

**THE PLACE OF COURT DANCE AND MUSIC IN THE  
JAVANESE KRATONS AND ITS RELATION  
TO THE POLITICAL SITUATION<sup>1</sup>**

**by  
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**Introduction**

On February 13, 1755, the kingdom of Mataram of Central Java was formally divided into two – the Kasunanan of Surakarta under Sunan Paku Buwana III (1749-1788) and the Kasultanan of Yogyakarta under Sultan Hamengku Buwana I (also known as Sultan Mangkubumi, 1749-1792).<sup>2</sup> Under the Giyanti Contract, which was supervised by the Dutch, Paku Buwana III gained the eastern part of the realm, while Hamengku Buwana I the western part, including one-half of the 20,000 *reals* paid annually by the Dutch for the lease of the coastal regions. Hamengku Buwana also received one-half of the royal regalia, including the gamelan. M.C. Ricklefs remarks that two days after the conclusion of the contract, Sultan Hamengku Buwana I, accompanied by Hartingh, and their entourages proceeded to Jatisari, midway between Giyanti and Surakarta. The *Babad Mangkubumi* reads that Sunan Paku Buwana III arrived shortly thereafter to the sound of Mangkubumi's gamelan. On this occasion Paku Buwana III presented the Sultan with a kris, Kyai Kopek, handed down from the *wali* Sunan Kalijaga.<sup>3</sup>

The Javanese court gamelan which were considered part of the royal regalia were possibly the gamelan Kodhok Ngorek, gamelan Monggang, and the gamelan Sekati. Along with the other regalia such as sacred weapons, those three gamelan also gained honorific name *Kangjeng Kyai*. They were only played in some specific events, such as the event of honoring the official arrival of Paku Buwana III at Jatisari to meet his uncle Hamengku Buwana I. This official reception which signified the peaceful relationship

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<sup>1</sup> This article was originally the answer of one of the five questions of the comprehensive examination when the writer pursued his Ph.D. program at the University of Michigan in 1981.

<sup>2</sup> M.C. Ricklefs, *Jogjakarta under Sultan Mangkubumi, 1749-1792: A History of the Division of Java* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 67.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 74 as cited from the *Babad Mangkubumi*, 41-44.

between Paku Buwana III and Hamengku Buwana I was celebrated by the sound of Hamengku Buwana's gamelan, Kangjeng Kyai Monggang.

From the result of the Giyanti Contract of 1755<sup>4</sup> we can see that the involvement of the Dutch in Java became greater and greater. They had gained control of the coastal regions – Balambangan, Surabaya, Rembang, Jepara and other ports on the coast as a repay given by Sunan Paku Buwana III for their assistance against the Chinese rebellion in 1743. A few years later the sunan, probably on the hope to save the kingdom from another rebellion, ingloriously sealed the act of cession of the entire kingdom of Mataram to the Dutch in 1749 in his bed. It means that the crown prince became ruler (Paku Buwana III, r. 1749-1788) not through right inheritance, but because the Dutch East India Company chose him for the position. So he was the vassal of the Dutch East India Company. And by the Giyanti Contract of 1755, Mangkubumi was named Sultan over one-half of Central Java, which he recognized to be a fief from the Company. His *patih* (prime minister) and his high officials were required upon appointment to go personally to Semarang to take an oath of allegiance to the Company.

Anthony Day, in one of his articles, comments that after the Giyanti Contract, with the exception of Dipanegara War of 1825-30, there were no more epic wars in the *Bharatayudha* manner. Surakarta and Yogyakarta, warring rivals for hegemony in Central Java in the eighteenth century, fell into a state of suspended antagonism, an enmity which they chose to express in the delicate and inconclusive skirmishes of the dance, music, puppet theatre, as well as dresses rather than in pitched battle.<sup>5</sup>

When Paku Buwana III of Surakarta inherited the sacred *Bedhaya Ketawang* (female dance) and *Beksan Lawung* (male dance) from his predecessor, Hamengku Buwana I of Yogyakarta created *wayang wong* (dance drama) and *Beksan Trunajaya* (male lance dance). Whereas the *Bedhaya Ketawang* depicting the sacred matrimony between Sultan Agung, the third and greatest ruler of the Mataram dynasty, and Kangjeng Ratu Kidul, the Queen of the Southern Sea, had developed favorably in the

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 49-50.

<sup>5</sup> Anthony Day, "Kraton Ambon: Myth and History in the Late Nineteenth Century," in *Conference on Modern Indonesian History, July 18-19, 1975* (Madison: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin, 1975), 26.

*kraton* of Surakarta, the *kraton* of Yogyakarta had paid its interest in another form of ritual dance, i.e. *wayang wong*, the male dance drama. The two dance forms – the *Bedhaya Ketawang* and the *wayang wong* – had mystical as well as political significance, by which Paku Buwana III and Hamengku Buwana I strengthened their claims as the rightful heir of the Mataram dynasty.

### **The Place of Court Dance in the Javanese Kratons**

Two years after the Giyanti Contract another major rebel Raden Mas Said entered into negotiations with the Dutch. He swore allegiance to the susuhunan, the Company and the sultan, and received the title Kangjeng Pangeran Adipati Hemangkunagara with the control over 4,000 *cacah* (households) of the susuhunan's territory. In 1813, due to his assistance to the British during their occupation of Yogyakarta, Pangeran Natakusuma from Yogyakarta was rewarded and given an independent inheritable domain of 4,000 *cacah* of the sultan's territory and the title Kangjeng Pangeran Adipati Pakualam I (1813-29). The Pakualaman thus became the Yogyakarta mirror-image of the Makunagaran in Surakarta, and the division of the kingdom of Mataram into two senior and two junior principalities was complete.<sup>6</sup> In the development of their dance, however, the style of Mataram was only split into two major styles – the style of the *kraton* of Surakarta and the style of the *kraton* of Yogyakarta. The difference between these two styles lies on their execution of the movements and their costumes. The dance movements of the Surakarta style are expressed in rather curved lines and numerous ornamentations, while the dance movements of the Yogyakarta style are expressed mostly in straight lines and less ornamentations. The dance costumes of the Surakarta style are gorgeous, while the dance costumes of the Yogyakarta style are less gorgeous. Both styles have their own standards of beauty.

Speaking about the place of the dance in both major *kraton* the present writer will emphasize his attention on the *Bedhaya Ketawang* of Surakarta and the *wayang*

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<sup>6</sup> M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia, C. 1300 to the Present* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 109-110.

wong of Yogyakarta with the argument that both forms had a parallel function, i.e., to strengthen the legitimization of both rulers as the heirs of the Mataram dynasty. Each ruler claimed as the rightful heir of the Mataram dynasty.

### **The Bedhaya Ketawang of Surakarta**

According to Javanese tradition, besides the ascendancy of a new king to the throne should be agreed by God the Almighty in the form of *wahyu*, the star, near the head of a ruler-to-be, the pomp of glory, the religious and supernatural props of legitimacy, were elaborated and emphasized, in order to raise his visible status and prestige. His court was known to house the holy regalia (*pusaka*), large collections of spiritually powerful weapons, books, conveyances, musical instruments, and also to perform ritual dances.<sup>7</sup> He also claimed the special protection of the Queen of the Southern Sea, who had promised her support to Senapati's descendants.<sup>8</sup> The spiritual bonds between the rulers of Mataram and Kangjeng Ratu Kidul had been celebrated by a sacred dance called *Bedhaya Ketawang*, which was inherited by the *kraton* of Surakarta. In the *kraton* of Yogyakarta the celebration has been done in a different way until today. On certain days of the year the sultan sent his *labuhan* offerings to Kangjeng Ratu Kidul in a ritual which was done by throwing the offerings into the Southern Sea (Indonesian Ocean).<sup>9</sup>

The *Bedhaya Ketawang* of Surakarta was the most sacred dance, performed on the anniversary of the sunan's ascension to the throne. It was believed that this sacred female dance was composed by Sultan Agung, the third and greatest king of the Mataram dynasty, in the collaboration with Kangjeng Ratu Kidul who was also called Kangjeng Ratu Kencanasari. She was said to have appeared before Sultan Agung (1613-1645) and revealed her love for him in a song which she sang while dancing before him. The queen was required to teach her dance to the sultan's dancers, so that he could always remember her. A performance of the *Bedhaya Ketawang* was and still is always

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<sup>7</sup> Ricklefs, *Jogjakarta under Sultan Mangkubumi*, 1974, 23; also see Soemarsaid Moertono, *State and Statecraft in Old Java: A Study of the Later Mataram Period, 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asian Program, Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, 1963), 62.

<sup>8</sup> *Poenika Serat Babad Tanah Djawi Wiwit Saking Nabi Adam Doemoegi Ing Taoen 1647*. Edited by Meinsma (s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1941), 77-78.

<sup>9</sup> Selosomardjan, *Social Changes in Jogjakarta* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1962), 18-19.

preceded by offerings and burning of incense to Kangjeng Ratu Kidul who was said to be invisibly present during the dance.<sup>10</sup> The performance and the rehearsals were only held in the most Javanese sacred day *Selasa Kliwon*, when *Selasa* or Tuesday of the seven-day week met with *Kliwon* of the five-day week.<sup>11</sup> It was believed that the nine female dancers of the *Bedhaya Ketawang* should be spiritually clean or not in menstruation. Since the reign of Sunan Paku Buwana X the *kraton* of Surakarta had revived the *Bedhaya Ketawang* which was and still is performed once a year to commemorate the coronation day of the reigning sunan.<sup>12</sup>

The Giyanti Contract of 1755 apparently marked Paku Buwana III as the loser of the war; however, he was satisfied by maintaining the *Bedhaya Ketawang*. This was quite different with Sultan Hamengku Buwana I of Yogyakarta. Although he won the war, he could not inherit the sacred *Bedhaya Ketawang*. The present writer assumes that the creation of the *wayang wong* dance drama by the sultan was meant to establish or strengthen his claim as the rightful heir of the Mataram dynasty.

### **The Wayang Wong of Yogyakarta**

The main reason why Pangeran Mangkubumi (later Sultan Hamengku Buwana I) raised a rebellion was his disagreement upon the policy of his brother Sunan Paku Buwana II (1726-49). As it was stated earlier Paku Buwana II repaid the Dutch for their assistance to crush the Chinese rebellion by giving the Dutch the mastery over all of Madura, Balambangan, Surabaya, Rembang, Jepara, and other ports on the northern coast. Pangeran Mangkubumi also complained that the amount of money which was proposed from the Dutch in exchange (20,000 *reals* per year) for these lands was insufficient. He also pondered what would be the outcome for the *kraton* if it was separated from the *peisir*, the coastal areas. In addition, Paku Buwana II, under the suggestion of the Dutch had reduced his promise to grant Mangkubumi land from the amount of 3,000 *cacah* (households) to 1,000 *cacah* if he could drive the rebel Mas Said from Sukawati. As a result Mangkubumi left the *kraton* and joined forces with the rebel

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<sup>10</sup> Claire Holt, *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967), 116.

<sup>11</sup> Soedarsono, *Dances in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 1974), 42.

<sup>12</sup> Ricklefs, *Jogjakarta under Sultan Mangkubumi*, 1974, 43.

Mas Said and gave his daughter Ratu Bendara in marriage to him to seal the alliance. Mangkubumi took up residence some 45 miles to the southwest of Surakarta at a place named Yogya [Ayogya], declaring himself ruler of Java.<sup>13</sup> With the departure of Mangkubumi began the civil war which Dutch historians have called it the Third Javanese War of Succession (1746-1755).<sup>14</sup> Mangkubumi's claim as the ruler of Java and the rightful heir of the Mataram dynasty was more obvious when he, with an elite consensus, replaced the sunan of Surakarta as the true monarch of Mataram. He took the traditional royal title, Susuhunan Paku Buwana Senapati Ingalaga Ngabdurahman Sayidin Panatagama.<sup>15</sup> Mas Said was appointed chief general and *patih* (prime minister).

With the above description it has helped us to understand why Sultan Hamengku Buwana I created *wayang wong* dance drama in order to strengthen his claim as the true heir of the Mataram dynasty, and much further the incarnation of the first legendary ruler of Java, Wisnu.<sup>16</sup> The chosen place of his kingdom, Yogya [Ayogya], the kingdom of Rama, was his initial signal that he identified himself as Rama, the incarnation of Wisnu.<sup>17</sup> Ricklefs also remarks that in the *Babad Mangkubumi* the sultan was some time described as “looking like Wisnu”.<sup>18</sup> His royal title Hamengku Buwana meaning “He Who Preserves the World” was apparently meant that the sultan himself was the incarnation of Wisnu, or at least had the same function as Wisnu. Later on the royal symbol of the House of Yogyakarta was in the form of the initials H.B. (in Javanese script), flanked by a pair of the *garuda* wings and crowned by a *mekutha* crown. *Garuda* bird is the vehicle of Wisnu. So with the name of the sultan's city Yogya [Ayogya] – then changed into Ngayogyakarta Adiningrat, meaning “Ayodhya the Beauty of the World” - , his royal title Hamengku Buwana, and his royal symbol *garuda*, he claimed as the true heir of the first legendary ruler of Java, Wisnu. Now, the writer would like to show the connection between the above claim with the *wayang wong*.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>16</sup> See *Poenika Serat Babad Tanah Djawi*, 7.

<sup>17</sup> See Soedarsono, “Rama, The Ideal Hero and Manifestation of the Good in the Indonesian Theatre,” in Soedarsono, *Living Traditional Theatres in Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Akademi Seni Tari Indonesia, 1974), 1-2.

<sup>18</sup> Ricklefs, *Jogjakarta Under Sultan Mangkubumi*, 87.

In his interview with Prince Suryobrongto, the son of Sultan Hamengku Buwana VIII, the present writer received an interesting information that the *wayang wong* which was created by Sultan Hamengku Buwana I in the 1750's was regarded as a *pusaka*, the sacred performance. The performance started at dawn until dusk.<sup>19</sup> The story performed was Gondawardaya, a play taken from the Mahabharata. The time arrangement was very unusual. As the *wayang wong* was a *pusaka*, the ritual performance, it is assumed that the show which started at 6:00 a.m. in the morning was meant to honor the appearance of Wisnu, the Sun God. The performance ended when Wisnu disappeared. The tradition of performing *wayang wong* started in 6:00 a.m. had been preserved until the reign of Sultan Hamengku Buwana VIII (1921-1939).<sup>20</sup> During the performance Sultan Hamengku Buwana was seated on the throne which was always placed on the Bangsal Kencana (the Golden Hall). The throne was placed exactly under the *uleng*, i.e., the tall spire that surmounts the roof and seems to pierce the heaven, symbolizing the center of the world. The high nobility and the other honorary guests were seated behind and on the right and left sides of the sultan. The *kawula dalem* (the king's subjects) were allowed to see the performance. They attended the performance not merely for pleasure but they wished to get some *berkah dalem* – the sultan's blessing - , in other words to get the sprinkles of the *kasekten* or magical power from the sultan.

The *wayang wong* in the kraton of Yogyakarta was performed to celebrate the most sacred birthday of the sultan, for instance, the fifty sixth birthday of Sultan Kamengku Buwana VIII in 1934. So *wayang wong* functioned as a state ritual, signifying the position of the sultan as the exemplary ruler. As *wayang wong* was performed in a very rare occasion, it is strongly suggested that originally it celebrated the most important birthday of the sultan, or probably commemorating the coronation day of the sultan. During the reign of Sultan Hamengku Buwana I (r. 1755-1792) there were three performances only, with the *lakon* or stories of Gondawardaya, Jayasemedi and 'Jayasampurna'<sup>21</sup>. Sultan Hamengku Buwana II (r. 1792-1812) only performed one

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<sup>19</sup> An interview with Prince Suryobrongto, August 20, 1981.

<sup>20</sup> G.B.P.H. Suryobrongto, "Wayang Wong Gagrag Mataraman," in Fred Wibowo, ed., *Mengenal Tari Klasik Gaya Yogyakarta* (Yogyakarta: Dewan Kesenian Propinsi D.I.Y., 1981), 52.

<sup>21</sup> The manuscript of the *Serat Kandha* (The Book of Narration) of the *lakon* Jayasampurna was found by the writer in 1986 in The India Office Library in London.

production with the story of Jayapusaka. We do not have any data concerning the full-scale *wayang wong* performance during the reign of Sultan Hamengku Buwana III (r. 1812-1814) and Hamengku Buwana IV (r. 1814-1823). This may have been owing to the political and economic conditions of the time. Ricklefs argues that as a consequence of an unsuccessful rebellion led by the sultan's chief administrator, Raden Rangga, of the *mancanegara* (outer regions), Governor General Willem Daendels (1801-1811) took the opportunity to impose new treaties on both *kraton* in 1811, which included extensive annexation to Dutch government territory. This means that the rent paid by Batavia to the Javanese rulers since 1746 for the use of the northern coastal areas was cancelled. Daendels thus eliminated the main financial source of the Javanese *kraton*.<sup>22</sup> In his thirty two years of reign, Sultan Hamengku Buwana V (r. 1823-1855) enacted five *wayang wong* plays with the stories of Pragolamurti, Petruk Dados Ratu (Petruk, the clown-servant, becomes king), the Wedding of Angkawijaya and Dewi Utari, Jayasemedi, and Pregoniwa-Pregoniwati. There is no data available during the reign of Hamengku Buwana VI (r. 1855-1877), and there were only two *wayang wong* productions during the reign of Sultan Hamengku Buwana VII (r. 1877-1921) with the stories of Sri Suwela and Pregoniwa-Pregoniwati. The golden age of the *wayang wong* occurred during the reign of Sultan Hamengku Buwana VIII (r. 1921-1939) who put on stage *wayang wong* more frequently – in 1923 with the stories of Jayasemedi and Sri Suwela (four days); in 1925 with the stories of Samba Sebit and Ciptaning Mintaraga (four days); in 1928 with the stories of Partakrama (Arjuna's Wedding), Srikandi Meguru Manah (Srikandi learns the art of archery), and Sembadra Larung (three days); in 1929 with the story of Jayapusaka (one day); in 1932 with the story of Sembadra Larung (one day); in 1933 with the stories of Semar Boyong (the Abduction of Semar), Rama Nitik (Rama searches for his reincarnation-to-be), and Rama Nitis (the Incarnation of Rama) (three days); in 1934 with the same stories as performed in 1933; in 1937 with the story of Ciptaning Mintaraga (two days); in March, 1939 with the stories of Pregoniwa-Pregoniwati, the Wedding of Angkawijaya and Siti Sendari, and the Wedding of Pancawala and Pregoniwati (three days); and in August, 1939 with the story of Pragolamurti (two days).<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> See M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia, C. 1300 to the Present* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1981), 108.

<sup>23</sup> Suryobrongto, 46-47.



Finally, another aspect signifying the *wayang wong* performance as a state ritual as well as honoring the appearance of Wisnu, the Sun God, in the early morning, was the first scene which usually depicted the appearance of King Kresna, the incarnation of Wisnu, in the audience hall, followed by a narration telling the prosperity of his kingdom as an exemplary state as follows:

May silence prevail. Numerous are God's creatures that roam the earth, fly in the sky, and swim the seas – countless are the world's beautiful women – yet none can equal those to be found in the kingdom of Dwarawati – Gate of the World. Search one hundred countries, you will not find two, nor among a thousand, ten, to match it. Thus, do I introduce this kingdom as our story's beginning.

Long, high, sands, mountains, fertile, prosperous, trade, foreigners. Long is Dwarawati's reputation and the telling of it. High is its prestige. Ocean's sands border it; mountains guard its rear. On its right lie field of rice, to the left a great river leading to a harbor on its shore. Fertile is its soil; prosperity abounds. Merchants trade by day and night, unceasingly in perfect safety while peasants' flocks and herds freely roam. Never has rebellion stirred the peacefulness of this land.

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The kingdom stands firm over the earth. Its torch is high, illuminating all the world with its radiance. Many are its colonies. Not only on Java do countries submit themselves to its rule, but kings from afar proffer allegiance, so great is their love for the perfection of the kingdom of Dwarawati. Near, they bow to the earth before its perfection; farther afield incline to show their respect. Annual tribute of maidens and precious gifts is offered by all as token of their submission.

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Many are his titles; 'Guardian of the Pandawas' for he loves and advises the five virtuous brothers, 'Bridge Between Man and God', 'Giver of Life', 'Kresna the Charitable', 'Kresna the Sear', 'Deterrent to Disaster', and 'Incarnation of Wisnu'.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Changes in Dance and Music Relating to the Political Situation**

Judith Becker discusses extensively about the relation between the political development in Indonesia and the development of gamelan music in Java in her impressive work *Traditional Music in Modern Java: Gamelan in a Changing Society*.

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<sup>24</sup> James R. Brandon, *On Thrones of Gold: Three Javanese Shadow Plays* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970), 86-87. The content of the narration in the *wayang wong* text is almost the same as the above quotation. Compare with *Kagungan-Dalem Serat Kandha Ringgit Tiyang Lampahan Mintaraga*, Kraton Yogyakarta manuscript, 1-7.

She observes that there was a close relation between the concepts of state or statecrafts and the formal gamelan structures in pre-modern Java.<sup>25</sup> She remarks further,

The court musician in Central Java was not only a conserver of music tradition but a supporter of a monarchical and cosmological tradition as well. Even the instruments that he played served to legitimize the role of the king. Several of the gamelan, or gongs within a particular gamelan, found within Central Javanese palaces are *pusaka*, magically charged items, . . . .<sup>26</sup>

A fascinating example of the role of the gamelan has been mentioned in the introduction of this paper, that is, when the Giyanti Contract was concluded Sunan Paku Buwana III arrived at Jatisari to the sound of Pangeran Mangkubumi's gamelan. The sounding of the gamelan was an act strengthening the legitimacy of the division of Mataram into two, i.e., Surakarta and Yogyakarta.

As art is the mirror of man, the development of gamelan music and dance in Java has also undergone some change in accordance to the political development of the country. The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 and the rapid progress of the Nationalist movement from the first quarter of the twentieth century towards liberation from the Dutch colonial regime had also a great effect on the development of Javanese gamelan and dance. In the period of the Nationalist movement (1908-1945), the democratization of court gamelan and dance became increasingly obvious, being manifested in the setting up of various private dance and gamelan organizations. The most influential dance and gamelan organization in Central Java was Krida Beksa Wirama, founded by Prince Suryodiningrat and Prince Tejakusuma in 1918.<sup>27</sup> It should be noted that Sultan Hamengku Buwana VII himself supported the foundation of the organization by providing dance and gamelan teachers and financial support. The *wayang wong* dance drama, *bedhaya* (female dance performed by nine or seven dancers), *srimpi* (female dance performed by four dancers), *lawung* (male lance dance performed by four, six, ten, or sixteen dancers) and the gamelan music began to be

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<sup>25</sup> Judith Becker, *Traditonal Music in Modern Java: Gamelan in a Changing Society* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1980), 27.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.; see also Benedict R.O'G. Anderson, "The Idea for Power in Javanese Culture," in Claire Holt, ed., *Culture and Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1972), 12.

<sup>27</sup> See Soedarsono, "Wayang Wong Gaya Yogyakarta: Satu Pengamatan dari Segi Estetika Tari" (Yogyakarta: Sub/Bagian Proyek ASTI Yogyakarta, 1979/80), 148-149.

taught outside the palace walls.<sup>28</sup> The membership of Krida Beksa Wirama was not limited; everybody could enroll to take dance and gamelan lessons. Beginning from 1923 Krida Beksa Wirama also accepted foreign students, among others were an American archaeologist Claire Holt and the famous Indian dancer Mrinalini.<sup>29</sup>

The major changes done by Krida Beksa Wirama was the appearance of female dancers in the *wayang wong* production. This was truly a new development since the court *wayang wong* performed in the palace never cast female dancers for female characters. Female characters were always danced by young and beautiful male dancers. This was a token of woman emancipation. Another major development was the introduction of the counting system in the dance instruction.

With the spread of dance and gamelan music outside the palace's walls, there has been a gradual but continuing trend toward secularization of Javanese arts.<sup>30</sup> With the establishment of the independent Republic of Indonesia in 1949 – officially proclaimed on August 17, 1945 – there was a new trend to create national dance and music by synthesizing elements from several different regions,<sup>31</sup> mainly from West Java and Bali. The modern era of dance and gamelan music began. Modern choreographers and modern gamelan composers have emerged since 1949 – some coming from the older generation and some from the younger one.

The most successful modern gamelan composer is Ki Wasitodipuro. Becker discusses lengthily about this prominent figure. In her chapter entitled “Music and Politics: Ki Wasitodipuro as a Modern-Day Pujangga”, she remarks,

During the period from Indonesian independence in 1949 until the fall of Sukarno in 1965 Ki Wasitodipuro was actively involved in writing political and propaganda songs in support of the national government. By transferring the *pujangga* role of the artist in support of his king to the modern concept of the artist in support of a national state, Ki Wasitodipuro has tried to adjust his traditional role to one compatible with contemporary Indonesian needs.<sup>32</sup>

The great output of political propaganda songs by Ki Wasitodipuro during Sukarno era can be seen as a part of his role as a modern-day *pujangga* for the new style

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>30</sup> See Becker, 31.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 38.

government. His work that most clearly links him to the role of the *pujangga* is a composition in the form of an hour-long suite with gamelan, chorus, and soloists called *Jaya Manggala Gita*, or ‘Song to the Victory of Happiness and Welfare’.<sup>33</sup>

The most successful modern choreographer is Bagong Kussudiardjo. His trend from 1949 to 1965 was almost the same as that taken by Ki Wasitodipuro. And almost all Bagong’s choreographies were accompanied by songs composed by Ki Wasitodipuro. One typical characteristic of Bagong’s choreographies until 1965 was his effort to mix the Javanese dance style with elements from West Java and Bali. Most of his works until 1965 were solo and group choreographies, such as *Tari Layang-Layang* (the Kite Dance), *Tari Tani* (the Peasant Dance), *Tari Batik* (the Making Batik Cloth Dance) and *Tari Merak* (the Peacock Dance).<sup>34</sup>

The role of the performing arts schools in Java – *Konservatori Karawitan* (Gamelan Conservatory) in Surakarta, *Akademi Seni Karawitan Indonesia* (Academy of Indonesian Traditional Music) in Surakarta, *Konservatori Tari Indonesia* (Indonesian Dance Conservatory) in Yogyakarta, and *Akademi Seni Tari Indonesia* (Indonesian Dance Academy) in Yogyakarta – is also very stimulating to cope with the political development in Indonesia until today.

## Conclusion

Dance and music had a significant place in the pre-modern Javanese *kraton*. Beside their aesthetic values, dance and music also functioned as a means strengthening the legitimacy of the king. The sacred *Bedhaya Ketawang* of the Surakarta court, inherited by the sunan from his predecessors – kings of the Mataram dynasty – was a symbol of the sunan’s position as the rightful heir of the Mataram dynasty. The dance depicting the sacred matrimony of Sultan Agung, the third and greatest king of the Mataram dynasty, and the Queen of the Southern Sea, was an eternal bond between the queen and Sultan Agung and his descendants. Thus, with the inheritance of the dance by the Surakarta court, Sunan Paku Buwana III felt that he was the rightful heir of the Mataram dynasty. On the other hand, Sultan Hamengku Buwana I created a new dance

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 38-39.

<sup>34</sup> See Soedarsono, *Dances in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gunung Agung, Ltd., 1974), 117-119.

form called *wayang wong* (dance drama) to establish his spiritual bond with the first legendary ruler of Java, Wisnu. By building his spiritual bond with Wisnu, he also claimed as the rightful heir of the Mataram dynasty. Sultan Hamengku Buwana I's claim can be seen from various aspects. His royal title Hamengku Buwana meant 'He who Preserves the World', thus, Wisnu. His capital city was Ngayogyakarta Adiningrat meaning 'Ayodhya, the Beauty of the World'; Ayodhya was the capital city of Rama, the incarnation of Wisnu. The *wayang wong* performance started at 6:00 a.m. honoring the appearance of the Sun God, Wisnu. The opening scene of the *wayang wong* performed at 6:00 a.m. was a narration about King Kresna in the audience hall, describing the identity of the king and the prosperity of the kingdom as an exemplary state. And the *Babad Mangkubumi* describes Pangeran Mangkubumi (Hamengku Buwana I) 'looking like Wisnu'.

As it was stated by Becker gamelan in the *kraton* of Central Java – especially the ones considered *pusaka* – had a significant role legitimizing the king's status; for instance, a gamelan, probably Kangjeng Kyai Monggang (also named as Kangjeng Kyai Gunturlaut), was sounded by Hamengku Buwana I honoring the arrival of Paku Buwana III at Jatisari a couple of days after the Giyanti Contract was concluded. Kangjeng Kyai Gunturlaut used to be sounded celebrating the coronation ceremonies in the Yogyakarta *kraton*. The same gamelan ensemble in the Surakarta *kraton* is called Kangjeng Kyai Udananarum.

The development of gamelan music and dance in Java has undergone some changes with accordance to the political development of the country. The increasing Nationalist movement in the first quarter of the twentieth century had caused the democratization of the court gamelan and dance, pioneered by Krida Beksa Wirama and sponsored by Sultan Hamengku Buwana VII himself. The participation of female dancers in the *wayang wong* performed by Krida Beksa Wirama was a token of woman emancipation in the world of dance in Java. It worth noting that the *wayang wong* performed in the *kraton* of Yogyakarta which cast male dancers for female characters, aside from its ethical consideration, was presumably meant to retain its sacredness.

With the establishment of the independent Republic of Indonesia in 1945 there was a new trend to create national dance and music by synthesizing elements from

several regions, mainly from West Java and Bali. The most successful modern gamelan composer was Ki Wasitodipuro, while Bagong Kussudiardjo was the successful pioneer on modern choreography. The role of performing arts schools in Central Java which was established during the 1950's and the 1960's was also very stimulating to cope with the political development in Indonesia.

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