in the Cosmos. It is like a receiver tuned to a special frequency which may connect you with a certain spiritual power in the Universe which you then are able to control and use for your purpose. During the forging process the Empu united different metals fx iron from the earth and iron from meteorites - heaven and thereby a special receiver was created.

The Empu Imbues the Kris with Magic Power

After the forging process the *Empu* awakened the power of the kris through different rituals. He so to say switched on the electricity of the receiver. But he did more than that. Through his special knowledge, his personality and his special mental power he was able to imbue the kris with special qualities, good as well as bad. It was especially important, however that the *Tuah/Isi* of the kris matched the person the kris was produced for. If it was too strong it might flood his consciousness and overwhelm the person and if it was too weak it might be useless. The kris was indeed seen as the alter-ego of the person, which meant to supplement and strengthen him.

⁸⁰ In Bali krisses, associated as they were with fighting and war, are still spoken of as "hot things" and their power is frequently represented as flames, a fire symbolically re-created in the red offerings made every *Tumpek Landep* (*Saturday-Kliwon* in the week of *Landep* (which means sharp)). On that day krisses are taken down from their shrines, lovingly cleaned and rubbed with oil, purified with holy water and provided with offerings. The most important of these, the *Tebasan Pasupati*, the ingredients of which are entirely red, recharges their *Kasaktian* (power)). M.J. Wiener: *Visible and Invisible Realms*, Chicago and London 1996, p 64 and 68.

Isi/Tuah

According to *Ing. Tammens* there were different opinions about the *Isi/Tuah* of the kris. Some thought that the *Isi/Tuah* was without consciousness. It was like a robot controlled through certain rituals. Others thought it had a personality of its own with a high degree of consciousness and intelligence that was beyond human beings to understand. Further some thought that the *Isi/Tuah* of the kris was like a little child that was influenced by the person who owned it or had owned it and what had happened to it. This idea meant that fx on Sumatra it was believed that the more people a kris had killed, the more its *Isi/Tuah* grew and the stronger a person was required to carry it. It so to say absorbed the power of those it had killed and its value grew. Had it killed especially many people it was looked upon as a sacred object. Such a kris might be difficult to control⁸¹. It might be bloodthirsty and it might, if you were not strong enough to control the power of the kris, roam at night and murder people to have its thirst quenched⁸². It had become *Ampuh*⁸³. Special indications showed that such uncontrollable forces were present, fx if its point was split or if there were cracks in the blade. The belief in the kris that it was able to absorb the spirit of human beings sometimes caused that you ritually killed a person - usually a girl - the spirit of whom was transferred to the kris during the forging process. Another version of this narrative tells that her spirit was dedicated to the kris and at first by her natural death entered the kris. It is also said that the best blades were hardened in the blood of a slave⁸⁴. In line with this it was a custom in Madura to dip the point of the kris into the brain of a snake (*Tjatjap*) and so transfer the power of the snake to the kris.

Counter Magic

Various forms of counter magic were known. One might go to the *Pawang* - magician, who could make one invulnerable to various metals. It was, however, almost impossible to protect oneself from very strong krisses fx the *Majapahit-kris*. It was also difficult to protect oneself from gold, so krisses with gold inlay on their blades were considered especially effective⁸⁵. To draw another man's kris from its sheath would be seen as a serious offence, because it would reveal its *Pamor*, and thus it would be possible to perform a magic manipulation with the owner. In order to cover the *Pamor* of the kris entirely, some krisses have *Ganjas* without *Pamor* (*Ganja Wulung*, see chapter 4 Fig 27). The sheath was seen as a protection of the kris. It protected the kris from harmful magic influences from the outside and it protected the environment from the magic power of the kris. It is the reason why many sheaths and hilts have symbols which protect from evil like fx the tree of life, the *Bonaspati-head*, and the hilt figures *Raksasas/Yakshas*, *Garudas* and both the hilts and the sheaths are produced from wood that contains fortunate or protective powers.

⁸¹ M. J. Wiener was told in Bali that krisses that had tasted blood were dangerous to unsheathe - for the *Kala* in them wants more. Such a kris could cause a man to run amok. Thus whenever they are unsheathed there is a *Tabuh Rah*, blood offering. M.J. Wiener: *Visible and Invisible Realms*, Chicago and London 1996, p 68.

⁸² G.B. Gardner: *Keris and Other Malay Weapons*, Singapore 1936, p 56-57.

⁸³ *Ampuh* is a magic force, which is difficult to control. David van Duuren; *The Keris*, Wijk en Aalburg 1998, p 61

⁸⁴ G.B. Gardner: *Keris and Other Malay Weapons*, Singapore 1936, p 57.

⁸⁵ *Ibid* p 131 ff.

The Storage of the Kris

When the kris was not in use, it was recommended that it was sheathed and was hung with its point downwards not to point at anybody. In Central Java it was placed in a bag (*Singep*) when it was not in use. Especially fine *Pusaka-krisses* (heirlooms) were placed in a chest on a pillow (*Pasaréan* = sleeping place). In Madura and in Central Java you had special kris boards decorated with carvings on which especially important krisses were hung and where you might bring them sacrifices. When the kris was placed in this way, it protected the house and its inhabitants⁸⁶. In Bali aristocratic people had just inside the entrance of the house a kris holder to place the kris of a visitor. It might figure a guardian, a *Hindu* god, one of the *Pandawas*, a demon, a little Chinese servant or an animal figure.

The Maintenance of Power of the Kris

To maintain the magical power of the kris rites and sacrifices were needed. Sacrifices to the kris were given once a week. Once a year the kris was cleansed and blued during a larger ritual. The *Pusaka krisses* which were stored in the back part of the house, called the *Kebongan*, were taken out. Food, incense and flowers were sacrificed to them. The blades were cleansed in coconut milk and had the bluing of the blade enhanced by rubbing it with a mixture of lime juice and arsenic. Then they were polished and oiled. Other krisses, belonging to people who could not afford to pay for such a ritual, were allowed to blue their krisses in the same mixture of arsenic and lime juice. In this way these krisses had a share of the power of the *Pusaka krisses*.

It was not possible to sell a kris and still keep its power, consequently they were always presented as gifts. So if you wanted to buy somebody's kris, you had to present the owner of the kris (often through a middle-man) with a suitable gift and the owner of the kris would then present you with the kris. All in all you had to show krisses your respect. Without the expressed consent of the owner of the kris it was regarded as a deadly sin to touch the kris or to draw it from its sheath. If you were allowed to draw the kris from its sheath you lifted it to your forehead or the your ear to listen to it and greet it.

The Way the Kris Expresses its Wishes

Through dreams the kris might express if it was not satisfied with its sheath or was missing sacrifices. If so the owner of the kris might dream about an old man or woman who came to his house and asked for a new dress or for some food, which meant that the kris wanted a new sheath or needed sacrifices⁸⁷. The receptionist at a hotel in Yogyakarta, where we stayed in 1990, told me that he had a *Pusaka kris*, which had a female spirit (*Sakti*). He himself could not see it, but his five year old son could because of his innocence. It had the power to find things lost if you prayed to it.

The Magical Qualities of the Kris

The respect for the kris was a natural consequence of the kris being such a powerful instrument. It was for instance able to heal. If the *Dukun* (shaman/healer) during a ceremony dipped a special kris (frequently a *Majapahit-kris*) into a glass of water and the

⁸⁶ G and B. Solyom : *The World of the Javanese kris*, Honolulu, USA 1978, p 60-61.

⁸⁷ G and B. Solyom : *The World of the Javanese kris*, Honolulu, USA 1978, p 29

sick person drank the water, it was supposed to heal the person. But some krisses were so powerful that their mere presence might heal. In 1880-81, when an epidemic spread in Yogyakarta, the state kris *Khaji Toenggoel* was carried around in the city to stop it. But you had to be very cautious with such a kris. Not all was able to touch it. If a wrong person touched it, he might become seriously ill⁸⁸. Krisses might act as midwives. It needed a special ritual. The woman in labour bound a string around her waist, symbolising what was obstructing the birth. The husband then lifted the kris over his head to honour it, cut the string with the kris and then the child was supposed to be born without difficulties⁸⁹. *Majapahit*-krisses with *Pamor Adeg* were supposed to prevent fires by pointing it at the fire and the fire would take another direction. Certain krisses were able to prevent natural disasters, eliminate poisons and drive away wild animals. If you were to be a success with women you should get hold of a kris with a hole in the blade. If you looked through the hole at a woman, she would be bewitched and fall in love with you.

The kris was your helper and alter-ego. Especially blessed and powerful krisses were called *Bertuah* krisses. It would help you to get on in the world and warn you and protect you from dangers. It might rattle in its sheath if there were dangers. Certain krisses fought so to say on their own and some were able to scare off an enemy. It is told that *Sunan Giri* gave *Raden Pateh* a special kris before his attack on the *Majapahit Kingdom*. If you pointed this kris at the enemy, a swarm of wasps would emerge from its point and attack the enemies and made them flee⁹⁰. The strength of this kind of krisses was regarded as being so great that if you stabbed the kris into the footprints of an enemy or pointed it against him, he was supposed to die.

The Pusaka Krisses

The *Pusaka* krisses of the princes were considered to be extremely powerful, especially krisses inherited through many generations. They were considered to be the most powerful pieces of all the *Pusaka* pieces (heirloom). In the tale about the conquest of Bali by the *Majapahit Kingdom* in the last part of the 14th century it is shown how important they might be. To rule the area the first minister *Gaja Mada* had installed the viceregent *Sri Kresna Kapakisan*. He was met with so much resistance that he asked *Gaja Mada* to be allowed to return to *Majapahit*. In answer to that request he sent his own *Pusaka kris Durga Dingkul* to him. This kris had a *Durga-head* on its blade, which made every enemy flee when it was drawn from its sheath, because the goddess of death appeared in front of him. By means of this kris he was able to conquer his enemies and it became one of the strongest manifestations of the power of the princes of this family until the present time⁹¹.

T.S. Raffles relates that when *Susunan Tegal Arum* fled from Mataram in 1677 he was forced to leave his two daughters and his crown behind. However, he managed to get the most important objects with him, the *Pusaka-kris Mása Núlar* and the *Pusaka-spear Kiái Paléret*. He later wanted to present them to his son *Pangéran Adipati*, but he would refuse to receive them. So instead the *Susunan* presented the *Pusaka-kris* and the spear to his other son *Pangeran Púger*. This son returned to Mataram and because he was in possession of the *Pusaka-weapons* he succeeded in gathering forces and to recapture the realm. So the one in possession of the *Pusaka-weapons* was the one who

⁸⁸ J. Engel: *Geschiednis en algemeen overzicht van de Indonesische Wapensmeedkunst*, 1980, p 10.

⁸⁹ H. Geertz: *The Religion of Java*, Illinois 1960 p 43.

⁹⁰ Thomas Stamford Raffles: *The History of Java*, Oxford 1965, vol 2 p 126.

⁹¹ Margaret J. Wiener: *Visible and Invisible Realms*, Chicago, London 1995, p 112 ff.

was able to overtake the princely power⁹². The Dutch had no understanding of the importance of the *Pusaka-kris*. So when they had defeated *Pangéran Purbáya* in 1679 they wanted him to deliver his kris and personal jewellery. This demand the prince found was the greatest humiliation and therefore quite unacceptable. To hand over his *Pusaka* was the same as the annihilation of his own honour and the honour of the family. He therefore decided at any price to flee during the night. He succeeded in escaping and continued the revolt. In line with this the prince *Panambákan Giri* in 1679 denied to hand over his most important *Puksaka-kris* to the prince of Mataram and because of that he was executed⁹³. The belief in the ability of the kris to give its owner power, protection and influence is kept until the present time. In the end of the 1920's the Sultan of *Belawan-Deli* in Sumatra issued a proclamation. He proclaimed that he was in the possession of a kris which was produced from the soul of the steel. This kris would reluctantly remain sheathed and had an troubled behaviour, if it was drawn from its sheath. The proclamation was meant as a warning to his subjects and it is told that from now on peace and quiet prevailed in his realm⁹⁴. It is also told that *President Sukarno* was carrying *Keris Sakti* (sacred krisses) hidden in his baton which he always carried during mass rallies⁹⁵. They protected him and strengthened his authority.

⁹² Thomas Stamford Raffles: *The History of Java*, Oxford 1965, vol 2 p 165.

⁹³ Thomas Stamford Raffles: *The History of Java*, Oxford 1965, vol 2 p 171-175.

⁹⁴ J. Fabricius: *Den Indonesiske Kris*, *Vaabenhistorisk Tidsskrift* bd 21 p 120.

⁹⁵ Moerbirman: *Keris and other Weapons of Indonesia*, Jakarta 1970, p 13.