

Foreword

Since the publishing of my book “Kris hilts, small masterpieces from Indonesia”¹² in 2009, two excellent books related to the subject were completed by noted Italian collectors^{4, 5}. One of them presents a very comprehensive collection, and the other one a selected assembly of very rare and old pieces. Few other books were also published by Indonesian authors during this period.

However the diversity of designs and styles of the Indonesian kris hilts is so vast that an additional book is not necessarily redundant, so after having significantly enlarged my collection I have decided to embark on writing a new one. As compared to my previous book, I have attempted to correct the obvious mistakes or inaccuracies, improve the pictures quality and enlarge their format, and further investigate about the origin and interpretation of the various hilts although this has ended-up as a very difficult target due to the vanishing of new sources of knowledge. However I could gain some valuable information by exchanging with other collectors and experts, and from the kris & hilts books published over the last period.

In this book I have primarily classified the hilts by type (figural or floral or other) in priority over the area of origin. Whenever possible I have tried to estimate the age of the pieces, and to interpret the meaning of their design. I have focused in priority on the figural style hilts due to their religious and cultural significance, and on the floral style hilts because of their artistic value.

This collection includes about 250 pieces which mostly have some age, but also some contemporary ones whenever they have any cultural or artistic interest. It should be noticed that since several years the market of good quality & old kris hilts is very limited except at some high-end auctions.

As in my previous book, the collection is limited to Indonesian kris hilts although few of them may originate from Malaysia, and I have tried to minimize the redundant pieces and eliminate those manufactured outside the tradition. I have also decided not to include the integral metal hilts of the Javanese amulet krisses *sajen* “offering”, which are described in detail in the book “Iron Ancestors” from Theo Alkema.

The generic term for a kris hilt in Indonesia is *hulu* but local names are also used in the various islands:

- . *Ukiran* (carving) or *jejeran* or *deder* in Central Java, and *garan* in Northern Java (Cirebon).
- . *Landeyan* or *landhian* in Madura.
- . *Danganan* in Bali or *danda* in Lombok.
- . *Pangulu* in Sulawesi and part of Sumatra.

In spite of my dedication, this book probably includes several mistakes regarding the estimated age or area of origin of the pieces especially, and I apologize in advance but I hope that I will be able to transmit to you a bit of my passion for these tiny masterpieces of Indonesian art.

Jean Greffioz

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