The Manifestation of the Highest God in the Tantu Panggělaran Text: The Perfection of Cosmic Reality

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Abstract: This research analyzes the notion of the perfection of cosmic reality based on Old Javanese concepts in the TantuPanggělaran (TP) text. It is aimed at elaborating the idea of the perfection of cosmic reality in the TP text through the manifestation of the Highest God. This is qualitative research which utilizes theories and concepts on space known within the philosophy of the Old Javanese society. The research is significant, for it complements the existing knowledge on the Javanese culture, especially the Old Javanese culture from the era of late Majapahit to the present as one of potential sources of local wisdom. Theoretically, this research offers a new paradigm towards Old Javanese texts using the theories and concepts on space from the philosophy of the Old Javanese society itself. The result of the research is that the manifestation of the Highest God in the TP text represents the perfection of the cosmic reality over the relationship between the Highest God and the humans as well as nature in the Sāiwa-Buddha concept.

Keywords: manifestation of the Highest God, Tantu Panggělaran, perfection, cosmic reality.

1. Introduction

Essentially, TantuPanggělaran(TP) text tells the story of the creation of humans and the Island of Java and everything on it. In the life of the Old Javanese community, the microcosmic and macrocosmic worlds were an integrated unity. This integrated unity is a unity among all beings in all their forms in the universe, seen as the manifestation of the Absolute and the representation of perfection. Perfection is the objective of all human actions in their lives as a representation of self-concentration based on the state of their inner lives. In the life of the Javanese people, this perfection represents the perfection of cosmic reality in the harmony among the universe, human beings, and God.

The TP text represents those three cosmic realities in the form of the symbolic space of Java Island (macrocumos), human beings (microcosmos), and the Highest God in all his manifestations (metacosmos/the realm of the gods as the focal point) in the three layers of the world. The perfection of cosmic reality in the TP text is analyzed through the roles and different manifestations of the Highest God as he occupies the world in the three different cosmic realities and layers of the world. The qualitative paradigm is used to analyze the manifestations of the Highest God in the TP text as they represent the perfection of cosmic reality. In elaborating them, it is appropriate to use theories and concepts on cosmic reality within the philosophy of the Old Javanese society itself.

In this philosophy, cosmic reality refers to the unity of three cosmic realities, i.e. the Absolute, the universe, and the human beings, which are currently known as the three layers of the world. In the Shiva-Hindu teachings, these layers are known as Triloka (Tri Bhuvana), consisting of swarloka: the world symbol of godhead; bhuvarloka: the world symbol of humans released from all ties with worldly desires; and bhurloka: the world symbol of human that embrace all worldly desires as the site where transgressions and sins take place. The Triloka itself refers to the concept of Tri Angga (Tri Mandala), i.e. uttama: the sacred space, madya: the space for human activities, and nista: the space for service. In the trantris teaching, cosmic reality refers to the divine immanence, i.e. a characteristic that demonstrates the relationship between humans and God. This relationship can be divided into three different spaces, i.e. niskala (immaterial), sakala-niskala (material-immaterial), and sakala (material).
In the Shiva-Hindu culture, these spaces represent the different levels of godhead, such as in the concepts of *Tri Mandala*, i.e. *uttama dewata*, *madya dewata*, and *nista dewata*. In this analysis, the name *nista dewata* (the lowest level of godhead) is referred to only as *dewata*.

In the perspective of the Old Javanese cosmology, the embodiment of those characteristics takes the form of divine immanence or the Highest God in the relationship between the microcosmos (humans) and macrocosmos (the universe). In reality, humans and the universe together represent the Creator or metacosmos. In essence, the human soul as the microcosmos is the place for the manifestation of the Highest God (metacosmos), so that humans with all their perfection are the site for the God. In other words, cosmic reality in the Old Javanese life refers essentially to the inter-relationship between the microcosmos, macrocosmos, and metacosmos. These three worlds are inseparable with one another because all of them are a unity within the oneness of the divine as an embodiment of its perfection. Basically, the TP text contains the philosophy of life perfection represented through cosmic reality as a manifestation of the Highest God. This constitutes a new understanding on the perfection of cosmic reality in the Javanese worldview (The Javanese worldview referred to in this analysis is the worldview of the Old Javanese society as mentioned in the *TantuPanggelaran* text to distinguish it from the Javanese world outside of the text).

2. Analysis

The TP text consists of seven parts of the story. In brief, they can be described as follows:

1) The creation of humans to balance *Yawadvipa* (Java Island).
2) The removal of Sang HyangMahameru from *Jambudipa* to Java Island to balance the island.
3) The origins of hermits and hermitages.
4) The creation of mandala, and the sanctification and perfecting of humans.
5) The perfecting of Java Island.
6) The balancing and creation of universal prosperity.
7) The perfection of humans and Java Island (Pigeaud, 1924:57-128).

The sequence of events above represents three different cosmic realities and three layers of the world. This sequence implies balance, sanctification, and perfecting of both Java Island and humans conducted by the Highest God. For the sake of perfecting the macrocosmos and the microcosmos, the Highest God manifests himself in a number of forms. These manifestations take place in the world using several different names according to the roles that the God plays, so that they imply the space of motion in cosmic reality when the God is performing his roles. As a result, through the different names referring to these manifestations, a picture of the perfection of cosmic reality in the TP text can be drawn.

The mentioning of the names and the roles of the gods demonstrate the characteristics, the levels of godhead, and their place in the three cosmic realities and the three layers of the world. The names of the gods in various events imply that cosmic reality finds its source in the Highest God, i.e. Bhatara Guru, who is none other than Shiva. Bhatara Guru is *niskala* at the level of *uttama dewata*, occupying *swarloka*. In the first paragraph of the TP text, it is stated that *Sang Hyang Tantu* exposes himself as an invisible form through yoga. *Tantu* means a sacred place, implying that Sang Hyang Tantu is Sang Hyang Tempat Suci (*"Tempat Suci"* means "Sacred Place") as *uttama dewata*, is *niskala* in character, and occupies the *swarloka* world. At that time, "Java Island was shaking and moving from place to place, because there were no humans, and Mount Mahameru as the world’s phallus was located in *Jambudipa*/*India* (Pigeaud, 1924:57)". The sentence implies that there was only emptiness (Java Island), because there were no humans, and Mount Mahameru did not exist yet. Sang Hyang Tantu (metacosmos), humans (microcosmos), and Java Island (macrocosmos) represent the
three cosmic realities. It is understood that Sang Hyang Tantu exposed himself so that he was transformed from being invisible to becoming visible.

This exposure took place due to the yoga performed by Bhatara Jagatpramana as *uttama dewata* in the cosmic perfection. This perfection existed within the empty world, was without limits, and could not be sensed, without real forms, occupying *swarloka*, being *niskala* in character, and encompassing all realities. The existing realities constituted the highest existence which could not be perceived, such as when all forms that depended on it were perceived, and became part of its existence, i.e. a reality that encompassed everything in this world. Afterwards, he exposed himself using other names and manifestations at the level of *madya dewata* and *dewata* to the world with the *sakala-niskala* characteristics and residing in *bhurloka*, as well as being *sakala* in character and residing in *bhurloka*.

Bhatara Jagatpramana first appears in the TP text performing the yoga together with Bhatari Parameswari on Java Island (Pigeaud, 1924:57). Bhatari Parameswari was the wife of Bhatara Paramecwara (Shiva), so that Bhatara Jagatpramana is Bhatara Paramecwara as the Highest God. In the next text, the name Bhatara Paramecwara appears more frequently compared to Bhatara Jagatpramana. He appeared in a number of events using different names or together with Bhatara Guru. He and Bhatara Guru are one single embodiment of *uttama dewata*, which can change characteristics and move to different places (*niskalanings warloka* and *sakala-niskalanings warloka*). However, Bhatara Guru eventually appears more than Bhatara Paramecwara. In other words, Sang Hyang Tantu or Sang Hyang Tempat Suci constitutes the Highest God, i.e. Shiva, using the name of Bhatara Guru. Therefore, the name Bhatara Guru along with all his manifestations can be said to be the center among the gods in the world of the gods which expanded and penetrated other realms, i.e. the realms of humans and the universe.

One example in the TP text is the appearance of Bhatara Guru in a particular event using his three names, i.e. Bhatara Tuhan, Bhatara Pangeran, and Bhatara Hanungkurat with all their specific roles in the world. The name Bhatara Guru itself is used when playing the role of the teacher for all beings and all gods. The name Bhatara Tuhan is used when protecting all humans. Bhatara Pangeran is the name used by all the humans who respect him. Meanwhile, the name Bhatara Hanungkurat is used when Bhatara Guru resides within all beings in the universe (occupying and being occupied) (Pigeaud, 1924:110).

As a result, the representation of the godly realm resides within the gods themselves can be recognized from the names that they use. For example, Bhatara Guru, who is the Highest God, is another name for Shiva. In general, it is known that Bhatara Guru is the manifestation of Shiva, who plays the role of a teacher when teaching something to the world [9]. Bhatara Guru with his other names and manifestations in the three cosmic realities and three layers of the world is represented explicitly in the TP text. Primarily, the other names of Bhatara Guru in cosmic reality can be seen in the following table:

**Table 1.** Names and Manifestations of Bhatara Guru in Cosmic Reality

| BHATARA GURU | Uttama Dewata | Madya Dewata | Dewata |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------|
| Other names  | Other names   | Manifestations | Manifestations |
| B. Śiwa      |               |              |        |
| B. Jagatpramana | -          | -            | -      |
Explanation: Bhatara Guru manifests himself as uttama dewata, madya dewata, and dewata with three characteristics, i.e. niskala, sakala-niskala, and sakala in the three layers of the world, i.e. swar-, bhuwar-, and bhurloka altogether.

In the uttama dewata column, there are nine names of Bhatara Guru in niskalaning swarloka, i.e. Bhatara Siwa, Jagatpramana, Mahakarana, Paramēçwara, Bhatara Hyang Hanalaga, Tuhan, Pangeran, Hanungkurat, and BhataraNamaçiwaya. The gods live in the invisible world (undetected by the human senses), immaterial, and have not divided themselves in different forms.

In the madya dewata and sakala-niskalaning bhuwarloka columns, Bhatara Guru divides himself according to the role that he plays, i.e. using his other names and the names of his manifestations. His other names are Bhatara Jagatnata, Bhatara Jagatwiçesa, Bhatara Nandiguru, and Bhatara Mahaguru. In his sakala-niskala characteristic, Bhatara Guru does not manifest himself directly. Using the name Bhatara Nandiguru, he manifests himself into Bhatara Darmmaraja. Naming and manifestation have certain significance in the world of the gods, so that they are deemed important as they are related to the depiction of the cosmic reality which they inhabit.

The last column refers to the manifestation of Bhatara Guru as dewata (god) whose presence encompasses sakalaning bhurloka. In cosmic reality, the roles of the gods are divided into two categories based on their direct and indirect manifestations. Bhatara Guru’s manifestations as cow herders are Bhatara Kalarudra and Bhujangga Mpu Mahapalyat. Then, Bhujangga has to divide himself into two entities in order to establish the two Shiva-Buddha sects in Java, i.e. becoming Mpu Bharang as the follower of the Shiva religion, and Mpu Waluh-bang as the follower of Buddha (Pigeaud, 1924: 104 & 109). On the other hand, Bhagawan Agasti is his manifestation with his other
name Bhatara Jagatwięcęsa (Pigeaud, 1924: 92). Sang rsi Siddawangsitadewa is his other manifestation through Bhatara Nandiguru and Bhatara Darmmaraja. Then, Bhatara Mahaguru becomes Sang rsi taruna-tapa-yowana (Pigeaud, 1924: 92, 98, 109). The gods in the cosmic reality of sakalaning bhurloka appear in real forms (can be detected by the human senses) and can communicate directly with all humans.

The performance of the roles of Bhatara Guru takes place in the world through the process of sanctification and perfection of both humans and the sacred places for the sake of perfecting Java Island. It implies that the roles of the Highest God are not always performed by descending into the world in his own form. It demonstrates that the existence of Bhatara Guru in the cosmic reality of niskalaning swarloka is always hidden, in secret, and cannot be captured by the senses. Bhatara Guru performs his duties in different manifestations as a way to exist as the Highest God. This is the reason why he takes up different names and manifests himself in different forms. All aspects of life in its immaterial (niskalaning-swarloka), material-immaterial (sakala-niskalaning-bhuwarloka), and material (sakalaning-bhurloka) forms are different manifestations of the Highest God. The realm of niskalningswarloka is the innermost core, which is the source of everything. Its representation as three cosmic realities and three layers of the world constitutes the perfection of cosmic reality (in the Javanese worldview). The following is the discussion of the perfection of cosmic reality in the TP text as the manifestation of the Highest God in both the microcosmos and macrosmos. The Island of Java was imperfect because of the absence of both humans and Mount Mahameru. It shows that the island was in need of humans and Mount Mahameru for its perfection. For this reason, humans were created and prepared to be able to conduct their lives in the world. Men and women were married. This marriage represents an integrated unity (Pigeaud, 1924: 57). Then, the humans developed until they reached perfection.

To reach perfection, humans had to perform meditation in a hermitage in order to be free from pañcagatisangsara—the five levels of manifestation in the process of rebirth,” i.e. wiku, dewa, hyang, sidaresi, bhatara (Pigeaud, 1924: 83). The release of humans from pañcagatisangsara takes place at the level of bhatara, the highest level of existence where the Highest God resides. The level of bhatara can be reached by way of perfection in meditation (as a hermit), as exemplified by Resi Sidawangsitadewi. The perfection of the hermitage of Resi Sidawangsitadewi: the absence of desires, not even the desire for the world, the heaven, bhatara, or makosan “the final release (of the soul)”; it is neither happiness nor sadness; worshipping none, without likes or dislikes (Pigeaud, 1924: 92). Any human that can achieve perfection in meditation will be blessed with Kuñci Sandijñana and will be deemed a perfect human (a demigod). Kuñci Sandijñana can penetrate into the realm of niskalaning swarloka, so that the essence of the Highest God will manifest in a perfect human. KuñciSandijñana (Skt) refers to the esoteric knowledge (Zoetmulder, 2006: 1013); esoteric knowledge (Zoetmulder, 1982: 1650). In the TP text, Kuñci Sandijñana contains knowledge that was given by Bhatara Mahaguru, which was allowed to use in order to absorb all beings, but these beings may not be sanctified without prior authority from Nāmaçiwaya, the Highest God (Pigeaud, 1924: 111).

The same thing happens in the laying down of Mount Mahameru on Java Island, from an unbalanced state into a balanced state of perfection. Mahameru (lingga or the world’s phallus) is a focal point needed by Java Island to reinforce its cosmic axis. Lingga (the world’s phallus) in the Shiva religion is a symbol of the productivity of Shiva’s self as a male creative energy (a universal existential energy). Lingga is also an image of the capstone, a monument that functions as the cosmic center, the holiest of the holy. It is often associated with the symbol of the yoni (female). This association represents the creative unification that generates life in the world. Lingga-yoni refers to Shiva and his goddesses, representing the power of cooperation in the holy maternity of the two sexes. This holy maternity is a cosmogonic reality created through a productive harmony in the form of the Heavenly Father and the Earthly Mother [10]. The TP text represents this form of unification in the events of: 1) Java Island as yoni needing lingga by creating Mount Mahameru; 2) the marriage of
humans that were created by Hyang Brahma and Vishnu; 3) the unification of two religions or sects into one, i.e. çaiwa sogata (Shiva-Buddha). The laying down of Mount Mahameru on the western end of Java Island represents the unification of lingga (niskala) and yoni (sakala) as the holy matrimony of the universe. However, Java Island experienced unbalance (tilting to one side), so that the top of Mount Mahameru had to be moved to the eastern end of the island. In this way, new mountains were created from the debris of Mount Mahameru. This event implies that the Highest God made himself present in the universe with the emergence of the new mountains. The unification of lingga (Mahameru) and yoni (Java Island) needed some kind of alignment in order to maintain the harmony between the two. The site of this unification became the sacred zone for the Highest God, or niskalaning swarloka.

Based on the explanation above, it can be learned that life in the world can become perfect because it originated from one single source, i.e. the Highest God. Humans and the universe should be understood as the manifestation of the Highest God. This knowledge represents the perfection of cosmic reality in the TP text. This perfection is the result of the relationship between the three cosmic worlds, i.e. the metacosmos, microcosmos, and macrocosmos. It can be illustrated as a circle with one focal point as the manifestation of the Highest God, such as depicted in the following diagram:

Figure 1. the manifestation of the Highest God

a) The circles demonstrate cosmic reality in the following sequence: Circle 1 is the sacred focal point as the place for the Highest God or uttamadewata (metacosmos), the demigods (microcosmos/the reflection of the human soul), and the axis mundi mountain (macrocosmos). All of them have the characteristic of niskalaningswaloka, or the immaterial world.

b) Circle 2 refers to the manifestation of the Highest God in his form as madyadewata (metacosmos), the perfect human in his intelligence (microcosmos), and the perfect mountain (macrocosmos). All of them have the characteristics of sakala-niskalaningshwaloka, or material-immaterial.

c) Circle 3 refers to the manifestation of the Highest God in his form as dewata (metacosmos), the representation of the human body (microcosmos), and mountain ranges as the outermost form of the microcosmic cosmogonic circle. All of them illustrate the characteristic of sakalaningsbhuraloka, or the material world.

d) The arrows pointing to the four directions, both outward and inward, are the manifestations of the Highest God as metacosmos (for himself), as well as microcosmos (humans within themselves), and macrocosmos (the universe and everything in it).
e) The arrow with the dotted lines pointing outward from number 1 symbolizes that the metacosmos, microcosmos, and macrocosmos exist in the highest level or the deepest core (*niskalaningswarloka*); the one pointing outward from number 2 conveys the idea that the metacosmos, microcosmos, and macrocosmos exist in the second layer of the world (*sakalaningswarloka*); the one pointing outward from number 3 represents the existence of the metacosmos, microcosmos, and macrocosmos in the third layer of the world (*sakalaningswarloka*).

3. Conclusion

The manifestation of the Highest God in the TP text represents the perfection of cosmic reality. This representation informs us that the highest or deepest level of existence, encompassing the realms of the gods, humans, and the universe, also takes place within the actual life of each individual as the manifestation of the Highest God. The three cosmic realities have similarities in characteristics, behaviors, and processes towards perfection until each reaches its own perfection. The perfection of humans and the universe constitutes one unity, whose source is the Highest God himself. This represents the perfection of cosmic reality.

4. References

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