

ness of the plants⁹ and to protect the entrance to the *kraton* Merapi, which is below the tree line. Humans should not wear green on the mountain outside of the villages, because this colour belongs to Nyai Gadung Melati and other spirits. Furthermore, there is the already mentioned Kyai or Eyang Sapujagad, who resides in the Merapi crater, as well as Kyai Petruk and many other spirits (Triyoga 1991: 47, 50, 51; interview with Mbah Marijan 6/1/1991).

The kingdom of Mount Merapi maintains strong ties to other kingdoms, primarily to the *kraton* Yogyakarta, whose current ruler is Hamengku Buwono X, and to the palace in the South Sea (the Indian Ocean off of Java's South Coast), which is ruled by Kanjeng Ratu Kidul, the spirit-queen of the South. These kingdoms are connected by the major rivers. A certain kind of frightening spirits, called the *lampor*,¹⁰ travel on the rivers, steering the horse cars that are used by the mountain and sea spirits to visit one another. This frequently leads to flooding.¹¹

The relationships of the spirits are often understood as being sexual. They marry each other,¹² and they both support the Sultans of Yogyakarta. His *kraton*, which is in the center of macrocosm and microcosm, is built equidistant from the mountain and the sea.¹³ Such a cosmological system, manifested in four spiritually meaningful points and a center, is shown in the diagram below (Fig. 4). This model is, however, not consistent with the geography of Yogya (Subagyo 1981; Triyoga 1991: 94; cf. *Minggu Pagi* 15/1/1995).

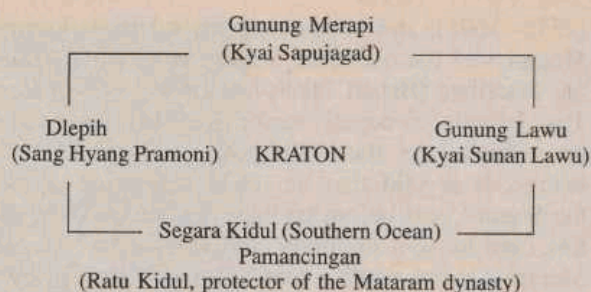


Fig. 4: Diagram demonstrating the cosmological system

Thus sexuality is not only part of the relationship between the human Sultan and the spirit-queen Ratu Kidul, but it is also part of the relationships between the male members of the spirit kingdom on the mountain and the female members of the sea kingdom. And many people believe that an eruption of Mount Merapi is the mountain spirits' ejaculation of semen.

It is still a matter of debate whether Ratu Kidul, herself, is having a love affair with the mountain *raja* (in this case, with Kyai Sapujagad) (Laksono 1988: 193) or if only her subjugated spirits are. Some people think that such a union will be consummated in the future. As Resink writes, "elle (l'union matrimoniale) n'est pas, jusqu'à présent, parvenue à ses fins; mais si un jour océan et volcan, eau et feu, se rejoignent effectivement, alors Java se scinderait en deux" (Resink 1982: 98 f.).

According to the villagers' belief, Mount Merapi is extraordinary active in the month of Suro, the first month of the Javanese year. Just as for the people, this is the volcano's time to purify and renew itself and also to go on visits, for instance, to the South Sea, and to get married. Should Merapi erupt at another time, certain people are usually warned by the spirits beforehand, mostly in dreams. Other warning signs are sounds from the crater, lightning seen above the mountain, and wild animals coming down to the villages to let the people know that Merapi will erupt.

One myth from the area that was directly affected by the eruption at the end of 1994, remains to be mentioned. It refers to Syeh Jumadil Qubra (Sèh Jumadil Kubra), a figure of great importance for early Indonesian Islam, as has been shown recently by van Bruinessen (1994). Van Bruinessen describes him as "an archetypal Javanese saint, ancestor figure and forest hermit, the *wali* of the *wali*" (327). The villagers living on the slopes of Mount Merapi regard Syeh Jumadil Qubra as a man with extraordinary spiritual power from the kingdom of

9 This interesting, indigenous figure, who has not yet been investigated in depth, is probably older than the rice and fertility goddess Dewi Sri. In the view of Mbah Marijan, her realm of power stretches from *sirah kuning* to *kendit* (the tree line).

In the *Serat Kandaning Ringgit Purwa* ("Major Serat Kanda"), another female spiritual being of Merapi is mentioned: Mayang Sari, the wife of Daniswara, the son of Dewata-cengkar (Pigeaud 1968: 359).

10 Elder people in Java report that in former times the *lampor* could be heard often and that the *kentongan* drums (hollow tree trunks) were then beaten (cf. Groenewegen 1923: 3).

11 Floods are not only caused by masses of water but also by volcanic debris flowing down the mountain as a result of the rain. On the river Opak, green coconuts and palm sugar are offered to the spirits occasionally in order to prevent flooding (Jumeiri et. al. 1983/84: 96–102).

12 The traditional explanation for people having drowned in the rivers of Central Java is that the spirits needed servants for a marriage ceremony.

13 In Yogyakarta, the connecting line between the South Sea, the *kraton*, and the Merapi is marked by two buildings, the column Tugo and the monument Yogya Kembali.