



Universiteit  
Leiden  
The Netherlands

**Bujangga Manik: or, Java in the fifteenth century: an edition and study of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Jav. b. 3 (R)**

West, A.J.

**Citation**

West, A. J. (2021, May 20). *Bujangga Manik: or, Java in the fifteenth century: an edition and study of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Jav. b. 3 (R)*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3163618>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3163618>

**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/3163618> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

**Author:** West, A.J.

**Title:** Bujangga Manik: or, Java in the fifteenth century: an edition and study of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Jav. b. 3 (R)

**Issue date:** 2021-05-20



## PART IV:

### *People in Bujangga Manik*

*Bujangga Manik* has a small cast of characters. Human beings are evidently not the poem's focus. Indeed, Noorduyt (1982:438) sees in its emphasis on toponyms a tacit message that people are to be avoided by those seeking spiritual insight 'whenever possible, even when travelling through the world'. When talking with the heavenly door guardian Dorakala, Bujangga Manik's soul says that he will not call witnesses from the Middle World to vouch for him because

'... one thousand one hundred and one · (among them) there's not even one · a human resolute in speech. · Many are the hell-bound sinners · even the gods are under attack. · I accuse them and drive them out' (BM 1607-1612).

While there is little evidence in *BM* of a classic Hindu ascetic's revulsion at the body and its effluvia (Olivelle 1995:188-210), the text portrays people as a nuisance to be avoided. The ascetic's distaste at living in a monastic community centres on the number of visiting outsiders (*aré* – a term still used by the Urang Kanékes for non-Baduy lowlanders [BM 1327, 1369]), and he complains that Bali is too densely populated (BM 971-979). His interactions with the ships' captains are pleasant and respectful, and indeed none of the people he meets are openly hostile, but the desire to leave the human world is nonetheless clear.

As noted above, Java in the fifteenth century appears to have been riven with political divisions even if much of the island was nominally loyal to Majapahit, and interpersonal violence is notable in foreigners' descriptions in this period. Mǎ Huān, describing the situation early on in the century, says '[when there is a misunderstanding] they at once pull out these knives<sup>270</sup> and stab [each other]. He who is stronger prevails' (Mills 1970:88).<sup>A29</sup> Executions by *keris* were a daily occurrence. Niccolò de' Conti, in Poggio Bracciolini's *De Varietate Fortunæ* (2004[1448]:112-117), claimed that debtors were often enslaved by their creditors, that a person buying a new sword would test it on passers-by, and that

'[o]f all peoples these [Javanese] are the most inhumane and cruellest. They eat mice, dogs, cats, and any other foul animals. They surpass all other mortals in cruelty. They kill people for fun without repercussions'.<sup>A30</sup>

---

<sup>270</sup> This is a reference to the *keris*, which Mǎ describes as having been worn by Javanese men of all ages, from three-year-olds to centenarians, albeit using the word 不刺頭 (pinyin: *bùlátóu*), from the Malay *beladau* 'curved dagger' (Mills 1970:87n6; Wilkinson 1932 #3064).

Barbosa (2000[1516]:371) and Pires (Cortêsão 1944:418, 494; Pires 2018:197) likewise refer to the practice of ‘running amok’, wherein a person in a fit of rage or desperation attempted to kill as many people as possible before being brought down in an act of suicide (memorably described centuries later by Alfred Russel Wallace [1877:174-175]). Barbosa says such particularly murderous people were called *amoucos* or *amocos*, which can be compared to the *juru amuk* ‘master duellists’ in BM 929, listed among the crew of the ship on which the ascetic travels to Bali. Indeed, the ships in *BM* are remarkably well-defended – by Chinese archers, warriors from Sulawesi, and the *juru amuk* from the Masalembu Islands – suggesting that violence (at sea, at least) was something against which precautions had to be taken.

On the other hand, Ludovico di Varthema (1535[1510]:f.70v) believed the Javanese to be ‘the most faithful people in the world’<sup>A31</sup> – although he and his (Chinese?) Christian companions eventually fled the island because of their cruelty (1535[1510]:71v-72r). Portuguese accounts note the haughtiness of the Javanese but they have positive things to say about the Sundanese – ‘the people of Sunda are more valiant than those of Java[; they are] good and truthful people’, Pires says.<sup>A32</sup> Mǎ Huān says that three groups lived in Java at the time: the local population (土人), who ate creepy-crawlies, chewed betel rather than drinking tea, and often killed one another; Muslims (回回人), probably including Middle Eastern and South Asian settlers; and immigrants from Guǎngdōng, Zhāngzhōu, and Quánzhōu in southern China (廣東、漳、泉等處人). The customs of the latter two groups appear to have been more acceptable to Mǎ, a Muslim Chinese man. Java had been a rather multicultural place for centuries, in any case, as several earlier inscriptions attest, including part of the eleventh-century Patakan inscription (Jakarta, Museum Nasional, inv. no. D.22 – Wurjantoro 2018:287-292; see also Hall 2011:152-153), which lists among taxpayers in Java merchants from kingdoms and ethnic groups in Sri Lanka, Campa, Cambodia, and North and South India.<sup>A33</sup> This is echoed in *BM* in the listed ethnicities of the ships’ crewmen (BM 920-931).

In this section, I will look at the humans of *BM*, specifically their titles and kin terms (IV.1) and then their physical descriptions, characterisations, and actions in the poem (IV.2). The ships’ captains will be looked at in section V.2; only the core characters are discussed here.



## IV.1 Titles and Kinship Terms

As in many other Austronesian languages, titles in Old Sundanese are not typically gendered, making it difficult to properly render them in English.<sup>271</sup> Both men and women may be *tohaan*, for instance, a word best translated as ‘Lord’ or ‘Lady’ – related to Malay *tuan* ‘lord’ and *tuhan* ‘god’ and probably originally from PMP \*qatuan ‘deity’ (ACD 4365). This term is applied to Bujangga Manik before he even leaves Pakuan (BM 12), and must be a noble title, not a term for an elder (cf. MSd *toha*, a word for elder aunts and uncles). *Taan* appears to be a short form, applied on its own and as *taan urang* ‘Our Lady’ to Ajung Larang, the mother of Jompong, the woman who falls in love with Bujangga Manik.

Some OSd titles are from Sanskrit and OJv. In MSd the word *prabu* is used to denote kings and princes – as in *Prabu Siliwangi*, the standard name in *pantun* for the legendary king (Ekadjati 1996:122). This comes from Sanskrit *prabhu* ‘lord, king’ (OJED 1378:8). In OSd, however, we find the word *prebu* instead – a different spelling and likely a different meaning, although the ultimate origin is the same. Noorduyt (1976:470) connects *prebu* to *paibou* or *paybou*, Pires’ transcription of what he says was the Sundanese name for a local lord, equivalent to the Javanese ‘*pate*’ (i.e. *patih*) (f.147v – Cortesão 1944:413; Pires 2018:191) – and thus *not* a prince or king. *Prabu* seems to be a later borrowing from Javanese. I have translated *p(e)rebu* in its sole occurrence, as a title for Jaya Pakuan before he heads east (BM 13), as ‘Master’.

*Rakéyan* is another noble title, in this case derived from OJv *rakryan*, used ‘before the name or the categorical noun (*apatih*, *tuměngguñ* etc) [or] in courteous address, often to a younger person’ (OJED 1491:7). In *BM* it appears exclusively before *Ameng Layaran*, one of Bujangga Manik’s names, and only after the name ‘Bujangga Manik’ has been adopted. Bujangga Manik’s mother uses it to address him in descending order of politeness:

*Rakaki Bujangga Manik (·) Rakéyan Ameng Layaran · utun kita ditañaan* (BM 458-460)

‘Venerable Bujangga Manik · Noble Ameng Layaran · my boy, you’ve been asked...’

*Utun* probably means ‘boy’ as a term of address (as in MSd – Danadibrata 2006:732; cf. PWMP \*utuq ‘vocative term for boys’ [ACD 5880]), and when Bujangga Manik’s mother uses *utun* it is typically preceded by *si*, an anti-honorific used with some kinship terms (implying familiarity) and with the names of demons and lowly people (implying disrespect). *Si utun* is also used in modern *carita pantun*

<sup>271</sup> Titles are notoriously difficult to translate between languages. A fascinating book-length argument by Christian Raffensperger (2017) suggests that the difficulties in translating early Rus’ titlature, for example, have had profound effects on the popular understanding of medieval eastern Europe.

for the story's hero, usually a nobleman of 'Pajajaran' (Rigg 1862:524), but in *BM* it does not appear to carry this implication.

Other titles are given to religious figures, including *mahapandita* 'great sage', given to the sage at the beginning of the tale and to Bujangga Manik himself (by Captain Séla Batang – BM 960) after his travels to the east. The word is Sundanised Sanskrit – *mahā* 'great' and *paṇḍita* 'learned man, seer, ascetic' (source of English 'pundit'). *Déwaguru*, meaning 'superior of a religious community' ('abbot/abbess') in OJv (OJED 396:4), is another Sanskrit-derived title; it is applied to the unnamed heads of East Javanese religious communities (BM 824, 1105). The word *ameng* is applied to Bujangga Manik by Jompong Larang in BM 250, and it is part of the name he adopts after sailing from Pemalang to Jakarta, 'Ameng Layaran'. It appears to have referred to a category of religious practitioners – *ameng* features in a list alongside *wiku* 'monks' and *tiyagi* 'ascetics' in *Sri Ajnyana* (SA 394), for instance. OJv *amēñ* and MSd *ameng* both mean 'to play' or 'to amuse oneself' (Coolsma 1913:15; OJED 64.9), and in MSd it has a particular implication of childishness and immaturity. I have therefore tentatively translated it as 'novice'. It may be, however, that the terms are unrelated.

### *Kinship and Gender*

Several kinship terms occur in *BM*, including *bapa* 'father' (*dibapa* 'have a father' – BM 627), *ambu* 'mother', and *nini* 'grandmother'. Kinship terms in western Indo-Malaysia are often generational, so the term for e.g. 'mother' likely also meant 'women of ego's mother's generation' (as in Malay/Indonesian). Other OSd generational terms include *anak(ing)* '(my) child' and *aki(ing)* '(my) grandfather', the latter of which the ascetic uses to address the ships' captains. *Rakaki* 'venerable', a word applied to Bujangga Manik himself, is from the OJv cognate (*kaki* 'grandfather, old man; venerable' [OJED 767:1]) with the OJv honorific *ra-*. Finally, *lañcek* 'elder sibling' is used by the female ascetic at Balungbungan to address Bujangga Manik, perhaps to circumvent accusations of romantic desire. In MSd the word (*lanceuk*) carries the same meaning; distinguishing kin by relative age is common in MP languages (cf. Malay/Indonesian *kakak/adik*).

*Tuang* 'revered' precedes some kin terms, as in *tuang a(m)bu* 'revered mother' and *tuang ponakan* 'revered nephew(s)/niece(s)' (BM 322), the latter a particularly interesting use. The word can be connected to OJv *twañ* 'reverence, awe' (OJED 2090.7 – see Noorduyn and Teeuw [2006:52-53] and Eringa [1949:70-72]), although it is used in MSd with a slightly different focus – e.g. *tuang-kuring* 'your very humble servant' (Rigg 1862:503). *Tuang a(m)bu* is used by both Ajung Larang (BM 402) and Bujangga Manik (BM 89) in reference to the latter's mother, suggesting that the phrase simply meant 'revered' or 'honoured' – but *tuang* may have been particularly relevant when referring to in-laws or marriageable classes. Jompong uses the term *tuang ponakan* 'honoured nephew(s)' when describing Bujangga Manik to her mother Ajung Larang, saying that he is more handsome than Silih Wangi, Bañak Catra, and *tuang ponakan* (BM 322), her mother's 'revered nephews'. *Ponakan* seems

to be a loan from OJv *kaponakan* ‘nephew, niece’ (OJED 800:1), apparently often used in reference to the children of ego’s sister. Jompong may have referred to her mother’s nephews (i.e. her own cousins) in this context because she would ordinarily have been expected to marry one of them. Ajung’s use of *tuang a(m)bu* when telling Jompong to bring the gifts to Bujangga Manik’s mother, now Jompong’s prospective mother-in-law, also suggests a connection between *tuang* and marriage alliance.

We cannot glean much from this about the nature of such marriages or precisely whom the marriageable class included, but it suggests that nobles in Sunda were expected to marry their cousins. Indonesian societies show a bewildering range of types of marriage alliance – matrilineal cross-cousin marriage, wherein men are expected to marry their classificatory mother’s brother’s daughters and women their father’s sister’s sons, is common in eastern Indonesian and upland Sumatra, for instance, but far from universal even there (see e.g. Forth 2001:104; R. Needham 1987:136; Renes 1983:226-227), and it is rare in western Indonesia (Fox 1989:34). Without more data we can only speculate about marriage alliance in medieval Sunda. Jompong is in any case able to assert her own choice, as is Bujangga Manik, although the fact that *larang* ‘forbidden’ occurs in Jompong’s name may be a clue to the poet’s views on the appropriateness of the proposed match.

The status of women in medieval Java is difficult to divine from the extant sources. Most depictions of women, and more particularly of marriage, are found in the OJv *kakawin*, which almost invariably describe the lives of noble women and draw on Sanskrit literature for models of how to describe women’s lives and bodies; the extent to which they reflected the situation in Java itself is debatable (Creese 2004:89). From these and other sources, though, it seems that women in Java were able to inherit land in their own right, preside over legal cases, and rule as sovereigns (Creese 2004:35-36). They are frequently depicted in *kakawin* as literate, although Helen Creese (2004:39) comments that ‘[i]f a distinctive women’s writing ever existed in the Indic courts of Java and Bali, it has been irretrievably lost’. Interestingly, the OSd text *Séwaka Darma* is believed to have been written by a woman, Buyut Ni Dawit (Danasasmita et al. 1987:1). The fifteenth-century OJv work *Tantu Paṅgĕlaran* says that men and women were made by different gods – men by Brahma and women by Wiṣṇu – but that they are ‘equal in beauty and perfection’ (Pigeaud 1924:57-58).<sup>A34</sup> In modern Kanékes/Baduy communities men and women are considered equal but with separate spheres of activity – men expected to prepare rice fields and construct buildings and women expected to weave and dye cloth (as elsewhere in the archipelago), prepare betel quids for ceremonies (as in *BM*), and harvest the rice once grown (Hasman and Reiss 2012:9; cf. Karim 1992:8). The depictions of women and gender roles in *BM* are consistent with this.

Pires says that sati (‘suttee’) was practised in Sunda but that it was not compulsory:<sup>272</sup>

---

<sup>272</sup> See Geertz [1980:100] for a description of sati in nineteenth-century Bali.

‘It is the custom in Sunda for the king’s wives and nobles to burn themselves when he dies; and so when anyone of lower rank dies in his house the same thing is done, that is, if they wish to do so, not because the women are persuaded by words to die, only those who want to do it of their own accord. And those who do not are [anchoresses] leading a life apart and people do not marry them. Others marry three or four times. These few are outcasts in the land’ (Cortêsão 1944:167).<sup>A35</sup>

Bujangga Manik says that he grew up without a father (BM 627), his father presumably having died. His mother seems not to have burned herself alongside her husband’s body, consistent with Pires’ description of the voluntary nature of the practice. Assuming Pires was right, the ascetic’s mother could not have married again.



## IV.2 The Characters

*Bujangga Manik* is framed by the speech of a sage (*mahapandita*) in Pakuan, who overhears crying and wailing in the palace at the leaving of Jaya Pakuan, the poem’s protagonist. The frame story is not reprised and the *mahapandita* is not heard from again. Jaya Pakuan, who goes by three names over the course of the story (*Ameng Layaran* and *Bujangga Manik* being the others), clearly dislikes human contact. Other aspects of his personality can be seen in his words and deeds, and his physical appearance is described briefly upon his return to Pakañcilan (BM 269-274). The ascetic’s mother, referred to once as Ratu Bañcana, features as an important secondary character, spurring the ascetic’s eastward journey. Jompong Larang (BM 236), who falls for the ascetic after he returns to Pakañcilan, and her mother, Ajung Larang (aka Sakéan Kilat Bañcana – BM 284), who arranges the marriage negotiations, are also essential to the plot; Jompong’s proposal perturbs the ascetic, prompting him. These people, including the ascetic in his first incarnation, are all described as *tohaan* ‘lords/ladies’.

Later, when Bujangga Manik is ensconced in his hermitage near Balungbungan, he is approached by an unnamed *tiyagi (wa)don* ‘female ascetic’, who wants to join him (BM 851). This, too, causes Bujangga Manik to pick up his things and leave, in this case for Bali, where the sheer number of people leads him to sail back to Java in frustration. Other characters include the two ship captains, Séla Batang and Béla Sagara, discussed in Part V, and Dorakala, the guardian of heaven (BM 1594) – the only supernatural character to have a speaking role in the surviving leaves. Legendary figures are mentioned occasionally – Silih Wangi, Banyak Catra, Sangkuriang, and the mysterious Tuhan Cupak<sup>273</sup> – but only nine people have speaking roles and only eight of them are named. An additional group of

---

<sup>273</sup> This may be a reference to the story of Cupak Gerantang in the folk theatre of Bali and Lombok, but in those stories Cupak is not a positive figure or a lord. I am at a loss to interpret Tuhan Cupak’s *sakakala*.



people ask Jaya Pakuan where he is going (BM 37-39), but their speech is described onomatopoeically as *séyah* ‘rustling, tumbling of a waterfall’, and the ascetic does not respond.

### *Bujangga Manik*

The poem’s ascetic protagonist has three names at different points in his life, retaining two of them until the end. The first name is *Jaya Pakuan* ‘Pakuan’s victory’ (BM 13); the second is *Ameng Layaran* ‘sailing novice’ (BM 123); and the third is *Bujangga Manik* (BM 457). It is as *Rakaki Bujangga Manik* (‘The Venerable Bujangga Manik’) that the ascetic is usually addressed at the height of his earthly powers; he is also referred to as a *mahapandita*. Noorduyn adopted *Bujangga Manik* as the name of the text for this reason, but, interestingly, a text named ‘Bujangga Manik’ is mentioned in another Sundanese lontar text, the *Sanghyang Swawarcita* (PNRI, L626), suggesting that *BM* was known by the name at the time of its composition. The name certainly survived in Sunda in the interim: Rigg (1862:67.15) says, long before the modern publication of the poem, that Bujangga Manik was ‘the name of Ratu Guriang, or the king of the moutain [sic] spirits’. This suggests that *BM*’s (missing) finale recounted Bujangga Manik’s transformation into a king of the spirits (Rigg’s *Ratu Guriang* – where *guriang* = *guru* ‘teacher’ + *hiyang* ‘god, ancestor’).

The ascetic is described in his youth – as an *ameng* ‘novice’ – by an infatuated Jompong Larang (BM 269-274). She says that he has round calves, graceful anklets, curved eyebrows, teeth stained red from betel-chewing, and long fingernails. (Rigg [1862:480] notes that in his day Sundanese aristocrats grew their nails long to show that they did not engage in manual labour.) Jompong also refers to the *ameng*’s *jojo(m)pong*, which seems to mean a ‘tuft of hair’; in modern Sundanese this word is used for the mane of a horse. It may imply that Bujangga Manik wore a *śikhā* (a tuft of hair associated with adherence to Hindu doctrine). After this the ascetic’s physical appearance is not referred to again until after his death. While travelling the ascetic wears a cloth (*sace(n)dung kaén*) on his head and later on is said to carry a *walatung*-rattan (*Calamus caesius*) whip and a five-headed walking stick. Examples of East Javanese-era mendicants’ metal walking stick finials hung with bells (*khakkhara* in Sanskrit) survive in museums, including a fourteenth-century one in the Museum Nasional (inv. no. 6067 – Fontein 1990:270-271). Bujangga Manik’s stick might not have been anything like this, though.

The protagonist aspires to an ascetic life, in any case, and he becomes a great sage (*mahapandita*) some time before his death (BM 1307). The word for ‘ascetic (practice)’ is *tapa* (cf OJv *tapa* – OJED 1945:5, from Skt *tapa*), a term still used in Sundanese and other Indo-Malaysian languages. Tomé Pires uses the same word, *tapas*, in referring to the mendicants and ascetics of Java, although Pires’s comment that such ascetics ‘do not go about alone’ does not accord with the seemingly solitary life depicted in *BM* (Cortêsão 1944:177).<sup>A36</sup> Bujangga Manik’s ascetic life involves renunciation of sex and marriage, withdrawal from humankind, disregard for external appearances, and meditation on the divine, as well as worship of the *lingga*, a Śaivist practice, in an attempt to die without

illness (i.e. Skt *mokṣa*, OSd *kamoksahan* ‘liberation’) and merge with the ‘great soul’ (OSd *atma*, from Skt *ātman*) to become a god (*jadi déwa*), a task he achieves after ten years at his hermitage near Mount Patuha (BM 1434). The ascetic ideal is summarised at the beginning of the eleventh-century *kakawin Arjunawiwāha* (1.1):

‘The mind of the scholar who understands the highest truth has already penetrated the Void and passed beyond / His intentions do not flow from a desire for the objects of the senses, as if he were concerned with the things of this world’ (*kakawin Arjunawiwāha*, 1.1 – Robson 2008:38-39).<sup>A37</sup>

Little in *BM*’s asceticism suggests disgust at bodily functions or the body *per se*, contrasting starkly with bodily revulsion in Indian asceticism (Olivelle 1995) – although in spurning Jompong and the female ascetic at Balungbungan Bujangga Manik is evidently determined to renounce both the body physical and body social. His rejection of the human world is not total – he still converses with the ships’ captains – but his motivation is nonetheless to do away with feelings and appearances to grasp an underlying monist reality.



Figure IV.1. A palm-rib broom at Karang Kamulyan in Ciamis, West Java. Author’s photo, November 2018.

An interesting aspect of asceticism in *BM* and other OSd texts is that of sweeping-as-meditation or worship-by-sweeping (*puja ñapu* – BM 846, 1288). This appears to have been of some importance, as the marks of the broom (*tapak sapu* – BM 1466) are among the things Bujangga Manik sees as he passes from our Middle World (*mad(i)yapada*) upon his *kamoksahan*. Brooms (*sapu*) made of the ribs

of palm leaves bound together to form a handle are common throughout the archipelago and can be seen in use at Sundanese sacred sites to this day (Figure IV.1). *Sri Ajnyana* features a more explicit description wherein the process of sweeping itself leads to insight:

‘The lessons of the eminent sage · were a yard swept · clean all over. · Now my mind was full of joy · seeing the lustre of the flowers · which made my mind recover’ (SA 242-247 – Noorduynd and Teeuw 2006:222).<sup>A38</sup>

Once Bujangga Manik has crossed into heaven he encounters the door guardian Dorakala, who, after some convincing, lets the ascetic enter on the grounds that his body or self (*awak*) is ‘more fragrant than opium · more valuable than sandalwood · sweeter than massoy bark’ (BM 1637-1639). Approximately the same phrases appear in the OSd poem *Séwaka Darma*, except that the subject is not *awak* ‘self; body’ but *aci* ‘essence’: *acina ruum ti candu · mahabara ti candana* ‘their essence is more fragrant than opium, more valuable than sandalwood’ (Danasasmita et al. 1987:28).<sup>274</sup> This is the reward of asceticism. As the Orthodox Christian theologian Kallistos Ware reminds us (1995:3-15), asceticism should not be reduced to renunciation for renunciation’s sake: Ascetic practice in *BM* often seems positive rather than negative, representing less withdrawal from the body and more positive emphasis on the divine or underlying reality, from which feelings and appearances are but distractions.

Dorakala is not described in any detail – we might have more information had f.29 survived. The name is derived from Sanskrit *dvara* ‘door’ (related to English ‘door’ via PIE \*dʰwǵr) and *kāla*, whose original meanings included ‘time’, ‘black’, and ‘death’, but which came to be applied to the heads or masks of demons that decorated the lintels of doors at temples in early medieval Java (alongside other terms, particularly *dwarapāla*, *cawintěn*, and *kīrtimukha* – see Fontein 1990:136-137). It is clear from his name and deeds, anyway, that he guards the entrance to heaven.

### *Jompong Larang*

Jompong Larang (‘forbidden youth’) appears to be the daughter of a noblewoman named Ajung Larang (‘forbidden beauty’, cf. OJv *ajěñ* ‘goodness, beauty’ [OJED 33:8]?). In BM 276-277 she is said to be ‘hurried, rigid, easily frightened’ and to ‘walk like a Javanese elephant’ (although the interpretation of the word *gajar* ‘elephant (?)’, is not certain). My translation of Jompong’s physical description in BM 539-548 is based on Aditia Gunawan’s interpretation (2019), wherein the most important traits relate to weaving and dyeing, essential aspects of womanhood in pre-modern Indo-Malaysia, contrasting starkly with that in Noorduynd and Teeuw (2006). Noorduynd treated *warangan*, for instance, as a word for a yellow-ish skin tone. It is better connected to OJv *warañ*, though, whose meanings are all related to marriage (OJED 2204:11), whence ‘nubile’. Noorduynd’s ‘invulnerable’ for

<sup>274</sup> The published text reads *naha bara ta cina(n)dana*, but I suspect these are typos. I would correct the text of *SD* to accord more closely with *BM* in this section in any case.

the word *karawaléya* (BM 543 – from Skt *kāravēlla* ‘gourd’, re-interpreted in OJv to mean ‘breadfruit; tough, invulnerable’ [OJED 806:5]) also seems less plausible than Gunawan’s interpretation of ‘tough grip (on the loom)’.

Jompong does not appear again after her rejection by Bujangga Manik, although he interprets the gifts she brings to suggest that she is constantly sick and weeping (BM 569-573). The poem gives no indication as to whether this is true or not.

### *Bujangga Manik’s Mother*

Weaving is an essential part of the poem’s presentation of its female characters, and Bujangga Manik’s mother is first encountered weaving and dyeing cloth (BM 159-165), as is Jompong’s mother, Ajung Larang. Bujangga Manik’s mother – whom he calls *a(m)bu* or *a(m)buing* ‘(my) mother’ – is described as having ‘yellow calves’ (BM 226); Noorduyn translated the word for ‘yellow’ here as ‘golden’, presumably because ‘yellow’ is not flattering, but ‘yellow’ is nonetheless more accurate. She powders her cheeks and wears ‘expensive cloth’ while preparing betel quids for her and her son. She clatters through the house, her *tapih* (tube skirt) slapping at her heels, presumably carrying the betel and other items, including a branch of *kupa* fruit (BM 208 – *Syzygium polycephala*<sup>275</sup>).

It appears Bujangga Manik’s father is no longer around; perhaps this is what made his mother wayward and ‘drunk without drinking palm wine (*tuak*)’ (BM 632). In one instance she is referred to as *Ratu Bañcana* ‘queen of deception’ (BM 223 – OJv *bañcana* ‘deception, fraud [etc.]’, from Skt – OJED 210:1), presumably a comment by the poet rather than a name. It is said that her mother, Bujangga Manik’s grandmother (*nini*), broke taboos (*pamali*), including eating *benter* fish (*Barbodes binotatus*, the common barb – Rigg 1862:53) and banana flowers (*jantung*, also meaning ‘human heart’) while pregnant, causing her daughter to go astray. The ascetic sees her acceptance of Jompong’s proposal as deceitful and wrong and, in the most dramatic and consequential interaction in the story, he rejects the entire idea, telling his mother that this is the last time they will see each other. He takes an open-work bag, puts the book *Siksaguru* (‘teacher’s instructions’) inside, and sets out east with his walking stick and whip, looking for a place to die (BM 652-667).

### *Ajung Larang*

Ajung Larang, who is also known as *Sa(ng?)kéyan Kilat Bañcana* (a tricky phrase – ‘bearing calamitous lightning’?), is Jompong’s mother. She is described in similar terms to Bujangga Manik’s mother: She weaves, dyes cloth, prepares betel quids, and rises ‘like a goose’ when getting up to enter the house. She is weaving when Jompong goes to speak to her. In BM 278-283, she is said to be sitting

<sup>275</sup> Formerly *Jambosa cauliflora*. The German explorer Justus Karl Hasskarl described *kupa* (*koepa*) thus: ‘The wood is beautifully red, strong, heavy, [and] coarse and can be used as timber in construction; the fruits are sweet and sour and are eaten’ (Hasskarl 1845:85 – my translation).

on a *kasur* (a quilt-mattress made from a cloth stuffed with cotton wool) beside a gilded Chinese box while ‘carelessly dressed’, her waist visible. Ajung Larang arranges the betel quids to be sent over to Bujangga Manik to propose the marriage, and she tells her daughter what to say to make the *tuang ambu* amenable to the request. It is notable that the entire process is initiated and controlled by women, and male involvement is not required at any point before Bujangga Manik’s rejection of the proposal.

\*

People are not the focus of *Bujangga Manik* and it contains few named characters. The moral message is that people are deceptive and easily deceived, and to indulge one’s passions is to be led away from the path to heaven. We can nonetheless extract certain interesting features of fifteenth-century Sundanese society from the poem’s portrayals of its human characters, particularly regarding gender roles and ascetic practice, and the personality of each individual comes across in the nuances of their deeds and descriptions (to the extent that we can understand them).

In the next section I will examine the portrayal of the ships on which Bujangga Manik sails. Unlike many OJv *kakawin*, which depict sea travel as perilous and ships as often wrecked, *BM* seems to delight in the details of naval construction and the multicultural world of the ship.

\*