

POWER, ECSTASY, AND ENLIGHTENMENT:
THE ROLE OF THE BALE KAMBANG IN 17TH CENTURY BALINESE KINGSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Our current understanding of Balinese political mechanisms during the pre-colonial period is imbalanced. Most recent studies either emphasize the performative ritual aspects of Balinese courts or the genealogical texts to reconstruct the social, political and religious environment of pre-colonial Bali. While both methods have provided valuable insight into Balinese statecraft, scholars employing these methods often downplay the role of art historical evidence. My research is the first comprehensive art historical case study of the Bale Kambang at Puri Semarapura.

This work examines the meaning and significance of the Bale Kambang, both art and architecture, to posit the function of the site within its historical context. By placing the Bale Kambang within this historical and cultural milieu, there is convincing evidence to suggest that the Bale Kambang was significant for royal attainment of spiritual power and essential to the maintenance of a king's realm.

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INTRODUCTION

Klungkung, the smallest regency of Bali, often goes unnoticed in the tourist pamphlets and brochures of Bali (fig. 1). Visitors usually stop over while travelling east to the quiet beach resort of Candidasa or north to Bali's most sacred temple, Pura Besakih on Gunung Agung. Among those that make the brief stop, most go to see the sumptuous ceiling paintings of the Kerta Ghosa, also known as the Hall of Justice, at Puri Semarapura, the royal palace of the Klungkung. The Kerta Ghosa, established in the eighteenth century, is a square pavilion that houses the richest surviving array of Balinese traditional painting. Arranged in ten levels, the paintings consist of scenes from popular moral fables of *Tantri* and stories of salvation starring the Indian mythological heroes Bhima and Garuda. Because of its spectacular decorations, it has been hailed as the "Sistine Chapel of Balinese traditional painting."¹

There is little else that survives of Puri Semarapura. However, in the same courtyard and adjacent to the Kerta Ghosa is the Bale Kambang, also known as the Floating Pavilion. As the English name suggests, the Bale Kambang is a pavilion that is surrounded by a man-made moat, creating the impression that it is floating on a body of water. The name Floating Pavilion also evokes a sense of leisure, relaxation and entertainment, all of which reflect the opinions of many regarding the function of the pavilion.

The Bale Kambang, like the Kerta Ghosa, houses vibrant paintings that cover the entire ceiling, but the paintings of the Bale Kambang differ in content and arrangement. The Bale

¹ Adrian Vickers, *Balinese Art: Paintings and Drawings of Bali 1800-2010* (Rutland, Vermont: Tuttle Publishing, 2012), 81.

Kambang paintings, as equally complex as their counterparts in the Kerta Ghosa, are organized in six levels that illustrate three popular Balinese tales, most importantly the *Sutasoma*. In spite of the rich historical, symbolic, and artistic achievements found at the Bale Kambang, it is usually overshadowed by the splendor of the Kerta Ghosa. Therefore, the overarching goal of my thesis is to advance the discussion of the Bale Kambang and the *Sutasoma* paintings. My research seeks to reassess the significance and function of the Bale Kambang in its historical context and to demonstrate how the overall site and the *Sutasoma* ceiling paintings may contribute to our understanding of the structure.

In my research, I have come across little scholarship that analyzes, even generally, the function of water pavilions in Bali. This issue becomes even more glaring when we consider that there is no general consensus regarding the function of the Bale Kambang. For example, Idanna Pucci states that the Bale Kambang “served not only as the royal guards’ headquarters but also as the antechamber for the raja’s visitors.”² In contrast, Garrett Kam states that the pavilion was “used by the royal family for pleasure, relaxing and entertaining; gong and gamelan were sometimes played here.”³ Each explanation offers a widely differing interpretation for the site’s function. Due to the lack of historical records or accounts that inform us about the particular use of the site, either option is plausible. Today, the common consensus favors Kam’s views. Because of its pleasant atmosphere, the Bale Kambang has been accepted as a place of leisure for

² Idanna Pucci, *The Epic of Life: A Balinese Journey of the Soul* (New York: Alfred Marck Editions, 1985), 20.

³ Garrett Kam, *Perceptions of Paradise: Images of Bali in the Arts* (Yayasan Dharma Seni, Museum Neka; Ubud, 1993), 39-40.

visiting priests and royalty. While this may be partially true, I believe that such interpretations underplay the significance of the structure.

The earliest information about water pavilion structures comes from Henk Schulte Nordholt. Following descriptions based on scattered data from nineteenth-century travel accounts to Bali and information obtained from local Balinese sources, he scrupulously reconstructs Puri Gdé Mengwi, the royal palace of the Mengwi Kingdom, which was one of the most powerful Balinese kingdoms during the eighteenth century.⁴ Located in the northwest corner of Puri Gdé Mengwi, the *palebahan loji*, is a small square pavilion surrounded by a concentric square pond.⁵ According to his sources the pavilion served as a place for the king to withdraw and meditate.⁶ Unfortunately, other than the *palebahan loji* at Puri Gdé Mengwi, there are no *palebhan loji* that are mentioned at any other sites.

The *palebhan loji* mentioned in Schulte Nordholt's reconstruction of Puri Gdé Mengwi is strikingly similar to the *taman alit*, or small garden, seen in Clifford Geertz's reconstruction of Puri Semarapura ca. 1905.⁷ Both structures exhibit similar features such as the square form surrounded by a concentric square pond. We can see an even deeper shared cultural milieu by observing the relationship between the two kingdoms. The Mengwi Puri is known to have been a replica of the Klungkung model that underscores architecturally the idea that the king of Mengwi was seen as the *patih*, chancellor and right hand to the *dalem*, or ruler, Déwa Agung, who ruled

⁴ Henk Schulte Nordholt, *Spell of Power: A history of Balinese Politics 1650-1940* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1996), 79-86.

⁵ Schulte Nordholt does not clarify the origin or the meaning of the name "*palebahan loji*." To my knowledge there is no dictionary definition of *palebahan*.

⁶ Ibid., 83.

⁷ Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theater State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981), 110-111,

from Puri Semarapura.⁸ Because the architectural program of Puri Gdé Mengwi was designed to replicate the Puri Semarapura, we might be inclined to assume that the water pavilion at Klungkung may, like the *palebahan loji*, also be linked with meditation. Surprisingly, Nordholt's findings have never been applied to the Bale Kambang at Puri Semarapura.

The possible meditative function of the water pavilion form in general largely goes unnoticed in discussions of the site. All available scholarship on the ceiling paintings reflects an emphasis on the performative or historical aspects of the *Sutasoma*. While, given its prominence, it is appropriate to emphasize the *Sutasoma*, these interpretations of the *Sutasoma* are not in line with the literary function of the epic, which clearly stresses the importance of meditative practice. Thus, a significant gap exists between our current understandings of the *Sutasoma* paintings at the Bale Kambang and our current interpretations of the text itself. One of my objectives is to reconcile the visual evidence with recent literary scholarship to suggest a function of the paintings that is in line with the cultural significance and historical context of the structure. By interpreting the various components of the site in concert, I intend to demonstrate that the Bale Kambang and the surrounding Taman Gili courtyard are parts of a comprehensive program intended to facilitate the maintenance of Balinese kingship during the 17th century.

I have organized my discussion of the art and architecture into four parts. The first chapter reconstructs the historical record of Puri Semarapura and the architecture in the Taman Gili. This discussion is followed by a guided tour of the structures, statuary, and paintings of the Bale Kambang, which provides the foundation for our analysis of the site.

⁸ Schulte Nordholt, *Spell of Power*, 71. "Like the residence of the Dewa Agung, Agung Munggu's puri was situated southwest of the crossroads."

Chapter two provides an investigation and interpretation of the iconographic elements of the architecture and statuary at Bale Kambang. It charts the meaning and significance of the central structure and the surrounding water pond by surveying applications of water symbolism at Balinese and East Javanese examples. As we shall see, water possesses multivalent symbolism that goes beyond the common concepts of *tirtha* (holy water) or *amṛta* (elixir of immortality). By preparing the adept to receive a set of spiritual instruction, the moat was likely a crucial component of the site's ritual function. Concluding this chapter is a discussion of the *Sutasoma* literary text and paintings, and the model spiritual journey.

Chapter three focuses closely on the culmination of the spiritual teachings in the *Sutasoma*. By examining the two primary doctrines of the *Sutasoma*, we can gain a sense of the types of meditative yogic practices that may have been performed at the site. Doing so also provides insights into the aims and aspirations of said meditative practices. In other words, the chapter focuses on exploring the goal of the meditative practice at the site and the methods through which this goal could be achieved.

The final chapter applies all of the findings to a theoretical reconstruction of the historical situation in 17th century Bali. The chapter examines the concepts of power, ecstasy and enlightenment that are embedded in the art and architecture of the site and how they may have operated within its original historical context, i.e., Déwa Agung's attempt to consolidate and stabilize the realm.

CHAPTER 1

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF PURI SEMARAPURA

Often described as the “spiritual center” of Bali, the remains of Klungkung’s royal palace at Puri Semarapura give little impression of Klungkung’s once preeminent status in Balinese history and politics. Other than the Bale Kambang and the Kerta Ghosa, there is little else that survives of Puri Semarapura. It will therefore be helpful to consult the Balinese literary records to paint a much more complete picture of the palace. The earliest extant versions of the *Babad Dalem* are dated to 1805 and 1812, but it is believed to have had earlier origins. This text chronicles important events pertaining to the kingdom of Klungkung (c.1686-1908) and records the genealogy of the ruling lineage by the name of Kapakisan, which is traced back to the Kingdom of Majapahit (1293 -16th century) via the Kingdom of Gèlgél (ca. 15th-mid 17th century), the first unified power in Bali.⁹ This lineage was important in 18th century Bali, when Majapahit became the symbol of proper social and political order. We can also see this in the visual records. The text mentions that Puri Semarapura, as well as all other subsequent palaces, was a replica of the Gèlgél palace, which in turn was fashioned after the royal capital of Majapahit. Therefore, the *Babad Dalem* not only highlights Klungkung’s dynastic claims through this paragon of imperial lineage but also the pedigree of the palace design.

⁹ For discussion of *Babad* see Helen Creese “Balinese Babad as Historical Sources; A reinterpretation of the fall of Gèlgél,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 147, no. 2/3 (1991): 236-260. Creese states that the *babad* is “re-composed over long periods of time, a characteristic feature of genealogical accounts throughout Indonesia.”

This, however, is not a cut and dried matter. Claims of a palace “replica” cannot be verified since there are no extant remains at Puri Gélgél. Our current understanding of the palace at Gélgél is through reconstructions of fragments of historical and literary accounts which are grafted on to “standardized” or “regularized” Balinese palaces, all of which post-date the time of Gélgél. In this manner, Adrian Vickers provides a reconstruction of the Gélgél palace during the reign of Watu Rénggong’s (r. ca. 16th century), the preeminent ruler of Bali at the time, by consulting a number of Dutch sources, including Aernout Lintgensz’s 16th century account of his visit to the Puri of Kapal, and interpolating his findings into typical Balinese palace characteristics and design.¹⁰

Vickers describes the Gélgél palace as being the heart of the kingdom with all the major state officials residing at this center. The palace was approximately 250 meters long by 200 meters wide and surrounded by a four-meter high red brick wall that would have been ornamented with inserts of Chinese porcelain. The palace grounds were divided by many gates, all of which symbolized the three worlds of Hell, Earth, and Heaven.¹¹ Each courtyard had designated inhabitants, which varied from members of the royal retinue from the immediately family to servants and slaves. The southern precincts were designated for food preparation and included a barn for livestock. The doors of the palace were intricately carved and covered in gold. Deep inside the palace and beyond the gardens, were ponds that enclosed open pavilions.

¹⁰ Adrian Vickers, *Bali: A Paradise Created* (Tuttle: Singapore, 2012), 67-68. It is unclear where he obtained the description of the inner palace. In this source he cites Aernout Lintgensz, “Bali 1597,” *BKI* I (1856): 203-234, along with several other sources that date to the last decade of the sixteenth century. Vickers’ interpretation may be based on Dutch descriptions of the Palace of Kapal. See footnote 4 on page 70.

¹¹ Vickers, *Bali: A Paradise Created*, 68.

There was a central building made out of brick, which was surrounded by all kinds of statues. The sources mention no specific details of the iconographic programs in the palace. Aside from the accounts used by Vickers for this reconstruction, we have no other early descriptions of Gélgél palace.

According to the *Babad Dalem* and Dutch sources, the fall of Gélgél took place during the second half of the 17th century as a result of the rising ambitions of Gusti Agung Maruti, chancellor to the last king of Gélgél, Dalem Di Made.¹² In 1656 the Dutch in Batavia received correspondence from the Gélgél court announcing Gusti Agung Maruti as the new ruler of Bali.¹³ Under Maruti's rule, Dalem Di Made was exiled to Guliang, where he spent his final days. Di Made's son, Déwa Agung Jambé was sent to Sidemen and raised in the household of Kiyai Anglurah Singarsa, the person put in charge of maintaining Pura Besakih, Bali's most sacred temple. With the balance of power in a state of flux, some nobles and followers fled the court to return to their home villages, while others joined the new king, Maruti, at Gélgél. Throughout the island, ambitious leaders took advantage of the break in power and sought to stake claims of their own. Maruti's rebellion marked the dissolution of Gélgél as the unified authority of Bali, and resulted in the formation of independent kingdoms.

In 1686, with military assistance from nobles of Badung, Karangasem and Tabanan, Déwa Agung Jambé defeated Gusti Agung Maruti and captured the seat of Gélgél. What happened next to Gusti Agung Maruti is uncertain due to contradictory accounts concerning his

¹² Ibid., 85. Vickers' argues that Gélgél was likely in a state of decline when Maruti succeeded in taking the throne. Maintaining the realm may have motivated his rebellion.

¹³ Helen Creese, "Balinese Babad as Historical Sources; A reinterpretation of the fall of Gélgél," *Bijdragen tot de taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 147 (1991): 236-260.

fate. Weiner's examination of the *Babad Dalem* indicates that Maruti was killed in combat, while Henk Schulte Nordholt's sources indicate that he fled west to Badung and became the progenitor of the Mengwi dynasty.¹⁴ Nevertheless, within the following years, Déwa Agung Jambé, Dalem Di Made's son, established a new court three kilometers north of Gélgél in the region of Klungkung and named his capital Puri Semarapura, the 'Abode of the God of Love' (75a-76a). After the establishment of the Puri Semarapura at the end of the 17th century, there is little if any, mention of the site in the known surviving texts until nearly a century later.

During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Bali suffered several catastrophes, most notably a volcanic eruption of Mount Tambora on the neighboring island of Sumbawa, which is reported to have caused bouts of famine and disease in Bali for about a decade.¹⁵ To make matters worse, in 1828 there was a smallpox epidemic that ravaged south Bali. During this time of hardship, the regional kingdoms called off warfare and concentrated their physical efforts and spiritual energy towards mitigating their losses and restoring their realms. In Klungkung the co-rulers Déwa Agung Istri Kania, the Virgin Queen, and her stepbrother Déwa Agung Putra II sponsored the restoration of Puri Semarapura sometime during the second quarter of the 19th century. Unfortunately, there are no indications in surviving records regarding what parts of the

¹⁴ The *Babad Dalem* contrasts with the Mengwi dynastic records, which maintain that Gusti Agung Maruti fled westward and after a period of wandering, established the Mengwi dynasty. In Schulte Nordholt's historical reconstruction of the Mengwi dynasty, he associates the figure Agung Anom of Blayu with Gusti Agung. In the *Babad Surapati*, Gusti Agung is described as a lesser relative of Panji Sakti, the king of Buleleng during the second half of the 17th century. He is also listed as a prominent vassal of Panjis. The same Mengwi dynastic records indicate that Agung Munggu (r.1740-1770s) left his puri in Munggu and set out to construct a new palace in the southern part of the town. As mentioned earlier, the new palace was a replica of the Puri Semarapura in order to underscore the king of Mengwi as the *patih* (chancellor) of Déwa Agung of Klungkung.

¹⁵ See Dubois letters, 12 August 1828, no. 73 Arsip Republik Indonesia, Bali 4/11.

palace were renovated or to what extent it was altered. But we do know that both rulers were ardent supporters of state temples. Déwa Agung Istri Kania was a skilled poet in Old Javanese poetry and a patron of the arts.¹⁶

In July of 1856, the Dutch controller by the name of Van Bloemen Waanders recorded his visit to the palace of Klungkung. Waanders notes the following: “Kloengkoeng is a small, insignificant little state, with the population that one can estimate at 30,000 to 36,000 souls. The whole, even the royal residence not excepted, breathes poverty and decline.”¹⁷ The derelict condition of the palace and relatively small size of Klungkung, both in terms of territory and population, led him to believe that the Déwa Agung operated as a mere figurehead possessing no real political power. Themes of decay and degradation are reiterated in the writings of Dr. Julius Jacobs, the newly appointed officer of health in East Java. In 1881, Jacobs travelled to Klungkung and upon arriving recorded his observations of his surroundings:

“Kloengkoeng, the once so powerful realm whose princes were the absolute monarchs of all Bali, is at present sharply in decay and the least populated of all Balinese realms. But a long time after the absolute monarchy of the princes of Kloengkoeng had ceased, the king of this realm was still considered as the most prominent prince of Bali and no other radja dared to carry out anything without the consent of the Dewa-Agoeng of Kloengkoeng.”¹⁸

¹⁶ Vickers, “the Writing of Kakawin and Kidung on Bali,” *BKI*, 138 (1982): 493-495. Margaret J. Wiener, *Visible and Invisible Realms: Power, Magic and Colonial Conquest in Bali* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 140. Wiener notes that “the *Babad Ksatria* likens her [Déwa Agung Istri Kania] to the goddess Saraswati, and she is said to have been the force behind Klungkung’s literary efflorescence.” Another interesting fact to point out is that the Virgin Queen is said to have spent much of her reign meditating in the Flower Garden Temple to the north of the capital.

¹⁷ P.L. van Bloemen Waanders, “Dagverhaal eener reis over Bali. In Juni en Juli 1856,” *Tijdschrift voor Nederlands Indie* 4, 2 (1870):16.

¹⁸ Julius Jacobs, *Eenigen tijd onder de Balier* (Batavia: G. Kolff, 1883), 95.

As Margaret Wiener keenly points out, these travel accounts were suffused with skeptical preconceptions and were clearly obsessed with the decline of great kingdoms. She adds that the negative tone of the Dutch accounts also reflects a shifting dynamics of interaction between the Balinese kings and the Dutch. Over the course of the 19th century, with the growth of Dutch political involvement on Bali, Dutch envoys became more aware of Balinese kings' political maneuvering to undermine Dutch authority. This created a rift between the two parties and resulted in the Dutch condemnation of numerous aspects of Balinese palace etiquette. Regardless of the biased perspectives of Van Bloemen Waanders and Dr. Jacobs, however, these accounts indicate that the appearance of the palace appeared to be worn and suggest that renovations did not take place for extended periods of time.

The next information we have about the palace is Clifford Geertz's reconstruction of Puri Semarapura in 1905. Geertz's reconstruction is informed by and explicated through his interviews with Cakorda Gdé Oka Ijeg, son of Déwa Agung, the ruling king at the time of the Dutch invasion of 1908.¹⁹ Geertz makes it a point to note that details have been omitted from his reconstruction plan and that he "regularized" the palace according to other examples from Gianyar and Puri Gdé Tabanan. To briefly summarize his description, the Puri Semarapura grounds were laid out as a square complex measuring approximately 150 meters on each side. It was arranged into numerous courtyards with each one serving a specific function ranging from

¹⁹ Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in nineteenth century Bali*, notes 13-3 and 112-1. Cakorda Gdé Oka Ijeg spent the first thirteen years of his life at the palace and participated in the *puputan*, or ritual suicide, which took place during Dutch-Balinese invasion of Klungkung in 1908. He survived the attempted ritual suicide and recovered from his injuries. Cakora Gdé Oka Ijeg was then exiled by the Dutch to Lombok for twenty-two years. He was brought back to Bali to head the public works department.

secular and mundane to sacred and sanctified (fig. 2). While most of the palace is now gone, the Taman Gili courtyard as it stands today, appears to retain its major components present at the turn of the 20th century.

The Puri Semarapura remained in use until 1908 when the Dutch launched an attack on Klungkung and finalized their conquest of the island. In the chaos of siege, a fire broke out and most of the palace, with the exception of the Bale Kambang, the Kertha Gosa, the kukul tower, and the great gate, was destroyed. Following their victory, the Dutch occupied and adapted what remained of the palace to fill their needs. They ordered the demolition of the palace ruins and converted the Kerta Ghosa into a full-fledged Dutch court of law and furnished it with western style chairs and table. In close proximity to the Kerta Ghosa, the Dutch built several small structures for use as holding cells. It is unclear what function the Bale Kambang served during this time.

Photographs from the KITLV archive, dating to the late 1920s, confirm that the Taman Gili courtyard and its extant structures survived both the Dutch invasion and subsequent demolition and modifications (fig. 3).²⁰ The Kerta Ghosa, the great gate and the kukul tower have retained the same form and do not appear to have undergone any major alterations. According to the photographs cited above, prior to the 1930s, the Bale Kambang was a simple and rather austere pavilion. During his fieldwork in the 1970s, Adrian Vickers inquired about the history of the Puri Semarapura and the Bale Kambang and, according to his contacts, the initial

²⁰ “[Radzaal van de Kerta Gosa te Kloengkoeng.]” Photograph. From KITLV Digital Image Library. Collection: Theo Van Erp; date: 1927; image code: 8242. “[Complex van de Kerta Gossa, gezien vanuit de rechtszaal te Kloengkoeng.]” Photograph. From KITLV Digital Image Library. Collection Blidenstein, B.M. Album number: 509; image code: 81218; date: 1928.

pavilion of the Bale Kambang was a modest and private building that was walled off from public view and surrounded by fragrant plants.²¹

In the mid 1930s to the 1940s Déwa Agung initiated a major renovation of the Bale Kambang. The pavilion was transferred to the nearby Puri of Klungkung and replaced with a larger one (fig. 4). The foundation of the Bale Kambang was elevated and balustrades with a comprehensive sculptural program were integrated into the site. Although the Bale Kambang underwent significant changes to the main structure, the core elements were retained. Déwa Agung commissioned I Wayan Kayun from Kamasan to paint the new Bale Kambang.²² Other than the periodic efforts to restore the paintings, there has been no major reworking of the site. The results of the 1930s or 1940s renovation are what is present today.

By gleaning these sources, we can establish a working chronology of Puri Semarapura. With the exception of the account of Déwa Agung Istri Kania's renovations in the second quarter of the 19th century, the available evidence suggests that Puri Semarapura experienced little change between the time of its construction in the 17th century and the Dutch conquest of Klungkung in 1908. The mid-to-late 19th century accounts of Van Bloemen Waanders and Dr. Joseph Jacobs, who specifically commented on the poor condition of the palace, seem to corroborate this perception. During the Dutch invasion at the end of the first decade of the 20th century most of the palace was destroyed. The Dutch administration then occupied the palace and modified the grounds to suit the palace's new role as a prison and Western-style court. Beginning in the 1930s and continuing through the 1940s, Déwa Agung coordinated the most

²¹ Adrian Vickers, email, May 5, 2014.

²² Vickers, *Balinese Art*, 77.

comprehensive renovation of the site. The initial pavilion of the Bale Kambang was relocated to a nearby Puri of Klungkung, and it was replaced in the Puri Semarapura with a larger pavilion accompanied by a new sculptural program. I Wayan Kayun from Kamasan was commissioned to paint the interior of the new Bale Kambang. After this, minor renovations, such as restoring or replacing the ceiling paintings of the Bale Kambang and Kertha Gosa, took place only when absolutely necessary.

Statuary of the Taman Gili and Bale Kambang

Compared to the history of the site, the statuary of the site poses a different set of problems and issues for accurate dating. Photographs of the site from mid-1920s confirm the presence of some different statuary compared to what is present there today (fig. 5). From what can be seen in the photographs, the statues are placed at the corners of the Bale Kambang facing outwards into the Taman Gili (fig. 6). Two photographs faintly depict a statue sitting cross-legged and wearing a top hat. However, due to the quality and the scant quantity of these photographs, it is not possible to positively identify the statuary that existed during this time or attempt a reconstruction of the sculptural program before the renovations.

Since the renovations that took place in the late 1930s-1940s, the site has been endowed with a wealth of easily identifiable sculptures. In fact, several of the statues have inscriptions that indicate the name of the character and place of creation. Photographs taken in the late 1930s and early 1940s indicate that there has been little to no change in the sculptural program at the site to

the present day. During my visit to the site in 2014, local tour guides and ladies peddling sarongs at the entrance of the site also mentioned that the statuary has not changed within their lifetimes.

It is possible that some of the current statues were present before the renovations. According to Vickers' description of the palace of Gélgél, "beyond the lush gardens where ponds enclosed high open pavilions, where the royal quarters with a monumental central building in brick, which was decorated again with porcelain and surrounded by all kinds of statues."²³ This comparison suggests that statuary could have been common in the artistic programs of Balinese palaces and may have been present at Puri Semarapura. There are 18th century examples of statuary at the Gunarsa museum in Klungkung that are stylistically similar to those at Puri Semarapura today. Thus it is possible to suggest that some of statuary and other decorative stonework at the Bale Kambang may be dated as early as the 18th century and may have been part of the initial construction of Puri Semarapura. That being said, we have little evidence about the statuary prior to the 1930s renovations and there is no way to know whether any of it was retained on the site. In conclusion, as we proceed we must keep in mind that our analysis of the site only considers the sculptural program that currently resides at the Bale Kambang and therefore the interpretation of this program is hypothetical.

Ceiling paintings of the Bale Kambang at Puri Semarapura

²³ Vickers, *Bali: A Paradise Created*, 68.

The paintings of both the Bale Kambang and Kerta Ghosa have caught the attention of visitors and scholars, but the Kerta Ghosa has been better studied.²⁴ The Kerta Ghosa is a square pavilion that houses the richest surviving array of Balinese traditional painting. In contrast little scholarship has been produced on the Bale Kambang. It is typically presented through the history of the Kerta Ghosa and is therefore treated in a cursory and subsidiary manner.

The Bale Kambang paintings are organized into six levels that illustrate three popular Balinese tales. Scenes from the *Palalintangan*, or Balinese astrological chart, are depicted on the first level of the ceiling, the level lowest to the ground. Ascending both upwards and inwards, the second level consists of scenes from *Brayut*, the local folktale of the ideal Balinese family. The four upper levels, the most sacred portions of the pavilion, are devoted to the mythological tale *Sutasoma kakawin*, an Old Javanese poem composed by Mpu Tantular in the second half of the fourteenth century.

Paintings at the Puri Semarapura are first mentioned in a palm leaf manuscript dated to the year 1842 currently in the Gedong Kirtya, the historical library in Singaraja. The manuscript praises the beauty of the decorations of the Kerta Ghosa, but does not indicate the subject matter of the ceiling, nor does it mention anything about the Bale Kambang.²⁵ We have almost no information in historical records that describe or even confirm the existence of the paintings of the Bale Kambang before 1940s. However, if paintings were present at the initial Bale Kambang (pre-mid-1930s), they may have taken another format such as large square paintings on treated

²⁴ For more information on the history of the Kerta Ghosa, see Adrian Vickers *Kerta Ghosa: The Ordered Realm. A Study in Balinese Narrative Art* (unpublished Bachelor of Arts thesis, University of Sydney: Department of Indonesian and Malayan Studies, 1979), and Idanna Pucci, *The Epic of Life* (New York: Alfred Van Der Marck Editions, 1985).

²⁵ Kam, *Perceptions of Paradise*, 31.

cotton such as a *langsé* (which are used as curtains at the sides of the pavilion) or *tabing* (used at the rear). Both forms function as decorative partitions and augment the spiritual potency of the space. Therefore, it is possible that the decorations praised in the manuscript at the Gedong Kirtya may have been temporary or impermanent fixtures of the building.

Garrett Kam (1993) observes the role of ceiling paintings mentioned in the *Jurasa (Joharsa)*, an Old Javanese myth from the 18th century Javanese-Islamic period. According to his research, painted ceilings were in vogue around the time of the creation of the Bale Kambang and, in most cases, they were associated with evoking emotions of delight and ecstasy.²⁶ Kam provides a cursory historical background of the Bale Kambang by looking through the accounts of Dutch artist and writer Wijnand Otto Jan Nieuwankamp, who visited Bali in 1904, 1906-1907 and 1918, and Walter Spies, who took photographs during his visit in the 1930s. Kam mentions that other than these sources, he has not encountered any evidence that indicates the existence of paintings in the Bale Kambang before the 1940s. He adds that the depiction of the Japanese flag in the lowest level of the Bale Kambang ceiling paintings suggests their origin dates to sometime during the Japanese occupation of Bali (1942-1945).

The most recent scholarship on Bale Kambang by Adrian Vickers notes the early 1940s commission to paint the ceiling of the Bale Kambang but he does not mention the presence of paintings and decorations at the Bale Kambang prior to the 1940s.²⁷ Citing the details of the Japanese flag found in the *Palalintangan* paintings of the Bale Kambang, he supports the dating of the paintings to the Japanese occupation.

²⁶ Garrett Kam, *Perceptions of Paradise: Images of Bali in the Arts*, 21-36.

²⁷ Vickers, *Balinese Art*, 81.

As the research of Kam and Vickers shows, the most conclusive evidence for dating the paintings points to the 1940s, thus coinciding with Déwa Agung's major renovation of the Bale Kambang. That being said, we must keep in mind the possibility that the paintings, or the subject matter, may have previously employed in a different format such as the *langsé*, *tabing*, or some other temporary or ritual form, such as recitation or performances. I should point out that depictions of the *Sutasoma* in Indonesia are very rare, the majority of which occur in Bali. In fact, whatever its date, the *Sutasoma* of the Bale Kambang at Puri Semarapura is the earliest and most comprehensive illustration of the epic, which gives us reason to believe that the epic was significant in the region before the appearance of the Bale Kambang paintings in the 1940s. As we shall here see it is very plausible, as much as it is fruitful, to interpret the *Sutasoma* as a part of the initial conceptualization of the site. This will be discussed in greater length in chapters two and three.

Site Description

Courtyard

The Taman Gili ("paradise island") is positioned in the northeastern corner of the Puri Semarapura. It is the only remaining intact courtyard from the initial palace design. The courtyard is square in shape and measures approximately 56 meters on each side (fig. 7). Comparing Geertz's 1905 reconstruction to its current condition, the Taman Gili appears to have retained most of its original components, including the Bale Kambang, a pavilion with a

surrounding pond and a courtyard, and the Kerta Ghosa. Today, the Taman Gili, a vestige of the former kingdom, has been converted into the major tourist attraction of Klungkung.

The north and east sides of the Taman Gili are adjacent to the two major roads of Klungkung: Jalan Puputan, which runs along north-south axis, and Jalan Untung Surapati, which runs along the east-west axis. On the eastern wall that runs along Jalan Puputan, a large *candi bentar*, or split gate, and ticket booth marks the entrance of the site. The atmosphere is vibrant as crowds ebb and flow from the traditional market located across the street from the palace. The entrance is often teeming with local ladies renting and selling sarongs to tourists, while the men offer guided tours.

Upon entering the courtyard, the entrance path bifurcates into a walkway that runs along the perimeter of the Taman Gili. Flora, including trees and shrubbery, are sparsely arranged around the garden. The eastern side or entrance pathway is the largest of the courtyard and measures approximately 9.5 meters from the exterior wall to the balustrade. The north and west pathways measure approximately 6 meters from wall to balustrade and the south side, the narrowest of the four, is about 4 meters in width.

A waist-high balustrade serves as a physical partition between the garden pathway and the pond. It is constructed from grey and red bricks that provide some visual contrast. Alternating patterns of post and podium add rhythm to an otherwise simple balustrade. The posts and podiums consist of basic geometric forms and reflect an overall restrained aesthetic; the latter are also architectural bases for the statuary. In the courtyard, there are thirty-five podiums and statuary arranged along the eastern, southern and western balustrades. There is no statuary on the northern side balustrade. Both the eastern and western balustrade has twelve podiums and

statues that are grouped into six pairs. There does not seem to be any symbolic meaning in the arrangement; rather, the pattern appears to serve visual rhythm. With the exception of a grouping of three statues at the center, the pattern is repeated on the southern balustrade.

All balustrade statues measure between 90 to 100 centimeters in height and stand atop square bases that measure 30cm on each side. The height of the square bases vary depending on the type of figure placed atop. There are three main types of statuary found at the site. The first type of figure is the *parekan* (*panakawan* in the Javanese tradition), or clown-like servant to the gods and demons, which are commonly found in Javanese and Balinese *wayang* traditions. *Wayang*, or puppet, performances are typically conducted in Old Javanese, but *parekan* speak in the local vernacular to act as intermediaries between gods and demons of the epics, and the audience. They identify the key themes and morals of the tale while displaying righteousness and ideal conduct. These figures are depicted with *kasar*, or crude features such as bulging bellies, rounded cheeks, plump lips, and protruding teeth or fangs (fig. 8). They are most often portrayed topless and sporting a *kain poleng*, a checkered sarong around their waist. Two *parekan* are placed along the eastern balustrade on the two northernmost podiums and three more can be found along the northern end of the bridge balustrade.

The second and most abundant type of statuary is the god or *dewa/dewi* form (fig. 9). These figures can also possess *kasar* features but are most typically depicted with refined, or *halus*, characteristics such as smooth skin, slender eyes, tight lips and a thin physique. The *dewa/dewi* form consists of both male and female adorned in royal attire, including high crowns and heavily decorated jewelry such as necklaces, armbands, and earrings that announce their

royal statuses. The statues also have individualized hairdos. Almost all of the male deities are depicted holding a weapon associated with their identity.

The third type of statuary at the site is the demonic, or *asura* form (fig. 10). These figures can be most easily identified by their *kasar* and fearsome characteristics such as the bulging eyebrows, bulbous noses, hairy faces, and protruding fangs. They are significantly larger in physical stature and have smaller bases than the servant and refined *dewa* forms. Like the heroic *dewa/dewi* figures, they also carry individualized weapons but their facial features, headdress and accouterments are standardized.

The Kerta Ghosa, the famous pavilion after which the site is now named, is located in the northeast corner of the courtyard and is oriented towards the main intersection and navel (*pusat*) of Klungkung. It is a square structure that measures approximately 9.3 meters on each side. Tourists can enter the pavilion by ascending stairs located on the western facade. The most notable features of the Kerta Ghosa are the sumptuous interior paintings that depict popular folk tales, i.e., *Tantri* and mythical epics, i.e., *Bhimaswarga*. Because the structure is positioned along the corner perimeter of the walls, tourists can view the interior paintings from the two streets.

Along the northern balustrade of the courtyard a *kori bentar*, a small split gate, demarcates the entryway to the Bale Kambang (fig. 11). In keeping with the aesthetic sensibility of the site, the *kori bentar* is constructed from grey and red bricks. The two halves of the split gate flank the bridge pathway. Both sides of the gate consist of three segments, which diminish in size as they move away from the bridge entryway. The gate employs a decorative program that can be commonly found throughout Bali; the base of each segment of the gate is adorned with the elephant design motif or, *karang gajah*, and the upper antefixes depict the *karang guak*,

or bird motif. Running along the corners of the gate are scrolling bands of foliage that coil upwards. Crown-like decorative flourishes run from the ridge at the top of the gate down to the lower segments and terminate at the balustrade.

Bale Kambang

A large rectangular pond, measuring approximately 37.3 x 45 meters, surrounds the Bale Kambang. The visitor must pass through the gate and traverse a bridge to get to the pavilion. (fig. 12). The bridge is approximately two meters wide and ten meters long. Balustrades flank the bridge causeway with podiums spaced in approximately two meter increments. In total there are ten podiums, five on each side, each topped by stone anthropomorphic statues. The statues located on the east side of the bridge balustrade are *dewa/dewi* forms and have noticeably smaller physiques and more refined attributes in comparison to their western counterparts, which have larger bodies and demonic facial attributes. The heights of the statue bases vary between 5 to 10 cm. to compensate for the physical differences of the demonic and *dewa/dewi* figures. All statues stand at approximately eye level with the viewer.

Proceeding from north to south, the first two figures to the east (left) and west (right) of the bridge balustrade are distinctly different from the majority of other statues found at the site. Their form clearly derives from the *parekan*. The identification of these statues as *parekan* is reinforced by an inscription stating, “Merdah,” one of four *parekan* commonly found in Balinese visual and performance arts, on the first statue on the east side of the balustrade (fig. 13).

Among the remaining statues on the bridge balustrade, there is a discernable division between the western and eastern groups of the balustrade. The eastern statuary group possesses larger bases, ranging from 20 to 25 cm. in height, while the figures are approximately 75 cm. in height. The statues of the eastern group consists of *dewa* forms and are depicted wearing royal regalia, often sport a crown and hold a weapon in one hand while performing a *mudra* with the other. On the western side, the *asura* (demon) statues are noticeably larger in stature and possess more demonic and *kasar* characteristics. These figures are approximately 90 cm. in height with bases that measure approximately 7 cm. Their bodies are also more elongated and robust than their eastern counterparts.

Continuing south towards the pavilion, a set of stairs connects the bridge to the main structure of the Bale Kambang. Two life-sized goddess figures flank the main pathway (fig. 14-15). Judging from their condition relative to the other statuary, they appear to be more recent additions to the site. The goddesses are physically and iconographically identical. Each is depicted with a *kain*, or cloth, wrapped the torso and sarong covering their waist and legs. Their knees are slightly bent, one foot positioned behind the other and the hips indicate a bowing gesture. They each carry a flywhisk in one hand while the free hand is in a variation of *añjalimudrā* and positioned at the sternum. Each female is accompanied by a goose, which poses by her left calf. I have been unable to discover any information regarding the provenance of these figures.²⁸

²⁸ Photographs from the 1940s show that initially there were two large demonic figures that flanked the entrance into the pavilion. This indicates that the artists experimented with the sculptural program.

The structure of the Bale Kambang is set on a rectangular foundation, which appears to be constructed from concrete (fig. 16). Horizontal striations in the foundation imitate the repetition of masonry. The first layer of the base rises from the pond to support the second layer, which is constructed from stacked greyish bricks with traces of cement or some form of plaster coating. The shape of the second layer tapers inwards and upwards at a forty-five degree angle, terminating at the first level of the main pavilion. At each corner, wedge-like forms project from the base. These corner projections are uniform in shape at each side and can clearly be distinguished from the body of the main structure. Remnants of thick tubular forms flank the northern corner appendages. However, these pieces are either severely damaged or perhaps left unfinished. At the southern face of the pavilion, a small protuberance projects from the center of the base. Its topside is flat while the bottom is tapered (fig. 17).

The first floor of the Bale Kambang is constructed from red bricks with grey stones utilized as accents. It measures 13.2 meters in width and 15.24 meters long. Two trees flank the entrance of the pavilion. A balustrade, surrounding the perimeter and enclosing the first level of the pavilion, has a total of twenty-seven statues seated atop podiums; six statues are located in the north and seven statues are found along the east, west and south sides. Two statues of the southern pavilion balustrade are inscribed with the names of Indic deities, Maheswara and Brahama.²⁹

²⁹ It is interesting to note that inscriptions only occur on the *parekan* and the *halus* human figures. There is no evidence that would indicate whether the inscriptions were reserved only for *dewa* forms. We also have no evidence to confirm the date of the statues or whether the inscribed statues mark a latter phase of sculptural restoration.

Today, tourists can enter into the highest point of the pavilion by a set of stairs at the northern face. The main pavilion is rectangular in form and consists of a large plinth with a secondary, smaller platform stacked on top. The plinth measures almost 8.5 meters across, 13 meters long and has an elevation of 1.6 meters from the first level. It is decorated on all sides with a series of decorative rectangular frames that are accented with floral motifs and the *karang bhoma*, a fearsome face motif. The platform is a smaller rectangular reiteration approximately 1.5 meters shorter on each side and elevated about 0.7 meters inches off of the plinth. It is constructed from unadorned grey bricks and has a smooth finish.

The open-air platform is the highest position of the site and permits a three hundred and sixty degree view of the surrounding courtyard. The slope of the roof, however, obstructs any panoramic views beyond the palace. Rather, the gaze of the viewer is refocused down and towards the encompassing moat, which is thriving with lotus flowers. The highest platform sits approximately 10 meters above the level of the pond, giving the pavilion an impression of monumentality.

Twenty-eight wooden columns support the roof structure: fourteen columns around the perimeter of the plinth and fourteen arranged in a row of three on the platform. The wooden posts are painted in red, blue and green pigment and decorated with floral patterns. Horizontal wooden beams are added as cross sections to the columns to form the skeleton and support the superstructure (fig. 18). The cross sections of the structural wooden frame also serve as perches for two *singa ambara raja*, the winged lion that is commonly associated with Balinese royalty. The roof, measuring approximately 13.8 by 9.5 meters, holds the ceiling paintings, the most prominent decorative feature of the Bale Kambang.

The ceiling panels are painted in the Kamasan style, a traditional painting style that stylistically derives from *wayang* forms. They are organized into six vertically stacked registers that can be categorized into three genres. Horizontal wooden bands divide each level of the ceiling paintings while securing the panels in place. The lowest level of the ceiling depicts the *palalintangan*, or Balinese astrological calendar paintings. The bottom row consists of sixty illustrated scenes with a majority of the panels bearing captions in old Balinese detailing the days of the Balinese calendar and their corresponding auspicious signs (fig. 19).

The second level of paintings tells the story of *Brayut*. The *Brayut* is a local folktale of the ideal Balinese family. The Brayut family is born of humble means, but through correct behavior, such as participation in the community and proper devotion to the gods, the family members achieve earthly and spiritual prosperity (fig. 20). The story is depicted in a linear narrative through a series of nineteen scenes. The first scene begins at the southern end on the east and progresses in a clockwise motion until it ends in the northeast.

Moving upward, the next four registers, consisting of a total of forty-four panels, are devoted to the mythological tale, *Sutasoma kakawin*, an Old Javanese poem composed by Mpu Tantular in the second half of the fourteenth century (fig. 21). Like the *Brayut* paintings, the *Sutasoma* epic begins at the south end of the eastern side and moves in a clockwise direction. The narrative begins on the sixth level and, after each revolution, moves down a level.

The *Sutasoma kakawin* is an Indonesian literary creation based on the *Mahasutasoma Jataka* (no. 537).³⁰ It tells the story of Sutasoma, a hero who renounces the princely life in order

³⁰ Toru Aoyama "Prince and Priest: Mpu Tantular's Two Works in the Fourteenth Century Majapahit," *The Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko* 56 (1998): 63-83.

to follow the path of spiritual enlightenment. After leaving the palace, Sutasoma first stops at a charnel ground to perform meditations. In the middle of his practice, Widyutkarālī, a form of the terrifying goddess Bhairavi, advises Sutasoma to continue his practices on the summit of Meru. On his journey to Mt. Meru, Sutasoma stops at the Keśawa's hermitage. Keśawa attempts to dissuade Sutasoma from continuing his path. Unsuccessful, Keśawa joins Sutasoma on his spiritual journey. Before embarking to Mt. Meru, the two meet with the great sage Sumitra, who informs them of Poruṣāda, the man-eating demon, who threatens the world. Along his spiritual path, Sutasoma is faced with a series of life-threatening obstacles such as the encounter with Gajawaktra, or the elephant-headed demon, the nāga, and the tigress. By performing intense meditations and through practicing non-violent means, Sutasoma is able to pacify all three threats. Eventually, Sutasoma reaches the peak of the Meru whereupon he encounters his final test; Indra sends celestial nymphs to tempt Sutasoma away from his spiritual goal. Unperturbed by the nymphs' and Indra as enchantress' sexual advances, he attains enlightenment and realizes that he is the incarnation of Wairocana. Having accomplished his practice, Sutasoma decides to return to his home in Hastinā.

Along the way, Sutasoma encounters a wounded demon, who pleads for mercy from Daśabāhu, the king of Kāśī. Sutasoma exhibits compassion for the demon's plea, and successfully intercedes with Daśabāhu on the demon's behalf. Impressed with Sutasoma's spiritual prowess, Daśabāhu proposes that Sutasoma marry his sister, Candrawatī and thus the two return to the kingdom of Kāśī. Sutasoma and Candrawatī's wedding is arranged at *Ratnālaya*, the pleasure garden. The two consummate their physical union in a jeweled pavilion located at the center of the garden. At this moment, Candrawatī realizes that she is the

incarnation of Locanā, Wairocana's consort. Candrawatī begets Ardhana and the family, along with Daśahbāhu, return to Hastinā.

Meanwhile, Poruṣāda, the man-eating demon, agrees to capture 100 kings to sacrifice to Kāla in exchange for supreme powers. Kingdom by kingdom, Poruṣāda is successful in his military expeditions and eventually fulfills Kāla's request of 100 kings. Mahākāla, however, is not satisfied with Poruṣāda's bounty and requests that he bring only one king: Sutasoma. As he did before in his journey to Mount Meru, Sutasoma performs meditations, confronts Poruṣāda on the battlefield, and pacifies the demon and shortly thereafter, Kāla. Through meditation and the practice of non-violence, Sutasoma is able to subdue and conquer all malevolent forces. Ultimately, it is Sutasoma's virtue and altruistic sacrifice that restore order to the world.

Now that we have established a general description of the site, we can now begin our analysis of the significance and meaning of the art and architecture of the Bale Kambang. The following chapter examines and contextualizes the iconographic program of the statuary and layout.

CHAPTER 2

MOUNT MERU, ANAVATAPTA AND THE SPIRITUAL PATH

The Cosmic Mount Meru

Upon entering the Taman Gili courtyard the architectural and sculptural program immediately overwhelm the viewer. The Bale Kambang, a rectangular pavilion placed atop a solid stone foundation, appears like a rock outcrop rising from the depths of the ocean. Surrounding the pavilion is a large moat, which occupies most of the courtyard. It is densely populated with lotus buds and schools of fish. Surrounding the pavilion, a vast array of statuary confronts the viewer. Even for an informed visitor, one would have to be well acquainted with the site in order to obtain the most general understanding of the artistic program.

Closer inspection of the individual architectural components reveals details that may be lost in the abundance of imagery. First, we can see that the base of the Bale Kambang has semi-circular appendages that project from the corners as well as a small, square protuberance jutting out of the center of the base at the south side. Winding tubular forms coil around the corner appendages but abruptly terminate. The tubular forms resemble the body of a snake, however due to severe damage they cannot be identified with certainty.³¹ Nonetheless, these unique elements suggest that the foundation is not merely a base. They may allude to the *Mahabharata's*

³¹ Our only evidence of the renovations of the site dates to 1930s and 1940s. I have yet to come across any photos that provide any additional information or details of the tubular forms around the corner appendages.

cosmogonic myth of the *Samudramanthana* or the *Churning of the Ocean of the Milk*.³² If so, the base may have depicted the subterranean world turtle, Kurma, bound by the autochthonous snake, Nāga Bāsuki. In the myth, the gods and the demons work in concert to obtain the elixir of immortality, *amṛta*. They achieve this by uprooting Mount Meru and placing it on the back of Kurma, to use it as the pivot to churn the ocean. In the Indonesian tradition, Nāga Bāsuki binds the mountain, acting as the rope for which the divine participants engage in an epic event of tug-of-war. From the furious churning motion spews forth the half-moon, the goddesses Śrī (the goddess of beauty) and Lakṣmī (the goddess of wealth). The water turns into a milky substance and *amṛta* arises from the depths of the ocean. From this reading, it is plausible that the Bale Kambang's base represents Kurma and the snake Nāga Bāsuki, of the *Samudramanthana* episode.³³

Further evidence for this interpretation is verified in the statuary on the site. Each statue on the pavilion balustrades is depicted with individual identifying attributes. The sculptors have clearly attempted to represent a pantheon of characters through variations in their physique, regalia, accouterments, and weapons. Minor modifications of facial features can also give us an indication of a figure's demeanor. Of the thirty-seven statues found along the bridge and pavilion balustrade, seventeen are *dewa* forms, fourteen are in the form of *asuras*, and the remaining four are *parekan*.

³² In Balinese sculpture and architecture, the iconography of the *Churning of the Ocean of Milk* is most common in the ubiquitous *Padmasana*, lotus seat.

³³ I Gusti Putu Phalgunadi, *The Indonesian Mahābhārata: Ādiparva, The First Book* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1990), and John Smith, *Mahabharata* (New York: Penguin Group, 2009). I have not examined the myth in the *Visnupurana* or other texts that may be more developed retellings.

By drawing a line through the center of the monument along the north-south axis, there is a clear east-west division of the statues. Almost all of the *dewa* forms occupy the eastern half of the bridge and balustrade, while the *asuras* occupy the western half. At the southern end, a greater number of *dewa* figures are present, which accounts for the numerical disparity between the two types. Four *parekan* occupy the northern-most seats of the bridge balustrade. The bipartite organization of the figures at the Bale Kambang appears to have been a long-standing mode for representing the *Churning of the Ocean Milk*.

A clear portrayal of the myth can be seen in a traditional painting of the *Churning of the Ocean of Milk*, now in the Honolulu Museum of Art, which dates approximately to the third quarter of the 19th century (fig. 22). The painting depicts the moment in which the gods and demons cooperate by pulling the churning rope to obtain *amṛta*, the elixir of immortality. In the center is the mythical mount Meru, the pyramidal form that is placed atop the back of Bedawang Nala, or Kurma. The body of the snake Nāga Bāsuki forms the rope that binds Meru and is used by the gods to churn the ocean. Enthroned at the top of Meru is Wisnu, who presides over the event. As the gods and demons engage in the cosmogonic tug-of-war, flames burst from the waters. The *dewas*, on the left side possess a combination of *halus* and *kasar* features while the figures on the right are depicted in standardized demonic form.

Based on the painting, we can read the site as follows. Standing at northern end of the courtyard and facing the entrance of the Bale Kambang, we can see that the layout of the statuary is identical to the composition of the painting the gods are located on the left (east) side; the demons are located on the right (west) side; and the two goddesses flanking the pathway are Lakshmi and Sri. All of the figures are symbolically engaged in the action of churning the ocean

to retrieve the *amṛta*.³⁴ The tubular form is the body of Nāga Bāsuki wrapped around the Bedawang Nala, or Kurma, which is represented by structure's base. The pitched roof of the Bale Kambang is the symbolic peak of Mount Meru and the platform is the abode of the king as Wisnu. This was appropriate since the Balinese kings of Klungkung frequently identified themselves with Wisnu. For example, Watu Rénggong (r. ca. 16th century) is described in the *Babad Dalem* as Wisnu manifested with four arms and holding a discus, club, conch shell, and sword or *keris*. These attributes define Wisnu as the preserver and maintainer of the *dharma* in Hinduism. In light of the obvious iconographic parallels between the Bale Kambang and the painting of the *Churning of the Sea of Milk*, I suggest that there is compelling evidence to identify the base and statuary as a conventionalized Balinese representation of Mt. Meru in the *Samudramanthana* episode.

Knowledge of Mt. Meru comes from the post-Vedic literature of India, particularly the *puranas*, where its attributes are described in great detail. Meru is the mythical mountain at the center of the universe and was present at the beginning of creation. It is horizontally and vertically symmetrical. The crown of the mountain, which was the city of the gods, is balanced below by nether regions occupied by the demons, *asuras*. Ian Mabbett states, "Meru is the vertical shaft which links macrocosms with the microcosm, gods with men, timelessness with

³⁴ The standard arrangement of the gods and demons is likely related to *wayang kulit*, or shadow play performances. In this tradition the *dalang*, or puppet master, operates the puppet behind a backlit screen. With his right hand, considered pure, he handles the gods and, with his left, he handles the demons. From the audience's perspective, the gods appear on the left and the demons are on the right.

time.”³⁵ As Indic thought permeated localities along the maritime route from India to Southeast Asia, Mt. Meru was absorbed and adapted into Southeast Asian cosmologies, including Bali.³⁶ Because Meru was understood to be at center of the cosmos and act as the linkage between the divine and human realms, these concepts were manifested in the spatial layout of the palace, itself a microcosm and exemplary center of the kingdom.

Puri Semarapura lays at the southwest quadrant of the center of Klungkung, which is marked by the intersection of two major roads (fig. 23). Today, an impressive vajra-shaped monument with four figures facing the cardinal directions demarcates the *pusat* (center or navel) of Klungkung. The condition of the monument suggests that is likely a recent addition. The Taman Gili is located in the northeastern corner of the palace complex and lies adjacent to the main intersection. In fact, the site is within such close proximity to the center that tourists can witness the hustle and bustle of the *pusat* from the Kerta Ghosa. From this standpoint, it appears that the vajra-shaped monument, or even the Kerta Ghosa, occupies the center of the Klungkung rather than the Bale Kambang. In light of this, how can we be certain that the position of Bale Kambang was meant to reference Mt. Meru? As discussed earlier, the Bale Kambang is located in the middle of the Taman Gili just as Meru was conceived as being the center of the universe. I believe this question can be sufficiently resolved by looking at the larger program and site layout. I suggest that the architects intentionally placed the Bale Kambang at the center of the

³⁵ For more discussion of Mt. Meru, see Ian Mabbett, “The Symbolism of Mount Meru,” *History of Religions* 23, no. 1 (University of Chicago Press, Aug. 1983): 68.

³⁶ Robert Heine-Geldern, “Conceptions of State Kingship in Southeast Asia,” *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 2, no. 1 (Nov., 1942): 15-30.

courtyard while seamlessly integrating other attributes associated with Meru, namely the Anavatapta, the cosmic ocean.

The Cosmic Ocean

Establishing an identification of the site with Meru provides a means to understand other imagery at the Bale Kambang. This interpretation, however, is only a fragment of a much larger picture. In addition to the descriptions discussed above, Mt. Meru is also associated with the heavenly lake Anavatapta: the source of the elixir of immortality. In the Indian tradition, the Ganges is believed to derive from this body of water. Therefore, it is crucial that we also take into consideration water as an essential component of Meru Symbolism and equally important to the program of the Bale Kambang. This section consists of three parts. The first part surveys comparative art historical examples in Bali and East Java to establishing a working understanding of the symbolism and significance of water. The second part examines the concept and imagery of water in the Javanese and Balinese court literary tradition. In the last section, my findings will be synthesized in the context of the Puri Semarapura with the goal of positing a theoretical function for the site.

The earliest visual reference to *amṛta* (elixir of immortality) in Bali is found at the tenth century site of Goa Gajah. Located in the district of Blahbatuh beside the Petanu River, Goa Gajah is a religious complex that contains both Hindu and Buddhist imagery.³⁷ The most

³⁷ R. Goris, "Dinasti Warmadewa dan Dharmawangsa dipulau Bali," *Bahasa dan Budaya* 5:3 (Feb., 1957). He notes that the archaeological excavations at Goa Gajah have revealed that there were two monasteries, one Saivite, and one Buddhist.

remarkable feature of the site is a cave with a giant face carved on the exterior of the living rock. Inside the cave are a series of excavated niches with one niche containing a group of several Śiwa *lingga*. Slightly east of the main cave and situated beside the river is the fragmented remnants of a Buddhist stupa. Most important to our discussion is the structure directly in front of the cave, the bathing pond (fig. 24). In Judith Patt's dissertation, she skillfully reconstructs the history of Goa Gajah and the bathing pond by reconciling literary sources, such as the *Usana Bali* and the *Narakṛtāgama*, with epigraphic evidence and the archaeological data.³⁸ The earliest mention of the Buddhist establishment in Bali occurs in the *Nāgarakṛtāgama* (ca. 1365), which refers to the site of Lwa (Lo) Gajah that was under Majapahit control (canto 79). While the names of the sites are similar, there is no conclusive proof that Goa Gajah, the site, can be identified of this Lwa Gajah mentioned in the text, but the archaeological evidence supports it.

From Pejeng, clay stupas with Buddhist figures and the *vajradhara* mantras stamped into them indicate a florescent Buddhist community in Bali during the ninth-tenth centuries. Stylistic analysis of the statues at Goa Gajah also supports a ninth to tenth century dating. For example, the floral patterns found at Goa Gajah are stylistically similar to those at the 10th-century Eastern Javanese site of Candi Jalatunda in the use of plump, broad spirals that swirl in opposite directions, outlined edges, and peppering with dots.³⁹ Patt also references a small, seated Buddha and Hariti statue found at Goa Gajah that are stylistically similar to late central Javanese sculptures of the 10th century. In light of the evidence, Goa Gajah appears to be the best candidate for the Buddhist establishment mentioned in the *Nāgarakṛtāgama* as Lwa Gajah.

³⁸ Judith Ann Patt, *The use and symbolism of water in ancient Indonesian art and architecture* (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1979), 256-268.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 276.

Of the bathing ponds complexes, the Goa Gajah bathing place is larger than its contemporary east Javanese counterparts of Belahan and Jalatunda. A broad stairway leading into the bathing areas can accommodate a substantial number of visitors and suggests that Goa Gajah was used for public ceremonies. In the basin of each of the two ponds and placed against the wall are a total of six *yakṣi* figures holding vessels. The *yakṣi* are full-bodied female figures, bedecked in royal regalia and jewelry and possessing soft, refined facial features. According to Coomaraswamy, “...*Yakṣas* [and their female counterparts, *yakṣis*] are primarily vegetation spirits, guardians of the vegetative source of life (*rasa* = sap in trees = soma = *amṛta*), and thus clearly connected with the water.”⁴⁰ Bosch observes the fact that a vessel with a spherical shape suffices to change its contents into life-giving *rasa*.⁴¹ Following their lead, Patt posits that the six deities, associated with the concept of life giving and life restoring springs, harness the potent waters of the Petanu river in their vessels which could then be distributed to the lay people. Similar practices are still performed in Bali today at sites such as Tirtha Empul in Tampaksiring.

To further her argument, Patt hypothesizes that a Gaṇeśa statue found on-site may have served as the central deity of the bathing pond. According to her reading of *Gaṇeśagita*, the opening homage by the poet repeats numerous times that Gaṇeśa is the source of *amṛta* and the teachings of *amṛta*, like yoga, with the ultimate goal of consuming the supreme nectar and becoming filled with it.⁴² However, Patt states that due to missing components of the main

⁴⁰ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Yaksas*, Parts II (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1971), 2.

⁴¹ F.D.K. Bosch, *The Golden Germ, An Introduction to Indian Symbolism*. Indo-Iranian Monographs, v.2 (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1960), 112.

⁴² Patt, *The use and symbolism of water in ancient Indonesian art and architecture*, 292-307.

sculptural group, the identification of the central deity is uncertain and her theory remains speculative.

Although the identity of the central figure remains ambiguous, veneration of water is clearly an important aspect of Balinese religious practices at Goa Gajah. Here, the iconography does not explicitly reference *amṛta* or the *Churning of the Ocean Milk*; but rather, as pointed out by Bosch, it represents the bearers of fertility, abundance, and in turn *amṛta*, the sole objective of the mythical *Churning* episode. If we accept Patt's identification of Gaṇeśa as the central deity, the regenerative and purifying attributes of water, distributed by the earthly goddesses, are clearly central to the function of the site. As we shall see in the following examples, water continues to remain a vital component of religious practices in Bali.

Perhaps the site most iconographically similar to the Bale Kambang at Puri Semarapura is the Naga Temple of Candi Panataran. Located approximately 10 kilometers north of Blitar in East Java, Candi Panataran is the largest state temple complex constructed during the Singhasari (1222-1292) and Majapahit (1293 – 16th century) periods. The Naga Temple is located in the northern part of the second courtyard, at the border of the second and third courtyard, and stands in front of the main temple. The earliest inscriptional evidence dates the complex to 1197 CE (Śaka 1119) but the main building project was carried out between 1369-1379 CE under Hayam Wuruk (r. 1350-1389), king of Majapahit.⁴³ The Naga temple is a square structure elevated on a square plinth (fig. 25). A single set of stairs on the eastern side permits access to the cella. On the exterior, nine crowned priestly (*ṛṣis*) or kingly figures surround the temple at the cardinal and sub-cardinal directions. Three priest/kings can be seen on the sides and the rear of the temple.

⁴³ Lydia Kieven, *Following the cap-figure in Majapahit temple reliefs* (Boston: Brill, 2013), 166.

The front facade has four figures with two at the corners and two flanking the doorway. All figures are depicted in the same posture with raised left hands holding up the body of a naga, and the right hands holding a *ghanta* or a bell that is associated with tantric ritual practices. The identical iconography of all nine figures suggests that the sculptors did not intend to depict individuals. The round body of the *nāga*, suspended by the *ṛṣis*, wraps around the structure just below the cornice.

Louise Pannenberg-Stutterheim examines the exterior reliefs to posit that the temple served as an important site for royal meditational practices.⁴⁴ She refers to the *Tantu Panggelaran*, a Javanese text of local cosmogonic mythology, and argues that the *nāga* wrapped around the exterior symbolize the *Churning of the Ocean Milk*. She identifies the exterior figures as kings in royal dress but possessing priestly attributes, which can suggest that the kings, using the purifying aspects of water, engaged in spiritual meditation in the cella of the Naga Temple. In short, for Pannenberg-Stutterheim, the Naga temple provided an ideal secluded location for the king to practice meditations with the goal to augment his *śakti*, spiritual power.

Marijke Klokke qualifies Pannenberg-Stutterheim's argument by stating that the exterior figures are in fact priests. She concludes, "the Naga-temple simultaneously refers to the churning of the ocean by the gods and demons, and to the ritual a priest performs to produce holy water, which is in fact a ritual reiteration of the churning of the ocean by the gods."⁴⁵ The priest

⁴⁴ Lousie J. F. M Pannenberg-Stutterheim, "Treasures or Meditation?," in: J.P.H. Vogel, *India Antiqua; A volume of oriental studies presented by his friends and pupils to Jean Philippe Voge, C.I.E., on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his doctorate*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1947), 257-263.

⁴⁵ Marijke J. Klokke, *Tantri reliefs on Javanese candi* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1993), 152.

figures symbolize the ritual production of *tirtha*, or holy water, which priests in Bali still produce today.

Lydia Kieven builds upon the work of Pannenborg-Stutterheim and Klokke and integrates the Naga Temple's function within a theoretical temple program. She accomplishes this through a close reading of the narrative reliefs to examine a theoretical spiritual path.⁴⁶ Kieven agrees with the *Churning of the Ocean Milk* identification and that the nine figures on the exterior of the Naga Temple are priests of royal status, rather than kings in priestly attire. Kieven cautiously suggests that one possible explanation for the presence of the nine *ṛṣis* can be found in the *Tantu Panggelaran*. The text narrates the story of the *Churning of the Ocean Milk*, however, it only mentions the gods engaged in the action of churning. It also describes the shape of Mount Meru as a *maṇḍala*, which is marked by nine points with one point in the middle and eight cardinal points. However, she notes that the shape of the Naga Temple and the arrangement of the figures do not indicate a *maṇḍala*, and thus this is only a tentative suggestion for the exterior figural group.

Regardless of the numerological significance of the nine figures, the iconography of the Naga Temple provides a convincing link to the *Churning of the Ocean Milk* and *amṛta* or *tirtha*. Thus, by incorporating the ideas of Pannenborg-Stutterheim and Klokke, Kieven suggests that the Naga Temple is a site where priests, through meditation and the recitation of *mantras*, produced *tirtha*, holy water.⁴⁷ The Naga Temple, located in the second courtyard, is along the path to the Main Temple. According to Kieven's theoretical program, the temple not only served

⁴⁶ Kieven, Lydia. *Following the Cap-figure in Majapahit temple reliefs* (Brill: Boston, 2013), 210-214.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 210-214.

as a place to produce *tirtha* but also a center to distribute *tirtha* to adepts before they continued onwards to the main temple. According to this interpretation, *tirtha* is a vital aspect of the Naga Temple and important to the spiritual path of Candi Panataran.

At this point, we can see that both the Bale Kambang of Puri Semarapura and the Naga Temple of Candi Panataran evoke the imagery of the *Churning of the Ocean Milk*. However, in both cases Meru and Anavatapta symbolism are deployed in widely divergent conceptual programs. At the Bale Kambang of Klungkung, both Meru and Anavatapta are literally manifested through the pavilion and surrounding pond, whereas, the Naga Temple symbolically conjures the churning episode by the presence of the entwined serpent but with the main emphasis centered on the production of *tirtha*.

We have no information regarding the accessibility or exclusivity of Candi Panataran. Its size and layout indicate that a substantial number of followers could be accommodated at the site. This suggests that Candi Panataran was part of royal and public ritual activities in east Java during the fourteenth century. It seems reasonable to believe that the Naga Temple would have certainly played a significant ritual role by providing the practitioners with a sufficient amount of *tirtha* for ritual use. This contrasts with the original Bale Kambang, which Vickers' describes as being situated in the "depths" of the royal palace. The pond occupies a majority of the courtyard and there are no open spaces to house large congregations. At the Bale Kambang, the feeling of seclusion appears to be deliberate. Therefore it is not surprising that the architectural layout does not facilitate the production and distribution of *amṛta/tirtha* as seen at Candi Panataran. This is not to say that I deny the presence of *amṛta* imagery at the Bale Kambang, but I believe that we have sufficient evidence to suggest that the water pond surrounding the Bale Kambang was

constructed with a different goal in mind. To uncover the meaning of the water pond at the Bale Kambang, we must first revisit the spiritual path at Candi Panataran.

The Spiritual Path

To help establish a context for other water-based ritual practices relevant to the Bale Kambang, we can refer to Kieven's research on the reliefs of Candi Panataran.⁴⁸ One should note that Candi Panataran is commonly interpreted as the predecessor of Balinese temple architecture.⁴⁹ It provides the closest example of a shared cultural sphere between the two islands. Kieven examines the pendopo reliefs of Candi Panataran and traces the development of the Cult of Panji that parallels the rise in popularity of the so-called "cap-figures." Kieven states, "...relief depictions of the noble cap-figure demonstrate and visualize the tantric practice, thus providing an introduction to this religious path for the visitor. The introductory function is enhanced by the character of Panji stories as post-mythological stories and as folk stories which appeal to the visitor, whereby Panji acts as an intermediary and kind of guide to the visitor."⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Ibid., 175.

⁴⁹ R. Soekmono "Indonesian Architecture of the Classical Period: A Brief Survey," in *The Sculpture of Indonesia*, ed. by Jan Fontein (Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art, 1990), 82-83. Candi Panataran and standardized Balinese temples are characterized by linear arrangement into three courtyards. Both examples appear to be arranged in the following manner; the front courtyard is the least sacred or more secular; the rear is the most sacred; the middle exists in a state between the two. Soekmono also brings to attention the postholes on the main temple that may indicate a wooden structure may have been incorporated into its design. Theoretically, the roof structure of candi Panataran would resemble the *Meru*, or multi-tiered roof system, of Bali that is still utilized today.

⁵⁰ Kieven, *Following the Cap-Figure in Majapahit Reliefs*, 204.

Her argument, in essence, is that the reliefs of Panataran possess a didactic quality used to educate and guide visitors along the ideal spiritual path.

In examining the Pendopo reliefs, which include numerous Panji episodes and other visual narratives such as the *Sang Satyawana*, *Sri Tanjung*, etc., Kieven enumerates the five most common subjects depicted in the reliefs:⁵¹

- a. Longing and separation
- b. Journey of the capped-man together with a *panakawan*
- c. The union between a man and a woman in the typical posture of sexual union
- d. Meeting with hermits
- e. The crossing of water⁵²

It is important to note that the features listed above are not fixed in this order. The first three features (a-c) are included in all of the narrative reliefs, while feature/s (d and/or e) are strategically interpolated in certain narratives at specific points. For the sake of continuity, I have arranged Kieven's features to flow with my analysis of the *Sutasoma*.

The first feature of the visual narratives is the situations of longing/separation. According to Santoso Supomo, *kāma* (love) is represented in two different moods: love-in-separation and love-in-enjoyment.⁵³ Love-in-separation is the emotion of longing for love, or (a), and is the emotion that drives the protagonist's narrative; he is compelled by the desire to unite (c) with his female counterpart. Feature (a) is often visually represented by a male or female figure slouching against a pavilion, their legs spread open and the back of their hand dramatically pressed up against their forehead.

⁵¹ Ibid., 202. See table 7.29 for a chart of stories in the Pendopo reliefs.

⁵² Ibid., 175.

⁵³ Santoso Supomo "Kama in the Old Javanese Kakawin," in *Society and Culture of Southeast Asia: Continuities and Changes*, ed. by Lokesh Chandra (Delhi: P.K. Goel, 2000), 263-281. *Kāma*, along with *artha* and *dharma*, are the three goals of a fulfilling life.

The next feature, or Kieven's theme (b), depicts the *panakawan*, or servants that accompany the capped-man or Panji. As mentioned earlier, the *parekan* (*panakawan*) act as intermediary figures to communicate the morals of the tales to the masses. This may be comparable to the function of Panji as the archetypal prince and intermediary to the path of the king. The two continue on their journey.

Feature (d) found in the visual narrative is the protagonist meeting with a hermit or sage. The *ṛṣi* delivers the necessary lessons to the initiate before undertaking the potentially dangerous spiritual journey. According to Kieven, the sage plays an important preparatory feature for the protagonist's passage to more sacred areas. The reliefs may indicate that visitors and pilgrims were advised to seek advice and religious teachings from the *ṛṣis* on site. The protagonist's consultation with a *ṛṣi*, or *purohita* (court priest), also reflects the general presence of esoteric, teacher-disciple practices of the Singhasari and Majapahit periods characterized in the *Nāgarakṛtāgama*.⁵⁴

At this point in the narrative the protagonist is depicted crossing a body of water (e), which can be represented by the protagonist physically or metaphorically moving over a body of water. The body of water appears to act as a space of liminality that transforms the protagonist into an elevated state of being. After crossing a body of water, the protagonist is often depicted with different physical characteristics such as, different headdress, more slender body, etc. In other words, he acquires refined, or *halus*, characteristics. According to Kieven, the "crossing of water means purification and the movement from one stage of religious knowledge to a higher

⁵⁴ Kenneth Hall, "Ritual Networks and Royal Power in Majapahit," *Archipel* 52 (1996): 95-118.

one, which ultimately leads to the understanding of higher wisdom. This corresponds with the teaching of the religious doctrine through the hermit.”⁵⁵

Once the protagonist has undergone a spiritual, as well as physical, transformation marked by the crossing of water, he is ready to reunite with his female counterpart (d), through love-in-enjoyment. Kieven neatly sums up her arguments: “The meeting with a hermit and the crossing of water can be understood as two prerequisites to start down the path of tantric practice. This will lead down to the unification with the divine symbolized on the mundane level in the union of male and female.”⁵⁶ Male and female embody the dual, yet complimentary, aspects of the natural world. Through the physical unification of male and female, the practitioner is able to realize that the dualities are in fact two aspects of the same state: the non-duality (*adywaya*) of the absolute truth and the phenomenal world. The ultimate scenario for achieving union is through sexual unification.⁵⁷ This aspect of tantric meditational practices will be explored in the next chapter.

Thus in addition to its life-giving and life-restoring properties, water was also perceived, in the east Javanese context, as possessing transformative powers.⁵⁸ Water is a space of liminality and traversing an aquatic boundary allows the protagonist, with the help of a spiritual guide, to attain a higher level of realization. In essence, the crossing of water prepares the initiate

⁵⁵ Kieven, *Following the Cap-Figure in Majapahit Reliefs*, 205.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Kate O’Brien, *Sutasoma: The Ancient Tale of A Buddhist Prince* (Bangkok, Thailand: Orchid Press, 2008), 163-169. Toru Aoyama, *A Study of the Sutasoma kakawin: a Buddhist narrative in the fourteenth century Java* (PhD diss., University of Sydney, 1992), 165-189.

⁵⁸ Candi Panataran is not the first instance of the transformative qualities of water. I believe that sites such as Jalatunda, a 10-11th century CE meditational hermitage located on the slopes of Mount Penggangungan, also embodies these ideas.

to perform tantric yoga practices. With this in mind, is it possible that the Bale Kambang and surrounding pond were used for tantric practices?

While Kieven's research provides a very tempting and accessible theoretical path to apply to the Bale Kambang, we must keep in mind that Candi Panataran and Bale Kambang were constructed three centuries apart. At the Bale Kambang, we have no inscriptions, literature, or even the slightest mention to indicate that yogic practices were performed at the site. In spite of this lacuna, I believe that we can resolve this issue by looking at the Balinese *kakawin*, or court literature, tradition. By examining the literature we can obtain an understanding of Balinese meditational practices and the "ideal" or "standardized" location at which they were performed. Once we have established a location for meditation, we can then synthesize and apply all of our findings to the Bale Kambang.

The clearest references to the locations for yoga occur in the Balinese court literature of *Dwijendratattwa*, an autobiographical text detailing the mystical journeys of Dang Hyang Nirartha, the progenitor of the Brahamana in Bali and archetypal Brahmin. Raechelle Rubenstein examines both the process of composition and the content of the Balinese court literary tradition, *kakawin*, through Nirartha's writings.⁵⁹ Following the lead of P.J. Zoetmulder, Rubenstein states that the *Dwijendratattwa* demonstrates literary composition's role in traditional Bali as a religious ritual.⁶⁰ In other words, creation of literary texts was believed to be a type of yoga that the poet performs as a means of attaining a mystical union with a specific deity. Pertinent to our discussion, Rubenstein surveys the poet's travels and his descriptions of the locations for

⁵⁹ Rubenstein, Raechelle, *In the Realm Beyond the Senses: The Balinese Ritual of Kekawin Composition* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2000), 99-126.

⁶⁰ See also, Zoetmulder, *Kalangwan* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 172-185.

composing works. The *Dwijendratattwa* emphasizes five sacred qualities of places worthy of pilgrimage. These qualities are a body of water, a rock formation, sound or its absence, fragrance driven by a soft gentle breeze, and the presence of flowers.⁶¹ These are characterized in the following passage:

“...the *pedanda* [priest] set out unaccompanied. He journeyed northward. And he was neither afear’d [sic] of the perils...because he possessed supernatural knowledge. Finally he arrived at the shore to the north-west of Mount Agung. Here there was a rock which was as if enclosed. It was green in appearance from moss. And a tree grew from the clefts in the rock. It was suitable as a place of shelter for the poet lost in the pursuit of beauty. There he took a rest and sat down, observing the beauty of the sea and the mountains. They were as if engaged in sexual intercourse. Truly this was a fitting place for the poet composing verse.”⁶²

As exemplified by the spiritual journeys of Nirartha, renunciation or removal from the mundane realm was part of his yogic practices. Nirartha sought the solitude of idyllic cliff sides that overlook the ocean. Here, he became enraptured in the *adwaya*, or non-duality, e.g. the union of rocks and the sea, which compose the natural world. In a similar manner, the Bale Kambang is hidden from the distractions of daily life. The king was free to perform his meditations at the Bale Kambang, which resembles a natural rock outcropping that overlooks a body of water. Lotus buds gently float on the surface of the pond and cool breezes come down from Gunung Agung sweeping through the pavilion with the fragrance of fresh flowers. Here, the king could also reflect on the non-duality of the natural world. In essence, the Bale Kambang appears to be a simulated environment for the king to perform his yogic meditations.

⁶¹ Rubenstein, *Beyond the Realm of the Senses*, 107. It is interesting to note that the work of Nirartha’s *Dwijendratattwa* also diverges from Javanese predecessors by elevating religious office and highlighting the supramundane powers of the poets.

⁶² Ibid., 116. *Dwijendratattwa*, Hooykaas-Ketut Sangka Collection no. 2632, 18-19

Not only is the spiritual path evident in the architectural forms, explicated with reference to the Balinese *kakawin* tradition, but it is also reiterated and rendered complete in the ceiling paintings of the Bale Kambang. The paintings consist of three genres that are hierarchically arranged into six registers. On the lowest and most mundane level is the *Palalintangan*, the Balinese astrological calendar. The *Palalintangan* is bound by time and space. The story of *Brayut* occupies the second level. This popular folktale expounds the perennial and ideal virtues of the Balinese commoner. The *Sutasoma* is a mythological epic that embodies the highest virtues and therefore it occupies the four highest and remaining levels. In essence the paintings reflect a mandalic organization. P.H. Pott describes a *maṇḍala* as:

...a cosmic configuration in the centre of which is an image or symbolic substitute of a prominent god surrounded by those of a number of deities of lower rank ordered hierarchically both among themselves and in relation to the chief figure, which configuration may be used as an aid to meditation and in ritual as receptacle for the gods, being distinguished from a yantra by a more graphic representation of the deities or their symbols and by a richer elaboration of the details.⁶³

The arrangement of the paintings reflects a didactic function that guides the practitioner through the mundane to the highest the spiritual teachings, i.e., achieving union with the primary deity. In the case of the Bale Kambang, the highest deity can be found in the *Sutasoma* paintings, namely Wairocana. Accordingly, we will now shift our focus to the *Sutasoma* epic. I will discuss the ideal spiritual path as expounded in the *Sutasoma* text, which will be followed by an analysis of the paintings at the site and a synthesis of the themes into the larger architectural program of the Bale Kambang.

⁶³ P.H. Pott, *Yoga and Yantra* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), 71.

Toru Aoyama's dissertation examines the *Sutasoma kakawin* and provides a comprehensive exploration of its themes of liminality and transformation.⁶⁴ Important to our discussion is Aoyama's analysis of Sutasoma's journey, or rite of passage. This rite of passage is a movement of an individual from one social status to another, often marked by ritual, which is required for the change to be socially accepted and legitimated. Referencing Arnold van Gennep's *The Rites of Passage*, Aoyama explicates the Sutasoma's transition in three main stages of a rite of passage: rites of separation, liminality, and the rite of aggregation.⁶⁵

The rite of separation occurs when the initiate separates from society and thereby loses his initial social status. For instance, in the *Sutasoma* the rites of separation are observed in the prince's renunciation of courtly life and the movement from the palace through the uninhabited wilderness and to the peak of the sacred Mount Meru. This phase is also illustrated with the removal of clothing and the donning of new garb. In canto 24.3 Sutasoma converses with the Buddhist sage Sumitra and informs him that he would gladly shave his head and practice meditations in the forest. Once he has appropriately removed himself, Sutasoma begins his spiritual journey.

The second stage in the rite of passage is the state of liminality. It marks the moment of transition and the beginning of the ritual initiation. According to Aoyama, this takes place when Sutasoma is performing intense meditation on the peak of Mount Meru and successfully resists the sexual temptation of the most beautiful heavenly nymphs and Indra. At this very moment,

⁶⁴ Toru Aoyama, *A Study of the Sutasoma kakawin: a Buddhist narrative in the fourteenth century Java* (PhD diss., University of Sydney, 1992), 148-163.

⁶⁵ Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), 10-11.

Sutasoma realizes that he is the incarnation of Wairocana and transfigures into the cosmic Buddha.

The final stage, the rite of aggregation, is the moment when a new social status is affirmed and the protagonist is reintegrated into society. Having finished his meditations and realized his true form, Sutasoma returns home and “his hair grew long swiftly and was done up again” (canto 54.8). His appearance immediately returns to its initial state. Aoyama notes, “His [Sutasoma’s] reintegration into the society is completed when he marries his cousin Candrawatī, sister of the king of Kāśī, Daśabāhu, and then succeeds to the throne of the kingdom of Hastinā.”⁶⁶ In this interpretation, Sutasoma’s marriage to Candrawatī is a necessary stage for his reintegration into society. At this point it will be helpful to further examine the marriage episode.

If we recall Kieven’s five features of narrative reliefs at Candi Panataran, water (d) is a necessary component in facilitating the protagonist’s transformation. After the initiate crosses water (e), he is depicted with a different appearance, signifying his purified form. The protagonist is now ready to engage in the next set of teachings: sexual union (c). Following this formula, the marriage of Sutasoma and Candrawatī takes place at *Ratnālaya*, the jeweled garden. The garden’s outer walls were made of gold and *candis* are featured at the corners and in between. Four beautiful gateways adorned with gold and brilliant gems face the cardinal directions. In the four directions are the resplendent abodes of Īswara (Śiwa), Dhātra (Brahmā), Mahamara, and Madhusudana (canto 67). In the center of *Ratnālaya* is the jeweled pavilion. The pavilion is situated on an island in a vast lake.

⁶⁶ Aoyama, *A Study of the Sutasoma Kakawin: A Buddhist narrative in the fourteenth century Java*, 164.

The island could be likened to heaven floating on a sea of honey, having just arrived from Kāma's heaven...However, she who was like the goddess of the beauty of flowers and revered by the whole kingdom was in a small pavilion at the edge of a ravine surrounded by *gaḍung* flowers just in bloom, completely overwhelmed by feelings of longing as she gazed in rapture at the indescribable beauty of the appearance of the crystal mansion-its jewels competing with the daylight, glowing with a reddish-brown hue (*Sutasoma*, canto 67.8).

The lord of the *Jinas* made the island his divine abode and lived there with his consort, Jineśwari. The island had remained pristine because no one had dared to cross the lake; four terrifying crocodiles were given orders to guard the island (canto 72). When Sutasoma arrives at the edge of the courtyard, the crocodiles were delighted to see the *Jina* incarnate. They changed their forms into iron bridges at the cardinal directions. Sutasoma and the king, Daśabāhu cross over the island and summon princess Candrawatī and her retinue. The environment of *Ratnālaya* is described with festive delight. In the rapture the couple decide to marry straight away and "...their union amidst the beauty of the garden would be as enchanting as the sea and mountains making love" (canto 74.1).

At this point in the text, once they experience sexual union at *Ratnālaya*, Sutasoma and Candrawatī come to the realization that they are the incarnations of Mahāwairocana and his consort Locanā. Having crossed the sea of honey, the loving couple proceeds to the jeweled pavilion where they perform the last teaching of their spiritual practice. Thus the act of crossing water (d) and the union of male and female (e) observed in the east Javanese reliefs are also present in the content of the *Sutasoma kakawin*.

Bale Kambang panel 26 depicting the union of Sutasoma and Candrawatī provides compelling evidence of the applicability of yogic practices at the Bale Kambang (fig. 26). The painting hangs on the third row of the south side of the ceiling and depicts the couple

experiencing union underneath a pavilion that appears to float in the middle of a pond. The pond is square in shape. Alternating gray and white horizontal stripes represent gentle ripples in the water caused by the waft of a soft breeze. In the center of this square pond is small roofed four-post pavilion with a single platform. With the exception of golden hue and adornments with red jewels, the pavilion is a modest structure. Striped red and white banners hang from the eaves and flutter as they catch a momentary breeze. Flanking the pond and pavilion is the exotic flora that gently sways side to side from a gust of wind. Inside the pavilion, Sutasoma and Candrawatī are depicted in the posture of loving embrace with their arms intertwined as their bodies press against one another. A fabric with floral designs conceals the lower halves of their joined bodies. Her left breast is exposed in a sign of sexual longing.

Perhaps the most cogent evidence for the linkage of king's meditational practices of *adwaya-yoga* and sexual union and the Bale Kambang can be found in the following canto:

Certainly the noble lord who brought it [the island] into existence is a virtuous sage and furthermore, a king. The eminent and noble sage who was first to achieve it during *samādhi* was the king himself... And [the king] is obviously impatient to see Kāma and Ratih in their heavenly home. Made manifest by your beauty and that of the incarnate Lord of Jinas in the beautiful golden abode. 'You [Candrawatī] are the prince's equal, my dear, and if you join with him [Sutasoma] in marriage, it will be exactly what the gods are striving for through ascetic practice on behalf of all of mankind, Who wouldn't be hoping for the divine perfection of Uma and Íswara united in love? (Sutasoma, canto 68).

Through the practice of *samādhi*, the king, with the faculties of a noble sage, created the island and pavilion to conjure the gods of love and desire, Kāma and Ratih. Sutasoma, the incarnation of Mahāwairocana, and Candrawatī, his divine equal, embody the dualities of the highest order of the natural world and through sexual union they are able to become one with Kāma and Ratih. From this passage, the jeweled pavilion of *Ratnālaya* is the location par excellence for Prince

Sutasoma to engage in the yogic practices of unification in order to obtain knowledge of the Absolute.

Now that we have established a context for possible functions of the structure and water at the site, we can synthesize our findings to recreate the spiritual path made manifest in the art and architecture of the Bale Kambang. One picture that begins to emerge suggests that the King Déwa Agung Jambé sought to follow the ideal spiritual path. Essential to his journey, he renounces the mundane world and enters the seclusion of his garden. The garden is a simulated environment evoking Nirartha's cliff side hermitages, *Ratnālaya*, or perhaps even a conflation of the two. The Bale Kambang would have been the ideal space the king can engage in yogic practice. Seeking the desire to obtain union (a-b) the king crosses the bridge and over the water (e), he transcends space of liminality, thereby transforming himself. With the guidance of his spiritual advisor (d) he begins his path to enlightenment through an adept's teachings of tantric practices; he is now ready to perform union with his female consort (c). Having completed his yogic practices, the king undergoes the rite of aggregation as he returns to the palace and the mundane world. Aoyama states, "the reintegration is in fact the fusion of the status of Buddha and the status of king, the royal householder who maintains the domestic life and the social order...Sutasoma is able to become Buddha and *Cakrawartin* at the same time."⁶⁷ From the pavilion back to the courtyard he is reintegrated into society, his *Cakravartin* status now legitimated.

⁶⁷ Ibid.,165.

Thus the architecture, statuary and the *Sutasoma* paintings of the Bale Kambang at Puri Semarapura provide a vision of the ideal spiritual path. The next chapter examines the culmination of the path through the teachings embedded in the *Sutasoma kakawin*.

CHAPTER 3

THE ROYAL MEDITATIONAL HERMITAGE

The History of the Sutasoma paintings

As mentioned earlier, the historical record of the Bale Kambang paintings of Puri Semarapura is problematic. None of the paintings at either the Kerta Ghosa or the Bale Kambang can be dated to the 17th century with certainty. The earliest textual evidence mentions the presence of interior decorations at the Kerta Ghosa and dates to the mid-19th century.⁶⁸ Unfortunately, there is no archaeological or epigraphic evidence that indicates construction and subsequent modifications at the site. To further complicate the matter, the Bale Kambang was rarely, if ever, mentioned in the Dutch travelogues. It was often ignored at the expense of the Kerta Ghosa.

The earliest known evidence of a Bale Kambang like-structure is traced to comparative 19th century travel accounts that described the palace of Puri Gdé Mengwi.⁶⁹ This information is sufficient to indicate that the Bale Kambang was likely part of the original palace layout. The earliest photographs of the Bale Kambang, dating to the 1920s, depict a rather unremarkable structure: an unadorned open-air pavilion with a low base platform. A small garden with several trees surrounded the pavilion, and around the garden was a concentric square moat. Statues at the

⁶⁸ Kam, *Perceptions of Paradise*, 31. As mentioned above he states that the first mention of interior decorations at the Kerta Ghosa appears in a manuscript dated to 1842. The manuscript does not indicate the subject matter of the decorations.

⁶⁹ Schulte Nordholt, *Spell of Power*, 79-87. As discussed earlier, by using 19th century Dutch travel accounts and members of the Mengwi royal family, Schulte Nordholt reconstructs Puri Gdé Mengwi. According to his reconstruction, the king performed meditations in the *pelabahan loji*, a pavilion that was surrounded by a moat of water.

corners of the inner garden face outwards. It is impossible to determine from the photographs whether the any paintings or decorations were present in the 1920s.

The period of the late 1930s and 1940s is a crux for the Bale Kambang at Puri Semarapura. At this time, the initial pavilion was relocated to the neighboring Puri of Klungkung, and Déwa Agung commenced renovations at the Taman Gili.⁷⁰ Balustrades and comprehensive statuary program were added around the main pavilion and outer moat. Around this time, Déwa Agung commissioned I Wayan Kayun to do the paintings on the ceiling of the pavilion, but beyond this, we have no further information on other artists that may have participated in the creation of the paintings. There have been several restorations of the ceiling paintings, in the 1960s, in the 1980s, and I witnessed another phase of restoration during my fieldwork in 2014. Despite these restorations, there seems to have been no significant change in style, organization, or content since the 1940s.

The historically fragmented period is further complicated by Japanese occupation of the island between 1942-1945. Kam describes a *Palalintangan* panel near the northwest corner of the first level, the constellation of *Prau Pegat*, which “shows a ship flying Japanese flags and full of Japanese sailors, a reminder of the occupation in World War II when it was painted. A great fish destroying the boat and swallowing sailors probably showed the artist’s negative view of the Japanese at the time” (fig. 27).⁷¹ It should be noted that none of the other Bale Kambang paintings have Japanese figures or other related Japanese related imagery. Kam goes on to describe the *Sutasoma* as a Javanese-Buddhist tale of salvation and conversion. However, his

⁷⁰ Adrian Vickers, email, May 5, 2014.

⁷¹ Kam, *Perceptions of Paradise*, 170.

research does not go deeper than a synoptic introduction to the site and he refrains from attaching any meaning or significance to the site or the paintings.

Adrian Vickers builds on Kam's ideas.⁷² He emphasizes the Japanese occupation of Bali as the artists' stimulus for the creation of the ceiling paintings. In his reading of the *Sutasoma*, Vickers states that the culmination of the epic takes place in the final scene in which Sutasoma offers himself to Kāla (fig. 28). Through his self-sacrifice, Sutasoma pacifies Kāla and restores order in the world. Thus the story represents purification of the world. Vickers states "Kayun [the artist] painted this during the Japanese occupation, as indicated by the Japanese flags in the *Palalintangan*, a time when the world was in need of purification."⁷³ In contrast to Kam, who refrains from attaching any meaning or significance to the site, Vickers states that, in the context of the Bale Kambang, the evocation of the *Sutasoma* may possibly represent the purification of Bali from Japanese occupation.

Given that the history of the paintings can only be traced to the Japanese occupation at the earliest, Vickers' linkage of purification with the *Sutasoma* text is logical. He situates the meaning of the epic within a historical period to posit a function for the paintings. For the artists behind the *Sutasoma*, Japanese occupation may have been one of the motivating factors for representing Japanese figures and flags. They may have been compelled to create sacred paintings to channel the spirits of the unseen world to assist with purifying the island.

That being said, Vickers' interpretation is rooted in the historical moment. By assigning a 1940s date to the paintings, he emphasizes the significance of the *Sutasoma* within this particular

⁷² Vickers, *Balinese Art*, 83.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 83.

context. He does not address the possibility of the *Sutasoma*'s existence before this time and in other media at the Bale Kambang, i.e., potential *wayang* performances and seasonal/ritual paintings. Vickers employs a rather conservative use of the evidence to interpret the *Sutasoma* paintings. I believe we can build from Vickers and expand our interpretations, somewhat more speculatively but also arguably, in keeping with broader historical, art historical, and literary patterns. We can now shift our focus to interpretations of the *Sutasoma kakawin* to help obtain an understanding of how the paintings operate within the larger iconographic program at the site.

Sutasoma Interpretations: performance and literature

Helpful to our discussion of the paintings is Angela Hobart's important research of the *Sutasoma* in modern Bali.⁷⁴ In her work, Hobart observes the gradual transformation of the *Sutasoma* through its importance in the *wayang* tradition. The *dalang*, or puppeteer, carefully selects which versions of the text to perform and curates which scenes or values to emphasize. She states that the importance of the *Sutasoma* epic has been maintained through the *wayang* tradition, and its ongoing popularity is mainly attributed to its ideals of faith in god and non-violence. The tale also espouses numerous virtues important to proper *dharma* and ideal kingship.

Hobart then applies a socio-political interpretation to the paintings at the Bale Kambang by channeling the ideas of Geertz's *Theater State* and Benedict Anderson's theory of Javanese

⁷⁴ Hobart, "The Enlightened Prince Sutasoma: Transformations of a Buddhist Story," *Indonesia* 49 (April, 1990): 75-102.

power.⁷⁵ For the Klungkung kings, Hobart posits that the site “was used to receive priests and guests...the paintings were not just meant to be seen, but...their aesthetic and ethical message was meant to impress the populace. Certainly Sutasoma was an ideal model for the rulers, who conceived of themselves as activators of the divine, to emulate.”⁷⁶ For the common people, she continues, the “usage of the *Sutasoma* would present a “veneer of a serene and static socio-cosmological order at the apex of which was the ruler, the Déwa Agung of Klungkung, who became the titular sovereign over the whole island in the nineteenth century.”⁷⁷ The paintings represent the exemplary center in which ideal conduct and behavior, *dharma*, is embodied by the king, whose exemplary action radiates outwards to the people. By this interpretation, the paintings possess a multivalent function, which includes a vehicle for transmitting these values.

Hobart’s method adeptly embraces the socially constructed importance of the *Sutasoma*. Her research champions the interpretations of the *dalang*, the performers of the texts, and the *sudra*, the primary recipients the performance. By extension, she applies these findings to the *Sutasoma* paintings of the Bale Kambang along with other examples found throughout the island. While her approach is applicable to a majority of the *Sutasoma* reproductions, the application of her findings to the paintings at Bale Kambang seems correct but with some qualifications. Her research omits several crucial aspects of the *Sutasoma kakawin*. First, the understandings of the texts vary greatly depending on the caste of the reader and the recipient. For example, the textual interpretation by a Brahman is vastly different from that by a *sudra* due to the different

⁷⁵ Benedict Anderson, “The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture,” in *Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, ed. Claire Holt (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1972). 3/84 and Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in nineteenth century Bali*, 98-136.

⁷⁶ Hobart, “The Enlightened Prince Sutasoma: Transformations of a Buddhist Story,” 95.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

exposures to ritual texts. As a result, her study does not take into consideration less obvious esoteric teachings that may be embedded into the text. Therefore Hobart's interpretation of the *dharma* of the king and the exemplary center is most fitting in the context of a *sudra*'s engagement with the site.

During the last four decades, there have been significant developments in our understanding of the *Sutasoma*. Scholars such as J. Ensink, Kate O'Brien, and Toru Aoyama have opened new avenues to approach the text. The tantric yogic elements of the text were first explored in the work of J. Ensink.⁷⁸ He examines the teachings of the hero, Sutasoma, as he encounters three obstacles—namely Gajawaktra, the *nāga*, and the tigress, who all become Sutasoma's disciples—on his path to the summit of Sumeru. Each figure presents a unique set of challenges that can only be pacified by Sutasoma's intense meditation. After Sutasoma overcomes his final obstacle, which culminates in the conversion of the tigress as a disciple, he preaches the final sermon and initiates the three disciples into the Śaivite and Buddhist doctrines.

Ensink identifies the two distinct paths of Buddhism and Śaivism. According to Ensink, the Śaivite way is represented by the teachings of *ṣaḍaṅga-yoga*, or six-stage-yoga. The Sutasoma sermon begins at canto 40 and identifies the goal as *mokṣa*, release. The primary method of release is done through *ṣaḍaṅga-yoga*. After the six stages of yoga are characterized, Sutasoma proceeds to state the eight perfections, which are the extraordinary faculties that a yogi develops through his practice. Sutasoma warns that, although the six-stage-

⁷⁸ J. Ensink, "Sutasoma's Teaching to Gajavaktra, the Snake and the Tigress: (Tantular, Sutasoma Kakavin 38.1-42.2)," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 130, no. 2 (1974): 195-226.

yoga can lead to *mokṣa*, obtaining powers through it can also lead one astray. In light of the potential pitfalls, Sutasoma explains that the Śaivite path is inferior to the Buddhist path.

Ensink continues by identifying the Buddhist path with the yoga of non-duality (*adwaya-yoga*). The yoga of non-duality is referred to in canto 39 and is systematically described in canto 41. Canto 41 parallels passages from the *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānikan* (*SHK*), a tenth-century Javanese Mahāyāna Buddhist treatise (a 42f). He anchors the discussion of the Buddhist path with the practice of *paratra-mārga*, or the way of dying. The ultimate goal of *paratra-mārga* is beatitude (*niḥśreyasa*), which is superior to *mokṣa*. Beatitude is attained by a variety of different practices such as forms of yoga, humming of mantras, meditation, and the performance of good deeds. The ultimate form of beatitude is right intention and right insight at the hour of death. Sutasoma espouses the teachings of *paratra-mārga* when he sacrifices his body to the hungry tigress. Thus the sermon emphasizes that the adept must become absolutely free from the attachment to life and focus on the absolute.

Ensink's reading of the *Sutasoma*, in which he uncovers the yogic practices embedded in the teachings of Sutasoma, provides useful insights to begin our interpretation of the paintings at the Bale Kambang. Through yogic practices the teachings expound that the ultimate goal is attainable by two ways, the Śaivite via *ṣaḍaṅgayoga* and the Buddhist path via *adwaya-yoga*. Both are long traditions in Java and can be traced to earlier texts such as the *SHK* dating to the 10th century CE.⁷⁹ After the 10th century CE meditation can still be traced as an important function to court conduct and culture.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Ibid. For provenance of the Ensink cites the work of Haryati Soebadio, *Jñānasiddhānta: Secret Lore of the Balinese Śaiva priest* (Thesis, Amsterdam: 's-Gavenhage. B. Indon, 1971). For the

In this context, it seems logical that the king, Déwa Agung, would have performed these spiritual practices under the direction and guidance of his court priest, or *purohita*. The *purohita*, either Buddha or Śiwa in affiliation, would have had access and exposure to spiritual knowledge and yogic teachings such as those mentioned in the *Sutasoma kakawin*.⁸¹ It is therefore reasonable to suggest that the function of the *Sutasoma*, within the context of the Klungkung royal court, went beyond the reaches of Hobart's interpretation. This prompts the question of how the *Sutasoma*, a narrative vehicle of esoteric knowledge, might have been employed at the Bale Kambang? To what extent are the meditational teachings visible in the architectural space and paintings of the Puri Semarapura?

As the study of the *Sutasoma* has effloresced, scholars have continued to further uncover the tantric esoteric aspects of the epic. The first scholar to thoroughly explore this issue was Kate O'Brien. In her studies of tantric Buddhist kingship of East Java, O'Brien proposes two East

provenance of the *SHK*. Soebadio points out that Buddhist treatises must have been translated in Śaivite spelling terms. For the teachings of ṣaḍ-aṅga-yoga, Ensink identifies the *Ganapatitattwa* and the *Jñānsiddhānta*.

⁸⁰ The Margowirjo of Djajadiningrat I of Surakarta states that 16th century Javanese king, Prince Karanggajam advised officials who could not afford to live a life of seclusion should perform ascetic practice (*tapa*) in the palace at the *paseban*, an open-air pavilion. Soemarsaid Moertono, *State and Statecraft in Old Java: A Study of the later Mataram period, 16th to 19th century* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2009), 99-100. Dipanagara was also reported to have a meditational chamber that was “made up of six large stone *yoni* (female Śaivatic symbols) arranged in threes with one row slightly higher than the other to form a sitting place, which he referred to as *séla gilang* (a stone which radiated light)” in Peter Carey, *The Power of Prophecy: Prince Dipanagara and the end of an old order in Java, 1785-1855* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2008), footnote 60.

⁸¹ Wiener, *Magic Power and Conquest*, 105. According to the *Babad Dalem*, the royal lineage of Klungkung begins with Dyang Hyang Kapakisan, who was the son of the Mpu Tantular, author of the *Sutasoma Kakawin* and a notable Buddhist practitioner (3a-3b). His son, Dyang Hyang Kapakisan, had four children who were appointed to rule regions of the Majapahit realm. Sri Kresna Kapakisan, the youngest son, was selected by Gajah Mada to rule Bali. (2b-3a).

Javanese sources that embody esoteric teachings: Candi Jago and the *Sutasoma kakawin*.⁸² O'Brien suggest that because the reliefs of Candi Jago do not exhibit a linear narrative sequence, they are thematically arranged to align with specific teachings of the *Vajradhatu* maṇḍala. For example, the reliefs of Candi Jago's northern wall share the major theme of both mental and physical conflict. The southern wall's reliefs depict various people in benevolent poses. On the eastern side, the theme of male/female relationship prevails. The western façade of the temple deals thematically with the practice of meditations. In essence, she argues that the reliefs facing each cardinal direction are thematically related to the attributes of a *Jina* Buddha of the *Vajradhatu* maṇḍala, and therefore symbolize the specific deity of that respective cardinal direction.

In addition, O'Brien suggests that the hierarchical organization of the reliefs on Candi Jago's façade symbolizes the various levels of the *Wheel of Existence* as found in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. She applies the *Wheel of existence* maṇḍala on the front projection of the temple, and argues that the maṇḍala of *Amoghapaśa* is situated in the *cella* at the rear of the monument. She states, "if Knowledge of the true nature of existence as manifest by the Wheel [of existence] is Wisdom and Means is represented by the *maṇḍala*, then the overlapping of the two *cakras* [circles or moon discs] within the ground plan is clearly symbolic of the fusion of

⁸² Kate O'Brien, *Means and Wisdom in Tantric Buddhist Rulership of the East Javanese Period; Based on an analysis of mandala motifs and their symbolism as found in the narrative bas-reliefs of Candi Jago and the Old Javanese literary work, Porusadanta (Sutasoma)* (PhD. Diss., University of Sydney, 1993). Kate O'Brien, "Candi Jago as a mandala; Symbolism of its narratives (Part I)," *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 22 (Summer 1988):1-61; and Kate O'Brien "Candi Jago; A Javanese interpretation of the wheel of existence? Part II," *RIMA* 24 (Winter 1990):153-187.

Wisdom and Means.”⁸³ By completing the spiritual teachings of the two maṇḍalas, which specifically relate to the maṇḍalas of wisdom (*prajñā*) and means (*upāya*) that are core to *anuttarayoga tantra*, supreme yoga, the king can achieve unification with his patron deity and attain liberation from the mundane realm.

O’Brien’s 2008 publication refines and fully develops her study of the tantric esoteric teachings of the *Sutasoma kakawin*.⁸⁴ Sutasoma renounces a life of princely leisure for one of austerities and proceeds to the charnel grounds where he practices meditations. The fearsome goddess of Widyutkarālī (Bhairavi) is born from his intense practices. She praises Sutasoma for his yogic powers and encourages him to continue his path to Sumeru. She grants him the *mahadayadharani*, a weapon capable of repelling all obstacles. During the course of his journey, Sutasoma encounters three obstacles consisting of Gajawaktra, the nāga, and the tigress. Each of the characters is pacified through non-violent means and becomes his disciple. Eventually, Sutasoma reaches the peak of Sumeru and is confronted with his final test, the temptation of nymphs. Indra descends to Earth as the most beautiful nymph to test Sutasoma’s resolve. Sutasoma is unaffected by Indra’s advances and remains steadfast in meditation. Successful with his austerities, he realizes that he is the reincarnation of Mahāwairocana, the cosmic Buddha.

In her analysis of the text, O’Brien identifies four stages on the path of the first maṇḍala. These four stages consist of the following: Sutasoma’s pacification of Gajawaktra, his pacification of the nāga, his sacrifice to the tigress, and the temptation of the heavenly nymphs. The mastery of the four episodes corresponding to the four stations of the *Vajradhatu*, or

⁸³ O’Brien, *Means and Wisdom*, 316-317.

⁸⁴ Kate O’Brien, *Sutasoma: The Ancient tale of a Buddha-Prince from 14th century Java* (Orchid Press: Thailand, 2008), 163-197.

diamond world, maṇḍala results in the attainment of means (*upāya*) (fig. 29). Fittingly, once Sutasoma attains realization that he is the incarnation of Mahāwairocana, he is now positioned at the center of his own maṇḍala. In Mahayana, *upāya* is the perfection of inner and outer qualities. It is one of two essential components for attaining enlightenment and knowledge of the absolute. Thus, Sutasoma's trials are necessary for the cultivation of the inner and outer qualities, the perfection of means (*upāya*), and mark the completion of the first maṇḍala.

Having accomplished his ascetic practice, Sutasoma begins the return to his kingdom, Hastinā. Along the way, Sutasoma encounters a demon fleeing from the king of Kāśī, Daśabāhu. The demon requests mercy from the divine king Sutasoma. Daśabāhu and his hunting party catch up to the demon and demand Sutasoma hand over the demon, but Sutasoma refuses and rebukes him. Daśabāhu is impressed with Sutasoma's supramundane characteristics and proposes that Sutasoma marry his sister, Candrawatī. Daśabāhu and Sutasoma then return to the kingdom of Kāśī and prepare for the marriage. The marriage of Sutasoma and Candrawatī is the setting of the second maṇḍala. Sutasoma and Candrawatī meet in the pleasure garden, *Ratnālaya*. The garden is described as being born from meditation and is the residence of Mahāwairocana and his consort. At the moment of their sexual union, Candrawatī becomes cognizant of her true identity as Locanā, the consort of Mahāwairocana. O'Brien states, "...Candrawatī is the perfection of wisdom and Sutasoma, having already attained yogic perfection, is now the perfection of means. Their physical union in the realm of mortal existence is, by all understanding of *anuttarayoga*, clearly a deity yoga and thus the perfect conjunction of Wisdom and Means."⁸⁵ In *anuttarayoga*, the female aspect is understood as the perfection of wisdom (*prajña*) and voidness. The male

⁸⁵ Ibid., 191.

counterpart is known as means (*upāya*) and compassion. According to Buddhist tantric esoteric practices, enlightenment and absolute knowledge are achieved through the perfection of both *upāya* and *prajñā*. The unification of the two indicates the culmination of the second maṇḍala and the attainment of the Absolute.

Based on O'Brien's interpretation of the text, it is apparent that the *Sutasoma* embodies a set of sacred esoteric teachings. Due to the spiritual potency of the teachings, this knowledge was not accessible to the uninitiated or the inept. As discussed earlier, the Bale Kambang at Puri Semarapura would have provided the ideal location to perform such yogic practice for the correctly initiated, or adept audience, namely the king. Is it possible that O'Brien's theory of *Sutasoma*'s dual maṇḍala is also applicable to the Bale Kambang? And if so, how is it implemented at the site?

Although Java has a history of mandalic structures (i.e., Candi Sewu, Borobudur, and Candi Mendut), we have yet to find physical maṇḍala-like forms in Bali. Extant evidence of mandalic forms in Bali comes to us in the *Nagabayu Sutra*, a Buddhist text in a private collection in Karangasem. F.D.K. Bosch states that the text pays homage to the five Jina-Buddhas or Tathāgatas.⁸⁶ The five Jinas of this text are the same configuration of Buddhas that comprise the *Vajradhatu* maṇḍala. Using this text, Bosch proposes a connection between the *Vajradhatu* maṇḍala and the architectural layout of Candi Sewu. Interestingly, Bosch's discussion provides literary evidence of the Vajrayana Buddhist elements in Bali. However, the question remains

⁸⁶ For a more in-depth discussion of the *Nagabayu Sutra* see F.D.K. Bosch, "Buddhist Data from Balinese Texts," in *Selected Studies in Indonesian Archaeology* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961), 109-133.

whether knowledge of the Jina Buddhas is incorporated into the art and architecture of the Bale Kambang.

Unlike Candi Sewu or Candi Jago, the Bale Kambang does not naturally accommodate ritual circumambulation. The garden and walkway surround the pavilion but there is no overt directional emphasis or linear narrative leading the adept individual to his destination. The choice of the architects to avoid any explicit directionality is echoed in the ceiling paintings.

The ceiling paintings of the Bale Kambang are hierarchically organized into three genres of paintings that span six levels. The first and lowest register depicts scenes from the *Palalintangan*, or Balinese astrological calendar. Individual *Palalintangan* scenes are identified by written passages in Balinese that instruct the occupants about appropriate behavior, auspicious signs, etc. Moving upwards and inwards, the second level consists of scenes from *Brayut*, the local folktale of the ideal Balinese family. The remaining four upper registers, beginning on the sixth and ending on level three, are devoted to the mythological epic *Sutasoma*.

Contrasting with O'Brien's speculations about the Candi Jago maṇḍala, the organization of the *Sutasoma* paintings indicates no effort by the creators to associate particular scenes or occurrences with a specific directionality. Rather, the visual narrative moves swiftly and without any notable deviations from the *kakawin*. At this juncture it is important to recall that the story of the *Sutasoma* begins at the highest level of the ceiling at the south end. The paintings proceed in a clockwise fashion, moving down a level after each full revolution. For example, the pacifications of the Gajawaktra (panels 5-8), the snake (panels 9-11) and the tigress (12-14) all occur in the highest levels. Sutasoma's temptation and self-realization that he is the incarnation of Mahāwairocana (panel 20) occurs on the fifth level. The physical union of Sutasoma and

Candrawatī (panel 26) is depicted on the first panel of the fourth level. One should note that Sutasoma's pacification of the obstacles and realization occupy the most auspicious position of the roof, the top two levels, while battle scenes between human kings and demon-armies predominantly occupy the fourth and third levels.

One possible explanation for the inversion of the epic, i.e., progressing from top to bottom rather than bottom upwards, might be attributed to the idea that mythical stories originate from divine inspiration.⁸⁷ It is not surprising to see the arrangement of the narrative reflect the belief that the epic moves downwards and outwards from a celestial, sacred center. Another factor may be that artists and architects of the site were cognizant of the primacy of spiritual teachings in the *Sutasoma*. The importance of an object's elevation is well documented in the *Asta Kosala Kosali*, a Balinese architectural manual. The *triangga* concept of elevation is still a major factor in architectural programming. Traditional Balinese buildings are designed to conform to *kaja* and *kelod*, the upstream and downstream or mountain and sea formation respectively. The structures that exist in the *kaja*, the higher elevation precincts of a compound, are considered to be more sacred than those *kelod*.⁸⁸ Balinese architects use the distinction of *kaja* and *kelod* to align architecture to the order of the natural world. Therefore it is plausible that

⁸⁷ Thomas Cooper, *Sacred Painting in Bali* (Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2005), 1-10. Leeland W. Gralapp, "Balinese Traditional Painting and the Wayang Tradition," *Artibus Asiae* 29, no. 2/3 (1967): 240. Javanese narrative reliefs typically do not reflect a top-to-bottom narrative flow, most notably the Borobudur narrative reliefs of the *Gandhavyuha*. The *Sutasoma* of the Bale Kambang seems to be atypical.

⁸⁸ Ngakan Ketut Acwin Dwijendra, *Arsitektur Rumah Tradisional: Berdasarkan Asta Kosala-kosali* (Denpasar: Udayana University Press, 2008), 7-9. In the Balinese architectural manuals, concepts of elevation are further distinguished by *purusa* and *pradana*. The elements existing in the realm of higher elevation belong to *purusa*, the atmosphere or the ether. The base or earthly elements correspond with *pradana*.

the arrangement of the *Sutasoma* paintings may indicate that the artist considered its spiritual teachings to be more sacred than the battle scenes. The spatial preference of the teaching scenes over the battle scenes is apparent from a practical standpoint as well. Panels depicting the great battle are placed in slender spaces, which are less prominently visible than those occupying the upper levels.

The exception to the division of spiritual teachings and battle scenes is a single panel, which depicts the physical union of Sutasoma and Candrawatī. According to O'Brien's reading of the text, the physical union of the couple is the climax of the tantric esoteric teachings. By this argument, one would expect the panel to be included with the teaching narratives of the fifth or sixth level. However, it is positioned on the fourth level of the ceiling. The placement on the fourth level may indicate that it was intended to contrast with those surrounding it. Juxtaposed with war scenes, the position of the sexual union panel gives greater emphasis and drama. Another possible reason for its relatively low position may be that since the subject of sexual union, as perceived by the artists, pertains to the realm of the mundane, and therefore was arranged accordingly. If we are strict with our application of the *Asta Kosala Kosali*, the arrangement would suggest that the union is less significant than the other teachings of the first maṇḍala. Regardless of what the artists intended with this placement, the sexual union panel complicates any direct application of the dual maṇḍala theory to the paintings themselves.

Whatever the reason may be for this peculiar arrangement, we should not forget that the Bale Kambang and Taman Gili are influenced by the imagery of the *Ratnālaya* pleasure grounds with a maṇḍala configuration inherent in its construction and layout. Therefore the paintings need not expound the teachings in *Sutasoma's* second maṇḍala, but rather the space itself

embodies these teachings and is the second maṇḍala physically manifested. Hence I posit that the Bale Kambang may have been the site in which the king and his consort consummated the ritual sexual unification and culmination of the teachings of the second maṇḍala in order to attain enlightenment. Application of the ritual practices of unification in Balinese statecraft during the 17th century will be discussed at greater length in the following chapter.

This discussion of the unique arrangement of the paintings also brings into question the values and virtues of the *Sutasoma* discussed earlier. Vickers suggests that Sutasoma's self-sacrifice to the world-threatening demon, Kāla, is the culmination of the epic. If the virtues of self-sacrifice and purification are indeed the essence of the epic, then one should expect the final scene to be emphasized; in other words, it should occupy the higher portions of the ceiling or at least possess some visual distinction. However, this is not the case. The final scene is tucked in the southeast corner of the third register and is not as easily viewable as the marriage scene. In addition, it occupies the lowest and closest of the *Sutasoma* panels to the mundane and earthly tales of *Brayut*. Based on these facts, I am inclined to suggest that Vickers' theory is no longer tenable.

Contrasting with O'Brien's speculations on the *Sutasoma*'s dual maṇḍala is Lydia Kieven's study of the architectural reliefs of East Javanese temples. In addition to her discussion of the thematic features of the reliefs, Kieven also distinguishes a bipartite organization of narrative reliefs. For example, at the fourteenth century east Javanese temple Candi Panataran, the reliefs not only exhibit a hierarchical organization from the mundane to the sacred, but also an intentional thematic arrangement, between the entrance and rear side of the temple. Positioned on the entrance side are post-mythological stories or stories that refer to the tales of princes and

their struggles in the mundane world. On the rear-facing side of the temple are mythological tales, which narrate tales of accomplished kings and deal mainly with the realm of the gods.⁸⁹

According to Kieven, the organization of the mythological reliefs towards the rear indicates a linear emphasis. This linear emphasis is best explained through an interpretation of tantric Kundalinī yoga practice rather than the circumambulation path of the Buddhist maṇḍala (fig. 30). Kundalinī yoga is a meditational practice that emphasizes the realization and maintenance of spiritual energy. The body energy travels along a series of chakra points that are found in seven nodes along the vertical axis of the human body. The lowest chakra point, *mulāhdāra*, found between the anus and genitals, symbolizes female energy, or *Śakti*. Śiwa resides in the highest chakra point, *sahasrāra*, located at the crown of the head. The goal of Kundalini yoga is to arouse and guide energy through the chakra points to experience the union of *Śiwa* and *Śakti* at the heart chakra. Kieven speculates that the kings of eastern Java organized their temples to facilitate tantric practices that emphasized the linear path exemplified in Kundalinī yoga. In other words, the vertical channel of the body is rotated to a horizontal one that is reflected in temple layout and linear organization of reliefs. Is it possible that the linear emphasis and tradition of Kundalinī yogic practices are also embedded at Bale Kambang of Puri Semarapura?

While possible, it is difficult to assess whether the spatial organization of the Bale Kambang embodies the teachings of Kundalinī yoga. Unlike the bipartite organization of the Majapahit temple reliefs, there are only two instances in which the Bale Kambang exhibits clear linear divisions. The first instance is evident in the east-west statuary arrangement, i.e., *dewas*,

⁸⁹ Lydia Kieven, *Following the cap-figure in Majapahit temple reliefs*, 78-106.

on the east side and *asura*, on the west. However, this linear division seems more likely an attempt to maintain the conventional representation of the *Samudramanthana* in Balinese traditional painting. The second instance of linear emphasis is present on the bridge. The bridge is the only method of accessing the pavilion and lies along the north to south axis. In the narrative traditions of East Java, the act of crossing a body of water is a major component to facilitating transformation. Therefore, it is plausible that the linear movement from the garden, over the water and to center of the courtyard at the Bale Kambang may reference the act of channeling of *śakti* along the vertical axis of the human body. The bridge facilitates access to the Bale Kambang, located in the center of the courtyard, which may also allude to the maintenance of *śakti* at the heart *cakra*, *Anāhata*, the core practice of Kundalinī yoga. This may also indicate the selection of a single bridge for the Bale Kambang, rather than the four as described at in the form of Sutasoma's *Ratnālaya*, may be a strategic choice and therefore possibly relate to the Kundalinī practices.⁹⁰ The linear orientation is further emphasized in the rectangular form of the pavilion. The adept proceeds from the bridge to the pavilion, and continues to the southern side of the ceiling to receive the beginning of his instruction.

Regardless of a specific religious affiliation, either Buda (Buddha) or Śaiwa, what becomes clear is that a spiritual path, some version of Kieven or O'Brien, or even a mix of the two, may have been present at the site. Here, the tantric esoteric teachings of classical Hindu-Buddhist Indonesia were expounded through the architecture and the paintings. However, the teachings of ritual meditation, namely the unification with a patron deity, were not available to

⁹⁰ I am not certain if the initial Bale Kambang had more than one bridge. Based on other similar structures such as the Bale Kambang at Puri Gdé Karangasem, and the Bale Kambang at Taman Soekasada Ujung, the single bridge appears to have been the conventional design.

all social classes. Only the king, due to his excellent abilities and spiritual fortitude, was given access to the secret teachings under the guidance and direction of his *purohita*. This in turn, provided the king with the ideal path to attain enlightenment. The following chapter proposes the possible significance of meditational practices for the king, Déwa Agung Jambé, at the Bale Kambang.

CHAPTER 4

POWER, ECSTASY AND ENLIGHTENMENT: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BALE KAMBANG AND THE SUTASOMA IN 17th CENTURY BALINESE KINGSHIP OF KLUNGKUNG

As we have seen in the previous chapters, the art and architecture of the Bale Kambang at Puri Semarapura are much more complex than how they had been perceived in previous scholarship. This chapter examines the themes established in the earlier sections and situates them within the Bale Kambang's historical context. I have organized this chapter in three parts: the first part addresses the issues pertaining to the creation and maintenance of power through architecture; the second deals with ecstasy and the spiritual path of unification; and the last section examines enlightenment and its significance to Balinese kingship. Through these themes, I intend to demonstrate that the Bale Kambang played a crucial role in 17th century Balinese politics at Klungkung.

The political climate in Bali during the second half of 17th century was a tumultuous one. It was a period that witnessed the fragmentation of Bali's unified kingdom into multiple warring kingdoms with local lords constantly jockeying for power. However, regardless of the chronic political turmoil, Klungkung—from its inception to this day—is acknowledged throughout the island as the spiritual center of Bali.

In order to understand Klungkung's preeminent spiritual status, we must first review its dynastic lineage, which can be traced back to the eastern Javanese Majapahit kingdom (1293-c.1500). In the period preceding close political relations with Java, epigraphic evidence from the ninth century indicates that the Balinese elite was literate in Sanskrit and Old Balinese. By the

tenth century, the Balinese court shifted from using Old Balinese to Old Javanese as the official court language for inscriptions. From the 10th century to the 15th centuries, the period in which the *kakawin* literary traditions flourished, the two islands appear to have belonged to the same cultural and religious sphere.

The *Nāgarakṛtāgama* (ca. 1365), which describes the domains of the Majapahit realm, is our primary document for understanding the relationship between the two islands. The text states that the Majapahit invasion of Bali took place in 1343 under the Prime Minister Gajah Mada (nag 49.4). By 1365 Bali was listed as a tributary of the Majapahit kingdom and said to conform to the customs of Java (nag 79.3). Consequently, scholars believe that the Balinese court was modeled on Javanese ritual, ceremonial, and cultural ideals. The most definitive instance of the shared customs between Java and Bali is evident in the 16th century. The steady disintegration of the Hindu-Buddhist Majapahit kingdom throughout the 15th century coupled with the rise of the Islamic sultanates of Java, resulted in the migration of the Majapahit court to Bali. Accordingly, the connections of Balinese court culture to the Majapahit cultural world is emphasized in the Klungkung royal chronicles, *Babad Dalem*. The Balinese dynastic lineage stemming from Majapahit was the core source of its legitimacy. Because of these literary documents, Bali has often been hailed as the last bastion of classical Hindu-Buddhist Javanese culture.

The *Babad Dalem* begins by detailing the origins of the Kapakisan dynastic line in Java and then traces the efflorescence of the lineage in Bali after the Majapahit conquest. Once Bali had been brought into the fold, Gajah Mada selected Sri Kresna Kapakisan, the youngest son of a

Brahman Buddhist priest, to govern the neighboring island.⁹¹ Dalem Sri Kresna Kapakisan produced three sons. The youngest of the three, Déwa Ketut Ngulesir succeeded his father's throne. Upon his consecration he took the name Dalem Ketut Smara Kapakisan and established the court at Gélgél. His title, Smara, expresses his identification with Betara Smara, god of love, desire and attraction.⁹² These attributes were paradigmatic of successful Balinese kingship. They refer to an individual's ability to attract and negotiate between those of the *sekala*, the visible (mundane realm), and *niskala*, invisible forces (gods, demons, fortune, etc.). In addition to Betara Smara, Dalem Ketut was also associated with the marshal deity Wisnu, the preserver and maintainer of the world. To solidify his legitimizing royal lineage, the text mentions that Déwa Ketut Smara Kapakisan possessed the *pusaka* (royal heirloom) I Bangawan Cangu that augmented his power.⁹³

Dalem Ketut Smara Kapakisan's eldest son, Dalem Watu Rénggong was attributed with unifying the realm and ushering in the golden age of Gélgél. He was often described in the likeness of Wisnu, possessing four arms with each hand holding the discus, the club, conch shell, and sword/keris. During his rule, Watu Rénggong enlisted the spiritual powers of Dang Hyang Nirartha, a prominent Brahman Śiwa priest from Java. Before the arrival of Nirartha, Watu Rénggong is described as fierce and terrible and it was "only after his [the king's] consecration

⁹¹ It is interesting to note that line of Kapakisan came from Javanese origins. The text explicitly identifies Sri Kresna Kapakisan as a Brahmana Buda (Buddha). Buddhist priests were able to engage in many activities that were restricted for Śiwa priests. Because of this, Śiwa priests were considered to be purer whereas the Buda priests are more powerful.

⁹² Wiener, *Visible and Invisible Realms*, 116.

⁹³ Ibid., 110-113, 118-121. For more information on the *pusakas* of Gélgél.

by Nirartha that the land is said to flourish and the king to be just.”⁹⁴ The *Babad Dalem* further states that “He [Watu Rénggong] is the master of all knowledge important to a king: rules of governing, the proper conduct of war, four means of destroying enemies, horse training and the arts of sexual love (33b-35a).” He was the embodiment of all aspects of royal power. Watu Rénggong begat two sons: Déwa Pemayun Bekung and Déwa Anom Ségening. The latter succeeded the throne. At this time, *Babad Dalem* notes that the relations between the kings and ministers and their branch kin began to dissolve. The text details stories of the prime minister’s plan to revolt and the exploits of nobles. Dalem Segening fathered Déwa Di Made, who would become the last ruler of Gél-gél.

VOC sources indicate that a new king, Gusti Agung Maruti (r. ca.1650-1686), prevailed in Bali during the successions of the Gelgel throne. In 1686 Déwa Agung Jambé, son of Dalem Di Made, with the help of the aristocratic class that had remained loyal to the Kapakisan lineage, claimed the throne and the rule of Gusti Agung Maruti at Gégél came to an end.

Power

In light of all of the misfortune that befell his father, Déwa Agung Jambé set out to establish a new center called Puri Semarapura, or the “Abode of Love,” in Klungkung, situated several kilometers north of the old capital. In order to ensure that the Klungkung realm was consolidated, Déwa Agung designed an architectural program that incorporated spiritually potent symbolism at Puri Semarapura.

⁹⁴ Ibid.,125.

The architectural elements of the Bale Kambang were fashioned to symbolize Meru, the center of the universe, with its surrounding moat as the cosmic ocean Anavatapta, the source of the elixir of life. The 1930s-1940s additions of the Bale Kambang explicitly reiterate Meru iconography by depicting *Samudramanthana*, the *Churning of the Ocean Milk*. Mt. Meru was crucial for "...stabilizing the world, [and] is explicitly likened to the throne and power of the *chakravartin* who makes the wheel of righteousness to revolve round that center. His rule thus appears, in the Buddhist image of the world, as a moral and ordinating service of the community - a fit substitute for the Vedic sacrifice and sacrificial power (brahman)."⁹⁵ By recreating Mt. Meru and the mythical episode, Déwa Agung Jambé may have sought to stabilize his nascent realm. Enthroned at the Bale Kambang, he could have associated himself with Wisnu, the preserver and maintainer of the world, and presided over his new realm.

Mt. Meru iconography was not only potent as the symbolic center of the realm, but it also provided a channel for Déwa Agung to tap into the spiritual power of his lineage. Ngakan Ketut Acwin Dwijendra's examination of the Balinese text, *Lontar Andha Bhuanana*, reveals an interesting aspect of Meru iconography: "... *Meru* berasal dari kata, *me*, berarti *meme* = ibu = *pradana tattwam* sedangkan *ru*, berarti guru = bapak = *purusa tattwa*, sehingga penggabungannya dari *Meru* milik arti *batur kelawasan petak* (cikal bakal leluhur)."⁹⁶ The passage roughly translates to "Meru is derived from the word, *me*, which means *meme* = mother = *earthly existence* while *ru*, means teacher = father = *the humanly realm*, so that the

⁹⁵ Paul Mus, "Thousand Armed Kannon: A Mystery or a Problem?" *Journal of Indian Buddhist Studies* (Tokyo: 1964): 30.

⁹⁶ Ngakan Ketut Acwin Dwijendra, *Arsitektur Bangunan Suci Hindu: Berdasarkan Asta Kosala Kosali* (Denpasar: Udayana University Press, 2008), 39.

combination of the two syllables as Meru possesses the meaning *batur kelawasan petak* (the founders of ancestral lineage).” In other words, it seems likely that Déwa Agung’s invocation of Mt. Meru at the Bale Kambang not only established his identification with Wisnu, but it also created a link to the founding members of his dynastic lineage, including Ketut Smara and Watu Rénggong, to legitimize his rule. Reverence to his sacred ancestors is further reinforced by the position of Taman Gili in the northeast precinct, or *utama-utamaning*, of the palace. According to the *Asta Kosala Kosali*, the *utama-utamaning* is reserved for *Sangguh* (*pemerajan*), or sacred spaces dedicated to ancestors.⁹⁷

Déwa Agung was responsible for the protection and prosperity of the people of the realm; it was the king’s duty to consolidate and stabilize the realm. The *rajadharma*, an early Indian text that expounds the conduct of the king, states that, “...the ruler’s activity consists in the wielding of *danda*, the infliction of punishment and the exercise of coercive force, whenever and wherever violation of the dharma occurs.”⁹⁸ Thus, it was essential for Déwa Agung to harness all available sources of power required to fulfill his kingly duty.

Upholding the *dharma* was the utmost priority for Balinese kingship, but how was the *dharma* maintained at Puri Semarapura? I suggest that the Kerta Ghosa, the Hall of Justice, was also important in the program of the Taman Gili and a component of Déwa Agung’s protection of the realm. At the Kerta Ghosa, the king and his advisors could adjudicate law and punishments to uphold the *dharma*. The *dharma* was perhaps maintained through the Kerta Ghosa but radiated out from the center, the Bale Kambang, through the king’s spiritual efficacy,

⁹⁷ Dwijendra, *Rumah Tradisional Bali*, 2-4.

⁹⁸ S.J. Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 24.

śakti, as well as his exceptional conduct. From this perspective, the Bale Kambang and the Kerta Ghosa together were crucial to the concept of the exemplary center. The *exemplary center*, or “the court and the capital is at once a microcosm of the supernatural order [...] and the material embodiment of political power [...]. It is the state.”⁹⁹ The state and its ceremonies were, “designed to express a view of the ultimate nature of reality and, at the same time to shape the existing conditions of life to be consonant with that reality; that is, theater to present an ontology and, by presenting it, to make it happen -- make it actual.”¹⁰⁰

The picture that begins to emerge is one that depicts Déwa Agung’s attempt to legitimize his reign and consolidate his realm. During a period of chaos that ensued after the rebellion of Maruti, Déwa Agung established a new political realm, or *maṇḍala*, in the regency of Klungkung. He announced his dynastic lineage by commemorating his ancestor, Dalem Ketut Smara Kapaksian, at the new palace and thereby proclaimed himself as the rightful heir to the realm. Déwa Agung employed a specific architectural program that harnessed both the spiritual potency of his ancestors and union with Wisnu, the protector of the *dharma*.

We should not, however, assume that the structure was the key component of the exemplary center. Although the structure and layout of the Bale Kambang possess sacred and spiritual symbolisms, it was ultimately the king’s engagement with the site that established the site as the exemplary center.

⁹⁹ Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in nineteenth century Bali*, 13.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 104.

Ecstasy

Vital to the king's *śakti* was the performance of ritual meditation. To obtain *śakti*, the king had to follow an ideal spiritual path as exemplified in the tales of Panji or in the *Sutasoma*. Either way, renunciation of the mundane world was essential to this path. Thus, in theory and according to the tenets of the ideal spiritual path, Déwa Agung would have symbolically begun his spiritual journey by moving away from the mundane world, through the garden of the Taman Gili and towards the Bale Kambang, thereby commencing the rite of separation: his removal from the physical world. The water, symbolizing the cosmic ocean Anavatapta and *amṛta*, possessed purifying and transcendental characteristics. In tantric rituals, reaching a state of purity is necessary before progressing to the next stage of teachings, namely obtaining unification with a deity. By crossing over the pond from the courtyard to the pavilion, Déwa Agung would have been ritually primed to commence the next stage of spiritual teachings.

Once Déwa Agung arrived at the Bale Kambang, he would have entered a simulated ideal meditational hermitage. The architects strategically crafted the Taman Gili and Bale Kambang to harness and imitate the beauty of the natural world. By replicating environments described in Nirartha's writings, the Bale Kambang would have provided the ideal location for Déwa Agung to seek solitude and practice his meditations. Sitting in the pavilion, he may have been overcome by the scent of flowers carried by a gentle breeze. Ripples in the surrounding pond create rhythmic vibrations that were in tune with the natural world. In a state of pensive reflection, he may have been overcome with desire for the beautiful world, *Kāma*, and inspired to engage in yogic practices to suppress the fluctuations of the mind and to obtain clarity. Arguably,

there is no better place than the Bale Kambang for Déwa Agung to reflect upon the non-duality of the natural world.

Having undergone his mental and spiritual preparations, Déwa Agung is ready to perform the highest tantric practice: sexual unification. Helen Creese's and Laura Bellows' study of nineteenth century Balinese erotic literature notes that sexual union "...unites more than the human participants. Sexual intercourse, especially for the first time, represents the union of the divine in the quest for liberation."¹⁰¹ They continue, "Union with the deity, *kama*, god of love, can only be achieved through steadfast meditation and the performance of specific ritual gestures or mudra (*kamamudragama*). The bed chamber itself becomes the place where the deity manifests himself in visible form and the lovers themselves become the human manifestations of the divinities Kama and Ratih."¹⁰² With this understanding of Balinese tantric ritual practices, the Bale Kambang's potential function as a sacred space for yoga tantric practices, such as the Jeweled Pavilion at *Ratnālaya* (the location of Sutasoma's and Candrawati's marriage), is even more convincing.

In the ancient Indonesian context, successful physical union is also associated with other forms of power. According to Benedict Anderson's notions of Javanese power, we can see that reference to the evocation of love and prowess is a metaphor for power, and the king's fertility was "seen as simultaneously evoking and guaranteeing the fertility of the land, the prosperity of the society, and the expansionist vitality of the empire."¹⁰³ Following his lead, Kenneth Hall

¹⁰¹ Helen Creese and Laura Bellows, "Erotic Literature in Nineteenth-Century Bali," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 33, no: 3 (2002): 412.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Benedict Anderson, "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture," 18.

states, “Sexual activity was also one way to obtain and direct power; mystic sexual union enveloped partners in cosmic energy and increased their power.”¹⁰⁴ This may suggest that, in the context of Déwa Agung and the Bale Kambang, it was part of his duty to perform the most exalted forms of sexual unification, or sexual yoga, not only as progenitor of his dynastic lineage but also for the prosperity of the realm.

Given that the name of the palace, along with its iconography and design, and the *Sutasoma* paintings of the Bale Kambang share a common goal to unification, we can conclude that tantric ritual practices, especially those centered on physical union, were intentional in the original conceptualization of the site.¹⁰⁵ These practices go beyond the goal of mere ideas of power and procreation but they are also a means to obtaining knowledge of the Absolute: enlightenment.

Enlightenment

The path to enlightenment/liberation is not obvious from the exterior of the pavilion. It is not until we arrive inside and in the presence of the interior paintings that we receive the clearest

¹⁰⁴ Kenneth Hall, “Ritual Networks and Royal Power in Majapahit,” 101.

¹⁰⁵ Sacred spaces dedicated to physical union have also been suggested in the 13th century travel accounts of Zhou Daguan, a Chinese visitor to Angkor. His accounts tell us that the Cambodian people believed that the king spent every night with a serpent goddess of the soil who visited him in human form. Heine-Geldern, “Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia” *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 4.1 (1964): 64-83/52. Heine-Geldern states that “obviously he was thought thereby to renew the connection between himself and the soil of his kingdom. Thus the king in ancient Cambodia, as an incarnation of the Devarāja and a descendant and at the same time spouse of the goddess of the soil, formed a real magic center linking the empire to the divine forces of the heavens as well as on earth” (p.26). Could it be possible that the Bale Kambang is the Balinese parallel?

picture of the teachings. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Bale Kambang's paintings expound Sutasoma's pacification of the obstacles, resistance of temptation by the nymphs, and the self-realization as Mahāwairocana, all of which take place in the top two registers of the ceiling. Based on O'Brien's observations, the teachings represent the mastery of the *Vajradhatu* maṇḍala that leads to the unification with the central deity, Wairocana. By entering the *Vajradhatu* maṇḍala, the adept seeks to obtain the perfections of the body to possess supernatural faculties/weapons. Power, in the world of early Java, is concentrated in the supernatural source—namely the gods—and if one can access this power, by means of yoga, then the success of his endeavors will be assured.¹⁰⁶ However, Sutasoma's spiritual journey does not end until he achieves sexual union with his feminine equal, Candrawatī, in the Jeweled Pavilion at *Ratnālaya*. Here, Sutasoma and Candrawatī symbolize the unification of *upāya* and *prajñā*, the unification of both means and wisdom, and thereby obtaining knowledge of the Absolute.

By this reading, the *Sutasoma* paintings of the Bale Kambang may have provided a path of yogic meditational teachings to guide Déwa Agung Jambé in his pursuit of these perfections and, ultimately, to enlightenment. Canto 40 of the *Sutasoma* expounds the two paths to attaining release. The Śaivite way is achieved by performing *ṣaḍaṅga-yoga* to attaining the eight perfections. The Buddhist way is achieved through the performance of *paratra-mārga*, or the right intention at the moment of death, and *anuttarayoga*, or supreme yoga.

In either form of tantric esoteric practice, Buddhist or Saivite, the central goal is, "...the union of the individual soul with the cosmic soul which means the liberation of the self from all

¹⁰⁶ Stuart Robson, *Arjunawiwaha: The Marriage of Arjuna of Mpu Kanwa* (Leiden: KITLV, 2008), 22.

worldly illusion and from passion. This can be done through yoga. Secret knowledge is passed down from teacher to pupil. An experienced guru is necessary for a safe path.”¹⁰⁷ In order for Déwa Agung to perform these rites, he would have needed the guidance of his *purohita*, who would have surely been trained in the sacred texts.

If my hypothesis and reconstructions were correct, this would suggest that the king, Déwa Agung, after crossing the pond and taking his position at the center of the pavilion, is ready to begin his spiritual teachings as expounded in the *Sutasoma kakawin*.¹⁰⁸ Under the guidance of his *purohita*, he would have performed the tantric esoteric meditational practices of Kundalinī yoga and/or *yoga tantra*. By completing his ritual meditations, such as the dual maṇḍala, he would have obtained supramundane physical and mental faculties, thereby augmenting his *śakti*. *Śakti* is a general term for spiritual power that can be applied in various ways. Déwa Agung’s accumulation of *śakti* was vital to kingship and duty as intercessor between the seen and unseen world, or, respectively, *sekala* and *niskala*. Only a man of his stature and ability is able to communicate between the two worlds. My interpretation suggests that Déwa Agung channeled these powers to appeal for good fortune for his subjects and fertility of the land as well as to mitigate potential disasters. Without the maintenance of his *śakti*, calamity would surely befall the realm as it did with Gélgél.

Not only would the perfections of meditational practices have enabled the Déwa Agung to protect and maintain his realm, but they also would help him obtain *mokṣa/nirvāṇa*, or release

¹⁰⁷ Kieven, *Following the Cap-Figure*, 82.

¹⁰⁸ The inclusion of the *Sutasoma* paintings in the Bale Kambang is also potent in that Mpu Tantular, progenitor of the Klungkung genealogy, is the author of the epic. Agung Jambé would have maintained and continued to access this knowledge. This provides us with an interesting glimpse into parallels between the *Sutasoma* and Déwa Agung Jambé.

from the cosmic cycle of rebirth. Rather than immediately departing from the physical world, Déwa Agung may have chosen to postpone his liberation until his moment of death. Thus, by returning from the Bale Kambang, he reintegrated himself into society and remained a part of the human realm in order to uphold and spread the *dharma* for the benefit of his subjects. To use Tambiah's classic formulation, he would then attain the highest achievement of the mundane realm by becoming both "World conqueror" and "World Renouncer."¹⁰⁹ Finally, upon his death in the physical world, he was released from the cycle of cosmic rebirth.

¹⁰⁹ S. J. Tambiah, *World Conqueror & World Renouncer*, 32-53.

Conclusion

In light of the evidence, the Bale Kambang would have served a much greater purpose than simply serving as “the royal guards’ headquarters,” “antechamber for the raja’s visitors,” or even as a space “used by the royal family for pleasure, relaxing and entertaining.” The art and architecture of the Bale Kambang was not merely a place or product of random decorative accretions but rather it was a spiritually charged site which deliberately harnessed a specific iconographic program intimately linked with the maintenance and attainment of power, ecstasy, and enlightenment, traits that are emblematic of the Balinese kingship of Klungkung in the 17th century.

That being said, the Bale Kambang at Puri Semarapura is by no means a form unique to the region of Klungkung. Similar structures can be found throughout Bali and Lombok. A cursory glance at other water pavilions indicates that many sites exhibit a standardized appearance but also possess localized iconographic or architectural repertoires that differ from that of Puri Semarapura. Thus my research not only offers a new interpretation of the function of Bale Kambang at Puri Semarapura but it also advocates for the reassessment of water pavilion structures found throughout Bali and its neighboring islands. This potential research could, in turn, provide a more comprehensive picture of the importance of meditational practices, the role of palatial architecture, and their combined importance to kingship in ancient Indonesia.

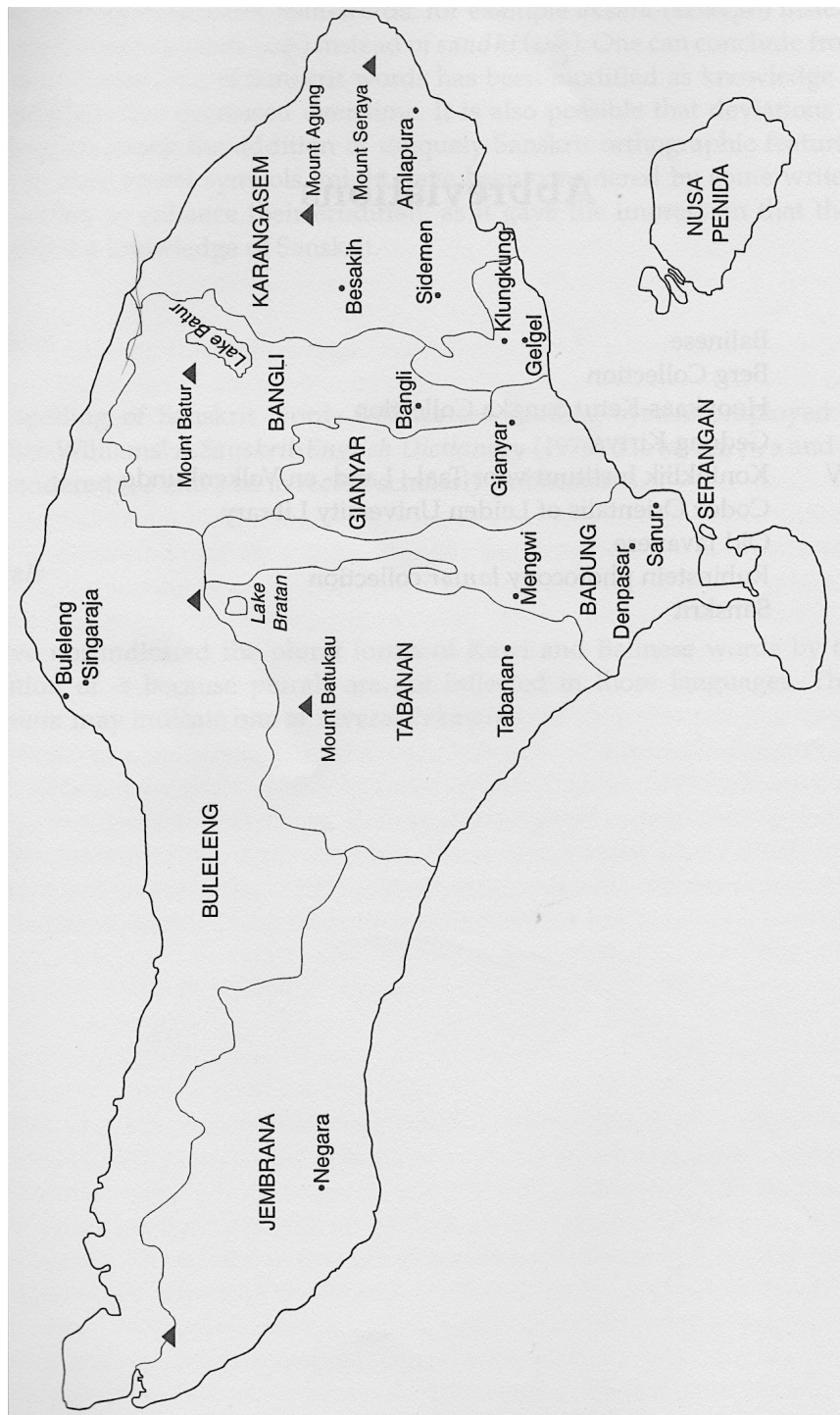


Figure 1: Map of Bali. Source: Raechelle Rubinstein, *Beyond the realm of the senses; The Balinese ritual of kakawin composition*, Leiden: KITLV press, 2000, map 1.

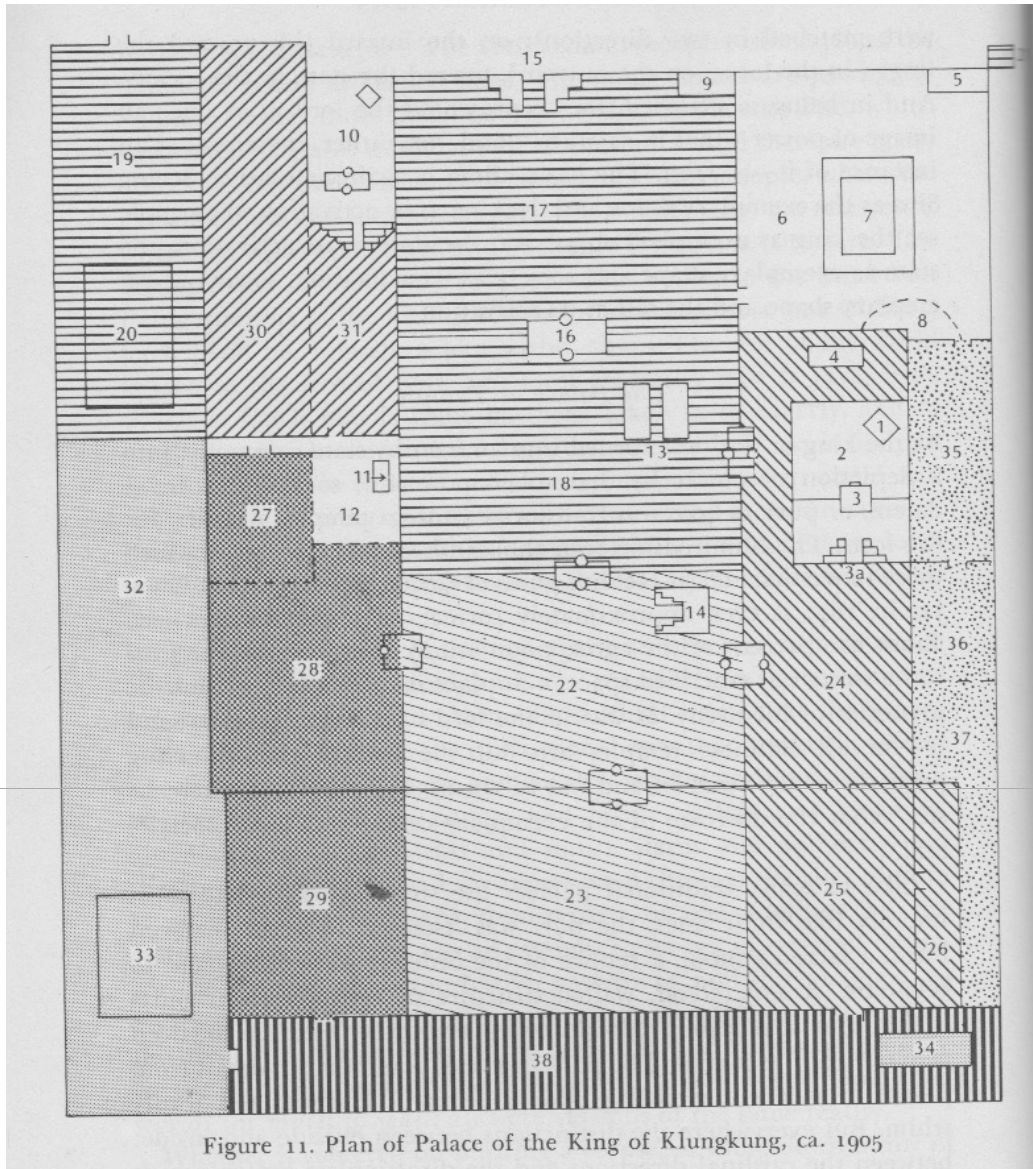


Figure 2: Diagram of the palace grounds at Puri Semarapura, ca. 1905
 Source: Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theater State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981), 110.



Figure 3: Bale Kambang, Taman Gili Courtyard, 1928. Source: KITLV digital archives, image code 81218, album number 509, collection of Blijdenstein, B.M. (via Dr. Pigeaud)/ zeist.



Figure 4: Renovations of Bale Kambang, Taman Gili Courtyard, ca. 1935. Source: KITLV digital archives, image code 1401756.



Figure 5: Kerta Ghosa, Taman Gili Courtyard, ca. 1925. Source: KITLV Digital Image Library, image code 8424, collection of Erp, Th. Van.



Figure 6: Bale Kambang and statuary, Taman Gili Courtyard, ca. 1930-1937.
Source: KITLV Digital Image Library, image code 67789, collection of Stein
Callenfels, P.V. Van.

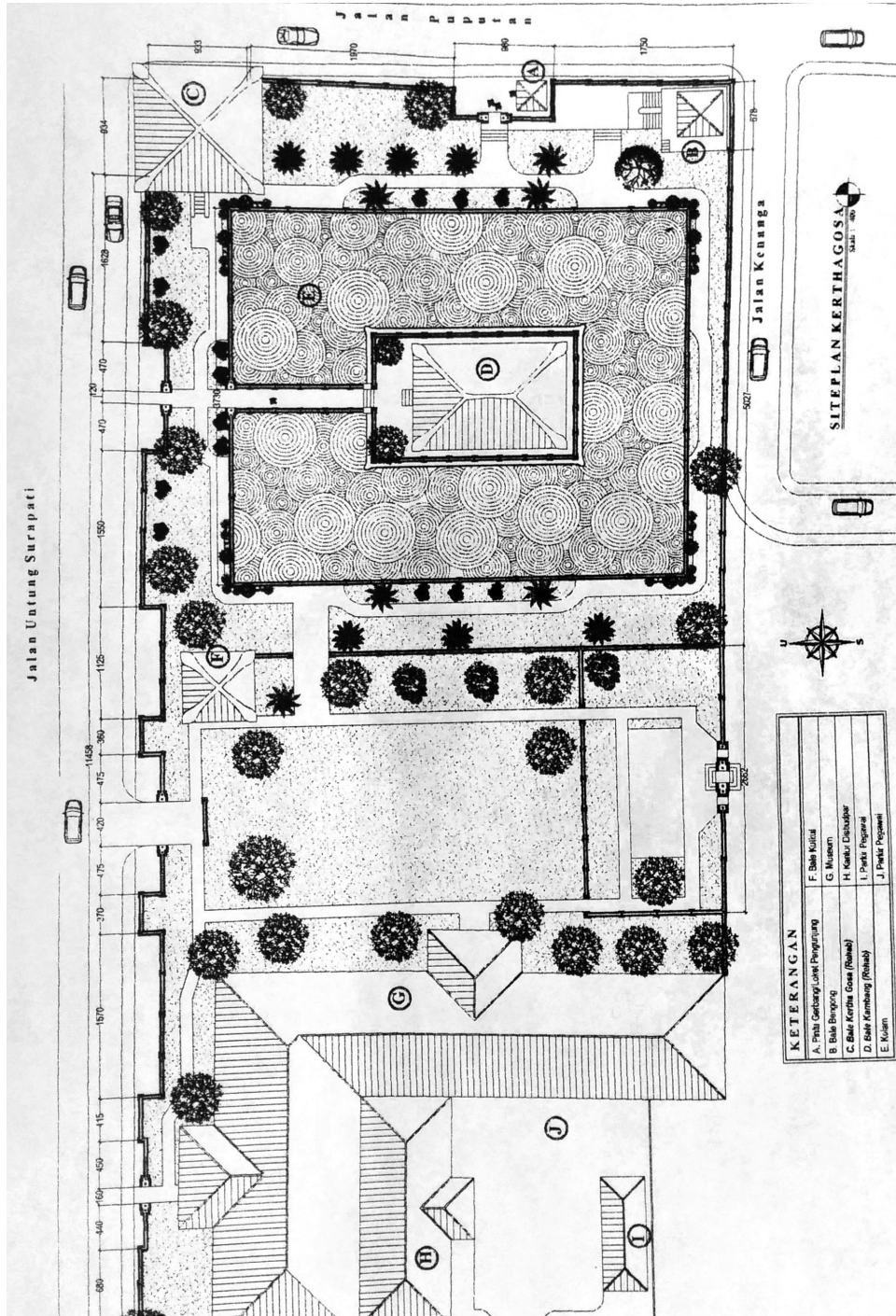


Figure 7: Puri Semarapura (site plan), Klungkung, Bali, Indonesia. Source: DINAS Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata Kabupaten Klungkung.



Figure 8: *Parekan*, eastern side of courtyard balustrade.



Figure 9: *Dewa*, eastern side of courtyard balustrade.



Figure 10: *Asura*, eastern side of courtyard balustrade.



Figure 11: Northern balustrade and split gate (*Kori Bantar*).



Figure 12: Bridge, facing south.



Figure 13: *Merdah*, eastern side of bridge balustrade.



Figure 14: *Goddess*, east of main pathway to Bale Kambang.



Figure 15: *Goddess*, west of main pathway to Bale Kambang.



Figure 16: Base, corner projection and tubular forms.



Figure 17: South face and central protuberance.



Figure 18: Ceiling paintings, Bale Kambang.



Figure 19: *Palalintangan* panel, first register, west side.



Figure 20: Brayut family attending Barong performance, second register, east side.

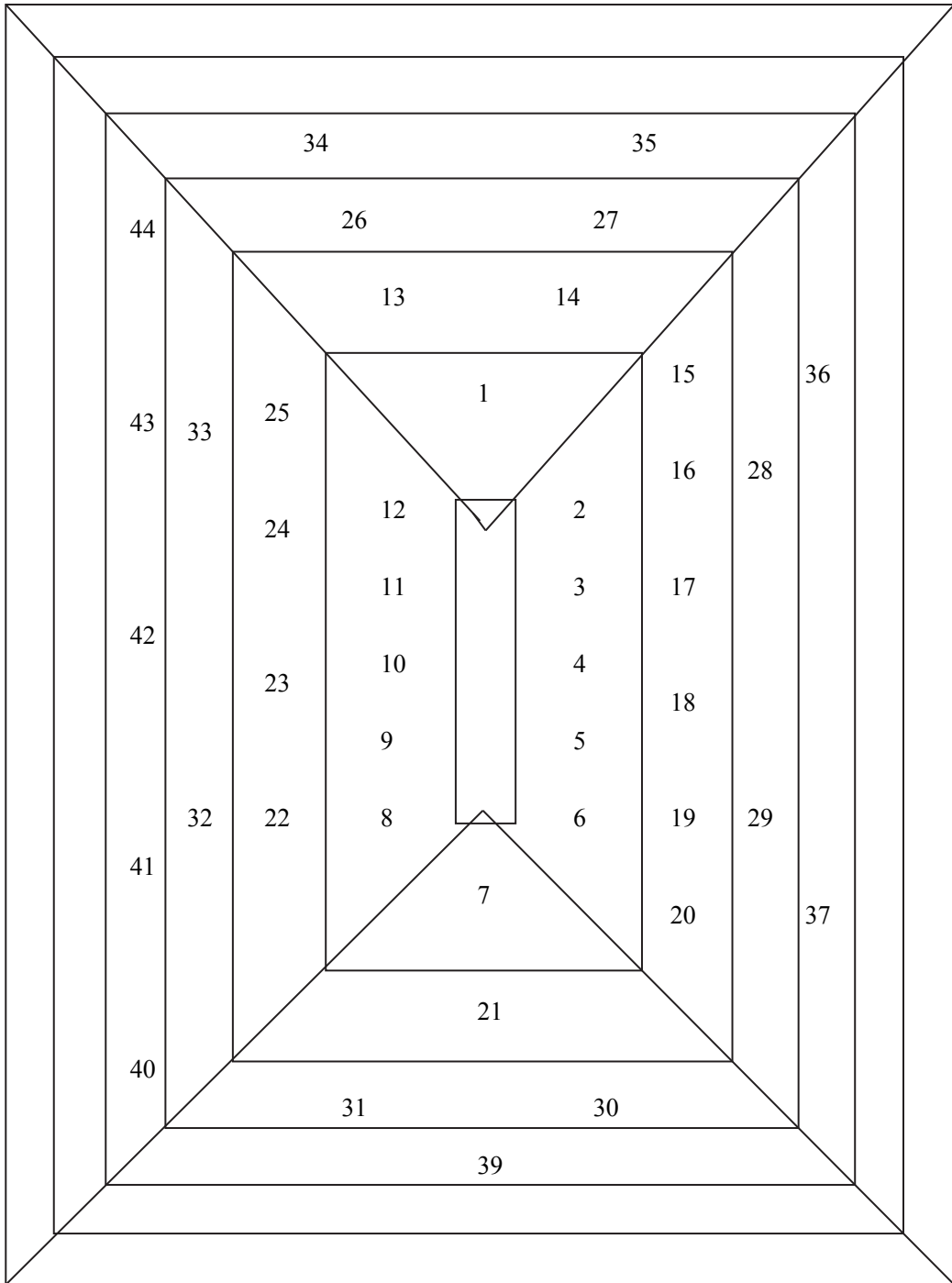


Figure 21: Diagram of *Sutasoma* narrative.



Figure 22: *The Churning of the Ocean Milk*, Kamasan, Bali, mineral pigment on cloth, probably third quarter of the 19th century. Source: Honolulu Museum of Art.



Figure 23: Puri Semarapura (aerial view), Klungkung, Bali, Indonesia. Source: Google Earth.



Figure 24: Bathing Ponds, Goa Gajah, Gianyar, Bali, 10th century.



Figure 25: Naga Temple, Candi Panataran, east Java, Indonesia, later half of the 14th century, andesite.



Figure 26: Union of Sutasoma and Candrawatī, panel 26, part 2 of 2.



Figure 27: *Prau Pegat*, *Palalintangan* panel, east side, first level.



Figure 28: Sutasoma's sacrifice to Kāla, panel 44.



Figure 29: Vajradhatu-maṇḍala, c. 13th century, Alchi, Ladakah, mural.
Source: Kate O'Brien, *Sutasoma* (Bangkok: Orchid Press), pl. 16.

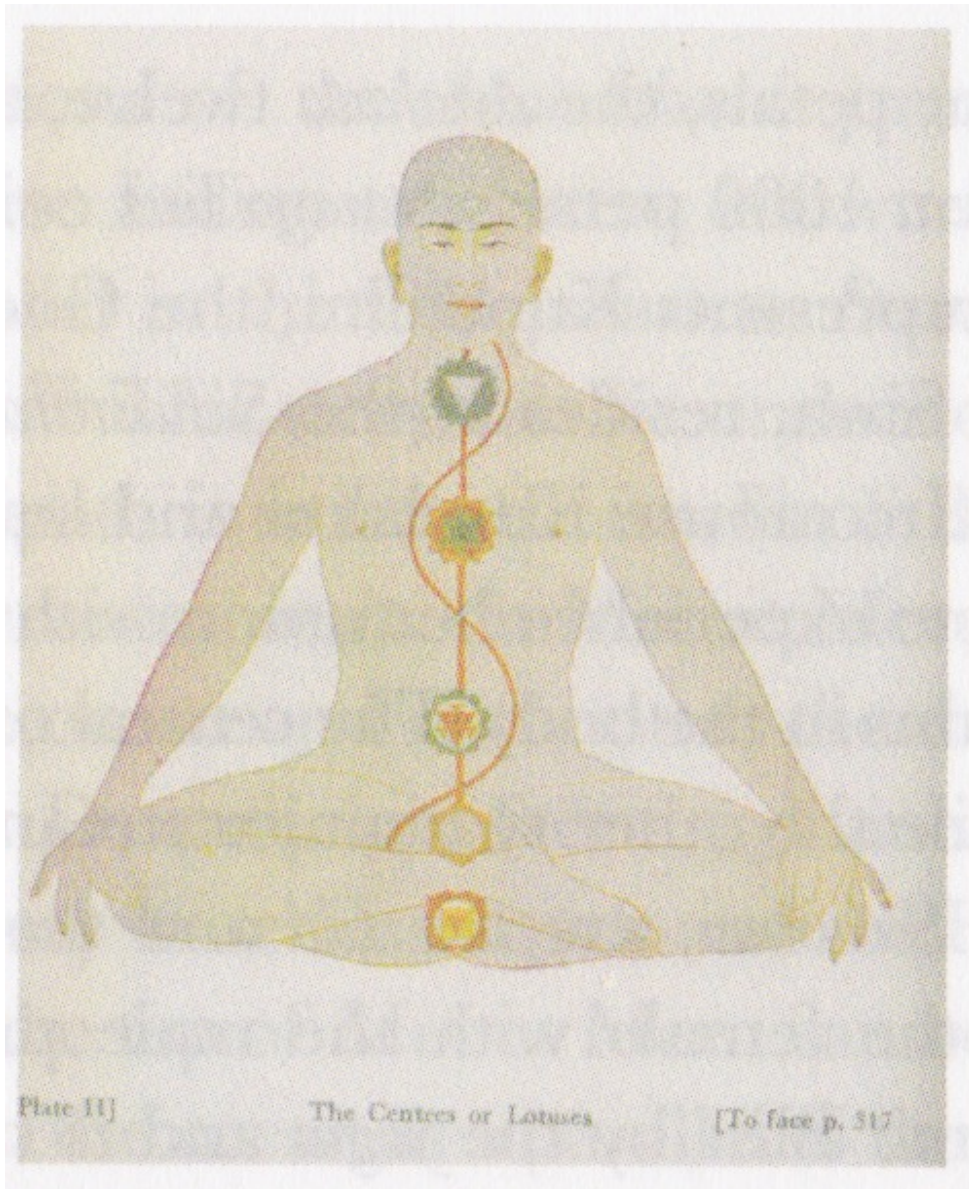


Figure 30: The cakra centers of Kunalinī yoga. Source: A. Avalon, *The serpent power*; By Sir John Woodroffe, 9th edition (Madras: Ganesh, 1973), pl. II.

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