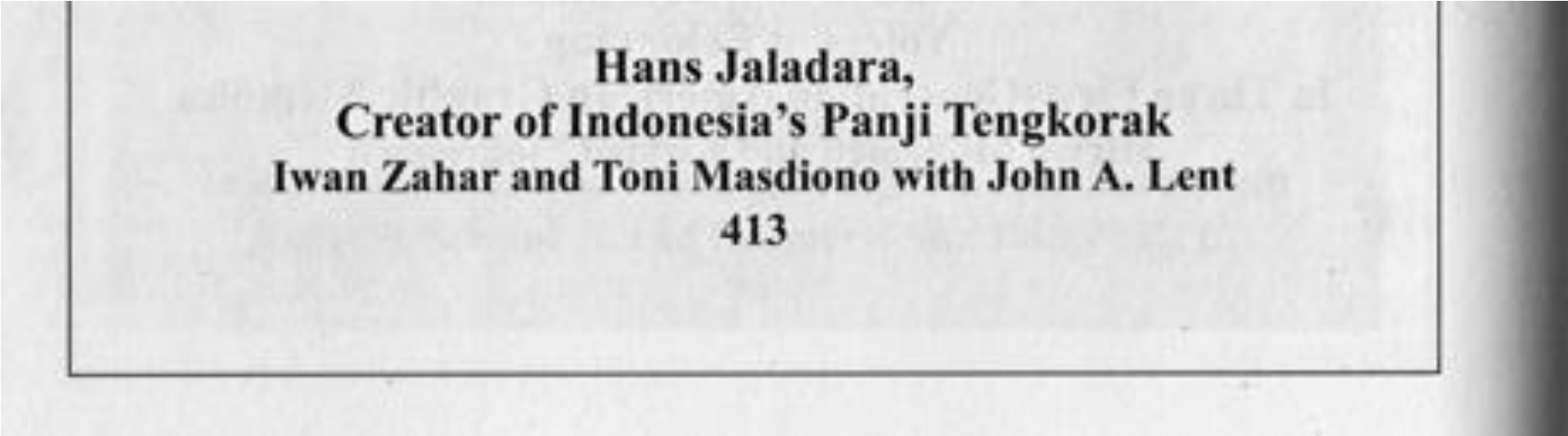


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Hans Jaladara, Creator of Indonesia's Panji Tengkorak

Iwan Zahar and Toni Masdiono with John A. Lent

During the past five years, cartoonist/lecturer Toni Masdiono and lecturer/photographer Iwan Zahar have been writing about historical figures in the Indonesian comic art world, that were published in the *International Journal of Comic Art*. These have featured Kho Wan Gie, whose *Put On* was the country's first comic (17:2, Fall/Winter 2015), Otto Suastika (18:1, Spring/Summer 2016), and Teguh Santosa, creator of "Kraman" (19:2, Fall/Winter 2017). In this installment, Hans Jaladara and his comic Panji Tengkorak are briefly portrayed (J. A. L.).

Hans Jaladara was born Liem Tjong Han, April 4, 1947, in Kebumen, a small city in Java, Indonesia. He was a Peranakan Chinese, meaning he was "nearly conceived," his family not native to Indonesia. During the Soekarno era, tense times for Chinese descendants, he chose to be Indonesian with the name Rianto Sukandi. To become a Chinese citizen would have been disadvantageous, if not deadly in the long run.

In his early years, Jaladara taught English at the Chinese school in Pa -- Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan, but his interest was drawing comics, which he started to do in middle school, selling his first handmade comic to a friend for 100 rupiah. Jaladara's first published comic series was *Hanya Kemarin* (Only Yesterday), but *Panji Tengkorak* (Panji the skull masked warrior) became his most popular comic, distributed in 1967. As many comic artists during his time, he both wrote and drew his stories. *Panji Tengkorak*'s story is one of tragedy. His wife was killed by a mysterious warrior who was trying to find his martial arts teacher Nagama's black book. Seeking to find his wife's murderer, Panji donned a skull mask (now known as Panji Tengkorak) and started his pursuit (Gumiran, 2011). He continued to be called Panji Tengkorak even when he stopped using the mask in later stories. He was also given the name Pengemis Panji Tengkorak (Beggar) because of his ragged clothing. This figure of Panji Tengkorak appeared in the series *Walet Merah* (Red Swallow), *Si Rase Terbang* (Flying Fox), as well as others such as *Pandu Muntara* (1977) and *Kembalinya si Rase Terbang* (1975). In Javanese, Panji means a nobleman or aristocrat who goes traveling, in contrast with Panji Tengkorak who is not a nobleman, but a wanderer in the martial arts world.

Panji chooses to be good, a martial arts master, and fight other martial arts warriors. In the *Panji Tengkorak* stories, it is usually very clear who the good and bad people are, similar to Chinese martial arts stories. However, according to Arswendo, the world of *Panji Tengkorak* is one of martial arts centered around a death match between good and evil. This hero is a fearless

warrior because he is on the side of righteousness. His persona resulted from losing himself, his lover, his wife, and his siblings. As a martial arts master, he can have doubts, but he always knows which path to take and never fails to carry out his duties as long as he lives.



Fig. 1. *Panji Tengkorak*. Hans Jaladara.

Hans's representation differs from that of Sie Tik Kwie, an earlier Chinese martial arts comic author in Indonesia. Hans drew people with striking shadow features and from various perspectives, similar techniques as those of Ganesh, TH. *Panji Tengkorak* was drawn from above or beneath eye level which was not done during Sie Tik Kwie's era. Hans also drew close-ups not shown in Sie Tik Kwie's drawings (Zahar and Masdiono, 2016); his angle of view was similar to that of Ganesh TH. Ganesh TH and Hans Jaladara became famous during the Indonesian comic golden age of the 1970s (Lent, 2014). Hans drew *Panji Tengkorak* until Panji gets old and disappears. His *Si Rase Terbang* resembles *Panji Tengkorak*. Hans's portrayal of a fox as a terrible creature in *Si Rase Terbang* was meant to arouse readers' interest, because in the middle of the story, the fox is a good animal (Jaladara, 2017).

In the mid-1990s, martial arts comics lost their audience, as did Indonesian comic books generally, with the onrush of foreign (mainly manga) comics. Hans Jaladara also drew Panji Tengkorak in manga style near the end of the series to attract new readers.

Earlier, it was mentioned that Hans Jaladara used techniques similar to those of his contemporary Ganesh TH, but there were differences as well. Though both are of Chinese descent, Hans Jaladara used more Chinese

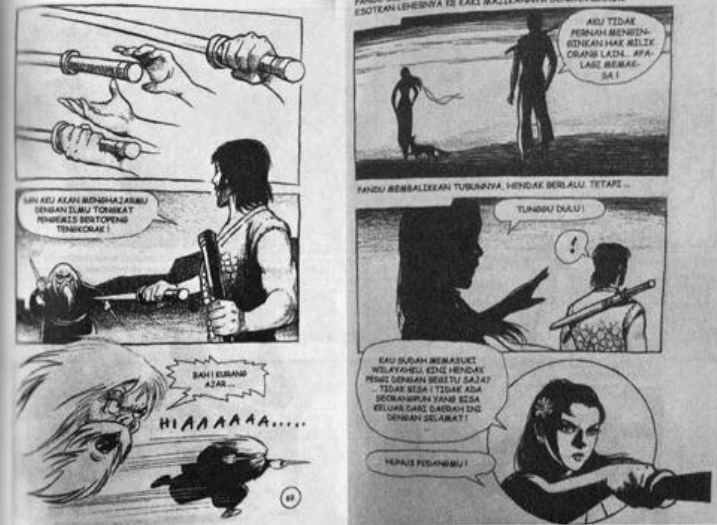


Fig. 2. *Si Rase Terbang*.

symbols or characters and was influenced by Chinese comic artists. For example, the rase (fox) is commonly used in stories in China and Japan as a spirit or ghost, while Indonesian traditions depicted ghosts as pigs or tigers. Also, the presence of a lady with ponytail and a white-long haired grandfather are common in Chinese comics and movies, as they are in Hans's comics. During an interview with Hans Jaladara, he told Iwan Zahar that he used many Chinese martial arts books as references; he can even identify Chinese dynasties by the outfits that characters use. Hans also used names of places in his comics that related to Chinese culture, such as *Lembah Pintu Naga* (Dragon Gates Valley); he also used Indonesian names such as *Desa Puri Dasa* (name of village).

Hans Jaladara basically continued the comic book style introduced to Indonesia in the early 1930s, through the works of Alex Raymond, Hal Foster, etc. This style also greatly influenced other comic artists, such as Jan Mintaraga, Teguh Santosa, and others. In the 1950s, Hans was also influenced by comics from China in drawing style and panel arrangement, such as those of Sam Kok and Sun Wu Kung.

In his later comics development, Hans also tried a more realistic style and even tended to be photo-realistic, which can be seen in his work *Walet Merah* (Red Swallow). Hans drawing style increasingly found its direction after *Walet Merah*. The red lines of the drawing style were clearer, as seen in his quite successful *Duel Menjelang Fajar* (Duel Towards Dawn) (1971).



(21) Selesai bersumpah, mereka menentukan nama panggilan masing-masing menurut umur. Karena usianya paling tua, Liu Pei menjadi kakak pertama, Guan Yu kedua, dan Zhang Fei dipanggil adik.



(22) Mereka menyiapkan makanan dan mengumpulkan tips dari orang-orang desa untuk minum sepuas-puasnya.

Fig. 3. Sam Kok influenced Hans Jaladara's drawing style. Gapura Media, Jakarta, 1977.



Fig. 4. Panji Tengkorak. 1968.

Hans Jaladara's image style is dynamic, continues to grow, and tries to keep up with the times as well as market tastes. Technically, Hans's sequences were very simple. In 2004, *Walet Merah* was remade and published by Elexmedia; it was Hans Jaladara's approach to the manga style.

Hans Jaladara continues to be productive while Indonesian comics have been crushed by imported comics, something that has happened to many artists of his generation. When this article was compiled, Hans published only his most recent works, *Triedas* (2016) and *Setan Kepala Terbang* (Head Satan Flying) (2017). These works are marketed online.

Hans Jaladara's drawings are very stylish, especially his portrayal of



Fig. 5. Panji Tengkorak. 1968.



Fig. 6. Cover. *Walet Merah* #7. 1970.



Fig. 7. Walet Merah. 1970.



Fig. 8. Duel Menjelang Fajar. 1971.



Fig. 9. Duel Menjelang Fajar. 1971.



Fig. 10. Duel Menjelang Fajar. 1971.



Fig. 14. Promotional postcard film, "Pandji Tengkorak." 1971.

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Iwan Zahar is a senior lecturer at Indonesia Esa Unggul University and also teaches at Universitas Pelita Harapan. He has published in four journals and presented papers at 18 international conferences. He previously worked at Universiti Malaysia Kelantan. He is the coordinator and reviewer of *Visual Journal*, Tarumanagara University, has made a photo exhibition in Reel Series 2: Indonesia & Vietnam Sabtu, has been awarded a bronze medal at



Fig. 15. "Pandji Tengkorak" movie poster. 1971.

Belajar Matematikaku (Indonesian Edition) and *Catatan Harian: Kiat Jitu Menembus New York* (Photographic Notes: The Way to New York).

Toni Masdiono began to cartoon at 16 years old, when he sent his cartoons to a psychology magazine. He has worked at advertising companies and drew many illustrations for novels, books, and magazines for Gramedia Group. He created a superhero type comic called *Avatar: Chakra*, and published *14 Ways of Making Comics* and *Let's Draw Manga*. His comic work can also be found in *Sequen Magazine*. He is the Indonesian delegate to Asia Pacific