

## **HISTORIOGRAPHY & MYTHOLOGY OF BENGAWAN SALA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The aims of this research are: [1]. Describing the historiographic dimension of Bengawan Sala (Solo River), [2]. Describing the mythology alive in the people's mind along the River Sala, [3]. Formulating revitalization of historiography and mythology of Bengawan Sala which can support the development of tourism in Surakarta. This is a qualitative research making use of primary and secondary sources. Research data were collected by using in-depth interviews, guided group discussions, field observations, and a close reading method (metode simak). Triangulation of data sources was done to ensure the validity of data. Data were analyzed by using the technique of interactive model. The results of the research show that [1]. Historiography of Bengawan Sala is important and singularly valuable when it is viewed from its historical perspective. From its historiographic aspect, Bengawan Sala was a main and urgent channel of transportation before the coming of train, cars and airplanes. [2]. The meanings of mythology around Bengawan Sala, such as Kerek, Lubuk Maya, Bengawan Goa Sentana, Benawi Getas, Lubuk Werpitu, all show the "sacredness" [or "keangkeran"] of Bengawan Sala as a channel for transportation. This mythological story functions to remind all boating people through such areas to be careful because those areas are the place where two different streams from the opposite direction meet each other, or where whirl pools happen. Mythological story of Tinggang depicts the giants which already died, "ambreganggang" shortened as "Tinggang." People believe that the big wood fossils scattered in the area are the bones of the giants which were already dead, "ambreganggang" [or "fell down criss-crossing"]. That mythology shows that the lands around Bengawan Sala are fertile. [3]. The exploratory research gives a basic model of "Revitalization Based on the Historiography of Bengawan Sala" (or "Revitalisasi Bengawan Sala Berbasis Kesadaran Sejarah"), that is revitalization of Bengawan Sala through the historiography and mythology development of it.*

**Key words:** *Revitalization, Historiography of Bengawan Sala, Mythology.*

### **Introduction**

Sala is a big cultural town on Java Island, next after Jakarta and Yogyakarta. As a cultural town, Sala has not maximized her cultural wealth, especially her

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traditional arts, history, and culture that can have great attraction for tourists, particularly foreign ones (Oka A. Yoeti, 1966).

The tendency among tourists travelling nowadays is to go for and value experience, a change from the old conventional ways of travelling to places with particular interests or attractions. The number of tourists who make trips with the specific aim of understanding the cultural richness and enjoying the natural beauty of a country is on the increase. Catering for this tendency on the part of the tourists to enjoy the natural beauty of a country and understand its cultural richness demands that the hosts possess a sufficient knowledge of the place being visited (*sense of place*). Thus, the development of the study of historiography and mythology will have an important impact in helping to form tourists' experience (Bromley in Sariyatun and Rara Sugiarti, 2006). Many areas with their unique characteristics have kept facts of history and mythology (folklores) and all this will be able to become attractions to tourists.

Bengawan Sala (the River of Sala), as one part of Surakarta's region, is rich in history and mythology; therefore, it is necessary to develop it in anticipation of the coming of tourists who are travelling for a specific purpose, that is to understand the cultural richness and enjoy the natural beauty of the country. Therefore, sufficient explanations on tourist objects in Bengawan Sala are important. One of the various efforts that people can do is by to revitalize this sector. This can be done by developing the various dimensions of Bengawan Sala's historiography and mythology.

Linguistically speaking revitalization means the process, ways, or actions taken to make something vital or important again (Hoetomo, 2003:1). Revitalization is a kind of review, a rearrangement or readjustment of things in order to make them beneficial for society in a more extensive context (Hastanto, 2002:1). Thus, revitalization is an effort to enhance something, for instance culture, by reviewing whatever drawbacks it has and meeting whatever demands that exist in order to bring out more benefits overall.

According to Gertler, (1992:8) in relations to tourism, revitalization and culture preservation are characterized by three things, i.e. [1]. A belief that revitalization is not only attainable, but can also be considered as being something beneficial culturally and economically. [2]. An awareness of the consequences; therefore, careful actions in relations to revitalization are necessary [3]. A comprehension of what should be done with the requirements so as to minimize risks associated with the effort to realize the potentials of tourism which is based on culture preservation.

Moreover, it is said that cultural values possess historical depth; their existence has become part of life's traditions. This also assumes that in life there exists a number of material forms, such as history, archeology, as well as immaterial forms, such as philosophy, traditions, and arts. Celebrations which are great events or personal affairs in the history of life's traditions, covering social, cultural, educational dimensions and others, are often expressed through

literature and folklores or common people's stories.

History in its objective meaning, records happenings or events. Historical event only happened once; they cannot be repeated nor reenacted again. In the expression "*sejarah berulang*" (history being repeated), history is understood in its objective meaning. While in the expression "*kita perlu belajar dari sejarah*," or "we have to learn from history," history is understood in its subjective context.

Through the teaching of history, there is an effort to communicate noble values to the learners or students. To relate historical events, it is necessary to interpret them in a conceptual framework so that the past experience will benefit the learners or students. History as knowledge of the past is very important as a basis for preparing for the future. At the same time, Toffler (1970) regards history as essential for the younger generation, the existence of history as a subject in schools must be upheld. Moreover, with the current emphasis upon the future, history ought not to be neglected, maybe this is what Naisbitt means (in Widya, 1990:7) when he writes: "*We must learn from the future in specially the ways we have learned from the past.*"

There are a lot of benefits that can be drawn from history because in it are kept data and facts for the present and next generations. Monuments and documents enable the present and next generations to re-actualize the collective experience of a nation, "... *history is the story of the experience of man, these experiences are, of course, passive as well as active*" (Reinier, 1965:35). "Thus, people need to learn history (experience) because history makes man become wise; besides, it is a course which has high values" (Hill, 1953; Rowse, 1963).

Folklore is part of a collective spreading of culture passed down from generation to generation. It comes in different forms: in varied traditional versions, in the form of writing including the use of sign languages. To differentiate folklore from other products of culture, it is necessary to recognize the characteristics of folklore in general. These characteristics include: [1]. Folklore's spread and passing down are usually done orally, i.e. through the telling of stories, or words of mouth [2]. Folklore is origin anonymous, the author's name is not recognized, [3]. Folklore has benefits for those living together in a collective setting, [4]. Folklore is generally naïve and innocent, so sometimes it looks rough and very spontaneous.

Based on the above characteristics, folklores in Indonesia can be categorized into three big groups, namely: [1]. Verbal folklore (or oral folklore), [2]. Partly oral folklore, and [3]. Non-oral folklore (or non-verbal folklore) (Brunvand, 1968:2-3). Oral folklore has purely oral form. Forms of folklore (or genres) which come into this big group are: (a) folklore speech ('*bahasa rakyat*'), such as dialects, nicknames, traditional ranks, aristocratic titles, (b) traditional expressions, such as proverbs, exeplums, and forbidden sayings, (c). traditional questions, such as puzzles, (d) common people's poems, such as rhymed lyrics, "*gurindam*," and poems, (e) common prosaic stories, such as myths, legends and tales, and (f) folk songs.

With the above mentioned description, the importance of the revitalization process through development of the historical and mythological dimension is based upon certain assumptions. These are [1]. Cultural historical inheritance is a component of education which can develop a sense of belonging and help one appreciate one's own history and culture, [2]. Bengawan Sala has educational, social, economic, cultural and historical values. Therefore, the empowerment of Bengawan Sala as a historical and cultural inheritance and in a tourism package is important. It is a device to preserve historical and cultural heritage and improve the community's economy simultaneously, [3]. To realize the concept of "*Sala Tempo Dulu*" (or "The Past Sala") or uniquely Solonese characteristic-based tourism, the historical cultural sites which show the unique face of Sala, for example Taman Jurug (Jurug Park & Zoo) and Bengawan Sala, need to be revitalized.

In relations to the above, the focus of discussion is on the following questions: [1]. How to develop the various dimensions of Bengawan Sala historiography? [2]. How to develop the mythology which is still alive in the minds of people residing along the banks of Bengawan Sala? and [3]. How to ensure that the model of historiographical and mythological revitalization can support tourism development in Surakarta? The discussion is aimed at describing the historiographical and mythological dimensions of Bengawan Sala, the mythology which is alive in the society residing along the banks of Bengawan Sala as well as enhancing the model of historiographical and mythological revitalization.

### **Historiography of Bengawan Sala**

Before the twentieth century, the community's life was much influenced by the River "Bengawan Sala." The geographical condition of the river banks was such that it could function as the shaper of space. Its lay out placed the community into a shared awareness of the setting of a certain culture. For the community around the river, the stream was their main artery of transportation. Therefore, the river bank community's language had idioms that were different from those of the language of other communities on the banks of other rivers (Koentjaraningrat, 1984). Thus, the space structure of the community is formed by the river. It acts as a signifier to unite groups in the community around it.

The growth of the community on the banks of *Kali Sala* ("Bengawan Sala's old name") has been proven by archeological findings in the forms of artefacts and fossils from the oldest ages, such as those found in Trinil, Ngandong, Sambungmacan, Sangiran, and in the sediments from the Pleistocen Period. The period lasted from 3,000,000 B.C. to 10,000 BC., at the time when nature had been able to provide human beings their basic needs, such as animals, plants, and water. The existence of terraced sediments can be assumed to have been the result of erosions caused by floods. Different terraces had been revealed and this has given clues to what natural happenings had taken place in the past. The findings

an the river's terraces (in Ngandong's sediment layers) were made possible by the digging done by W.F. Oppennoorth and C. Ter Haar (1931-1932). It resulted with the discovery of 11 skulls of *pithecanthropus soloensis* together with a number of animal fossils (SNI I, 1975:37).

*Kali Sala* is not mentioned as "sungai", but "bengawan, or "benawi" meaning "big river." In Javanese mythology, the "Bengawan" was created in the year of *Suryasangkala* 231 (*Rupa Weddhaning-Panembah*) or in the year of *Candra-sangkala* 238 (*Naga Katingal Boja*). In the period of *Kartika*, Sanghyang Surapati created *nadisara*, that is a big river which surrounds *Maharpatan* (Ranggawarsito, 1993:140) which is in Java. Dyah Balitung's plate on *tambangan Telang* in Wonogiri (in 903) mentioned "Bengawan" in the first part as *Sang Hyang Mahawan* (the word "mahawan" means "road"), while in the second part as *Sang Maharddika* (the word "maharddika" means "priest") (Ranggawarsita, 1987:110-111), which was then pronounced "Bengawan." The honorary name given by the community, "sang hyang," was commented by DeCasparis, that it was connected with a religious function that is called "dharma kamulan" (Casparis, 1950:149).

The story of the stream of Bengawan was once written by the Bojanegoro regent, R. Adipati Arya Reksakusuma (in 1916) (Tirtopranoto, no year: 78-79). From a spring, it flowed southwest, then westwards, in Kakap it turned north, in the southern part of Wonogiri it met Kali Keduwang (which had its spring in Mount Lawu). It then turned southwest and met Kali Dengkeng (which had its spring in Mount Merapi), and continued northeast. In Sala Town it met Kali Pepe (which had its spring in Mount Merbabu's slope). It ran northeast to meet Kali Kedhungbang (which had its spring in Mount Lawu's slope). In Sukowati, it turned east up to the border of Ngawi to meet Kali Kedhungbanteng (which had its spring in Mount Lawu). Moving straight east in Ngawi it met Kali Madiun or Kali Genthong from Ponorogo, Magetan and Ngawi. The river became wider as it turned north and east a little in Cepu to meet Kali Bathokan (which had its spring in Mount Pandhan). It went east again before sharply turning left and then right. In Bojanegoro, it met Kali Kening (which had its spring in the Mountainous Gamping). The stream proceeded east, going into the border of Tuban. North of Kapas, it met Kali Pacal (which had its spring in Mount Pandhan). Going north of Palem it reached Rengel where it turned east till Babat, then turned northeast to Gresik, then turned left and right towards east, afterwards in Sedayu the water drifted into the sea.

Based on the description above, it can be said that stream of Bengawan originated in Kedhuwang (Wonogiri), passed through Pajang, Sukawati, Jagaraga, Madiun, Blora, Jipang, Tuban, Sedayu and Gresik. In the south of Sedayu, the stream of Bengawan Sala branched to the sea off Madura. The length of the river, measured from Sala town to Gresik, is not less than 356 miles or about 634 kilometers; although as represented on the map, if it is drawn with a straight line, it is only about 140 miles or about 210 kilometers.



The spring of Bengawan Sala is from the southeastern cliff of the Mountainous Sewu, that is Dalepoh Plateau (in Wonogiri), whose slopes are covered with Pilangputih forest. Dalepoh is surrounded by the hills of Anak, Gajah, Kuning, Tundha, Rujak, Babal, Putri, Kekep, Brit, Dhandhang, and Gelung. Some of the local people believe that the spring of Bengawan Sala is guarded by the queen Widanangga in Cave Jatha, called “*kedhatyan*” (in Centhini, 15, 18-19). Widanangga is Andarawati, known as *Nyai Rara Kidul*, a daughter of king Angin-angin and Dewi Angin-Angin, the ruler of Segarasemu kingdom, in Sonji Palace (Christmas Island) (Arifin, 2005).

The soil and mud around Bengawan Sala generally become very fertile secondary soil, especially in its delta because it is rich in alluvial deposits from sediments of active mounts and other kinds of sediments, and with ample water there. The average debit of water in Bengawan Sala per second is between 2,000 cubic meters and 2,300 cubic meters, and 2,500 cubic meters during flood season (Geertz, 1976:44-47). For examples, in the southern part of Rembang of Bengawan stream area, a lot of fertile soil is found in parts of the stream that have sufficient water (Warto, 2001:22,24). But, along the river, floods happen almost every year because the river cannot contain all the water from smaller rivers flowing into it, and big floods had occurred in 1866, in 1902, and in 1904 (in *De Locomotief*, 16 November 1917), and in 1066.

Sala town was affected by a big flood in 1892. To curb flood, a strengthened bank of 10 kilometers length was built (in the southern and eastern banks of the town). During the Japanese occupation, a channel to drain flood (Kali Anyat) was built. It was a “*sudetan*” or a cutting drainage to Kali Pepe heading straight towards Bengawan Sala (near Putri Cempa). The aim was to decrease the overflowing during the rainy season. The 1966 flood is regarded as stemming from a political failure as far as the environments are concerned. The 1001 Movement, i.e. a movement to plant trees on unattended land, caused a narrowing the width of Kali Pepe. The initial width of Kali Pepe was intended to contain flood. After it was narrowed the width was reduced to about 1.5 meters wide only. Thus, the objective of containing the flood had become meaningless. In Wonogiri, the long term production of woods which was deemed unable to bring prosperity to the community was greatly reduced and the activity was replaced by that of agricultural production.

Bengawan Sala was used for water transportation: sailing boats and for “*tambangan*” [or crossing from bank to bank with rafts or boats drawn by people using ropes] (Vincent, 2002: 621-624). Piagam Telang issued by Dyah Balitung gave free passage to people crossing the river using “*tambangan* raft or boat.” This showed that Bengawan Sala was under the reign of Mataram kings. This matter can be surmised because crossing from bank to bank of the river was one of the ways connecting southern and eastern parts of the kingdom at that time. Such passages through the southern slopes of the big mounts which are in the middle, such as Mount Lawu, Mount Wilis, and Mount Semeru, were important

in the context of political and economic history (De Graaf, 1985:256-257).

Not much is known about Bengawan Sala, because there is no written evidence or other records (Lombard, 1966:10-11). Traditional source gives information on the growth of community centers around the river, such as Mulwapati or Bojonegara with figures like Anglingdarma and other rulers specifically mentioned. These rulers also used the river as a water-way to sail to the sea (*Out Javaansche Oorkode* (OJO) No. XLIII from the period of Mpu Sendok (in 852 or in 930). The name of a place, Kahyunan, is also mentioned. According to Poerbatjaraka, “*cala*” in OJO is the Sala area because there was a name “*Prahuan*” (“*Praon*” or the the place where people may use boats for numerous purposes) near the estuary of Sungai Pepe (the river Pepe) (Poerbatjaraka, 1961: No 3). OJO also wrote about “*ing peken ri Hemad*” (in the market Hemad), a ceremonial place for the setting up “*Swatantra* [self-governing] Sala”. It also referred to Bengawan [Sala] and Merapi (Mount Merapi) (Poerbatjaraka, 1952:31), and it also stated that during Prabu Dandang Gendhis’ rule in Kediri, Pajang (on the western side of Bengawan) had grown into a little kingdom. Later, in the period after it, it was also mentioned in *Serat Pararaton, Nagarakertagama, Babad Jawi or Serat Kandha*.

*Piagam* Suradakan or Suradakan Chapter (in 1447) is supposed to be the last chapter which mentioned the name of “*Bengawan*” (Yamin , 1962:181-212). Later it was referred to by using the name of “*Bengawan Semanggi*”. Likewise in “*Serat Wicara Keras*,” Yasadipura mentioned that this referred to the Semanggi people’s Bengawan (Soeratman, 1989:21). It was called such because Semanggi became their dominant location or the center for activities in the Pajang region (De Graaf; Pigeaud, 1960:259-260). It was supposed to be so because Semanggi had been important since Pajang became the center of power. The mentioning of Semanggi was to refer to Bengawan which flowed in Pajang region (*Babad Tanah Djawi*, 1920:47).

In his research, Boorduyn (1998:166-168) succeeded in indentifying the sites of “*bandar tambangan*” or “the ports of tambangan” along the river covering a distance of between 3 to 7 kilometers and / or 13 to 15 kilometers. Semanggi was listed as the number 44<sup>th</sup> site found near Barang, Katelan, Ngambon, Kembu. This knowledge of the approximate location of Semanggi was supported by the witness in the fifteenth century from Bujangga Manik who wrote about his adventurous travel to Majapait (Noorduyn, 1998: 413-442); and Robert W. Hefner, 1990:54-55). The trip was from Tanah Sunda to the eastern region passing through the northern coast, turning to the hinterland in Medangkamulan and southward through the Sala village and Semanggi village, to the east, that is to Gegelang. In Bobodho he found the name of “*Wuluyu*” for Semanggi, the low flat land between Mount Lawu and Mount Merapi. Bobodo was a land that belonged to Pangeran (Prince) Sutawijaya (the son of king Brawijaya V, in Majapait kingdom) who was called Ki Gede Majasta. Pangeran Sutawijaya was also called *Jaka Klowor* or *Joko Bodho*, so his land was called Bobodho or dhukuh Pajang (*Babad Demak*, 1981: 397).

The information on the geographical position of Semanggi was similar to what was reported by a spy to Pangeran Surabaya. The information was used when soldiers were sent eastward to Pajang in 1617, “*lepen ageng urut margo, anuntan anjog Semanggi*” (which means “followed the big river, then came to Semanggi”) (Babad Mangir, 1980:207). Semanggi was situated on the western bank of the river Bengawan, near Baturana (Meinma, 1874:665; ***Babad Kartosura***, 1981:78). By the seventeenth century, it was located around ‘*tempuran*’ or the meeting of Bengawan and Kali Pepe (with strong stream, so it was dangerous, “*angker*” and “*wingit*”). This was so because the land covered the area from Putri Cempa in the north of Jurug, Beton, Putat (the extension of Sangkrah) up to tambangan Sampangan, near Maja and Serenan in the south.

Semanggi and Bengawan had become very interesting elements of historiographical analysis (Djajadiningrat, 1983:310-303). Concerning the geneology of their figures, there are points of similarities such as “*keturunan anak manusia buaya*” or “the descendants of crocodile people”. This was related to *nisbah kekerabatan* (familial line) of a Majapait king. The description of human beings by using “*pralambang*” (symbols) like animal’s name was regarded as “*tembung andhupara*”. This is taken to show the ability, wisdom, and “*alus sarta luwesing tembung*” (or “fine and eloquent words”) of the writer (Suradipura, 1990:47-50, 91). The dominant figure was Bajulegara and his son, Jakasengara. The latter was appointed the regent of Pengging with the title Pangeran Handayaningrat. According to De Graaf and Pigeaud (1960:258-259), Handayaningrat still had royal lineage traceable to the king and the prime minister of the Majapait kingdom. He got married to a princess of Majapait after having conquered Blambangan and Bali. With the help of Adipati Sapulaga from Probolinggo, Raja Menak Bandong (Badung, Den Pasar) was defeated. But, what is more important was that Handayaningrat gained victory because of the crocodile community, a community that was the predecessors to his father’s community from Semanggi.

The story about the popular white crocodile which forms part of the mythology in Grobogan (*Suara Merdeka*, 3 July 1997) was attributed to Prabu Dewatacengkar. He became a white crocodile because of “*wong wani in sudarmo*” or “someone who challenged or disrespected his father” (*Surat Kandhaning*, 1988:159). The name was really a “*sanepa*” (a symbol) about someone whose life was like a crocodile, and according to Schrieke (*The Hague*, 1957:277) this was said to have referred to a criminal. Really, the nickname “white crocodile” or “*buaya putih*” was used to hide the real identity of the character. According to manuscript *Manikmaya* (Volume III, 1981:300-301), Bajulsengara was a figure from the estuary of Sungai Gresik; he explored the stream (“*baya putih lami tapa, sawangan jladri genipun, anungsung nurut bengawan*”) to control his area. He was Raden Pancala, the son of Syeh Jumad, a rich businessman from Pinang Island (Carub Kandha Carang Seket, 1980:90) from the matriachal lineage of the daughter of Prabu Panca in Pengging. The term “*buaya putih*”



or “white crocodile” was to distinguish it from other pirates known as “black pirates.” Pigeaud believed that Bajulsegara is someone who was already a “*pecat tandha*,” that is a position in Majapait associated with someone in the ruling power in charge of trade and centers of business traffic, like *tambangan* business (Pigeaud, 1985:217). That position existed until the eighteenth century as referred to and written in *Serat Pustaka Raja Purawa* (Schrieke, 1967:108-109). But, the nickname of “*buaya*” for Ki Gedhe Pengging had an implication more related to politics. Pangeran Handayaningrat II and Kebo Kanigara also fought together with *panca tanda* [five signs] from Terung and Patih Gajahmada, at the end of the Majapait era. Handayaningrat was killed in Sengguruh and his leadership passed to Kebo Kenanga who was called Ki Gedhe Pengging. This took place after Ki Kebo Kanigara (his older brother) chose to wander the forests in Mount Merapi and Mount Merbabu. Pengging embraced Islam due to the efforts of the followers of Seh Siti Jenar (1490-1550) (Saksono, 1995:63). Kebo Kenanga also joined the new religion.

Pangeran Benawa once travelled by using the river. After Senopati took control of Pajang which was then part of Mataram, he went quietly into hiding in Sidayu. He went there by means of the water-way of Bengawan (De Graaf, 1985:95). Later Pangeran Sidawingi ruled Pajang and with the support of those from the eastern region, he did “*kraman*” [or rebelled] against for Sultan Agung in Mataram in 1617. When the armies of Tumenggung Tambakbaya and Demang Jagaraga experienced defeat and Pajang was seized and destroyed by the enemies, Pangeran Sidawingi together with Tambakbaya fled to Surabaya through Semanggi. Following the stream by boat, they went to Giripura, before arriving at Surabaya. When eighteen people led by Balthasar van Eyndhoven and Cornelis van Maseyick were detained by the ruler of Mataram in 1618, they devised their escape plan by disguising themselves in Javanese clothes and by blackening their faces. Boarding a boat in Bengawan, they travelled three days and three nights to arrive at a *loji* or a Dutch house (De Graaf, 1985:86). At that time (in 1620) Mataram attacked Surabaya with 70,000 soldiers. Mataram lost the battle because Gresik was guarded by a Dutch warship *Naptunus*. Indeed, the town was very strategic. It acted as centre for the supply of rice for them, whether the supply came by sea or by means of the Bengawan river.

The situation described above shows how important the river Bengawan was as a water- way (as noted by Antonio Hurdt, Antony Hendrik Buchler and Van Taack Tra Kanen) (F.A. Sutjipto, “*Beberapa Tjataan tentang Pasar-Pasar di Djawa Tengah*” or “Some notes on the markets in Central Java” in *Kegiatan Ilmiah dan Hari Wisuda Sardjana Fakultas Sastra & Kebudayaan, UGM, 1970:148-149*; Schrieke: 117). It was therefore natural for van Hohendorff to consider Desa Sala as the capital of the new Mataram. Pasca “*Geger Pacinan*” or after the Chinese Rebellion, an agreement between Susuhunan Paku Buwana II and the VOC was signed in 1743. It referred to the handing over of Madura Island, the coastal land, and the areas along the big rivers to the VOC (J.K.J. de Jonge, 1878:52). When

the governor general van Imhoff visited Mataram Palace in 1746, he obtained an additional agreement to strengthen the 1743 Tract: that all customs and taxes on roads and water-ways were also given to the VOC. Thus, all the businesses of Bengawan were under the VOC's control (Willem Remmelink, 2001:572). The river became "*garis depan*" [the frontline] of Pangeran Mangkubumi and R.M. Said in their onslaught against the VOC until the time of the Giyanti Agreement in 1755 and the Salatiga Agreement in 1757.

During the Surakarta era, the water-way usage was marked by the legend of Kyai Rajamala, that is a boat using a "*canthik*" or ornament depicting a head of a puppet figure whose name was Rajamala with a face like that of a giant. The boat had a capacity to carry about 100 people, two units of gamelan music instruments and a place for provisions. The boat was built due to RM. Gusti Sungadi's order (he was the would-be Paku Buwana V) for a trip to Pamekasan. Her last voyage was during the reign of Paku Buwana VII to pick up the would-be queen from Bangkalan. There was another boat called Kyai Rajaputra of medium size, a present from the governor general (Paku Buwono VI). According to Sala Regent in 1817, Susuhunan had 10 big boats (*prauwen*), Sultan had 10 boats and Mangkunegaran had 4 boats. All of the boats were used for trips every year to Gresik to carry salt.

During the nineteenth century, Bengawan was much used for non-business trips. By the time of the arrest of Pangeran Dipanegara, a government commission for both Yogyakarta and Surakarta was formed. The disbanding of the armies on the Dutch side had already begun. In a discussion with princes from Madura, Sumenep and Pamekasan, Residen Van Nes agreed that members of their armies who did not want to work for the government would be sent to Sedayu through the water-way of Bengawan. After the war of Pangeran Dipanegara came to an end, the colonial government took over the land of *mancanegara* (possibly the land was outside Java Island). After the deal with Sala was agreed upon, Van Teijlingen and De Salis were sent to complete the provisional matters, and then Merkus and associates began their trip to the eastern region. At the end of 1830, they visited Sepreh, at "*tempuran*" [the meeting place] of Bengawan and Kali Madiun, near Ngawi, for a meeting of all regents from Madiun and Kediri discussing the changes that had taken place. On July 3, 1832, Govenor General Van den Bosch visited Kasunanan Palace, then they took a trip following the stream to Ngawi with a great number of small boats owned by the king and other members of the royal family in tow.

The importance of Bengawan for the economy was revealed by Sebalt Wonderer and Ryckloff van Goens in Dagh-register, 1647-1648 (Schrieke, *op.cit* 114). It was explained that Amangkurat I's measure on July 1648 to position Gresik as an important market was based on its strategic location. The harvested agricultural products from Mataram's hinterland were brought there through the water-way of Bengawan. According to Dash-register 1663 (*Ibid.*, 114), people bought pepper, cotton yarn, skin of buffalo, and other goods which were popular

in Sedayu and along the big river. Agricultural products and other merchandise from the inland areas bound for Gresik, Surabaya and other surrounding ports had to be brought from Mataram and Ponorogo by Bengawan. The trading activities encouraged the growth of inland industrial centers, such as Baturana and Gambudan in which the royal servants lived. The servants made “*babud*,” or “*permadani*,” or rugs.

By the nineteenth century, the imported merchandise, such as white cloth, white linen, plates, cups and porcelain wares, seasonings, salty fish, gambir, horns, iron, and horses, were brought through Semarang port. Some of these items were carried by boats using the inland bound Bengawan. The boats from Gresik went up along Bengawan to Surakarta town, and they could continue upstream for 20 *pals* (Suhartono, 1991:51). They brought salt and salty fish as the chief commodities for the consumption of people residing in land. According to Thomas Horfield’s report in 1814, each year a big number of sailing boats came to Gresik from the inland areas through Bengawan, carrying agricultural products. Those boats were of different sizes: medium ones which could carry goods weighing up to 15-20 *koyans* and the bigger ones up to 50 *koyans*. A few boats with a capacity of 100 *koyans* went once a year from Surakarta.

The tracts built in 1743 and 1746 by the VOC ran for 600 roedens or about 6 kilometers inland, making Mataram isolated from international trade (Lombard, Nusa 2 . . :58). In Karesidenan Rembang, there were two important infrastructures which greatly facilitated transportation. These were the main road (which was built by Daendeles) and the Bengawan river. The road and river or stream held important roles to enhance the population’s trade. The goods traded included husked rice and unhusked rice from the Sunan area and Rajegwesi. Some of these goods were carried through the water-way of Bengawan to be sold in Sedayu, Gresik, and Madura. The little roads in the northern district of Bengawan also functioned to connect one district with other districts as well as to facilitate the movement of merchandise and log wood from the middle of the forest to the coastal areas or Bengawan. In districts to the south of Bengawan, the people used the water- ways more than roads for transportation.

Merchandise transportation through Bengawan was also done from the Madiun area, especially as far as rice, plantation product and wood were concerned. In 1832, in Karesidenan Madiun, the harvest exceeded the level needed for local consumption by about 2,000 koyang (60,000 *pikuls*). The excess was then sold in Surakarta, brought through Bengawan, and every pikul was worth 2,5 guildens. During the “forced labor to plant” (*tanam paksa*) scheme, members of the community were compelled to transport and deliver logs, coffee, sugar and tea daily along Kali Madiun and Bengawan to Surabaya where the wages for their labour would be paid. Oak wood used by sailing boats for their fuels were later replaced by “*kayu jati ungu*” [or a kind of purple teak] from Pajang district. The cost of logging and delivery through the water-way of Bengawan was up to 37,731.54 guildens, the transportation cost for 2.352.5 *pikuls* of rice was 11,626.72

gulden, and that of 186 *pikuls* of salt, 60,126.53 gulden (*Ibid.*, 33). Thus, the roles of these rivers were very important for the piling up of merchandise and their long distance delivery. The centers of teak wood in Madiun were Ngawi and Caruban alongside Kali Madiun. From there and through the Bengawan waterway, the merchandise were brought to Ngareng, then carried to Bunga, the big accumulation place of goods in Surabaya. Bengawan became an increasingly more important waterways for the main transportation of wood to Surabaya. Surabaya was connected to inland places which produced teak wood, through deeper inland waterways such as Sungai Ngawen, Sungai Bengawan Jero, and Kali Benawi (Warto, 2005).

During the Kartosura era, Semanggi and its surroundings became the place for consolidating soldiers from Kartosura as well as the eastern areas. Pangeran Puger recruited soldiers from Kartasura, including 40 princes riding on horses under yellow umbrellas, and they were supported by the armies from the coastal areas of Kudus to the west. In Semanggi they stayed the night on the eastern side of the river, and then on the next they went to Madiun. However, the deployment of soldiers did not always use Semanggi. Instead the mighty movement always proceeded from Kartosura to Kudus and Jepara and vice-versa. This involved 13,000 soldiers crossing the river by using *tambangan* in the south of Sala heading towards the Ponorogo area (Arifin, 2005).

The role of the Bengawan was not only related to transportation, but also to the community's settlement. The community around the river, led by Demang Kencet in Baturana, had a great deal of political and economic potential. They became the frontline defence for the capital Kartosura in the eastern sector. They were given the task to evict Panembahan Herucakra who had already then occupied Semanggi after the defeat of Surabaya's army in the battle in Sragen. The community, which was called "*wong urut Sala*" or "people after Sala", became a new force which then gave birth to the concept of "*wong Sala*" (*Kartasura 2*, opcit., 38-39).

In the Kartasura conflict, Bengawan came to be the border between the king's army and his enemies. After having made the pilgrimage to Gubug cemetery, the main force of the rebellion arrived at the street leading to Kartasura. There they defeated Rajaniti and the regent's armies from Kedu, Tengaran and Ampel. Subsequently they pulled back to Boyolali. When they surrounded the palace, Sunan escaped through a hole in the wall and fled into the paddy fields, and a small group of his followers slipped away through Bengawan towards Kamagetan.

Before Kartasura was seized from the Chinese rebellion, Pangeran Mangkubumi had a headquarter in Desa Beton on the western side of Bengawan, while his soldiers were encamped in Desa Ngempang (*Ringkasan Babad Mentawis*, 1979: 54-55,57). Sunan Adiprakosa's army was encamped in Desa Panambangan, near Bengawan in the Wonogiri area. In the fight against Kartasura, R.M. Said was encamped in Mulur, attacking the villages on the western side of the Bengawan

and “*tepis iring*” (the outskirts) of Kartasura. The cavalry, led by Mantri Jawi, crossed the Bengawan and burnt villages. They seized buffaloes and cows, forcing the inhabitants to flee and seek protection in Kartasura.

When Paku Buwana II was ill, the VOC had intended to attack R.M. Said and Pangeran Mangkubumi. A fight broke out in Desa Panambangan. By using yellow umbrellas as a form of trap or decoy on one side of the Bengawan, R.M. Said’s army attacked the incoming enemies from the other side of the Bengawan instead. When the VOC’s army returned to Sala, R.M. Said’s army ran after them and then took a rest at Paserenan. At the same time they threatened the capital from the other side of the Bengawan and this caused panic amongst the inhabitants of the capital. It seemed that during the period the Bengawan became a line of demarcation. So when R.M. Said returned to Surakarta, Paku Buwana III crossed the Bengawan by using “*rentangan sasak*” to welcome him. Finally, the naturally strategic Bengawan became the center of water-way traffics, *tambangan*, and became heavily laden with conflicts of political interest or nature (Arifin, 2005).

### **Myths along Bengawan Sala**

Mythologies and folklores have the following characteristics (1) Spread and inheritance: Mythologies and folklores are usually spread orally, by words of mouth. Folklore has a traditional form that is, it spreads in a relatively unchanged form or remains in standard form, (2) Folklore is anonymous, that is the creator of the tale is not known anymore. Folklore usually has formulated or patterned forms. “*Menurut empunya cerita . . . demikianlah konon*” (or “According the author of this story . . . so, it happened”), or in Javanese folklores, the tales mostly began with the phrase “*Anuju sawijining dina*” (or “*pada suatu hari*” or “one day”) and they end with the phrase “*A lan B urip rukun bebarengan kaya mimi lan mintuna*” (or “A and B live together happily ever after”). (3) Folklores bestow benefits to a community living together. Folklores, for example, are useful as educational tools and forms of entertainment or past-time. They can also serve as a form of social protests, and projections of hidden wishes. Folklores are prological, that is they have their own logic which do not fit in with the common logic. (4) Folklores are generally simple and innocent; so they look rough or unadorned and spontaneous. They can be understood because there is much folklore which is the manifestation of human beings’ sincerest emotional projections (James Danandjaya, 1986).

Based on the above theoretical explorations, it can be seen that the mythology related to Bengawan Sala fits in well with the general theory regarding mythologies: mythologies are spread orally, anonymous, perform functions as educational tools and social protests. They are also a form of hidden wish projections, and are expressed simply, innocently and spontaneously.

Mythologies on Kerek, Lubuk Maya, Bengawan Goa Sentana, Benawi Getas, Lubuk Werpitu, all show “*keangkeran*” or “the sacred terrifying effects”



of Bengawan Sala as a water-way for transportation. These mythologies serve to remind people travelling on boats to be careful because the existence of the convergence of the two streams can create dangerous whirlpools. It was packaged with a scary story so that it could be observed and obeyed by those who used the water-way of Bengawan Sala, in view of the great danger there, i.e. the possibility of boats sinking due to the whirlpools. These mythologies have spread from generation to generation orally without the real author being known. Up till now many Solonese people who live in the area of *tempuran* (the meeting point of the two streams) of Bengawan Sala still believe in these mythologies (Tirtopranoto & Mardisuwignya,.....).

The mythology of Tinggang is a story of someone who was like a dead giant and "*ambreganggang*" and it was shortened as Tinggang. The community believes that the big wood fossils scattered in the area were the bones of the dead giant that was "*ambreganggang*". This mythology showed that the area around the river was a fertile land. This has already been proven with the growth of big trees along the river Bengawan Sala. Mythology has a function to educate the community along the banks of Bengawan Sala so that they would be knowledgeable and would observe wisdom in cultivating and when interacting with nature.

Mythology of Kedung Srungga is related to the story of Joko Tingkir crossing Bengawan Sala borne by forty crocodiles ("*kasangga bajul patang puluh cacah*"). "*Bajul*" or crocodiles in this story were people in Kedung Srungga who attacked Joko Tingkir and his brothers. This mythology was a form of entertainment or past-time during the solitude past as well as a form of social protest. It was also a form of projection of a hidden wish: in order to get a position or a job in Demak palace, Joko Tingkir had to struggle against various obstacles and endured sufferings. But with a strong will and a sincere intention, Joko Tingkir was at last welcomed back in Demak. Through the administrative effort of the authorities of Taman Jurug, a Municipality of Sala, this mythology had been included in the tourism package of "*Larung Joko Tingkir*" (letting a furnished and garnished boat with a figure representing Joko Tingkir going downstream) every *Lebaran* season (i.e. after the Moslems had observed their thirty days of fasting in the month of Ramadhan). As a package of tourism, of course, the mythology has assumed different meanings. The word "*larung*" seems to denote as if Joko Tingkir on board the boat was about to be pushed away and left to drift in the stream of Bengawan Sala to the sea; whereas, in the original mythology Joko Tingkir had succeeded in overcoming the rough "*tukang tambang*" (or a person whose job was to carry people and things to cross a river from bank to bank by using a rope) and his friends, i.e. the "crocodiles", defeating forty people.

### ***Model Revitalisasi Bengawan Sala Berbasis Kesadaran Sejarah (RBKS) or Model of Bengawan Sala's Revitalization Based on Historical Awareness***

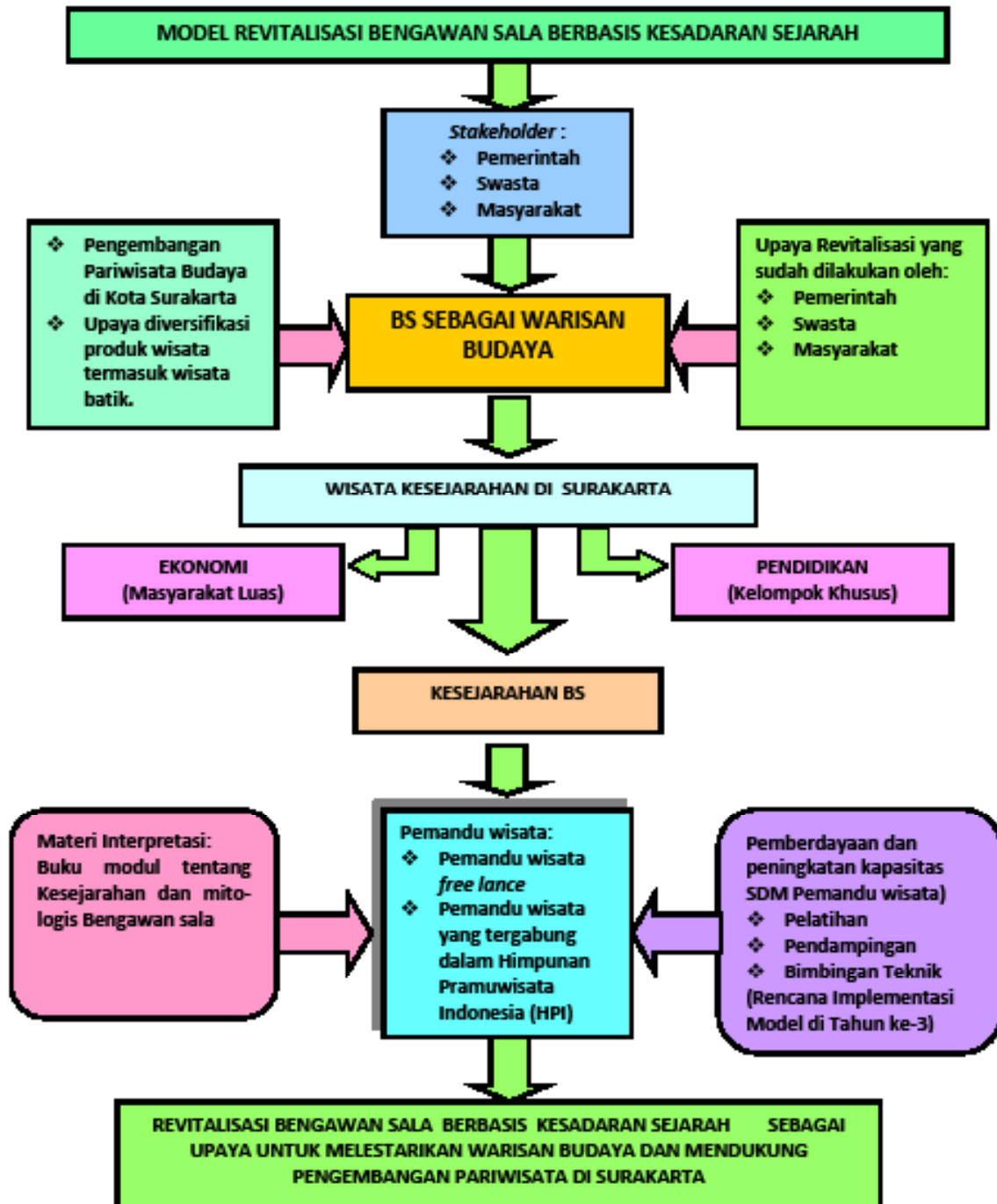
The formulated model of Bengawan Sala's revitalization is a model to develop revitalization based on historical awareness. The model puts emphasis on the importance of developing historical and mythological dimensions of Bengawan Sala. Its interpretation is then conveyed to the tourists who visit Surakarta (*knowledge transfer*) so that the local communities and the tourists will together have a comprehension and understanding of the historical and mythological dimensions of Bengawan Sala. In other words, they would have an historical awareness and therefore they can then appreciate, and join in the effort to protect and preserve, Bengawan Sala as a historical and cultural heritage.

### **Conclusion**

The historiography of Bengawan Sala covers the areas along the river which had been an important social environment since the colonial period. Indeed it had been so during the kingdom periods up till now. For example, during the Mataram Kingdom, Bengawan Sala became the artery of transportation connecting inland areas with outer areas through the water-way up to the coastal areas. Thus, the historical aspect of Bengawan Sala is important and it has its own unique value when it is viewed from the historical angle. With regard to the prehistoric dimension, there exists many archeological sites, such as Sangiran and Trinil. These sites prove that Bengawan Sala has been a place which has a continuous influence upon the life of the community since the prehistoric age. Historically speaking, the main and important means of transportation had been there before there were trains, cars, and airplanes. In fact, the transportation system in Bengawan Sala had been there before there was any land transportation as it had its water-ways. Therefore, with regard to transportation, its historic roots had been deep in Bengawan Sala. This is due to the presence there of the widest and longest river on Java Island.

The meanings of the mythologies around Bengawan Sala, relating to Kerek, Lubuk Maya, Bengawan Goa Sentana, Benawi, Benawi Getas, Lubuk Werpitu, all show the "*keangkeran*" or "the sacred terrifying effects" of Bengawan Sala as a water-way or means of transportation. As already explained above, these mythologies function to remind people travelling on boats to be careful. They need to be careful because there exists a meeting point of two streams with dangerous whirlpools. These mythologies were padded with scary stories so as to ensure that the reminders or warnings would be duly observed and obeyed by those using the water-way of Bengawan Sala. Considering the presence of the great danger, i.e. the boat could sink due to the whirlpools there, the point has to be driven home effectively. The mythology about Tinggang, as already pointed out earlier,

## Model Revitalisasi Bengawan Sala berbasis Kesadaran Sejarah



describes a dead giant and “*mbreganggang*.” The community believes that the wood fossils scattered in the area are the bones of dead giants. This mythology shows that the areas around Bengawan Sala are fertile. This mythology has a role to educate the community in the areas around Bengawan Sala so that they have the wisdom to cultivate the natural land along Bengawan Sala. The mythology of Gedung Srungga, also already described above, is related to the story of Joko Tingkir who crossed Bengawan Sala on a boat borne by forty crocodiles (“*bajul patang puluh cacahé*”). This is told in *Babad Joko Tingkir (The Chronicles of Joko Tingkir)*. It is an entertainment or past-time for solitary period; it is also a form of social protest, and a projection of a hidden wish or hidden wishes. In the case of Joko Tingkir, he aspired to gain a position in Demak palace. In relations to that Joko Tingkir had to go through various obstacles and sufferings.

Based on this exploratory research, it is proposed that one can indeed create a model of Bengawan Sala’s revitalization through the development of its historical and mythological aspects and dimensions. The proposed model of Bengawan Sala’s revitalization is aimed at preserving its historical and cultural heritage. It can also assist or support a community-based Tourism development in Surakarta. This development model encapsulates the process of “Revitalisasi Bengawan Sala Berbasis Kesadaran Sejarah (RBKS)” or “*Revitalization Based on Historical Awareness*.”

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