

THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

*Divine energies of the Balinese earth:  
the temple networks and territorial cults  
of Mount Batukau*

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## DECLARATION

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the highland villages and temple networks of Mount Batukau in central Bali. The region depends upon local village priests to consecrate holy water (*tirta*) from their own ancestral sources for ceremonial purposes. Joint custodianship of the summit temple and a prohibition on Brahmanical priests from completing highland ceremonies unifies these groups into a regional culture. This research proposes that these shared practices constitute a ritually autonomous system that is localised to each village area.

The first part of the thesis explores the region's temple networks, stories of origin, and periodic ceremonies that revitalise the earth. It argues that inherited ritual authority is premised on localised origins as evidenced in different village contexts. It also examines the cultic nature and territoriality of temple deities, drawing parallels with Southeast Asian founders' cults that venerate the divinised energies of the earth. Additionally, the megalithic temple network named *jajar-kemiri* circumnavigating Mount Batukau is surveyed to reveal "paths of life" (*jalur kehidupan*) running from mountain summit through the centre of each highland village unto the sea. The second part of the thesis documents a six-months long ceremony named Pengurip Gumi held at Pura Batukau. This once-in-a-generation event involves the descent of the networks' deities in a procession by foot to sea that brings the earth (*gumi*) back to life.

The following chapters search for meaningful context of rituals through comparison with other societies ranging across Southeast Asia. The thesis argues that a common religious basis underlies Mount Batukau's use of megalithic stone assemblages, ritual authority of founding ancestors, and sacrifice to revitalise earthly domains like the mountain, rivers, sea, and lakes. Its focus on the continuity in ritual tradition between Southeast Asia's insular and mainland regions contributes to reconceptualising Balinese culture within a broader comparative framework of understanding.

*For Tatiana, Vincent, Nina & Lily*

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Like so many of my cohort, the post-fieldwork writing up period was not at all what I had imagined it would be. Instead of flying to London, I returned to my home to Australia from Bali just as the pandemic was gathering pace. I told the few Balinese I had time to meet that I would be back in a few months to conduct checks on the mountains of data I had collected, but I never had the chance. With our international borders closed, I remained in Melbourne and wrote my thesis from my family home during a period of time that was intense to live through. Not only were we reading each day about how a novel coronavirus was causing great suffering to people around the world, but our city took the extraordinary step of locking down its residents for longer than any other city worldwide. This disrupted my writing immensely because our primary school-aged children were home and required supervision during their remote learning. Nevertheless, the LSE was very accommodating in granting necessary extensions to my writing, and our country prevented sustained transmission of the virus until most of its population had been vaccinated, an honourable goal jointly won by our community.

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## GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

<i>adat</i>	custom
<i>agama</i>	religion
<i>agung</i>	great, in higher register
<i>anggapan</i>	hand-held blade used for harvesting original rice strains ( <i>padi bali/gaga</i> )
<i>bale</i>	pavilion; generic structure that provides shelter
<i>balean desa</i>	village priest assigned to life-cycle rites; assists with other temple ceremonies; chosen by village/not inherited
<i>balian</i>	medium; healer; shaman
<i>banjar</i>	hamlet/district of a village ( <i>desa</i> )
<i>banten</i>	offering, all kinds
<i>bebaturan</i>	stone assemblage of varying forms; megalithic structure
<i>beji</i>	fresh water source; purification stream
<i>brahmana</i>	highest caste group from which <i>pedanda</i> originate
<i>bukit</i>	lesser mountain; peak
<i>bupati</i>	leader of the regency ( <i>kecamatan</i> )
<i>buta</i>	elements of the earth
<i>buta-kala</i>	chthonic forces; potentially malevolent beings
<i>camat</i>	leader of the district ( <i>kecamatan</i> )
<i>caru</i>	series of rituals usually involving blood and sacrificial animals; dedicated to the chthonic realm; concerned with cleansing and promoting fertility
<i>dasaran</i>	trance specialist
<i>desa adat</i>	customary village that worships together at a set of village temples and possess their own cemetery
<i>dewasa</i>	an auspicious day derived from reading the symbolic alignment of meanings of a Balinese calendar
<i>dewi</i>	goddess
<i>dresta</i>	custom; tradition
<i>dukuh</i>	forest ascetic; ancestral beings; founding ancestor of great spiritual power
<i>giri</i>	mountain
<i>gong durwe</i>	sacred/ancient gamelan owned by a temple
<i>griya</i>	family compound of a Brahmanical priest
<i>gumi</i>	land, country, realm, earth, world
<i>hyang</i>	deity; god of a place/object
<i>ibu</i>	mother
<i>jaba tengah</i>	middle courtyard of a temple
<i>jaba sisi</i>	outer courtyard of a temple
<i>jajar-kemiri</i>	ring of megalithic temples encircling Mount Batukau

<i>jeroan</i>	inner courtyard of a temple
<i>karya</i>	work (both physical and ceremonial)
<i>kawitan</i>	point of origin
<i>kecamatan</i>	regency, e.g. Tabanan
<i>kecamatan</i>	district, e.g. Penebel
<i>kedaton</i>	palace; kingdom
<i>kerajaan</i>	kingdom
<i>keris</i>	magical dagger
<i>kertih</i>	natural resource; source of agricultural life; resource domain
<i>kidung</i>	ritual chants
<i>lelubur</i>	ancestors
<i>lingga-yoni</i>	male-female symbolism; phallic mountain-source of water/origin
<i>lubur</i>	above
<i>mantra</i>	formulae associated with Brahmanical ritual
<i>melasti</i>	procession to sea
<i>mepekeling</i>	to announce a deity one's intentions
<i>merajan</i>	family temple for worshipping ancestral deities
<i>mudra</i>	esoteric hand gestures associated with Brahmanical ritual
<i>niskala</i>	unseen/invisible dimensions; the divine
<i>moksa</i>	to achieve liberation/not be reborn
<i>muput</i>	to finish
<i>nabe</i>	spiritual mentor of a <i>pedanda</i> in training
<i>naga</i>	chthonic serpent; dragon, associated with water, fertility and mountains
<i>ngusaba</i>	major ceremony with agricultural ties; meeting of divinities
<i>nyama pat</i>	four spiritual siblings
<i>odalan</i>	annual temple festival
<i>padmasana</i>	multipurpose shrine, often used for praying toward Sang Hyang Widhi
<i>patih</i>	chief minister
<i>pecalang</i>	protector; security
<i>pedanda</i>	Brahmanical high priest
<i>pedukuhan</i>	settlement of a <i>dukuh</i> ; place of healing and spiritual learning
<i>pekelem</i>	sacrificial rite through submersion of an offering into the earth
<i>pelinggih</i>	permanent seat associated with a god
<i>pemangku</i>	temple priest
<i>pemuput</i>	variety of holy water for completing rituals
<i>pengempon</i>	those who take care of/ritually maintain a temple
<i>pengurip</i>	the process of giving life to something; coming alive
<i>pesimpangan</i>	shrine for worshipping a distant god



<i>prasasti</i>	inscriptions, in stone or copperplate; sometimes used to refer to a written history of a group
<i>pretima</i>	permanent symbol of a deity
<i>pura</i>	Balinese temple, usually delineated into stepped courtyards
<i>pura Siwa</i>	temple inaugurated at the place a <i>dukuh</i> attained liberation; shrine from which to request <i>tirta pemuput</i> for completing rituals
<i>purusa-predana</i>	male and female generative principals causing life
<i>puri</i>	palace
<i>puhnama</i>	full moon
<i>puseh</i>	navel; origin; centre; island-wide village temple associated with deified founding ancestors
<i>raja</i>	king/lord
<i>rame</i>	busy; lively; crowded
<i>ratu</i>	lord/chief
<i>rejang</i>	sacred dance
<i>sad kahyangan</i>	island-wide network of public temples dedicated to stability of the world
<i>sakti</i>	powerful; attributable to objects and persons
<i>sang</i>	honourable; term of reverence
<i>sanggah</i>	smaller altar, used for ancestral worship and temporary residence of gods called to take part in ceremonies
<i>sanggar</i>	bamboo structure built for major ceremonies
<i>sampi</i>	cow
<i>sekala</i>	visible/seen dimension
<i>sedahan</i>	controller; refined Balinese term for <i>penunggu</i> ; spirit-owner
<i>sisia</i>	disciple; ritual client to a spiritual mentor who consecrates <i>tirta</i> for their disciples
<i>siwa</i>	spiritual mentor; guru; centre in relation to periphery; Shiva
<i>subak</i>	farming cooperative, including wet ( <i>carik</i> ) and dry ( <i>abian</i> ) fields
<i>taksu</i>	spirit power; divinely-sourced talent; source of efficacy
<i>tegal</i>	dry rain-fed garden; highland garden
<i>telaga</i>	pond; small lake
<i>tenget</i>	magically and dangerously powerful; quality attributed to objects and places of concentrated spiritual power
<i>tirta</i>	water that has been transformed by the addition of a divine element
<i>tukang banten</i>	offerings specialist
<i>wakil</i>	representative of a higher power
<i>yajamana karya</i>	Brahmanical ceremonial leader

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

*When the Indic spectacles are removed, that kind of anthropological Wallace line which traditionally separates Bali from other Indonesian islands vanishes.*

—Jean-François Guérmonprez, *Dual Sovereignty in Nineteenth-Century Bali*

Like so many other communities living high upon Indonesia's volcanic terrain, the villages located on Mount Batukau's slopes are dominated by its imposing stature and pervasive influence within the regional cosmology. Megalithic temples forming a ring around the mountain comprise an ancient network known as *jajar-kemiri*,<sup>1</sup> each aligned with the summit temple, and many of them still found within the expanse of sacred forest covering its alpine slopes. These old temples circumnavigating Mount Batukau are ritually maintained by a series of highland villages, who inherit their custodianship down core founding lineages. The mountain's perception as a source of life and origin for the autochthonous population is fundamental to grand ceremonies they undertake to revitalise the earth. Those periodic rituals summon the mountain deity to descend to the village and onto the sea along "paths of life" (*jalur kehidupan*) particular to each community. These shared concerns unite the dispersed highland villages, who each bear unique traditions, into a common culture that I document in this thesis.

At its core, this highland culture has several key features. These include custodianship of the mountain sanctuaries, prohibiting Brahmanical priests (*pedanda*) from completing rituals on their lands, burying but not cremating their dead, disavowing caste titles, and using holy water (*tirta*) imbued with the essence of local deities to "complete" (*muput karya*) temple ceremonies and rites of passage. The last feature is of paramount significance and its documentation constitutes a major contribution of this work. This practice guarantees the highland villages' independence from *tirta* derived from non-local sources, such as that consecrated by Brahmanical priests (*pedanda*) who predominate over Balinese religious practice elsewhere. Through examination of the meaning and origin of these practices, this thesis proposes that the culture of the

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<sup>1</sup> I discuss this term in Chapter 4. It translates as a row of candlenut trees but also signifies a chain of interwoven elements bound by mutual reverence for their common source of life: the mountain summit.

highland Mount Batukau villages constitutes a ritually autonomous system. This system is founded on each worship community's particular relationship with a divinised landscape, as revealed by temple founding stories, regional folklore, land conversion rites, and analysis of the chthonic elements to village revitalisation ceremonies that I explore in the chapters that follow.

Throughout this thesis, I search for meaningful context of rituals that are remarkably akin to those practiced by other societies ranging across Southeast Asia. As will become evident below, those resemblances hint at a common religious basis that has persisted despite the profound changes to Balinese religion which took place over the course of the last century (see review below). Contextualising my research findings with Indonesian, Austronesian and Austroasiatic studies provides me with a framework to interpret the distinctiveness of the Mount Batukau region. It helped me grapple with the striking use of megalithic stone assemblages, ritual authority of descendants whose ancestors first established accord with the divine energies of a place, and use of sacrifice to revitalise earthly domains like the mountain, rivers, sea, and lakes. My focus on the continuity in ritual tradition between the insular and mainland regions of Southeast Asia contributes to reconceptualising Balinese culture within a broader comparative framework of understanding.

The temple networks and highland village practices on Mount Batukau have largely eluded long-term ethnography.<sup>2</sup> One important exception is the anthropological work of Arlette Ottino (2000; 2003; Filloux 1991), whose monograph (Ottino 2000) on the ritual practices of a single Batukau village is drawn on throughout this thesis. Ottino's foundational research on the highland communities' temple networks inspired my own fieldwork to range extensively around the mountain to investigate the distinctive features of Mount Batukau's regional culture. Over the course of twenty-eight months of fieldwork, I focused primarily on the villages of Sangketan, Wongaya Gede, Jatiluwih, Sanda, Batungsel, Pujungan, Kebon Tumpalan, Kebon Anyar, Wanagiri and

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<sup>2</sup> A Balinese professor named I Nyoman Wardi (2017b) recently completed his doctoral thesis on similar themes to my own, but it was unavailable to read before submission of my thesis. It promises to be of great interest.

Sarinbuana, who each maintain an ancestral connection with temples located within Tabanan’s upland region (see map below).<sup>3</sup> My fieldwork also extended to old villages surrounding Lake Tamblingan in Buleleng regency, which is perceived as the ultimate source of water feeding through to tributary rivers and underground springs for all Tabanan. The common thread uniting these fieldwork sites was their custodianship of the *jajar-kemiri* temple network located around the base of Mount Batukau (see Chapter 4), and practice of consecrating *tirta* from ancestral sources that is defined locally as *mesiwa ke dewa* (see Chapter 2). Before explaining the significance of these terms, I wish to outline what first drew me to the Mount Batukau region and how I became interested in the research themes which pervade this thesis.

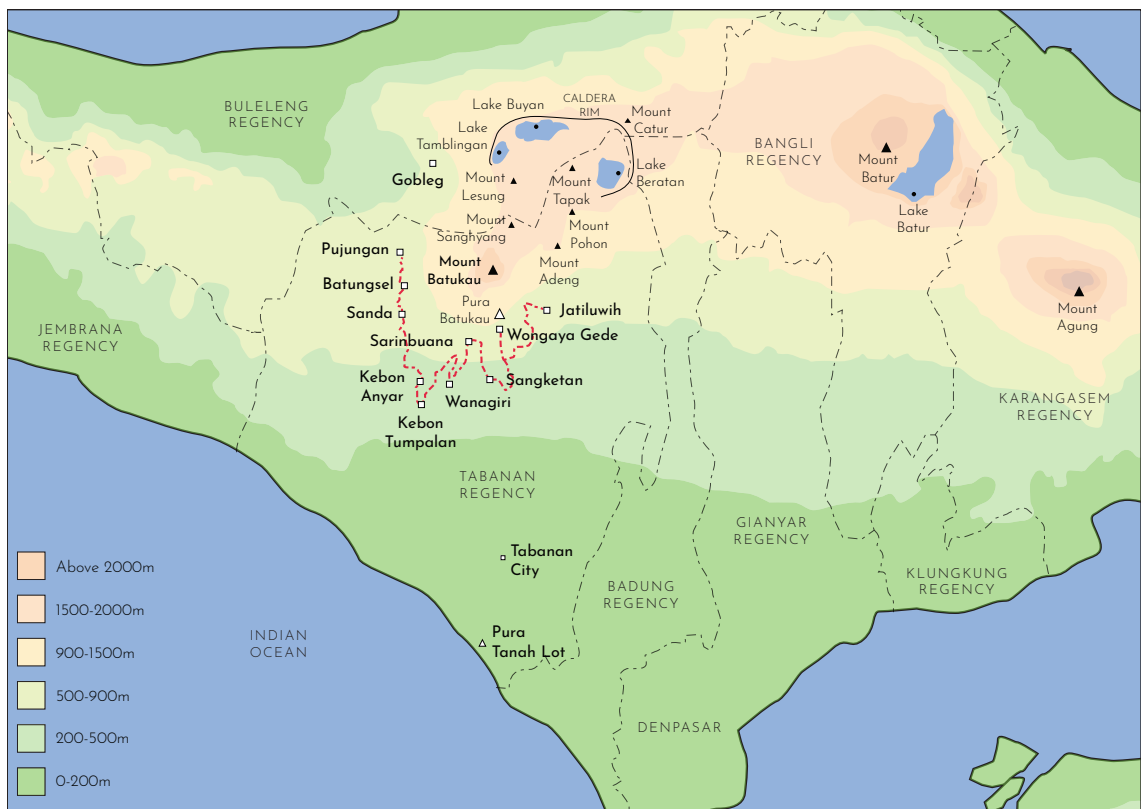


Fig. 1.1: Location of the fieldwork villages mentioned above. A dashed line connects them via the highland trail I drove on regularly by motorbike. In Buleleng regency, the old villages are centred on Gobleg.

<sup>3</sup> Tabanan is one of the nine regencies (*kebupaten*) of Bali, which roughly associate their territorial extension with those of the precolonial Majapahit-derived kingdoms.

## Foundational Stones, Earthly Energies and Ethnographic Dissonance

I arrived on Bali with the somewhat myopic research proposal to study local conceptions of magic and set myself the initial task of finding an appropriate field site. After reading Ottino's (2000) monograph, I knew the Mount Batukau region was of interest because its ancestral traditions present an alternative to some of the norms of Balinese Hinduism. In her work, Ottino explains that "the relative geographical isolation of the region is paralleled by a high level of ritual autonomy from the supremacy of the high priests who represent the *Tri-Wangsa* caste order"<sup>4</sup> and that Tabanan's rituals are renowned for comprising "the form of an esoteric cult of water and of the natural energies mobilised in agriculture" (2000: 20).<sup>5</sup> She also describes the local populations of the mountain as sometimes being referred to as Bali Aga but who themselves prefer the term Bali Mula ("original" or "first" Balinese).<sup>6</sup> Ottino indicates that the highland villages belong to a system called *sisia Batukau*,<sup>7</sup> meaning "that they request holy water (*tirta*) necessary for the performance of their rituals, from the ancestors of the mountain represented in the temples of this network rather than from the Brahmanical high priests" (2000: 20). She briefly introduces the Pura Batukau temple network and role of the Kebayan, which refers to both a high-status autochthonous group and its leader who reigns as chief priest over the state temple of Tabanan, both of which I describe fully in Chapter 5. Apart from these general comments about the region, her monograph remains an excellent study of the ceremonial practices of a single Mount Batukau village and interpretation of its *desa adat* (customary village) as a cohesive ritual system.

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<sup>4</sup> *Tri Wangsa* refers to three distinct origin groups, including Brahmana, Satria and Wesia, each with their respective functions.

<sup>5</sup> For a brief historical review of the mountain region and kingdom of Tabanan, see Ottino's dissertation (Filloux 1991) and monograph (2000).

<sup>6</sup> Bali Aga and Bali Mula both generally refer to indigenous Balinese villages in contrast to those living under the Majapahit culture imported during its conquest of Bali from the fourteenth century onwards. I avoided using either term in relation to Mount Batukau because of the significant interplay between local and novel incoming cultures that has occurred over the centuries on Bali, making it difficult to know what is truly definitive about the terms. Above all, one finds culture localised to a village's territory and landscape in ways that tend to resist overgeneralisation about any one facet of Balinese culture.

<sup>7</sup> I never heard the term *sisia Batukau* used but rather the network of temples was described to me as *jajar-kemiri* (see Chapter 4).

By chance, a southern Balinese woman I spoke with about my research project on magic suggested I visit Tambawaras temple on Mount Batukau.<sup>8</sup> This highland sanctuary had recently become a destination for people seeking spiritual purification (*melukat*) from all over the island after the installation there of seven bathing fountains (*sapta gangga*) disseminating water originating in the mountain. After visiting the area, I commenced living a couple of hundred metres away from Tambawaras in the adjacent village of Sangketan, which along with four other village communities (*desa adat*), takes care (*pengempon*) of the temple. Only after speaking with local priests, did I become aware that Tambawaras is part of the network of temples that Ottino refers to above (see Chapter 5). This realisation opened a new array of potential research pathways for me to explore. I shifted my focus to research questions around the relationality of temples, the purpose of vast temple networks, how these communities become ritually tied to the landscape, and the spiritual authority of leaders presiding over single and intervillage worship communities. I intended to investigate the relationship between autochthonous populations of Mount Batukau and other indigenous groups (Bali Aga) on Bali, to explore the similarities and differences between them. As a result of my earlier proposal to study magic, furthermore, I hoped to undertake conceptual comparisons with other Southeast Asian societies, including those classified as animistic and others who blend local and universal religions. Only after commencing fieldwork, however, did I discover that the very materiality of Mount Batukau's ceremonial structures would provide me with the greatest initial insights into early forms of Balinese religion and the layering of foreign influence that has accumulated on the island over time.

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<sup>8</sup> *Tamba* means “medicine” while *waras* means “health”, which together refer to the medicinal oil and plants supplied by the temple to sufferers of ill health, especially of the kind produced through black magic.



*Fig. 1.2:* A road in Sarinbuana leads toward Mount Batukau. The highland gardens and forested mountain are forever green in this region identified as Bali's largest wetland.

While still trying to get a handle on the local language I explored the surrounding villages and major temples. Over several months, I surveyed a fascinating range of vernacular construction and began to reflect upon the structures I had documented. From even this early stage of fieldwork, certain things I had assumed about Balinese culture did not seem to conform to my observations around Mount Batukau. Paramount among these distinctions were the preservation of a remarkable number of megalithic structures of varying form that constitute the basis of both ancient and modern temples. At times, these sites only comprised an assemblage of stones (*bebaturan*) loosely stacked upon the ground, or other times a larger series of terraces built from blocks gathered from a nearby river. Equally, I found large boulders or trees adorned with cloth at which worshippers dedicated offerings directly, which were unmistakably the original religious focus of a larger temple. Sometimes these shrines were isolated amongst the fields or forest, or alternatively, were incorporated into a stone complex stretching over a large area, often connecting down to altars in the river valley. From my initial conversations with local people, I learned that even the largest public temples of the region, including the majestic Pura Batukau, were originally much simpler sanctuaries consisting of only emplaced stones or pre-existing geographic

features as their ritual focus. Assisted by different interlocutors, I slowly came to understand that temples around the region were portals at which to worship a locality's divine energies personified by *hyang* (deity), first represented by its geographic features and the emplaced stones, upon which the elements of Balinese Hindu temple styles were gradually adorned over time.

The ways in which these stones, boulders and trees were spoken of alerted me to a profound and abiding connection to the earth and its inherent energies. This surprised me, because I had understood the core of Balinese Hinduism to be the holy trinity of Siwa, Wisnu and Brahma, three celestial Indic deities associated with the powers of death, life, and birth who are accorded worship at separate village temples (*kahyangan tiga*). Yet the deities of the temples I came to survey were rarely ever spoken of in those terms, and more typically described as simply the god of the place. Equally absent were stories of village founders who established a community and subsequently became venerated as deified ancestors in the village Puseh temple, as is commonplace all over the island. When stories of migration were recalled to me, the incoming population always seemed to integrate themselves with a pre-existing energy associated with a place, either a now faded, older settlement or the worship of a local deity identified as sovereign over that territory (see Chapter 3). The founding of large and powerful temples, even those of prehistoric origin, followed a similar logic: an early figure of spiritual power was drawn to a locality because of an energy radiating from the place, witnessed at night as light emitting from the earth upwards to the sky, around which was established a core temple for the community. I came to understand the development of villages and temples in the region as following a process of subtle layering of human presence upon lands already associated with divine control, to which the incoming group initiated a cult dedicated to caretaking of the energies of each locality. This precedence of place and harnessing of its immanent power struck me as an alternative way of speaking about temples and especially their foundations.



*Fig. 1.3: An enormous volcanic rock is the centrepiece of the Pura Dalem of Bengkel Anyar, a *desa adat* of the encompassing *desa dinas* Sangketan. Its massive size indexes a substantial concentration of magical energy (*tenget*) that warranted construction of the village temple at this site in the first place.*



*Fig. 1.4: A series of *bebatuan* stone assemblages named Mbas Bayu located amongst rice fields in Tengkidak village, south of Wongaya Gede. Megalithic sites featuring menhir and heaped stone piles are typically associated with spiritual beings known as *dukuh sakti* discussed in Chapter 2.*





*Fig. 1.5:* This massive stone named Beji Pingit is recalled in stories as the original site of worship around Tambawaras. Its sacredness is underscored by the fact that every temple anniversary held at Tambawaras requires a Kebayan family member from Wongaya to travel to the stone and request *tirta pemuput* for finishing the ceremony at Tambawaras (see Chapter 5). The stone also features an ancestral footprint on one of its faces.



*Fig 1.6:* The principal shrine of Batu Kelembang temple in Rejasa village, south of Sangketan. Its founding is associated with a powerful Kebayan ancestor arriving many centuries ago, following a light at night seen from Pura Batukau. The temple supplies fertility to fields and gardens close-by. Later incoming groups requested permission from the chief deity to settle themselves (*mepondok*) and thereafter share worship (*nyungsung*) of the temple. Atop the stones is a *pengadeg daksina* that contains the deity after its descent for temple festivals. These are made afresh for each temple ceremony around Mount Batukau and thereafter ritually cremated and buried.

#### **Four Basic Traditions Emerge Amongst the Custodians of Mount Batukau**

The closest model I had to the old villages around Mount Batukau are the Bali Aga communities found in the Mount Batur highlands and some lowland areas of north Bali and Karangasem (see Reuter 2002a, 2002b; Hauser-Schäublin 2004a, 2008; Korn 1960; Français-Simburger 1998; Lansing 1977, 1983). Like the Batukau communities, Bali Aga do not traditionally allow Brahmanical priests (*pedanda*) to complete rituals at their village temples and do not permit caste titles or cremate the dead in their villages. Yet the Bali Aga have a defining characteristic that is absent from the Mount Batukau villages I studied, namely the use of councils of elders (*ulu apad*) who embody ritual authority for the village. Briefly, each adult male of those villages joins its council after marriage and over time ascends its ranks, moving up the ladder (*apad*) sequentially with the death or retirement of those occupying more elevated positions. In essence, then, the highest rank is determined by seniority, a difference in status open to all married

men that is accrued over time. By contrast, ritual authority around Mount Batukau is inherited (*keturunan*) and the central figures in ceremonial affairs are typically those who descend from the founding ancestors who established an agreement with the divine energies of the place. At first, I assumed the villages I undertook fieldwork in were probably an anomaly, and village councils (*ulu apad*) such as they use in Bali Aga communities existed around Mount Batukau in the past too. But as I dug around asking about the councils and found no local knowledge about them, I began to question that assumption. Furthermore, as I got to know other highland villages around Tabanan, it became apparent that the councils were not in use regionally. This led me to interpret those inherited ceremonial duties I encountered around Mount Batukau within a broader anthropological framework that I introduce below and becomes integral to my discussion in both Chapters 2 and 3.

This distinction between the Bali Aga groups and those highland villages of Mount Batukau prompted further enquiries around the significance of inherited ritual authority. While the earliest inscriptions document that the Bali Aga societies of both Kintamani and lowland Bali go back many centuries (Lansing 1977), it remains an open question to me how their council of elders (*ulu apad*) system relates to my research area. Thomas Reuter (2002a; 2002b) identifies a model of precedence as fundamental to the temporal ordering of the councils, as well as a pronounced dualism occurring across both axes of the seating patterns of elders during their council meetings. Certainly, precedence is a concept of wide-reaching significance to Austronesian-speaking groups and much has been written about its relationship to those groups' social and ritual orders (e.g. Vischer 2009; J. Fox 1988). However, inherited ritual authority is also prevalent across the Austronesian-speaking world. For example, within its non-Melanesian parts, Peter Bellwood (1996) indicates that the closest descendants of founders holding core positions of rank is a widespread (and presumably ancient) phenomenon, leading to positions of ritual and political authority being inherited down founding lineages (see also J. Fox 1995; Wessing 2006; Lin & Scaglione 2019). Of course, this is equally a model of precedence wherein the original founders are the first in a succession of groups who come to settle upon shared territory, elevating the former to higher status by virtue of their earlier arrival (e.g. Lewis 1988; Buijs 2006). In

Chapter 2, I present a case study of the local Kebayan group and its inherited spiritual leadership over a regional network of temples, exploring the hierarchical divergence between founding lineages and later arriving groups. It offers an alternative model to how autochthonous ritual authority may be interpreted for the Balinese context that corresponds to other Austronesian-speaking groups within the region.

Consecrating holy water (*tirta*) for completing rituals directly from ancestral sources is perhaps the defining characteristic for old villages of the Batukau highland region. This is commonly referred to as *mesirwa ke dewa*, but alternatives such as *meraga ke dukuh* exist amongst the different villages who practice it. When explaining the meaning of those terms, my interlocutors often contrasted their practice with that of communities who submit to Brahmanical priestly (*pedanda*) ritual control in ceremonial contexts. If the latter communities require *tirta* for completing a ritual in their village, they seek the services of a *pedanda* priest in his or her home (*griya*). This action is defined as *mesirwa ke griya*. The simple contrast outlined to me between *mesirwa ke griya* and *mesirwa ke dewa* implies an underlying dichotomy between autochthonous and foreign origins that I consider in Chapter 2. I propose there that Balinese villages who depend on *pedanda* locate those foreign-derived Brahmanical priests as intermediaries between the divine and their community, whereas the Mount Batukau villages mediate with the divine through their ancestral sources, as explicitly referenced by the term *dewa* (divine/gods) in *mesirwa ke dewa*. For example, local priests described to me how the *tirta* they consecrate during this process, known as *tirta pemuput*, is destined for completing (*muput*) rituals, and by seeking it from ancestral sources they request the local gods complete the village rituals themselves through the medium of *tirta*. The alternative name for this practice mentioned above, *meraga ke dukuh*, hints at this ancestral connection with each place. One of the key terms of this research, *dukuh*, refers to the original spiritual beings looming large in the folklore of Mount Batukau, another focus of Chapter 2.

Another core theme I wish to introduce here is the territoriality assigned to temple deities. In general, the worship communities I observed around Mount Batukau venerated gods of localised powers, whose function is to secure prosperity in agriculture

and unite the village with a cosmos centred on the mountain summit temple. Territoriality is especially evident in the revitalisation ceremonies I discuss in Chapter 4. These periodic ritual events instantiate variations on the common theme of bringing the mountain deity into the centre of a highland village, and thereafter blessing the domains of sea and river along with the local lands and fields. Except for Pura Batukau, whose regional network consists of a family of temples that come together to jointly undertake these rituals and processions (see Chapter 5), each highland village was ritually concerned with its own territory. By this, I mean that their ceremonies aimed to *pengurip* (bring to life) local domains of significance, and each village undertook this process for their own lands irrespective of adjacent villages undergoing similar ceremonies on their own respective schedules. In other words, these rituals do not transcend the territoriality of their own domain (*gumi*).<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, this territoriality correlates with communal obligations borne by each village member to participate in these ongoing periodic ceremonies of revitalisation. As a result, this thesis explores the relationship between the territoriality of temple deities and worship responsibilities that originate in residence upon land perceived as being under divine control (see also Guernonprez 1990). In so doing, it draws links between the Mount Batukau context and research on Southeast Asian founders' cults (e.g. Tannenbaum & Kammerer 2003; Wessing 2006, 2017; Aragon 2000; High 2022).

Lastly, one of the critical means by which I explore the relationship of Balinese temples to their divinised landscapes is through rites of land conversion. This is once again a widespread Southeast Asian phenomenon, for which I draw on Guadenz Domenig's (2014) volume on vernacular forms of Indonesian architecture and indigenous rites associated with landtaking, amongst other things. At least for my own research, understanding the process of converting land for its use as fields, houseyards and indeed temples was a crucial step toward seeing the earth as integral to the temple cults I

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<sup>9</sup> The term *gumi* (earth/world/domain) has territorial associations, yet this concept should not be confused with delineated boundaries. H. Geertz explains how this works for her field site: "All the territory of Desa Adat Batuan is sometimes referred to as the *gumi* or "realm" of Pura Desa Batuan. The term "*gumi*" here is not a geographical one, though it can be used that way; more precisely it means "subjects", a reference to the people of, the worshipers of, the gods of the temple. By extension, perhaps, the term "*gumi*" indicates not only the congregation, but also all the other gods of the region beholden to the gods of Pura Desa Batuan" (2004: 70).

studied. Domenig offers a tripartite model for land conversion that is formulated from his comparative research on groups living around the archipelago. This follows (1) divination, (2) land clearing, and then (3) establishing a sacred grove that functions as a permanent home for the deity where it may receive ongoing offerings in exchange for its blessings. I found the divination aspect to be missing from Balinese anthropology, and with it a complete understanding of the full significance of localised deities (*hyang*). In Chapter 3, I offer the most comprehensive picture I could gather about this sacred practice administered only by those with requisite spiritual power. This practice of divination goes together with establishing an accord with whatever divine energies are located there, involving a request for permission to use the land for gardens, fields, or homes, or in the case of temples, divining which territorial deity governs the place and which shrines ought to be dedicated therein. Therefore, deified control over the land is an essential point of analysis in this thesis. In Chapter 3 in particular I explore how initiating a cult of worship requires harmonising the community or individual with a locality's divine energies.

These four aforementioned subjects became the central foci of my fieldwork research: enigmatic megalithic structures; inherited ritual authority of localised origin; the practice of consecrating *tirta* for completing rituals from ancestral sources; and the territorial ownership of temple deities over the land. Taken together, they best represented to me what was particularly distinctive about the Mount Batukau communities from the extant literature on Balinese culture elsewhere. My ongoing examination of those four basic traditions constitutes the basis for my argument that the old Batukau villages enact a ritually autonomous system that substantiates their independence from non-local sources of *tirta*, which is fully articulated in Chapter 10. Of course, elements of this Batukau culture are present in other parts of Bali—I am not suggesting that around Mount Batukau exists a *sui generis* set of beliefs and practices unrelated to those encapsulated by Balinese religion today. Rather, I suspect the regional Mount Batukau culture offers a window onto practices that were likely pervasive across the island at one point or another and to varying degrees, knowing full well that Balinese religious and social traditions are far from uniform (C. Geertz 1959). Around Mount Batukau alone there exists such variation, even amongst neighbouring

communities (see Chapter 4), that it seems futile to imagine a universally applicable set of precepts about Balinese religion that could encompass the variegation across village traditions. Nevertheless, specific religious ideas seem constant amongst my fieldwork data, and I wanted to dedicate chapters in this thesis to examining the most prevalent forms.

### **Formulating an Anthropological Framework from Artefacts of Regional Ethnology<sup>10</sup>**

Once I had decided on the contribution I wished my thesis to make, driven by the peculiarities of the Mount Batukau culture, temple structures and ways my interlocutors spoke of these, I cast a wide net for interpretive frameworks. To my surprise, I found mainland Southeast Asia's many Austroasiatic- and Austronesian-speaking societies offered valuable comparative insights. Anthropologists of that region have long noted the centrality of founders' cults to the fabric of indigenous cultures. Furthermore, the territoriality of those cults and deities who inhabit the landscape are identified as evidentially paramount aspects of local cosmologies (Thierry 1981). The accounts I read of cults of Tai and Lao *phi* (e.g. Tambiah 1970; Condominas 1975; Holt 2009; Petit 202; Davis 1984), Burmese *nat* (e.g. Spiro 1967; Aung 1959), and Cambodian *neak ta* (e.g. Work 2018; Guillou 2017; Thierry 1981) seemed remarkably akin to what I was discovering around Mount Batukau. Notably, those mainland concepts typically refer to "earth" deities that are inextricably related to fertility and powers immanent in the land itself, a concept of apparent obscurity in Balinese anthropology.<sup>11</sup> When interpreted through Hindu metaphysics, chthonic powers on Bali are generally relegated by virtue of their lower cosmological position to being demonic, impure, and malevolent (see Howe 1980; Warren 1993). Yet stripped of that moralistic framework, the inherent energies of a place,<sup>12</sup> spoken of as light emitting upwards from the land and around

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<sup>10</sup> In writing 'ethnology', I follow Philippe Descola's description of the term as undertaking regional comparisons "to detect among societies neighbouring the one they study a type of belief, of behaviour or of institution that seems to present enough consistent properties – in spite of the variability of its actual manifestations – for it to be taken as a sort of regional invariant" (2005: 67).

<sup>11</sup> On Bali, fertility is generally associated with the Indic named deity Dewi Sri, who is conceived of as a celestial *dewa* of universal relevance. The agricultural rites I explore in both Chapters 4 and 5 and the Pengurip Gumi of Chapters 6 to 8 bring into question universal sources of fertility.

<sup>12</sup> The Balinese term is *tenget*, which alternatively translates as "a mystical milieu where powerful forces concentrate" (Lovric 1987: 51), "mysterious, charged with supernatural power" (Eiseman 1989: 366) or

which core temples were established in ancient times, seemed to describe very well a power that was of the earth.

Through reading the literature mentioned above I eventually became acquainted with Paul Mus, French theorist of the religion of monsoon Asia. His distinguished lecture from the 1930s examines the interactions between Indian culture as it was disseminated through Southeast Asia and the indigenous societies long present in the region (Mus 1975). There are two parts to the lecture that are equally relevant to Mount Batukau's village culture. Firstly, Mus formulates a general theory about the indigenous religions of agrarian societies in the region existing before the emergence of Hinduism. For these groups, the earth was the object of foremost religious importance, whose divine energies were distilled into cults that worshipped the fertility each earth deity supplied to the land. These cults were territorial by definition seeing as the deity was of the soil itself, consubstantial with the earth, and each indigenous group worshipped at their land's respective deities. Those energies were eventually indexed by some geographic feature like a large stone or tree, or emplaced stones that represented the intangible earth deity, thereby becoming the material means through which the deity was petitioned for fertility and protection of the group. Mus argued that the groups' chiefs established a pact with the earth deity, and their descendants retained ritual superiority because of the obligations to venerate the deity in exchange for blessings that they each inherited. Furthermore, all individuals living on village soil were buried back into the earth to merge with the collective identity of deity, place and group that amalgamated over generations.

The second key feature of Mus's lecture is its nuanced analysis of the reception of Indic religions by Southeast Asian societies. We learn how the religious practices eventually culminating in Hinduism in India were composed of pre-existing autochthonous earth cults and Aryan religious ideas arriving from afar. That same coalescence of indigenous local religions with Hinduism (and/or Buddhism) took place repeatedly across the

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"enchanted, a place favored by invisible beings" (Wiener 1995: 176). Its ambivalence of meaning suitably captures the equivocal ways in which Balinese approach these kinds of powers (see R. Fox 2015), including rarely any definitive claim about their nature.



region, most prominently in the Indianised states of Mataram, Majapahit, Srivijaya, Champa, Angkor and indeed the old Balinese kingdoms (see Taylor 2008; Cœdès 1975; Lansing 1977; Manguin 2022). Mus focuses on the Austronesian-speaking Cham people of what is now southern Vietnam, in which developed the Indianised kingdom of Champa through the first millennium A.D. He perceives that Champa society received Indic ideas as familiar concepts by virtue of the shared cultural substratum of earth cults spread across the monsoon region: “when Hinduism, with its Sanskrit literature, reached the Far East, what we witness is above all a diffusion of the old Asiatic ideas: ideas that were instantly recognised, understood and endorsed by peoples who perhaps were not always aware of wholly changing their religion in adopting those of India” (1975: 52).<sup>13</sup> As an example, Mus writes about how the “strictly indigenous chthonic goddess” (1975: 52) Pô Nagar worshipped at Nha-trang in Champa was elevated to the status of wife of Shiva during the Indianised era, going by the name of Parvati or Uma.<sup>14</sup> Remarkably, however, after the dissolution of the Hindu kingdom in Champa, that deity returned to its indigenous identity, what Mus suggests was “her primordial condition. Now she is once again a local divinity” (1975: 52). Naturally, the precise evidence and veracity of Mus’ arguments about the regional history of religions is beyond the scope of this Introduction. I have instead wished to highlight their value to my own research framework, which has been to guide my re-evaluation of some past assumptions about the character of Balinese religion that I discuss below, principally the significance of the earth to ritual practices and temple networks I documented.

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<sup>13</sup> When speaking of “old Asiatic ideas” Mus (1975) is referring to those represented by the territorial *yaksa* in early Indian religions, whose later identification with Hindu deities follows a similar process as described in Champa above. About the pre-Hindu context in India, Mus writes: “[t]he pre-Aryan religions had arranged themselves, as far as we can tell, in a kind of religious map, each district being identified by the cult of one of those tutelary divinities, essentially indigenous, to which the Sanskrit name of *yaksa* was later applied” (1975: 44).

<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, the name appearing in Cham inscriptions is *Yang Pù Nagar*. The term “yang” is equivalent to “hyang” in the Balinese context (see Chapter 3). In Cham, this name is translated as the “lady of the kingdom” identified “as the very personification of the fertile earth” (Nguyễn Thé Anh 1995: 56).

## Contributions To Local and Regional Anthropology

My thesis on the highland villages of Mount Batukau aims to make several contributions to Balinese anthropology, which I will now outline. Both contemporary and pre-Hindu religion on Bali is generally described as engaging in ancestor worship, whereby deified ancestors are venerated at village sanctuaries (e.g. Forge 1980; Reuter 2002a; Boon 1977; Ottino 2000). In the context of Mount Batukau's temple networks, I found this concept to be only indirectly relevant because either an ancestral being (*dukuh*) who is associated with the place precedes the incoming group and thus does not embody a genealogical connection, or the primary deity of village temples was first and foremost a nonhuman energy associated with the place. As a result, my research explores the ways in which divine control is understood to precede human occupation. This idea is fundamental to how Balinese relate to their landscape when settling an area and establishing fields for agriculture, as explored in Chapter 3. There is, however, often no clear distinction that can be determined between ancestral and nonhuman divine energies after generations of cohabitation has occurred. My investigations around Mount Batukau suggest that even in cases like these, founding ancestors are not worshipped for their own sake but instead for facilitation of access to divine energies that cause life to flow and society to prosper. As I propose in Chapter 10, this is further evidence of a ritually autonomous system predicated on the collective identity of the living, deceased and divine energies of a locality that characterises the territorial cults I documented around the highlands (see also O'Connor 2003).

Another key investigation of my thesis relates to the earth's significance to Balinese ritual practice. As I have begun describing above, its importance first became apparent to me through temple founding stories. The veneration of prominent geographic features was pervasive around Mount Batukau, including ritual objects like stones, springs, the forest, mountain and lakes, each of which comes to represent sources of life (see Chapters 3 and 6 to 8). Offerings made directly upon heaped stone piles (*bebaturan*) also drew my attention to the ways this practice seemed to disregard a distinction between an above world of gods (*dewa*) and below world of demons (*buta-kala*) spoken of in Hindu theology. This distinction became especially problematic at

Mount Batukau's summit temple, the inner courtyard of which consists only of layered stones upon the ground. Ceremonies I witnessed there involve placing offerings directly upon those stones to connect with the deity consubstantial with the mountain. Moreover, the sacrificial offerings I document in Chapter 5 forming part of a triennial series of rites (*pekelem*) administered by the Kebayan of Pura Batukau involve the submersion of "seeds of the earth" (*asil gumi*) under those same stones at the mountain summit, literally returning them to its earthly domain so that its deity will reciprocate those agricultural species in abundance. The following year of the same sacrificial series sees a water buffalo dragged by canoe and then released into the centre of Lake Tamblingan, an offering to the goddess who is by action of this ritual conceived of as consubstantial with the water, accepting the offering into her body. These instances of worshipping the energies associated with the earth make apparent its local and regional importance to ritual around Mount Batukau. They further illuminate the broad continuity of tradition with other regions of Southeast Asia.

A third contribution this thesis makes is to highlight the relationality of temples, a feature of much wider application than to only Mount Bautkau. As my research explores in Chapters 4 and 6 through 8, voyages of gods and *tirta* between different sanctuaries reveals how both intravillage and intervillage temple networks constitute a topography of sacred sites interlaced by ritual events. Complementary to the relationality of temples is their enmeshment within a divinised landscape, as made obvious by their chosen location on mountaintops, beside river headwaters and junctions, the sea and other prominent geographic features (see Lansing 1991). To understand how temples relate to one another and the landscape, I propose that a wider scope of view on these ancient highland temples, including their megalithic foundations and broader resemblances, must be undertaken, as I have attempted in Chapters 3 and 4.<sup>15</sup> In so doing, it becomes apparent that each highland sanctuary lies within a far-reaching network of temples, and the worship communities who take care (*pengempon*) of them imagine each site to be encompassed by higher altitude complexes until

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<sup>15</sup> Reuter's (2002a; 2002b) work in the highlands of Kintamani exemplifies the kind of regional ethnography required to comprehend the relationality of Balinese temples, as does Stephen Lansing's (1991) research on Balinese water temples.

reaching the apex at the mountain summit. This relational understanding of temples, seeing them as integrated with both their surrounding landscape and other shrines around the mountain, leads me in Chapter 4 to suggest that highland temples cannot be fully comprehended in isolation.

The last contribution I wish to highlight is the ways in which this thesis contextualises Balinese ritual practice within the broader region. Looking beyond the shores of Bali to the cultural panorama of Southeast Asia, commonalities exist between the religious practices of a spectacularly diverse range of social groups. Shared concerns with offerings dedicated to local divinities, the land and its immanent powers, deified ancestors, cosmological dualism, and the all-important force of fertility characterise agrarian societies dispersed throughout Southeast Asia (see de Casparis & Mabbett 2008; Coédès 1975; Porée-Maspero 1962; de Josselin de Jong 1965; Acri et al. 2017). Within its many subregions and localities there exists such wide cultural variation that the particularities of each individual culture have often become the driving focus of research.<sup>16</sup> At one level Balinese culture is highly distinctive, as the “anthropological romance of Bali” testifies (Boon 1977), and its enduring image “as an island of Hinduism in a sea of Islam” (Picard 2011: 48) seemingly fortifies. From another perspective, Hinduism is only one constitutive element of a broader religious complex generating from a loosely-defined animism, early migrations disseminating Buddhism, trade networks enmeshing the archipelago, the courtly culture of the Majapahit empire, and the linguistic and cultural affinities with Austronesian-speaking societies elsewhere. At this second level, the broad similarities between rituals and religious practices throughout Southeast Asia, despite institutional affiliations with Islam, Christianity, or Buddhism amongst neighbouring societies, invite a comparative framework of understanding.

Seeing my fieldwork region through the lens of a theory like Mus’s monsoon religion helps this thesis explore productive new directions for Balinese anthropology generally.

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<sup>16</sup> A critical argument against increasing particularity in ethnographic focus and in support of regional studies is penned by Richard O’Connor (2003) in his afterword to the seminal *Founders’ Cults in Southeast Asia*.

In this respect, it aims to move beyond what Arjun Appadurai termed “gatekeeping concepts” (1986; see also Lederman 2008). Balinese anthropology is famous for its analysis of caste, hierarchy, ancestor worship and cremation, to name but a few concepts that I found absent or recast around Mount Batukau. In drawing parallels between Mount Batukau’s temple worship communities and Southeast Asian territorial cults, this thesis brings novel perspectives to bear on Balinese ritual and the social institutions I document herein. Another major inspiration for this regional method comes from the Comparative Austronesian Project, which through a series of publications (e.g. Bellwood, J. Fox & Tryon 1995; J. Fox and Sather 1996; Reuter 2006a; J. Fox 2021) draws together different disciplinary approaches to formulate a general framework for understanding the complexities of Austronesian-speaking societies. Through its comparisons with other Southeast Asian traditions, then, this thesis hopes to de-particularise some facets of Balinese religion and stress the relative cultural unity found within the region.

Finally, this research not only wishes to give meaningful context to the practices it documents around Mount Batukau, but contribute to the illumination of general propositions about indigenous religious thought in Southeast Asia. In this sense, analysis of the distinctly Balinese variation of traditions spread widely across the region adds to our understanding of anthropological themes like founders’ cults, stone worship, the territoriality of place-deities, and the religious importance of the earth that have been the focus of recent ethnographies (e.g. Petit 2020; Guillou 2017; Holt 2009; Schweyer 2017; High 2022). In addition, this thesis underscores how the perception of divine potency in the landscape connects highland Bali with other insular Southeast Asian communities, despite their apparent conversion to universal religions (e.g. Allerton 2009; Aragon 2000; Bovensiepen 2009; Waterson 2009). Each of these studies contributes in their own way to our understanding of a uniquely regional variation of animism. This anthropological concept has deep roots in the region (e.g. Skeat 1900; Winstedt 1925; Cuisinier 1951; Endicott 1970; Kirsch 1973) and has been the subject of recent (re)theorisation (see Århem & Sprenger 2016; Tsintjilonis 2004) to determine its particular Southeast Asian quality, thereby distinguishing it from studies focused on other contexts (e.g. Descola 1996; Viveiros de Castro 1998; Ingold 2000; Bird-David

1999). In its Conclusion, this thesis draws on those works to theorise the relationship between the animistic basic to Balinese religion and contemporary Balinese Hinduism, and outline how the sacred topography of Mount Batukau's temple networks adds to our conception of the asymmetries of animism found across the region.

### **Religions Of Bali: An Overview of Recent History**

To contextualise the following chapters' discussions about Mount Batukau's distinctive practices, I will briefly review some recent developments in the field of Balinese religion. I lack space here to give a fuller historical account, so refer the reader to excellent summaries in McDaniel (2013), Forge (1980), Picard (2011), Nagafuchi (2022), Howe (2001), Bakker (1997) and H. Geertz (2004). I wish to extract some key themes that relate to the core subjects of my thesis, most importantly: the institution of monotheism on Bali; the local religion's identification as Hinduism (*agama Hindu*); and the supremacy of the Brahmanical tradition. Balinese religion has been fundamentally transformed over the last hundred or so years since the Dutch gained control of the island (Nagafuchi 2022). As I have hinted at above, local interpretations are in flux and ways of speaking about gods and ritual today have been shaped by sociohistorical forces occurring both within Bali and across Indonesia. Anthony Forge (1980) describes this most recent process as the rationalisation of religious practice,<sup>17</sup> driven by the 1949 formation of the Republic of Indonesia and its subsequent Ministry of Religion that initially included only Islam and Christianity. Those two religions fit the novel Indonesian constitution's criteria that all its citizens must possess a religion, which it defined as belief in one and only one supreme being (*Tuhan yang Maha Esa*), amongst other things.<sup>18</sup> Balinese religion, along with other animist religions of eastern Indonesia, were excluded from this state-authorized categorisation, being classified as *belum beragama* (not yet having a religion) (Picard 2022) and treated as practicing mere "belief" (Nagafuchi 2022).

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<sup>17</sup> Compare with the rationalisation of indigenous Ngaju religion under the title of Hindu Kaharingan in Schiller (1997).

<sup>18</sup> These other requirements "conform to an Islamic understanding of what defines a proper religion", including a prophet's divine revelation, a holy book, a codified system of religious law, worship congregations not confined to a single ethnic group, and belief in a singular and omnipotent God (Picard 2022: 94).

Naturally, residents of this small island wished to protect their ancestral traditions against proselytising of Islam and Christianity from inside Indonesia. Thus began a process of reform, initially in the early 1930s with the emergence of an intellectual class of Balinese travelling to India to study Hindusim (see Bakker 1993; Picard 2011; H. Geertz 2004; Hornbacher 2017) and culminating with the formation of the government-backed council named Parisada Dharma Hindu Bali in 1959. Initially composed of Balinese intellectuals and Brahmanical *pedanda*, this institution set out to unify the spectacularly diverse village religions practiced on Bali into the collective form known as Balinese Hinduism. It formulated official doctrines that stressed Brahmanical interpretations and conformed to Jakarta's expectations of religion's definition in the new state, which were disseminated through national programs of religious education (McDaniel 2013). Ultimately, Balinese religion was recognised in 1962 as one of the official religions of Indonesia (C. Geertz 1964). This correlates with the emergence of a monotheistic entity known as Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa, today revered as an omnipotent, all-pervasive God (*tuhan*), akin to correspondent entities in Islam and Christianity. This profound metaphysical reinterpretation of local ritual practices led to identifying village deities as mere "symbols" (*simbul*), Hildred Geertz explains, and "only temporary manifestations of the one God" (2004: 38). Those same deities of everyday rituals are today likened by Parisada "to the refraction of a beam of white light from the sun into a blaze of varied colors" (H. Geertz 2004: 38). Progressively, the assortment of traditions, practices and beliefs encompassed by their local religion eventually became known as the monotheistic Balinese Hinduism.

Adapting to the Indonesian state's constitutional requirements necessitated the reinterpretation of Balinese ritual and tradition to fit modern conceptions of religious practice. Michel Picard argues that this led to adopting "an unprecedented distinction between the religious and the non-religious" (2022: 94) through gathering their diverse traditions and ritual practices under the banner of *agama*, a Sanskrit term with no native translation in Balinese. Picard (2011, 2017, 2022; see also Howe 2001) shows how this comprised a two-step process of first inventing a "Balinese religion" (*agama Bali*) and

second identifying their religion as “Hinduism” (*agama Hindu*).<sup>19</sup> Along with the monotheism just outlined came an emphasis disseminated by Parisada on personal devotion and faith with the exclusive Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa, the theological principle of essential differentiation between a benevolent God and malevolent and impure chthonic “demons” (see also H. Geertz 2004: 39), and a gradual transition away from “orthopraxy” (C. Geertz 1964) toward learning from textual sources on ritual orthodoxy (Picard 2022: 106). Critically, this change toward embracing the newly formulated *agama* (religion) meant at the same time integrating localised *adat* (customs/traditions) within a framework of “de-territorialized universal religion” (Picard 2022: 105) as the shared doctrine of Balinese Hindus. In this respect, the Brahmanical *pedanda* were well-placed to represent continuity from precolonial Majapahit-derived Hindu traditions to those reconceptualised as Balinese Hinduism due to their long-standing reverence for transcendental, universalising Indic deities.<sup>20</sup>

There are several crucial facets to the Brahmanical tradition which help contextualise the rituals I documented around Mount Batukau. At the core of *pedanda* practice is a daily ritual named *surya sevana* (see Hooykaas 1966; Stephan 2015).<sup>21</sup> Its specific aim is to produce varieties of holy water for use by dependent Balinese communities in their village ceremonies, and in the eyes of ordinary people this constitutes the *pedanda*’s most important ritual function (Stephan 2015). As H. Geertz explains, producing holy water is exclusively the role of the Brahmana priest for most Balinese villages: “at the height of a *pedanda*’s prayers, the highest god Siwa enters him through his fontanel and acts through him to consecrate the water. A *pamangaku* cannot do this” (2004: 24). This mystical union of Siwa and *pedanda* “permeates the ordinary water in the holy water container transforming it into *tirta amerta*” (Stephan 2015: 101). The holy water thus

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<sup>19</sup> By inventing “religion”, the author means that previously there was no bracketing of religious activity off from other domains of social life, as is the default condition of religion in contemporary western societies.

<sup>20</sup> The emergence of Balinese Hinduism described above has strengthened the privileged *pedanda* position, though social movements taking place over recent decades are seeking to democratise access to the divine on Bali (see Howe 2005). This is also true for the rise of priests of casteless clans who consecrate water for their own ancestral groups, emulating Brahmanical traditions yet without dependence upon them. For analyses of this kind of ethnic politics, see Pitana (1997: 278-333) and Poignand (1999: 14-22).

<sup>21</sup> I note in passing that most *pedanda* on Bali are Shaivite but another class named *pedanda boda* (Buddha) has its own distinctive liturgy.



transubstantiated, H. Geertz informs us, is “needed in any major ritual to “complete” or “make perfect” (*muput*, from *puput*) the work of the commoner *pamangku*” (2004: 67). Equally important to their identity is an exclusive lineage. Only members of Brahmana origin groups are permitted to undergo the years-long spiritual training, overseen by an already-ordained mentor (*nabe*) toward becoming a *pedanda*. Reading their historical chronicles (*babad*), Rubinstein (1991) traces the origins of all *pedanda* to the legendary Javanese priest and lord of the twice-born, Dwijendra, whose marriage with local Javanese and Balinese women originates the various Brahmana subgroups. Notably, this lineage leads further back to an ultimately divine genesis of Dwijendra by the Indic deity Brahma. One way of conceiving of the Brahmanical *pedanda*, then, is as embodying a lineage of foreign origins that has attained the highest position in Bali’s religious hierarchy due to their special capacity for religious unity with Indic deities, chiefly Siwa.<sup>22</sup>

When considering the local ritual practices existing around Mount Batukau, the Brahmanical tradition just outlined articulates a stark opposition. Forge has aptly summarised the Brahmanical tradition as “in many respects a different religion from the majority of the Balinese” (1980: 223) whose “rituals are territorially bound”, whereas “the worship daily performed by *padanda* has no geographical limitation” (1980: 224). As I outlined earlier, the most distinctive practice of those Batukau communities is named *mesirwa ke dewa* (or *meraga ke dukuh*), which may be seen as an alternative to the *surya sevana* rite of *pedanda* just described. Instead of a mystical union between Siwa and Shaivite priest, village chiefs and priests of highland temples request that localised deities impart their essence into *tirta* for use in finishing ceremonies, paralleling the course of transubstantiation *pedanda* orchestrate as well. In some ways analogically equivalent, the local chief or priest embodies a similarly exclusive position of privileged access to the divine as the *pedanda*. Yet in Chapter 2, I propose that the former’s is established in localised origins as opposed to the foreign and transcendental associations of the latter.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Note that Siwa is identified in many parts of the island as the highest deity, especially before the emergence of the omnipotent Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa.

<sup>23</sup> Forge apparently concurs that the “aspect of Balinese religion which involves an omnipresent supernatural power is almost exclusively the property of *padanda*” (1980: 225).

## **Methodology: Roaming and Expanding through Adaptation**

I wish to make a few comments about my fieldwork practice here. Initially, I participated in the days-long preparation for every one of the village ceremonies in the subdistrict of Sangketan where I resided, attending rites of passage, accompanying villagers to their fields and gardens, and becoming a regular fixture at local events. I started building a picture of patterns of migration from other nearby communities and asking questions about island-wide origin groups that are especially important to Balinese identity today (see Schulte Nordholt 1992; Pitana 1997). Like other parts of the island, the ceremonial life around my research area was intensely frequent. Even more so, perhaps, because the subdistricts of Sangketan each have their own set of village temples (*kahyangan tiga*) to care for (*pengempon*) and, in addition, come together to ritually maintain both Tambawaras and Muncaksari temples. Those latter two regional temples are sites at which a higher order of collective worship and obligatory care is enacted, one defined primarily by the fact that villages involved in their maintenance live on proximal lands. Seeing the different groups come together at temple anniversaries (*odalan*) for Tambawaras and Muncaksari seemed remarkable to me, since each village had its own traditions and history that were largely subsumed to the regional unity needed to undertake events at those highland sanctuaries (see Chapters 6 and 7). This kind of relationality occurring between villages at higher-order temples struck me as vital to study, and I progressively expanded my scope of fieldwork to account for the interconnections I was discovering. Yet my growing curiosity about the regional culture and temple networks uniting the old villages led me often on long voyages around the mountain by motorbike, resulting in my increasing absence in the village. Over time, as the community learned I was equally interested in the ceremonies and traditions of the other highland villages, I became less integrated with Sangketan. This was a compromise I made while trying to gather data from other village temple ceremonies for later comparisons, but one at the same time I regretted because I felt less connected with the community which had first welcomed me.

Travelling for hours each day to different communities involved repeatedly meeting new interlocutors and documenting their old temples and traditions. As I discuss in Chapter

3, at its most challenging I would trek for hours through the alpine forest, often alone, searching for megalithic sanctuaries I was told would help me understand the foundations of the regional culture. Searching for commonalities amongst different highland villages had the even more demanding consequence of being invited to each of their significant ceremonies, which were performed according to their own, often conflicting, schedules. Nevertheless, I was motivated by a sense of discovery about a region of Bali that had managed to stay largely under the ethnographic radar. Adding to the accumulating mystery, I was taken by a community named Kebon Tumpalan to a giant boulder deep in the forest some kilometres from their settlement that functions as their ancestral source of *tirta* for completing village rituals (see Chapter 3), which had inscribed upon it a series of partly undocumented petroglyphs of considerable age. These were the only known petroglyphs on the island at the time, so I have included my photos of its previously unseen features as Appendix 1. Around halfway through my fieldwork I realised I was taking on too much and concentrated on the revitalisation ceremonies documented in Chapters 4 and 6 through 8, as well as the shared traditions found across the highland villages I mentioned above.

While gathering data from different communities was in some part improvised due to each village having its own style, there were some basic fieldwork methods I employed throughout. By far the most important skill I learnt was speaking the common register of Balinese, interspersed with a few of the higher register words for appropriate politeness. This familiarity with the Balinese language helped to quickly gain comradery with new interlocutors and feel more “inside” than if I were to deploy the national Indonesian language alone. In all the houses I visited, temples I worked in and rituals I observed, Balinese was the language of choice around Mount Batukau. During my observation of ceremonies, I took photographs profusely that proved invaluable for later analysis (see discussion below). My initial notetaking was done with small pads and pencil, but this quickly proved impractical due to the torrential downpours occurring in the Batukau highlands. Furthermore, studying temple ceremonies requires being present from evening until sunrise the next morning, so I found shorthand notes on my backlit phone was the easiest way to chronicle the detailed sequences of events, offerings used, and correct spelling of names and places. The following day I would write

lengthier reports of the events, never letting pass more than three days to record the details, and those lengthier entries would comprise anywhere between 1,000 to around 5,000 words or more, depending on the ceremony. Although it was time consuming, I always inserted photos from the day as I wrote so my fieldwork diary became something like an immense journalistic project. For the writing up, including the interspersing of photos, I used a program named Scrivener that is typically used by authors writing novels and scripts, but I found its branch-like arrangement of diary entries and searchable fields to be well suited to my needs.

My fieldwork also felt quite unstructured and marked by change both in terms of scenery and pace of enquiry. I did not arrive to Bali with a multisited fieldwork project in mind, but just kept following where my questions led me, allowing for shifting directions as new information came to light. At every instance, it should be made clear, I was encouraged to seek perspectives from other villages by my interlocutors, once they understood my research interests transcended any one locality. I came to realise that independent of whether one studies a single village, isolated practice or regional culture, fieldworkers must remain open to whatever is presented to you, (re)formulating your conceptions over time, so the ethnography becomes a joint production of partly our own interests and partly moulded by the input of our research participants. While the overall direction was dynamically guided by the slow-burning unfolding of new data, at the core of my ethnographic practice was participant observation. This last point feels especially integral to my three-chapter centrepiece on the Pengurip Gumi ceremony undertaken at Pura Batukau (see Chapters 6 to 8), for which I extended my fieldwork duration and committed close to six months of my time to documenting.

About the Pengurip Gumi, the reader will note my heavy use of photographs and diagrams to provide a fuller account of my fieldwork experiences. From the outset, I wish to make clear that photos, like words themselves, remain subjective to the extent they are wielded by anthropologists bearing preconceptions and biases toward highlighting one feature over another in the image. Ethnographic monographs are highly curated interpretations that selectively exclude the vast majority of our fieldwork experiences. Similarly, the accompanying photographs to this thesis offer merely

another perspective, rather than an “impartial” or “complete” representation of Balinese culture. In short, my use of photos does not stem from a belief in their power to corroborate what I have said in the text, but rather, complement the words. In a written response to a review of their *Balinese Character*, Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson suggest that “[w]ords can only say the single thing that is in focus but the camera gets a lot of background—what the elbows are doing as well as what the hand does and what the mouth says” (qtd. in Reichel 2021: 170). This interpretation of photographic use becomes especially relevant to the Pengurip Gumi. My access to certain parts of this ceremony was restricted in part by my foreigner status and other parts by the sheer volume of synchronous acts and number of people involved. Local friends I made who were also photographing the event gracefully granted me access to their images and permission to reproduce some of them here. In the end, their selective use in this thesis has been administered solely by me with the intention of helping to illustrate aspects of my writing. Finally, just like the text itself, I hope the images prove useful to future researchers, especially those local Balinese who may wish to compare the following chapters with rites undertaken in their own villages.

## Layout of the Thesis

The thesis begins its substantive chapters by looking at the relationship between ritual authority and origins in three highland contexts. In **Chapter 2**, I document significant variation between types of origin and even the structure to ritual authority found around Mount Batukau. Yet the common factor I extract from my data is that localised origins are critical to securing the *tirta pemuput* required for successful completion of village rites and highland temple ceremonies. I suggest that ritual authority in each case is premised on the privileged position each village chief or high priest embodies with respect to the divine, usually in the form of inherited obligations to mediate with local deities for the community, making their origins of special importance. For **Chapter 3**, I describe some of the megalithic structures I documented around Mount Batukau and puzzle over their existence and ongoing meaning to my research participants. From these initial reflections, I begin my analysis of the key term *hyang* for deity in native Balinese and compare it with cognates in western Indonesia and mainland Southeast Asia to consider its broader meaning. The picture I progressively sketch concerns sacred stones, the territoriality of temples, divine owners of land and the inherited obligations of chiefs documented in the previous chapter, which I begin interpreting through the framework formulated by Paul Mus.

In **Chapter 4**, I take a regional view of the temple networks covering the southern face of Mount Batukau. The common name for this system is *jajar-kemiri* and refers to how each highland village occupying relatively similar altitudes positions itself in the centre of a path running from mountain summit unto the sea. Through regional analysis of these networks, it becomes clear that their most sacred common element is veneration of the mountain deity enshrined at the summit temple, Pucak Kedaton, who is invited to participate in each village's revitalisation ceremonies (*ngusaba*). I argue that these revitalisation ceremonies do not follow the standard temple anniversary (*odalan*) processes documented by other anthropologists in other parts of Bali, but rather, have the revitalisation of resource domains as their key objective. The next chapter continues my analysis of temple networks, yet this time undertakes sustained focus of the most well-known of them all, which centres on Pura Batukau. **Chapter 5** outlines the relationship between the four subordinate "child" temples of the "mother" Batukau

temple, and their conception as a whole entity in the ceremonial context of their once-in-a-generation processions to sea. This chapter also examines the unique agricultural rituals undertaken in and around Pura Batukau for local farmers, which I suggest have their roots in the regional cultivation of rain-fed dry rice (*padi gaga*). The temple's status as a regional centre for fertility in surrounding lands is analysed through its triennial sacrificial rites (*pekelem*) undertaken at the crater Lake Tamblingan, summit temple Pucak Kedaton and tributary river Yeh Mawa.

In my first of three chapters dedicated to the Pengurip Gumi, **Chapter 6** introduces the event and some of its recurrent themes, explaining my rationale for the ceremony's style of presentation. This first part tracks the *Announcement* of the ceremony to the relevant deities from across the island and begins conveying the different levels of the sociopolitical order involved in large-scale Balinese ceremonies like these. I then describe the *Initiation* phase that involves ritually preparing the different spaces of the temple for the arrival of regional deities and construction of temporary ceremonial structures, as well as incorporating the entire network's set of villages into a sacred context of space and time for the upcoming months. Thereafter, the final phase of this chapter looks at the *Ingredients* gathered for assembly into offerings and use in the coming stages of the ceremony. In **Chapter 7**, my exposition covers first the *Reunification* of the temple network for the upcoming procession to sea. I portray my understanding of these processions as more about revitalisation than purification (as it is conventionally described in the literature) and highlight the ways deities from the above are called to step over the earth (*napak*) toward water sources (and never the below deities of rivers and sea summoned to village temples). After the *Procession* is complete, the *Sacrifice* phase commences that involves the dedication of a staggering number of animals as offerings. Lastly, the *Peak* of the ceremony is undertaken on February 20, 2020, where I document how each of these component stages is synchronously performed across the four other sanctuaries comprising the family network.

In my final chapter of exposition, **Chapter 8** begins with the *Commemoration* phase, highlighting the locally-significant Sanghyang spirit-effigies that were specially crafted for the event. Next comes the *Exchange* phase, which I consider the most symbolically

important set of rituals that speak to the fundamentally agricultural basis to this enormous instance of a revitalisation ceremony, sharing elements in common with the others I have documented in Chapter 4. Its highlight is the *sarin tabun* which involves two enormous piles of rice stalks that have been standing in the courtyard for several weeks being dedicated at last, and some days following this, the ritual dispersion of those rice stalks to villagers' farms takes place. It brings us to the set of ceremonies comprising the *Closing* section of the Pengurip Gumi, which include burial of the offerings formed in Chapter 6 in the courtyards of Pura Batukau and each network member temple. The gods are requested to depart and the effigies inhabited by the various deities are ritually cremated and buried back into the temple grounds. The final substantive **Chapter 9** attempts to briefly contextualise some of the Pengurip Gumi's features both within Balinese anthropology and Indonesian studies more generally.

In my **Conclusion**, I synthesise the previous chapters' findings to formulate my argument that these highland villages enact a ritually autonomous system. I discuss the core of the Pengurip Gumi, as I came to understand it, which is aimed at revitalising five earthly domains considered vital to agricultural life for the region's communities, including mountain, sea, rivers, lakes, and forest, which is an expansion of the triennial sacrificial rites (*pekelem*) I document in Chapter 5. I conclude that those revitalisation ceremonies and indigenous religious thought generally are concerned with facilitating the course of life from above, which for the Batukau temple networks is identified with the upper domain of the mountain's ancient sanctuaries. Finally, I articulate how the findings of this thesis contribute to regional understandings of Southeast Asian animism, which remains significant to Balinese religion today despite the layering of different historical influences. Indeed, the continuities of tradition this research explores suggest that Bali exemplifies ritual practices found commonly amongst the rich diversity of Southeast Asian cultures.



## CHAPTER TWO

# Structures of Origin: Forms of Ritual Authority on Mount Batukau

*What matters in the relation between Gunung Batukau and the village is therefore not so much that the mountain is actually located in the northern direction but that Munduk is located downstream from it, as if it had grown out of its very soil and moved down, pushed further and further from its original source.<sup>24</sup>*

—Arlette Ottino, *The Universe Within*

## Introduction

This chapter explores the relationship between origins, territory and ritual authority in the context of Mount Batukau's highland villages. I investigate how those three concepts appear fundamentally interwoven and mutually implicated in each village I studied. This relationship also underlies those villages' independence from the religious practice predominating elsewhere on Bali, where Brahmanical priests (*pedanda*) generate holy water (*tirta*) for completing rites in communities dependent on those powers (see Chapter 1). In this chapter, I discuss three different villages who each represent a variation on what I describe as a ritually autonomous system. The first, Batungsel, is a village with some of the most preserved traditions I encountered during my time on Bali. All their temple foundations are megalithic, both the priest's bell (*genta*) and ritual formulae (*mantra*) associated with Balinese Hinduism are not used, caste and cremation are disavowed, and the village concentrates ritual authority in a sole individual, their leader known as Jero Pasek.<sup>25</sup> The second village, Sanda, shares many similarities with other Mount Batukau communities, yet its leader does not claim genealogical descent from the village's deified founder. My conversations below detail how this village, and indeed others bearing similarities across the region, adopted the

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<sup>24</sup> Epigraph taken from Ottino's (2000) published monograph based on her fieldwork from 1986 in a Mount Batukau village downstream from Jatiluwih. Her works are discussed in detail in this chapter as they were the only in-depth English-language account of village ritual life practiced on this mountain. Years later, Ottino stayed with the Kebayan family to study their kinship relations and other particularities of the group. I draw on this second source (Ottino 2003) especially in my final section.

<sup>25</sup> I suspect Batungsel exemplifies traditions which were widespread amongst the highland villages previously, because others informed me they had only recently began using *mantra* and converting their megalithic shrines into cement structures.

traditions of a spiritually powerful, ancestral being named *jero dukuh sakti* who underlies their ritual autonomy. This agreement entails an enduring obligation for villagers to request holy water (*tirta pemuput*) from an ancestral source to finish all ceremonies performed on their lands, an arrangement known as *mesirwa ke dewa*.

Finally, my third example introduces the Kebayan family of Wongaya Gede. The term Kebayan conveys several different meanings worth distinguishing here. The Kebayan comprise an indigenous group originating on Mount Batukau that inherits custodianship of Tabanan's grandest temple, Pura Batukau. Kebayan is also the name given to both the tightly held core-line of the family (*garis purusa*) and its more inclusive clan (*karwitan*), both of which are centred in Wongaya village.<sup>26</sup> Kebayan is furthermore a title given to leadership positions found around the island, both priestly and administrative; in old Balinese communities found outside of Tabanan, a *kebayan/kubayan* typically holds ritual authority over ceremonies (see Reuter 2002a, 2002b; Lansing 1977; Schaareman 1986; Français-Simburger 1998). The leader of the Kebayan group in Wongaya Gede, a man known simply as the Kebayan in my text, traces genealogical descent from an apical ancestor who established a covenant with the temple deity of Pura Batukau in an ancient past. The Kebayan is the chief mediator between that temple deity and its worship community, which includes all Wongaya Gede's subdistricts, comprising eight customary villages and thousands of residents.

Following my exposition of the three village contexts, I undertake a more theoretical discussion about structures of origin. In that section, I investigate how ritual authority derived from localised origins is essential to the autonomy of the group. It explores how descent (*keturunan*) and inherited obligations underlie a distinction in status between the descendants of founding core-lines and other resident groups, drawing on James Fox's (1995) concept of "apical demotion". It also reflects on how the contemporary notion of origins on Bali associated with an island-wide network of clans (*karwitan*) is subordinate to the hierarchy defined by core-lines in the highland villages of Mount

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<sup>26</sup> At times I speak of Wongaya village, other times of Wongaya Gede. The former is the core village and home of the Kebayan and his family, which itself is divided into four *banjar* (subdistricts/hamlets). Wongaya Gede is a larger village that encompasses satellite communities that branched off into hamlets of their own over time.

Batukau. This leads me to argue that the territoriality of each village underlies their long-standing prohibition on *pedanda* completing rites in the villages, which correlates with a preference for localised over foreign origins in ceremonial contexts. Furthermore, ritual authority borne by core-line descendants is an expression of precedence significant to the entire region, given the indigenous Kebayan group's ritual control over the state temple of Tabanan. As I propose in my conclusion, this suggests an autochthonous monopoly on fertility held by the highland groups, evidenced by enduring relations of patronage by lowland royal palaces and government to the exclusion of Brahmanical priests.

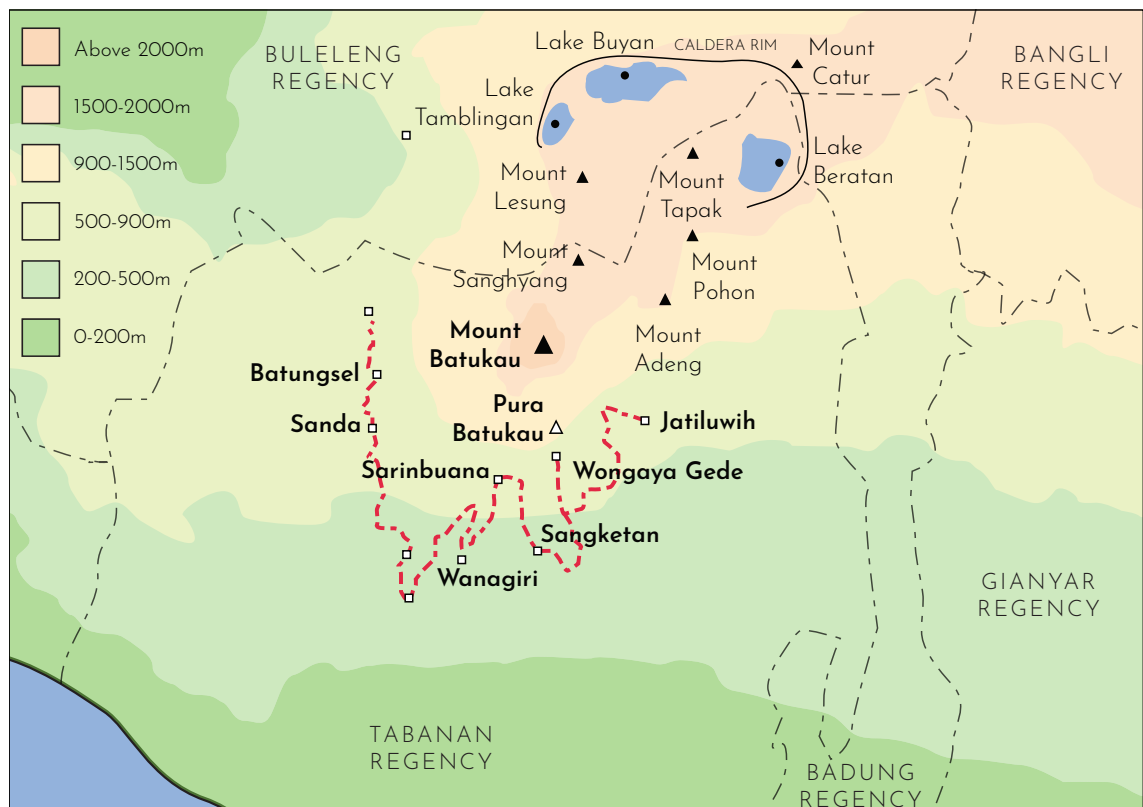


Fig 2.1: Location of the villages discussed in this chapter, connected by the trail I regularly travelled.

### Ascetics of the Forest Domain: The Ancestral *dukuh*

Before moving onto my first ethnographic case, I wish to introduce a class of spiritual figures whose ritual traditions are widely recognised as representing the oldest of the region. Those first inhabitants go by the name of *dukuh* and live large in the mythology

of Mount Batukau.<sup>27</sup> In the collective imaginary of the priests and elders dispersed around Batukau that I spoke with, the *dukub* precede the religious traditions of Hinduism and embody a special relationship between a community's environment and those deities who control it. I came to understand *dukub* to mean a spiritual person of preeminent power living as a forest hermit who was central to indigenous religious practice. Their knowledge and power are revealed by forces identified with the invisible world. They are revered for an unsurpassed mastery of medicinal plants, a capacity to communicate with the forest's unseen inhabitants and other spiritual abilities that feature in accounts below. In some stories these figures were created by a god from an epoch foreign to ordinary humans. But in other narratives they were humans with exceptional powers, able to ultimately attain the pinnacle of spiritual achievement and liberate (*kelepasan*) themselves from mundane existence (*sekala*).

Some elders and senior priests I spoke with shared fragments of stories about them that I have pieced together in the following. During an era typically referred to as *jaman pida* (first/original time), there were no permanent human settlements like the villages of today. Resembling origin stories recorded in eastern Flores (R. Barnes 1974), the early inhabitants emerge first at the summit and descend to eventually settle at the foot of the mountain. Those first inhabitants lived in the forests, typically at higher altitudes, in a simple relationship of harmony with their natural environment. This mode of living was described as pre-agrarian, and these autochthonous people were memorably spoken of as wearing *kulit kayu* (tree bark). When settlement did occur, this was described using the term *pedukuhan*, an indigenous commune at the heart of religious and social life before the tradition of permanent settlements (*desa*) became common in the region. The origins of such people, as far as I could gather, were identified with the mountain itself: the *dukub* were said to be created by the mountain god and assigned the duty of its

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<sup>27</sup> The term *dukub* is not universally recognised nor its meaning fully understood. Hauser-Schäublin, for example, asserts that little is known “about what or who the *dukub* were ... According to the traditions, it seems to refer to local sacred leaders, maybe ‘chiefs’, who ruled over a community” (1997: 65). J. Hooykaas states that *dukub* refers to “a non-brahmanical hermit, very frequent in folktales and to-day still the initiator of sudras” (1956: 304). Schaareman also finds *dukub* were affiliated with Bali Mula ancestry around Karangasem where he undertook fieldwork. Yet today clans (*karwitan*) by the same name, including with their own priestly class, exist in that region. Priests around Sangketan were aware of those clans and their associated priests, assuring me that the *dukub* around Mount Batukau were distinct in meaning, inextricably tied to the sacred origins of the mountain and pre-Hindu culture across the island. Note also that in Java *dukub* refers to a place, akin to a hamlet (Wessing 1999).

custodianship.

The *dukub* were sometimes also spoken of as being forged in a time preceding the existence of Mount Batukau when that mountain was known as Mount Keregan. In stories I encountered across the region, extending to around Lake Tamblingan, there was once a mighty volcano standing in the centre of Bali. Being the original and grandest mountain of the region, Mount Keregan was the cosmological centre hierarchically encompassing all other geographic features and human settlements on the island.<sup>28</sup> Yet at some distant point in geological time, its eruption in cataclysmic fashion caused a massive caldera to form, whose depths eventually gave form to two lakes, namely Tamblingan and Beratan. With the passing of time, seven subsequent mountains emerged after this eruption.<sup>29</sup> As the grandest of them all, Mount Batukau became the dominant volcano of the post-caldera universe and inherited this mythical landscape as its domain. Its summit temple became identified as Pucak Kedaton to reflect its status as the regional apex. Today it is the highest altitude sanctuary on Bali and revered as the most sacred locality within the cosmic landscape of Tabanan.

This story establishes an origin grounded in the Balinese landscape and institutes an autochthonous link for those who recognise descent from the traditions initiated by the *dukub*. The centres of spiritual learning (*pedukuban*) and practice they established were revered as sites one could receive healing using the knowledge of medicinal plants each *dukub* mastered. Most commonly, though, evidence of their spiritual prowess was identified with eventual liberation (*kelepasan/moksa*) at sites where they practiced meditation, typically indexed by megalithic stone assemblages (*bebaturan*). Moreover, it was universally acknowledged to me that the summit temple, Pucak Kedaton, was the nucleus of *dukub* culture and a site of ultimate origin for the region's indigenous

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<sup>28</sup> Alternative explanations depict Mount Batukau itself as merely possessing a different, original name, which is Mount Keregan. Mount Batukau is still known as Mount Keregan by some elders in western Tabanan and Buleleng I interviewed. Conceivably, Keregan could refer to Mount Batukau before its own eruption and loss of volcanic cone that transformed its crater to resemble a coconut shell (*kau*). Indeed, I was told “Keregan” comes from *kereg*, the explosive sound associated with thunder and volcanic eruptions. The story I outline above was told to me around Wongaya, Sangketan and Jatiluwih.

<sup>29</sup> The seven mountains are today found both inside and outside the caldera: Catur, Pohen, Lesung, Sanghyang, Adeng, Tapak and Batukau. For geological analysis of their relative ages, see Ryu et al. (2013).

population (Ottino 2000). As discussed below, some highland villages I studied recognised descent from these first inhabitants while others adopted their traditions after becoming settled in a locality. Until today, this latter group consecrates *tirta* from sources first initiated by the *dukub*, and thereby establish their own connection and stories associated with the mountain deity enshrined at Pucak Kedaton.<sup>30</sup>

### **Batungsel: Local Genesis and Sacred Unity of Divine to Descendant**

In Tabanan's western district of Pupuan there lies a village of remarkable antiquity and tradition named Batungsel. Of all the communities I spent time in around Mount Batukau, this village most explicitly channelled all authority on religious matters through only one man, their chief/leader (*penglingsir/penghulu*), known simply as Jero Pasek.<sup>31</sup> As one village member affectionately claimed, this man is akin to the *raja* (king) of Batungsel. Like the Kebayan of Wongaya Gede and other village leaders I encountered, his distinction from the community is his genealogical descent, and the hierarchical divergence between leader and residents is manifest primarily in religious contexts. My meetings with him were undertaken on the porch of his home that in outward appearance was no different than the others, sandwiched between houseyards beside a busy road. On the occasions we met, I would arrive as evening descended and join a line of community members who had assembled for an audience with the spiritual authority of Batungsel. Conversations were all undertaken in public, the attendees sitting cross-legged face-to-face with Jero Pasek, who sat with his guests on his porch. The appointments I witnessed ranged in complexity from requesting a list of offerings for an anniversary ceremony at a family temple (*sanggah*) to his healing of a villager's persistent illness through massage and prescription of oils and offerings. These were jovial meetings, where even a simple treatment performed on the back of a young man extended into a rambling conversation about the guest's family and village affairs.

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<sup>30</sup> I refer to this process in Chapter 1 as the subtle layering of human presence upon lands already associated with divine control. In Chapter 3, I explore it more fully in contexts where migrating populations discover ruined temples and take on responsibility for dedicating offerings there in exchange for blessings.

<sup>31</sup> For those versed in Balinese anthropology, the term Pasek may imply historical connections to other Pasek groups around the island (see Pitana 1997), though this is most definitely not the case. The title Jero Pasek distinguishes his leadership of Pasek Batungsel alone, or more precisely, of Kawitan Gunung Waringin. As will be revealed below, Jero Pasek's family line does not originate elsewhere.

Jero Pasek was a man of great warmth and clearly devoted to the community he and his ancestors have led for centuries. He identified himself as the thirty-third generation of incarnation from an original ancestor, and others I talked with around the village agreed that Jero Pasek was the only person with whom I should discuss any matter relating to ritual. While his spiritual leadership is recognised outside of Batungsel, especially by the lowland Tabanan palace named Puri Jero Subamia who serve as patrons (*penganceng*) to many of the ancient mountain temples, his ritual authority is limited to serving his community through temples that they together are mutually obligated to caretake (*pengempon*). This includes a variety of village temples of significance for the community, including a Puseh, Dalem and Batur temple, as well as forest sanctuaries located higher up the mountain beyond human settlement, most importantly, Gunung Waringin, Gunung Tengah and the summit temple, Pucak Kedaton. All these village temples have megalithic stone assemblages (*bebaturan*) as their foundations.

The leader explained to me how his ancestral lineage is fundamental to the successful realisation of prosperity for the village. About its genesis, his heritage and role as leader, Jero Pasek spoke the following:

In the beginning, a divine revelation (*sabda*) arrived from the sky. Thereafter was a place to pray, there was a location, a name and a story. Over time until the present day, the regeneration of the leader continues exclusively through me (“*kemudian ditelusuri terus sampai saat ini, keberadaan regenerasi pengurus ke wantah tiang*”). This is our beginning. Our genesis was in Batungsel, unlike others whose origins are located elsewhere, our beginning is here, caused by divine revelation (“*Pertama kali yang ada di Batungsel, itupun bukan diciptakan darisini darisini, tidak. Diciptakan disini, krana sabda wahyu beliau*”).

Like other Batukau villages, Jero Pasek locates the genesis of his apical ancestor, family clan and village on the mountain and does not seek ultimate origins elsewhere. This was conveyed to me by other communities using the expression “*tiang ngawit ring gunungne*” (I originate on this mountain) (see also Ottino 2000). For Batungsel, this includes a temple associated with origins that is exclusive to their village, which his family inherits leadership of and to which many other residents are members, making it the core clan of the village. This origin temple is a megalithic stone assemblage located in the forest upstream from the village, which was visited by a local archaeological team in 1980.

They found a series of *bebaturan* and stone statues, including an inscription (*prasasti*) carved into stone dated to 1310 A.D. (Balai Arkeologi 1980). To note, in other villages around Bali, source temples of clans (*pura kawitan*) are usually found in remote centres far from the villages where people reside. By contrast, the old villages around Mount Batukau typically locate their village as the “point of origin” (*kawitan*) for their ancestral tradition and families (see below).

This identification coalesces the village lands and origins into a binding relationship, to which ritual authority becomes pivotal. For example, Jero Pasek commented to me:

According to my knowledge, when in the visible world, I represent all those disciples who worship our village gods, including those who have come to live in Batungsel. This encompasses rituals directed to the above and below. If it is not our god who finishes the ceremony, including all types of rituals, then it is not complete. [This power to complete rituals] is not from here [this visible world], which is why we are one and the same: in the visible world, I, in the invisible dimension, the god who is worshipped at Puri Gunung Waringin (“*mawinan nika tunggal: di sekala ne, tiang, di niskala ne nika Ida Bhatara ring Puri Gunung Waringin*”).

Jero Pasek intimates that the prosperity of his village, like other old Batukau communities, is predicated on his spiritual connection to an ancestral deity. As above, the leader is the material representative of the immaterial deity (“*di sekala ne, tiang, di niskala ne nika Ida Bhatara*”). Through his union with the divinity, it may be petitioned to complete rituals (*muput karya*) undertaken on village land. For Batungsel, the leader’s centrality is defined by continuous descent from an ancient time and this structures hierarchy in ritual around his authority. Moreover, his lineage is connected to the regional landscape through its blending of its point of origin (*kawitan*) with Mount Batukau itself. As we explore in the coming chapters, this connection to the mountain is of the upmost importance for Batukau villages who incorporate the summit temple, Pucak Kedaton, and forest sanctuaries built from megalithic stone assemblages (*bebaturan*) into their regional temple networks. This linkage between a living descendant and founding ancestor of local origin contributes to an autochthonous monopoly on fertility for the villages supporting the old highland temples, including the summit temple. In practice, this means that representatives from Tabanan city’s Majapahit-derived lowland palaces who are identified as patrons (*penganceng*) of the highland temples, like Puri Jero Subamia and Puri Agung of Tabanan, are prohibited



from ascending the mountain to its summit. They are, therefore, dependent upon those highland villages performing rites that revitalise the entire regency of Tabanan, as seen in Chapters 5 to 8.

This prohibition of foreign influence on the summit temple extends to Brahmanical priests (*pedanda*). In her field research on Mount Batukau, Arlette Ottino found that Pucak Kedaton

is widely considered to form the apex of the regional temple network of the *sibak*, its supremacy being underlined by the fact that the prohibition on using Brahmanical high priests (*pedanda*) for performing rituals, which affects every temple located on the territory of land (*sibak*) encompassed by the summit temple, only really pertains to Pura Puncak Kadaton itself. (2000: 103)<sup>32</sup>

While *pedanda* are certainly forbidden from completing rites at the summit temple, I never heard the regional prohibition on *pedanda* expressed in those terms. In my understanding, this prohibition can be explained by the direct linkage between the highland villages' contemporary descendants and an ancestral past, which I explore in my concluding section. This spiritual connection is manifest through the local practice of requesting holy water (termed *mesirwa ke dewa*, see below) for finishing rituals from a deified founder, which would be disrupted through introducing a *pedanda* of ultimately foreign origin to mediate between the human community and their village deities.

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<sup>32</sup> The term *sibak* means “divided half” and is used to collectively describe the mountain’s ritual domains as split into different sections, such as *sibak kangin* (eastern division), *sibak tengah* (central division) and *sibak kaub* (eastern division). However, all Batukau communities envisage their village as occupying the central *sibak tengah* so the eastern and western division are relative positions.



Fig. 2.2: Pura Batur Kemulan in Batungsel. The pile of stones in the middle of the photo is the temple's principal shrine. During their annual ceremonies, Jero Pasek sits on the wooden board to connect with the affiliated deities.

### **Sanda: Mesiwa ke Dewa as Source of Ritual Autonomy**

To understand what it means for a local divinity to “complete” ceremonies (*muput karya*), I wish to turn to a neighbouring village of Batungsel named Sanda whose traditions bear great similarity. In Sanda, the most important temple for achieving the village’s ritual autonomy is called Pura Siwa, about which a story was recounted with slight variation to me numerous times. Originally, the people of Sanda came from elsewhere, the village leader’s family, for example, tracing its origins to Dalem Tamblingan temple located beside Lake Tamblingan. Upon arrival to the region the community made several attempts at establishing themselves. In common with other founding stories around Mount Batukau, the first settlement in the forest was unsuccessful due to discord with the environment, typically reported as *desa usak krana ada semut* (the village was abandoned due to termites). All that remains of that site is a large banyan tree cordoned off by a perimeter of low plants.

After settling in their present location, the first families of Sanda encountered a forest

hermit they refer to as *jero dukuh sakti*. This spiritual man would perform religious services (*ngayah*) for the new community. In turn, villagers sought him out for religious teaching and medicinal powers at his simple forest residence, referred to as a *pedukuhan*, where he cultivated his spiritual practice (*metapa*). The villagers invited the *dukuh* to join (*menyama*) their community, but he refused (*ia sing nyak*), preferring to live alone in the forest. The *dukuh*'s first responsibility was tending to a sacred site featuring piles of river stones (*bebaturan*) close to his residence. One time when visiting him, the villagers witnessed the *dukuh* levitating cross-legged on the leaf of a taro plant (*mesila di don keladi*). However, the next time the villagers went to visit the *dukuh* he had disappeared (*ilang*), leaving behind only his walking stick and garden tools. The villagers interpreted this as him having achieved liberation (*kelepasan/moksa*) through his spiritual practice, meaning he would not be reborn (*sing lekad bin*). His transcendence (*kelepasan*) initiates the inception of a Siwa temple for the Sanda community at the original site he cared for, from which *tirta* must be requested to complete every ritual performed in the village.

I spoke separately with both Sanda's village leader (*penglingsir*) and Siwa temple priest (*pemangku*) to help me understand the role of the *dukuh* for them. The leader (*penglingsir*) observed how the village's first families and *dukuh* have distinct origins. His family descends (*keturunan*) from the original founders of the village, and his leadership is a hereditary position, the principle of descent being a key structuring mechanism for these communities. As recounted in the story above, the newly-established village depends upon the *dukuh* for ritual services, which in other contexts is explained as embodying a relationship of disciples (*sisia*) to a spiritual mentor (*siwa*) (Ottino 2000; 2003). Indeed, the leader explained that one can conceive of the area encompassing their village lands as a *kerajaan* (a "kingdom" falling under the authority of a single leader) and the *dukuh* as the *bagawanta* (high priest to a regional lord) to the local kingdom of Sanda.<sup>33</sup> While not made explicit in the story above, the village appears thus

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<sup>33</sup> Here, especially, the model of *siwa* to *sisia* parallels the patron-client relationships established between Brahmanical priests (*pedanda*) and their dependent communities around Bali. There is reason, therefore, to suspect that the Javanese Hindu structure of *pedanda* as *siwa* to non-Brahmana "disciple" as *sisia* was adapted to the indigenous model of *pedukuhan*—an early settlement congregating around the *dukuh* as a collective spiritual leader.

to have established an agreement with the *dukub* where his spirit continues to provide ritual services for the community, who are obligated to request this special *tirta* at every ceremonial instance.

Despite the story not explicitly referencing a contractual agreement of dependence on the *dukub* for village prosperity, this is clearly the arrangement I observed in ritual practice. For any ceremony to be undertaken on village lands, *tirta* that will be used to “complete” (*muput*) the ceremony must be sought from the Siwa temple. As will be recalled, this is where the *dukub* achieved liberation and his spirit remains associated with the megalithic stone assemblages (*bebaturan*). This practice applies to every kind of ceremony (*panca yadna*). The priest assigned to the temple explained the process of requesting this special *tirta* for completing ceremonies as follows. If a village member wishes to undertake a ceremony, for example, at his family temple (*odalan*) or to ritually initiate his house (*makub*), they will take a cut piece of bamboo (*bunbung*) to the priest, who will then inscribe its purpose on the side of the material using Balinese characters (*aksara*). Then the priest will travel to the forest Siwa temple and fill the bamboo with water from a small stream (*beji*) below the sanctuary. Only then will the priest ascend to the inner courtyard of the temple, where he announces (*mepekeling*) to the deity the village member’s plans to undertake some activity on village lands. At this time, the priest asks the divinity to impart its blessing into the *tirta*, making the water a vehicle for the power of the god to authenticate and complete the ceremony.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> For descriptions of the powers of *tirta* as the divine essence of a temple deity, see Stuart-Fox (1987: 173-177) and Eiseman (1990: 51-62).



Fig 2.3: Four separate *bungbung* with inscribed Balinese characters (*aksara*) gathered for the ritual initiation (*makub*) of a villager's house in Sanda. Each *bungbung* contains *tirta* that was consecrated at Pura Siwa.

This procedure is of the greatest consequence when distinguishing the Batukau villages from other Balinese communities who depend on Brahmanical priests (*pedanda*) to complete their ceremonies. When the Siwa temple priest requests the deity impart its essence, he asks for a gift (*pica*) that is also sometimes described as a blessing (*penugrahan*). This is an excerpt from our conversation:

- Pemangku Siwa: For every kind of ceremony, we go there to request *tirta*. The god completes the ceremony once we've already requested that *tirta*.
- Me: When using *tirta* from the Pura Siwa, it means that Ida Bhatara completes the ritual?
- Pemangku Siwa: Yes! With respect to myself, I am only the intermediary ("*perantara*"). The god completes the ceremony through its gift of *tirta* ("*Ane muput Ida, pican Idane*").
- Me: Ohhh, I thought that it was the priest who completes ("*muput*") the ceremony?
- Pemangku Siwa: No! That is not allowed! We "*mesywa Widhi*". A priest completing a ceremony is not permitted! We only deliver the *tirta*.
- Me: Even for mortuary rites?

Pemangku Siwa: Yes, we must request *tirta* from there, always! For whichever kind of activity undertaken by the disciples (“*damuhne*”) here in Sanda, for every type of ceremony.

In the above conversation, the Siwa priest is explicit about the god’s role in completing all types of ceremonies in Sanda. This is part of a wide-reaching phenomenon in the Batukau villages generally known as *mesirwa ke dewa* (alternatively *mesirwa Widhi* or *meraga ke dukuh*). It involves a direct relationship with the divine (*dewa/niskala*) from whom the community requests holy water for finishing rites (*nunas tirta pemuput*). The culmination of any Balinese ceremony is when it is “completed” (*muput karya*), which is achieved through the sprinkling (*ngetisan*) of a variety of holy water known as *tirta pemuput*. In other words, the deified ancestral guardian completes the rituals undertaken in Sanda through transubstantiating its essence into *tirta*, the sprinkling of which brings its powers to bear on the material world (*sekala*). To note, significantly, in other settings this completion of rituals is the exclusive role of *pedanda*, who consecrate *tirta* in their compounds (*griya*) for use in rituals amongst dependent communities (*sisia*) falling under the patron network of each Brahmanical priest (see Chapter 1).<sup>35</sup>

In contrast to the previous case of Batungsel, the village leader (*penglingsir*) of Sanda makes no claim of genealogical descent from the founding ancestor (*dukuh*) who established harmony between the worship community and its surrounding environment. The leader is, however, recognised as the living descendant of the first settlers who established a relationship with the *dukuh*. Following Ottino’s (2000; 2003) investigations around Mount Batukau, this may be interpreted as the village founders of Sanda being “adopted” as heirs to the religious traditions of the *dukuh*, from which begins a core-line of descent that achieves “ritual ascendancy” (Ottino 2003) because of its privileged access to *tirta* from the ancestral source (*dukuh*). Those adopted heirs of the *dukuh* are indeed classified as descendants (*sentana*) (see Ottino 2003: 10), despite the lack of an ideology of genealogical descent from the deified founder (*dukuh*). Collectively, the residents of Sanda consider themselves disciples (*sisia*) of the *dukuh*,

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<sup>35</sup> C. Geertz explains the *siwa-sisia* relationship as one where the term *sisia* translates not simply as “disciple” but “is more carefully glossed as “one desirous of obtaining holy water”” (1980: 150).

and this spiritual relationship (*sisia-siwa*) continues today in the forms of obligatory worship undertaken at the Siwa temple.<sup>36</sup>

This relationship reveals an enduring contractual arrangement by which the village must abide. For example, every baby once past three months old travels with its parents to dedicate an offering (*banten pejati*) at the Siwa temple during its annual ceremony. I observed the temple priest (*pemangku*) perform rites of initiation for these babies, adorning them with traditional wristbands (*benang*) and other decorative items (*bagia* and *orti*), as they formally come under the protection of the community's deified founder, *jero dukuh sakti*. Robert Wessing speaks about founders' cults in the wider region having a similar effect, where "[s]trangers and newcomers must be introduced to the ancestral founder and the tutelary spirit; in other words, they must be made into members of the community of venerators" (2017: 526).<sup>37</sup> Indeed, one of Sanda's senior priests informed me: "*iraga wajib nunas tirta saking pura Siwa uling lekad sampai meninggal*" (we are obligated to request *tirta* from the Siwa temple from birth until death). The worship community thus characterised is a cult revolving around access to localised powers of the divine realm (*niskala*), from which they derive their ritually autonomy. This is the underlying meaning of the practice *mesiwa ke dewa*. It singularly underpins their differentiation from other religious traditions on Bali.

Around Mount Batukau, I was informed that spiritual figures like the *dukuh* are transported to the summit of the mountain after achieving liberation (*kelepasan/moksa*). Continuing the conversation with the Siwa priest from before, I asked him to explain the connection between their temple and the summit:

Pemangku Siwa: *Meraka-rai adan. Yen anggap cara iraga di keluarga, hubungan keluarga, mekakak adik, kenten model ne meraka-rai ajak ida sesuunan di Pucak Luhur. Tetep, nggih, pesemeton, menyama, keto cara iraga!*

Elder to young sibling relationship is its name. When we consider our families,

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<sup>36</sup> I believe the name of these temples derives from the founding deity's connotation as spiritual "guru" (*siwa*) as opposed to the Indic deity (*Siwa*). However, given that *siwa* can equally refer to "guru", the "Hindu god" or "centre", the temple's function is somewhat teleologically overdetermined, as are most facets of Balinese religion (see R. Fox 2015).

<sup>37</sup> Chapter 3 explores the meaning of founders and territorial cults found across Southeast Asia and their relevance to the Mount Batukau context.

it is like that relationship, from brother to sister, the model is like elder to younger sibling with the god of Pucak Luhur [the summit temple]. Permanently, yes, we are like a brotherhood, siblings!<sup>38</sup>

Judging from other priests I spoke with as well, those acts of transcendence institute a permanent bridge between the downstream site where they practiced their asceticism and the mountain summit, enabling synergy to flow between the two localities.<sup>39</sup> The Siwa temples found around Mount Batukau, therefore, serve to not only ground the highland villages' ritual autonomy from foreign influence but also bring them into unity with the mountain. This is ritually expressed through revitalisation ceremonies that ensure the source of fertility (*pusat subur*, i.e. the mountain) flows through to the highland villages. Ancestral sources like Sanda's Siwa temple, then, become identified as analogically equivalent to the summit, such that *tirta* sourced from them is ritually sufficient for a village's annual and intermediate ceremonies. Only for the largest ceremonies would they undertake a ceremony upon the summit itself, occurring in Wanagiri and Sarinbuana once every five years, and in Sanda roughly every 10 years (see Chapter 4).

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<sup>38</sup> Note that an elder to younger sibling relationship is a common way of ordering hierarchy according to precedence in Austronesian-speaking societies (see J. Fox & Sather 1996).

<sup>39</sup> This expresses in reverse the same idea conveyed by the chapter's epigraph, where Ottino speaks of her fieldwork village as having originated on the mountaintop and progressively moved downstream over time.





*Fig. 2.4: Bebaturan of the Siwa temple cared for by jero dukuh sakti. From here the temple priest requests the deity impart its essence into water sourced from a nearby stream.*



*Fig 2.5: Families gather with their young children to be formally registered with the Siwa temple deity in front of its bebaturan, where they undergo rites of initiation.*

## Wongaya: The Autochthonous Kebayan Group and its Regional Significance

As we have seen, some Batukau communities like Batungsel identify their point of origin with their locality, and ultimately the mountain itself. Origins are thus rendered intrinsically local and, as the leader from Batungsel informed me, not sought elsewhere (see also Hauser-Schäublin 2004a: 339). Other founding communities in places like Sanda come from elsewhere originally but adopt the religious traditions of the *dukub* to ritually integrate themselves with a localised source of *tirta*, which serves to ultimately connect them with the mountain as well. In either case, access to those ancestral sources of *tirta* is exclusively held by core-lines who maintain ritual authority over the ceremonies dedicated to local village deities. This was also the case around Sangketan at the regionally significant Tambawaras and Muncaksari temples (see Chapter 5). During my fieldwork there, I would often ask why ceremonies were completed by local priests (*pemangku*) and not by Brahmanical *pedanda* as is the case elsewhere on Bali (see Chapter 1). The response I typically received was: “*krana suba ada Kebayan dini*” (because we already have the Kebayan here). This somewhat blunt response made little sense to begin with until I could place it in the context of origins.

CATUR ANGGA - The Batukau temple network

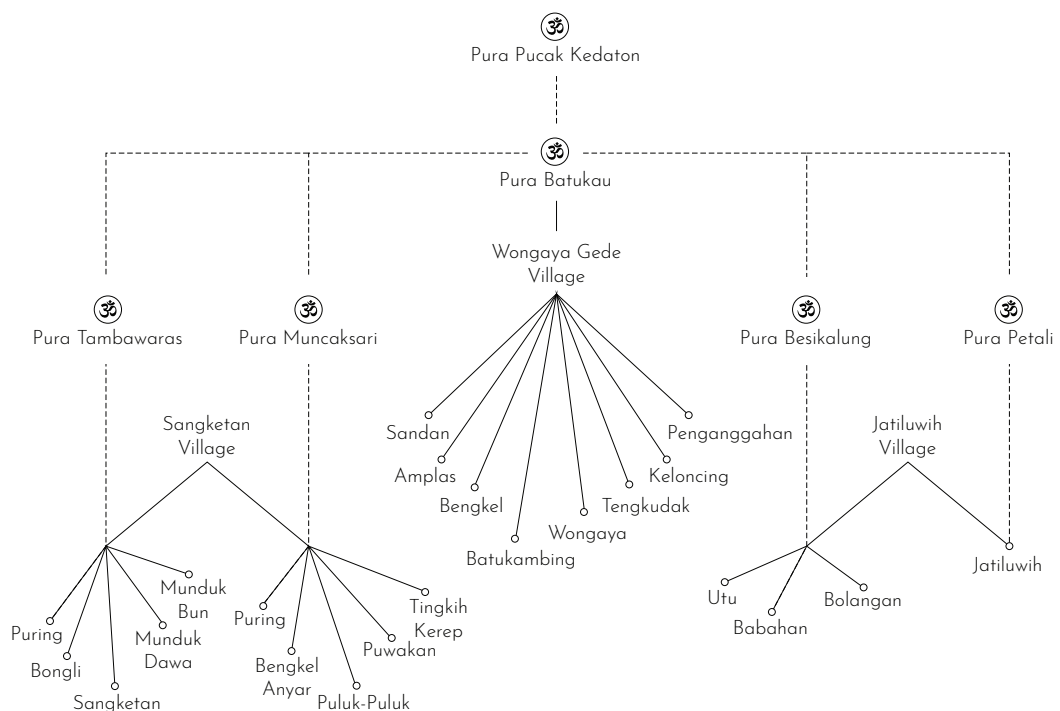


Fig. 2.6: The Batukau temple family network. Each circle represents a separate customary village.

Over time, I came to learn that the Kebayan group underlies ritual autonomy for the Batukau temple family network for two complementary reasons. Firstly, the core-line of the family embodies a lineage bearing responsibility for exclusive mediation with the principal deity of the region who presides over Pura Batukau. The leader of this group, referred to simply as the Kebayan, is conceived of as the material representative of this deity in the tangible world (*sekala*), and their sacred unity enables rituals to be completed across the lands encompassed by the temple network (see Figure 2.6 above). Secondly, judging from interviews I conducted and stories I gathered, the group was the original population of the mountain and first to bear responsibility for the summit temple, Pucak Kedaton. This precedence in place underscores their special relationship with the deity of Mount Batukau and ritual duties to undertake revitalisation ceremonies for the realm of Tabanan (see Chapter 5). I will elaborate these two points further before moving onto my final section theorising how we might understand the distinction autochthonous leaders bear with respect to ritual authority, origins, and territory.

The families living amongst the many subdistricts of Wongaya Gede village are bound into solidarity by an obligation to caretake (*pengempon*) Pura Batukau. The exclusive mediators between this temple deity and that entire worship community are the Kebayan family priests, their leader occupying the central position during peak moments of their anniversary ceremonies (*odalan*) and incorporating the deity for its descent for the Pengurip Gumi revitalisation event (see this chapter's Conclusion). The Kebayan's ritual authority is supported by four priestly groups seen in other highland contexts, roles which are inherited through genealogical descent (see Chapter 5). Like in Batungsel, the Kebayan leader enacts an exclusive union with the Batukau temple deity, and his legitimacy as regional king (*raja gunung*) and chief priest derives from their amalgamation over generations. Ottino illustrates this through analysis of the leader's consecration ritual, writing that

the goddess [deity of Pura Batukau] and the spirits of the past leaders become identified with the aspiring leader in such a way that he is then transformed into their living manifestation in this world. It is from this identification with the goddess and the past leaders, that the Kabayan derives his

capacity to conduct rituals. (2003: 13)

As the prime descendant of a prestigious core-line, the Kebayan leader therefore channels the powers of both Pura Batukau's deity and the group's ancestors into his spiritual leadership over this regionally significant temple.

Turning to the subject of Kebayan precedence in the region, the matter is less clearly established. This is understandable given the deep habitation of the Batukau highland communities and lack of historical records. Ottino (2000; 2003) reports that the Kebayan group displaced an autochthonous population already established at the Batukau temple site, the ancestral spirits of which serve to protect the Kebayan line from outside influence. Complementing this idea, a senior member of the Kebayan core-line I interviewed who had personally researched a written history (*prasasti*) of the family, informed me they originate in the foothills of the Himalayan region of India. Speaking with other family members, I was surprised to hear stories of an apical Kebayan ancestor journeying across Java to Bali, imitating other Hindu-associated culture heroes such as Rsi Markandeya (see Stuart-Fox 1987: 301-304; MacRae 2006), and paralleling the course of status competition identified in the discourse of other origin groups (e.g. Pitana 1997; Howe 2001; Ottino 1994; Poignand 1999). Others within the inner circle, however, cautioned against adopting stories like those as truth and instead resigned themselves to the uncertainty of knowing the deep genealogy of a region lacking written evidence.

I felt it would be helpful to seek input from outside of Wongaya Gede, yet still within the Batukau temple network. The views I gathered from elders were less varied and pointed to a specific function of the core-line tied to origins localised on the mountain. The excerpt below comes from a conversation with one of the most senior priests around Jatiluwih:

Me: May I ask what you know about the Kebayan from the earliest time? There are people who've told me the Kebayan line originates on this mountain. Others say it comes from India, arriving here via Java. And there are people who say Kebayan is only a status, there is no other meaning.

Pemangku: Kebayan... it's difficult to know exactly. Perhaps, the Kebayan is below the *dukub* only (“*Kebayan itu di bawah Dukuh saja*”). Kebayan means the person who has lived the longest on Bali (“*Artinya orang yang paling tertua tinggal di Bali*”). The person who was first trusted to carry the burden of [Mount] Batukau at Pucak Kedaton (“*Yang diberi kepercayaan untuk apa memikul beban di Batukau di Pucak Kedaton, orang pertama*”). It's not true there is no meaning, there is indeed!

This priest explains that the Kebayan core-line ancestors were the first to be trusted to maintain the summit temple (“*yang diberi kepercayaan untuk apa memikul beban di Batukau di Pucak Kedaton*”). To be clear, the summit temple is synonymous with the mountain deity of Mount Batukau, and within a cosmology affixed to the divinity of mountains, this is an exceptional responsibility within the regional landscape. Around Sangketan, I was told by another senior priest that the term Kebayan comes from two words, namely *kubu* (a small forest dwelling, like a hut) and *wayahan* (the oldest). In this way, the autochthonous population around Mount Batukau was collectively identified as *kubu wayahan*, meaning those who first established their residence around the mountain. This second priest described to me how the Kebayan are descendants (*sentana*) of the mountain's original spiritual beings (*dukub*) forged during the time of the original cosmic Mount Keregan described above. Once again, this layering of presence (see Chapter 1) ties groups recursively through one another to a locality, in this case, the divinity of the mountain itself.<sup>40</sup>

Despite the different perspectives on the Kebayan group's origins these stories represent, their common essence points toward the family's exclusive role as mediators between Batukau's temple deity and its worship community today. The power of this god is vast, being situated at the core position of its temple network, presiding over the state temple of Tabanan, and acting as arbiter of fertility for regional agricultural pursuits (see Chapter 5). Yet both within its own folklore and according to most villages

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<sup>40</sup> My point here about ritually tying a group's origins to a locality is explored further in the next chapter. In some ways, the historical origins of the Kebayan or any other group is beside the point because what matters is their continuation of an agreement established between the divine energies of a place and the group in residence. If they are the ones who first set the agreement, then their lineage is conceived of in terms of continuous genealogical descent. If, on the other hand, the group arrives to a locality where an agreement already appears established between a figure like the *dukub* of Sanda and the land, then “adopting” those traditions as their own equates to the same kind of inherited ritual authority for the group.

I researched in Tabanan, it is hierarchically encompassed by the deity of Pucak Kedaton. This is a rather confusing situation because on many levels, Pucak Kedaton and Pura Batukau appear to be composite elements of a single divinity, known locally as Sang Hyang Tumujuh (see Chapter 5). Nevertheless, the western villages outside of the Batukau temple network, including Pujungan, Sanda, Batungsel, Sarinbuana and Wanagiri, today enjoy direct mediation with the mountain deity enshrined at Pucak Kedaton irrespective of the Kebayan group; those villages recognise the Kebayan's ritual authority as limited to the Penebel district of Tabanan, where the Batukau temple network is situated. In other regions of Tabanan where I undertook fieldwork, stories of Kebayan authority over their lands could rarely be found, although it was common to speak of the regional temple network, the *jajar-kemiri*, circumnavigating the entire base of Mount Batukau (see Chapter 4). There was also some consensus that the *jajar-kemiri* network was originally centred at Pura Batukau under the stewardship of the Kebayan, yet this relationship between the core regional temple and other parts of Tabanan has since diminished.

To my surprise, I was told a story in those western villages that speaks to some of the original conditions mentioned above and how that ritual landscape became transformed. It is important because it speaks more directly to the precedence of the Kebayan group on the mountain. I received two versions from distinct villages in the Pupuan district of Tabanan, both from elders of the highest status. Note before continuing that these villages are a considerable distance from Pura Batukau and have no relationship with the Kebayan family of Wongaya. If anything, the western villages are in competition with Wongaya for both control over the summit temple and patronage from the royal palaces of Tabanan city, with which all the old villages have longstanding relationships. Before continuing, it's important to understand that unlike any other Balinese temple known to me, the summit temple, Pucak Kedaton, is not controlled by any one priest or group, nor does it undergo a single ceremonial anniversary like most other sites around the island. No village supplies a head priest controlling the summit's megalithic shrine (despite some claiming they do), but instead a temple priest (*pemangku*) assigned from each of the downstream villages attends to presenting offerings there during their respective ceremonial events.

Both versions of this story were introduced by declarations that these accounts were transmitted orally and presented without judgement, emphatically describing them as *satua* or *dongen* (folklore). I have blended the two stories to facilitate interpretation:

Before Wongaya existed, there was only one *perhyangan* (place of a god, *hyang*) called Pucak Kedaton. Once Pucak Kedaton came into existence, there lived an important person able to bond (*mengikat*) with the god of Pucak Kedaton. He was known as the god's first minister (*papatih*). This is the same person whose descendants came to settle in what is called Wongaya. The Kebayan in that time was sole authority (*prekanggo*) of Pucak Kedaton.<sup>41</sup> He was responsible for everything at the summit. For that reason, he is called the Kebayan.

Long ago, the village known today as Wana Engsel was called Wana Taro. Once upon a time, the god of Pucak Kedaton left for a ceremony at Pura Srijong [a seaside temple]. While it was gone, Wana Taro ascended the mountain to perform a ceremony (*ngaturang wali*). At the summit, the god was absent because it had left for Srijong. Still, Wana Taro encountered the Kebayan there who received their offerings since that was his responsibility. When the god later returned from the sea to the summit, it saw traces of offerings. So, the god asks, "which village held a ceremony here?" The Kebayan answers, "Wana Taro village". The god of Pucak Kedaton became furious. "How dare you, Kebayan, receive these people [when I am not present]?" spoke the god. The Kebayan was unable to respond.

Thereafter the god believes the Kebayan can no longer be trusted because he has transgressed his duties. Given the Kebayan is unable to carry out his function as determined by the god, the chief minister (*papatih*) is released from his responsibility. Reflecting his position within the cosmic landscape as servant to the divine king, the Kebayan was beheaded (*dipenggal*) by the god. Thereafter, the head rolled down the mountain. The god thus spoke: "Wherever the Kebayan's head comes to a halt is where his clan (*karwitan*) shall be!" That place will be called: Wong Aya [lit. "great" (*aya*) "person" (*wong*)]. For that reason, the Kebayan clan is today in Wongaya. After beheading the Kebayan, the deity of Pucak Kedaton felt remorse and sadness (*nyesel*). So Wana Taro's village name was changed to Wana Engsel.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Unfamiliar with the word "*prekanggo*" at the time, I asked my interlocutors to explain its meaning in other terms. They said in Indonesian: "*Kebayan itu dulu adalah prekanggo pucak. Kebayan itu menjadi tanggung jawab apa pun di pucak*", then in Balinese: "*Prekanggo artine ia suba ngiterin pucake, kebayane. Sangkan kaukin kebayan.*" The Indonesian more simply translates as, "The Kebayan originally was the "prekanggo" of Pucak Kedaton. He was responsible for anything and everything at the summit." The Balinese sentence translates as "Prekanggo means the Kebayan already "ngiterin" (to surround, implying he "possessed" or established his "power" around) the summit. For this reason, he is called Kebayan".

<sup>42</sup> There is an alternative to this story that is more widely known, and quite distinct: In the earliest time, the goddess of Pura Batukau lived at the summit with her husband, the god of Pucak Kedaton, and their four divine children (see Chapter 5). Once upon a time when the deity travelled from the mountain, he informed his wife that if someone comes to make offerings, accept them unless it is made from an animal with four legs, which is prohibited. While gone, the summit deity has a premonition that his wife has violated the prohibition and returns to find an offering of pork that his wife had accepted. Out of anger, the pig's head was cut off, wrapped in coconut leaves, and rolled down the hill, until arriving at the place where Pura Batukau now stands. Due to breaking the promise, the wife is expelled and thereafter settles in Pura Batukau, never to return to the summit.

Amongst other things, this story implies that the Kebayan group were the original custodians of Mount Batukau's deity enshrined at its summit temple, Pucak Kedaton.<sup>43</sup> Their ancestors served this god by receiving villages undertaking their pilgrimages to worship the cosmic ruler of Batukau cosmology.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, the story acknowledges precedence over the Batukau region through the Kebayan's position as *prekanggo* (chief authority/servant), while other villages united with the mountain god through his mediation. Yet this original condition shifts dramatically as the narrative continues. I suspect the ancestor's decapitation in the myth is symbolic of a revolution in control across the mountain's village hierarchy, perhaps due to contestation with incoming migrations or some actual transgression occurring at the summit. Deprived of their exclusive access at Pucak Kedaton, the group adapts through founding a downstream settlement, that of Wongaya and Pura Batukau (see Chapter 1). Following the story above, those villages in western Tabanan who previously worshipped at this shrine via the Kebayan's union now enjoy direct access to the summit. Indeed, this reflects the present-day arrangements I encountered during my fieldwork.

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<sup>43</sup> Ottino (2000: 174-77) defines the Kebayan of Wongaya as a high-status origin-group in competition with other highland villages, with priests of the latter being "the genealogical or spiritual descendants of the *dukub*". This corresponds with her reporting that the Kebayan group are a later addition supplanted upon an autochthonous population (Ottino 2003). She suggests that the Kebayan group, while being recognised as superior to the lowland Tabanan king as the latter's "elder sibling", does not hold supreme ritual power on Mount Batukau. This is because priests assigned to Pucak Kedaton from other highland villages are hierarchically superior, due to the summit temple's paramount status for the region. In my own view, the precedence of the Kebayan's responsibility for Pucak Kedaton is clearly outlined in the above excerpts, despite there today existing tension between the Batukau temple deity and summit temple (see Chapter 7). In my experience, highland villages were consistently making competitive claims against the others to demonstrate their superiority over the summit temple, each one telling me they were the true caretakers of Pucak Kedaton's inner courtyard. The Kebayan family, by contrast, never made such claims and only recognised universal access to Pucak Kedaton as a feature of today's ritual landscape. Strikingly, I observed the Kebayan family and Pura Batukau priests ascend the mountain for its triennial sacrifice (*pekelem*) and bury an immensely sacred offering under the constitutive stones of the summit altar, an act that seeks prosperity for the entire realm of Tabanan (see Chapter 5). This lifting of the stones to submerge an offering containing seeds of life (*asil gumi*) seemed to me premised on the greatest familiarity with the mountain's divinity. In the end, I concluded that the Kebayan group are the autochthonous population of the mountain, yet a full defence of that position would have to be argued elsewhere.

<sup>44</sup> Some elders recalled to me that the *dukub* originally resided just below the summit's elevation. Around this elevation, a sacred *bebaturan* assemblage called Batu Perauman is known in Kebayan folklore as the place one of its ancestors attained liberation (*kelepasan/moksa*). The Kebayan's wife informed me that the ancestral Kebayan's spirit residing there now functions as the *pecalang agung* (chief protector) of the mountain god.



## Structures of Origin: Privileged Access to the Divine

In this final section, my aim is to synthesise elements from those village contexts mentioned above. I will begin by introducing the concept of Balinese clans (*karwitan*) before moving to an analysis of the same term and its differential meaning around Mount Batukau. I draw on Ottino's (2003) fieldwork research into both the Kebayan core-line (*garis purusa*) and Kebayan *karwitan* (clan), which are distinct kinds of origin groups with unequal privileges attached to them. This comparison helps to demonstrate how descendants of core-lines exemplify the paramount source of ritual authority found around the highland villages.

On Bali today, groups generally trace their origins (*wit*) to a remote ancestral temple (*pura karwitan*).<sup>45</sup> The clans (*karwitan*) to which Balinese belong are usually conceived of as operating at a higher order than family temples (*sangguh keluarga*) and extended family lines (*sangguh gede*). Disassociated from any single village, this kind of collective belonging has created an island-wide network of origin groups, each possessing its own mythological charter and position within an overall cosmic order. Relations instituted by clan membership of this kind, at least for highland people I knew, do not imply genealogical descent, as is the case with the ancestral houses of extended family lines (*sangguh gede*). Indeed, many people I spoke with had no idea which *karwitan* they were meant to belong to and ended up resolving this by attending a medium (*balian*) who divined their clan-based association for them.<sup>46</sup> Thereafter, they assume a common mythological origin (*karwitan*) and dedicate offerings together on the anniversaries of the origin temples. Ottino neatly summarises the distinction between localised levels of belonging and the island-wide *karwitan* groups with respect to her own fieldwork village:

In contrast with membership in the village ancestral groups such as the *sangguh gede* and the *desa adat*, membership in the *karwitan* is not linked to the inheritance of any property, privileges or rights. The *karwitan* is an origin-point group where no traceable ties exist between the apical ancestor and the *karwitan* members or individual members of the same *karwitan*, unless they are independently related through ancestral ties which remain however contingent to the *karwitan* ties. (Filloux 1991:

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<sup>45</sup> For an excellent overview of kinds of Balinese group associations, see Pitana (1997).

<sup>46</sup> These kinds of investigations were still ongoing during the time of my fieldwork.

41; see also Pitana 1997: 39)

In sum, remote clan temples are conceived of as points of origin to which descendants who collectively identify with the group return periodically from around the island to make offerings on anniversary ceremonies.

Around Mount Batukau, the term *kawitan* took on a more localised meaning in my research. In villages like Wongaya, Sangketan, Wanagiri and Batungsel, the elder families holding ritual authority over the village temples identified their origins with the village itself. The core village temple was oftentimes analogous to a *kawitan* temple, such as Pasek Wanagiri in Wanagiri, Pura Siwa in Sarinbuana and Gunung Waringin in Batungsel. In other instances, the ancestral house of the founding family held ritual authority over the core village temples, such as in Sangketan, Wongaya Gede and Sanda. In both contexts, the origin structures I documented around the region were fundamentally concerned with descent (*keturunan*) and establishing a distinction between the family which held ritual control and those who came after. These kinds of origin structures, James Fox states, are “not abstract or neutral structures. They exist for a social purpose since they establish precedence. They determine who is to be first, foremost, elder, superior, greater, or, to occupy the center” (1988: 14-15). Indeed, this distinction between founding and newcomer groups is common to Austronesian-speaking societies around the region (see J. Fox & Sather 1996; Lewis 1988; S. Barnes 2011).

Precedence establishes the kinds of ritual authority I documented around Mount Batukau. Yet unlike in other areas where Balinese indigenous groups employ councils of elders (*ulu apad*) to determine leadership in ceremonial contexts (see Chapter 1), the ritual authority of Batukau villages is traced to descent from exclusive origins tied to each locality. Fox’s (1995) concept of “apical demotion” describes how this kind of origin structure elevates an elite class in relation to others who belong to origin groups of lesser status, explaining that

[a]pical demotion is a dynastic device of an elite to distinguish itself from the majority of its own society. This form of precedence emerges within particular societies and invariably leads to an

internal division, whereby one segment of society traces exclusive origins in marked contrast to a more reflexible reckoning of origins by the rest of the population. (1995: 238)

He notes that societies in which sacred chiefs occur make typical instances of “apical demotion”, like the highland Batukau villages I am describing, as well as those in which a royal class held power, such as Tonga, Samoa, Tahiti and Hawaii. Within that ruling elite group, further differentiation occurs: “only one line retains status; and within that line, in each generation, ultimately one individual” (J. Fox 1995: 238). Fox speaks of the Majapahit-derived lines of origin on Bali as constituting a good example of apical demotion.<sup>47</sup> The Batukau origin groups I have written about above follow the same principle, where ritual authority remains in the hands of those whose identification with exclusive local origins sets them apart from other resident groups, who are nevertheless obliged to support the ritual centre. Indeed, whether referring to core-lines of Mount Batukau or the Majapahit, the key factor is exclusivity, irrespective of whether they are foreign or autochthonous origins.

To illustrate the importance of this exclusivity to the domain of ritual for Mount Batukau’s villages, I will focus on the core-line of the Kebayan family. Ottino’s (2003) research on this group clearly distinguishes between non-territorial *karwitan* clan associations and the inherited ritual authority held over core temples by founding lineages in the highlands. In her text, Ottino contrasts a male hereditary line (*garis purusa*) of the Kebayan family, which is tightly held and subject to marriage restrictions, with that of the *karwitan* Kebayan clan to which anyone can theoretically join as long as they acknowledge the supremacy of the Kebayan core-line (*garis purusa*).<sup>48</sup> The core-line of the Kebayan, from which spiritual authority over the village and chief priest of Pura Batukau are derived, bears responsibility for undertaking regionally significant rites of renewing fertility and securing water for the fields in all Tabanan (C. Geertz 1980: 81).

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<sup>47</sup> Another example comes from Rubinstein’s study of Brahmana *babad* (chronicles). This written “record of Brahmana ancestry and descent and the rules they prescribe for the relationships among the Brahmana subgroups keep the Brahmana mindful of their sameness, of their identity as a social group. This, at the same time, reminds them of their discreteness from other groups and sets them apart from the rest of Balinese society” (Rubinstein 2000: 79).

<sup>48</sup> To clarify this somewhat confusing arrangement, there exists an extended Kebayan family line where genealogical relations are significant, and a *karwitan* clan of the same Kebayan name where submission to the core-line (rather than genealogy) is the pre-requisite.

However, members of the Kebayan *kawitan* hold no special privileges, and by associating themselves to the clan are obliged to support the core-line in all major rituals undertaken in their temples.

This case is exemplary because the *kawitan* clan is explicitly dependent upon the founding core-line despite both groups locating their origins within the same place. Furthermore, this distinction is actively maintained. For instance, the anniversary of the core-line temple is performed in the Kebayan family houseyard, whereas the Kebayan *kawitan* temple anniversary is held for its thousands of members in a public temple on land downstream from the Kebayan home. Additionally, the *kawitan* temple head priest comes from the core-line, demonstrating their ritual authority over the clan. Moreover, the defining tradition associated with membership in the *kawitan* Kebayan is that they request *tirta pemuput* (for finishing rituals) from the Kebayan core-line temple rather than from the *kawitan* temple itself. As Ottino notes, this practice is locally defined as *mesiwa ke garis purusa* for clan members, also known as “*mesiwa ke Siwa*, the Kabayan leader, who holds the title of Jero Kabayan Lingsir being considered the Siwa or ‘spiritual mentor’ of all the members of the *kawitan*” (2003: 9). Ottino concludes that *kawitan* membership is therefore predicated on “ritual subordination to the core-line, and more specifically to the long line of ancestral leaders of the group who ruled as kings and served as high priests in Pura Luhur [Batukau]” (2003: 9), which notably, she correlates with the rejection of the Brahmanical *pedanda*.

**Kebayan core-line and kawitan origin groups**

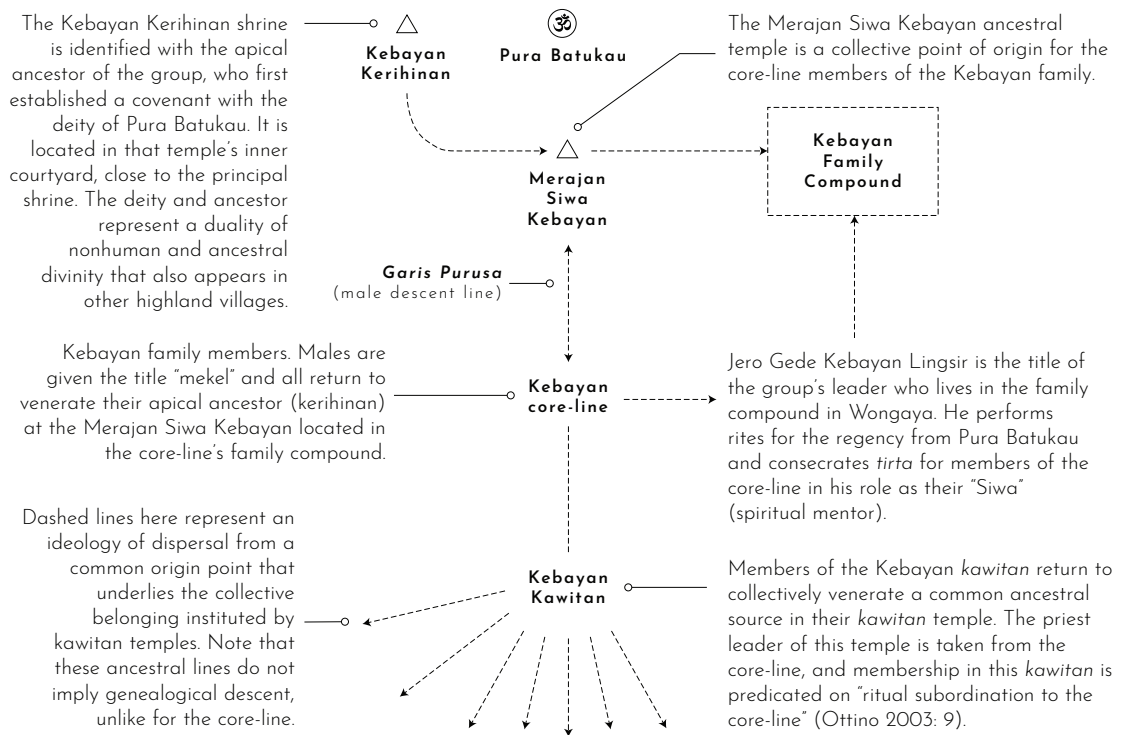


Fig. 2.7: Schematic view of the Kebayan core-line and Kebayan *kawitan* origin groups.

Speaking more generally about the highland communities of Mount Batukau now, covenants between core-line founders and village deities are profoundly consequential to how social relations unfold over generations. These arrangements situate the descendants of an apical ancestor as indispensable to human-divine relations. Moreover, a covenant's renewal across generations through ceremonial activity consolidates both human and divine into one worship community, as exemplified by the multivillage community worshipping Pura Batukau's deity. This coalescence of many groups into one community is nevertheless characterised by the concept of apical demotion described above, where an elite group, the Kebayan family in this instance, holds exclusive ritual ascendancy due to their proximity to the divine. Furthermore, this system prevails despite some villagers' membership to origin groups associated with the island-wide network of clans (*kawitan*). Indeed, Balinese born outside the highlands who bear caste titles and marry into one of the Batukau villages mentioned above must conform to its customary rules (*dresta*). In these instances, caste-holders lose their elevated birth-right status and keep their name only when joining highland village social units, and are buried amongst other village folk upon their death.

As I have been outlining, one should not mistake this invalidation of caste-titles for a society of equals. This social practice in fact evidences a prohibition on alternative forms of hierarchy, namely those associated with the Majaphit kingdom's conquest over Bali from the fourteenth century onwards. In my experience, it must be said, this resistance to the priestly order of Brahmanism is not a token of antagonism between the Batukau and later arriving social groups. Rather, it is deemed necessary to uphold an earlier system of ritual order that guarantees protection and fertility to a community, fixed to a locality and the divine energies of its earth (*gumi*) (see Chapter 3). The autonomy of the highland villages is thus premised on a founding or original relationship that grants access to *tirta*, forged through a divine ancestor that set the terms of village-human bonds. These are the origins of concern for the Batukau villages of my fieldwork and the basis for the cultural phenomenon of founders' cults in the region (see Mus 1975; Tannenbaum & Kammerer 2003; Wessing 2017; J. Fox & Sather 1996).

## **Conclusion**

In general, origin structures revolving around core-lines within the highlands reveal to us a localised phenomenon. Rather than generating a sense of collective belonging through common descent from a mythological ancestor of distant origin, one group is inseparably and exclusively identified with a place. As a result, this type of origin structure allows for distinctions between the autochthonous and foreign: that which is indigenous to the land versus that which is either from elsewhere or of newer addition. Origin stories of this kind were of the greatest significance to the old villages around Mount Batukau because they do more than trace generations back to an apical ancestor. Their significance is to bond that original ancestor with a place and incorporate the locality into the origins of the people. The origin structure is important, furthermore, because it establishes a hierarchical distinction between descendants of that ancestral line who bear ritual obligations and those others who come to take up residence on the land.<sup>49</sup> In this sense, exclusivity is an integral feature of the core-line hierarchical

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<sup>49</sup> This process is widespread amongst Austronesian-speaking societies, for whom J. Fox (1996: 9-10) notes that place and person commonly merge, and orders of precedence established through the sequential arrival of different groups serves to configure hierarchy between them (e.g. Lewis 1988).

divergence, as was made explicit in the separation of Kebayan family and Kebayan *karwitan* origin groups.

Looking at my data from across Mount Batukau's highland villages, there is likely no single model of ritual authority that can be applied to the whole region. In the most traditional of communities, the Jero Pasek of Batungsel is equivalent to a sacred chief through which all ritual related to village deities is conducted. In villages like Sangketan, the core-line retains priestly control over the most important temples like Tambawaras and its Pura Dalem, while other priests (*pemangku*) chosen by temple deities now bear inherited responsibilities for other village sanctuaries, irrespective of their origins. In Wongaya, the Kebayan holds authority over Pura Batukau and the Catur Angga temple network, yet the common village temples like Puseh and Dalem are assigned to priests of different families. In Sanda, the community shares ritual responsibilities amongst four priests (*kanca pat*) who equally depend on the powers of the *dukub* imbued in *tirta* used for completing rituals on its land.<sup>50</sup> It appears that there is no rule to draw the groups into commonality apart from the previously mentioned prohibitions they share and their collective veneration for the summit temple.

But if we look past the individual profile of highland leaders and priests to the source of their power, there is indeed a practice which defines their distinction from the broader religious tradition today practiced on Bali. The exceptional case of Sanda, in fact, provides us with insights into how highland ritual autonomy is maintained. In every instance, the vital task of completing rituals (*muput karya*) in Sanda is assumed by village gods themselves, whose essence is imparted into *tirta pemuput* upon request by those who hold ritual authority. This practice known as *mesirwa ke dewa* manifests in different ways around Mount Batukau. In the first case of Batungsel, it results from the special unity between the founding line's descendant, Jero Pasek, and the deity enshrined at the exclusive village clan, Gunung Waringin. In Sanda, the *dukub sakti* associated with their Siwa temple and early settlement supplies the community with its

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<sup>50</sup> However, the village elder of Sanda informed me that previously their arrangement was like Batungsel where all activity was channelled through his forebears as the core-line's prime descendant. For this reason, he is today both *pemangku desa* (village priest) as well as *penglingsir* (village elder).

*tirta*. And for the Kebayan, the satellite communities of Wongaya Gede and worship community of the regional temple network he governs claim their ritual autonomy is based on his core-line's special covenant with the deity of Pura Batukau (and previously to this, according to the origin story recounted above, his covenant with the mountain deity enshrined at Pucak Kedaton). The material product of this arrangement is likewise the exclusive capacity for Kebayan priests to request *tirta pemuput* from the Batukau temple deity, as well as from his family temple (*siwa*) for members of the Kebayan *kawitan* clan. As a common denominator, then, the different highland groups' use of *tirta pemuput* from local deities to complete their ceremonial activities constitutes a distinct regional culture (see Chapter 1).

The old Batukau villages' precedence is further evidenced by their relationship to both the lowland groups and mountain itself. While the precolonial kingdoms eventually came to wield near-universal control over the island including its paramount religious sanctuary, Pura Besakih, in Tabanan's highland region, at least, this was only achieved through cooperation with local village leaders. Notably, this relationship of alliance (*penganceng*) between chiefs of Mount Batukau who descend from founding ancestors and the lowland palaces excludes the *pedanda*, who function as intermediaries with the divine in most other locations on Bali. Additionally, the temple structures of the highland villages are all megalithic and predate the commonplace three-village temple system (*kahyangan tiga*) found across Bali (see Chapter 3). In communities like Wanagiri and Sanda, for example, a single village temple remains their ritual focus for village ceremonies and rites of passage.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, in Sanda, one of their four principal priests (*kanca pat*) is known equally as priest of the summit temple (Pucak Kedaton) and by the term *puseh*, despite no separate Puseh temple existing in that village. This ritual identification of Pucak Kedaton with *puseh* suggests that for the autochthonous Batukau villages, the summit temple represents their ultimate point of origin (*puseh*)<sup>52</sup> and abode of ancestral founders (*dukuh*). In the living descendants of ancient founders around

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<sup>51</sup> Hauser-Schäublin (1997: 35-37, 201-203) also finds that some ancient temples in southern Bali where she undertook fieldwork contained all three altars dedicated to the *kahyangan tiga* in a single sanctuary, which function as "clan" temples as well.

<sup>52</sup> While the word *puseh* generally refers to a village temple forming part of the *kahyangan tiga* system, the term itself means "navel" or "omphalos" (Shadeg 2007) and thus figuratively refers to the cosmic centre of their landscape, Pucak Kedaton.



Batukau, we can therefore discern a persistent, autochthonous monopoly on fertility.

Perhaps the best ethnographic illustration of this happens during Pura Batukau's monumental, once-in-a-generation ceremony (Chapters 6 to 8). On one evening of the six-months long event, the Kebayan leader must incorporate the temple deity to complete its descent (*nedunang*) from the mountain to the Batukau temple domain and thereafter inhabit a special receptacle for the ceremony. This involves the Kebayan alone meditating within an enclosed elevated room of a pavilion inside the temple complex, where his body becomes the vehicle for the unification of god and core-line to ready the deity for its upcoming procession to the sea (see Figure 7.8 in Chapter 7). This climatic moment occurs while four groups representing an ancient system of social order around Mount Batukau stand metres below the pavilion in which the Kebayan sits alone, bracing their bodies against its four columns in an act of support for his spiritual authority above. Those four groups include: members of the Kebayan family in the northeast corner; representatives from the royal palace of Tabanan in the northwest; then the *kesinoman* and *penyarikan* priestly groups in the southwest and southeast corners respectively. Once his unification with the temple deity is complete, the Kebayan emerges from the pavilion adorned from head to toe in white cloth, effacing his individual identity to reflect the unification of his origins with the region's paramount temple deity. He is then carried upon the shoulders of men around the temple. The *pedanda* play no part in this ritual widely acknowledged as the most sacred element of the Pengurip Gumi ceremony, described in full in my final thesis chapters.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Territorial Cults in the Monsoon Zone

Every mountain is inhabited by a deity, every lake has its goddess, there is not a spot of ground that escapes their influence. They are invisible, but omnipotent. It can hardly be expected that, when people who have such a conception of matters are asked the question “Whom does the land belong to” the honest answer can be anything but: “The land, with everything that grows on it, the water that flows through it, the air that envelops it, the rock it holds in its womb, belongs without exception or limitation to the invisible gods and spirits who inhabit it.”<sup>53</sup>

—F. A. Liefrinck, *Bali*

#### Introduction

Before commencing fieldwork on Bali, I had a straightforward understanding of the island’s temples that each village maintains. I expected to find brick- and stone-walled sanctuaries enclosing upright shrines dedicated to gods of the Hindu cosmos. Only peripherally did some accounts I read mention sites of worship appearing as heaped stone piles (*bebaturan*) of megalithic origin (e.g. Covarrubias 1937: 16; Hauser-Schäublin 1997: 86-105, 2008: 38-39; Grader 1969: 158; Korn 1960: 309; Bernet Kempers 1991: 15-16).<sup>54</sup> Nor did the earth as a domain of religious significance figure greatly in the literature;<sup>55</sup> more often it was described as populated by “demonic” forces of the underworld (e.g. Eiseman 1990: 226-234; Reuter 2002a: 30-31; Howe 2001: 69-72). Despite being aware that the highlands of Tabanan were heavily forested, I knew nothing of ancient pilgrimage sites of the highest religious value concealed deep within those zones. Most astonishingly, I could not have foreseen myself entering the forest on so many occasions, often accompanied, other times alone, in search of these mysterious places.

I was dumbfounded when standing before the sacred stones at first. Given the

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<sup>53</sup> Original quotation in Dutch. Taken from the English version quoted in Goris, “The Religious Character” in *Bali: Studies in Life, Ritual and Thought*.

<sup>54</sup> One local exception is the published dissertation of I Made Sutaba (2001). Sutaba researched some of the megalithic structures in Tabanan and around Batungsel village specifically (2000). Wikarman (1994) also provides an account of stone worship by early Bali Mula populations.

<sup>55</sup> For discussions around the ambivalence of the earth to Balinese religion, see Warren (1993: 36-38), Giambelli (1999: 510-513), Howe (1980: 188).

abundance of megalithic sites across the Indonesian region (see Sutaba 2001; Steimer-Herbet 2018; Soejono 1969; Perry 1918; Miksic 2007; Bonatz, Neidel & Tjoa-Bonatz 2006), it is not surprising to find similar structures on Bali. Yet why were so many located far within the alpine regions of Mount Batukau, distant from the highland settlements by an hour or more of difficult trekking? Pressing questions emerged: What did the stones represent? Where did this practice originate? How did it relate to other forms of religious worship on the island? And why were so many of the sanctuaries forbidden from undergoing renovation? This chapter describes some of my discoveries and suggests that these structures provide a window onto the religious foundation upon which later forms of worship were adorned all over the island.

My fieldwork surveyed many ancient temples scattered across the southern face of Mount Batukau, which form a roughly shaped ring called the *jajar-kemiri* (see Chapter 4). This ring comprises megalithic structures located at varying altitudes within the mountain forest domain. While the generic word for “temple” (*pura*) is regularly used when speaking of those sites, they are more properly classified as *bebaturan*, which includes giant boulders, terraced pyramidal stone monuments, pyroclastic rocks, heaped piles of stones, thrones carved from river rocks and more loosely-formed seats at ground level moulded out of stone blocks.<sup>56</sup> Apart from their ancient stone character and location within the forest, there was no apparent quality that each site bore which could universally explain their function and provide context around their origins. Of course, I asked everyone I could about them. The most common explanation I received was that the forest sites were remembered as places where an ancestral being (*dukub*) attained liberation (*moksa/kelepasan*) (see Chapter 2). Just as frequently, however, I was told that any explanation is a *post hoc* interpretation because the *bebaturan* were found in place by their ancestors—no-one knows who built them.

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<sup>56</sup> These ideas are hardly exclusive to Bali. Open-air, terraced stone structures oriented toward mountains are common further east into the Pacific, including the *marae* of New Zealand and *heiau* of Hawaii. Heading west into Java and Sunda regions, pyramidal temples called *punden berundak* are found all over the island.

## Artefacts in the Forest: Layered Puzzles of Meaning

Some of my experiences may help illustrate the complexities of navigating the ancient time of Balinese religious practice. The forested region of Mount Batukau encompasses six other mountains and three lakes, extending into the adjacent regency of Buleleng. While Lake Tamblingan is located in Buleleng, it is of special importance to the people of Tabanan because it is conceived of as the ultimate source of water for their regency. One day while exploring the forests around Tamblingan, I was told by local residents about a temple named Pucak Duhur Sari on the edge of the forest that would be of interest to me. Amongst some high-altitude gardens far from the village who supports the temple, I documented its *bebaturan* piles of stones, some featuring classical *linggayoni* carved symbols. Afterwards, I sought a meeting with the head priest of the temple, arriving to his home to talk over coffee.

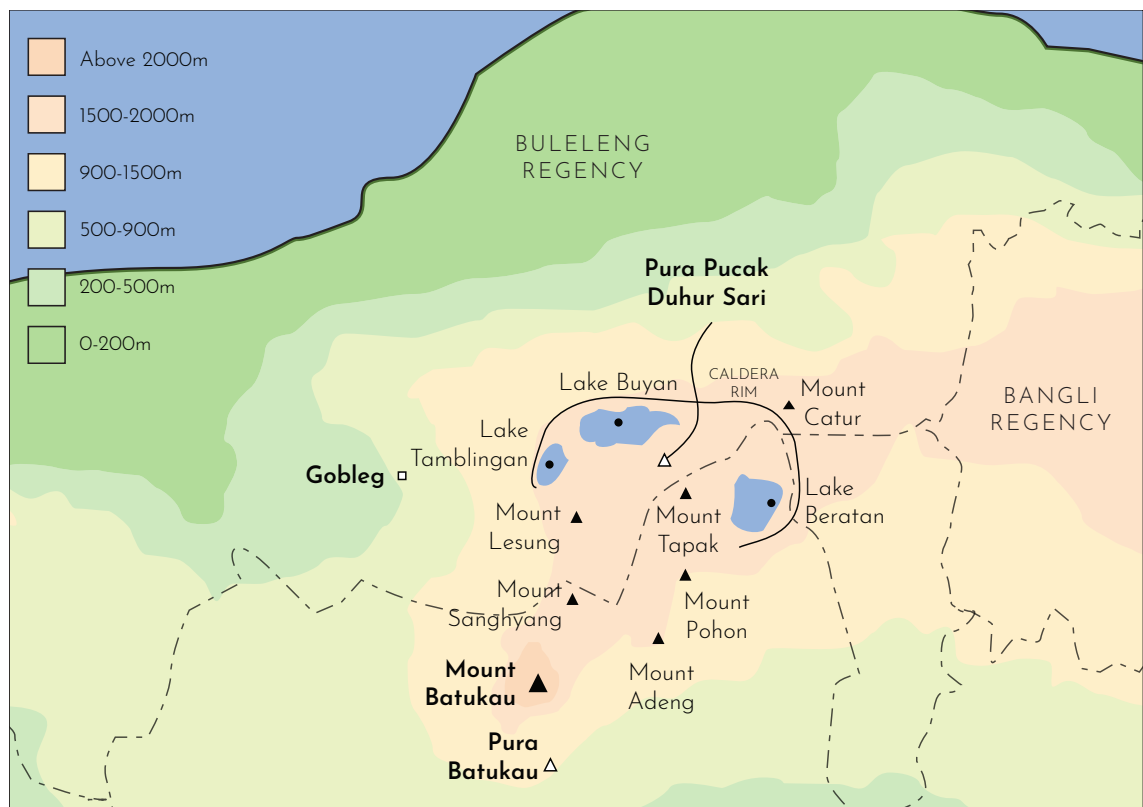


Fig 3.1: Pura Pucak Duhur Sari's location within the Buyan-Beratan caldera in central Bali.

The priest spoke with me about the temple's founding and its significance to fertility for local gardens. The village was established in 1946 after his and other families moved

from the southern Badung regency looking for land to farm. They established gardens at the higher altitudes after first clearing forest. At this time the families discovered the temple ruins, whereupon the site was immediately acknowledged as powerful (*tenget*) and that it should be taken care of by the new residents. The priest informed me that each one of the eighteen piles of stones (*bebaturan*) in Pucak Duhur Sari is dedicated to deities inhabiting prominent mountains on Bali, Java and Lombok. Given it was discovered by the incoming group and not built by their own ancestors, I wondered, then, how did the priest come to know the function of each shrine and to which deity to make offerings? As is common all over the island in these kinds of situations, a ritual specialist (generally a *balian*) was invited to divine the identity of the gods of the place and their demands so that local people could attend to these in exchange for blessings. This resolved the problem of not knowing the gods' identities for the village, and the temple has become an important site at which to request fertility for the region. Each year farming families bring agricultural seeds (*asil gumi*) to be blessed by the deity and thereafter taken home to sprinkle over and thus revitalise their highland gardens (*tegal*) (see also Chapters 4 and 8). As we explore below, this ritual process suggests a link between the temple deity and its powers of fertility over territory on which local farmers undertake their agricultural production.



*Fig 3.2:* One of the eighteen *bebaturan* stone piles of Pura Pucak Duhur Sari. The ruins were still buried under the soil when found by villagers clearing the forest. When asked if there were more *bebaturan* in the area, the priest told me: “*tidak ada lagi—ada banyak!*” (not just more—there are lots more!).

Not long after, I was chatting with temple priests at Pura Muncaksari in Sangketan village, which is one of the Catur Angga temples (see Chapter 5) supported by that community. In the upper region of the sprawling religious complex of Muncaksari lies a shrine named Alas Madia, about which I began asking questions. It is fashioned in the *bebaturan* style but was built relatively recently and is forbidden to be updated to modern Balinese Hindu standards. The priests explained that this shrine originates from another terraced structure about two hours trekking upstream through forest from Muncaksari. This was surprising to me, because Muncaksari is already the highest altitude sanctuary before the sacred forest of Mount Batukau begins. Four hours trekking from Muncaksari would see you at the summit. The upstream terraced structured they referenced is known as Ibu Madia Wana, which might translate as “mother of the forest midpoint”. The priests informed me that the deity of Ibu Madia Wana was previously alone in the forest, without a community taking care of it. This situation is not only inappropriate for a god but dangerous for nearby inhabitants. Therefore, some time ago, the priests decided to build the Alas Madia shrine at Muncaksari and undertake a special ceremony to invite the deity of Ibu Madia Wana to

permanently associate itself with the downstream temple so that it could receive offerings periodically. The new shrine was built from stones collected around the original Ibu Madia Wana site.

The priest of Alas Madia agreed to take me to the Ibu Madia Wana temple. After praying together before the principal shrine at Muncaksari, we set off on a barely visible trail through the forest. Using the word “temple” to describe the site might convey the wrong impression, because it does not resemble the *pura* (temples) Bali is famous for. At this altitude (1248m above sea level), the steep ground lends itself to terraced structures compiled of stones packed one on top of another, delineating the highest point as the core focus. Those structures we found were almost completely covered in soil that had accumulated over years of neglect. There were only a couple of upright menhir-like stones emerging from under the earth, which the priest assumed were the seats (*linggih*) of the principal (*pokok*) deities, so we directed our prayers there. We were completely enveloped by forest at this point—there was no apparent reason to me why this site should have been chosen to build a temple, nor what its original purpose might have been. Perceiving that the priest was anxious to leave straight after we arrived, we commenced our return. About 30 minutes into the descent, he showed me two sections of the forest path that had been levelled generations ago. This accords with the belief I often encountered amongst highland villages that their first ancestors lived higher up the slopes.



*Fig 3.3:* The Alas Madia shrine at Muncaksari with the forest of Mount Batukau commencing behind it.



*Fig 3.4:* One of the upright stones of the Ibu Madia Wana terraced complex. The priest dug away some of the soil to expose the stones. Surrounding the stepped-terraced structure were forest trees and the incline was very steep at this elevation.



Before continuing, I wish to make a few comments on the story thus far. The first experience of discovering a collection of eighteen *bebaturan* stone piles amongst gardens in an area that was previously forest I included to share the difficulty one faces when trying to contextualise these sites. It may, at first, appear that divination is a kind of last resort tool for the Balinese to mediate with the god of a place, employed because the villagers were not the ones who built the temple. Yet as I discuss below, divination is at the heart of the temple founding practice I documented around Mount Batukau. In general, the sites of major temples I surveyed were originally founded by a spiritual person who detected an energy inhering in the location, determining it as fit for temple construction. This was almost always described as a white light emitting upwards from the earth to the sky at night (see Chapters 1 and 2). This light manifests a locality's immanent power and draws the spiritual person there, whereupon they divine the kind of temple which should be built in that place. Typically, at the location one finds some prominent natural feature such as a large tree or boulder (see also Lehman 2003).

Both examples point to the obscurity of the deep past in these areas of Bali. Ibu Madia Wana's covering in soil that accumulated over years in the rainforest suggests it had been "forgotten" and only recently rediscovered.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, a common refrain I heard was that the communities had only "found" (*nepukin*) the stones. One can see how this is of little consequence to the villagers in the above cases, who nevertheless recognise a site's inherent power and assume its ongoing worship (*nyungsung*). At minor sites, I was told, this process might be as simple as appearing unwell before a stone that has been identified as powerful, where a person promises to forever dedicate offerings in exchange for health. If they recover, then the agreement is set, and calamity would ensue if it were broken. This obligation to dedicate offerings there inherits down generations. Irrespective of whether the site features a large tree or a previous generation's collections of stones left to ruin, the process of divination to determine a deity's wishes is analogically the same. Upon recognising a location's immanent power, the newcomers adopt themselves into patronage by the deity of the place in exchange for its blessings.

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<sup>57</sup> It also hints at the possibility that other sites may have already disappeared under the soil.

Another example exemplifies the issue for me. Halfway between Sangketan and the western Tabanan villages of Pupuan lies another community adhering to the old Batukau traditions. Kebon Tumpalan worships at a set of three *bebaturan* sites located at great distance from one another within the forest of Mount Batukau and makes no claim to have built the megalithic structures. The first of the three temples, Turus Gunung, is considered an origin point whose custodianship is shared between six local villages. Another of the sites, Batu Belah, functions as a Siwa temple from which *tirta* is requested for finishing ceremonies held in the village and at the origin temple, Turus Gunung (see Chapter 2 for an explanation of Siwa temples). The third sanctuary named Suralaya is identified as an agricultural temple (*ulun swi*) from which fertility may be requested by farming cooperatives (*subak*) owning fields located downstream from it. This network of temples grafts three key functions onto the landscape for the village: a site of origin; another from which to harness ritual power; and lastly one to secure fertility in the land.

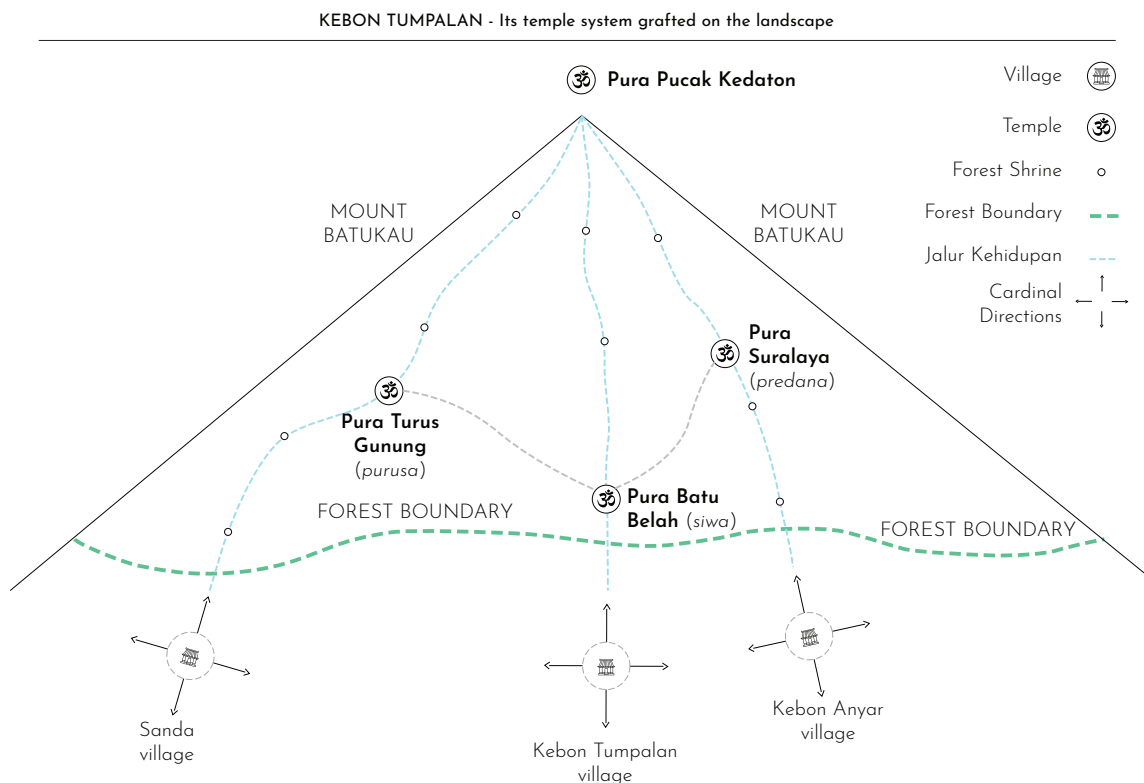


Fig 3.5: The villages of Kebon Tumpalan and Kebon Anyar participate in a temple network centring on Turus Gunung (origins—*purusa*), Pura Suralaya (fertility—*predana*) and Pura Batu Belah (ritual autonomy—Siwa).

I visited the forest site Batu Belah during its biannual ceremony. Its original feature is a giant boulder that forms a rock shelter upon which petroglyphs have been inscribed.<sup>58</sup> The boulders and petroglyphs were clearly *in situ* long before the village associated themselves with the place. I was curious to know how their community established a connection to these three sanctuaries. About Batu Belah, the priest explained that his line is ritually tied to the site through stories of an ancestor who, after attaining liberation (*moksa*) there, “entered” (*mecelep*) the rock where their spirit remains. The boulder that the ancestor entered thus became identified as the Siwa temple of the core family of Kebon Tumpalan. In saying Siwa “temple” (*pura*) this should, again, not imply a typical Balinese Hindu structure, because the shrine is the boulder itself, with whom the worship community interacts directly (see photo below).<sup>59</sup> In this way, the community merged itself with a landscape already showing signs of sacred power, this time in the form of mysterious petroglyphs of unknown origin. As part of each ceremony held at their Siwa temple, including the one I witnessed, the elder of Kebon Tumpalan dedicates offerings to the engravings in acknowledgment of their precedence in the place.

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<sup>58</sup> Visiting there in 1984, the local archaeological department suggests the engravings form part of a wider grouping of Indonesian petroglyphs due to the boat symbolism identified at the site (Gede 1998). I found further engravings (see Appendix 1) not documented by the original team that may correspond with even older styles found in Timor Leste (S. O'Connor et al. 2010). Without excavation of the area, however, proper dating is next to impossible from petroglyphs alone.

<sup>59</sup> My previous chapter has already outlined the meaning of Siwa in these contexts, temples which underlie the ritual autonomy of highland villages.



*Fig 3.6:* The boulder in the foreground contains the petroglyphs while the second boulder in the distance is Kebon Tumpalan's Siwa temple.



*Fig 3.7:* The elder priest connects with the god affiliated with the boulder during its ceremony. This is the community's Siwa temple.

Eventually I made my way to another of the three temples. Turus Gunung is located

beside the forest trail leading to Mount Batukau's summit temple, Pucak Kedaton, upstream from the western Tabanan village of Sanda. Despite being the closest village to the site, Sanda has no affiliation there. It bears reemphasising that at this elevation (1004m above sea level), we are one hour's walk from the nearest village and surrounded by forest, leaving no obvious reason for Turus Gunung's original foundation. It is a relatively compact, terraced structure, including a rudimentarily carved *lingga-yoni*, menhirs and an elevated platform that now has large trees growing from within it, disrupting the stone-tiled ground. The people of Kebon Tumpalan identify this megalithic site as their point of origin on the mountain and its deity as their protector and guarantor of general prosperity. Ceremonies are jointly undertaken by the six villages who worship there every three to five years. In the interceding years, a smaller-scale version of that ceremony is performed at the village Puseh temple of Kebon Tumpalan, making the sites analogically equivalent. Indeed, the latter is colloquially referred to as "Turus Gunung *cenik*" (a mini Turus Gunung). This kind of microcosmic instantiation of a grander and more sacred temple found further upstream is typically named the *penataran* (like the "temple yard" of a remote centre).



Fig. 3.8: A frontal view of the Turus Gunung site, showing the first low-lying terraced wall.



*Fig. 3.9:* A detail of the same low-lying terraced wall showing its basic construction.



*Fig. 3.10:* The rudimentary *lingga-yoni* symbolism discovered at the site. A stone-carved phallus-shaped pestle rests beside a half-buried stone container with accompanying lid.



*Fig. 3.11:* One of the site's focal points, featuring a stone heap and menhir.



*Fig. 3.12:* One of the main sites of worship (*pokok*) featuring larger stone blocks upon a smaller stone heap that has been disrupted by the growth of an immense tree.

Finally, the third sanctuary is another megalithic terraced structure named Pura

Suralaya. Its god is the controller of fertility for fields situated downstream from it. This site is at an even more elevated altitude of 1265m above sea level, deep within the forest. I sought access to it for over a year, dropping by the head priest of Pura Suralaya's home every few months to ask if there was an opportunity to visit the temple. Its sacredness means a death in the village prohibits access for months afterward and there should anyway be a strong reason to ascend. I had almost given up hope until one day I received a text message from the priest's son alerting me to their plans to go there the following day to fetch holy water for an irrigation temple's ceremony.<sup>60</sup>

Over two hours of trekking through unvisited forest led us to the site. At the risk of repeating myself, I wish to note that this temple is so remote from the villages that maintain it—and concealed within forest stretching for kilometres in all directions along the contours of the mountain—that its original purpose still baffles me. Nor is it merely a single stone heap. Stretching across somewhere between 50 to 100 metres of terrain, the first clearing begins at its base with a *bebaturan* dedicated as the site's divine guardian (Ratu Nyoman) before another clearing some tens of metres further uphill, featuring a large pile of stone blocks (Jero Tengah) upon which offerings are directed to the god who resides in Suralaya's upper platforms. Only after praying there may the group ascend a final section of terraces naturally delineated by the mountain's slopes. Each change in elevation is lined with stones now barely visible under plant growth.

Suralaya is classified as an *ulun swi* temple, referring to its position beside a river that feeds into farmers' rice fields far below. As a result, five *subak* (farming cooperatives) that depend upon those waters form the community which performs ceremonies there. It is said that after clearing the land and establishing *subak* temples at which to pray for fertility in their fields, the oldest *subak* temple's deity revealed (*pewurwus/pewisik*) to the community a sacred location high up in the forest at which to worship *hyang* (a deity). Upon its discovery, Suralaya was then incorporated into the community's own network of temples. Thereafter, Pura Suralaya became the *predana* (female generative principle) and Pura Turus Gunung the *purusa* (male generative principle) for their cosmological

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<sup>60</sup> In particular, this site recalls the famed Arca Domas stepped terrace maintained by the Orang Kanekes (Baduy) of Sunda (see Wessing 1999; Wessing & Barendregt 2005)



system that integrates the landscape of Mount Batukau (see Figure 3.5 above).



*Fig 3.13:* From the middle courtyard of Pura Suralaya, a clearing between trees in the middle of the photo leads up to the inner sanctuary.



*Fig 3.14:* The view after passing into the inner sanctuary from the middle courtyard. Stones on the ground track the terraced levels until arriving at the highest point, located in the distance of this photo.



*Fig 3.15:* The highest terraced layer, featuring a small tree placed in its centre.



*Fig 3.16:* In the middle courtyard, the stone heap known as Jero Tengah is where the community places their offerings to the deity associated with the highest terraced layers.

The longer I spent exploring the ancient forest and highland villages of Mount Batukau, the more I realised that layers upon layers of meaning are present at sites that have been attended to by different generations of Balinese for in some cases centuries, and others much longer.<sup>61</sup> In their adaptations, I found communities' patronage under gods to be highly versatile, yet centrally concerned with ritually tying themselves to a divinised landscape seen as the ultimate source of life-giving powers sustaining these highland groups. Despite in some instances literally stumbling across megalithic ruins of another era, sacred places became swiftly woven into the tapestry of temples through which a community negotiates its prosperity within a locality. The ruins, ancestral temples, boulders, or other geographic features were sometimes associated with origin stories, other times meaning was divined through ritual specialists. But always, the place was identified with immanent powers demanding the attention of its worship community.

Thus far, I have presented a series of short vignettes that may give the impression that the region's communities are too diverse to draw any conclusions about a common structure of belief and practice. In fact, there is plenty we can say about what the ancient stone structures might mean and infer about the cosmology in which they are significant. Later, I will consider the materiality of stones in regional context to arrive at a deeper understanding of their purpose. For now, I wish to note how some of the stories I relate above depict populations who were first and foremost "worship communities", engaged in the worship of a deity (*hyang*) associated with their lands to whom each resident must submit to participate in said community. Identification with those gods of the landscape thus becomes the thread uniting a community into a nexus of mutual obligations, from which village solidarity emerges. As we see later, this is the basis of a territorial cult.

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<sup>61</sup> My point here is that it can be misleading to interpret a temple's meaning by its present-day appearance, because divination and renovation may quickly transform meaning. The public temples I knew best, Tambawaras and Muncaksari, for example, are massive complexes built in the Balinese Hindu style, featuring *gedong* and *pelinggih* that reference other sanctuaries in the region. Their stone and wooden structures rapidly decay in the humid rainforest, rendering them apparently immemorial. Elders in my village, however, cautioned against interpreting the temples "as is" because both were completely renovated in recent decades, before which time they comprised simple *bebaturan* stone heaps immersed in jungle.

## Hyang: Deities of the Landscape

I would like to consider the term *hyang* (deity) that I have just described as the object of a community's worship. Balinese temples are described as *kahyangan*, which translates as "place of *hyang*". Looking comparatively to the Javanese and Sumatran cosmological systems, cognates of *hyang* are still in use today. This regional literature is important because it helps contextualise terminology outside of the framework of Balinese Hinduism that has become increasingly dominant over the last century (see Chapter 1). In his seminal paper on Javanese spirit taxonomy, Robert Wessing describes how the term *dhanyang* is derived from *hiang* or *yang*, meaning spirit or deity (2006: 18).<sup>62</sup> He informs us that *dhanyang* is used to refer to spirits of the land with whom villages must enter into a pact to access the earth's fertility: the "Javanese speak of them as *penguasa*, the ones who are in authority or in control of a place" and "conceived of as the owner of the soil on which a village stands" (2006: 18). When speaking of how a *dhanyang* becomes a guardian spirit of territory or village, he writes that:

[b]efore land is claimed for human habitation, a divinatory ritual is conducted in which it is assumed that if the spirits do not actively object, they acquiesce in the occupation of their land by human beings. Once the humans move in, one of the spirits is appointed as leader of what was until then a leaderless mob of wild spirits; in other words, the invading people incorporate the formerly non-social spirits into their social system. Having been appointed, this spirit is given offerings and is celebrated as the object of a cult. (Wessing 2006: 34)

Further west, in the Sundanese region of Java, the spirit of rice, Nyi Pohaci Sang Hyang Asri, ensures the abundance of crops in a role equivalent to the Hindu-named Dewi Sri on Bali, where she may work in conjunction with each hamlet's protective spirit (*sanghiang*) (Barendregt & Wessing 2008: 557). In Sumatra, the Karo Batak term *dayang* is composed of *da* (beloved, honoured), and *yang* (spirit, god) (Neumann 1904: 134). Beatriz Van der Goes writes that the "*beru dayang* occupy a place, like a significant feature in the landscape or an important element of the house" (1997: 381), while Si Dayang refers to the female rice spirit present in dry rice during its production in fields. There is thus commonality in belief across Sumatra, Java and Bali that *hyang* are unseen powers present in the landscape with whom inhabitants must come to terms with to

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<sup>62</sup> The terms *dhanyang* and *dayang* are analogous to *sang hyang* on Bali, where *sang* translates as honourable and *hyang* as deity.

thrive on their soil.

Curiously, more broadly around insular Southeast Asia, the most common Austronesian-speaking word ascribed to invisible beings are cognates of the proto-Austronesian term *qanitu* (Molnar 1990). This includes *nitu* in Flores (Forth 1998), *anito* in the Philippines (Yengoyan 1995), *anitu* in Fiji (Wolff 2003), *hanitu* in Bunun, Taiwan (Fang 2016) and *hantu* in Malay speaking contexts (Endicott 1970). Those Austronesian words typically refer to nonhuman beings, yet each vary in their closeness to the idea expressed by *hyang* in the Balinese context. This is surprising because the languages spoken on Bali, Java and Sumatra are undoubtedly part of the Austronesian language family. Despite speaking Austronesian languages, the western Indonesian concept of *hyang* seems affiliated with the term *yang* used by Austroasiatic-speaking hill-tribe groups of Vietnam like the Mnong, Katu and Sre (Dournes 1993; see also Condominas 1977; N. Ärhem 2014), and the Austronesian-speaking Jarai (Padwe 2020) of Vietnam and Cambodia. The Jarai present in the hills of Cambodia and Vietnam, for instance, use *yang* to refer to

the spirit beings that animate forest and village alike, inhabiting plants and animals but also rocks and springs, copses and hills, and other places in the forest, as well as houses and buildings and objects like sacred gongs and the ceramic jars used for drinking rice beer. (Padwe 2020: 4)

Moreover, *hyang* also appears to be an ancient term in the western Indonesian context. Speaking of an early inscription named Mantyasih on Java from the year 907, de Casparis and Mabbett recount how pre-Hindu deities are described:

There is a crocodile by the name of Manalu, and there are different snakes (*ulāsarpa*) and different fires (*nāla* and *apuy*). All these terms and names are preceded by *sang hyang*, always indicating deities, animals and objects considered sacred. There are a sacred axe (*sang hyang wadung*), a sacred heart (*sang hyang tēas*), presumably the centre of the foundation, and a sacred rice block (*sang hyang kulumpang*). Some rivers were sacred, such as the Bengawan Solo (*sang hyang bhagawān*), as were some mountains. (2008: 301)

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to fully substantiate these links, yet I wish to suggest that what I documented around Mount Batukau may be best comprehended through

this broader lens onto the deep history and cultural affiliations uniting the region.<sup>63</sup>

### **Land Conversion: Divination, Clearing and Worship**

Let us turn to a framework that illuminates how a divinised landscape becomes interwoven into Balinese religious practice. In his brilliant exposition of indigenous Indonesian concepts relating to space, land and the divine, Guadenz Domenig's (2014) comparative anthropology takes regional architectural styles, landtaking rites and the cosmologies underpinning them as some of its core themes. He offers a tripartite general model for how Indonesian societies mediated with deities of the landscape when first establishing themselves in a place. The steps are: (1) divination; (2) clearing the area; and (3) establishing a sacred grove to worship the deity previously inhering in the place. Elaborating upon the first process, he writes that

divining in landtaking means to stipulate, explicitly or implicitly, the terms of a contract, according to which the spirits have to leave the area but will get in compensation a new dwelling space where they will be worshipped and from which they will continue to preside over the land as helpful guardian spirits/deities. (Domenig 2014: 35)

In one example of landtaking rites held across the archipelago, Domenig draws on Rodolfo Giambelli's (1999) fieldwork undertaken on the small Balinese island of Nusa Penida. Giambelli describes the process whereby a ritual specialist invokes forest spirits (*memedi*) to convince them to vacate the land because a farmer wishes to establish his garden there. The ritual specialist is a man known as *jero dukuh sakti*, the same title given to the founding ancestors figuring prominently in Mount Batukau folklore (see Chapter 2). This individual is chosen for his heightened capacity to communicate with spirits of the forest and land (Giambelli 1999: 504). The expelled spirits are requested to inhabit a large tree that will be reserved as a sacred grove after the land is cleared, where the human owner will continue to make offerings. As Domenig notes, this domesticates the deity of a place into a protector of the new inhabitants, writing that

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<sup>63</sup> Note that Jacques Dournes specifies the term *yang* as "common to almost all Indo-Chinese ethnic groups (natives of the south), both Austroasiatic and Austronesian. ... and places the Indo-Chinese ethnic minorities in relation with millions of other people who think *yang*, a notion with a profound resonance in this part of the world" (1993: 218).

[t]he ritual procedure not only transformed wilderness into land for human cultivation or settlement, but at the same time also turned not-worshipped nature spirits into locally worshipped ones, thus changing a chaotic multitude of wild spirits into an ordered community of local guardian deities represented in the cult by its chief. (2014: 45)

This example sheds some light on how the landscape comes into relationship with the inhabitants of Mount Batukau. Yet Giambelli does not share details around divination that the ritual specialist surely undertook to first determine whether the land was appropriate for use as a garden. Around Sangketan, my friend Solo, a senior priest and descendant of the village founders, helped to fill in some of the gaps in the Balinese ritual procedure. By incorporating this previous step, we see how the Balinese relationship to land accords with Domenig's model cited above.

Firstly, Solo informed me that ordinary priests (*pemangku*) do not have the capacity to perform the divination rite known as *malinin tanah*. This implies it is the domain of a spiritually powerful person (*anak sakti*), such as a *balian* (medium, healer). The following procedure is applied independent of whether the land is already garden (*tegal*), rice field (*carik*) or still forest (*alas*). Each ritual specialist has their own techniques. One method involves taking a series of small offerings (*canang sari* and *segehan*) with red onion (*barwang*) placed on top that are then dedicated to the spirit-owner (*penunggu*) of the land. These offerings are placed at each corner of the land and one furthermore in the centre. Then the specialist will sit on the ground and perform a rite. This revolves around communicating with whatever presence is there. *Mantra* may be used by some specialists while others may speak directly with the divinity using normal speech (see Giambelli 1999: 501). The most important element is when the specialist requests permission from the spirit-owner to transform the site for whichever purpose they have planned. They must then await signs of its acceptance. At this point, the land is left alone for some days. After this interval, they return to check if the red onion (*barwang*) remains, which is a sign that the invisible owner accepts the terms, and the land may be processed for human use. If, on the other hand, the onion is missing, then the land is dangerous and they must not proceed.

Before the land is cleared, the qualities of the site must be determined by the ritual specialist. This person will dig up some of the earth and inspect it to identify its colour,

smell and additionally examine the contours of the land. Each of these qualities becomes significant when determining the kind of purification ritual (*ngeruwak*) that must be performed later. The ritual specialist will be looking for reds, yellows, chocolates, and blacks as these are associated with the foundational elements of the universe (*panca maha buta*) and contribute to deciding the size of the *ngeruwak* ritual. The colour of the earth will also feature prominently in the colour of the *ngeruwak*'s offerings. In terms of smell, the specialist is looking for qualities like sweetness (*manis*), spiciness (*lalab*), bitterness (*asem*), meat/blood (*andih*) and putrefaction (*bengu*). If the latter two qualities become apparent, then automatically the *ngeruwak* rite will involve more elaborate offerings (*rsi gana*). Lastly, the specialist checks the land's contours to determine where a special package (*gangga mili*) leftover from the *ngeruwak* purification rite will be buried. This will typically be placed at the bottom of the land's incline, akin to a stop on the flow of water. Only now, after all these determinations are made may the components of the *ngeruwak* rite be announced. This will be performed by the village and its effect is to ritually transform the site in preparation for tree felling, ground levelling and the construction of any buildings.

When a ritual specialist connects with the energy of a place to request permission to occupy the land and transform its status, they are communicating with an entity rarely spoken of in Balinese scholarship. The term *penunggu* translates to either "owner" or "controller"; its equivalent is *sedahan* in the higher Balinese register. To pre-empt any confusion, this kind of unseen being is according to my interlocutors distinct from the gods of the earth worshipped in highland temples normally known as *hyang* or *bhatara*, a point to which I will return. The ritual specialist deals directly with the *penunggu* because it is identified as the chief of that land's many creatures, which includes different unseen beings like *wong samar* (invisible forest people), *memidi* (ghosts) and other *buta-kala* (chthonic entities). The *penunggu* controls that mob of potentially malevolent forces if it is worshipped as the deity of the land. It also protects against pests like mice in the case of rice fields. Moreover, the plants growing upon its land are "owned" by the *penunggu* such that if, as I regularly observed around the houseyard I lived, a neighbour comes to cut some coconuts or fruit growing in someone's garden, they will always make offerings first (*mebanten malu*) at the shrine dedicated to the



spirit-owner of the garden (*penunggun tegal*, or *penunggun perasat*).<sup>64</sup> Hence, after the ritual specialist receives signs of acceptance of the terms they have laid out for occupation during their initial contact, they construct a temporary altar (*terus lumbung*) that will house the spirit until a more fitting shrine is built after the land has been cleared. As I have hopefully made clear, the process of converting land begins with direct communication between a ritual specialist and the god of a place, where the latter agrees to stabilise the land's inherent energies in exchange for regular worship at a permanent abode.

This vital process of communicating with spirit-owners (*penunggu*) when converting land for human use is underreported in Balinese anthropology. In every occupied space I visited, *penunggu* shrines are visibly evident, including in both the highlands and lowlands and facilities as broad as schools, rice fields, gardens, offices, restaurants, and houseyards. Indeed, every Balinese home has a permanent shrine dedicated to the *penunggun karang* (god of the houseyard). Around Mount Batukau, *penunggu* may be identified with either an existing stone or large tree, typically by adorning it with chequered cloth (*saput poleng*). I would often ask my interlocutors why a large tree or stone was covered in cloth and the answer was always simply: “*krana ada penunggu*” (because there is a *penunggu*). Moreover, it is to the *penunggu* of rivers and adjacent forested areas to whom residents would dedicate offerings to when crossing bridges. In the fields, farmers would often place a few stones in a field's corner and invite the spirit of the land (*penunggun carik*) to inhabit there. Or, just as commonly, an already existing stone or other feature was identified with the *penunggu* inhabiting the land and that feature turned into a site of worship.

Crucially, one sees from the ritual procedure I outlined above that the specialist does not decide how land may be used. Rather, the land's inherent qualities determine its potential usage. In other words, the land communicates through signs like colour and

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<sup>64</sup> The key idea underpinning the concept of *penunggu* is indeed ownership. Parallels can be drawn between deities of temple networks referred as Ratu Meduwe Gumi (the ruler who owns the earth), a name given to the god of Mount Batur (Hauser-Schäublin 2011: 46). See also Grader (1969).

smell its suitability for different kinds of human use (see also Allerton 2013: 122).<sup>65</sup> This understanding helps us address the special case of temple construction. As I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, most of the ancient temples or *bebaturan* I documented around Mount Batukau were said to have been founded at a site that indexed a special kind of immanent power (see Chapters 1 and 2).<sup>66</sup> Solo explained that land where temples are built will have something distinguishing it from other localities, often its earth effuses a special fragrance (*miik*) and magical power (*tenget*) is always highly concentrated there, as illuminated by the light.<sup>67</sup> Only a person of great spiritual power will be able to communicate with that energy and determine what kind of temple must be built there. The energy in this context is described as *hyang* or *bhatara* (as opposed to *penunggu*) and the future temple thus becomes a *kahyangan*. Requiring a more elaborate and advanced technique than when communicating with the spirit-owners (*penunggu*) described above, here the specialist unites with the energy via a process known as *meyasa* to divine the wishes of the god, including what shrines ought to be built within the new temple. Once these details are confirmed, temple construction may commence and the *hyang* is worshipped for the benefit of those living or working on approximate lands. This effectively institutes a cult, or temple worship community (*masyarakat pengempon*).

### **Territorial Cults: Local Divinities Consubstantial with the Land**

Across the villages I surveyed on Mt Batukau one begins to detect a generalised pattern of commemorating a founding agreement between the original inhabitants and a deity associated with a place that takes the form of a cult. These cultic deities are engaged to protect the villagers and ensure fertility flows through to their fields. It must be said at

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<sup>65</sup> Writing about eastern Bali, Margaret Wiener explains that “[*t*]enget places include mountaintops, forests, beaches, the ravines and trees ... Temples, priestly houses, and palaces are often built in such regions, or on any land where there are signs of numinosity such as the presence of certain species of trees or a luminescence, fragrance, or pleasurable feeling of well-being” (1995: 55).

<sup>66</sup> Barbara Lovric’s research largely accords with my own investigations that the overriding quality determining a site’s appropriateness for temple construction is its “tengetness” (1987: 52). She defines *tenget* as “a mystical milieu where powerful forces concentrate” and space that is “magically and ambiguously powerful”, which includes “[u]nusual landforms and geological formations” (1987: 51).

<sup>67</sup> When asking interlocutors, both priests and laypersons alike, about the most important qualities Balinese look for when choosing a site for temple construction, it was universally agreed that it must be both *tenget* (powerful) and *tegeh* (high).

the outset, this idea does not present itself transparently nor do people usually speak about the annual commemoration of an agreement between a founder and a god. This theme exists underneath the surface probably due to the ways religion and its interpretation have evolved on Bali across time, especially the recent emphasis on locating divine beings within a universal framework of cardinal Indic deities including the trinity of Siwa, Wisnu and Brahma (see Chapter 1). Consequently, this arrangement is best detected through landtaking rites, aspects of temple ceremonies, and the stories of origin I encountered across the region.

An example helps illustrate the point. The village I lived in during fieldwork is one of the five which takes care (*pengempon*) of Muncaksari, a large public temple renowned throughout Tabanan as one of the four primary temples (Catur Angga) encompassed by the Batukau network of family temples (see Chapter 5). Like Tambawaras, it originally consisted of only *bebaturan* stone piles encircled by the sacred forest of Mount Batukau. Those *bebaturan* were not emplaced by the current caretaking villages but by an earlier generation of uncertain origin. The current generation of caretakers shared a founding story with me that conveys how they came to bear responsibility for the complex, which I have translated and condensed:

There was once a man named Kakek Rumrum from a village named Puluk-Puluk. He and his two sons and two neighbours entered the forest of Mount Batukau looking for rattan to build a home. Soon after a thick fog descended upon the forest and heavy rains began falling. The group tried to return home but realised it was impossible after circling around lost three times. They sat down together and began praying, asking for help from the gods (Bhatara-Bhatari) who owned ("*madurwe*") the place. The man spoke, "I am Pekak Rumrum and my son came here to search for rattan to make a house and rice barn. Due to this thick fog, I ask for forgiveness. If the Bhatara-Bhatari are willing to bless me so that we may return home safely to Puluk-Puluk, I promise to offer a great ceremony including the meat of feathered ducks and 525 Chinese coins." Not long after, the weather cleared and the rain stopped. Only then could they see a *bebaturan* beside a large tree. So, they made a sign there to return, and went home with their health intact. Upon arriving to the village, the story was told to all his children and neighbours.

Some six months later, the old man proposes to fulfil his vow ("*anake odah pacang nawur bisamane*") and heads back to the forest site from before. Along with five others they make their offerings, then hear a voice informing the elder that he should take responsibility for the shrines there ("*wenten kocap sabda kapirengang, kani-kayang anake odah mangde dados juru sapuh tur nyungsung palinggihe irika*") and undertake a ceremony once every six months. After six more months, the grandfather remembers his promise and returns to the place to make

offerings (“*maturan wangi*”). The sanctuary is thereafter called Bedugul Gumi, where a god in the form of Sedahan Agung is responsible for life/fertility (*amerta*) in the irrigated fields, dry rice fields (*padi gaga*) and village gardens (“*Genabe irike kewastanin Badugul Gumi, sane ngerajegin, merage Sedahan Agung, ngamong merta ring sawah, ring gaga, ring pabiyanan*”). After a long time, the elderly man becomes frail and cannot travel there anymore. The second grandchild called Pan Renduh then became head priest.

In the above story, we observe some of the elements I have introduced thus far. In the forest lies a collection of stones that index a power inherent to the place and means through which communication with that energy may proceed. A promise is made that establishes a worship community who exchange blessings for regular offerings, thereby instituting a cult. As with most Balinese temples, the position of head priest (*pemangku gede*) is inherited (*keturunan*) down generations. Today, the descendants of Pan Renduh are the core priests of the temple, yet the deity’s identity as controlling fertility over the lands nearby have led to four other adjacent villages in addition to Puluk-Puluk sharing the responsibility for its annual ceremonies. Moreover, the god referenced in the story is a nonhuman entity associated with a specific place. This is not, therefore, a case of ancestor worship. Rather, the founding ancestor, Kakek Rumrum, is revered for establishing the agreement between his family and the deity of Muncaksari. A shrine dedicated to this founding ancestor exists in the temple’s inner courtyard, separate from the one at which the temple deity is worshipped.

Gods like the one in the story are recognised across the island as being the original owners of the soil upon which Balinese generate their lives (e.g. Belo 1953). Yet this concept of “ownership” is rarely made the focus of sustained analysis, despite some important exceptions (see Reuter 2006b; MacRae 2006; Lansing 1991). This is perhaps because of the ways Hinduism has influenced both the physical structure and layers of significance attributed to Balinese temples. My investigations here acknowledge the complexity of ritual due to the layering of religious influence on Bali, which is equally apparent in even the most traditional of highland villages around Mount Batukau. Indeed, I have already begun detailing those communities’ adaptive relationships to both the landscape and variegations of religious thought that have developed over generations. Nevertheless, my interjection here is that populating the vast and topographically significant territory between the individual houseyard and remote

heavens are an interconnected network of chthonic deities consubstantial with the land, whose authority is delimited to controlling geographical phenomena associated with that place. It is these beings whom one must analytically confront in order to understand how the divinely-charged landscape becomes integrated into worship communities around Mount Batukau.

To put some of my ethnographic material into perspective, I would like to once again turn to regional ethnology to help contextualise the indigenous networks of territorial cults around Mount Batukau. To begin, Wessing offers this generalisation about the broader region:

Traditionally throughout Southeast Asia, and South and East Asia as well, people utilize the land on which their settlements and fields lie only as a kind of leasehold. The owners of the land are said to be spirits that embody the land's fertility, and thus can influence the prosperity of the human group. ... These spirits' approval is required before settlements can be built and crops planted. Even after this permission has initially been obtained, the spirit(s) must be notified and feasted when a new agricultural cycle commences. (2017: 519)

Looking to mainland Southeast Asia, this phenomenon is widely reported (see Chapter 1). In his synthetic review of the region, Solange Thierry writes that “[a]ll the spirits—masters of the earth, ancestral guardians, the undisputed owners of the land—dispense wealth on condition of being served. They speak and heal through mediums, or punish and torment. They represent a hierarchy superimposed upon the human hierarchy” (1981: 150). About the *phi*, for example, Thierry writes that “the principal characteristic of the *phi* is that they are the masters and guardians of the soil” (1981: 145). Moreover, John Holt, writes that in folk Lao religion the notion of *phi* “is largely centered on a concept of power that is regarded as intrinsic to a specific territory, usually the village, but also relevant to a family’s cultivated rice paddy field” (2009: 24). Likewise, Thierry explains that with respect to the Cambodian *neak-ta*, “the tutelary spirit is regarded as the “center” of the territory that it protects and “governs”” (1981: 148). Underlying these disparate worlds is the shared belief in the territoriality of deities, whose “ownership” is delimited to a parcel of land nested amongst other divinely-controlled domains.

Within insular Southeast Asia, the same idea persists. In Central Sulawesi, Lorraine Aragon describes how the Tobaku people use the term *pue* to refer to “one or many beings who oversee or “own” a particular domain such as a mountain, a waterway, or a stand of trees” (2000: 169). Continuing, she writes that “[*p*]ue’ represent the guardian land spirits with whom the founding ancestors made their pacts to clear the land” (2000: 169). On Flores, Catherine Allerton (2013) describes the enduring relationships villagers of Manggarai hold with a divinised landscape, writing that “[t]alk about spirits may often be a kind of front, or a shorthand, for talking about an energy that belongs to the land ... believed to have a potency in and of itself—a potency that can be both beneficial and harmful” (2013: 109). Likewise on Sumba, Gregory Forth speaks of the Rindi concept of *ndewa-pahomba* as “a sort of animating principle or force that is present in or flows through forms” of which “certain places and objects of ritual significance are instances” (1981: 82). Lastly, in highland Timor-Leste, Judith Bovensiepen (2009, 2011; see also McWilliam 2011) outlines the relationship between ancestors, the spiritual potency of the land (*lulik*) and its spirits. The term *lulik* is analogous to *tenget* on Bali, a quality of places and objects that conveys their potentially dangerous yet harnessable power. Bovensiepen finds that *lulik* is inscribed in ancestrally significant places as well as uninhabited areas like “forests, hilltops, rocks, rivers or stones”, where one is likely to encounter the land spirits classified as “owners of the land” with whom sacrificial rites are directed when clearing new fields (2009: 326–327). In rituals intended to ensure abundant rain and agricultural fertility, “people address the land, as one productive, life-giving entity” (Bovensiepen 2009: 327), a classification that acknowledges the powers of *lulik*, land spirits and ancestral beings as jointly animating the landscape. Taken together, the divine energies of the earth are elements of a cosmological complex shared widely across the region.

### **Divine Energies of the Soil: The Religion of the Monsoon Zone**

The regional religious complex just described was theorised by an early twentieth-century French ethnologist named Paul Mus. In his seminal lecture, Mus (1975) identifies a widespread continuity in religious belief and practice across an area encompassing southern and eastern India, Southeast Asia and southern China that stretched far back into prehistory. He argues that these collective religious ideas

comprise a “shared cultural substratum” for the indigenous societies of those regions, and this cultural matrix both precedes and contributes to the development of the Indic religions. Mus outlines the key features of this transcultural phenomenon he calls the “religion of the monsoon zone” and discusses its interface with Hinduism and Buddhism, which took hold in the region from the common era onwards.

Mus’s theory declares that indigenous groups of Southeast Asia worshipped the earth’s divine energies through locally distinct territorial cults. His lecture describes how the earth was originally imagined as an amorphous energy supplying a section of land with its life-giving resources. Within these localities, an unusually prominent feature of the Southeast Asian landscape typically became associated with the concentration of that land’s inherent powers, whereafter this formless energy was distilled into cults of localised earth deities. Mus defines the power of this divine energy as “the fecundity latent in the earth, productive of fruits, harvests and cattle, which constitutes the real substance of the god of the soil” (1975: 25). Furthermore, as we will explore over the coming chapters, this cult of earthly powers is localised by definition: the territoriality of one community’s cult implies the existence and sovereignty of others, amounting to a “something like a territorial law” (Mus 1975: 26). His insight helps to orient ourselves towards an understanding of the earth in the indigenous perspective not as a global or transcendental entity, but as a locality: in a word, the earth of a domain (*gumi*).

Mus formulated a potent theory for understanding the historical development of social forms across the region.<sup>68</sup> For example, when writing about Tai territorial cults, Richard Davis summarises Mus’s theory of the monsoon religion as follows:

This religion consisted of ritual interaction between a localized group of people and an impersonal, intangible earth deity or spirit of the soil. The spirit embodied the fertility of the earth within the territory inhabited and cultivated by the group. In time, says Mus, the local deity came to be identified with some natural object, such as a tree or stone. *Later still, the cult of the territorial spirit assimilated the ancestral cult of the local chief. At this point, dynastic and territorial concerns became fused, and statehood was made possible.* (1984: 273; emphasis mine)

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<sup>68</sup> Anthropologists of Southeast Asia have recently shown renewed interest in these ideas (e.g. High 2022; Petit 2020; Aciri et al. 2017; Holt 2009; Wessing 2006; Song 2021).

Indeed, the “ancestral cult of the local chief” is of paramount importance to the highland groups living around Mount Batukau (see Chapter 2). It revolves around the leader’s (*penglingsir/penghulu*) exclusive access to life-giving powers held by the cultic deities. Note how these ethnographic particularities reverberate with Marshall Sahlins’s (2017) argument that early hierarchical political formations derive in their first instance from the elevation of figures of distinguished spiritual authority, premised on their unique powers to mediate with deities who supply “life” to communities. There is no greater expression of this relationship than the Kebayan of Wongaya village, colloquially known as *raja gunung* (king of the mountain) and identified as equivalent to the deity of Pura Batukau (see Chapters 1, 2 and 5). This was equally the case in other highland villages like Batungsel, where their chief is the conduit through which all ritual must be performed (see Chapter 2).

More broadly, I suspect that the affinities between the local practices of Mount Batukau and upland groups heading westward through Java, Sunda, Sumatra and into the hills of Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand and Laos may be traced to this original cultural milieu that Mus (1975) describes. Similarly, Wessing (2006) argues that societies of the Java and Sunda regions are bearers of an indigenous tradition outlined by Mus, which continues despite the veneers of Islam and Hinduism. Still, within the anthropological literature across insular Southeast Asia (as opposed to the mainland), there has been less engagement with Mus’s ideas, including within the context of Balinese anthropology. This may have something to do with the fact that the early forms of religion and stone worship Mus outlines have faded below the surface of Hinduism, coupled with the influence of Brahmanical ideas instituted by the Majapahit-derived kingdoms. It also may simply reflect how grand syntheses like Mus’s have fallen out of favour within the discipline. Documenting instances of stone worship, however, was a central element of my fieldwork around Mount Batukau.

A recent volume entitled *Stone Masters* reengages with Mus’s lecture using contemporary ethnographic data from Southeast Asia. Its chapters explore how the materiality of stones and their veneration were central to the “shared cultural substratum” of the region. In its introduction, Holly High observes that “often stones or



stone-like entities (termite mounds or mountains) are both symbols of the potent presence of the place (perhaps more accurately icons or even indexes of it) *and* that potency itself directly” (2022: 8, emphasis original). In so many instances, it seems that stones and mountains are of the same essence, where the former comes to represent the latter in microcosmic form. Indeed, the name Batukau derives from *batu* (stone) and *kau* (coconut shell) referencing the concave shape of its crater, implying that stone (*batu*) stands for mountain in this case.<sup>69</sup> Regarding these correspondences, Howe writes that “the origin of life in Bali is conceptually related to the mountainous interior of the island, with the above rather than the below, and with such ideas as *kaja*, *batu*, *ulu* and their categorical associates” (1980: 67).<sup>70</sup> Around Mount Batukau, furthermore, stones are everywhere the foundation of ancient temples located in the forest and nearby settlements. In villages like Sanda, Batungsel, Wanagiri and even Pura Batukau before its 1959 renovation, river stones originating in headwaters higher up the mountain were piled upon one another into mounds (*gegumuk*) that become both representations of the mountain and the divine energies of the place of worship (see also High 2022: 10). The stones offer thus both physical and spiritual unity between the downstream sites of stone veneration and the mountain.

An ethnographic example illustrates the above concept. Just downstream from Sangketan lies another regionally significant temple named Batu Belig. The temple is subordinate to Pura Tambawaras, serving as its divine protector (*pecalang agung*) at occasions that bring the two deities and worship communities together. Its physical form is remarkable. The boulders constituting its many shrines are pyroclastic material ejected from Mount Batukau. Seen in the photo below, the main shrine dedicated to the god of the temple is an enormous natural stone feature. Upon this feature has been added a seat that becomes the focal point for ceremonies. The recent addition of a modern structure merely incorporates the original stone element, this time too large for it to be concealed in cement foundations, thus remaining exposed to observe the layers of change over time. Whereas in other sanctuaries across the region the stone piles

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<sup>69</sup> Hans Schärer reports for the Ngaju of Kalimantan that “[i]n religious ceremonies, a stone stands for the primeval mountain and a coconut shell or bowl full of water for the primeval waters” (1963: 24).

<sup>70</sup> Note that in Balinese *kaja* means either “mountainward” or “upstream” and *ulu* refers to “head”, “leader” and “above”.

(*bebaturan*) have long since been renovated into modern Balinese Hindu temples, here one sees quite plainly how the landscape's features were the original structure around which a worship community formed.



*Fig. 3.17:* A huge mass of pyroclastic material identified with the *hyang* of Batu Belig constitutes the principal shrine. The origin story of this temple is once again associated with a spiritual figure being drawn to the light emanating from the volcanic mass.

### **Wanagiri: Exemplary Instance of the Territoriality of Cults**

Until now, I have focused on how the divine energies of the landscape become personified into the object of a cult. These immanent energies were indexed by signs like abandoned temple ruins, the prominence of geographic features, and through techniques of divination. To complement this notion, I will now suggest that communal worship of the cultic deity underlies village obligations and solidarity (see also Chapter 2). In my case study of Wanagiri, I discuss how this is reflected in practices like common burial that reinforce group identity. I also introduce the idea that territoriality is integral to temple cults, which I elaborate further in the next chapter. By this I do not mean a clearly delineated concept of territorial extension, but rather a notion of divine power over land by which the “owning” deity or deities govern specific territory. In this

way, ritual obligations that underlie communities of worship originate in two concerns: ensuring continuity in set relations between tutelary deities and village leaders, and securing fertility in local fields.

This is not dissimilar to how the Balinese three-temple system (*kahyangan tiga*) institutes shared obligations to worship at deities associated with each village.<sup>71</sup> Writing of these three temples, Goris explains that “[t]heir maintenance, and the festivals held in them, constitute the object of the village’s first and foremost task” (1960: 81),<sup>72</sup> and this duty is premised on the belief in gods being the “overlords of the land” (Goris 1960: 83). In a similar vein, James Boon suggests that “the three-temple-cluster congregation (the village-area or *desa*) is responsible for maintaining the religious harmony of the sacred locale” (1977: 94), and Graeme MacRae describes how the “*desa* is the primary spatial and ritual unit ... binding local community to local landscape through collective responsibility to local deities. Land is understood to belong to these deities” (2006: 85). However, as many have noted (e.g. C. Geertz 1959; Stuart-Fox 1987; Boon 1977; Guernonprez 1990), the three-village temple system (*kahyangan tiga*) is an ideal type that is only sometimes instantiated in the actual network of temples cared for by each village.<sup>73</sup> In fact, the great variation in configurations of village temples suggests the *kahyangan tiga* deity associations are somewhat arbitrary, and likely adorned over previous ideologies of worship.<sup>74</sup>

The ethnographic material drawn from around Mount Batukau reinforces this relationship between village deities and territory. Early settlements in the region generally focused on a core sanctuary (as opposed to two, three or more temples) conceived of as the principal source of fertility for proximal lands. I was told that their

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<sup>71</sup> *Kahyangan tiga* refers to three village temples associated with the Hindu Trinity: Puseh temple, concerned with village origins and Wisnu; Desa/Bale Agung temple, concerned with life’s maintenance and Brahma; and Dalem temple, concerned with death and Siwa.

<sup>72</sup> Guernonprez’s study of the Balinese village system found that the *desa adat* (customary village) is fundamentally a religious community concerned with “vertical relations between villagers and the invisible world” (1990: 76).

<sup>73</sup> Guernonprez writes that this ideal-type of three village temples, and presumably their Hindu ties to Brahma, Wisnu and Siwa, is a “normative view” promoted by Brahmanical *pedanda* (1990: 82).

<sup>74</sup> For example, Stuart-Fox finds in west Karangasem that only two core village temples were in use rather than three, suggesting this may index an older system rooted in a pervasive system of dual-classification, including pairs like sky-earth and male-female (1987: 31-32).

communities pre-date the existence of the three-temple system (*kahyangan tiga*) and that, if those temples were in use today around Mount Batukau, they evolved from a more basic system revolving around a core sanctuary. This situation is exemplified by the highland Batukau villages of Sanda, Sarinbuana and Wanagiri (see discussion below), for whom a core sanctuary has not been supplanted by separate *kahyangan tiga* temple sites. Moreover, this particularity of Mount Batukau is corroborated by the absence of venerating a village's deified founders in their respective Puseh temples, as is typical for Bali. This is the case because a village's founding ancestors are generally associated with *dukub* and Siwa temples in the communities I studied. Nevertheless, the single core sanctuary and three-village temple (*kahyangan tiga*) systems described above are not essentially different. Rather, the latter appears to have elaborated the original idea of territorial cults worshipping locally-significant deities into a universally applicable concept that transcends any one village context.

To help illustrate what I mean by a core sanctuary and its relevance to a single community I wish to turn now to Wanagiri village. Located around three kilometres west of Sangketan, the community has kept its many *bebaturan* shrines remarkably intact by adhering to its longstanding prohibition of renovation works, rendering them some of the best preserved I surveyed around Mount Batukau. As such, these physical structures of worship provide a window onto an older religious tradition present in the region. Above and beyond its material forms, though, remains an exemplary case of a territorial cult. Its core temple performs several functions at once: it is the central foundation of the village; origin point of the village clan (Pasek Wanagiri); source of *tirta pemuput* for all ceremonies undertaken on its territory; and focal point for agricultural rites that revitalise the earth (*gumi*). There are no separate Puseh, Dalem and Desa or Bale Agung temples (*kahyangan tiga*). Instead, these are individual shrines or pavilions located within the sprawling core sanctuary.

Wanagiri's residents are united by mutual obligations to worship at the core temple named Pasek Wanagiri, which is a corollary of full village membership. This duty to worship at the core temple overrides other affiliations, meaning that if a caste-bearing Balinese man or woman marries into Wanagiri, they lose this status and join the

casteless rank of other villagers. Irrespective of origins, therefore, all village members are buried in the same earth governed by the core deity (see also Chapter 2). Moreover, the core temple is where ritual activity is undertaken (see Chapter 4), either directly through two annual revitalisation ceremonies (*ngusaba*) or indirectly through *tirta pemuput* (holy water for completion of a rite) requested from the Siwa shrine to complete every ceremony undertaken on village lands. This includes rites of passage (*manusa yadna*), mortuary rites (*pitra yadna*) and ceremonies at family and village temples (*derwa yadna*).

Seen in the diagram below, Wanagiri's configuration of *bebaturan* shrines dispersed around its territory comprise a nexus of sacred stones aligned to a core power. Each shrine is assigned a different function: the *bebaturan dukuh sakti* located to the west, for example, is a place where villagers may petition the deity for healing powers, while the *bebaturan jero pauman* located to the south is a shrine farmers request fertility for their rice-fields and gardens. Those village deities, along with the deified ancestors of the community's extended family lines (*sanggah gede*), congregate in the core temple Pasek Wanagiri for its twice annual ceremonies (*ngusaba*). None of the peripheral shrines receives a separate ceremonial anniversary because the annual rite held in the encompassing core temple revitalises the whole domain (*gumi*).

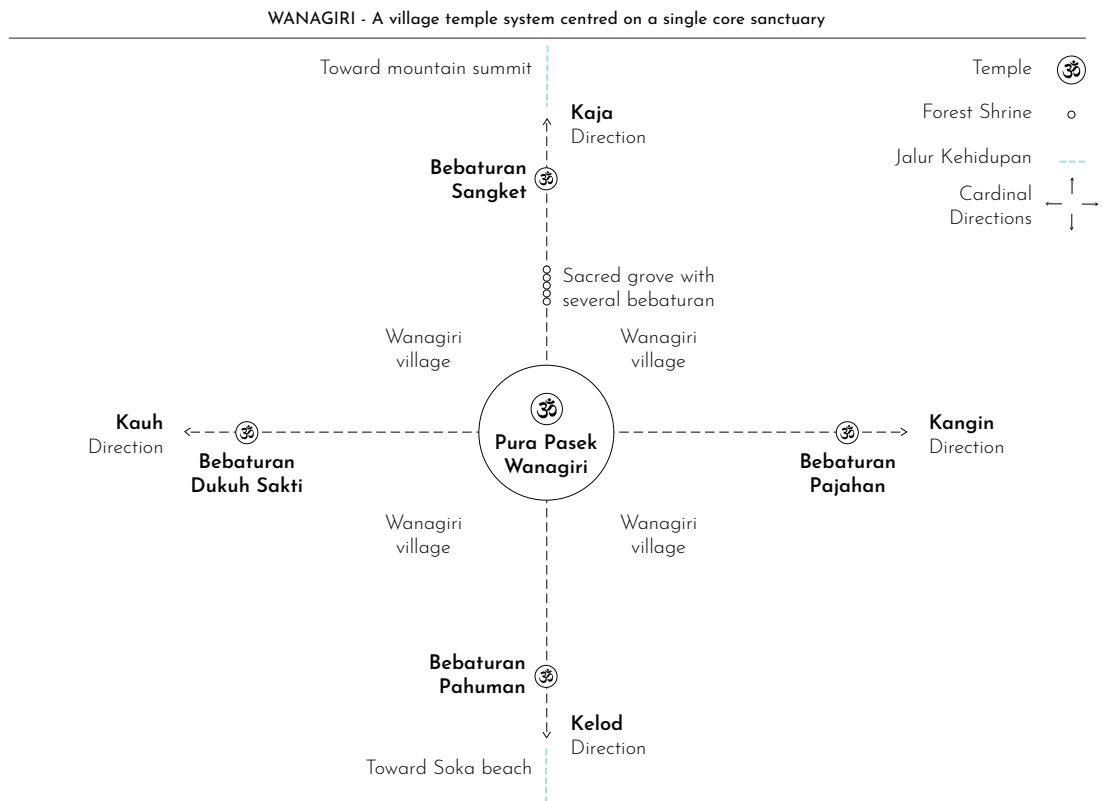


Fig 3.18: Wanagiri's temple system demonstrates the centrality of the core sanctuary and its encompassment of the village's peripheral shrines during annual revitalisation ceremonies.

The core temple is furthermore the principal source of agricultural fertility for adjacent fields. Every six months, the whole community undertakes a village-wide revitalisation ceremony named *ngusaba*. At this time, the village families each assemble an individual offering named *banten tegteg* in which rice stalks from their home barn are placed along with other seeds deemed significant. During a climactic moment late on the final ceremonial evening, the families' *banten tegteg* are placed within a cordoned off square symbolising a *lumbung* (rice barn) in which extra offerings are placed at each of the nine cardinal points fanning out from the square's centre. Then the village elder (*penghulu*) prepares for a series of rituals that invite the village deities to bless the assembled offerings directly. Around fifteen trance specialists (*dasar*) begin encircling the offerings that have been placed on the ground and, one by one, the village gods enter the mediums' bodies, who continue to circumambulate the offerings for close to 30 minutes. This climax (*pucah*) brings collective blessings to bear on those villagers' offerings that will be carried home later. As this process winds down, other women become entranced to distribute stalks of rice sourced from within the temple to each of the villagers, who wait kneeling with a *canang sari* (small offering) placed on their heads

in which to receive these gifts (see similar rite practiced by Wongaya in Chapter 8). In this way, agricultural products brought to the temple act as a medium for incorporating life from this central source back to the fields and homes of Wanagiri. Every six months the cycle repeats itself, whereby families bring their seeds to the temple and thereafter return them home blessed, bearing as well *tirta* to be sprinkled in the gardens and paddy fields.

In sum, the core temple is the source of energy vitalising the farmers' pursuits and its worship community comprises a territorial cult. This idea of cultic territoriality is reinforced by the fact that Wanagiri's revitalisation ceremonies are directed toward their domain (*gumi*) alone, unconcerned with neighbouring villages who undertake their own separate ritual activities (see Chapter 4). It is also supported by the pre-eminence of a chief (*penghulu*) whose inherited obligation from the village's apical ancestor (*dukuh*) is to orchestrate the annual ceremonies (*ngusaba*), ensuring they adhere to ancestral tradition. As we saw last chapter, this elevation of a core-line of local origin subordinates other resident groups to the exclusively privileged position of the chief, supported in the case of Wanagiri by four priestly groups known as *pasek*, *kebayan*, *kesinoman* and *penyarikan*. This leveling of other groups through bans on caste and cremation reinforces their collective identity with the core deity associated with village territory. In the next chapter, I analyse the meaning and structure of revitalisation ceremonies (*ngusaba*) like those undertaken by Wanagiri. My focus there will be conveying how village temples like Wanagiri's become encompassed by temple networks that trace the flow of life (*jalur kehidupan*) from the mountain summit unto the sea.



Fig 3.19: The principal shrine (Puseh) of the western half of the Pasek Wanagiri temple complex.



Fig. 3.20: This *bebaturan* dedicated to Lake Tamblingan is within a sacred grove above Wanagiri's core temple.





Fig 3.21: Jero Pauman at the southern boundary of Wanagiri, where farmers can request fertility from the large stone draped in red cloth.

## Conclusion

This chapter began with a series of puzzles linked to the different styles of megalithic structures I surveyed around Mount Batukau. I discovered that major public temples across the region typically have *bebaturan* stone piles or terraces as their foundations, and the mountain forest contains within it ancient structures that remain integral to the ritual networks of the highland villages, despite their distance from those settlements. Some of these religious structures precede the community in place, indexing an earlier generation of worship that identified with a locality. Those pre-existing structures were seamlessly incorporated into the highland village worship communities, by signifying them with origin stories, as at Batu Belah and Turus Gunung, or by divining the identity of gods affiliated with sacred stones, such as in Pucak Duhur Sari, Ibu Madia Wana and Suralaya. Underlying these processes is the fundamental notion that the land is already under divine control, to which an incoming group must reckon with to become safely and prosperously established.

The divination procedures I documented around Sangketan demonstrate that the land's

features determine how a site may be used, conveying its suitability for Balinese occupation or agricultural production. Likewise, a particular kind of energy (*tenget*) present in a place may signify even greater religious value that becomes inaugurated into a temple for future generations to exchange offerings for blessings from its *hyang*. By ritually tying themselves to stones and other representations of immanent power at each locality, the highland communities could access the divine energies of the earth localised to that domain, principally its fertility. I have shown how these practices of converting land into temples institutes a cult that parallels other Southeast Asian communities' ways of negotiating with deities of the landscape, most prominently amongst mainland groups whose veneration of earth deities is both widespread and well-documented. This was most clearly expressed in the founding story of Muncaksari, where an agreement established between a group's ancestor and resident deity has been inherited down generations. Over time, this has expanded into a five-village worship community that today collectively maintains this regional source of fertility under priestly leadership of descendants from the same core line.

In the case of Muncaksari, furthermore, we find a layering of presence and religious meaning. In its inner courtyard stand three tall shrines (*padma tiga*) dedicated to the Hindu trinity of Siwa, Brahma and Wisnu, toward which one faces when praying. Those three altars were built upon an earlier site of religious focus referenced in the founding story, a collection of *bebaturan* that are today encased and concealed by the new structures. Yet the head priest informed me that even these earlier shrines are not the original abode of the temple deity. Its home is a volcanic rockface a hundred metres or so heading down the eastern river valley, from which it is summoned during temple ceremonies, and to which it returns to sleep overnight when no-one is allowed to visit that most sacred place outside of daylight hours. My point is that the original relationship to a chthonic deity associated with a volcanic rockface controlling fertility for the region is not in conflict with the three altars dedicated to the Hindu gods; instead, they represent different layers of meaning and link to alternate metaphysical frameworks. The latter additions provide relations of increasing significance to younger generations educated in Balinese Hinduism from early school age (see McDaniel 2013; H. Geertz 2004). Nevertheless, I wish to caution against assuming that at Muncaksari,

or indeed elsewhere, this novel framework of religious meaning could sufficiently explain the origins of these highland temples, or their importance to the local populations' ritual networks.

In the next chapter, the village-level vignettes sketched here are replaced by a mountain-wide lens onto the regional temple network called *jajar-kemiri*. This framing will allow us to focus more precisely on the territorial nature of divinity around the highlands, and how each temple cannot be satisfactorily studied in isolation. Rather, a broader view offers us insights into how the indigenous ritual system formed a hierarchical network of relations running through the sacred forest of Mount Batukau up until the universal encompassment of all sacred sites by the apex of the network. Seeing from this angle will also help us to understand how each of the core-line descendants' privileged statuses within their own ritual communities is tied to the extension of sovereignty associated with their own local village deities, reflecting once more the territoriality of one another's temple cults.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### The Jajar-Kemiri and its Territoriality

*Groups shift, change, fragment, expand, and migrate; space remains. Part of the indisputable reality behind outsiders' impressions of Bali's profound religiosity concerns the wedding of lore and topography.*

—James Boon, *The Anthropological Romance of Bali*

#### Introduction

Balinese temples cannot be fully comprehended in isolation. Within their terraced courtyards are enshrined links to other temples found further afield that signal relationships of hierarchy and co-dependence. These temple associations form networks that incorporate sources of water and human labour, divine fertility and protection. Taken together, those interconnections chart a cosmic topography of sacred localities distributed across the land. Surveying these dispersed sites demands the ethnographer defy preconceived ideas of what a typical fieldwork area constitutes, chasing instead a bewildering array of evermore temples to document. My own experience is illustrative.

Initially I travelled to Sangketan village to learn about its renowned temple named Tambawaras. I had heard about the temple deity's power to heal bodies and minds afflicted by black magic, and there had been no previous anthropological work undertaken in the area. I had in mind a focused study of the practices revolving around ritual purification (*melukat*) and the medicinal plants used in the temple. Upon arriving, however, I encountered a religious complex of immense scale, incorporating a series of terraces, megalithic foundations, nearby forest and field altars, river shrines, volcanic boulders and underground springs into a regional centre of power held over its surrounding lands and the waters being channelled through them. Suddenly, the narrow scope of my original research idea seemed inept.

Unlike enclosed sanctuaries that insulate you from the surrounding world, Balinese temples (*pura*) like Tambawaras integrate the locality as part of the religious complex. Typically, the highland temples I documented were originally inaugurated beside

unusually prominent features of the landscape identified as inhering in diving energy (see Chapter 3). In the case of Tambawaras, a giant boulder emerging from the earth named Beji Pingit was the initial place of worship, some hundred metres or so from the temple's principal courtyard today (see Figure 1.6).<sup>75</sup> Moreover, Tambawaras is identified as an agricultural temple (*ulun suwi*)<sup>76</sup> from which fertility is requested by farming cooperatives (*subak*) to flow into nearby rice terraces (*carik*), local gardens (*tegal*), and further villages downstream. Those living on proximal lands are obliged to collectively share the temple's maintenance (*pengempon*), in this instance five distinct worship communities of hundreds of families, each with their own designation as customary villages (*desa adat*). In addition to the gathering of all local village deities at Tambawaras for its annual ceremonies (*odalan*), temple gods some kilometres downstream travel along with their congregation to pay tribute at each of these events. It also enjoys patronage (*penganceng*) by the lowland royal houses of Tabanan city, as do many of the other important temples on Mount Batukau. These kinds of interrelations between local and regional communities quickly became the subject of my ethnographic attention (see Figure 4.1).

Before long, I began asking about the participants at the temple's annual ceremonies. In addition to the worship communities' families and other visitors from across the island, there arrived the leader of the chief royal palace (Puri Agung) of Tabanan city from which the precolonial king (*raja*) was appointed, alongside another man from a nearby village I came to know as the Kebayan. These two distinguished men sat together during the ceremonial event's climax (*pucak karya*). Later I discovered it was the duty of those men to witness (*nyaksi*) temple anniversaries (*odalan*) and larger ceremonies held at these mountain sanctuaries in their complementary roles as *raja gunung* (mountain king) for the Kebayan and *raja kota* (lowland king) for the palace representative of Tabanan regency. As one senior priest explained to me, "*ada Raja Tabanan, ada*

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<sup>75</sup> These kinds of situations are normally identified through use of the term *penataran* to refer to the temple's ceremonial and performative courtyard, where gods are summoned from their regular abodes to be worshipped and receive offerings.

<sup>76</sup> Note that *ulun suwi* typically translates as "headwaters temple" but is inappropriate in this sense. Despite the fact that rivers course down valleys on either side of Tambawaras, it is not conceived of as an apex point in the flow of water from which irrigation is channelled into rice fields, as per the water temple networks documented by Lansing (1991).

*Kebayan—yen negak: berdampingan, status sama!*” (There is the King of Tabanan, and there is the Kebayan—when they take their seat, it is by one another’s side, meaning they have equal status!). The event’s climax also brought together the head priests (*pemangku gede*) from other regional temples to participate in the dedication (*nganteb*) of offerings to the gods present. Watching the ceremony unfold, I began to grasp the scale of involvement at supravillage temples like Tambawaras.

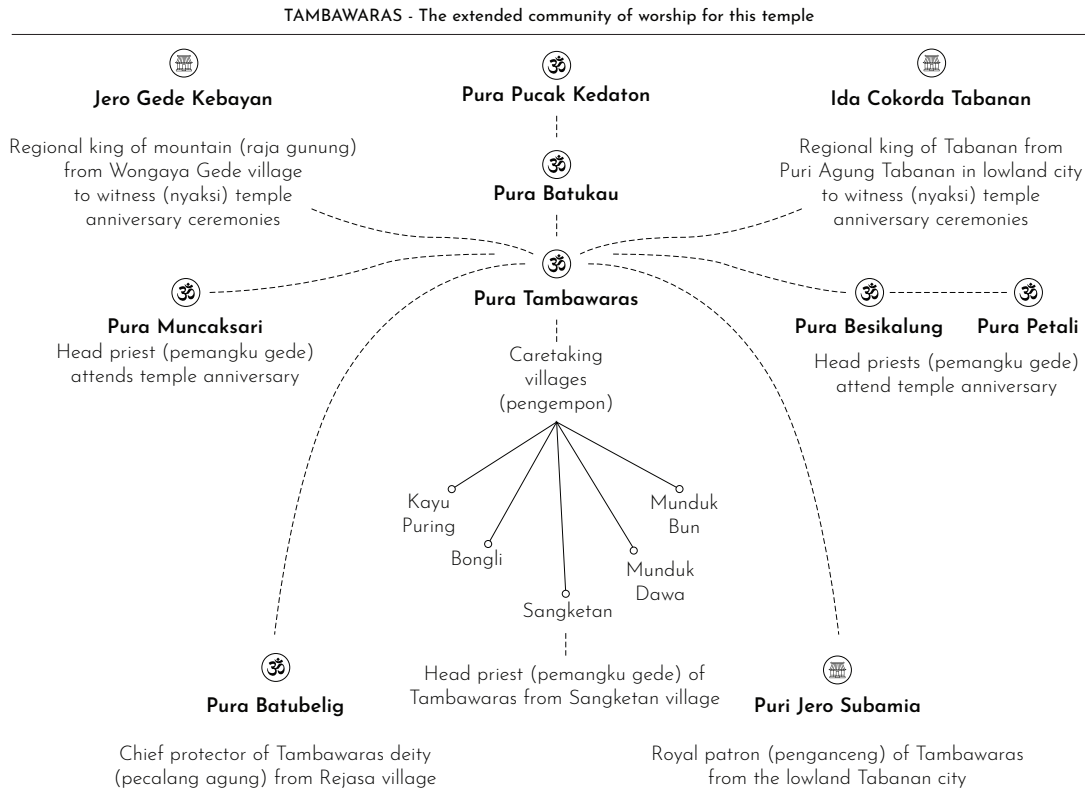


Fig 4.1: Some of the important relationships between Tambawaras and other local and regional human and divine actors that are activated for its annual temple anniversary (*odalan*).

As it turned out, the sprawling temple complex of Tambawaras whose vast size first impressed me, dominating the environment in which I commenced fieldwork, was only a supporting member of a much larger network of temples. Those other priests arriving for the offerings dedication represented temples that constitute a family of gods separated by many kilometres from one another, named Muncaksari, Petali and Besikalung, each governing distinct territory and encompassed by the largest temple of the regency, Pura Batukau, identified as the mother temple of the network and state temple of Tabanan. The regional temple network of Pura Batukau named Catur Angga is the focus of my next chapter. In addition, I discovered that the summit temple known

as Pucak Kedaton referenced in the inner courtyard of temples like Tambawaras was the father deity and apex of this network, and origin point for the indigenous population of the mountain (Ottino 2000: 102) (see Chapter 2). Fascinated by this ever-expanding temple network, my project grew to include many villages and their respective temples and patron gods.

### **A Brief Overview of the Highland Batukau Worlds and Jajar-Kemiri**

The following sections provide descriptions and diagrams of how the different Mount Batukau temple networks are arranged amongst the highland villages. Some of my main themes here include the following: first, that each village is centrally concerned with revitalising its own *gumi* (world/earth/domain), meaning that periodic rituals are undertaken independently to unite the village with the mountain, sea and rivers. These ceremonies ensure continued fertility in the lands they occupy. Second, that each of these communities locates itself within the heart of a ritual domain defined by a core axis linking mountain and sea, and sees its neighbours as situated at varying distances and directions from this domain centre. This results in “centre-oriented” village cosmologies that locate themselves as the nucleus of their respective domains (*gumi*). Third, the periodic rituals of world (*gumi*) revitalisation each highland community undergoes are partly expressions of a widespread Southeast Asian phenomenon that Richard O’Connor defines as “localism”, a “process of symbolic differentiation between groups wherein each defines itself through locality-creating rites and customs” (2003: 274). By this I mean that the founding of temples discussed in Chapter 3 institutes an identity between a worship community, tutelary deity and surrounding lands that is reinforced across generations through ritual practices (see Chapter 3). Taken together, these three points evince a deep relationship with the local environments of each community, primarily the earth and its natural resources, that is revealed through ritual.

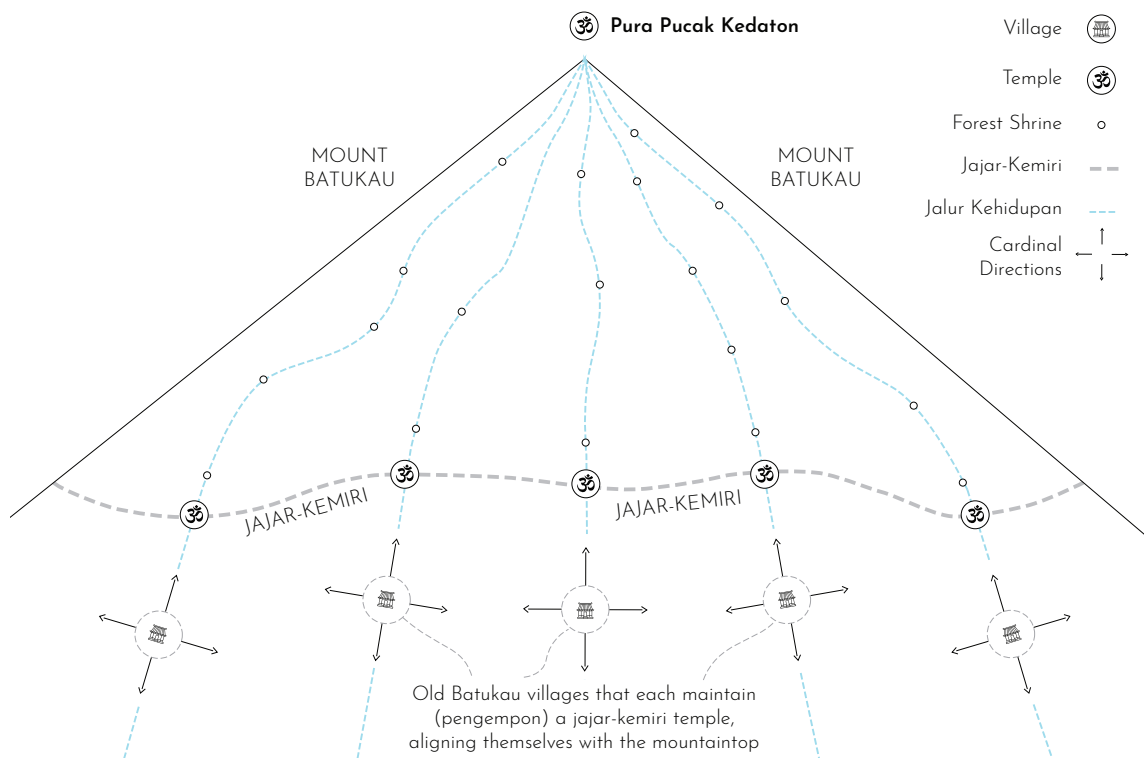


Fig 4.2: Each village occupies a core position along an axis running from mountain to sea. Cardinal directions are relativised to prominent mountaintops on Bali, meaning that each highland village first takes its initial anchor from Mount Batukau's summit and then arranges the other three directions accordingly. This makes each high village the centre of its domain (*gumi*), and every other village peripheral.

The term *jajar-kemiri* signifies a ring of megalithic temples encircling Mount Batukau. Counterintuitively, its circumference is not what unifies the network. Rather, they are connected through common alignment and convergence at the mountain summit temple, Pucak Kedaton. In other words, the lateral row (*jajar*) of temples does not unite the worship communities through its girth but instead each of those temples is radially linked to the summit (see Figure 4.2) through “paths of life” (*jalur kehidupan*) that flow downstream from the mountaintop. I found, therefore, often little if any relationship between those highland villages as one travels around the mountain's base, physically isolated from one another by the forested ridges and steep ravines that limit lateral travel. Nevertheless, from my documentation emerges a ritual system shared by the worship communities supporting each of the ancient *jajar-kemiri* temples. This continuity is apparent despite the myriad versions of origin and unique ancestral traditions held by each community (see Chapter 2).



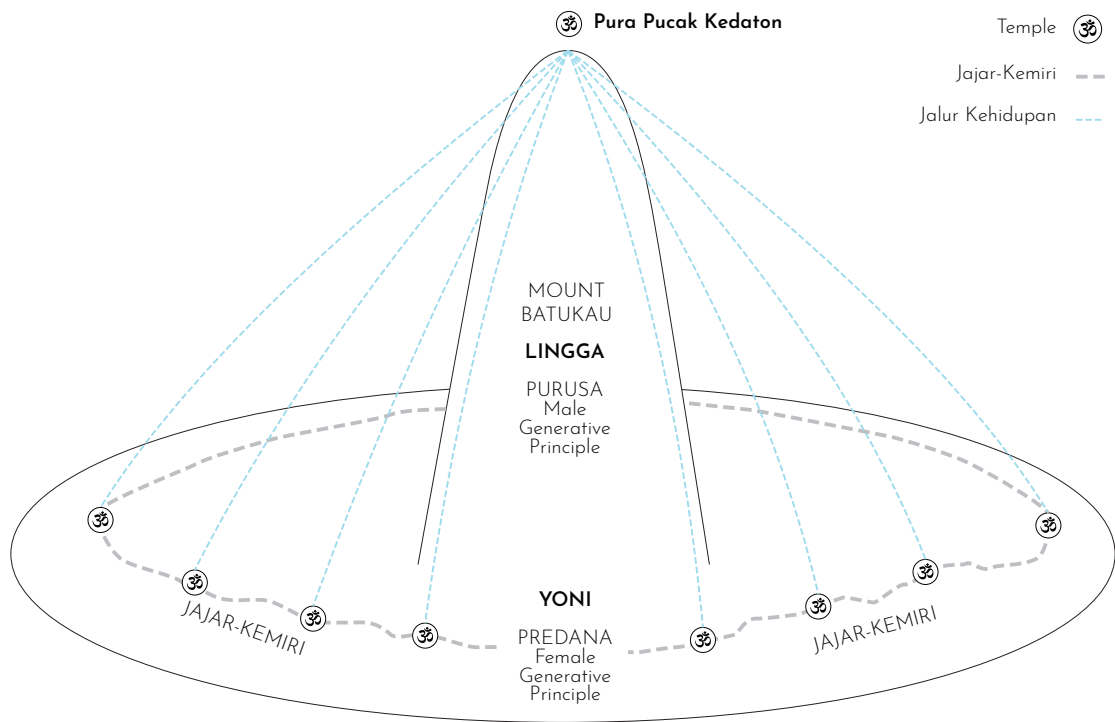


Fig 4.3: The mountain (*lingga*) is the core power to which the *jajar-kemiri* temples (*yoni*) align themselves. They comprise a ring of temples located side-by-side (*jajar*) at the mountain's base, each of which is linked/aligned to the summit via their individual paths of life (*jalur kehidupan*).

The oldest understanding of the *jajar-kemiri* I came across, spoken of in multiple villages unconnected from one another, was that it signified a ring encompassing the entire caldera region located north of and including Mount Batukau. This begins below its southern face at Wongaya, continuing westwards into Pupuan and then north into Buleleng regency, incorporating Lake Tamblingan, Lake Buyan and Lake Beratan, then back around the eastern edge of the caldera before returning to the central southern river of Yeh Mawa where Pura Batukau stands (see Figure 4.4). In this model, the seven volcanic peaks originating in the Buyan-Beratan caldera system are integrated into the forested ecology of Mount Batukau, whose summit temple Pucak Kedaton stands as the highest point within the system (see Chapter 2). Remarkably, I found that in at least one story about this older version of the *jajar-kemiri*, the ancestral deity of Mount Batukau is referred to as Sang Hyang Lu Mang Gelang. This name reflects the unity of the ring concept: *lu* (upright rice pounding stick) embodies the central mountain surrounding which a *gelang* (ring/base) of temples circumnavigates it. In my conclusion, I discuss the foundational unity of summit and downstream *jajar-kemiri* temples

expressed in these ideas. For this chapter I have used *jajar-kemiri* to signify a shared set of beliefs and practices around worship of Pucak Kedaton and its involvement in the ritual revitalisation of the many highland worlds (*gumi*) of Mount Batukau.

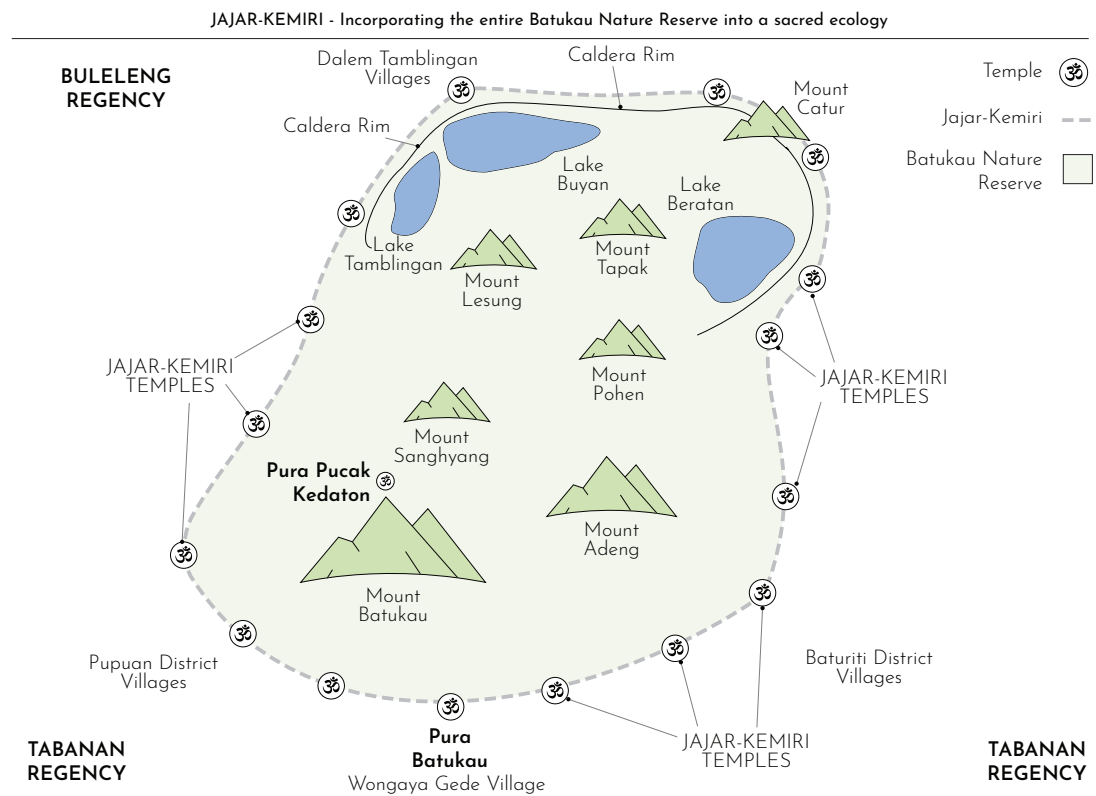


Fig 4.4: Illustration of the original *jajar-kemiri* concept encompassing all seven volcanic cones into one forested ecology, with Pucak Kedaton as the apex of the network. Today, the area highlighted incorporating the three lakes and forested region surrounding the volcanoes is protected as the Batukau Nature Reserve. While the map is not to scale, the ring drawn above covers close to 20 kilometres north-south and 20 kilometres wide east-west.

### Pucak Kedaton: Summit Temple, Origin Point, and Source from Which Life Flows

As time went on and more of the *jajar-kemiri* revealed itself to me, I began to wonder what the summit temple Pucak Kedaton meant for this diverse assortment of communities all aligning their ritual activities toward its centre. Indeed, one cannot understand the complexity and totality of the *jajar-kemiri* without a complementary interpretation of the role of Pucak Kedaton in the network. Its origins shrouded in mystery, and by far the most sacred point within the region, it stands at 2278 metres above sea level, higher than any other temple (*pura*) on Bali. A thick and wet forest drapes the mountain's slopes, encompassing megalithic shrines and ancient trails

marked by volcanic stones, until the first villages emerge around 900 metres above sea level. The upland villages are the custodians of this sacred forest that they normally enter only en route to the summit, bearing offerings for the spirit guardians at its perimeter and other ancestral waypoints. During ascent, one emerges out of the forested trail only in the final few minutes of the hours-long journey, amongst the sacred alpine ferns (*paku*) to witness, if one is blessed with clear skies, a vista reaching from Java to Lombok, down to Tamblingan lake and across to Mount Agung and the seawaters surrounding the island.

To arrive at the summit is to step into the inner realm of a regional universe. It is a relatively flat zone out of which a natural gradient has formed to delineate an inner courtyard (*jeroan*) and lower outer courtyard (*jaba*). The latter is where one may rest, adjust ritual attire, and prepare offerings before stepping into the highest plane of ground. Facing east in the centre of the upper courtyard is a single *bebaturan* (stone assemblage) shrine constructed from tiered slabs of stone. Around this shrine are sacred trees and smaller plants, forming a naturally delimited area that is the focus of prayers and offerings. The *bebaturan* shrine resembles the megalithic style of some of the oldest sanctuaries I documented around Mount Batukau, without a seat (*linggih*) and little elevation between the ground and shrine. Its simple purpose appears to be a patch of stone on which to dedicate offerings during ceremonies that unite those who have come to worship the deity of the mountain. This shrine is the only permanent structure in the inner courtyard and shows no signs of adaptation to the more common style of Balinese Hindu temples found throughout the island.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> The outer courtyard (*jaba tengah*) of the summit has, however, undergone recent renovations. The western Tabanan village named Batungsel installed four *gedong* upright altars and a special pavilion named *bale sumanggan* outside the entrance to the sacred inner courtyard. The inner courtyard remains unchanged and is vigorously protected. On one ascent with a western Tabanan village, for example, I witnessed their distress upon viewing a telegraph antenna that had been installed some 10 or so metres behind the main shrine. Not long after arriving, one of the village mediums became entranced and rounded up young men to pull the structure out of the ground and throw it down the mountainside.



*Fig 4.5:* Pucak Kedaton, the core of the regional Batukau universe. Offerings are placed on the ground in front of the shrine and on the lower stones. The triennial *pekelem* rite undertaken by the Kebayan family involves burying an offering containing seeds of significant crops (*asil gumi*) into a hole under the first stone step. Plants and trees form a natural perimeter that resembles a sacred grove.

The practice of founding a shrine by a culturally-determined site of power inhering in the landscape represents a typical foundation for *jajar-kemiri* temples (see Chapter 3). The installed shrine serves as a temporary abode for a deity to inhabit as the Balinese petition the god and present it offerings. Other temples downstream might be founded by a large boulder, underground spring, river source, volcanic rock face, major hill within the mountain range or similar geographical peculiarities, all of which have relevance limited to those localities. In the case of the summit temple, Pucak Kedaton, the mountain deity is worshipped as the power encompassing all other features of the landscape (see also Ottino 2000: 102-106). Its god is generally assigned to controlling the region's rain, channeling abundant wind for agriculture, dispensing fertility to its lands that continue till the sea and functioning as a point of origin for the indigenous population of the mountain (see Chapter 5). It is, furthermore, the place from which villages come to initiate rites set to revitalise their respective worlds (*gumi*) in recognition of its apical position within the cosmic landscape.

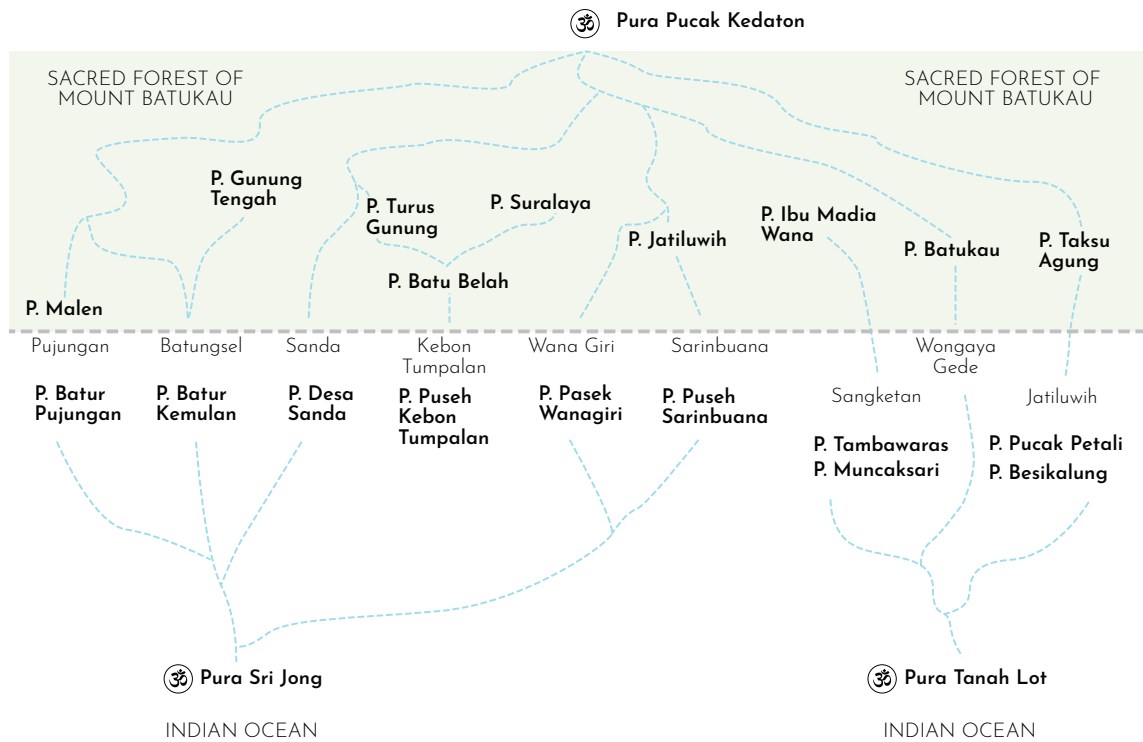


Fig 4.6: Alternative view of the *jajar-kemiri* temples and the forest trails (*jalur*) that each highland village uses when heading to the summit. Minor shrines are found along each trail, villages making offerings at these during ascent. The above selection of temples is in no way complete—it is intended merely to convey an idea.

Nevertheless, the summit is a distant locality arrived at through a taxing journey of many hours through thick forest from the highland villages. Therefore, the network temples found at the foot of the mountain take as one of their many different functions to be a place to unite with the mountain deity. The limitations of physical distance are thereby overcome through having a sanctuary through which each respective community may connect (*kaitan*) with the summit from inside the village, without having to undertake the burdensome ascent. In this way, those *jajar-kemiri* temples are symbolically tied with the summit temple, who in this conceptual framework is the necessary upstream ingredient for fertile generation in the lands falling under the territorial domain of downstream temple deities. The mountain symbolises the male generative principle (*purusa*) while the village temples are instances of the complementary female generative principle (*predana*) inherent in the earth. In everyday ritual activities, however, these *jajar-kemiri* temples function independently as providers of divine resources for the communities who support them. Only during larger ceremonies (*ngusaba/pengurip gumi*) is it necessary for the summit and village temples to

be reunited to renew this original relationship.

In sum, the most significant belief held universally across the Batukau cosmologies is the supremacy of the divine spirit enshrined in Pucak Kedaton. Remarkably, those highland villages have resisted ideas of centralised, supravillage authority over the summit temple, meaning they retain autonomy over their networks and lands through an unmediated connection with the mountain god (Ottino 2000: 105). I found this to be the case despite many villages sharing conflicting statements that their custodianship was more genuine than the others. Here, I suspect that claims by the Batukau villages to enjoy a privileged relationship with the summit temple is a product of their relative cosmologies, which see themselves as the centre of their respective *gumi* and adjacent communities as occupying peripheral positions (per Figure 4.2 above).<sup>78</sup>



Fig 4.7: Location of the four villages discussed in the following sections.

<sup>78</sup> One way this came into relief was during my conversations with the leader of Batungsel, a village located west of Mount Batukau. Until then I had always heard of Pura Batukau and Wongaya village occupying the central division (*sibak tengah*) of the *jajar-kemiri*, yet Batungsel positioned itself in the centre (*tengah*) and spoke of Wongaya as occupying the “right/eastern” division (*sibak kangin*).

## Sarinbuana

I begin with ethnographic material gathered from the village of Sarinbuana, located west of Sangketan and by most accounts one of the earliest communities of the region. The most important temple its community maintains is named Pura Jatiluwih, which is a site where fertility and *tirta* (holy water) are requested for many farming cooperatives (*subak*) located downstream from the temple. Pura Jatiluwih is located inside the sacred forest of Mount Batukau, some distance upstream from Sarinbuana. It is also the starting point for trekking towards the summit, a journey which takes around four hours to ascend using that path. In the village itself there is a core religious complex that is divided into interconnected temples, one named Pura Siwa and the other generally referred to as Pura Puseh. Like Wanagiri village to the south, both Puseh and Siwa temples are conceived of as embodying a fundamental duality known as Puri Kanginan (eastern) and Puri Kauhan (western) respectively, standing next to one another at the centre of the village. Beside the river running west of the village lies its Pura Beji, a site that involves ritual unification with the deity of the crater lake named Tamblingan from which all rivers originate in Tabanan. Moreover, during the village's annual *ngusaba* ceremonies of revitalisation the whole community undertakes a procession (*melasti*) to Soka beach, a journey of around 20 kilometres to the coast. There are other significant temples that fall within Sarinbuana's territory, yet those just listed constitute the main sites attended to during the annual ceremonies known as *ngusaba* that ritually revitalise their local universe (*gumi*). As shown in the diagram below, one can visualise how the temples differentially represent the domains of mountain, forest, river/lake, sea, and village centre.

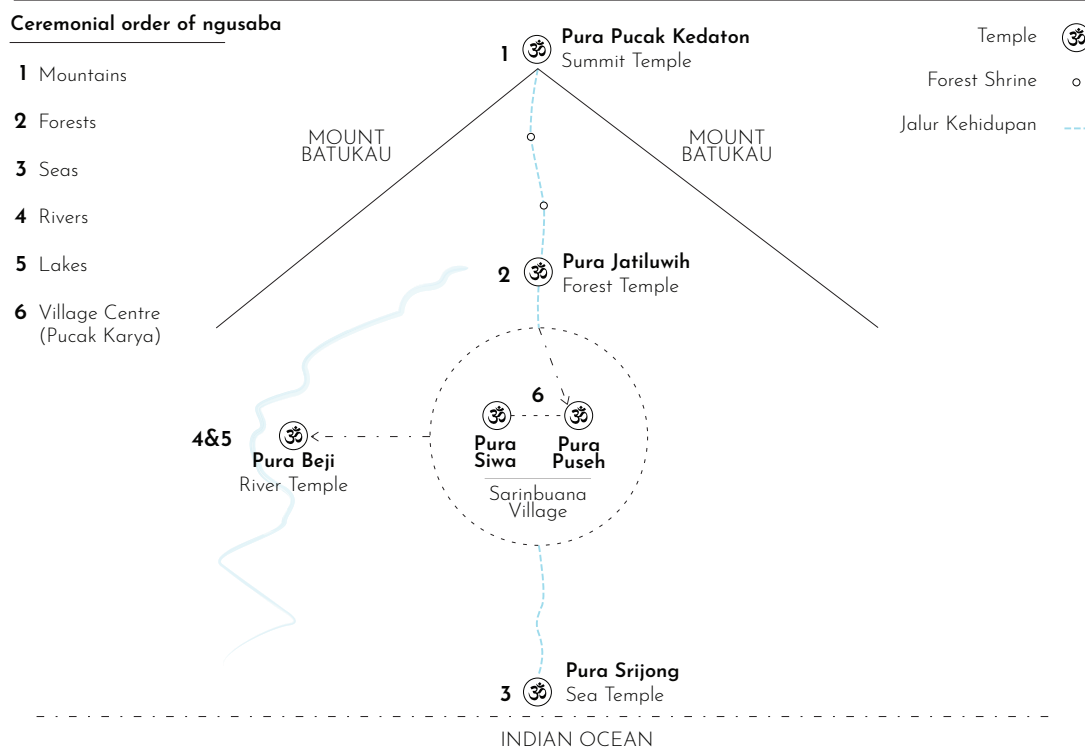


Fig 4.8: The sequence of ceremonial work involved in Sarinbuana's yearly *ngusaba*. A line traced from the mountain summit unto the Indian Ocean at Pura Srijong covers a distance of over 25 kilometres.

The following ritual procedure I will describe is the basic model followed by all old Batukau villages during their respective revitalisation ceremonies. There is significant variation regarding the timing and naming of these ceremonies; some are called *ngusaba* whereas others are known as *nyegara gunung* or *pengurip gumi*, and some occur only once in a generation while others are performed every year. The structure and function of each is of key significance to this chapter rather than their innumerable particularities. The *ngusaba* of Sarinbuana is undertaken annually, yet once every five years it is expanded to include an overnight stay on the mountain summit where a ceremony is performed for the deity of the mountain. This five-yearly event is called *nyegara gunung*, meaning to bring together or traverse sea and mountain. Furthermore, during the five-yearly event each village family is required to make a special offering named *banten tegteg* that incorporates seeds from the earth (*asil gumi*) such as coffee, rice, and other significant crops. This offering is presented to the god of the mountain. Once the ceremony is complete, those blessed seeds are blended with crops at home and sprinkled over the fields to revitalise different agricultural domains. This ritual process identifies the mountain as the ultimate source of fertility (*pusat subur*) for the villagers'



crops and lands.

In the days leading up to the full moon of the tenth lunar month (*puhnama kedasa*) the preparations begin for Sarinbuana's yearly *ngusaba*. First, the community gathers in their Puseh temple from where they head towards their forest temple, Jatiluwih. From this location, the priests summon the god of the mountain to join them, a process known as *memendak* that refers to the welcoming of a god after its descent from the mountain. The divinity participates in the *ngusaba* from within a temporary offering receptacle called a *pengadeg daksina*.<sup>79</sup> Thereafter in Jatiluwih temple the ceremonial activity begins, where the village performs rituals throughout the night. From there the entourage descends back to the village Puseh temple, accompanied by the gods of Pucak Kedaton and Jatiluwih, where they continue the ceremonial events for another night involving dances (*rejang*) and offerings. The following day begins a procession originally performed on foot to Soka beach, where offerings are made at the adjacent temple named Srijong, before heading back up to the village. After returning to the village's central Puseh temple, they walk down to the riverside Beji temple that connects to the fresh waters flowing from the mountain and ultimately the crater lake of Tamblingan. Finally, the villagers go once more to the core Puseh temple for another night of ceremonial activity which is more properly referred to as the culmination (*pucak*) of the collective rituals, involving more dancing and participation from all village members who present offerings until the following morning, whereafter the gods are dismissed back to their respective locations.

The preceding account was greatly simplified to highlight some of the following key points. The ceremonial activity which runs over several days incorporates a ritualised topography of vital significance to the *gumi* of Sarinbuana. The god of the summit temple is invited to presence, who then participates beside the god of Jatiluwih temple,

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<sup>79</sup> From what I know about lowland temples, an important difference between them and the old Batukau villages is that the former typically possess sacred objects (*pratima*) that function as the permanent receptacles for named deities to inhabit during the ceremonial events. These are stored (*nyimpen*) in the temple and ritually purified each year by rivers and the sea. By contrast, the Batukau villages fashion offerings (*pengadeg daksina*) from plant leaves for a deity to inhabit when summoned, and these are ritually cremated and buried back into the ground after the deities have been dismissed following the end of a temple ceremony. In short, the Batukau village tradition remains fundamentally aniconic.

from where both are carried to the village temple for the next stage of the ceremony. This brings together the powers of the mountain and forest, both intimately tied to fertility.<sup>80</sup> From there the village participants and deities head to the sea and river to bless these domains before heading back to the village for the culmination of rituals that bless their world. It is important to note here that the deities of the mountain and forest temple participate in these processions, brought on the journey in a palanquin (*joli*) for transporting gods, which not only brings about their contact with the domains of sea and river before returning back to the village, but also the lands upon which they are borne. As they move over (*napak*, meaning "to step on", usually the earth) this land they cause it to regenerate, I was told, analogous to how kings of the precolonial era were transported in palanquins around fields that were dry, pest-laden or otherwise infertile. This may be plainly interpreted as the upper gods (*lubur*) of the highlands blessing the downstream terrain leading to coast and river (see Chapters 9 and 10).<sup>81</sup> Above and beyond that, however, is the notion that through these processions, the worship community and its patron gods are tracing together a map that outlines the flow of life for that highland community. This passage of life from mountain through village to sea and river is spoken of in Sarinbuana as *jalur kehidupan* (path of life), paralleling the flow of water.

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<sup>80</sup> Sarinbuana's Puseh temple priest explained that Pucak Kedaton, the summit temple, is conceived of as *pusat subur* (centre of fertility) for all the mountain and its inhabitants.

<sup>81</sup> Rather than "purification", then, I was told by elder priests that walking to sea and river is fundamentally concerned with revitalising those resources that each community depends upon. I will discuss this alternative explanation more in the following chapter.



Fig 4.9: Men carrying two palanquins (*joli*) holding the village gods during the *ngusaba* procession to the river. A large boulder in the middle of the river receives offerings as the focus of this ritual.

Despite the affinities amongst old villages encircling the base of Mount Batukau, communities like Sarinbuana notably presented themselves as independent and indifferent to neighbouring villages' customs. Many times I would bring up similarities between themselves and other communities, to which the general response was mild curiosity, while differences were explained away through the saying *desa, kala, patra* (village, time, context—each community has its own traditions specific to their locality), which was typically the final word on the matter. I came to understand that the ceremonial goings on in neighbouring villages were of little to no concern because they were irrelevant to the ritual topography just described. Despite a massive ceremonial undertaking taking place in a village temple on land adjacent to their own, gods of each community are specific to its territory and have no bearing on the well-being of its neighbours (see Chapter 3).<sup>82</sup> This is not to diminish how ceremonies become events where other villagers come to socialise with one another, bringing offerings to dedicate while joining in prayer with the host community. Yet this participation is not derived

<sup>82</sup> This obviously refers only to deities of village temples and not those regional temples cared for by multiple villages, such as Tambawaras.

from communal obligation: those who live on lands owned and controlled by localised divine powers must contribute to periodic offerings in exchange for their continued blessing (see Chapter 3), and the villages undertake this as a community.

From its upstream position, the mountain summit is considered the apex for these highland cosmologies, indexing life coming from above. During the *ngusaba* in Sarinbuana, the summit deity of Pucak Kedaton is called to participate in the village's renewal, and thereafter carried by procession to the sea and the river. Significantly, the gods of sea and river (and ultimately the lake) are never brought from their respective domains to the village temple. Rather, the temple deities, including that of the mountain summit, are taken to those repositories of water. This parallels a basic ordered dualism in Balinese religious thought assigning the "above" (*luhur*) mountain god as male and the "below" (*beten*) sea, river and lake deities as female. Thus, one of the underlying principles involved here is the male summit deity being brought into contact with sea and river to bring about their revitalisation. This conceptual unity of male and female principles to generate life is likely one of the most pervasive notions underlying ritual on Bali. Yet given that place-deities of highland village temples are rarely gendered and instead thought of as simply "the god of that place", I suspect the more fundamental idea is of an elevated source being brought into unity with a downstream resource such as the sea and river, or indeed the village fields (see Chapter 10).

### **Wanagiri**

Immediately south from Sarinbuana is another village of megalithic origin that bears many affinities with its northern neighbour. Indeed, the following ritual events I describe display common attributes to ceremonies of revitalisation I observed in other villages, yet they are each particular to the ancestral traditions (*dresta*) upheld by every individual community. I have already examined Wanagiri village at the end of the last chapter, so I will only introduce new data as it relates to the ceremonial revitalisation theme of this section. Its central temple is the site of two annual *ngusaba* ceremonies run on the fourth and tenth months of the Balinese lunar calendar, each for several days. I was informed that the only major conceptual difference between these two separate

events is that on the fourth full moon (*purnama kapat*) the village undertakes a procession to sea and the events are centred on the Siwa shrine of the village temple complex, whereas for the tenth full moon (*purnama kedasa*) they head to the river and the Puseh shrine becomes the ritual focus.<sup>83</sup>

Already from my brief outline of the two village-wide ceremonies (*ngusaba*) run each calendar year we see a likewise emphasis on marking out the ritual topography specific to this community. Those ceremonies conceive of the core Wanagiri temple as the centre of its local universe, anchored to a midpoint between mountain and sea, united with the rivers and sea through the yearly processions. As seen in Figure 3.19 of Chapter 3, the temple system is a *mandala*-like arrangement that links up with deities stationed at each of the cardinal points, incorporating the terraced stone assemblages (*bebaturan*) hidden in sacred groves extending upstream from the centre. Significantly, these divine powers in addition to the ancestors (*lelubur*) of each family line assemble together in the central temple before the twice-annual ceremonial processions to sea or river. This process consolidates the territorial gods of the village into one space for a single event that blesses the lands and inhabitants for another six-month cycle. Hence the village-wide ceremonies act to gather all relevant divinities around a ritual centre seen as the source of lasting power for the community in the same way as the mountain is conceived on the macrocosmic scale as the ultimate origin and source of fertility for the region (see Chapter 3).

During each *ngusaba* event, the whole village is involved in the ritual undertaking. Young unmarried men (*teruna*) trek through the forested slopes to the summit where they sleep overnight to at dawn gather different varieties of fern (*paku*) only found at that altitude.<sup>84</sup> Other men undertake the difficult task of entering the forest and hunting

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<sup>83</sup> However, the timing of their two major ceremonies at the beginning and end of the monsoon suggests they probably had an alternative meaning originally. This becomes clearer in the last section on Pujungan where their ritual undertaken in the tenth month is concerned with cleansing the fields of pests and disease that must occur once the rainy season expires.

<sup>84</sup> This action was explained as symbolically uniting the mountain spirit with the village temple for the event itself. The ferns are placed in large bamboo posts (*penjor agung*), used to decorate the palanquin (*joli*) and a special device (*gelagar*) held by young unmarried boys (*teruna*) during temple dances. Yet mountain and village unity are also permanently bridged through the Siwa shrine, which as I explained in the last chapter, is identified with the god of the mountain and considered ritually equivalent.

(*meboros*) deer (*kidang*) using only nets and dogs. This deer is then processed into offerings and its head features in one of the final dances (*kincang-kincung*) of the ceremony. Each family brings to the temple a collection of fruits, seeds, and rice from their barn, which are carried in a special offering (*banten tegteg*) by a member of each village household (*kerama desa*) around the temple eleven times during a procession shortly after midnight on the final evening. In addition, an effigy (*banten dewi nini*) of the rice spirit is formed by each household with stalks from their rice barn and together these are gathered into a separate palanquin (*joli*) to join the ceremonial procession (*melasti*) to the sea or river. For the event, all the deities located within the village boundaries assemble to collectively bless the ceremonies that are principally concerned with ensuring fertility in the dry and wet fields.

Despite being located beside one another, Sarinbuana and Wanagiri villages are not involved in their respective ceremonial affairs. Each one sets about revitalising its own specific domain to ensure its families are blessed and its fields remain fertile. As already noted, they are independent and ritually autonomous communities. The centre of each village is the core of its domain, and the deities of the mountain and surrounding land, including deified ancestors of family lines, are called to participate in its annual rituals of renewal. That core may be interpreted as a *mandala*, a cosmic system arranged around a centre that is interwoven with peripheral entities through ritual (Tambiah 2013; see also Français-Simburger 1998). In Wanagiri and Sarinbuana, the central temple radiates life to the surrounding families and land through the distribution of blessed offerings and seeds, and especially *tirta*. This is achieved through drawing the powers of the mountain into the local domain, due to its identification as the ultimate source of life for the highland communities.

## **Sanda**

Sanda was a village I heard about several times before visiting. Friends mentioned the place as one I could ask questions about the mountain summit temple, Pucak Kedaton, and the old culture of the highlands. Intrigued, I set out on the long journey by motorbike from Sangketan and, as I often did in new settings, stopped to speak with

men or women congregating by the roadside, to ask them about the local temples and particularities of the village. Before long I was introduced to the village administrator (*kepala desa*) who turned out to be enthusiastic about my presence, especially with respect to my timing. By serendipity, in just four evenings their annual village temple ceremony (*ngelemeji*) would be held and an announcement by the village deities made then about the village's long-awaited *ngusaba* ceremony. In Sanda, unlike Sarinbuana and Wanagiri, this village-wide ritual occurs only when it is deemed both necessary and auspicious, and this determination is divined through mediums. The timing of each ritual stage is predicated on an alignment of cosmic conditions, what the Balinese refer to as *dewasa*. The last *ngusaba* event for Sanda ran in 2006, some 12 years earlier. Fortunately, I was invited to observe the upcoming temple ceremony and ensuing *ngusaba*, should the gods prescribe it.

The central temple of Sanda is simply called Pura Desa (village temple), and as with some other highland villages there is no separate Puseh and Dalem temples as one generally finds across Bali. There is also no *odalan* (temple anniversary ceremony) performed there, but instead every six months the community gathers to undertake a series of rituals collectively called *ngelemeji*, during which time they pray together and enact a number of dances. The principal event on that date is a discussion (*nunas baos*) between the gods and four priests (*kanca pat*) of the village.<sup>85</sup> This takes place in a pavilion of the outer courtyard named *bale sumanggan*, a distinctive structure which does not resemble anything else I observed around the island. In this enclosed pavilion lie four tables (referred to as *tinggi*, meaning tall or elevated), aligned with the cardinal directions.<sup>86</sup> All village families are assigned to one of the tables that represent distinct social groups. Newcomers to the village, for example, are only permitted to join the groups assigned with the less sacred directions of *kelod-kangin* and *kelod-kauh*. The four village priests, on the other hand, must originate in the group assigned to the most sacred direction, *kaja-kangin*.

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<sup>85</sup> These four priests are assigned to four temples: Siwa, Dalem, Desa and Pucak Kedaton. The *pemangku desa* is also the *pelingsir* (elder) of the village as prime descendant of the founding settlement. Interestingly, the *pemangku* assigned to Pucak Kedaton is also commonly referred to as *pemangku puseh*. This latter term *puseh* is symbolically associated with "origins", "fertility", and a "centre", as in the navel of the compass rose (see Chapter 2).

<sup>86</sup> Note the recurrent and pervasive theme of four entities supporting a core power.

When the time comes for these four priests to speak with the village gods, trance specialists named *walen* gather in the centre of the pavilion. They begin to incorporate the deities, one by one, through a violent displacement of the human spirit by the divine entity. Aids rush to catch the *walen* as they fling themselves backwards, signalling the spirit's arrival, whereafter they are adorned with sacred cloth and treated as divine. Thereafter the gods assemble themselves upon the most sacred table to speak directly with the four priests who sit humbly, side-by-side, on a simple bench seat below them. This is when the priests may ask their gods on behalf of the community things such as if there is anything amiss in the village, whether certain renovations may be undertaken, and most significantly, if the time is good for the *ngusaba* to finally be performed.<sup>87</sup> To everyone's great relief, that night the gods sanctioned the massive undertaking and word quickly passed around the hundreds of families gathered in the Pura Desa grounds that the *ngusaba* was imminent.

Preparations commence the very next day. This is remarkable, for it requires a hold put on regular activities such as farming, business and travel as bringing the ceremony into being becomes the intense commitment and focus of village families for the next six weeks or so. Unlike Sarinbuana and Wanagiri, the *ngusaba* of Sanda is split into four distinctively themed phases run over two separate time periods. The first is called *ngusaba bukit*, the latter term referring to the mountain (*bukit*), the second is *ngusaba gede*, which is when all the local and regional deities assemble in the village temple. The climax of the works for *ngusaba gede* should land on the fourth full moon (*puinama kapat*) of the lunar calendar and the *ngusaba bukit* precede it by several weeks. After these two segments of the *ngusaba* are complete, there is a break. Symbolically, those initial phases named *ngusaba bukit* and *ngusaba gede* are associated with the male generative principle, *purusa*, tied as they are to the mountain and village gods. For the subsequent half of the *ngusaba*, the stages are associated with the female generative principle, *predanda*, due to its affinity with the fields, gardens, rivers, and sea. Before the second half may begin, the same process is undertaken to ascertain an auspicious time

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<sup>87</sup> This is certainly not guaranteed. I witnessed two other six-monthly gatherings where the gods denied that the *ngusaba* could continue until certain other activities were taken care of first.



(*ngalih waktu*) deemed appropriate by the gods for the works to continue, typically some months after the end of the *ngusaba gede*. One interlocutor explained how the resting time between the phases of *ngusaba* is essential for the male and female principles to bond and life to generate through their amalgamation.

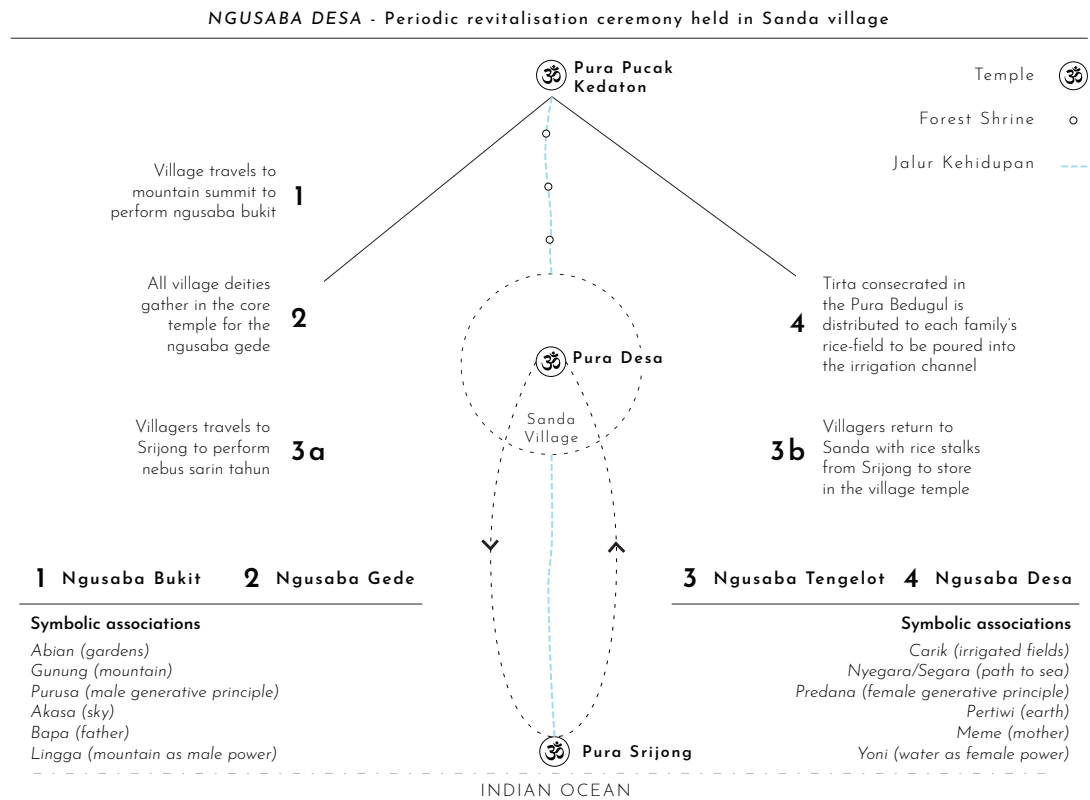


Fig. 4.10: The different phases of *ngusaba desa* in Sanda which occurs only once every ten to fifteen years.

The next phase entitled *ngusaba tengelot* may then proceed, a term combining land (*tenge*) and sea (*lot*) that indicates their meeting point. This set of rituals is centred on a shrine named Tengelot located in the village temple. After this phase's completion, the village travels from its central temple to the seaside sanctuary Srijong to receive a reward for their ceremonial activity, a moment defined as *nebus sarin tahun* (to redeem a share of the year's harvest). From within this temple's rice barn (*lumbung*), sacred stalks of rice (*padi*) are brought down (*nedunang patun*) to be decorated (*meyas*) in ways reflecting the rice's divine power, and thereafter placed within a palanquin (*joli*) for procession back to Sanda's village temple. This rice is spoken of as embodying *amerta* (life), but colloquially and perhaps more revealingly, is said to be the fruit borne of marriage between male and female generative principles that has come about through the ceremonial work of

Sanda's villagers. This product of the dualism of divine forces, analogous to the gift of new life realised through human marriage, is distributed to every villager upon return to Sanda's village temple. The community receives this *padi* (rice stalks) in their respective offerings (*banten tegteg*) to be carried home and thereafter blended with that already stored in each houseyard's rice barn (*lumbung*).

The final stage, *ngusaba uma*, references the female aspect of divinity through the word *uma*. This equally denotes irrigated rice-fields and is a name for the wife of Siwa. After its commencement in the village temple, the epicentre of ritual activity moves to the Pura Bedugul, temple of the headwaters (*ulun suwi*) from which irrigated water is channeled toward all fields. Every rice field-owner fashions a small bamboo pole (*penjor sawen*) that they take to the Pura Bedugul for the evening of this ceremony. On the following day, the farmers install this bamboo pole where the waters enter their respective fields and sprinkle the *tirta* consecrated during the *ngusaba uma* that serves to revitalise the land for another generational cycle. Here, again, the villagers ritual efforts bring together the dualism of life embodied by complementary forces. The *tirta* carries with it the female generative principal (*predana*) associated with *uma* and the fertility of rice generally, while the *penjor sawen* represents the male generative principal associated with the mountain.<sup>88</sup>

Through the ceremonial work of the *ngusaba*, the agricultural lands are brought back to life (*pengurip*) by holy water produced in each phase, poured into waters channeled into terraces and sprinkled over gardens, acting as a divine fertiliser for the earth (*gumi*). Generalised prosperity is achieved through blending the gift of divinised *padi* with the rice stored at home. This is placed in the family's barn where rice stalks are kept after the harvest of that family's fields, and from which the new seeds of rice are taken for the next planting cycle, integrating thus the divinised *padi* into the following year's production. While the goal here is clearly to reanimate and render abundant the natural resources upon which the village community depends, the phased operation of Sanda's *ngusaba* also mimics the directional flow of life. The *ngusaba* commences with the

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<sup>88</sup> This same concept is illustrated in majestic form during the Pengurip Gumi ceremony at Pura Batukau during Chapters 7 and 8.

mountain not simply because it is the most sacred entity in Balinese cosmology, but also because there marks the inception of life, from where the waters commence their journey downstream, through the village to terminate at the sea.



Fig 4.11: The offering (*banten tegteg*) containing seeds of agricultural products each family makes and brands with their name that is taken home after being blessed during the ceremonies.

## Pujungan

This last description of a western Tabanan highland temple network focuses on the village of Pujungan. Both Sanda and Pujungan fall within the regional district of Pupuan and are typically grouped together with Batungsel as the three high altitude villages who *pengempon* (caretake) the summit temple, Pucak Kedaton. In Pujungan, the *ngusaba* revitalisation ceremony is performed annually like in Wanagiri and Sarinbuana. The ritual is divided by an alternating focus on the monsoonal cycles of rainy and dry seasons that align with the fourth and tenth full moons (*purnama kapat* and *purnama kedasa*) of the lunar calendar. On both full moons the village ascends to the summit, but for different purposes. The fourth full moon (*purnama kapat*) marks the beginning of the wet season, so Pujungan undertakes a small ceremony at the summit itself before

inviting the mountain god down to the village, who then accompanies the villagers to the seaside temple of Srijong. Once they return to the village the ceremony runs for another week or so, during which time agricultural seeds are brought by farmers to the temple to be blessed in a special offering that includes things like coffee, rice, and cloves. The seeds are then returned home and incorporated into the family store and thereafter to the fields once the growing season begins.

By the tenth month the rainy season is ending, when the village undertakes a purification ritual (*nyapsap*) by sacrificing a water buffalo (*kebo*) and reassembling its body into an offering (*wangun urip*) to be dedicated at the summit temple. The village then heads to the sea again before undertaking another village-wide ceremony in the central temple for around three days. Upon completion, *tirta* is brought from this central source toward all the family and clan temples, the gardens and fields. The name for this process is *nangluk merana* and smaller scale versions of this rite are undertaken at fields across the island, normally aimed at diffusing the spiritual causes of pests in agricultural plots. In this way, the powers of both fertility and protection of Mount Batukau's deity are incorporated into the agricultural lands of Pujungan, on the fourth and tenth full moons respectively. In the case of this village, it becomes clearer that the division of many months between the first and second phase of *ngusaba*, aligning with the monsoonal cycle, indexes their alternative focus on fertility and growth (rain) and thereafter divine protection (purification) against disease. As per my discussion of rice-cultivation rites in Chapter 5, the alignment with the monsoon reveals an earlier focus on rain-fed dry rice (*padi gaga*) that was traditionally grown all over the highlands of Mount Batukau.

In a similar vein to Wanagiri, a single village temple, Pura Batur, in Pujungan is symbolically equivalent to the summit temple. It is an ancient and simple sanctuary with little modern intervention to the grounds. The ritual centrepiece is a stepped-terrace of stone piles, upon which a wooden structure has been added more recently. The priest accompanying me there explained how the wooden elements represent additions to the assemblages of Pura Batur, which were the original sites of worship in the area. In most local stories I was told, communities became established in something they refer to as

*jaman batu* (stone era), before the introduction of wood (*jaman kayu*) to religious structures. In past times, the original focus was a central temple site, in this case Pura Batur, with whom the summit deity unites during the revitalisation ceremonies, brought into contact through its descent and thereafter participation together in processions towards the sea and rivers. Indeed, it is here that the summit deity is brought first after its collection from the mountain in the days preceding the fourth full moon. As we've now seen several times, the downstream village does not stand alone but must be conceived of as aligned with and dependent upon the mountain, part of a network of sites that flow from that summit towards the sea.



*Fig. 4.12:* The central shrine of Pura Batur Pendem in Pujungan featuring the original *bebaturan* base.

Pujungan is also a village where most (but not all) locals divulged that the stone structures were not built by their ancestors. They were found already in place, I was told, in deep pockets of the forest, and thereafter incorporated into their spiritual landscape. One elder who was committed to documenting many of these sites around Pujungan explained, for example, how a sanctuary like Pura Kemoksan, a site I visited that is located within the mountain forest, far from village residences, was found by people initially exploring the region. Later, spiritually powerful people (*anak sakti*) felt the energy there and divined its story as a place where an earlier person or ancestral

being attained liberation (*moksa*). Thereafter the site assumed that name. These kinds of stories about distant ages reveal the importance of the surrounding environment and its inherent divine powers to the way a community comes to establish spiritual harmony within its locality (see Chapter 3). The highland villages care for local sanctuaries that are theirs alone to maintain, a tradition first instituted by their ancestors whose descendants inherit this obligation. In other words, apart from the summit temple whose god is the only truly regional (approaching universal) god, all the temples of the *jajar-kemiri* belong to distinct, individual communities.<sup>89</sup> As I discuss below, this is part of what we can discern as locality-creating rites (O'Connor 2003), a practice of harmonising themselves with the environment but also establishing distinction from neighbouring communities, whose local deities are interwoven within their own ritual topography.



*Fig 4.13:* This stepped terrace structure named Pura Kemoksan is located in the forest some kilometres from both Pujungan and Batungsel villages. I was told by its priest that families from both villages use it as an ancestral source of *tirta* for completing all kinds of ceremonies undertaken on their lands.

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<sup>89</sup> This does not foreclose the possibility of people from other villages or entire communities helping to prepare or worship at ceremonies, but rather that the territorially affiliated obligation to undertake ceremonial work is that local community's alone, because of the deep affinity established by its ancestors and the place-deities.



Fig 4.14: Like so many others I document in Chapter 3, Pura Kemoksen is less a “*pura*” (temple) and more a collection of *bebaturan* (stone assemblages) like the one shown in the photo above.

### **Territoriality**

My ethnographic material from around Mount Batukau conveys how localities remain an indispensable element of the *jajar-kemiri* temples and worship communities. Revitalisation ceremonies I documented attest to how the resources which flow through each community’s land remain under the divine control of gods venerated in the shrines and temples of that place. Each community’s gods, such as the village deities of Sarinbuana, Sangketan, Wanagiri, Sanda and Pujungan, are one with a place and distinct from others’ gods who are consubstantial with their respective communal lands. This is corroborated by the indifference we see shown to the ceremonial activities of communities located side-by-side, as well as the obligations placed upon those living on village lands governed by local deities. The act of attributing a god to a place “creates a locality” (O’Connor 2003: 274), a symbolic process of identification between the divine and human worlds coinciding in the landscape.

In this regard, O’Connor notes that Southeast Asian founders’ and territorial cults are instances of “locality-creating rites and customs” (2003: 274) that together comprise a

“lingua franca of localism” shared across its diverse ethnographic settings. All over the region, he suggests, the tripartite institution of earth, founder and worship community “charters each piece [of land] as a ritually sovereign commonwealth of humans and spirits, a community of the living and the dead, that seeks to prosper and protect itself through rites and customs” (2003: 275). Indeed, long before a vision emerged of Bali as a collective entity ruled by different kingdoms, a colonial power or now the national republic, there prevailed the idea that both the village land and the region’s highest point, the mountain, were the sovereign essence of each distinct community’s world: its *gumi*.<sup>90</sup>

Other indigenous societies collectively structure themselves through worship of a shrine established at the core of a ritual domain. For the people of Tana ‘Ai in eastern Flores, these domains known as *tana* (earth/domain) are each associated with different territories and their ceremonial upkeep shared by different clans. About this term, E.D. Lewis writes that

[t]ana is the earth itself, ... the ground and substratum upon which the configurations of centers, peripheries, and boundaries of the human community are inscribed. It is also the substance of the earth, the rock of which mountains are made, and the soil that nurtures crops and forest. The word is used to refer to the physical landscape of Tana ‘Ai, and means “region” or “place” when it is used as an auxiliary to a place name (Lewis 1988: 21).<sup>91</sup>

The centre of Tana ‘Ai ritual territories are marked by *mabé*, an altar of stones and wood that are found in sacred forests where the principal ceremonies of the domains are performed. While the domain’s core lies in a protected forest, the peripheries extend to the coasts of the island, and between the centre and periphery stand their residential hamlets and gardens (Lewis 1988: 32). Ceremonies known as *gren mabé* that revitalise the domain’s fertility are undertaken several years apart under the spiritual authority of the living descendant of the founding clan. Resembling how I have described the importance of ritual topography to the Batukau village worlds, Lewis explains that the

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<sup>90</sup> Indeed, Richard Fox explains that “the solidarity established with things such as plants, draft animals, and buildings is evident in the idea that the traditional polity, or *gumi*, includes not only its human subjects but also the plants, animals, and living objects” (2018: 77).

<sup>91</sup> This is like how the Balinese term *gumi* means both “earth” and “realm”, depending on the context in which it is used.



Ata Tana 'Ai domains are "realms of power or ritual influence that emanate from their centers, both social and physical" and spoken of "in terms of ritual centers, named places, and the settlements they encompass" (1988: 32). Moreover, for the revitalisation ceremonies (*gren mahé*) held at the forested altar core, all communities encompassed by the ritual domain are obliged to participate under the authority of the founding clan. These examples point to a collective that incorporates human settlement and tutelary deities into a wider territorial coalescence, where one community's immediate lands and gods are encompassed by a grander power standing at the regional core. This last point underscores a similar concern held around Mount Batukau of villages conceiving of their temples and lands as encompassed by the power enshrined at the summit temple.

Around Bali, a similar idea is found in Bali Aga communities populating the highlands of the Kintamani district of Bangli, nearby to Lake Batur. Reuter (2002a; 2002b; 2006b) shows how the pan-Austronesian concept of *banua* (alternatively *wanua*) refers to the incorporation of multiple villages into the collective worship of regional deities who supply fertility to agricultural lands falling under a ritual domain (*banua*). In his characterisation of *banua* as "ritual domains", Reuter explains how land occupied by both founding families' descendants and later immigrants binds them into mutual obligations to participate in the care of regional deities enshrined in *banua* temples. Reuter characterises these "ritual alliances" as deriving not from concentric, *mandala*-like relationships of encompassment by regional centres, as I found, but rather by a nexus of ancestral paths that share a common origin point (*kawitan*) (see also "topogeny" in J. Fox 1997). The locality containing each domain's shared origin point becomes the ancestral village to satellite communities that trace their lineages back to that source. The relationship between source village and satellite communities is ordered by precedence, the oldest and closest to the point of origin holding authority over the more distant communities.

Reuter stresses the importance of territory to the *banua* domains of Kintamani. He writes that the "territory of a domain composed of several villages is a whole in a spiritual sense, and its people are 'one' in their dependence on the deified founding ancestors who perpetuate the fertility of the land" (2002b: 42). As I outlined in my

previous chapter, these ideas describe the kinds of cultic relationships for both single and multiple villages I documented around Mount Batukau. In my own fieldwork, I found implicit or explicit references to “agreements” between founding ancestors, place-deities and a worship community were the essence of their binding obligations, distinct from shared points of origin. As I have argued, this is because land is owned by gods inhabiting a divinised landscape in Bali. Similarly, Reuter finds that *banua* are “constituted on the idea that a domain and its people are “owned” by one or a group of deified ancestors or gods” (2002a: 29). Furthermore, he states that “the sacred origin of society is the moment when people and land became conjoined in a sacred covenant, the time when the founding ancestors first cleared the primordial forest” (Reuter 2002a: 30). There is, thus, great resemblance between the two models of temple networks and their shared value of territoriality of the regional deities and those obliged to worship them in periodic rituals.

Nevertheless, whereas those regional deities of Mount Batukau are often spoken of using familial idioms delineating parent-child or sibling relationships, the communities are not obliged into collective worship due to a common ancestral source. Rather, their territorial occupation in proximity to these divine owners requires them to partake in the communal dedication of offerings (see Chapter 3). While it is true that the summit temple may be conceived of as point of origin for the autochthonous population of Mount Batukau, this is relevant to the first populations and their descendants who hold ritual authority over the villages.<sup>92</sup> Around Mount Batukau, then, I found that it is not a shared ancestral origin that unifies communities into worship, but rather the recognition of deities’ powers over the land that brings about their collective veneration.<sup>93</sup>

## Conclusion

In summarising the *jajar-kemiri* territorial cults I wish to stress the emergence of two

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<sup>92</sup> Note that Ottino writes that the summit temple is conceived of as “a centre and an origin point ... dedicated primarily to an idea of universal ancestry encompassing the whole mountain, which includes the population of the villages residing on its slopes and their crops” (2000: 102). My own research data suggests this is only relevant to the indigenous population and its claims of ritual authority.

<sup>93</sup> For other arguments about the shared obligation to worship at village temples that reflect the situation I found around Mount Batukau, see Chapter 3.

distinct phenomena. First, in their worship of gods specific to a locality that act as divine patrons to a community, the cults themselves underscore the territorial nature of those place-deities. This can be interpreted as the delimited sovereignty of divinity, a quality we should expect of gods consubstantial with the land. From this, we can assert that the local cults comprise a religion of particular rather than universal application (Forge 1980),<sup>94</sup> and acknowledge Mus's point that "each collectivity occupies a limited area, and that in basing its religion upon its association with this area, its cults imply not only a contract with the soil, but also the recognition of other contracts in the neighbourhood" (1975: 37). Second, each territorial cult is defined equally by its own land and the encompassing totality of the mountain. Around Mount Batukau, the ancient villages always founded at least two shrines at which to worship. Typically, one is assigned to revering an ancestral founder who provides the community with ritual autonomy by gifting *tirta* to complete ceremonies undertaken on the land (see Chapter 2). The other is a village temple conceived of as a local source of agricultural fertility to the community, such as Pura Batur of Pujungan, Pura Desa of Sanda and Pura Puseh of both Wanagiri and Sarinbuana. These village sanctuaries are always relationally tied (*kaitan*) to the summit temple because the mountain is conceived of as the regional core of fertility for all living upon its slopes. This makes the summit temple deity akin to a sovereign for the entire region's lands, encompassing all falling within the perceived divine territory of the mountain, incorporating its expansive forests until the shoreline.

This interpretation helps us grasp the function of the summit temple as the cosmological navel (*puseh*) of Mount Batukau's regional universe. The divine energies of the earth were not enrolled alone as independent tutelary spirits of each local district, but instead complement the sacred stones (*bebaturan*) at Pucak Kedaton to embody a grander totality. Prohibitions such as those restricting parents from entering temple grounds at Pura Batukau until their children's first teeth emerge in fact parallel an original taboo at Pucak Kedaton, which I found in place at other *jajar-kemiri* temples in Pupuan and Sangketan. In the context of the *jajar-kemiri*, then, the highland community networks tracing the flow of life from the mountaintop through the village

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<sup>94</sup> Mus's (1975) use of the term "cadastral religion" aptly describes the indigenous temple networks I surveyed around the region.

unto the sea should be imagined as dispersed yet integrated ritual domains.<sup>95</sup> Water typically provides the greatest analogy for Balinese religious thought, where rivers travelling through lands from a higher upstream source to the sea are unbroken paths, their extremities forming opposing ends of streams of ever-flowing water, constituting a sprawling aqueous system that interweaves the earth. This same interconnectivity reflects the symbolism of a regional cosmology presided over by the mountain god at Pucak Kedaton.

The synergy between Pucak Kedaton and its correspondents in the village *jajar-kemiri* temples merits a few final comments. Mount Batukau is unlike the other two large volcanic systems of Mount Agung and Mount Batur in the island's east, where those mountain's peaks are scorched by volcanic activity and their highest altitudes are otherwise uninhabitable. By contrast, the forest of Mount Batukau continues from the *jajar-kemiri* villages until the summit, enveloping the entire mountain in an interconnected alpine domain. This forest resembles a monumental "sacred grove" (Domenig 2014) because it is subject to specific prohibitions and the highland villages are custodians of its ecology. Some of its key features include: logging is forbidden; ascent is controlled and normally ritualised; offerings are made as one transitions inside the perimeter to boundary deities identified with protecting the mountain god; sacred ferns and other plants are sought from the upper regions for ceremonial purposes; hunting wild deer is ritualised in ways that would otherwise be unnecessary in other tracts of forest; and taboos are in place for heading to the summit, forbidding one from complaining of hunger, cold or tiredness, the transgression of which invokes disaster from the mountain-god in the form of thunderstorms that mask the way home.<sup>96</sup> Also, recall from my descriptions above that the summit temple is effectively a naturally delineated courtyard standing at 2278 metres above sea level with no trace of Hindu influence within its inner space (*jeroan*). The megalithic stone assemblage is ringed by a group of plants and trees that resemble a sacred grove at the region's core, spilling down

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<sup>95</sup> The topographical quality of these ritual networks can also be interpreted as comprising ceremonial bodies (see Chapter 9).

<sup>96</sup> The Orang Kanekes (Baduy) of Sunda on western Java strike me as similar to those *jajar-kemiri* temple worship communities I have described. The Kanekes live under strict prohibitions as the ancestral custodians of several sacred groves and megalithic stepped terrace structures (*punden berundak*) concealed in the forest (see Barendregt & Wessing 2008; Wessing 1999).

the mountain's sides until reaching the highland villages standing on lands once inhabited by this same forest. In fact, temples like Tambawaras and Muncaksari were until only recent decades still enveloped by forest extending down the mountain, and Pura Batukau and Pura Jatiluwih today remain nested within that interconnected alpine domain.

If we can speak of the forest ecology of Mount Batukau as symbolising an enormous “sacred grove” with the summit temple at its core, this should underscore the importance of imagining the *jajar-kemiri* temples as part of a cosmic topography. This topographical relationality enshrines hierarchy and co-dependence in the form of interconnected temple networks occupying the land, like I mentioned at the chapter's outset. Certainly, the downstream sites are not one and the same as the summit temple. Instead, their union might be imagined as constituting partible aspects of the one common divinity (see Hyang Tumuwuh in Chapter 5), or through an idiom of siblingship (see Chapter 2). Alternatively, those *jajar-kemiri* temples circumnavigating the base of Mount Batukau were often described using dyadic symbolism that interrelates the summit and village temples. This was expressed by terms like *purusa* (male generative principle) to *predana* (female generative principle), *lingga* to *yoni* and even *suami* (husband) to *istri* (wife). Indeed, the Pura Batukau family of temples identifies Pucak Kedaton as father deity to all *jajar-kemiri* members of that network (see Chapter 5). In sum, despite contemporary associations with Hindu deities, the megalithic character of the ancient Mount Batukau temples surveyed in this chapter suggests a highly developed indigenous network of interacting temple deities that identify their origins with the mountain. Seen in this light, the relational matrix of Balinese temples can only be fully illuminated within the context of their divinised landscape.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Catur Angga: The Batukau Family of Temples

*For the Balinese, virtually the whole of nature is a perpetual resource, not merely a museum of the past. The productivity of nature, not industry, is the basic social resource.*

–Stephen Lansing, *Priests and Programmers*

#### Introduction

In the last chapter, I provided a broadly regional overview of several highland villages and their respective temple networks. Here I undertake sustained analysis of the family of temples associated with Pura Batukau. As the largest and most well-known segment of the *jajar-kemiri* ring of temples, this temple network merits special focus in my discussion of Mount Batukau's highland villages. Pura Batukau is the state temple of Tabanan and its congregation undertakes rites for the benefit of the whole region's population. It is supported by the royal house of Tabanan (Puri Agung) as well as regency- and district-levels (*kecamatan* and *kecamatan*) of political leadership. At a more localised level, Pura Batukau is the core source of fertility for fields and gardens of the six customary villages that jointly support (*pengempon*) the temple. Connected with this responsibility, four agricultural shrines located within the temple complex undergo ceremonies every year that bless rice at different stages of its growth in the nearby fields. Somewhere in between those two levels, Pura Batukau is conceived of as the mother temple to a set of four subordinate "child" temples, who are regional powerhouses in and of themselves, which together with the mountain summit temple comprise a family of deities who only come together for monumental revitalisation ceremonies of the earth (*gumi*) (see Chapters 6 to 8). This last relationship, known today as the Catur Angga temple network, constitutes a cornerstone of this chapter.

I start this chapter by describing the setting of Wongaya Gede and Pura Batukau's family of temples to orient the reader to the landscape. From there I outline the Catur Angga network, beginning with the structure and function of its constituent temples,

followed by interpretations of the meaning implied by their unity.<sup>97</sup> Then I describe the special responsibilities borne by Pura Batukau and its leader, the Kebayan, for undertaking sacrificial rites (*pekelem*) on a triennial cycle to revitalise the domains of mountain/forest, lake and river. These ritually guarantee fertility and the conditions for prosperity for the realm of Tabanan. Shifting to the local domain, I explain the rituals associated with rice production that depend on ceremonies undertaken at the core temple. To deepen our comprehension of those rituals, I contextualise them and their associated religious ideas within Southeast Asian ethnology.

There are two predominant theoretical themes I wish to draw out from the ethnographic material discussed in this chapter. The first is the expansive prevalence of a concept I refer to below as “four-around-one” that configures structures of ritual authority, temple networks, the cardinal directions and many other facets of Balinese religious thought. This indigenous concept is found in ancient Java and China and marks a cultural model with wide-ranging influence. Time and again, I was told that the reason there are four subordinate temples, four invisible siblings, four support pillars or four dependent villages in any given relationship was simply because there cannot be either more or less: there must be four that coalesce around a core power. The second theme takes territorial centres of power as a key concept featuring in both the temple networks of the last chapter and this one. My discussion reflects upon the importance of powerful centres for Balinese networks, the paragons of which are the mountain themselves, and looks to regional literature for comparison. To begin, let’s examine a centre of great antiquity on Bali that has long been incorporated into both precolonial and contemporary societies.

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<sup>97</sup> As my fieldwork was nearing its completion, I received a copy of the “manual” for the ceremonial masterpiece entitled Pengurip Gumi that was produced by Pura Batukau’s senior priests, temple staff (*panitia*), offerings and ritual specialists, containing a summary of the temple network and its members’ different responsibilities. I was thrilled to find that so many of the artefacts I had uncovered during my fieldwork were presented in a text put together by my interlocutors themselves. I refer to it as *Pengurip Gumi Panitia Perumus*, or *PGPP* for short.



*Fig. 5.1:* The Pura Batukau family network within Tabanan regency, which incorporates the summit temple, Pucak Kedaton, and seaside temple, Tanah Lot.

### **Wongaya and its Sacred Forest Temple: Pura Luhur Batukau**

The highland temple bearing Mount Batukau's namesake, Pura Batukau, is an ancient religious complex standing in perfect alignment with the summit. Visiting the temple requires passing through the highest altitude settlement, Wongaya, whereafter most guests are asked to traverse the final inclination by foot. This procession over steep ground flanked by dense forest hints at passage beyond ordinary habitation, transcending us into the sacred domain of Mount Batukau. Sounds of the jungle then reign, one becomes awash with the humidity of Bali's largest wetland and an endless sea of trees overwhelm visual peripheries. Finally, the temple grounds open a clearing amongst the blanket of jungle-green wrapping the mountain. This location bridges the endless expanse of undomesticated forest to villages of the highland zone, mediating between the divine mountain and human communities of worship.



Like the waters forever cascading down its valleys, life is conceived of as emanating from upstream sources that energise the landscape. Pura Batukau regularly undertakes sacrificial exchanges to bring about the revitalisation of those sources of life, including at a caldera lake (Tamblingan), the mountain summit (Pucak Kedaton), and the headwaters of the region's highest tributary river (Yeh Mawa) located in its sacred alpine forest. Those resource domains upon which the broader region depends are entrusted to the highland community of Wongaya Gede and its leader the Kebayan. This highland community is today made up of six distinct customary villages (*desa adat*) and ten village subdistricts (*banjar dinas*), collectively dedicated to the temple's ongoing ritual maintenance (see Figure 5.3). However, the Kebayan's custodial influence extends far beyond those customary villages to encompass four other worship communities making up the temple network known today as the Catur Angga. Each of these four subordinate temples has its own number of support villages, who are all called upon for ritual duties (*ngayah*) at the core temple, Pura Batukau, during its revitalisation ceremony (*pengurip gumi*) run once a generation.

The village name Wongaya is a combination of two words: *wong* (person) and *aya* (great, big). This is typically explained as "people of great status". The term is certainly linked to the Kebayan group's responsibility for the state temple, but also to stories about the special covenant between its core-line and the deities of Pura Batukau and Pucak Kedaton (see Chapter 2). Wongaya itself appears like many other traditional villages, houseyards abutting the main road travelling from upstream to downstream (*kaja* to *kelod*), intersected by a crossroads that leads to other communities, although it was almost entirely rebuilt after fighting with the Dutch (Ottino 2003). Today, Wongaya Gede refers to the incorporation of more recent, peripheral communities. Hence, Wongaya is the core village from which the other component subdistricts of Wongaya Gede either originate or submit. This supravillage organisation obliges the marginal villages to contribute ritual work (*ngayah*) at Pura Batukau under the leadership of the Kebayan. This is first and foremost a spiritual relationship in recognition of his affinity with the Batukau temple deity and its key role in enabling prosperity for the region.

Any significant ceremony in Wongaya Gede is accompanied by four priests that represent origin groups with their own distinct responsibilities. In this way, duties are distributed to different families whose descendants must supply the next leader of each of the four groups. This is especially true for how the different forms of *yadna* (religious ritual) are administered. The Kebayan is responsible only for *derwa yadna*, rituals that engage gods: he may not participate in *buta yadna*, those dedicated to chthonic forces. The other three priestly groups may perform all other types of ritual in addition to helping in Batukau temple. In Wongaya, the special responsibility for *pitra yadna* and *manusa yadna* (mortuary rituals and human rites of passage) lies with a figure known as the *balean desa*. Because of his contamination through working with the dead, he is not permitted to *menek tuun* (go up, go down) when assisting in the temple, meaning he is unable to ascend a shrine to place offerings or consecrate *tirta*.

My priestly interlocutors jokingly remarked that their duty is far easier than the *balean desa*. If they err the temple god will forgive them, for their intentions were true despite some ritual inaccuracy. However, the *balean desa* must study for many years to acquire the esoteric knowledge required to perfectly undertake ceremonies that ensure passage from one stage of life to the next. So, when a new *balean desa* is needed, the person is chosen by the village, an exception to the general rule that priestly roles continue via genealogical descent (*keturunan*). The new *balean desa* of my village of Sangketan, for example, trained for years with his elder complement in Wongaya before being entrusted by his home village to perform those important life and death rituals independently. Temple priests, by contrast, arise through the death of a forebear, often unexpectedly and without preparation. They learn on the job, as it were, fumbling through *mantra* read from printed texts when beginning, slowly assimilating the skills to perform the far simpler task of ensuring a temple ceremony runs according to a timeless plan long established by ancestral tradition.

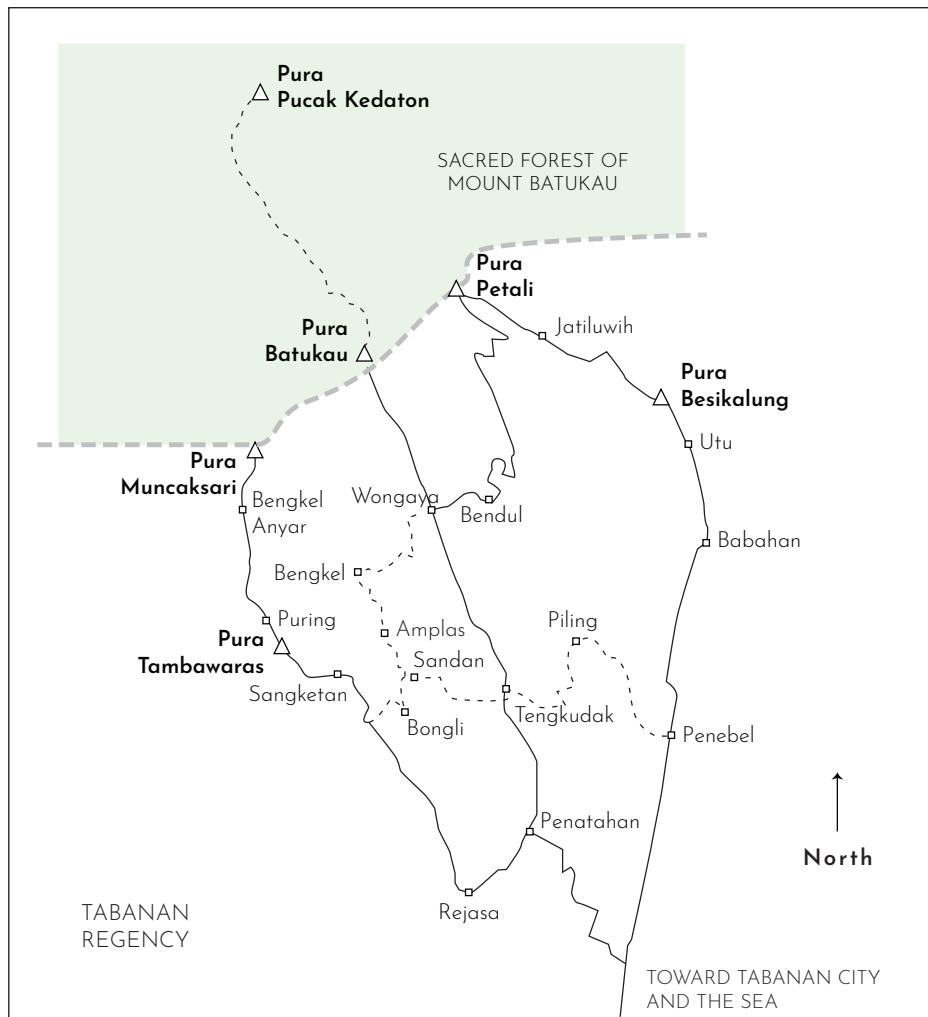


Fig. 5.2: The fieldwork sites I frequented when researching the Pura Batukau family of temples. The unbroken line shows main roads while the dashed line indicates smaller paths or trails.

The figure above shows the temple network's relationships and respective distances schematically. On the ground, I would travel by motorbike for around 20 minutes heading east from Sangketan, which is considered the western half (*sibak kauh*) of the network, to arrive at Tengkidak, one of the customary villages dedicated to maintaining Pura Batukau. Driving a further 15 minutes uphill through Wongaya would see me arrive to the temple's entrance. Alternatively, riding east from Wongaya for 20 minutes would take me to Jatiluwi village, which comprises the eastern half (*sibak kangin*) of the network. The eastern and western halves constitute a territory over which the Kebayan holds spiritual authority. Until relatively recently, these passages would be undertaken by foot through rice-fields and forest paths, crossing rivers using simple bamboo bridges. Considering this, the Batukau family of temples and their respective worship communities should not be imagined as settlements living side-by-side, nor

possessing a uniform set of ancestral traditions and origin stories. The megalithic foundations of every member temple point to prehistoric origins, but there is no written evidence to date their inception, except in Pura Besikalung's case where its recently compiled temple chronicle (*purana*) suggests copperplate inscriptions from the tenth century already reference the temple by name (Dinas Kebudayaan Provinsi Bali 2017). Over the many centuries, the distinct worship communities of the Catur Angga would slowly have differentiated and had limited opportunities to come together as a single community due to the forested ridges and ravines separating the settlements. This makes the unity implied by the four temples into one divine body during major revitalisation ceremonies even more interesting, something everyone I spoke to felt was of the utmost importance to the generalised prosperity of the region.

CATUR ANGGA - The Batukau temple network

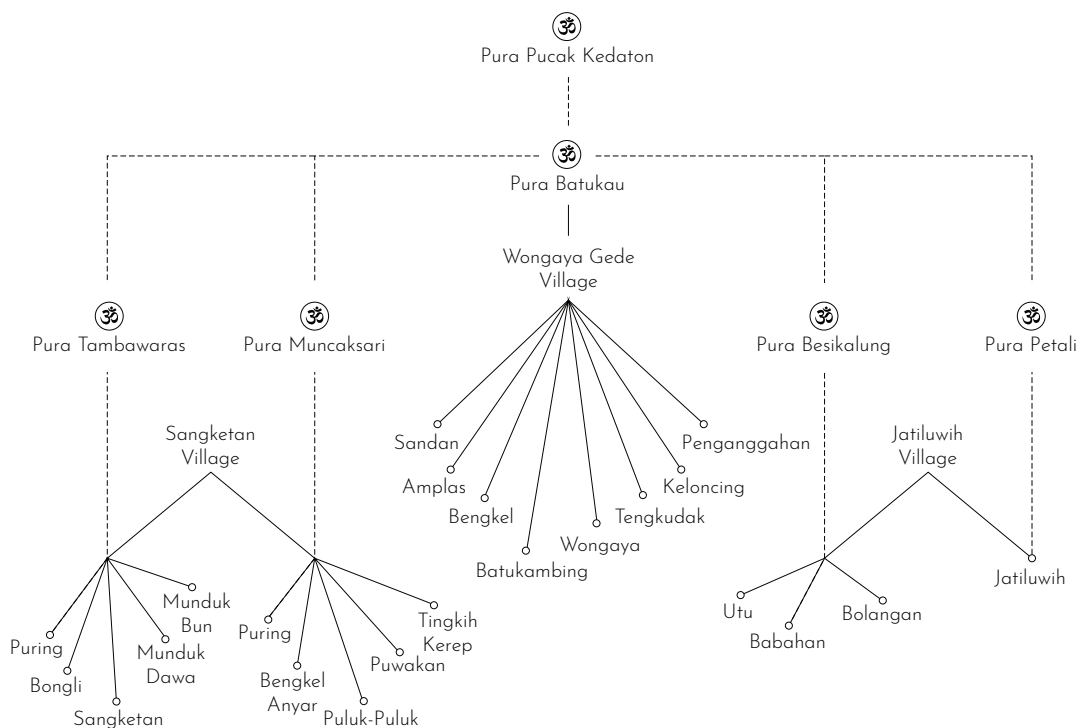


Fig 5.3: The local villages assigned to support (*pengempon*) the Batukau family of temples.

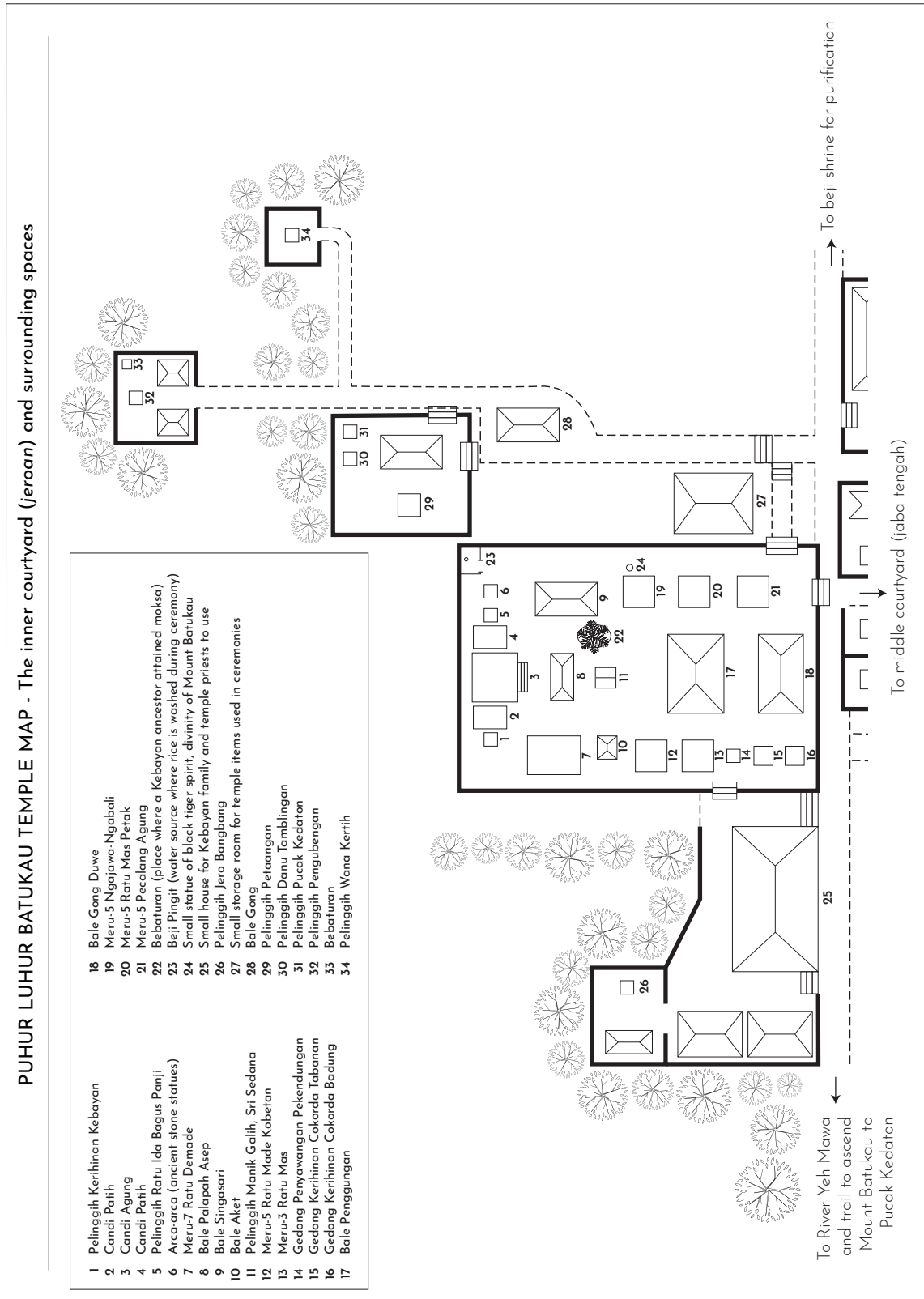


Fig 5.4: Map of Pura Batukau's inner courtyard and peripheral sanctuaries.

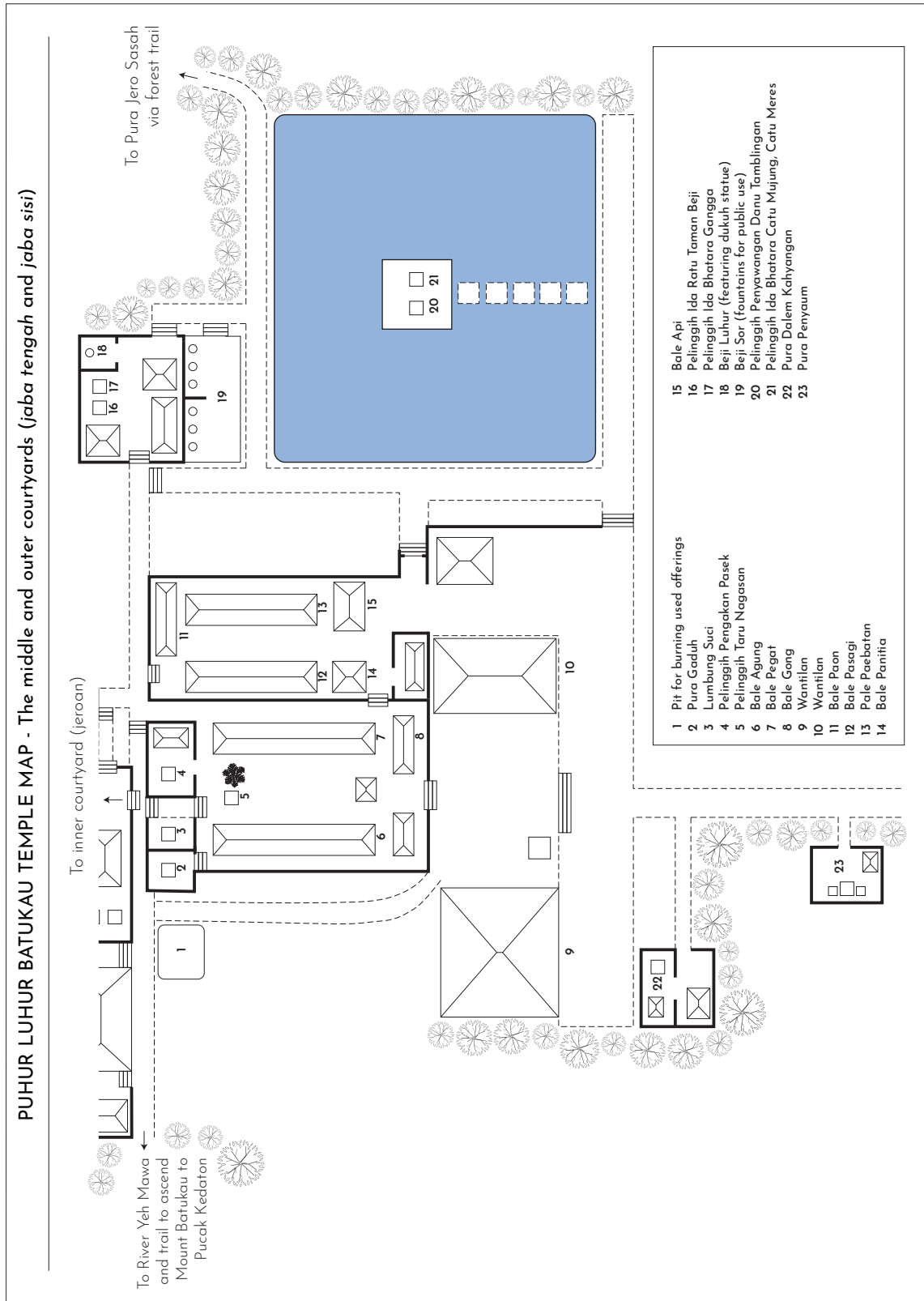


Fig 5.5: Map of the outer courtyards and miniature lake beside the temple.

## Structure and Meaning of the Catur Angga: Four Children Supporting the Mother

The set of relationships paramount for the *jajar-kemiri* (see Chapter 4) temple network featured in this chapter is the Pura Batukau family of temples known today as Catur Angga. This term was developed recently to distinguish those sanctuaries from the broader ring of *jajar-kemiri* temples circumnavigating Mount Batukau. This occurred during UNESCO's determination of the ancient temples and forest ecology ritually tied to Pura Batukau as a World Heritage Site of outstanding cultural value (Salamanca et al. 2015). The words *catur* and *angga* together mean "four bodies" (or four pillars of support), referring to the four divine "children" of Pura Batukau and Pucak Kedaton. In its status as *pura induk* (parent temple) in that set of relationships, Pura Batukau is referred to as the mother. From west to east, the four temples are: Tambawaras and Muncaksari of Sangketan village (my fieldwork base), and Petali and Besikalung of Jatiluwih village. Each possesses individual functions within the network, and indeed particular histories outside of that relationship, yet most importantly, they are conceived of as a single unit. As the *Pengurip Gumi Panitia Perumus (PGPP)*<sup>98</sup> states, "The Catur Angga temples are pillars of support such that Pura Luhur Batukau cannot be conceived of in its entirety without inclusion of all five temples. Unified, the Catur Angga Batukau temples bear status as headwater temples (*Pura Ulun Swi*) of the agricultural world of Tabanan regency".<sup>99</sup> This kind of unity and its relevance to the broader themes of this thesis will be a feature of my conclusion to this chapter.

Integration of the family unity of Batukau temples is reflected in beliefs about their distinct powers. Together, they are said to comprise a cosmic government. The four ministerial departments refer to Tambawaras as governing health for the worship community, derived from the words *tamba* (medicine) and *waras* (health), for which it is also known as *apotek niskala*, "pharmacy of the invisible dimension". Muncaksari governs wealth and fertility and its name comes from the essence or division (*sari*) of the

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<sup>98</sup> See relevant footnote above.

<sup>99</sup> "Pura Catur Angga sebagai penyangga sehingga menyebut Pura Luhur Batukau secara utuh tidak terlepas dari semua Pura tersebut. Kesatuan Pura Catur Angga Batukau distatuskan sebagai Pura Ulun Swi bagia dunia pertanian di Kabupaten Tabanan."

summit (*pucak*). It is more broadly concerned with granting success and flourishing in life, both in fields of work and agricultural production. Situated in the eastern half, Besikalung governs the cultivation of spiritual power and Pucak Petali is concerned with strength, protection, and generalised harmony. This ministry of separate departments coalesces around their divine prime minister in Pura Batukau. Still, they are encompassed by the summit temple deity of Pucak Kedaton, identified as the cosmic king for the region.

Many interpretations pertain to the familial unity of those temples. Within the Balinese Hindu metaphysical framework, both the god of the summit temple and Pura Batukau are identified as Mahadewa, meaning “great god of the gods”. Both deities are also known as Ida Bhatara Panembahan Sakti Penataran Bali.<sup>100</sup> In addition, the constitutive temple deities are all locally identified as Sang Hyang Tumuwh. *Tumuwh* refers to the life-giving power of growth in all living things. This common identity shared by the principal deity of all network members underscores how this dispersed religious complex becomes integrated as one body (see also Chapter 9). Aporal metaphors also signify relationality.<sup>101</sup> The term *jajar-kemiri* is a reference to two separate terms applied to the megalithic network at large. *Jajar* is a row in the sense of nodes interconnected along a line, typically applied laterally (as opposed to vertically). *Kemiri* refers to the candlenut trees grown natively on Bali.<sup>102</sup> Together, the concept intimates the way the fibres or veins (in this case, the “row” *jajar* or “segments” *juringan*) of the candlenut are interwoven to strengthen them and protect against weathering. It implies a single entity subdivided into parts (*juringan*) that are tied together laterally (*jajar*). One interpretation of the *jajar-kemiri*, then, is a metaphorical unity that strengthens its capacity for life-generation and social reproduction across a vast scale.

Another recurring theme expresses core-periphery relationality. Around the entire *jajar-kemiri*, including the Catur Angga, downstream site and summit temple are ritually

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<sup>100</sup> This more involved name is composed of *panembahan* (from *sembah*, “to worship or pray towards”), *sakti* (powerful) and *penataran Bali* (the Balinese land).

<sup>101</sup> Botanical metaphors are a common theme in Austronesian-speaking societies, especially with respect to origin structures (see J. Fox & Sather 2016).

<sup>102</sup> The indigenous Balinese term is *tingkih*. Candlenut is used extensively in offerings.



aligned, paralleling the flow of life coursing from the upstream mountain. This institutes Pucak Kedaton as the regional core, radiating powers to temples situated at its base, who circumnavigate the mountain as satellites orbit a planetary body. The same core to periphery dynamic applies at a smaller scale to single religious complexes like Tambawaras. Each of its smaller shrines comprising the larger sanctuary, including altars identified with boulders in nearby forest, river shrines and those springs and trees found in adjacent fields, are considered repositories of the power that is concentrated in the main temple courtyard. Therefore, every temple anniversary involves priests heading out to these peripheral sites to request *tirta* from the respective deities of each place for use in the major ceremony held in the inner temple courtyard. One elder priest compared this structure to the *dewata narwa sanga*, the nine cardinal deities arranged around a core deity of the windrose, an image that underscores the interconnectivity of both larger temples and the networks that encompass them.

From another perspective, the familial unity of the Catur Angga refers to the totalising relationship incorporating those temples, mountain and the earth. The two western temples of Tambawaras and Muncaksari are gathered under the title *sibak kauh* (western half) and the eastern temples of Petali and Besikalung comprise the *sibak kangin* (eastern half). These complementary halves of the network are assigned different meaning, with *sibak kangin* said to refer to foundational powers and *sibak kauh* to the development of those powers. To illustrate, the Catur Angga, Pura Batukau and Pucak Kedaton are interpreted in the *PPGP* as combining into a *padmasana*, the upright shrine found in Balinese Hindu temples all over the island today. The conceptual image of the *padmasana* shrine is applied there as follows (see Figure 5.6). Besikalung symbolises the base of the universe and its core powers associate with the cosmic turtle Bedawang Nala; Petali temple corresponds to soil and water and the base of the structure; Muncaksari temple symbolises wisdom and a source of primary needs and corresponds to the back and rising structure of the shrine; and Tambawaras temple symbolises the Garuda eagle and maintaining the survival of humankind through treating disease. The body of the entire *padmasana* structure is associated with Pura Batukau while the seat (*linggih*) carved at the top is dedicated to Pucak Kedaton as the head and centre (*padma*) of the universe.

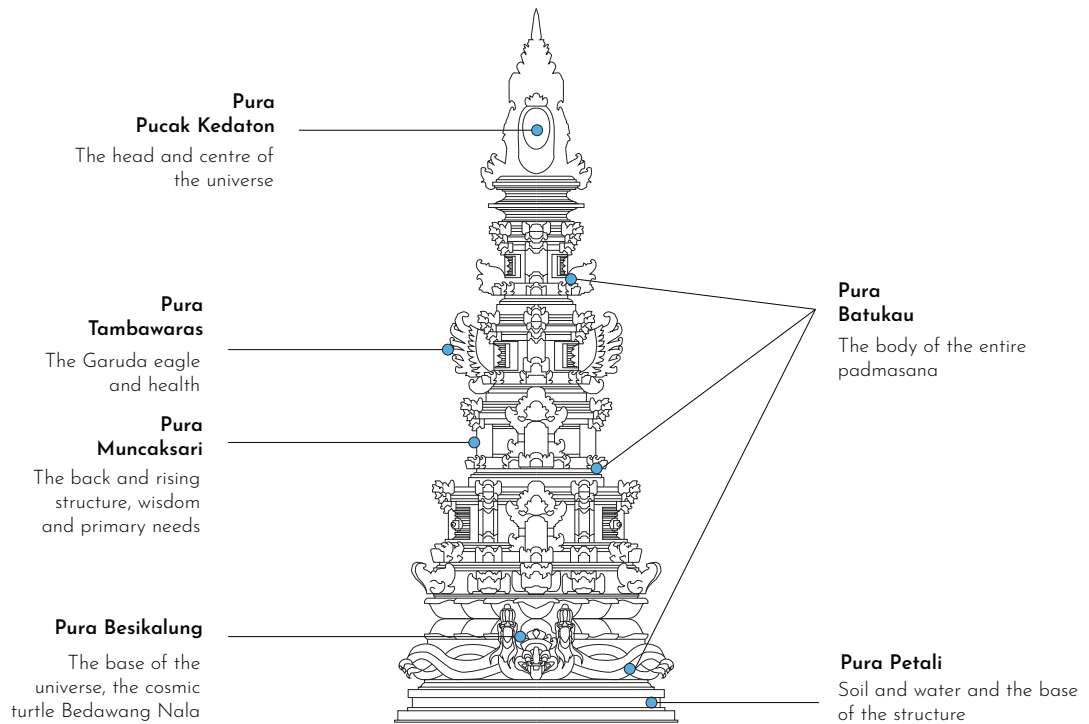


Fig 5.6: A conceptual *padmasana* drawn from descriptions of symbolic associations given in the *PPGP*.

While this metaphysical symbolism is far removed from the everyday language of non-priestly temple activities, it illuminates once again how this religious complex covering a huge swathe of territory is conceived of as a single encompassing unit. Indeed, it replicates the idea of a body structured and integrated by composite parts (see Chapter 9). In essence, when ritual demands it, unification of the network amounts to something greater than their interwoven components alone. This notion is paramount to the symbolic plane of unity required for the Pengurip Gumi revitalisation ceremony to be documented in the following chapters. For that event, the consubstantial unity of the temple network deities' divine essence is drawn upon to enact the reanimation of the world (*pengurip gumi*) for the agrarian communities of the mountainside. As we will see in the coming chapters, there is no grander demonstration of this unity than the *melasti* procession by foot undertaken by the entire network from mountain unto sea.

## The Responsibilities and Functions of Pura Batukau

The annual responsibilities of the priests of Pura Batukau can be split into two groups of activities. The first group consists of the *pekelem* (sacrificial drowning), *mapag toya* and *mapag angin* (calling the water and wind) rites that I describe below. The second group includes *ngusaba* rituals relevant to the cultivation of rice. In the following ceremonial activities, the Kebayan or a representative from his family of priests administers the ceremony. The sacrificial *pekelem* rites are performed at localities consubstantial with deities presiding over a source of life. While the second group of rituals are generally fixed to full moons, the Kebayan has some influence over their timing to accommodate environmental changes, such as a delay to the onset of rain.

The most significant set of rites for the region are those broadly classified under the banner of *pekelem*. This term is typically spoken of as referring to the sacrifice of an animal through its drowning in water. Despite this association, the rites are more precisely described as the submerging or releasing (*mulang pengeleb*) of a sacrificial offering into the earth. At the waterless environment of the summit temple, for example, offerings are buried under the megalithic shrine to be dedicated at sunrise the following morning. I emphasise this point because while submersion is more obvious in the case of water buffaloes drowned at the lake (see below), the burial of offerings at the summit is symbolically equivalent. The key idea is dedicating an offering to the god consubstantial with those life-giving powers identified with a place.

The *pekelem* are a triennial set of rites performed on a rolling basis at three distinct locations. On the fourth full moon (*purnama kapat*) of one year, the Kebayan and an entourage of senior priests (*pemangku*), temple staff (*panitia*) and a section of the caretaking community (*pengempon*) and temple security (*pecalang*) head to Lake Tamblingan in Buleleng regency. Either the king of Tabanan or a member of his family accompanies them to the lake. Because of their association with agricultural fertility, the chief official of Tabanan's farming cooperatives bearing the title of *sedahan agung* attends all *pekelem* rituals. This crater lake is identified as the main source of water flowing through the Tabanan regency, via both underground springs found on Mount

Batukau and rivers that originate in its sacred forest. A water buffalo is decorated beside the lake temple in preparation for sacrifice. After a series of preparatory rituals, the buffalo is drawn alive into the lake by canoe that encircles the body of water three times before releasing the animal into its centre.<sup>103</sup>

In concert, a special offering made by the congregation of Petali temple called *banten temuku* is taken to the principal natural shrine of the lake area. This is a section of volcanic rock face known as Bebaturan Tirta Mengening. The *temuku* offering dedicated to that deity references a piece of wood normally laid in water channels to divide their flow (*temuku*), suggesting it ensures water flows underground toward Tabanan. The deity of the lake, known colloquially as Dewi Danu (lake goddess), is in this set of ceremonies most plainly consubstantial with the lake, accepting the water buffalo offering into her body of water. The deity thereafter guarantees a continuous supply of life to the irrigated fields and rivers in Tabanan until the next *pekelem* rite comes around three years from now.



*Fig 5.7:* Bebaturan Tirta Mengening photographed from a canoe in Lake Tamblingan. Canoes are the only approach to this sacred section of the caldera wall formed from the Pleistocene Buyan-Beratan

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<sup>103</sup> Photos of this process are presented in Chapter 7.

volcano.

The following year, again on the fourth full moon (*purnama kapat*), a group of men, women, and senior priests from Pura Batukau's congregation head to the summit of Mount Batukau. This is undertaken on the day before the full moon so that arrival to the summit after a five-hour trek from Wongaya is achieved before the sun sets and freezing conditions ensue. A black duck and chicken taken alive to the summit are considered a fundamental aspect of the *pekelem*, at which time they are thrown alive over the summit shrine and left free to roam, symbolising life's renewal. The centrepiece, however, is an offering named *banten pengeleb*. I documented its complete assembly in Pura Batukau by the senior offering specialists (*tukang banten*) of Wongaya, where each seed and ingredient are encased in a special individual container crafted from a sacred type of palm leaf. These comprise the seeds of the earth (*asil gumi*), representing all the relevant crops to life in the highlands, including those grown in fields, gardens and others used when assembling offerings.<sup>104</sup> After their preparation, the offering must be assembled by the hands of the Kebayan and his wife alone into a large ceramic vessel that will be hauled up the mountain. Before dusk falls at the summit, the *pengeleb* offering is buried under the principal shrine of Pucak Kedaton and then at sunrise is dedicated to the mountain deity. This ceremony is said to ensure fertility and prosperity through regulating the weather, in particular the commencement of the monsoonal rainy season that typically coincides with that fourth month of the lunar calendar.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Note the symbolism here between the *asil gumi* seeds taken to each village's core sanctuary outlined in the last chapter, and the same event occurring here at the cosmic centre, Pucak Kedaton, in a scaled-up version aimed at revitalising the entire realm.

<sup>105</sup> From the *PPGP*: "The *pekelem* at Pucak Kedaton is addressed to Ida Bhatara Pucak Kedaton (Siwa) to request that he provide fertility and prosperity through constantly regulating the weather. Therefore, when *subak* cooperatives require water for agriculture, the rainy season will commence".



*Fig 5.8:* Senior Wongaya women prepare offerings to be dedicated at ancestral sites along the forest path to the summit for this year's *pekelem* rite at Pucak Kedaton.



*Fig 5.9: The Kebayan assembles the *banten pengeleb* alongside his wife and an offerings specialist (*tukang banten*) from the Kebayan family.*



Fig. 5.10: At sunset, one of Pura Batukau's senior priests digs under the sacred principal altar of the mountain, Pucak Kedaton. He removes the ceramic jar from the *pekelem* rite performed three years ago.



Fig. 5.11: At sunrise, the *banten pengeleb* offering is dedicated to the mountain god and then buried under the shrine. A live duck and chicken are left to roam at the summit, 2276 metres above sea level.



In the last year of the triennial cycle, the same congregation gathers at the tributary river Yeh Mawa running beside Pura Batukau. This holy river originates higher than any other in Tabanan, in the middle of the concave southern end of Mount Batukau's crater that leads downstream toward Pura Batukau. After a series of rituals inside the temple then at the shrine beside the river, the key figures walk around 30 metres upstream to a river boulder that is also the focus of the *mapag toya* (see below) ceremony. Beside this boulder, a black duck and chicken are drowned in the currents as an offering to the deity controlling all rivers. This sacrifice aims to guarantee stability of the water cycle and fertilisation from water source unto the rice fields.

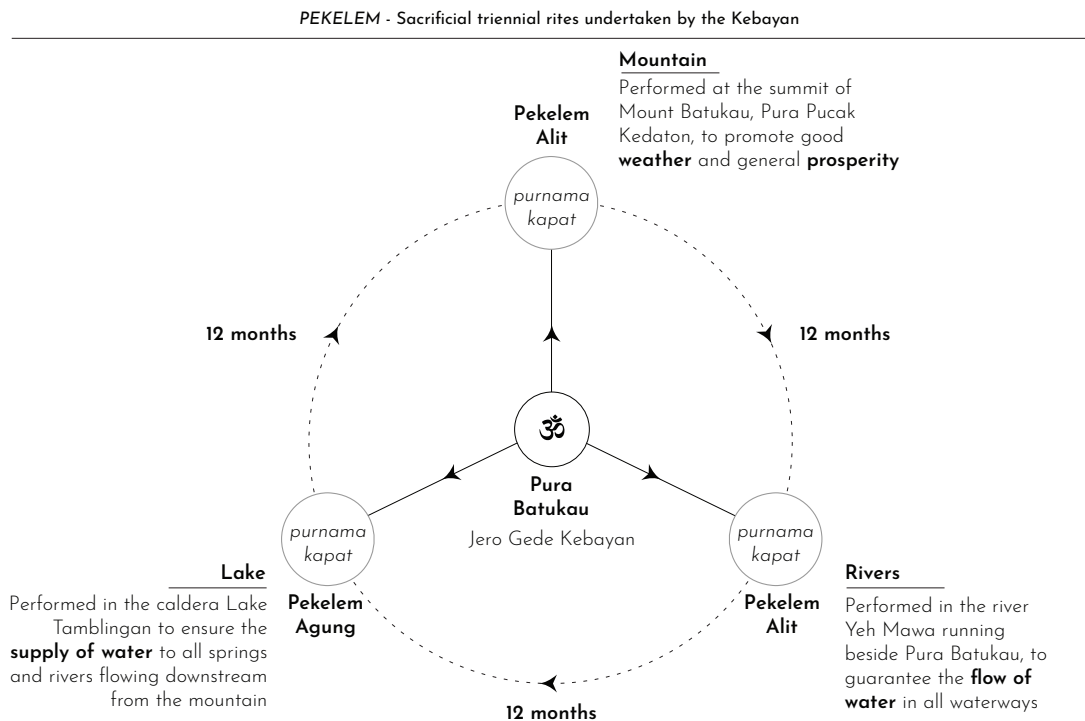


Fig 5.12: The three-yearly cycle of *pekelem* rites performed at Lake Tamblingan, Pucak Kedaton and the river Yeh Mawa.

The three *pekelem* sites of the triennial cycle cover around 20 kilometres from end to end, a territorial expanse incorporating the forested ecology of the Batukau Nature Reserve. According to the *PPGP*, “[w]ithin a three-year period, three natural forces were awakened to shape the fertility and prosperity of Mother Earth continuously, namely: Dewa Siwa, Dewi Danu and Dewi Gangga”. The gods associated with each stage correspond to the mountain, lake, and river respectively, and are synonymous with

forces and resources (see Figure 5.12—the purposes listed are given in the *PPGP*). These rituals also speak to the intimate relationships the Batukau highland population traditionally cultivated with their divinised landscape. The sacrifice of animals at the three locations reveals the most basic of exchange principles found in ritual practice: life is offered to promote reciprocation from the gods in the form of living-powers associated with each location.<sup>106</sup>

The sacrifice of large animals to promote reciprocation from gods is commonplace on Bali.<sup>107</sup> This practice is typically classified under the label of “exorcistic”, purificatory (*caru*) rites because of the use of blood and their direction toward the “below” or chthonic realm (Howe 2005: 69-72; Stuart-Fox 1987: 190; Eiseman 1990: 226-234). As the *pekelem* rites demonstrate, a dichotomy between a pure upper world and impure lower world is of questionable relevance to indigenous Balinese cosmology (see Warren 1993: 38). As Signe Howell’s (1996) edited volume conveys with its specific focus on sacrifice for eastern Indonesia, sacrificial animals are dedicated in those neighbouring societies toward gods and ancestors and are not restricted to the purification of malevolent energies, as is now commonly interpreted in Balinese Hindu metaphysical frameworks (see H. Geertz 2004: 35-67).<sup>108</sup> In the central-eastern highlands of Bali, furthermore, Reuter documents annual sacrifice to ancestral deities during temple festivals in the larger domain temples (*pura banua*) in which “a male water buffalo, is sacrificed, divided, and “resurrected” (*wangun urip*) in order to recreate and revitalize the domain” (2002a: 69).<sup>109</sup> Relatedly, around the Mount Batukau highland villages, a cow (*sampi*) is sacrificed during the annual *taur kasanga* rites undertaken on the eve of

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<sup>106</sup> Definitions of sacrifice are countless and typically struggle to encompass the “ragbag of elements” we include in our comparative analyses (Howell 1996: 3). Howell’s (1996) volume on sacrifice in eastern Indonesia arrives at no final definition of the practice.

<sup>107</sup> In Chapter 7, an Aside entitled Maturan Nunas speaks to this basic exchange principle of Balinese ritual.

<sup>108</sup> One anthropological text dedicated solely to Balinese offerings claims that “[a]n offering is foremost a gift. When presented to the deities it expresses the gratitude and thanks of the Balinese for the fertility of the earth, for everything that makes life on this planet possible. When offered to the demons it prevents them from disturbing the harmony of the universe” (Brinkgreve 1992: 19). There are many other possible interpretations applicable to the purposes of offerings (see R. Fox 2015). The elder priests I spoke with were clear to me that offerings are part of a dyadic process that desires *tirta* in exchange, making them a largely functional practice and certainly not without expectation of reciprocity.

<sup>109</sup> During the once-in-a-century ritual named Eka Dasa Rudra held at Pura Besakih, Stuart-Fox (1982: 70-71) documents a *pekelem* involving the sacrifice of a water buffalo, goat and duck who are thrown into Mount Agung’s active volcanic crater, the highest summit on Bali.

the new Balinese lunar year and reassembled into life (*wangun urip*) for dedication to gods at Dalem temples. At these annual events, and temple ceremonies in Sanda, Batungsel and Wongaya that I observed, a sacrificial animal is dedicated first to the gods and then its meat divided and shared amongst all present. This practice clearly brings about commensality between gods and communities that reinforces their fellowship (see also Howell 1996: 19). Given how emphatically Southeast Asian ritual practice on Bali remains even today, we should expect sacrifice to be undertaken with the expectation of reciprocation.

Before moving onto localised rites concerned with rice production, let's look at the ceremony called *mapag toya* that precedes them in the sequence. Like the *pekelem* rites, *mapag toya* is tied to the lunar calendar and occurs on the fifth full moon (*purnama kelima*).<sup>110</sup> The name *mapag toya* means to summon or welcome the water. The *mapag toya* rite is performed by all irrigated rice-farming cooperatives around Bali, usually at their locally significant water temple positioned at the division from which irrigation is channelled from a source river to a group of fields. It is performed before starting work to prepare the rice fields, as the first step in a line of successive rituals that accompany rice cultivation in Bali (see C. Geertz 1980: 81; Lansing 1991: 65). Farmers and priests gather to present offerings to the source of water in exchange for its supply to the fields downstream.

At Pura Batukau, this is once again scaled up to the regency level and attended by the royal house (Puri Agung), district political leader (*camat*) and chief of Tabanan's farming cooperatives (*sedahan agung*). While in other places this significant ritual is performed by a local priest, the *mapag toya* rite at Pura Batukau must be administered by the Kebayan. The highlight of the ceremony is when a miniature lake (*telaga*) sculpted from mud and filled with water is pulled apart simultaneously by the different community leaders present, symbolising the release of waters from Lake Tamblingan to the agrarian communities downstream in Tabanan. One of the miniature lakes is sculpted and then ceremoniously destroyed at Pura Petaangan inside Batukau temple's walls, whereafter the same rite is performed on top of the boulder in the river Yeh

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<sup>110</sup> This is generally around September or October each year.

Mawa spoken of above. Once completed, water will flow freely to the farmers' fields and the next stage of work can begin, which involves turning over the fields (*ngolah tanah*) in preparation for planting.



Fig 5.13: The miniature *telaga* (lake) made for ritual dissolution by senior representatives from the Kebayan family, farming cooperatives, local government, and the royal palace.

### **Ngusaba and Mapag Rituals for Farming Around Pura Batukau**

Turning away from the regency-wide responsibilities of Pura Batukau, the temple also has a special role in agricultural fertility for neighbouring villages. Rice farmers envisage Pura Batukau's deity as governing localised conditions in the earth, and thus request blessings there at different stages of the rice production cycle. These rites are unique for they draw on blessings from different minor deities falling under the broader religious complex of the temple, a situation I have not seen elsewhere on Bali, including the other highland villages. In other contexts, rice farmers typically pray at water temples (Ulun Swi/Bedugul) to the universal deity governing the growth of rice and fertility named Dewi Sri. By contrast, the cycle around Wongaya Gede village is divided into four parts. These sequential phases are collectively referred to using the term *ngusaba*. These four phases are scheduled to commence only after the grander *mapag toya*

ceremony runs annually. In turn, the *mapag toya* ceremony must be undertaken a month after the larger rites of regional fertilisation have been completed on the auspicious fourth full moon (*purnama kapat*), as detailed above.

Planting begins once the *mapag toya* rite has been performed on the fifth full moon. After rice seedlings emerge in the fields, the first *ngusaba* rite is performed at a shrine within Batukau temple called Penyaum. The name derives from *jaum* (needle), which in this context refers to the needle-like appearance of seedlings grouped together in the highest corner of the field. These *ngusaba* ceremonies are principally a time for the farmers to gather with the respective temple priest to dedicate offerings to the god associated with that phase of rice production, and its blessings incorporated into *tirta* that is sprinkled over the irrigation channel bringing water into each individual farmer's respective fields. Once every three years each *ngusaba* ceremony is considered *agung* (large) to align with the *pekelem agung* held at Lake Tamblingan. Then the gamelan orchestra attends, the offerings are multiplied, and women perform a dance entitled *rejang penyaksi*. During this dance, women hold offerings that incorporate blessings from the temple deity into the family's agricultural seeds, predominantly rice (*padi*), which is then blended with crops kept at home.



Fig 5.14: The *rejang penyaksi* being performed after the main offerings were dedicated. This same dance is performed in temple ceremonies held at all village temples of Wongaya Gede and Sangketan.

The second *ngusaba* agricultural rite is held at Jero Sasah temple on the seventh full moon of the lunar calendar. Again, the name is tied to the stage of growth where *sasah* means “to scatter”, when the seedlings are transplanted from their initial single corner allotment to be spaced evenly across the field. This forest sanctuary is exceptional. While it is a constitutive element of the Batukau temple complex, to attend its *ngusaba* we walked some 40 minutes northeast from the grounds through forest until arriving at a megalithic terraced shrine. The principal altar is an over two-metre-high heaped pile of stones (*bebaturan*) in the local style known as *gegumuk* (mound) that mimics the shape of the mountain. The elder priests recalled to me that all Pura Batukau’s shrines were similarly constructed before their complete renovation in 1959. Note how, unlike in the contemporary context of Balinese Hindu temples where offerings are placed above the ground and dedicated to gods seated (*ngelinggihan*) in thrones, the older style sets offerings on the ground or leaning against *bebaturan* stones, reinforcing the connection between the earth and the worship community.



*Fig 5.15: The banten tegteg offerings gathered before the shrine ready to receive blessings before being carried during the rejang penyaksi. The priest addresses the deity from the ground. The terraced, principal shrine has a menhir on its peak and is oriented toward the summit of Mount Batukau.*

Before the final two phases of Batukau's *ngusaba* rites occur many months later, the *mapag angin* rite is undertaken by the Kebayan from outside his family houseyard. As before with *mapag toya*, this rite is performed to summon or welcome a divinised force, in this case the wind (*angin*). It generally occurs on the full moon of the eighth month of the lunar calendar (*purnama keulu*) and involves the Kebayan requesting this atmospheric force under the deified control of the mountain contribute to the growth of crops in the region's fields. Then there is an interlude for many months.

When the final full moon of the lunar calendar comes around in June, the last two *ngusaba* rites are performed on the same day. This occurs at Petaangan and Pengubengan, two shrines inside the Batukau temple walls that are managed by senior Kebayan family priests. I struggled to find any clear association between the names and/or functions of these temples and rice production. Petaangan is where the *mapag toya* (calling the water) rite is also held. It has a sculpture of a *naga* originating in the forest and entering under the wall, symbolising water emerging from the forest springs that corresponds to its ritual relationship with securing water for the fields. Pengubengan, on the other hand, is derived from the term *ngubeng* that signals both a sense of revolution around a centre and the combination of different activities into one ritual. Some interlocutors noted that Pengubengan's shrine functions as a *pesimpangan* (mid-way shrine) for the summit temple, and indeed in other contexts to perform a *ngusaba desa ngubeng* means to enact the ceremony from the village as opposed to directly upon the mountain summit. I can only loosely interpret that this final *ngusaba* phase is tied to the generalised prosperity and protection originating in the summit temple to bless the final stages of rice growth.

### **The *Ngusaba* Rites of Batukau in Regional Context**

When considering the rice growing rites detailed above, it is important to note that these are generally pegged to the lunar calendar and monsoonal cycle. The entire area around Wongaya, including the gardens around my fieldwork base in Sangketan, was until only a few decades ago dedicated to the cultivation of rain-fed dry rice (*padi gaga*).<sup>111</sup> These upland rice varieties are still planted in irrigated fields using the traditional varieties of red, white, black, and yellow grain colours grown there. The tradition of planting upland rice in rain-fed gardens is today rarely found on Bali, but I suspect the timing of the above rites was originally determined during the previous phase of dry rice cultivation. The *pekelem* sacrificial rites are performed on the fourth full moon, as the monsoon changes and rains typically begin. Today, rain is still understood to be controlled by the mountain deity enshrined at the summit, where its

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<sup>111</sup> Ottino (2003) explains that irrigation construction only commenced in the region with the arrival of the Dutch from the early twentieth-century and then really took off from the 1950s.



triennial *pekelem* sacrificial rite encourages fortuitous weather for the farmers downstream.



*Fig 5.16:* A local farmer harvesting traditional rice strains (*padi bali*) in irrigated fields in Sangketan. She holds the *anggapan* tool used for cutting those stalks by hand, as opposed to the sickle used for modern rice stalks.

Earlier I noted how I found no other evidence of similar rites on Bali that focus on blessing the rice at distinct sites as is performed at Pura Batukau. In other parts, the universal goddess of rice, Dewi Sri, is associated with generating growth in the *padi*. The villagers planting rice in fields around Pura Batukau also pray to Dewi Sri, who is equally revered as the goddess of rice there and of fertility in other domains. Yet the rites that secure growth in the rice, or perhaps more precisely the fecundity of the fields, are directed to deities enshrined within the Pura Batukau complex. I came to understand this is because it represents the core divine power influencing fertility in the earth for those residing on proximal lands. To help illustrate my view, Kees Buijs offers the following description for the Austronesian-speaking Toraja of Mamasa on Sulawesi:

The rice deity Totiboyang is thought to reside on a mountain, in an area associated with the upper course of the river, where the fertility-bringing water emerges from the wilderness. Totiboyang is not a deity in heaven. The expression *tiboyong* indicates a certain area and *totiboyong* is the one who has

control over that area. In the case of rice, *tiboyong* means the whole area where the rice grows, including the forest and the mountains providing the rice fields with the necessary water. (2006: 112)

In this example, the rice deity's power is delimited to an area fed water by an upper source, from where fertility is drawn into the downstream fields.<sup>112</sup> The same principle applies to rice growing rituals around Wongaya, where individual fields are encompassed by headwater temples (*ulun swi*) and finally by Pura Batukau itself, as the dominant deity influencing fertility in proximal domains (see Chapters 7 to 8 especially).

Amongst the highland Karo Batak groups of Sumatra, rain-fed dry rice is still the dominant crop, as it was previously around Mount Batukau. The rice deity is once again not conceived of as a transcendental goddess, but a subset of the deity associated with the landscape. Beatriz Van der Goes explains the landscape there is conceived of as a body, which belongs to the encompassing earth deity named Beraspati Tanah. Significant places within the landscape are attributed the title Beru Dayang,<sup>113</sup> such that “the relationship between the *beraspati* and the *beru dayang* is conceptualized as one between a whole and its parts” (1997: 382). Moreover, the rice deity Beru Dayang is thought to normally reside upon the highest nearby mountain, Mount Sibuatén. When commencing dry rice production, a betel leaf lodged in a stick is placed in the ground and oriented toward Mount Sibuatén, inviting the rice deity to inhabit the field and cause growth in the seeds planted around it. In short, the rice deity in this context is part of the broader category of the divine energies of the earth that are called upon in farming.

It makes sense, then, that the Batukau temple complex continues to play a central role in rice production in the nearby villages. Given the deep habitation of the highland population in the region, and their past practice of cultivating dry rice in rain-fed

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<sup>112</sup> This parallels Lansing's findings regarding the relationality of water temple networks on Bali (1991; 2006), which I discuss in Chapter 10. However, this concept is not limited to water temple networks. Around Mount Batukau, the idea of hierarchical encompassment by regional temples precedes the development of irrigation.

<sup>113</sup> Van der Goes notes herself that this terminology is likely related to the Javanese term *dhanyang* for divine beings inhabiting the landscape, which seems more than probable to me, and connects this idea to the Balinese concept of *hyang* (see Chapter 3).

gardens, the *jajar-kemiri* temples would have been the conduit through which fertility flowed to proximal lands. Blessings from the Batukau temple deity at various stages of the rice-production cycle suggest it was the source of fertility for those agricultural pursuits before the notion of a universal rice goddess Dewi Sri became entrenched across Bali. As outlined above, both downstream site and summit temple share the divine identity of Sang Hyang Tumuwuh, which indexes the powers to enhance growth in all living things (*tumuwuh*). In sum, the synergy between Pura Batukau and Pucak Kedaton, who appear in many instances as one and the same divinity, translates into the core Batukau temple being the conduit through which regional powers of fortuitous weather and fertility are transmitted into local fields.

While headwater temples (*ulun swi*) featuring in Stephen Lansing's (1991) study similarly channel water (and by extension fertility) to downstream fields, Pura Batukau is not a water temple in the same way. The temple was not built next to a river because of irrigation needs occurring downstream, as is the case with most *ulun swi* temples. This interpretation, moreover, would efface the original relationship of mountain to downstream *jajar-kemiri* temple working in synergy to provide fertility to surrounding lands. Rather, Pura Batukau is symbolically affiliated with Tabanan's ultimate source of water, Lake Tamblingan, and the source of rain that replenishes the lake and gardens, Pucak Kedaton. It is this symbolic association which elevates Pura Batukau to an *ulun swi* temple for the entire regency. Rites undertaken by its congregation guarantee water supply and flow in analogically similar ways to ceremonies undertaken by farmers cooperatives at their upstream irrigation temples. In both cases, the ceremonies are directed toward divine owners of water resources.

#### **Four-Around-One: Periphery to Core Relations**

In earlier chapters I spoke of the way highland villages structure ritual authority around a core leader supported by four priestly groups. In Wongaya Gede, Sangketan, Sarinbuana, Wanagiri, Batungsel and Sanda villages I found this to be the case. In practice, this means the central officiant, chief priest, or village elder will have seated beside them four priests who witness (*nyaksi*) the ceremony's completion (*pemuput*). The

four priestly groups are most often named Kebayan, Pasek, Kesinoman and Penyarikan, although variation in nomenclature exists as one moves around the mountain. Around the highlands, the priestly responsibilities to support a core leader are inherited (*keturunan*) across generations and each has its own separate ancestral line.

Around Mount Batukau this configuration is manifest in a special rite named *tegak gede*. Shortly after a temple ceremony's culmination ritual when the most important offerings are dedicated (*nganteb*), the four priestly groups along with the ceremony's principal officiant, the village administrator (*bendesa adat*), and gamelan leader (*mekel gong*) sit on the ground before offerings and a meal placed in front of them. Thereafter, elder women chant (*mekidung*) a specially formulated hymn that changes direction nine times to align with the cardinal directions. Then the officiating temple priest announces that the preceding stages of the temple ceremony have been successfully completed, beginning from the early morning or previous days until the culmination ritual just passed. He also outlines the stages yet to be performed. This "witnessing" (*nyaksi*) by the four priestly groups of the announcement of proper ritual procedures authenticates the ceremony. Although only speculation, I suspect this process has its origins in ensuring that ancestral tradition is followed according to the original pact secured between community and the respective divinity.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> One senior priest informed me that its purpose is to announce that each ritual phase has been completed to the Kebayan representatives included in each group, who are conceived as the oldest inhabitants of the land.

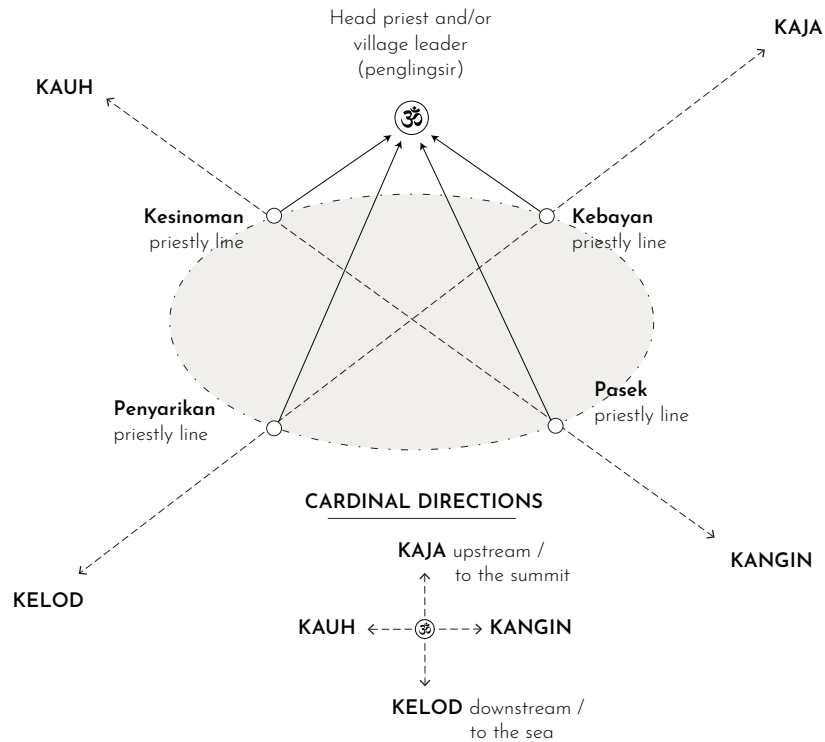


Fig 5.17: The cosmological principle of four outer entities supporting a core power. The head priest/village leader communicates directly with the gods on behalf of the entire community. The others support this role.

This model of four-around-one is common to a cosmological structure of four pillars supporting a centre that pervaded ancient Bali and Java (Ossenbruggen 1977). The most outstanding example of this system around Mount Batukau is how Pura Batukau is identified as mother deity to the gods of the Catur Angga temples. As above, each of these temples bears different responsibilities in the cosmic governance associated with the Batukau network, the mother temple deity acting as Prime Minister aided by four divine ministers (*pepatih*). Significantly, this model appears to be a longstanding cultural feature of Indonesia, found also in “the ancient Javanese concept of *manca-pat*, literally “the outer four”, with One as Supreme Being in the centre and Four in a circle around him at the east, west, south and north. Together they form the Sacred Five” (Rouffaer quoted in. Ossenbruggen 1977: 34). This system is clearly analogous to the relationship of four priests supporting a core leader described above.

In fact, its extent reached further than the Indonesian archipelago. H. L. Shorto describes this transcultural idea as follows:

all along the migratory routes, from South China through the basins of the Irrawaddy and Menam to Indonesia, we find universe and state intermittently conceptualized in terms of a cruciform structure of five points, the ‘five regions’ of China and ‘sacred five’ of Java. So widespread and tenacious a phenomenon is hardly to be attributed to Indian influences, nor indeed would we expect Indian concepts to take root in South East Asia except where existing institutions and ideas favoured their adoption. (1963: 591)

As suggested here, these regional ideas of a “quincuncial pattern of organisation” (Wheatley 1971: 425) emanate from an earlier base of indigenous religious forms, found equivalently in ancient China (Feuchtwang 2014; Wheatley 1971), the mainland (Shorto 1963) and across Bali and Java. Note that in Rouffaer’s comment above, and in Ossenbruggen’s (1977) discussion of the phenomenon, when viewed from outside, the “sacred five” are conceived of as “a single unit”, or a complete circle. The integration of the four-around-one to make the “sacred five”, known in some Batukau villages as *pangliman* (from *lima* meaning five), or in others like Sanda as *kanca-pat* (four friends), should be understood as a whole entity in ceremonial contexts. Indeed, Ossenbruggen informs us that the term “*pat*” in “*manca-pat*” refers to a “fourfold unity”, or “an entity in four parts” (1977: 49). In other words, their integration happens at a higher order, which is replicated in the relations of core to periphery I discuss below.

This model is pervasive across a great range of cultural phenomena. In Chapter 3, we saw how in Wanagiri power is structured around a core temple to which four sacred stones are radially linked, aligned to the cardinal directions. Furthermore, in the Balinese practice of assembling offerings, geometric modelling of four-around-one is pervasive, especially in those dedicated to the chthonic domain, paralleling the cardinal directions and assignment of Hindu-named deities to each node in that intersectional arrangement (Stuart-Fox 1987; Eiseman 1990). This is also evident in the birth order of names given to Balinese children that follows a four-part naming system before repeating the cycle again, e.g., 1) Wayan/Gede, 2) Made, 3) Nyoman then 4) Ketut (C. Geertz 1966; Lansing 1995). Another interesting case includes the crossroads (*pempatan*) found all over the island, typically at the centre of lowland villages and cities. Without exception, each of those intersections will have stationed beside them a shrine at which one dedicates offerings to ensure safe passage and to maintain spiritual balance

at the site (R. Fox 2015). One elder explained to me that the geometry of crossroads alone initiates a concentration of energy (*tenget*) at their centre, due to its formation of a core intersected by four directions (see also Hauser-Schäublin 2004b).

Lastly, perhaps most interestingly, every individual Balinese has born beside them four spiritual siblings (*nyama pat*) who accompany the person through life.<sup>115</sup> As we might expect, each one is aligned with a cardinal direction and the accompanying geometrical arrangement parallels a core tied to four peripheral entities. In this case, the four spiritual siblings are once again spoken of in the register of protection, where most Balinese informed me that if they made offerings to their *nyama pat* and did not forget about them, then those siblings would protect the individual from malevolent forces. Moreover, the *nyama pat* are typically the focus of spiritual work aimed at strengthening a person's power (*kesaktian*) or increasing their defences against witchcraft (Connor 1995). As Richard Fox (2015: 49) intimates in his article on Balinese offerings, the Balinese language contained within it no indigenous concept of a unitary soul—*roh*, *jiwa* and *atma* are all foreign words that Balinese use today to reference the notion of a unitary “soul”. Instead, its indigenous conception revolved around ideas of concentration that we see elsewhere across the Southeast Asian region (R. Fox 2015).<sup>116</sup> This is strikingly evident in the universal practice on Bali of calling back a part of a person's

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<sup>115</sup> Bart Barendregt describes an alike concept of spiritual siblings found on Java and Sumatra: “Similar to the Javanese, the highlands saw themselves as part of a community of spirits. The notion of four spirit siblings and the person as a fifth (human) spirit, which is found in Java, is also common in highland Sumatran cosmogonies and ritual formulae. In highland belief, the human world exists in parallel with four other domains with porous boundaries allowing them to intersect. A parallel is continuously made between the four spirit siblings and the person on the one hand, and the four otherworldly domains on the other. With the human world at the center, all of these worlds are seen as located at a crossroads (*simpang padu empat*)” (2006: 114). Clearly, just like the *hyang* terminology I tracked through western Indonesia in Chapter 3, this four-around-one concept is of wide-ranging significance to the region.

<sup>116</sup> Calling back the soul after its flight from a person is common to Southeast Asia. One example speaks of the “soul essence” (*kbwan*) of indigenous Tai religion: [t]he *kbwan* must be recalled and aggregated to the body in order to make the person whole” (Tambiah 1970: 243). A similar idea of calling the “soul” *pralung* occurs in Khmer religious thought, which are “multiple, independent entities which animate not only humans but also certain objects, plants, and animals” (Thompson 2005: 1). Note that Thompson's descriptions of calling the Khmer *pralung* to then be secured to a person through tying cotton bands around their wrists is extraordinarily similar to the practice of tying cotton wristbands (*benang*) to individuals during Balinese rites of passage and after praying at temple ceremonies. The common idea, expressed also in the footnote below, is that the “soul” is composed of multiple forces that are consolidated into a single entity, as is paralleled with the general four-around-one concept I have been describing in this section.

soul that is left by the roadside after a motorbike accident or other shocking event.<sup>117</sup> Without performing this rite, the person is left disorientated and essentially incomplete.

Together, these examples illustrate how fundamental the cross-cultural concept of four-around-one is to Balinese conceptions of relationality. With respect to Pura Batukau and the Catur Angga, including the broader discussion above, the relationship of core to periphery is hierarchically structured around a superior centre supported by a ring of complementary entities. Within these relational dynamics, the elevation of a core is predicated on its privileged access to divine powers, which characterise the centre more generally in Balinese religious thought. Note how this equally applies to the configurations of ritual authority found around the highlands, where the descendants of founding ancestors mediate between local divinities and their worship communities by occupying an exclusively-elevated core position with respect to the gods. Hence, in geometric terms, the centre is both the navel (*puseh*) of a cosmic structure and elevated to a position of mediation between the divine and periphery in the analogous instances spoken of above.

### **Spiritual Centre of The Realm**

In the previous chapter I discussed the relationship of a single village to the summit and its unique pathway of life (*jalur kehidupan*) unto the sea, whereas here we have a collection of villages worshipping at a family of temples with a higher-order, mother deity at its core. As I have outlined already, this multi-village cult revolves around the divine power of the temple deity and descendant of an ancestral founder. As I have described above, the annual and triennial ritual responsibilities of the Kebayan for enacting generalised prosperity for the realm of Tabanan elevate this figure to holding ritual influence over an even more vast scale than implicated by the Catur Angga temple network. In this role, he is referred to as the king of the mountain (*raja gunung*). Given the term's semantic variability, I defer to Marshall Sahlins's definition as being most

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<sup>117</sup> See Howe's comment for Balinese context: "One aspect or component of a person is the *dasa bayu* ('the ten energies'), and when someone has fallen, had an accident or been badly startled, and is thus confused or 'mixed up' (*pusing*), a small ritual is performed in which a priest instructs each *bayu* to 'go home' (*mulih*), each time stipulating a particular body organ (liver, spleen, heart, etc) which is the 'seat' of that specific *bayu*" (2005: 70).



suiting to the context here: “the king is the condition of the possibility of the people’s welfare by virtue of his privileged access to the divine sources of prosperity and life itself” (2017: 348). The common factor to both the localised and regional territorial cults, it seems, is a privileged cosmic position, determined by origins, which translates into autochthonous control over the powers of fertility for the land.

The exceptional case of the Kebayan appears to have long had the support of the Majapahit-derived kingdom of Tabanan. Despite accounts that attribute divine powers to past instances of kingship in Bali (Wiener 1995; Lansing 2006), the leader of the lowland royal palace, Ida Cokorda of Tabanan, performs a merely supportive role in the execution of important ceremonies held at Pura Batukau by the Kebayan.<sup>118</sup> On an island where historical forces have transformed ritual control into the hands of Brahmanical priests in other contexts (see Chapter 1), it is surprising that the Kebayan group retains authority for rites as regionally significant as those associated with the revitalisation of lake, mountain, and river domains for the entire realm.<sup>119</sup> This deference to the ritual supremacy of the autochthonous group is most strikingly displayed in the positioning of the ancestral houses of the Tabanan and Badung dynasties in the least sacred section of the inner courtyard of Pura Batukau (see also Hauser-Schäublin 1997: 185). The founding ancestral Kebayan shrine is adjacent to those dedicated to the temple deity in the upstream part of that courtyard.

To understand this dynamic, we should consider the power of the temple deity itself. In every highland network I studied around Mount Batukau, one could discern, either overtly or more implicitly, a temple which possessed a special synergy with the mountain god enshrined at Pucak Kedaton. In the case of Pura Batukau this is explicitly the case, memorably identified as a husband-and-wife pair that is fundamental to that

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<sup>118</sup> Guernonprez (1989) argues that there was never a cult of divine kingship on Bali, but rather kings were considered “elders” in relation to their subjects. Yet even kings were subordinate to Brahmanical priests (*pedanda*) who occupied the apex of precolonial social order elsewhere.

<sup>119</sup> C. Geertz (1980) also notes this to be the case for Tabanan. Lansing (2006) argues that after the era of ancient Balinese kings came to an end, so did divine kings’ involvement in agricultural rites of the type described above. Therefore, the later Majapahit-derived kingdoms of the fourteenth-century onwards perhaps ought not to be expected to have ever been more than royal patrons of the autochthonous rulers in the highlands.

family of temples.<sup>120</sup> In the context of my discussion above, this elevates the deity of Pura Batukau into a privileged cosmic position to unite with the more encompassing divine power of the mountain on behalf of the four peripheral temple deities comprising the Catur Angga network. In the context of origins, furthermore, it will be recalled from Chapter 2 that both the Kebayan and deity of Pura Batukau are spoken of in stories as being expelled from the summit temple, tracing their earlier origins to this higher sanctuary and implying precedence for that group over the region. This privileged cosmic position of Pura Batukau in relationship to Pucak Kedaton certainly contributes to its importance to the region for agricultural prosperity.

Yet it may be reasonably asked why Pura Batukau was elevated over other highland temples to the status of state temple of Tabanan, and its local leader, the Kebayan, identified as mountain king instead of other village chiefs of the region. I do not think we can answer this question with any great certainty. For example, Pura Batukau is not exceptional in terms of its synergetic relationship with the summit, as this corresponds to other *jajar-kemiri* temples around Mount Batukau that also embody a relationship of *lingga* to *yoni* (see Chapter 4) with the mountain. Pura Batukau is, however, unmistakably ancient and the Kebayan ancestral lineage of great antiquity—if we accept their precedence in the region then this may have informed the decision made by the lowland kingdoms to support their elevated status. Moreover, its exceptional geographic position lying in the centre of the valley that begins from the horseshoe-shaped southern crater wall opening of the summit, beside the highest tributary river, most certainly carries with it cosmic weight. Perhaps when the lowland kingdom of Tabanan became established in the fourteenth century, the Kebayan chiefdom was paramount in the region, as recounted in stories of a spiritual domain centred on Pura Batukau that encompassed Pupuan in the west and Baturiti in the east, and for this reason the newly established lowland kingdom became patrons of this temple.<sup>121</sup> Over

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<sup>120</sup> For comparison, read Stephen Lansing's (2006) account of Pura Ulun Danu Batur and Pura Besakih in east Bali, which are conceived of as a brother-sister pair.

<sup>121</sup> The lack of written records about their relationship makes it impossible to track whether this is historically the case. Hauser-Schäublin writes that "[t]he temple of Batu Karu is, as people in Wongaye Gede say, the temple of "the king of the mountain." In fact, there seems to have been a mountain kingdom with its center in Wongaye Gede. It cooperated with the royal house of Tabanan, of which shrines for P. Batu Karu in the Pura Puseh of Tabanan *kota* and a shrine of the ruling house of Tabanan in the P. Batu Karu gives testimony" (1997: 130).

time, this identification has instituted a dynastical complementarity between the two families, undoubtedly benefiting the Kebayan line in the process through recognition as autochthonously responsible for the agricultural health of the realm.<sup>122</sup>

Seen from the perspective of descendants of the Majapahit kingdom, acting as sponsors to Pura Batukau and establishing their own dynastical shrines within the complex integrates their foreign identity within the regional landscape. Given that Mount Batukau is the dominant geographic feature of Tabanan and normally considered the spiritual centre of its realm, as opposed to Mount Agung in the island's east, this integration would have been considered imperative for the incoming royal court. In the highlands where the Brahmanical *pedanda* have traditionally been prohibited from finishing rituals, and this autonomy maintained successively over generations, the royal court affiliated themselves as patrons (*penganceng*) to the autochthonous mediators with the mountain living in the highlands. In her own research, Brigitta Hauser-Schäublin finds

Batu Karu is a royal temple ... [a]nd the 'king of the mountains' belongs to the clan of the Kebayan, the strongest kin group of the mountain region. P. Batu Karu is their royal temple; the royal courts of Tabanan and Badung have only limited rights to hospitality in this imposing sacred ground in the middle of the forest. But since this temple is the most important and most powerful mountain sanctuary of West Bali, these rights have high value (which the declaration confirms). (1997: 185-187)

This relationship continues today, with the different royal houses (*puri*) of Tabanan aligning themselves as patrons to the ancient *jajar-kemiri* temples of Mount Batukau.

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<sup>122</sup> One of the senior Kebayan core-line members, who had personally researched his family's history, explained that the original kingdom governed by the Kebayan was spread over a large area until Yeh Leh in the west and Baturiti in the east. He affirmed it was not a "political kingdom" but rather a "spiritual kingdom", the centre of which was Pura Batukau. This man went on to state that the precedence of this kingdom was acknowledged by the incoming Arya Keceng family who established the lowland kingdom of Tabanan in the fourteenth century, who declared the Kebayan kingdom an autonomous area that did not have to follow the rules of the king, including not paying taxes. Furthermore, the Kebayan family would not have to follow standard protocols when visiting the lowland royal palace, given the indigenous group is recognised as their elder sibling in the hierarchy of the realm. This same man explained that he is under no obligation to speak in the higher register when the brother of the king visits him, because his core-line retains superiority due to their elder status and ritual supremacy over the region. It should be noted that I did not corroborate this information with the Kebayan leader, although Ottino (2003) says very similar things about the hierarchical superiority of the Kebayan over the lowland palace. Stories of a spiritual kingdom in the original time, were also commonly encountered in my field research.

## Conclusion

Returning to my conceptual discussion, Pura Batukau remains the spiritual centre of agriculture for both the regional population supporting the Catur Angga network and the royal house of Tabanan supplying the lowland king. As detailed above, agricultural rites undertaken for the prosperity of the realm are initiated at Pura Batukau, identifying it as its paramount ritual centre.<sup>123</sup> In its core position it embodies the four-around-one relationship pervading indigenous thought, as documented above. Under these conditions, Pura Batukau represents a *mandala* which, according to Indo-Tibetan tradition “is composed of two elements – a core (*manda*) and a container or enclosing element (*-la*)” (Tambiah 1976: 102). The container, in this instance, are the dependent temples comprising the four support bodies (*catur angga*) of the temple network, which orbit the mother temple as satellites orbit planetary bodies. Stanley Tambiah (1976) describes this kind of concept as a “galactic polity”, which he used to interpret the configurations of powers of Southeast Asian kingdoms that concentrated power in capitals and were identified as exemplary centres. In terms of a “polity”, however, this concept appears less relevant to the Mount Batukau context.

Rather than Tabanan’s capital being identified as an exemplary centre for agricultural ritual in the regency, this has remained centred on Pura Batukau. Tambiah describes the “seasonal cosmic rites” that were “first performed at the capital by the king or his delegate, to be followed in time by the provincial rulers, and they by their lesser district heads, and so on – a scheme of activation from the centre to the periphery in successive waves” (1976: 112). Yet these descriptions apply much better to the rites undertaken at Pura Batukau in the highlands than the lowland capital, as we will see in greater illustration in the following three chapters. Nevertheless, Tambiah noted how those “galactic polities” were just one possible cultural manifestation that may generate from

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<sup>123</sup> Note how Clifford Geertz describes the *mapag toya* rite (what he calls “Water-Opening”) in *Negara*: “The initiation of the whole cycle began with an all-Tabanan Water-Opening ritual at the most important “all-Bali” temple in the region, far up the forested sides of the sacred mountain which dominates the Tabanan area both physically and spiritually: Batu Kau”. This ceremony “was conducted in order to secure sufficient and “effective” water for all the terraces in the realm during the coming season” (1980: 81).

the more basic, indigenous concept of *mandala* (2013: 508). For example, he identified several other, often simpler forms of core to periphery across Southeast Asia that included the “elementary geometric designs” (Tambiah 2013: 504) found across ancient Java I reference above, including the four-around-one concept and its expansion to nine cardinal points. This spatial configuration is paramount around Mount Batukau and the wider region because the centre is a spiritual position defined by its proximity to divinity, in comparison with its subordinate periphery. The divinity in question, of course, are those forces inherent to the mountain that constitute the ultimate centre around which the ancient temples orbit in their ring-like formation, comprising the *jajar-kemiri*. In the context of the Catur Angga temple network and royal palaces who support it, then, the broader forces of the earth are channelled through Pura Batukau, including most importantly the mountain, lake and flow and supply of water down rivers.

This same idea of a privileged cosmic position defining the core equally applies to the other regional networks of the *jajar-kemiri*. They are equivalent in their direct, unmediated access to the mountain’s forces enshrined at the summit, which are transmitted downstream via the duality of a central temple and core leader bearing inherited obligations, supported in each instance by four priestly groups. Despite most communities claiming a more authentic relationship to the summit temple than the others I visited, in practical terms none of the Batukau communities I documented in my previous chapter have any greater influence over its divinity. In actuality, the divinity of the mountain participates in the revitalisation ceremonies of each community separately, granting them generalised blessings for the intervening period until the next major ceremony must be performed. As I argued in my previous chapter, centre-oriented cosmologies are the dominant feature of these networks, where ritual authority is structured around a core leader or shrine, or indeed the duality encompassing both, through which access to the divine is obtained.

By the same logic, the Batukau communities’ universal reverence for the mountain deity enshrined at Pucak Kedaton stipulates that if there were a priest or leader who mediated access exclusively for all those *jajar-kemiri* communities with the mountain god, then by

implication all would be hierarchically subordinate to this figure (see Chapter 2). Yet, today at least, that is not the case. Certainly, the king of Tabanan does not perform this role, whose members of the royal houses of Tabanan are forbidden from ascending the mountain and depend upon the highland communities to secure flow of the divine powers of the mountain to all downstream. Likewise, the *pedanda* have no place on the mountain summit given its perception as the ultimate source of origin for the autochthonous populations. As Ottino (2000) found, the prohibition on the completion of rituals by *pedanda* around Mount Batukau most likely applies singularly to Pucak Kedaton, which by extension then encompasses the entire highland landscape due to the interconnected networks covering its slopes.

In preparation for the next chapter, I wish to discuss this final point with respect to the remarkable confluence of traditions that are demanded by the revitalisation ceremony named Pengurip Gumi held at Pura Batukau once every 25 years or so. To my surprise, given Wongaya village's position as one of the strongholds of Batukau identity and tradition, for this ceremony *pedanda* are invited to perform ceremonies throughout the event. At first, I assumed this had eventuated due to Pura Batukau's longstanding integration with the lowland kingdom and wider world of Bali as one of the island's six directional temples (*sad kahyangan*). However, priests at the temple informed me in a matter-of-fact way that the *pedanda*'s inclusion is automatic because of the type of offerings included in the ceremony and has nothing to do with a relinquishment of local control. Rather, the complexity of the offerings dedicated at various stages of the ritual demands handling by the *pedanda* husband and wife, who are masters of the intricate *mantra*, *mudra* and other associated paraphernalia required for success in these ceremonial endeavours. As such, they are invited as guests to work (*ngayah*) at the temple.

Now, it appears undeniable that the *pedanda*'s inclusion in the major revitalisation ceremony, alongside local and regional levels of government, is a sign that highland culture is adapting as ever to the changing influences on the island. This may be viewed in the context of the increasing complexity of offerings (*banten*) that has gripped Bali over the last few decades, and presumably longer still, which was a complaint made by

highland villagers to me. For example, I could see the differences in the complexity of offerings prepared by the people of Sangketan and Wongaya in comparison to the more isolated villages of Sanda and Batungsel, the latter of which only ever uses the simplest of meat and plant ingredients, usually assembled into five different elements and placed for dedication at the base of their *bebaturan* shrines. In short, greater complexity in ritual and offerings has led to even greater dependence of the villages on the *pedanda's* expertise. This has surely contributed to the inclusion of *pedanda* into the traditionally autochthonous-controlled ceremony held at Pura Batukau. From my perspective, at least, it gave me a chance to consider how their participation was navigated by the local priests.

Fascinatingly, I discovered that despite *pedanda*-run rituals around Bali being normally completed (*pemuput karya*) by the Brahmanical priest's generation of special *tirta* for this task, this was not the case at Pura Batukau. While they are invited to execute many of the standardised ritual elements of a ceremony run over six months at the temple, in the final stages of an important rite, a priestly member of the Kebayan family would be sent to the inner courtyard to request *tirta pemuput* directly from the temple god. This simple intervention ensured that the deity itself was completing the rituals through the vehicle of its essence imbued into holy water (*tirta*), and ultimate control remained local at each stage of the Pengurip Gumi. As will be explored in the following two chapters, those *pedanda*-run ceremonies taking place during the Pengurip Gumi are distinct from the ones also running during the event that I have described above, including the *pekelem* rites at the lake, mountain summit and river as well as the *mapag toya* and *angin* rituals, all of which must remain firmly under Kebayan authority. From what I have described above, furthermore, it appears to reflect the general theme underpinning the aforementioned observations: that despite the great transformations which have taken place in the religious domain over the centuries on Bali, around the highlands, control over the powers of the earth has remained largely in the hands of the autochthonous leaders, whose communities continue to worship at their age-old temples in search of the fertility that will guarantee their prosperity into the next generation.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Pengurip Gumi: Part I

#### Announcement, Initiation and Ingredients

*To be involved with others is, in indigenous theory, to cooperate with them in the promotion of life; and where there is no such obligation, there is no involvement. It is no exaggeration to say that social organization in this society is ritual organization.*

Elizabeth G. Traube, *Cosmology and Social Life*

#### Introduction

“To give life to the world.” Few ceremonies announce goals so grand. Nor do they operate on such an immense scale. Yet the Pengurip Gumi ceremony run at Pura Batukau comes around only once in a generation.<sup>124</sup> Last held in 1993, it cannot be scheduled or initiated by human will. Rather, the god of Tabanan’s paramount temple reveals to the community its wishes to revitalise the earth and balance the elemental constitution of the world. This decision is normally triggered by natural disasters occurring across the region that create disorder, threatening the flows of life from lakes, rivers, springs, forest, mountain and sea to Tabanan’s agrarian communities. Thus initiates a majestic project of ritual renewal aiming to secure regional prosperity for another generation, jointly undertaken by highland communities of the Pura Batukau temple network.

The Pengurip Gumi allies thousands of local people living around Mount Batukau under a common purpose. Primarily, it brings together the deities of five temples of a familial network known as the Catur Angga who assemble around and support the core power of Pura Batukau (see Chapter 5). A four-day procession (*melasti*) in January unites an expansive group of worship communities to carry their gods from mountain to sea, which is accompanied by tens of thousands of people. The royal palaces of central Tabanan must witness all important ritual stages, the local and regional government observe each event, and high priests (*sulinggih*) from all over the island administer highly complex procedures involving elaborate offerings. Encompassing them all stands

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<sup>124</sup> *Pengurip* means “to give life/animate” and *gumi* means “the earth/world”.



the Kebayan, the spiritual leader of Wongaya Gede, high priest of Pura Batukau, head of his extended family clan and prime descendant of the founding ancestors who established an accord with the divinised forces of the mountain.

I have organised the following description into successive phases that bear the name of their most dominant characteristic. I hope this helps the reader navigate my exposition of an immense project that was the intense focus of tens of villages and thousands of highland people for months on end. Those Balinese I spent days and nights on end with worked tirelessly together, showing remarkable spirit and generosity toward one another. Engaging in communal activity that blends their diverse talents and typically gendered skills, I watched them become enveloped into a collective to support their temple network to once more ritually vitalise the universe of Mount Batukau. In its simplest terms, the ceremony held at Pura Batukau sets out to ensure the energies of the landscape continue supporting life for the region's population for another generation to come.

I am presenting this ceremony as the centrepiece of my dissertation for several reasons. I hope the following three chapters serve as a chronicle for future scholars, particularly local Balinese, who may wish to draw comparisons with other ceremonial activities held on the island. The Pengurip Gumi combines unique ritual practices of the highlands with Brahmanical Hindu traditions, distinguished by ceremonial responsibilities held by the Kebayan local priests and *pedanda* respectively. It also provides a rare opportunity to witness the coming together of communities spread over a highland region who are by no means culturally identical, yet all submit and contribute to the ritual obligations of the Pengurip Gumi. It must be reemphasised that the temple network incorporating Pura Batukau, Pucak Kedaton and the Catur Angga temples are conceived of as one inseparable unit, a dispersed yet integrated body (see Chapter 5).<sup>125</sup> I will leave it to Part IV to provide an extended analysis on the themes of autochthony, resource revitalisation and divine relationality that are central to the ongoing description of events.

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<sup>125</sup> Thomas Reuter has documented the ritual networks of the Bali Aga living in the central-eastern highlands. I explore some of the similarities and differences to Mount Batukau in both Chapters 2 and 9.

Part I includes sections I have entitled Announcement, Initiation and Ingredients. These sections cover the official commencement of the programme, the introduction of figures who are key to ceremonial administration, and the gradual incorporation of different constitutive elements to the temple, including *tirta* (holy water) sourced from regional centres and other essential ingredients. Together, these different phases set the stage for Part II. Its consecutive sections are entitled Reunification, Procession, Sacrifice and the Peak. They involve the assembly of the Batukau temple network deities for a journey by foot to sea and back, whereafter the two climactic days of sacrifice and the main event of the Pengurip Gumi are undergone synchronously across the Pura Batukau and Catur Angga temples. The main event is locally described as “the peak”, and one can envisage all preceding efforts as leading toward its culmination, after which time a slow descent or unwinding begins. Finally, in Part III, I separate events under the titles of Commemoration, Exchanges and Closing. Those sections cover the commemorative dances of the Sanghyang, communal offerings made in exchange for divinised fertility in local fields and gardens, the last procession encompassing the figurative garden of Pura Batukau, and the final departure of gods and of ritual elements that are brought home to the family compounds and farms of the worship communities.

At different parts of the text, one finds sections entitled Kertih. The term *kertih* roughly translates as “natural resource” and is linked to the concept of *sad kertih*, or “six natural resources” that must be ritually renewed periodically for life to prosper. The contents of *sad kertih* vary across texts but generally include: *gunung* (mountain); *danu* (lake); *segara* (sea); *wana* (forest); and *tukad* (river). A sixth *kertih* is not explicitly referenced in the Pengurip Gumi. For the Pengurip Gumi, these *kertih* ceremonies expand on an original set of three *pekelem* sacrificial rites run triennially by the Kebayan and Pura Batukau congregation at Lake Tamblingan, Mount Batukau and the river Yeh Mawa locations (see Chapter 5). Those *pekelem* rites are administered by the Kebayan during the Pengurip Gumi, whereas the sea and forest *kertih* sacrificial rituals are run by *pedanda*. To my mind, the *kertih* ceremonies are at the heart of what the Pengurip Gumi aims to achieve: the revitalisation of the earth including its distinct resource domains that are conceptualised as sources of life relevant to the entire realm of Tabanan.

A brief word on style. I wanted to keep the description of events as focused as possible for easy reference by future readers. At different moments I interject with an 'Aside' that is intended to complement the running commentary by providing information of relevance to the Balinese more generally. Given the length of the combined parts of the Pengurip Gumi's exposition, I hope these 'Asides' also offer some relief from reading the long text sequentially. In between each of the three substantive Parts I write a short interlude, meant as a quick summary of the events described thus far. My frequent use of diagrams is intended to aid the reader in conceptualising the different relations at play during specific events. This kind of visualisation helped me while in the field come to terms with the complex network of temples, in addition to the recurrence of geometric themes found in offerings, priestly relations and the ever-present idea of cardinal directions anchored to the mountain. Finally, I have included an abundance of photos because these more fully capture important moments than words can alone. I rely on my own images and those of a few Balinese friends whose permission I have to include their photos in my thesis, credited at each instance. If a photo is not credited, then it was taken by me. In the end, this layout resembles the flow of my field notes, on which I spent hours most days elaborating jottings written on the spot into long accounts of the day's events, interspersed with photos, commentaries, explanations, and reflections for future reference.



*Fig. 6.1:* The Kebayan (Jero Gede Kebayan Lingsir) and Pura Batukau's principal shrine (*candi agung*) dedicated to the temple deity. To our left stands an altar to worship the apical ancestor of the Kebayan core-line, marking an important distinction between ancestral powers and the temple's principal god.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

November 12: Matur Piuning, Ngaku Agem

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After months of anticipating this moment, I join the villagers who have been assembling in Pura Batukau since shortly after dawn. The date is 12 November 2019 and today's ceremony is called *matur piuning, ngaku agem*. The terms *matur* (to offer) and *piuning* (knowledge) summarise the ritual's intentions: an announcement to the deity of the months-long work (*karya*) to be undertaken in the temple. This declaration from the temple priests (*pemangku*) is normally a part of every human and divine exchange, an action known as *mepekeling*, where the priest introduces themselves and advises of the ritual about to begin. *Ngaku agem* refers to focusing oneself with great seriousness, marking the shared commitment undertaken by the congregation as one of devotion and respect.

At the scale of the Pengurip Gumi, this requires gathering all major participants to unite in communal prayer to signify the work's initiation. A member from every family comprising the eight subvillages of Wongaya Gede (see Figure 6.8 below) who form part of the caretaking community (*pengempon*) of Pura Batukau must attend. The second in command of Tabanan's regional government is summoned, acting as the representative (*wakil*) of the regency's political leader (*bupati*). He is the leading public official for the Pengurip Gumi, taking on a role held in the past by the precolonial kings of Bali. The Ida Cokorda of Puri Agung Tabanan, head of the royal palace that provides the largely ceremonial king for the region, must also witness every major event. The entanglement of the Kebayan and Puri Agung dynasties runs deep as it has for generations (Ottino 2003), despite the waning significance of kings in Bali. Besides them stands the highest ranking official (*sedahan agung*) for farmer's cooperatives (*subak*) in Tabanan as well as his wife, the political leader (*camat*) of Penebel district. Together these representatives of four distinct social spheres (*kecamatan* – the district, *kecamatan* – the regency, *puri* – the palaces, *subak* – the farmers cooperatives) will witness most major events, participating in aspects that call for their handling of sacred objects. Those groups will later be joined by Brahmanical priests (*pedanda*) invited to

work in the temple, including one assigned with being the ceremonial leader (*yajamana karya*) of the Pengurip Gumi. The ultimate spiritual authority for the region, however, is the Kebayan, second only to the temple deities. These are the major players taking part in the Pengurip Gumi, who are supported by the temple staff (*panitia*), village leaders (*bendesa adat*), temple priests (*pemangku*) and their wives (*serati*) in addition to countless villagers from the surrounding communities.

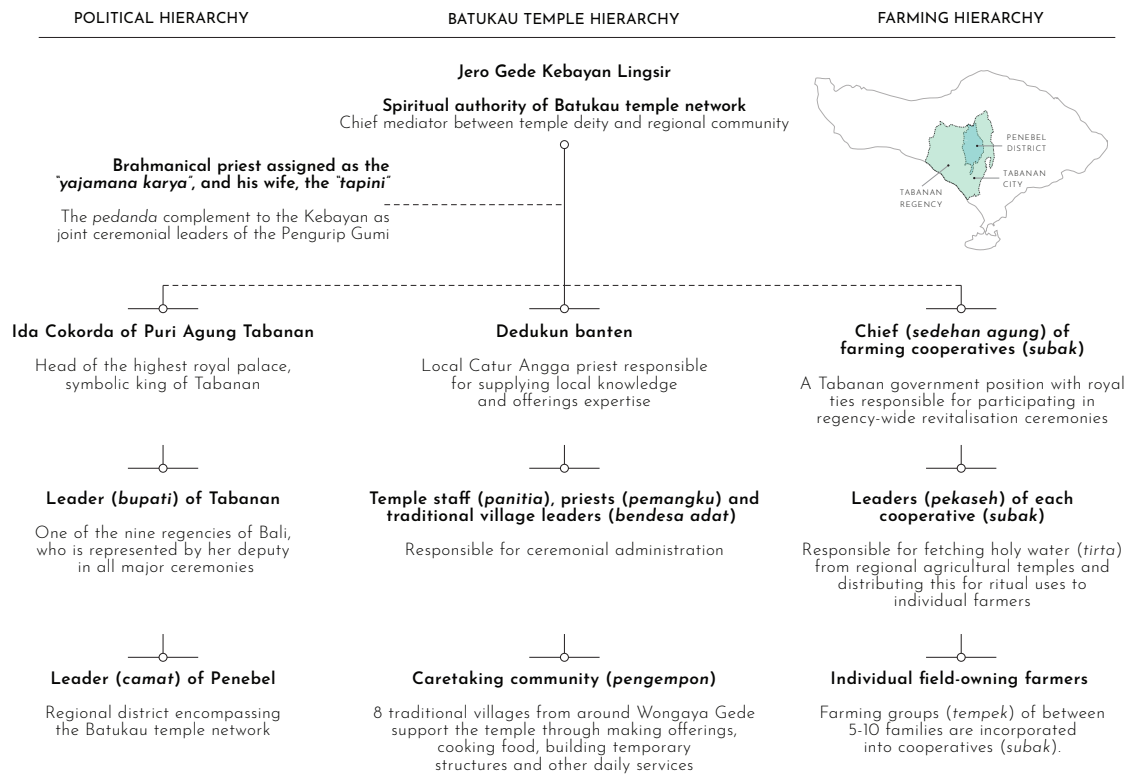


Fig. 6.2: Social spheres of Tabanan activated for the Pengurip Gumi. The farming area falling under the Catur Angga and ultimately Pura Batukau's authority includes 4,481 farming households and covers over 2,400 hectares (Salamanca et al. 2015).

Today's ceremony coincides with the fifth full moon (*purnama kelima*) and the *mapag toya* (summon the water) ritual that is administered annually by the Kebayan in Pura Batukau (see Chapter 5). After this annual ceremony is complete, the community gathers to conduct the initial rite *matur piuning* in the inner courtyard (*jeroan*) of the temple. The Kebayan administers this event, appealing directly to the deity while sitting in front of the principal shrine (*candi agung*). Surrounding him are members of government, the palaces, the Kebayan family of priests, and below them are assembled all the temple priests (*pemangku*) who will regularly assist during the Pengurip Gumi.

Behind them in an elevated pavilion reserved for the highest status visitors sits the Cokorda of Tabanan (a term equivalent to “king” in this context). After the Kebayan finishes, another priest initiates a series of rituals (*prayascita biakaonan*) involving the purification of subjects about to undergo a ritual process. This is achieved through *tirta* and other organic elements arranged on the ground. Those elements are wafted toward the congregation who either gesture upwards (*ngayab*) to absorb the cleansing properties or gesture away (*ngatab*) to extract impurities from the body. Shortly after we pray together and the opening ceremony is complete. The final act of today is to perform a smaller version of the same ceremony at Wongaya Gede’s village temples, then each family’s ancestral shrines. As a result, ancestral and village deities, the extended community, officials, and priests are becoming interwoven with the ceremonial activity occurring on the central stage of Pura Batukau.



*Fig. 6.3: Left: The Kebayan leads the *matur piuning* prayer, flanked on either side by regional politicians.*  
*Fig. 6.4: Right: The Cokorda Tabanan, king of the regency, sits beside his wife in an elevated pavilion to witness the events. Photos credit: I Made Ari Yudiana*



Fig. 6.5: A senior Kebayan family priest (*pemangku pengubengan*) sits beside the political leader (*camat*) of Penebel district and her husband, the *sedahan agung*, head of Tabanan's farming cooperatives (*subak*).  
Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana



Fig. 6.6: Temple priests (*pemangku*) from Wongaya Gede assemble for the initial prayer in the inner courtyard of Pura Batukau. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana





Fig 6.7: The priest of the *beji* purification shrine runs the *prayascita biakaunan* rite by wafting the cleansing properties of the offerings on the ground toward the temple congregation.  
Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana

Given the extensive preparations required for each major event, the Pengurip Gumi will take close to six months until completion after today's initiation. Yet those days when ritual activity is happening pass by faster than one expects. Despite weeks of preparing offerings and invitations, the climactic moment when the Kebayan exchanges directly with the deity, followed by our purification and then prayer, is completed within a couple of hours. I will find this experience common to the entire chain of rituals comprising the Pengurip Gumi. Women work countless hours, day after day, weaving and assembling offerings, while men cook for the rolling roster of workers, play gamelan, build bamboo structures to hold offerings and slaughter animals to prepare their meat and blood for offerings. The temple work (*ayab*) is constant: the community arrives early morning and leaves mid-afternoon every day from this day forward.

Fig. 6.8: Worship communities (*masyarakat pengempon*) of the Pura Batukau temple network

Pura	Tambawaras	Muncaksari	Batukau	Petali	Besikalung
Desa Dinas	Sangketan	Sangketan	Wongaya Gede	Jatiluwi	Jatiluwi
Desa Adat	Sangketan Bongli Munduk Dawa Munduk Bun Kayu Puring	Puluk-Puluk Puwakan Tingkih Kerep Bengkel Anyar Kayu Puring	Wongaya Gede Batukambing Keloncing Amplas Bengkel Sandan Tengkudak Penganggahan	Jatiluwi	Babahan Utu Bolangan
Pura			Pucak Kedaton		
Desa Adat			Piling		

#### November 15: Nunas Ica Ring Pura-Pura Sad Kahyangan Jagat Bali

Corresponding announcements (*pekeling*) continue over the following days in other temples deemed important for the Pengurip Gumi. The island of Bali is protected by an interconnected network of temples named *sad kahyangan* that guard against malevolent forces of instability, a grouping that includes Pura Batukau. On this day, temple priests are sent to each of those public temples to make similar announcements to the respective tutelary deities and request *tirta*. This holy water functions as a blessing from that god to ensure the Pengurip Gumi will run smoothly. It is a form of *tirta* that is distinct from that which is sought later to “relationally unite” (*ngiket*) regional temples, and from the sacred kind that “completes” (*pemumpu*) each stage of the ritual.

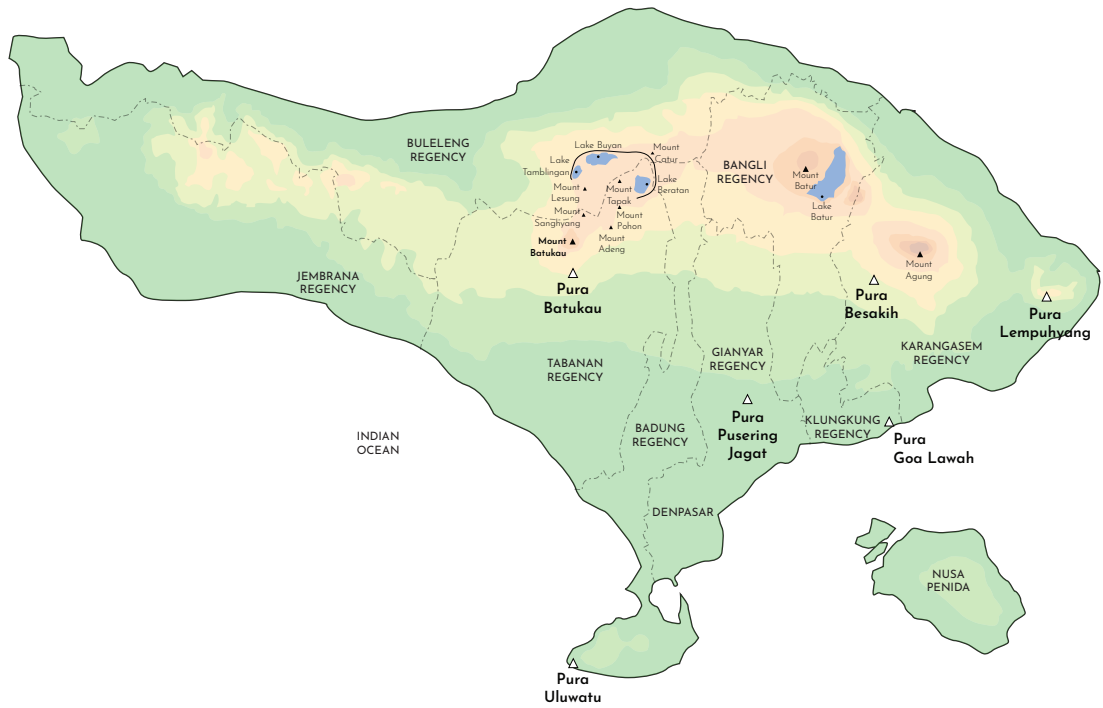


Fig. 6.9: Map showing the physical location of the *sad kahyangan* temples. These are all public, universally significant temples.

DEWATA NAWA SANGA (Cardinal Deities of the Windrose)

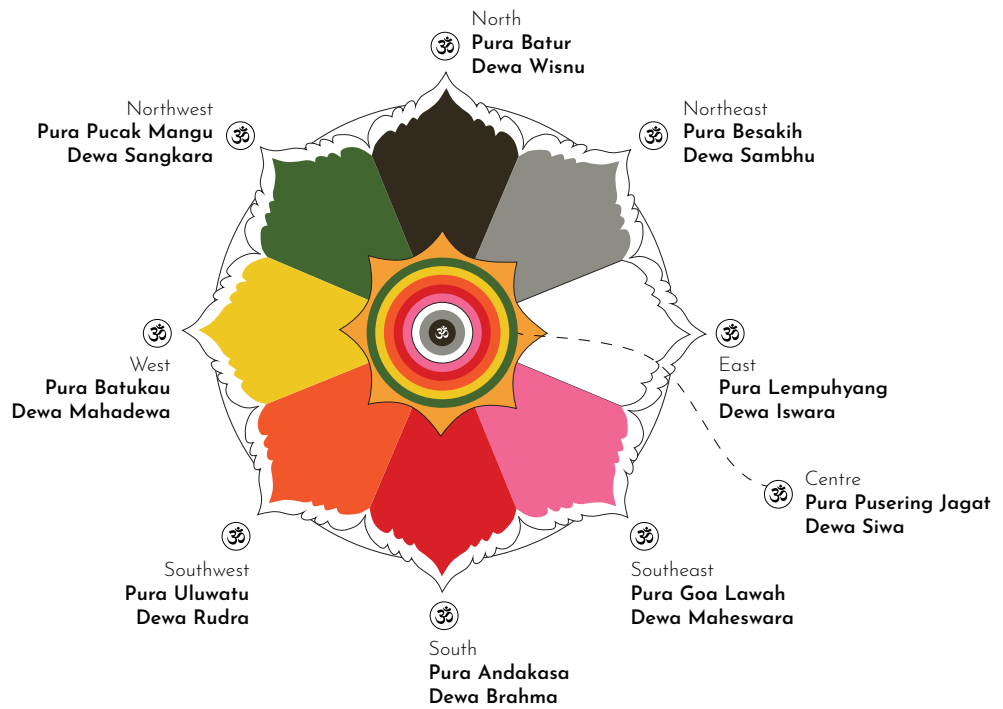


Fig. 6.10: An elaboration of the six *sad kahyangan* temples into nine in total to complete alignment with each cardinal direction of the windrose. This same colour and deity assignment is used in offerings configurations.

The following day, the same *matur piuning* ceremony is performed at each of the temples comprising the localised Batukau *jajar-kemiri* network. These are the temple communities who will come together around the deity of Pura Batukau when it descends toward the sea for the procession in January. They include Pura Pecalang Agung di Tengkidak, Pura Batusalahan, Pura Tanah Lot, Pura Pucak Kedaton and the four child temples of Pura Batukau: Tambawaras, Muncaksari, Pucak Petali and Besikalung (see Figure 6.11 below). Those four child temples known as Catur Angga make up the other principal stages of ritual activity outside of Pura Batukau and cannot be conceived of independently from the mother temple within the context of the Pengurip Gumi (see Chapter 5). Today, as in Pura Batukau, the priests advise the respective deities of each temple listed above of the ceremonial plans and then dedicate relevant offerings.

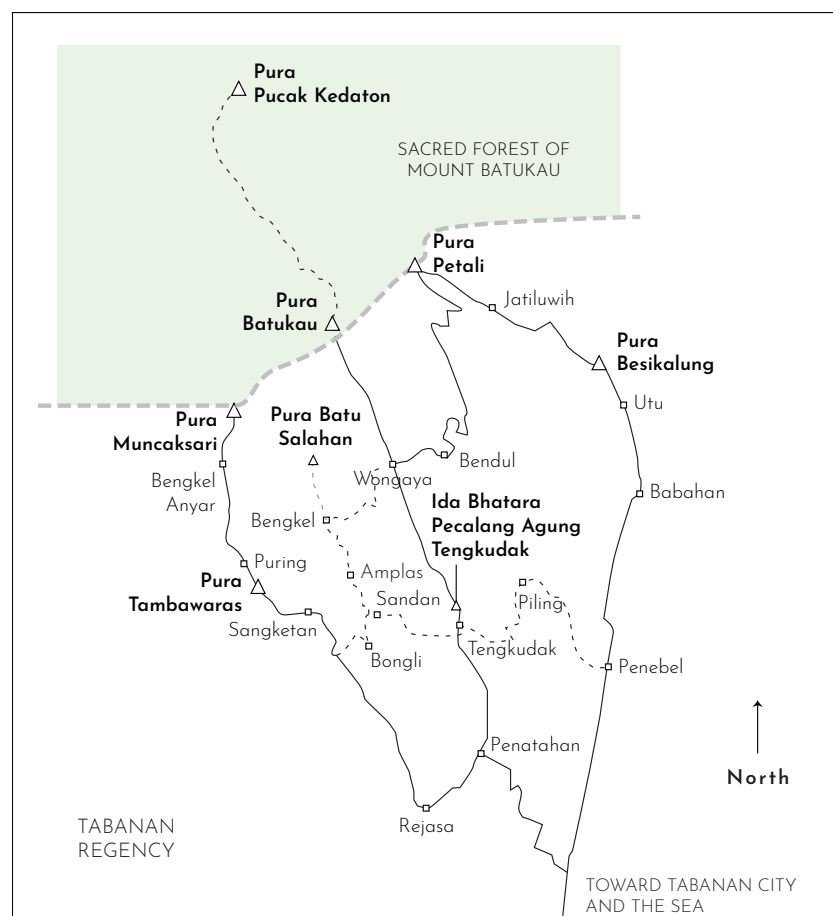


Fig. 6.11: The local Batukau *jajar-kemiri* network, including the Catur Angga.

## INITIATION

November 18: Nuwasen Karya, Nyukat Genah

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We now move into a new ceremonial phase I have labelled **Initiation**. This section introduces the *pedanda* through major rites undertaken to prepare the ground, space and time for subsequent stages. Today a small ceremony is conducted in the inner courtyard of Pura Batukau to mark the beginning of ritual works (*nuwasen karya*). The term *nuwasen* derives from the slicing action of preparing ingredients for offerings. The women offerings specialists are henceforth permitted to begin their production (*ngawit mekarya*). Furthermore, the grounds are delineated (*nyukat genah*) in preparation for the enormous bamboo structures (*sanggar*) that will be built around the temple to hold offerings for major events. As with just about everything in Bali, the process is highly ritualised.

To begin, a five-chicken sacrificial offering (*caru manca sanak*) ensures the land and its beings, popularly referred to as *buta-kala*, are in harmony with the proceedings. Ceremonial processes like these are overdetermined in meaning (R. Fox 2015). The Kebayan's wife describes the chthonic ritual (*mecaru*) to me as an invitation for blessings from beings of the surrounding environment, in particular the tiger-spirit so closely associated with the mountain. Another priest explains sacrificial rites as always dedicated at the most general level to the earth-mother, Ibu Pertiwi, who is consubstantial with all ground, master controller of its chthonic powers. Common beliefs hold that *buta-kala* are "demons" who cause affliction in human life (see Aside: Demons in Chapter 7). Other interlocutors suggested that *buta-kala* refer to the invisible (*niskala*) aspect of the five elements of the earth (*panca maha buta*), the energies comprising everything in the world. Signalling this earthlier connection, after ritual completion the meat and coconuts used in the rite are dug into the ground to return them to the earth-mother, the theme of burial recurring throughout the Pengurip Gumi.



Fig. 6.12: Temple priests dedicate this sacrificial offering (*caru manca sanak*) in preparation for the coming rites that disturb the land during the construction of bamboo towers (*sanggar*). There are five bamboo altars (*sanggah cucuk*) used here, aligned to the four directions plus centre, each associated with a cardinal deity and colour (see Figure 6.10 above). These altars are characterised by sky earth dualism, the upper and lower parts distinguished by offerings for deities associated with the above (*lubur*) and below (*beten*).

In the inner courtyard, the *nurwasen karya* rite is conducted by a Brahmanical *pedanda* from Wana Siri village in Tabanan. This priest has been given the title of *yajamana karya* and functions as the Brahmanical complement to the Kebayan throughout the Pengurip Gumi. After an initial phase of offerings dedication the priest begins *nyukat genab*, which refers to assigning and measuring space in which to erect high bamboo towers used for holding the most sacred offerings. The *pedanda* determines the location in the northeast corner of the inner courtyard, whereafter white powder is sprinkled around a perimeter and upright bamboo poles are dug into each corner to signify the position of the tower. Leaves from the *dapdap* tree are used to purify (*nyapsap*) the ground and different kinds of *tirta* sprinkled inside the space. This same process is repeated in both the middle and outer temple courtyards where other bamboo towers will also be built. With the space ritually initiated, groups of men can begin work on erecting the towers over the coming days.



Fig. 6.13: From left to right, the men in white: leader of the temple staff (*panitia*) for Pengurip Gumi; the *yajamana karya* (Brahmanical complement to Kebayan); brother of the Cokorda Tabanan (the king's representative); and the Kebayan. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana



Fig. 6.14: Preparing the ground before erection of the bamboo towers (*sanggar agung*). The *camat* (district leader, with pink sash) of Penebel and deputy *bupati* (regency leader, with black jacket) of Tabanan assist, representing involvement of different political levels. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana

Before day's end, a special ceremony is held in the Bale Agung of the middle courtyard, led by the head priest of the Pasek Batukau origin group. This ritual called *aci wanara petak* is dedicated to the spirit-owner of forest monkeys. As will occur with other species-masters in a week from now, this transaction appears as a payment to deter monkeys and other beings, under control of their respective gods, from interfering with proceedings. Nevertheless, the most common and plainly stated explanation by informants for these kinds of exchanges is to achieve harmony with nature.



*Fig .6.15:* Women from different local villages take turns contributing to the joint effort of producing offerings (*banten*) inside the temple. Each day women from the eight subvillages of Wongaya Gede are rostered to work (*ngayah*) preparing offerings in makeshift zones of the temple.



A week passes to allow time for women to produce offerings, setting them aside, piles of *banten* (offerings) now accumulating around the temple. Meanwhile, groups of men are busy erecting the bamboo structures. While the largest are tied to major sacrificial rites, plenty are built simply to house the profusion of offerings until their future use. The multitiered bamboo structures, known as either *sanggar* or *bale* depending on its use, are upwards of five metres tall once completed, resembling a scaffolding toward the sky, its upper platforms holding offerings that both house gods and worship them. To distribute responsibility, both women and men are organised into groups by their different caretaking communities and rostered to work on alternative days. In general, the temple is now filled with highland villagers working in its every corner and people from around the island are beginning to appear more regularly to pray and attend single events like these. This contributes to an environment of *rame*, “bustling and interactive”, which is pleasing to the Balinese.



*Fig. 6.16:* Women typically work on offerings in assembly lines. Here, elder offerings specialists work in the area named *genah suci* reserved for assembling the most sacred offerings under the direction of the Brahmanical *tapini*, wife of the *yajamana karya*. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudianta



Fig. 6.17: Each final offering is made of composite parts that are put together by women at different stations. The younger, usually recently married women, learn the basics from elder women until years later they have progressed enough to handle the most complex offerings (see Figure 6.15 above).

#### November 25: Nedunang Pengrajeg Karya Ring Pucak Kedaton

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Today marks the initiation of the summit deity Pucak Kedaton's presence in the temple. The process is called *nedunang pengrajeg karya*, referring to the descent of the ceremonial guardian. The ceremonial guardian (*pengrajeg karya*) oversees the ceremony in an administrative sense, applying to both visible and invisible (*sekala* and *niskala*) dimensions. The head of the temple staff (*panitia*) or a member of the royal palace (*puri*) would normally fill this role in the visible dimension. For the Pengurip Gumi, the mountain deity is picked up from the summit and installed in a bamboo shrine built to house the god in its function as invisible guardian of the ceremony. A group of men left for the summit at dawn from the temple, a journey taking around eight hours roundtrip. Once there, an offering receptacle (*pengadeg daksina*) is placed on the stones along with a cut piece of bamboo (*bunbung*) used for storing *tirta*. The deity is requested to inhabit the offering (*pengadeg*) and impart its essence to the *tirta*, which will be kept beside the deity, akin to a life-source.

Around mid-afternoon the men arrive back to outside the temple grounds. The Kebayan, his wife, several priests and others now wait to greet the deity. An offering to the earth (*segehan agung*) is dedicated where they stand, typically performed each time divinities transition through spatial zones, such as when entering temple grounds. This usually requires the beheading of a duck and its blood spilled over the ground. Around me now, screams of women entering trance are heard as we wait for the god to appear from the jungle. Those unsettling sounds always signal communal anticipation, as one by one, women, and often men, howl as their bodies are incorporated and they rush forward to form an entourage around gods in procession. For the highland villages, trance is ubiquitous, different than other parts of Bali (see Aside: Trance below). As the scene quickly shifts from ordered anticipation into the tamed chaos of trance-filled events I had become accustomed to, two rows of women emerge dancing a *rejang pemendak* (sacred dance of greeting) as the gamelan is pounding from the middle courtyard. Those dancers face the jungle, eyes locked on the deity's vessel (*pengadeg*) as it appears at last, stepping backwards to invite the god inwards. The men holding the divine receptacle and *tirta* above their heads are both entranced, shouldering an extraordinary weight, while others have encircled them to disperse this weight and rush the deity forward.

Entering the inner courtyard, the Kebayan receives the deity and *tirta* from the summit and places them in their specially-constructed *bale*, whereafter offerings would normally be dedicated. However, the Kebayan's wife becomes entranced and initiates a dance (*rejang tabuh enak*) alone. This is usually performed immediately after other ceremonial dances (*rejang*), during which *arak* (palm liquor) and *berem* (rice wine) are poured onto the ground. The intensity of trance embodying the highest status woman of the temple is striking. As always, Balinese address anyone entranced not as a person but as a god, speaking in the highest register and seeking to fulfil any demands it makes. The Kebayan attempts to dissuade the deity, imploring it to withdraw since everything is in order, but she continues by calling forward three men to kneel before her. She dances around these men, blowing air around the tops of their heads, holding the hands of each man until they shake tremendously, gripping her nails into their shoulders before wafting her hands around all their heads, bringing one of the men to tears. After a

display of staggering forcefulness she now calls for the customary village leader (*bendesa adat*) of Wongaya who is not present yet. Presently, we hear distant growling from the other side of the temple, increasing in volume as the man nears, crawling along the ground, coming to stop at her feet, himself entranced by this call. Then he too receives similar treatment as the others. These four individuals it now becomes clear share the role of guardians for the ceremony in the visible dimension (*sekala*), complement to the summit deity functioning as ceremonial guardian of the *niskala* (invisible dimension), initiated into this position by the Kebayan wife's entranced state.



*Fig. 6.18: Left:* The Kebayan's wife dances in front of the men chosen to be ceremonial guardians of the Pengurip Gumi. The man she touches now is leader of the temple staff (*ketua panitia*) for the ceremony. Normally, he works as a professor at a local university. For the Pengurip Gumi, his responsibility is to facilitate the running order of events and make announcements. Photo credit: I Nengah Januartha.

*Fig. 6.19: Right:* Inside the Bale Pengrajeg Karya, the receptacle (*pengadeg*) inhabited by the deity from Pucak Kedaton and cut bamboo (*bungbung*) holding *tirta* from the summit will remain for the duration of the ceremony. Offerings are made each morning and evening to the deity in exchange for its blessings.

November 26: Pengalang Sasih, Ngadegang Pengrastiti, Ngawit Nymuh and  
Nanceb Wewangunan Yadnya

The temple is bustling today for an event called *pengalang sasih*, which is common to

major ceremonies around Bali. The name derives from *galang* meaning “light or brightness”, in the sense of clear skies and the correspondent clarity this brings, whereas *sasih* refers to the “moon” and in this context the lunar cycle as a measure of time. It coincides with *tilem*, the darkest night of a month when a new moon begins. The ceremony initiates an encompassment of sacred time and space around the Pengurip Gumi, and the same *pengalang sasih* event is held synchronously in each of the Catur Angga temples as well.

In pragmatic terms, *pengalang sasih* brings into order a prohibition on all life-cycle rituals, including death, tooth-filing and marriage rites for all the caretaking communities around the temple network. This means those who die during the ceremony will be buried until the Pengurip Gumi is complete, after which time the *ngaben* ceremony of transferring their soul to merge with ancestral deities in the family houseyard will be conducted. Those types of ceremonies now prohibited each require performance on an auspicious day (*derwasa*) determined by a priest reading the alignment of symbolic meanings on a Balinese calendar. As such, rites like the one performed when a baby turns three months old (*telu bulanin*) are permitted because they follow their own schedule. Mortuary and life-cycle rituals will only recommence after the completion of the Pengurip Gumi next year for the caretaking communities.

The *pengalang sasih* ceremony is conducted in the inner courtyard by the rostered *pedanda*. Once he has dedicated the major offerings, a *pedudukan* rite is run where live animals and various offerings are carried by men and women around the temple grounds, touching the elements on all shrines as they pass. This is a general feature of *pedanda*-administered ritual rarely seen in the highlands’ temple ceremonies. After its completion, the community may begin erecting the different bamboo towers (*sanggar*) in the inner and middle courtyards. Meanwhile, an open space called *genah suci* has been cordoned off for the elder women to assemble the most sacred offerings. This will be their daily workplace from now. Four small shrines are erected at the outer corners of this space where offerings are made each morning and afternoon to protective spirits called *pengraksa karya*. Before the day ends, offerings are also dedicated to the species-masters of dogs, birds, ants and termites, each given food offerings (*laba*) as payment for

their respectful noninterference in the proceedings. A special shrine dedicated to *wong samar*, invisible people of the forest, is established in the car park where offerings are dedicated every morning for the same purpose. Together these rituals have established space and time as sacred from this point forward for the temple and its wider community—potentially disruptive forces have been controlled, mortuary and life-cycle rites now prohibited and further works may begin on the grounds.



*Fig. 6.20: Left: A traditional altar known as turus lumbung. Offerings are made each day to the deified controller of wong samar, invisible beings who inhabit the forest.*

*Fig. 6.21: Right: One of the sanggah pengraksa karya stationed at the four corners of the space (genah suci) where women assemble the most sacred offerings. Daily offerings are placed both above and below.*

To complement this preparatory work, a special *tirta* named *pamarisuda* is requested from the Pura Dalem Kahyangan shrine of Pura Batukau. This holy water has the function of removing impurities from people and the surrounding environment. It is always consumed after participation in death rituals that risk contamination to non-related village members. Given it is the day of a new moon, it is customary for every Balinese village to congregate in the evening at their respective Dalem temple. As such, the *tirta pamarisuda* is picked up from Pura Batukau by each village's leader and

distributed to all subdistricts of the caretaking communities of Wongaya Gede, Sangketan and Jatiluwih villages. Sprinkling this special holy water on each family gathered in their respective Dalem temples acts to transition the communities together into this newly carved spacetime of combined attention on the Pengurip Gumi, dissociated from ordinary village ceremonial affairs.

TIRTA PAMARISUDA - Tirta sourced from the core sanctuary travels outwards to peripheral villages and residents

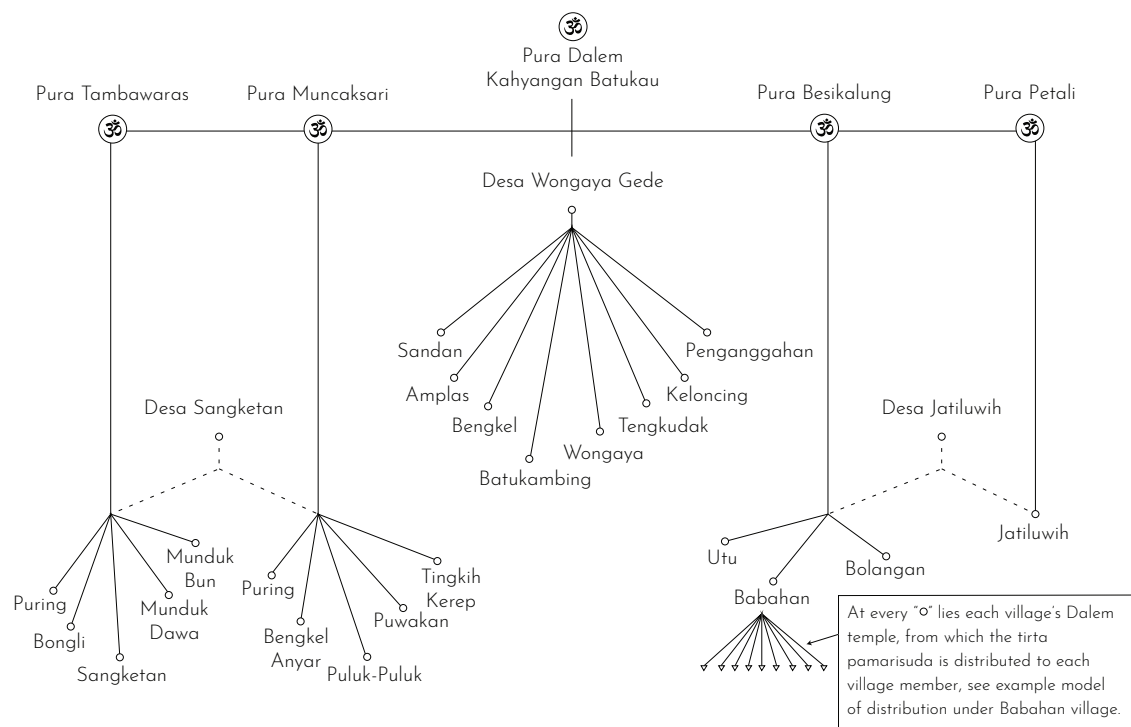


Fig. 6.22: Just one of the many passages of *tirta* from the core temple, Pura Batukau, to subordinate temples and caretaking communities.

Over recent days, as I travel between Sangketan and Wongaya Gede, I am struck by how my home village is also becoming consumed with the Pengurip Gumi. Every day, temple duties are rostered in both Tambawaras and Muncaksari temples in preparation of the ceremonies that will take place in those Catur Angga temples. My friend Pak Putu brought forward the wedding of his son to commemorate the event a couple of days before the *pengalang sasih* ceremonies, else they would have to wait until after April of next year. We celebrate the wedding together in a final village meeting characteristic of the rites of passage that punctuate the cyclical programme of temple ceremonies and farming in the uplands. Still, conversation often returns to focus on the upcoming village-wide events of the Pengurip Gumi now on the horizon, none more so than the

march of local deities to Pura Batukau in preparation for the communal procession (*melasti*) to sea scheduled for late January.



Fig. 6.23: Men work in assembly lines when producing chthonic offerings and composite parts of bamboo altars, learning to be proficient craftsmen from a young age. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana



Fig 6.24: Men at work sculpting bamboo into scaffolding for the offering towers (*sanggar agung*). Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana



A few weeks later comes another moment of consolidation for relations between temples in the region. In the preceding days, many of the temporary bamboo structures have been completed. Of those, one named Bale Penegtegan standing beside the temple's rice barn is particularly important. It will house configurations of *tirta* and blessed rice for use in major ceremonial procedures. All the holy water gathered from around the region today will be stored there, along with other variations of *tirta* in the future, this structure functioning like a pantry for the temple priest's ritual art. For today's event, temple priests have been sent to regional temples to request *tirta pemuket* from the respective deities and other gifts (*urup-urup*) such as ingredients for offerings to contribute toward the Pengurip Gumi. This kind of *tirta* collection involves also gathering a handful of earth from around the source of holy water used in that temple, which is wrapped in leaves (*don dapdap*) and then mixed together for use in the upcoming *ngingsah lan nyanggling* ritual. The term *muket* refers to the essence of the soil donated from each different site, establishing once more an earthly connection underlying the relationality of temples.<sup>126</sup> Every major ceremony from this point forward will draw on the *tirta* stored in the Bale Penegtegan so that each ritual combines the force of those regional deities. After *tirta* from the temples listed in Figure 6.25 below has been accumulated in individually-named cut bamboo containers (*bungbung*) in the Bale Penegtegan, the Pengurip Gumi can transition into its next phase.

Fig. 6.25: Source locations of *tirta pemuket*

Pura Candi Agung	Pura Tambawaras	Pura Rambut Sedana
Pura Pengubengan	Pura Muncaksari	Pura Jatiluwih
Pura Petaangan	Pura Petali	Pura Puseh Sarinbuana
Pura Jero Sasah	Pura Besikalung	Pura Srijong
Pura Penyaum		Pura Pekendungan
Pura Pekiyisan		Pura Sarwa Genep
Pura Luah Agung		Pura Tirta Empul
Pura Danu Sawang		

<sup>126</sup> Note Danker Schaareman's comment that "[t]he importance of the soil as an object of worship as such is also clearly expressed by the fact that, within the temple compound, it is not so much the buildings or the shrines of the gods that are sacred, but primarily the *soil* on which the temple has been built" (1986: 67).



*Fig. 6.26: A temple priest dedicates offerings on the ground as *tirta* arrives carried by a Kebayan family priest. Behind the priest stands the Bale Penegtegang. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana*



*Fig. 6.27: A man arrives with *tirta* requested from the seaside temple of Pura Srijong. *Tirta* travelling between destinations is normally stored in cut bamboo wrapped in cloth and adorned with leaves. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana*

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## Aside: Bamboo

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*Tiing* (bamboo) is integral to Balinese social life. Men are master craftsmen of it. Women use it in the production of offerings and their associated paraphernalia. It can be used for just about anything, including carrying *tirta*, building small altars (*sanggah cucuk*), the infamous *penjor* (bamboo posts), offerings towers, places of shelter, decorative structures for marriages and deaths, equipment for hunting and gathering, musical instruments, knives and food and water vessels and seemingly infinite other minor uses. This distinctive practice of integrating bamboo into all facets of social life has led one author to consider the Southeast Asian populations as having “bamboo cultures” (Burling 1965).

I came to wonder at this craftsmanship. Take a wedding for example. A week or so before the event, men from the village will gather one morning and cut, carve and entangle bamboo using only organic ingredients to build decorative stalls, shelters and other temporary structures. By lunchtime they have collectively transformed a houseyard with astonishing efficiency. For the Pengurip Gumi, the same kind of transformation is taking place to accommodate all the extra offerings and deities coming to visit. After an event’s completion, the bamboo is simply thrown back into the jungle or burnt to return to the earth. In short, the Balinese have a stunning capacity to work together to quickly erect bamboo structures for residential, ceremonial and other purposes.

The island’s forests are replete with bamboo as has been the case since time immemorial. I came to think of it as the material of choice for a mobile culture living in close proximity to forests, preceding the use of wood and brick that characterise permanent fixtures. And yet, given this ancient practice is wholly organic, evidence of its use disappears without trace soon enough, the materials of *banten* (offerings), *sanggah* (altars) and *bale* (structures) quickly assimilated by the ever-advancing tropical jungle.

\* \* \*

## INGREDIENTS

I have named this next section **Ingredients** after the diverse roles they play in the following ceremonial phase of the Pengurip Gumi. This is primarily rice to start, thereafter the bodily substances of a cow, sacred ferns of the mountain, towering bamboo poles (*penjor*), then lastly the seeds of the earth (*asil gumi*) which are assembled into towering bundles of offerings to be buried under the temple grounds. This section of rituals will take us up to the procession to sea.

December 9: Negtegang Manik Galih

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I referred to the Bale Penegtegang above as a storehouse for *tirta*. This name has *negtegang* at its root, from *tegteg*, which refers to firmness, solidness or strength. One can understand *negtegang* then as a process of ritual strengthening through the addition of a divine element. This is the core meaning of the *negtegang manik galih* rite that is run today, where *manik galih* refers to uncooked rice that has been imbued with divine essence. The regional *tirta pemuket* that arrived two days ago will be used for this ceremony, which calls on Dewi Sri, goddess of fertility and rice, to energise the uncooked rice for use in major offerings from this moment forward. It helps to understand that Dewi Sri is also a name given to a more generic concept in Balinese cosmology, comparable to a vital force that causes generation in living things. The white rice to be used in today's ceremony has been separated into four baskets and dyed red, black, white and yellow, which are the primary colours of the four cardinal directions in Balinese religious thought. Notably, these also correspond to the original colours of dry rice (*padi gaga*) grown around Mount Batukau in the fields of Wongaya Gede.

A female *pedanda* conducts this ritual due to the symbolic association of rice and fertility with female powers (*predana*). After the priestess dedicates a staggering amount of offerings assembled on a table between herself and the baskets of coloured rice (*manik galih*) stored in the Bale Penegtegang, we are called upon to pray communally towards the rice. As with many ceremonial events, the climax after many days of preparation passes swiftly. Nevertheless, the ceremony is filled with symbolic meaning because of

the cultural significance of rice.

The divine realm partakes in all stages of rice cultivation on Bali, including its harvest and storage through to new seeds taken from the houseyard granary to reanimate the fields. Human and divine are thus interwoven through rice, its production dependent upon those deified forces of generation who are reciprocated with the fruits of the harvest.<sup>127</sup> This is exemplified through the *sarin tahun* thanksgiving ceremony that is one of the final acts of the Pengurip Gumi (see Chapter 8). In many ways, rice comes to signify more than itself through this perpetual cycle of exchange, being analogous to life-giving powers that characterise the dependency of human to divine for success in agricultural production. It is also significant that rice is consumed thrice daily by Balinese and it constitutes an ingredient of just about every offering imaginable. Hence the importance of today's ceremony, *negtegang manik galih*, is that it begins to ritually prepare the rice for use in the most sacred offerings dedicated during the Pengurip Gumi. At the end of the day, somewhat unsurprisingly, everyone at the temple moves forward to request (*nunas*) individual portions of blessed rice by placing a handful in a small offering (*canang sari*) that is then taken home and mixed in with their uncooked rice stores.

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<sup>127</sup> Ottino characterises this relationship as an “ideology of siblingship between rice and men” (2000: 49).



*Fig. 6.28:* Uncooked rice taken from a temple ceremony is mixed in with grains kept in the home store to bless the rice cooked daily by families.

Separate from the above, ten tall bamboo posts (*sunari*) are today installed at different locations around the temple. These *sunari* have a woven image of a wild animal from palm fibres (*duk*) affixed near the top, and a small windmill that creates sound to repel insects and birds. These poles are traditionally installed in fields when rice begins to flower. There is thus an apparent symbolism of the temple as a field upon which ceremonial work is being undertaken. Meanwhile, at the four Catur Angga temples the same *negtegang manik galih* ritual is performed and six *sunari* are installed at each of those temples.



Fig. 6.29: Even a seemingly minor element like the *sunari* must be ritually initiated into use in the temple. A stack of offerings is dedicated before their installation by the four priestly groups referenced in Chapter 5's section on four-around-one formations. From left to right, the priestly representatives are: Kebayan; Kesinoman; Pasek; and Penyarikan.

#### December 16: Ngingsah lan Nyanggling

A week later follows the complementary ritual, *ngingsah lan nyanggling*. These two terms refer to washing and filtering the rice that had been fortified during last week's *negtegang* ritual. Again, a female *pedanda* administers today's major procedures. First, the rice is brought out of the Bale Negtegang and taken to the lower *beji* purification site where it is sprinkled with pure waters (*mesiram*) from this sacred source. At this point, people enter trance and accompany a Kebayan-led procession of the rice toward the inner courtyard, where the entourage encircles the courtyard three times (*ngider*) and then halts at its northeast corner. A special water source (*beji pingit*) there is used to wash and filter the rice. Alongside the rice are four of Wongaya's Sanghyang effigies that participate in today's ceremony, held by four young children and accompanied by dances (*rejang*) and hymns (*geding*) unique to the Sanghyang tradition (see Aside: Sanghyang below; also Chapter 8). As the rice is washed, the water passing through it is energised by the vitalised grains and reserved in four separate terracotta vessels, matching the colours of the rice.

Now the rice is taken to the middle courtyard's Bale Pegat where two female *pedanda* commence a process called *ngreka*. With the Kebayan standing between these two women, together they take white rice and sculpt by hand two large male and female figures, *lanang* and *istri*, the complementary forces required for all life-generation in Balinese religious thought. The figures are roughly a metre long when finished, adorned with decorative offerings, then covered in cloth, white for male and yellow for female. Beside the Kebayan and *pedanda* stand the Cokorda of Tabanan and Kebayan family.

A final procedure is now performed by the two *pedanda*, beside whom the Kebayan and Cokorda sit. This is the dedication of a staggering number of offerings towards the rice and water-filled terracotta pots. Immediately after, a slow, winding *rejang penyaksi* (sacred dance) is performed around the inner perimeter of the courtyard for 15 minutes, accompanied by the gamelan of Wongaya. During the dance, women entranced still from the earlier procession have been gathering around a table in the courtyard's centre upon which is laid out all the ingredients required for cooking in Balinese cuisine, including piles of garlic, onions, spices and so forth. Most villagers now approach this table with paper money in a small offering to exchange this for some of those blessed ingredients to take home. This process recalls the *sri tumpuk* ritual performed on the final day of Pura Batukau's temple anniversary (see Chapter 8). As explained above, this more general transaction between villagers 'buying' the raw ingredients of the earth from women incorporated by deities parallels the notion that human and divine worlds are necessarily interwoven for agricultural production to succeed.

I also document the *ngingsah lan nyangling* ceremony occurring at Pura Tambawaras later today. Interestingly, before its commencement the congregation request *tirta* from all major sites constituting the temple complex. The different waters are mixed then poured over the rice after it is washed by the river. This concept appears analogous to using the *tirta pemuket* at Pura Batukau, where religious sites from around the broader region are conjoined in fortifying the rice. Whereas at the scale of Tambawaras, just one notch below Pura Batukau, it is its own constitutive shrines that perform a comparable role.





*Fig. 6.30:* The Kebayan flanked by two female *pedanda* and the Cokorda Tabanan together form male and female anthropomorphic figures from the blessed rice, symbolising the pervasive thought in Balinese religious thought of the joining of complementary opposites to generate life. Photo credit: I Nengah Januartha

#### December 24: Memineh Empehan

Some weeks later a white cow named Dewa Ayu along with its calf are borrowed for the *memineh empehan* ritual. It arrives around 5am to be restrained within a bamboo enclosure in the middle courtyard. The priests extract five substances from the cow: milk, sweat, saliva, urine and faeces. These are filtered and then processed into liquids, and cooked with oil to produce a distillation of the divine substances of the cow for adding to special offerings for later use. Once extracted and processed, the materials are kept in the Bale Penegtegang. The animals are then paraded around the middle courtyard while women pound *lu* (large wooden pestles) into a wooden trunk as happens during *ngaben* rituals. A female *pedanda* runs this ceremony as the Cokorda Tabanan witnesses the event alongside the Kebayan.



*Fig. 6.31:* From left to right: the Kebayan's wife, rostered *pedanda* and *dedukun banten*. The *dedukun banten* is a local priest who has a key role for the Pengurip Gumi, designing and orchestrating many of the events due to his extensive local knowledge and scholarly research in religious matters pertinent to Mount Batukau. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana



*Fig. 6.32:* Priest's wives (*serati*) pound traditional pestles (*lu*) to make rhythmic drumming during the parade of animals. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana

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## Aside: Sanghyang

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During my time in Wongaya I had the opportunity to observe a unique element of Balinese culture that lives on in traditional villages bearing ties to rice cultivation. Sanghyang effigies are divine symbols carved from bamboo, about half a metre long, that are activated for performances and processions relating to the protection of farmers' fields and securing good harvests. The effigies incorporate spirits associated with female powers and animal species to control malevolent forces from disrupting farmers' work in the fields. In general, they aid rice farming and celebrate powers associated with female qualities in Balinese religious thought.

In Wongaya there are seven kinds in total. Only Sanghyang Dedari, Sampat, Leling, Lelipi and Cecing participate in the Pengurip Gumi. Two further Sanghyang, called Jarang and Memedi, rarely feature in ceremonial life since electricity arrived in the highlands a few decades ago, preferring the darkness instead. As will be detailed below, trance is an essential part of Sanghyang performances. Additionally, they have their own collection of hymns (*gending*) sung only by women, accompanied by female dances of all ages. The dancing and singing are of a very different nature to the religious hymns (*kidung*) one typically hears in Balinese temple ceremonies (see Chapter 8).

The family assigned to caretaking the Sanghyang originates in the Merajan Bande family temple of Wongaya Kaja. On a full moon (*puhnama*) leading up to the event, the ingredients used to produce the Sanghyang effigies are gathered from the forest, including fibres from local trees (*kayu jaka*) and other organic materials. This practice is distinct from most other Sanghyang still in use on Bali where permanent effigies are stored locally in a temple. In Wongaya, they must be made anew each time the spirits are called down (*nedunang*) and it is only for the largest ceremonies that this occurs, like this Pengurip Gumi, and not for regular temple anniversaries. Upon completion, the materials are ritually cremated and buried in a corner of the Bande family temple, initiating a gap of many years to pass before their next appearance.

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## January 9: Sanghyang

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The Sanghyang are initiated outside the Merajan Bande family temple. The different effigies are placed on a table in front of which is performed a Sanghyang Dedari ceremony. This involves the purification of young girls through the smoke of

smouldering coconut skins, who place their hands and faces close to the embers, after which time they arise entranced, beckoned by the female leader, as the surrounding elder women sing (*megending*) the hymns of the Sanghyang. Today's two-fold aim is to initiate the girls and activate the effigies for their upcoming involvement at Pura Batukau. The next morning, the Sanghyang are carried by procession to Batukau temple where they will be stored in their own structure (*bale*) beside the Bale Penegtegan for the next two months, playing an important role in ceremonies relating to rice-cultivation during the Pengurip Gumi.



*Fig. 6.33:* Some of the Sanghyang effigies crafted from bamboo with the Deling variety in front.  
Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana



*Fig. 6.34: The Sanghyang Cicing in the second photo. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana*



*Fig. 6.35: Young girls in preparation first, before entering trance and rising to their feet. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana*



Fig. 6.36: The woman facing them with arms outstretched in the last photo is the leader of the Sanghyang dancing troupe, who plays a central role in later processions. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana

#### January 11: Ngadegang Pememben

By the middle of January the ingredient preparations reach their culmination. Most large ceremonial events administered by *pedanda* around Bali involve the creation of towering offerings containing agricultural seeds that are buried in temple grounds to return to the earth-mother (Ibu Pertiwi). This exchange is an explicit model whereby farmers' produce is submerged in the earth so that its deity will return in abundance those products to the fields. These elaborate burial offerings are collectively named *banten pememben*, and on January 11 they are assembled under the ceremonial title *ngadegang pememben*, meaning "to give shape or form" (*ngadegang*) to the burial offering (*pememben*). Different kinds of plant species are layered within a large vessel (*paso*) over one metre high and almost the same in diameter. In total, 21 burial offerings will be assembled today, and throughout the Pengurip Gumi they are delivered to different locations for their respective gods, including the temple grounds of the Catur Angga, the lake and sea. At each domain they are dedicated through submersion into the earth, either under water or underground.

The ingredients gathered from both the worship community's donations and across Bali have until now been accumulating in the zone dedicated to production of the most sacred offerings (*genah suci*). Today the burial offerings are brought into Batukau temple's inner courtyard to be filled with ingredients. The first item is a handful of sacred earth (*tanah suci*) taken from under each shrine in the inner courtyard, followed by a long list of ingredients, some classified into categories like *pala bungkah* (underground tubers), *pala wija* (standing crops other than rice) *pala rambat* (climbing plants) and *pala gantung* (plants that flower overground). Others are combinations of multicoloured rice, sugarcane, bananas, Chinese coins, coconuts, spices and other offerings. Lastly, 108 species of tree symbolised by branches collected from the forest are placed atop the ingredients, along with 108 species of flower from around Bali. Each is capped by two crowning elements known as *orti* and *bagia* with which people are also adorned after passage through a life-cycle ceremony.

On January 15 these offerings will be activated in preparation for their dedication as offerings throughout the Pengurip Gumi. This process known as *melaspas* is generally explained as the animation of an object but more properly refers to its purification before its life commences in the *niskala* (unseen dimension), either by spirit or force, that brings its animation in the *sekala* (seen dimension) into being. On that same date, the towering bamboo structures (*sanggar*) purpose-built to hold important offerings are also animated. Common to all built structures and large objects utilised in Bali, a ritual known here as *ngambe* (to welcome) commences habitation of a spirit or force in the *niskala* of the object that thereafter reflects its subsequent classification as "alive" (*idup*). Today's assembling of the burial offerings involves active participation of members of local and regional government, the royal palaces of Tabanan and the temple priests all gathering around to add finishing touches.



Fig. 6.37: The 21 burial offerings (*banten pememben*) are moved into the inner courtyard where they will today be filled by ingredients gathered from around the region. Photo credit: I Wayan Naya



Fig. 6.38: These agricultural ingredients to be assembled inside the burial offerings explicitly register the connection between dedicating offerings to the earth and reciprocal abundance. Photo credit: I Wayan Naya





Fig. 6.39: Handfuls of earth (*tanah suci*) taken from under all significant shrines in the temple are placed inside upon the base of the burial offerings. The *pedanda* woman assigned as the *tapini* along with the *Kebayan* lead the assembly, indicated by the many threads of white cotton (*benang*) wrapped around both their wrists. Photo credit: I Wayan Naya

January 13: Nunas Paku-Paku

Two days later other vital ingredients are gathered. A group of men from Wongaya Gede enter the forest to climb towards the summit where the upper section of the mountain is characterised by native ferns (*paku*) growing only at that altitude. The ferns are sacred elements symbolising the divinised mountain and used to adorn the bamboo posts (*penjor*) and palanquin (*joli*) held above men's heads for transporting deities. The men arrive back this afternoon with three special plants: *don paku mas* and *don paku panyung*, two fern varieties taken from around the summit, and *don jenggol rsi*, a sprawling moss gathered from the inner courtyard of Pucak Kedaton. The latter will be used for a special kind of offering while the ferns are installed as above. These plants are explained as markers of identity that bear the blessing of the mountaintop. Today, giant bamboo poles (*penjor agung*) have also arrived to the temple, awaiting their decoration.



Fig. 6.40: Local men from Wongaya Gede arrive from the summit of Mount Batukauu where they have just collected *don paku mas*, *don paku panyung* and *don jenggot rsi* for use in *penjor* and offerings.



Fig. 6.41: The Kebayan's wife inspects *don jenggot rsi* harvested from the upper reaches of Mount Batukau.



Fig. 6.42: Tall bamboo poles have been cut from the surrounding forest to be used as *penjor*. Decorations of coconut leaves (*bakang-bakang*) have already been attached, yet further decorations are still to come.

Over the coming days, three different varieties of bamboo posts (*penjor*) will be installed around the region. The largest *penjor* known as *penjor agung* are installed in Pura Batukau as well as the Catur Angga temples. The other two kinds are placed out the front of every household as occurs annually during the Balinese Galungan festival. Yet for the Pengurip Gumi, every house in Tabanan is directed by the regional government to follow a common template for the *penjor* design to bring about unity throughout the entire regency. This effectively registers Pura Batukau's status as state temple for Tabanan. As can be seen below, the *penjor* are less elaborate for the wider Tabanan population than those for the caretaking community villages surrounding Pura Batukau, indexing their closer identification with the mountain gods. All *penjor* must be installed before January 20 in preparation for the embarkation of the deities to sea a week later.

*Penjor* are highly symbolic of the close affinity upland villages maintain with the mountain. The most common interpretation of *penjor* I came across was that they bring prosperity from the mountain to village families, usually with a discrete reference to chthonic *naga* serpents. They are installed outside households every year for Galungan, and in temples for regular anniversaries and other major events. The enormous *penjor*

*agung* used in the Pengurip Gumi require at least 10 men to secure into place. At the entrance to Pura Batukau two *penjor agung* are installed, one representing Pucak Kedaton and the other Pura Batukau, signifying the synergy between the two locations. Later in Chapter 8, we will see how smaller *penjor sawen* are brought to the temple by every male member of nearby *subak* farming cooperatives and weeks later returned to their rice fields, further evidencing the *penjor*'s function in concentrating the powers of the mountain and male-associated generative principle in the fields.<sup>128</sup>

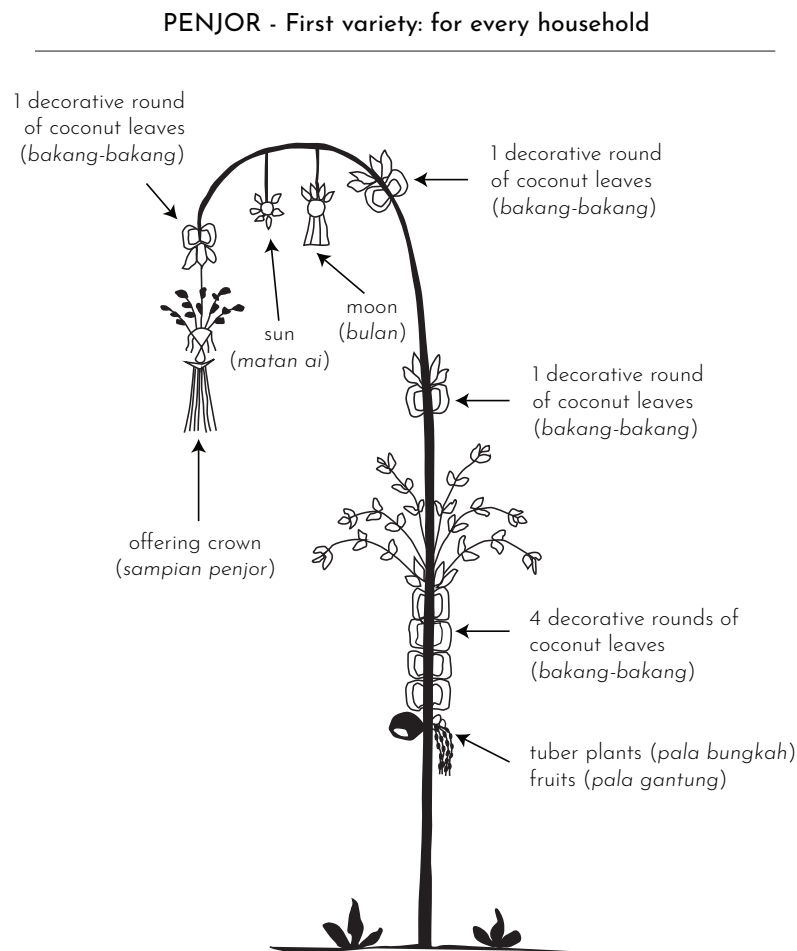


Fig. 6.43: The bamboo posts (*penjor*) to be installed in front of every household through all Tabanan.

<sup>128</sup> Domenig (2014) describes Balinese *penjor* as a “spirit lure” for attracting the deities to descend from high places into spaces where they may receive offerings in worship, which seems highly relevant to the offering practices I documented.

PENJOR - Second variety: for caretaking communities

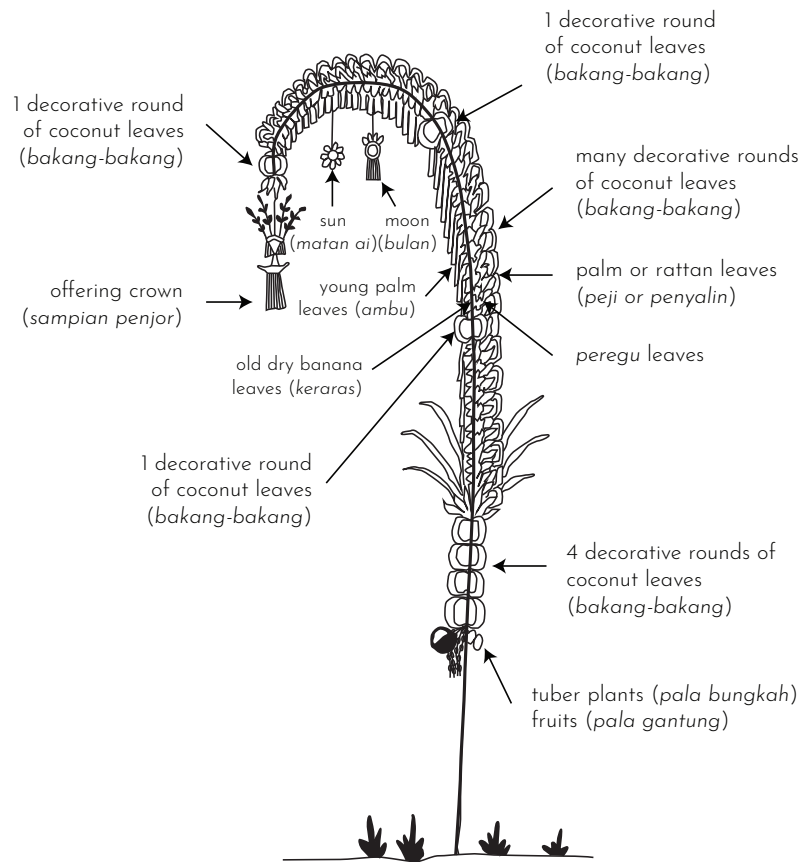


Fig. 6.44: The bamboo posts (*penjor*) to be installed in front of households of the caretaking communities in Wongaya Gede, Sangketan and Jatiluwih villages.



Fig. 6.45: Two *penjor agung* flank the main entrance to the temple. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana

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#### January 24: Nunas Tirta Pemuput

Finally, the most sacred ingredient must be sourced: *tirta pemuput*. This is the configuration of holy water for completing a ritual (*muput karya*) that is the pinnacle of ceremonial activity. Any *tirta* used for this function must always come from a temple of equal or higher status for it is akin to the deity itself participating in the sacred completion of the rite, an act that would be inappropriate for a lesser status being to entertain (see Hobart 1978). Thus, all around the highlands, where regular temple priests administer ceremonies and *pedanda* are traditionally prohibited, the priests act merely as vehicles for delivering the god's force in the world through *tirta pemuput*. This

situation is wholly distinct from most other locations in Bali where the Brahmanical priest finishes (*muput*) rituals through *tirta* concocted in their home compounds (*griya*) (see Chapters 1 and 2).

Today, small groups arrive from all over Bali and neighbouring Java and Lombok to deliver the *tirta pemuput* they have requested in person from high status temples. The *tirta* is identified with the god whence it came and therefore a sacrificial offering is performed at the priest's feet as each one enters the temple carrying the holy water in a cut bamboo container (*bungbung*) above their head. This is generally performed for any manifestation of divinity as it transitions between zones, such as entering a temple or crossing a bridge. All the *tirta pemuput* is gathered first in the Bale Agung of Wongaya over the course of the day and then carried in joint procession towards Pura Batukau. The one exception is *tirta pemuput* obtained from Pucak Kedaton that arrives first from the forest, carried by men who went to the summit before sunrise. As before, the *tirta* from the summit is greeted by two files of women dancing while an entourage surrounds the men carrying the *tirta*, collectively embracing to shoulder the weight (see Figure 6.47). The Kebayan receives the *tirta pemuput* in the inner courtyard and carries it himself up the large temporary bamboo structure now standing complete there, roughly five metres above ground.

Fig. 6.46: Source locations of *tirta pemuput*

From Around Pura Batukau	From Around Bali	From Outside Bali
Pura Pucak Kedaton	Pura Besakih	Mount Semeru (Java)
Pura Tambawaras	Pura Andakasa	Mount Rinjani (Lombok)
Pura Muncaksari	Pura Goa Lawah	
Pura Besikalung	Pura Uluwatu	
Pura Petali	Pura Pucak Mangu	
Pura Batu Salahan	Pura Ulun Danu	
	Pura Lempuyang	
	Pura Ulun Danu Tamblingan	



*Fig. 6.47: Tirta pemuput consecrated at the summit temple this morning arrives at Pura Batukau. It is held high in a bungbung (bamboo container pictured in the photo centre) the entire journey down the mountain. Entranced men and women clear a passage for the tirta to travel directly to the waiting Kebayan in the jeroan.*



*Fig 6.48: Left: Tirta pemuput arrives from one of the holy sanctuaries listed above. Tirta of this kind is treated as equivalent to the deity itself. Fig 6.49: Right: Tirta pemuput sourced from Balinese temples and sites on Java and Lombok are gathered first in the Bale Agung of Wongaya before ascending by procession to Pura Batukau.*



In the preceding days, the gamelan orchestra (*gong durwe*) owned by the temple arrived. This sacred ensemble plays throughout the arrival of the *tirta pemuput* and will be a feature of every major ceremony now. It is unlike any other gamelan I encountered on Bali, apparently originating from the third century A.D. according to Kebayan family members (I was unable to corroborate this) and categorised as *gong luwang* (Darma 2009). Its melody and distinction are discussed further in the next chapter.



*Fig. 6.50:* Men from Kesiut village in Tabanan bring the ancient *gong durwe* owned by the temple. No normal temple anniversary held at Pura Batukau may commence until the *gong durwe* has arrived. This gamelan will remain on site for the upcoming months, accompanying the gods to the sea and back.

Lastly, the Bale Agung pavilion in the middle courtyard is adorned with yellow and white cloth in preparation for Bharati Nini offerings soon to be arriving. Every village family from the caretaking communities must prepare these offerings tomorrow morning, which will eventually make their way by procession to the respective Pura Batukau and Catur Angga temples. Bhatari Nini is the name given to an effigy of the rice mother that is normally shaped by farmers in the fields at the time of harvest. Around Wongaya it is made from freshly cut rice sheaves symbolising an anthropomorphic male and female figure that are woven into one combined effigy. After harvest, Bhatari Nini travels with the farmer back to the houseyard where the rice

stalks are piled up and the Nini placed atop this pile like a crown. When the day is right to perform the ritual *mantenin padi* involving the storing of the harvested rice, the stalks and Nini ascend the home granary (*lumbung*). When it is time to plant again, rice seeds are taken from the granary for another cultivation period, thus returning the rice mother's divinity to the fields.

Tomorrow, each farming household will ascend their granary at home and collect the Bhatari Nini stored from last harvest. It is taken down (*nedunang*) to their family temple where it is decorated (*pemayasan*), and then placed in a basket (*sokasi*) for carrying offerings. It is then taken to the Bale Agung of Wongaya village where every family's Nini is kept until the following day's procession of all the Nini offerings together toward Pura Batukau, where they will stay until the closing of the Pengurip Gumi. By this centripetal force, the divine essence of every farmer's field becomes concentrated in the mother temple for the ceremony. When the Pengurip Gumi is complete, the Nini is centrifugally returned by each family to their fields and henceforth begins the new planting season with seeds that underwent communal blessing at the mother temple, Pura Batukau.



*Fig. 6.51:* A priest advises Bhatari Nini of his intention to take her down from inside the family's granary. The effigy and rice stalks are stored here on auspicious days (*de-wasa*) after harvest.  
Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana



Fig. 6.52: Decorations (*pemayasan*) of flowers and leaves are applied to the effigy, Bhatari Nini.  
Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana



Fig. 6.53: Everyone's Bhatari Nini arrives to the centre of Wongaya in preparation for their communal ascent to Pura Batukau alongside the deity of Muncaksari in the coming days.  
Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana

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## Aside: Trance

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According to friends I made from other parts of the island, trance is rarely if ever a feature of temple ceremonies there. This surprised me greatly because trance is an integral element of ritual around Mount Batukau. At any moment, no matter how minor the ceremonial phase, there may be a sudden rush forward by a person who feels the urge of divinity enter their body, often setting off a pattern of others becoming incorporated too. Even priests undergoing their ceremonial tasks would sometimes become entranced, yet this was generally more controlled. These spontaneous instances were separate from the figures whose responsibility it is to incorporate the deity of a temple every anniversary, known as *dasaran*. The words spoken by the *dasaran* in those moments are registered as speech of the deity, and thus carry with them irrefutable force.

The entranced also regularly provided dramatised performances. One of my favourites to watch, albeit from a distance given their unpredictability, was a pair of women in Sangketan who would never fail to incorporate the same deities each temple ceremony. One older woman was embodied by a particularly intense spirit who yelled at people out of place or for them to stand up and participate, whereas the other woman resembled an old lady, acting concerned and somewhat disorientated. They would typically interact with one another in comical ways, providing light entertainment for us waiting on the long tasks of ritual undertaken by priests to be completed. More strikingly, when I observed the *memandak ider buana* (summoning the gods from every direction) ceremony held at midnight outside Tambawaras temple on each of its anniversaries, one woman in particular would stamp around the ground, tears streaming from her face, calling out in anticipation for the gods to arrive. While watching her, I was always moved by the ways she charged the atmosphere with emotional longing.

There was something about Tambawaras, in particular, where trance was especially prolific. During each procession to the different riverside (*beji*) sites one would know to stand back as tens of people would always rush forward, incorporating different personas to form a protective circle around the gods. I was every time astonished by the intensity of these events, especially when the deities had returned to the temple and we stood waiting for them to take their positions in a special pavilion. This assembly of the gods would often take upwards of 20 minutes, during which time the entranced would become more and more agitated, as if the human was calling back to return to their bodies, desperate for the god to depart, screaming for temple priests to attend to them by sprinkling *tirta* so the divinity would be released. Immediately thereafter the person was dragged to the side where they would sit confused, oblivious to the experiences of the last hour, unable to understand where they had been.

There seemed to me to be a basic structure to most trance. Perhaps underscoring the relational

composition of personhood in Bali, divine beings displaced the animating spirit of the person while adopting their body, as if being entered by a force that consumes the person against their will. The Balinese terms typically used for trance are either *kerauban* (from *rauh* meaning “to arrive”) or *tedun* (meaning “come down”). From this moment onwards, that body no longer indexes the same person: they are a god, and treated with deference by even the highest priests, spoken with in the formal register of Balinese. Despite pleading by others around them, the god will not leave until its demands are met and its purpose materialised. Only then, a priest comes with *tirta* to send it home and the spirit of the human may return.

Trance clearly provides a means for frequent and direct mediation with village gods of the highlands. In Sanda, for example, there are four main priests who divide the responsibility of supporting the community spiritually. Each 210 days the village runs a temple ceremony (*ngelemiji*) in their main temple. Trance during this event happens like clockwork, where the main stage of ritual exchanges is an enclosed structure called Bale Sumanggen. Once roasted pigs have been delivered to the northeast corner of the structure in preparation for the gods arrival, then the mediums (called *walen* in Sanda) begin to incorporate each of the village gods. Those male and female mediums then assemble on a table while the four priests sit on a bench lower to them and conversation between the two parties ensues. This is the moment when important decisions are made around the village that require the input of the gods. It is during this moment that comes around once every 210 days, the gods announce what must be undertaken in terms of village repairs, new shrines, and most importantly, when and if the *ngusaba* may be performed (see Chapter 4).

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## Interlude

The stage has now been set. **Announcements** have been made, the temple grounds **Initiated** and the wider region enveloped within an encompassment of sacred time and space. The daunting task of assembling the prodigious amount of **Ingredients** for the production of offerings has commenced, and in some parts been completed. Central to this Part I has been the gradual incorporation of more and more elements inside the temple walls, including *tirta* from around the island that at each instance indexes regional interconnections between temples. Additionally, the effigies of the Sanghyang, sacred gamelan (*gong duwe*) of Pura Batukau and summit deity in its function as ceremonial guardian are now in residence. Rice has been ritually purified and energised in preparation for its use in offerings during the culmination stages, and effigies of the

rice-mother from every individual farmer's field have now returned to the mother temple of the region. This symbolic thread of concentrating into Pura Batukau the constitutive elements required for the Pengurip Gumi will continue into the next phase, wherein further divine entities will come into residence via large processions. In short, the key objective of this Part has been to ritually prepare the space for the arrival of temple deities and their entourages in the coming days, none more importantly than the deity of Pura Batukau itself.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Pengurip Gumi: Part II

#### Reunification, Procession, Sacrifice and the Peak

*Ritual, as long as it retains its meaning, is a co-operation for life.*

A.M. Hocart, *Kings & Councillors*

#### Introduction

Two and a half months have passed since the opening ceremony. **Preparation** has been the dominant feature of all works, from **Announcement** through **Initiation** and the gathering of vital **Ingredients**. Now another phase begins I have termed **Reunification**, because it consolidates the vast Batukau temple network into its core sanctuary for the procession and climactic ceremonies still to come. This phase only lasts a few days but the temple changes dramatically in the *niskala* (unseen dimension): first to arrive are two Catur Angga deities, Tambawaras and Muncaksari, then the following day the chief protector gods of Pura Batukau, named Pecalang Agung Tengkidak and Batusalahan. The temple deity itself then descends through the medium of the Kebayan and lastly the summit deity Pucak Kedaton arrives via the peripheral village of Piling. Once the family of temples has been reunited, they may descend to the sea as a whole unit.

The following phase entitled **Procession** is a relatively straightforward affair despite its enormity. From Pura Batukau it is still undertaken on foot, whereas around the island these days long processions are typically done using trucks. As a result, it takes four days of walking to reach the sea and back to the mountain sanctuary. Tens of thousands join the event and a significant portion of these people continue for the entire four days, sleeping only a few hours each night on the streets outside the temples where the deities stay overnight. The summit and mother temples are reunited for this journey, yet as folklore stipulates the father deity remains estranged from his wife and children, travelling with them but sleeping separately in Tabanan city at the royal house of Jero Subamia. Upon their eventual return to Pura Batukau from the sea, the next phases may commence.

Both the **Sacrifice** and **Peak** phases are extravagant centrepieces of the Pengurip Gumi. Immense numbers of people attend, including representatives from royal houses and different levels of political leadership. An inordinate number of animals are sacrificed, and countless offerings are dedicated to both the above and below domains. Smaller versions of the same ceremonies are held synchronously across the network, with *tirta* flowing from the core Batukau temple to the peripheral Catur Angga members to complete their respective phased events.

During this chapter, four of the five *kertih* ceremonies are performed. As will be recalled, these are undertaken to revitalise a resource or domain and usually involve the submersion or release of a sacrificial offering into the lake, river, mountain or sea. These are an expansion of the triennial *pekelem* agricultural rites of renewal undertaken by the Kebayan for the realm of Tabanan (see Chapter 5). For the Pengurip Gumi, the traditional set of three—lake, river and mountain—rites remain under Batuaku temple's custodianship, while the forest and sea *kertih* ceremonies are administered by *pedanda*. In my conclusion in Chapter 9, I argue that these five *kertih* ceremonies are at the heart of what this monumental ceremony sets out to achieve. For the most part, however, this chapter remains focused on the movement and descent of key deities and the climax events scheduled for the middle of February.



## REUNIFICATION

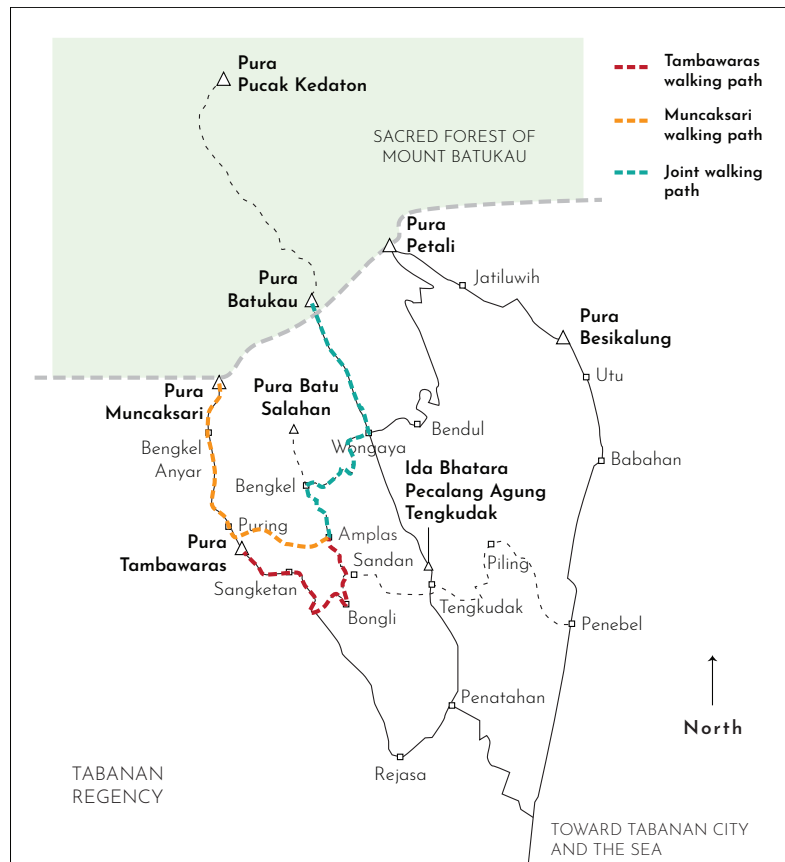


Fig. 7.1: Paths taken by Tambawaras and Muncaksari toward Pura Batukau.

January 25: Memargi ke Pura Batukau

This morning the atmosphere is electric. Hundreds of people have gathered in Tambawaras alone, while hundreds more have gone to Muncaksari. These two deities will begin on separate travel paths before they meet to walk the final hours as one unit, arriving to Wongaya together to make the final ascent to Pura Batukau. Those who come to Tambawaras this morning head straight to the inner courtyard to pray communally and receive *tirta* before helping assemble the gods together in a palanquin (*joli*). Other men and women incorporate protective deities who will accompany the travelling deities. From the front of the procession, priests sprinkle *tirta pamarisuda* from a vehicle to purify the ground before the parade steps over the ground. Alongside the priests travels a massive drum (*tambur*), announcing the procession's movement through nearby fields and hamlets. Thereafter come men carrying rain and sun parasols (*payung-pagut* and *tedung*), village banners (*umbul-umbul*) and tall spears (*lelancang*).

Then follows the deities in a palanquin hoisted on the shoulders of men. Finally, the hundreds of followers (*pengiring*) form a two-person file accompanied by the gamelan of Sangketan.

Temple deities always travel with an entourage. This typically includes the village gods of caretaking communities and may also involve neighbouring temple deities who are regionally significant, who function as guardians of the higher status being. At Tambawaras, for example, another public temple named Batubelig further down the regional hierarchy arrives with its own entourage the day before Tambawaras walks towards Pura Batukau. The worship community of Batubelig temple then becomes attached to Tambawaras for the procession to sea, further swelling the size of the parade. Likewise, the community of Muncaksari invites the deity of neighbouring temple Jagasatru as its protector to join its procession to Pura Batukau. Once fully assembled, each procession resembles a military-like column of residents carrying their divine leader upon their shoulders, a regional god communally venerated for its command over village territory.



Fig. 7.2: Men carry the *joli* containing the deities of Tambawaras down the temple entrance.

There is a sense of joy amongst those participating in a moment to be remembered for years to come. The event brings together faces rarely seen in the community. Younger people who moved out of the highlands to the tourist sector have returned to join the older generations who stayed to work in the temples and fields. As members of the five customary villages who caretake (*pengempon*) Tambawaras, all contribute to joining their regional deity on its journey to the mother temple, and then unto the sea. This entourage also involves many others from outside the local communities who feel allied with the deity, who, for example, may have touched their lives through curing illness. I follow them until a fork in the road where I await Muncaksari's long procession to arrive.

Alongside Muncaksari I descend through decayed stone steps mixed with wet mud from rice-fields flanking the ancient path. The men bearing the palanquin and other paraphernalia never miss a step. We cross a river at the bottom of the valley and then ascend to enter Amplas village, a subdistrict of Wongaya Gede. Families stand at the entrance to their houseyards, providing snacks to the travelling participants and dedicating offerings to the deities as they pass each home. Both temple processions arrive to Amplas at the same time and turn upstream to walk between terraced fields cut into the foot of the mountain. I push to the front to see the federated procession of Tambawaras and Muncaksari behind me snaking for hundreds of metres, thousands of people in unity, meandering tirelessly under the scorching heat, chattering amongst the banging cymbals and drums of the gamelan.



*Fig. 7.3:* Procession through rice fields above Amplas. The first set of banners indicate Tambawaras's palanquin while the distant yellow and white banners mark the start of Muncaksari's entourage.

It is late afternoon before we reach Wongaya village. As we enter the crossroads from the west and turn to face the mountain, I am stunned by the awaiting reception. Hundreds of women flank both sides of the main road, holding Bhatari Nini (effigy of the rice spirit) offerings on their heads. They frame a central passage heading up the road toward the temple, lined with towering bamboo posts (*penjor*). As we pass, the local women holding their Bhatari Nini offerings join the procession behind Muncaksari due to the god's association with fertility and rice-cultivation.



Fig. 7.4: Walking through the heart of Wongaya toward Pura Batukau.

Traversing the final segment of road, we enter the forested surrounds of Pura Batukau. The temple gate is stocked with people waiting to greet the gods, including the Kebayan, royal and political leaders and other temple priests. I enter through a side entrance to witness the deities arrive to the inner courtyard, first Tambawaras then Muncaksari, for the first time in so many years. This movement of hundreds of worshippers carrying divinities and their paraphernalia to their special pavilion built to house them during their visit takes over twenty minutes. Meanwhile, the Bhatari Nini offerings assemble in the Bale Agung of the middle courtyard. From this moment forward, the senior priests of Tambawaras and Muncaksari must sleep overnight (*mekemit*) in the inner courtyard, beside their gods. Tomorrow the protective deities of Teng kudak village and Batusalahan temple will arrive, taking their place beside the Bhatari Nini inside the Bale Agung. Everything is then set for the most sacred moment of the Pengurip Gumi.



*Fig. 7.5:* Tambawaras completes the final ascent to Pura Batukau, led by priests and the entranced.  
Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana



*Fig. 7.6:* The Kebayan waits at the temple gates to receive Tambawaras and Muncaksari. To his left stands the brother of Tabanan's king (*cokorda*) and to his right the Kebayan's son.  
Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana



Fig. 7.7: Women from Wongaya Gede wait to enter the temple carrying their Bhatari Nini offerings.  
Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana

#### January 26: Nedunang Ida Bhatara Luhur Batukau

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This evening marks the descent of Batukau temple's deity. I am informed that this will only occur once Tambawaras and Muncaksari have arrived, waiting to have those two children beside her. It must be stressed that today is wholly distinct from the normal temple anniversary (*odalan*) held every six months at Pura Batukau, where the deity's descent (*nedunang*) takes place inside the temple's inner courtyard from its principal shrine. Tonight, the deity descends from the Gaduh shrine in the temple's middle courtyard, which only occurs for the Pengurip Gumi. The Gaduh is a pavilion that stands on four columns supporting an enclosed attic above open space below. Most significantly, the Kebayan is tonight the vessel through which the god descends into the temple domain, after which time it inhabits a special receptacle for the remainder of the ceremony. I have not heard of incorporation of a major deity into a leader for this purpose in other contexts, and here it clearly signals the liminal position of the Kebayan as bridging human and divine worlds. Note that no *pedanda* are invited to work at this event.

After a series of purificatory rituals at sundown, a white cloth (*kain*) is rolled over the ground for the Kebayan and his wife and other close members of the family to walk toward the Pura Gaduh. They are followed by senior priests and eventually other members of the congregation who gather in any available space around the middle courtyard. Seated around the Pura Gaduh are important guests, including the lowland king, local and regional political leaders and others who wished to witness this event, causing overflow into other parts of the temple. Alone, the Kebayan ascends a specially-made bamboo staircase to enter the pavilion's attic. Thereafter, the congregation waits for approximately 30 minutes. During this time, the Kebayan meditates (*meyoga*) to connect with the temple deity, who eventually enters his body. This moment of unification is immensely powerful, described by one attendee as sending waves of intense energy vibrating outwards at intervals from where the Kebayan sat.

As this is happening, four distinct social groups have gathered around each one of the Gaduh's support columns. The Kebayan priests stand in the most sacred corner (*kaja-kangin*), representatives of the Tabanan's royal palace in the northwest (*kaja-kauh*), followed then by the *kesinoman* and *penyarikan* priestly groups supporting the other two columns. As will be recalled, this four-around-one formation is a characteristically indigenous concept that reflects the way power is structured hierarchically around a core, in this instance, the Kebayan elevated some metres above the others. It symbolises the deeply pervasive concept in Balinese thought of four directions uniting around a centre (see Chapter 5). The fourth social group, *pasek*, normally included in the four-around-one formation, plays the key role of helping the Kebayan descend from the pavilion once he finally emerges. Note the tangible expression of hierarchical order of Kebayan as prime descendant of an ancestral lineage, elevated above other groups who support his core mediating role.



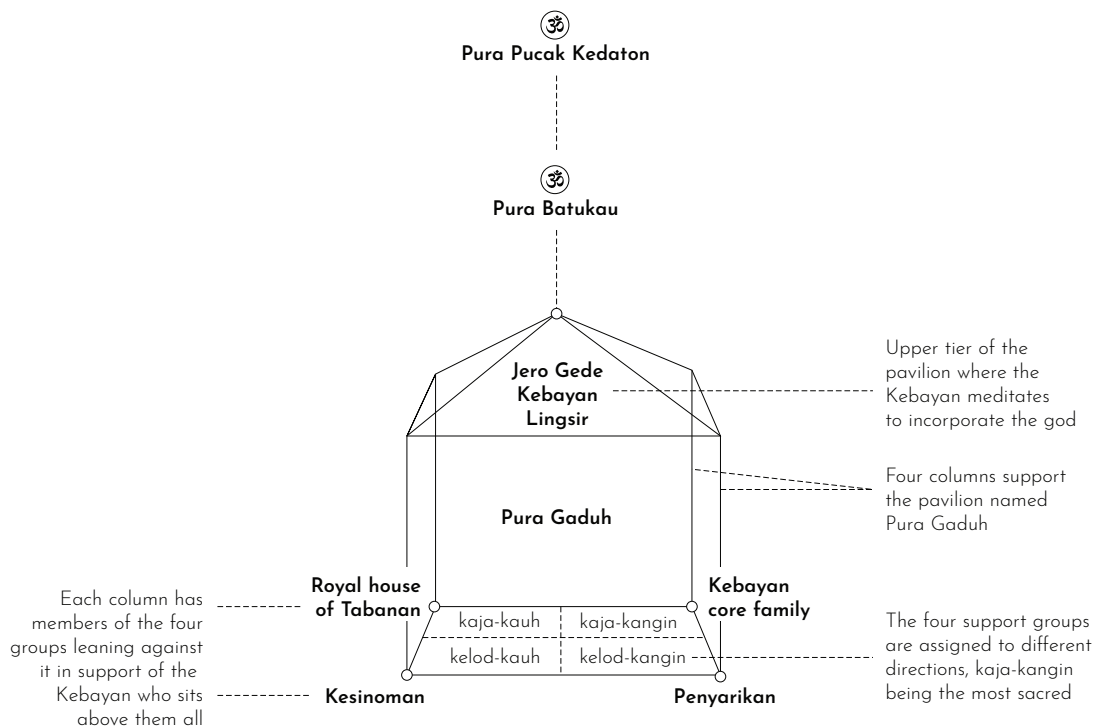


Fig. 7.8: During the descent ritual, the Kebayan embodies the structure of four-around-one in the Gaduh.

Finally, the Kebayan knocks from inside the wooden shrine after an interlude of tense anticipation. During the interceding time he has become completely adorned from head to toe in white cloth such that we cannot see his body or face, only the human form. He is led by the Pasek priest to sit on another white cloth (*kain*) now raised above everyone's shoulders. Thereafter the procession encircles (*ngider*) three times the Bale Agung and then enters the temple's inner courtyard, as the sacred gamelan plays its distinctive highland melody. They walk toward the Bale Singasari, the pavilion associated with the Kebayan's ancestors, which is forbidden for anyone but his closest family to enter. There he is placed down at last. This passage marks the descent of the deity, through the body of the Kebayan, after which time it inhabits the receptacle constructed for the ceremony. The Kebayan is then unravelled and sits exhausted, while his son kneels before him and they exchange words quietly.

The relational position of the Kebayan is evident throughout these ritual stages. He is the paramount figure through which the deity descends, the man and god becoming one while the other social groups buttress this process. Once unification is complete and

he descends, his face and bodily features effaced by complete immersion in cloth, the congregation carries the god-man like a king. Encircling their temple strengthens the fellowship between deity and congregation. Note that most other highland temple ceremonies meet their gods (*memendak*) by summoning them from the mountain to inhabit special offerings held above the congregation's heads. Here, in strikingly original form the Kebayan ancestral line merges with the god in service of his apical spiritual position for the region's population. This configuration expresses the sociocosmic hierarchy of the mountain, the Kebayan encompassing all through his exclusive capacity to merge with the deity. Upon this sequence's completion the god is in residence, awaiting its departure toward the sea in three more days.



*Fig. 7.9: Left: The Kebayan is ritually purified in preparation for the deity to inhabit his body.*

*Fig. 7.10: Right: He travels toward the Gaduh pavilion along cloth. By his side in both photos are his wife and the *dasaran agung* (chief medium). Photos credit: I Made Ari Yudiana*



*Fig. 7.11:* Below the Gaduh pavilion stand men at each corner representing different groups. The king and deputy political leader of Tabanan sit in an elevated pavilion off to the side of the photo.  
Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana



*Fig. 7.12:* Men carry the Kebayan wrapped in white above their shoulders into the inner courtyard.  
Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana

The following evening sees the arrival of the summit deity from Pucak Kedaton. It is brought down the mountain by a neighbouring village called Piling who is locally recognised as one of the old villages designated to caretake (*pengempon*) the summit temple. Night has fallen, and once again the temple is filled with people who have come to witness this rare occasion of reunification. We wait anxiously the arrival of the most powerful god of the region, congregating around the temple gates. Suddenly, men and women around me rush forward down the hill, shrieking from possession as they descend. First, we hear the gamelan, then a group of entranced men and women appear in front of a large human column. They climb upwards, the village of Piling carrying its own assortment of spears, banners, and umbrellas, then finally the palanquin carrying Pucak Kedaton wrapped in chequered cloth passes between us, marking the god's reunification with its estranged family. It is brought to a specially-made pavilion on the other side of the inner courtyard, far from Tambawaras and Muncaksari, where it will be taken care of by Piling priests throughout its time here. The reunification at Pura Batukau is now complete. Tomorrow sees the descent of the other two Catur Angga deities, Petali and Besikalung, in their respective temples in Jatiluwih village, from where they will walk by procession to meet us on the road on January 29.

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**Aside: Batukau's estranged family**

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Some tension arose during the Pengurip Gumi after the reunification had taken place. This was apparent between the support group of Pucak Kedaton, including Piling village and the lowland palace of Jero Subamia, and the Batukau temple congregation. I suspect this tension has its origins in the estranged relationship between the Pura Batukau and Pucak Kedaton temple deities. The stories I presented in Chapter 2 speak of an original condition before Wongaya existed, when, depending on the version, either the goddess of Batukau temple or the Kebayan were in residence at the summit, until some transgression occurred and they were expelled. Other stories explain the tension between husband-and-wife deities in different ways. One story I collected, for example, spoke of an era when those temple deities were still in the tangible world (*sekala*). The mother and father, Pura Batukau and Pucak Kedaton, had four children and lived together in a family home. Yet the father was directionless and unsupportive to his wife and family. (*"I Bapa ne, ngadug-adug, sing narwang kangin-kaub, artine beneh pedidi. Ne sing taen baange*

*benéh né ibukné. Sing baange benéh mesomaban, cara iraga mesomaban kéné”).*

Eventually, the eldest son, Pucak Petali, already grown by this stage, chases the father away from the family home. The father flees to different *pedukuban* settlements in the region, residing in one called Pakusari where he becomes a spiritual mentor, healing those who visit him, and ultimately attaining liberation to return to the summit temple. Hence, one elder priest explained that the reason the Petali temple deity always walks last during the *melasti* procession is because he remains his mother's chief protector. Therefore, when the family reunites, the father deity avoids Petali because he remains scared of his son. This is also why the special pavilion (*bale*) erected to house the summit deity in the inner courtyard of Batukau temple during their reunification is intentionally distant from the other children and mother deity. It is, moreover, the reason that the father deity does not sleep with his family when visiting Tabanan city (see below).

This situation is reflective of a general schism found around Mount Batukau that I touched on in Chapter 2. One can classify the old highland villages very roughly into two groups: those who unite with the mountain through Pura Batukau, and those who unite with Pucak Kedaton directly through paths of life unique to each village, as I have shown in Chapters 4 and 5. Those who unite through Pura Batukau collectively accept the spiritual leadership of the Kebayan, while the others recognise instead the ritual authority of their own core-line descendants. So, when the mountain god of Pucak Kedaton comes into residence at Pura Batukau in preparation for their joint procession to sea, tensions arise between visions of the 'correct' sociocosmic order of things. This was noted especially during the order of groups descending to the sea, where Pucak Kedaton fits in behind Pura Batukau and the Kebayan (see Figure 7.17 below).

Yet I wish to stress that these tensions were not to my understanding new. Those old enough to participate in the 1993 procession recalled to me how Pucak Kedaton chose to sleep elsewhere in Tabanan city then as well. Indeed, the fragments of stories I collected and general understanding I gleaned from Batukau folklore convey how the schism between the old villages is first and foremost about the estrangement of husband-and-wife deities, which goes back to the earliest times when the Kebayan group had attained original precedence over the summit. The revolution in cosmic order that I recount in Chapter 2 thus appears to still reverberate today in the rare occasions that these deities reunify for events like the Pengurip Gumi.

\* \* \*

Recall that during the Pengurip Gumi, natural domains (*kertih*) are revitalised to ensure the flows of life are guaranteed for the next generation. The first of these sacrificial rites replicates the *pekelem agung* performed under Kebayan custodianship once every three years at Lake Tamblingan (see Chapter 5). The lake is related through a complementary dyad with Pucak Kedaton, source of the (male) rains which replenish the (female) lake repository. Beside the lake stands Pura Ulun Danu Tamblingan where the Kebayan and Cokorda of Tabanan meet triennially to initiate this sacrifice to the lake deity, accompanied by farming cooperative leaders (*pekaseh*) to receive *tirta* to take to their respective *subak*. On January 27 a water buffalo is decorated with goldleaf on its horns and then dragged by canoe three times around the lake, before its release into the centre. This exchange secures water from the lake to the southern villages of Mount Batukau, emerging through its springs and rivers. From there *tirta* is taken to return to Pura Batukau for use in the temple, comprising the other transaction taking place in exchange for the buffalo and offerings given to the lake goddess.

Lake Tamblingan is a crater lake within the large caldera formed through a Pleistocene eruption of the ancient Buyan-Beratan volcano. At an unadorned section of the caldera's inner wall, another site of worship named Bebaturan Tirta Mengening is a source of *tirta* for ceremonies (see Figure 5.7 in Chapter 5). Priests dedicate a special offering named *banten temuku* there, which ensures free passage of the waters under the ground toward Tabanan's many agricultural communities. In the region's folklore, these underground channels are known to exist through discovery of a *tirta* sprinkler (*lis*) around Jatiluwih after its submersion in Lake Tamblingan. For these reasons, Lake Tamblingan is revered as the ultimate source of water for Tabanan and requires sacrifices made every three years outside of the Pengurip Gumi ceremony.



Fig. 7.13: Kebayan priests carry the *banten temuku* to Bebaturan Tirta Mengening on the other side of the lake. Photo credit: I Nengah Januartha



Fig. 7.14: The same priests return with *tirta* from Tirta Mengening, carried on the head of one of the Kebayan family priests, greeted by women dancing as this *tirta* is equivalent to the deity itself. Photo credit: I Nengah Januartha



*Fig. 7.15:* The decorated buffalo is drawn to the canoes to embark on its fateful journey into the lake.  
Photo credit: I Nengah Januartha



*Fig. 7.16:* Further offerings are dedicated from the ground toward the lake by priests from Pura Batukau.  
Photo credit: I Nengah Januartha



## PROCESSION

January 29: Melasti ke Segara

I arrive to the still dark temple kitchen area at 5am, snacking with others on leftovers from last night's meal. Within a couple of hours, the temple is heaving with people and excitement builds. Around 9:30am the Kebayan enters the inner courtyard, signalling the commencement. It will take 30 minutes just to assemble the different palanquins (*joli*) and accompanying paraphernalia of each deity, then another 30 minutes for them each to exit the temple, forming an ordered column that stretches from the entrance gate to hundreds of meters down the road. Once we begin walking, I will lose friends and meet new ones constantly, as my position alternates around a procession that maintains an expressly structured order. The model of Tambawaras and its entourage walking to Pura Batukau I provided above is roughly similar here yet enlarged by seven more divine groups and their respective entourages. The order of gods is as follows:

Position	Temple Deity	Network Position	Network Function
8	Ida Bhatara Luhur Petali	Child	Protection/Defence
7	Ida Bhatara Luhur Besikalung	Child	Spiritual Power
6	Ida Bhatara Luhur Muncaksari	Child	Fertility/Life
5	Ida Bhatara Luhur Tambawaras	Child	Health/Medicine
4	Ida Bhatara Luhur Pucak Kedaton	Father	Cosmic King
3	Ida Bhatara Luhur Batukau	Mother	Prime Minister
2	Ida Bhatara Luhur Batusalahan	Protector	Master of Ceremonies
1	Pecalang Agung Tengkidak	Protector	Security

Fig 7.17: Worship communities (*masyarakat pengempon*) of the Pura Batukau temple network

Out front a small group of priests travel first, performing sacrificial offerings (*segehan agung*) at transition points between villages and in front of major temples. The next

travellers of the procession are the many entranced followers, paving the way for the deities. Thereafter flow a large mix of priests, followed by the banners, parasols, and spears. In front of Pura Batukau's deity, the Kebayan and his wife alongside his family's inner circle walk surrounded by a specially-assigned group of security (*pecalang*) holding spears and banners, forming a protective barrier. Following them travels the sacred gamelan (*gong durwe*) disassembled into marching accompaniment unto the sea. Behind them two chairs are carried above the heads of young men the entire procession. If the Kebayan and his wife feel tired and cannot continue walking, then they will be carried while seated for the journey. Despite this privilege, the 74-year old Kebayan walks the entire four-day journey to the sea and back, approximately 90 kilometres in distance.



Fig 7.18: Path of the four-day, three-night procession (*melasti*) from Pura Batukau. The different temple locations show sites where the gods visit (*simpang*) during their voyage to the sea.

The procession stops along the way at many significant temples to visit (*simpang*) the deity associated with that place. Offerings are prepared at each site while the local gods and travelling deities gather in the temple's inner courtyard or Bale Agung for a break of usually half an hour or more, to allow time for the long column to reform. Offerings are stationed outside every home that we pass for the deity's consumption, as well as snacks

and water for those people participating. Bridges that have been constructed recently that divert the original route to sea are not traversed. Instead, those people carrying the gods must descend to the river and cross it by foot as their ancestors did before these modern bridges were built. This occurs at Yeh Ho, Yeh Empas and Yeh Panan rivers.

By the time we arrive to Penatahan village, it is already past 5pm and many thousands have joined the procession. It now grows substantially as the remaining two Catur Angga deities, Besikalung and Petali, are reunited with the rest of the network. Those gods and their corresponding entourages fall in place behind the others to become once more an integrated divine unit. Petali takes the final position as is customary for its protective role within the family. Around 8pm we arrive to Wana Siri village to rest and eat our first meal since the early morning. An hour and a half later, we travel to the centre of Tabanan city, where at 2am the gods finally arrive to the city's Puseh temple and are stationed until first light. Most people sleep on the streets outside the temple in any place they can find until around 5am the work of preparing the gods for their next leg is already underway. At this point, many people forming the different entourages now swap with other groups assigned for tomorrow's walk to the sea and back, whereas others who have come only for this initial leg of the procession return home to sleep. Core members of the network will stay the entire four-day course, briefly sleeping each night, including the main priests of Pura Batukau and its temple network.

Significantly, upon arrival to Tabanan city in the early hours of the morning, the summit deity of Pucak Kedaton and its entourage do not stay with the others at the central temple of Tabanan. Instead, they overnight at a nearby royal place named Puri Jero Subamia who are the patrons (*pengenceng*) for many highland temples, including Tambawaras and Muncaksari. By contrast, Puri Agung, the core palace of Tabanan who provided the king (*raja*) during the precolonial era, is the royal patron (*pengenceng*) of Pura Batukau. This choice of the summit deity to sleep elsewhere reflects the long running estrangement of the divine father from its wife and children recounted in Batukau folklore (see Aside: Batukau's Estranged Family above).

The procession leaves Tabanan today for the coastal temple Tanah Lot and then later this evening will return back to sleep again in the city's Puseh temple. Tanah Lot is the island's single most popular tourist destination, comprising a sprawling complex with magnificent views toward an ancient sanctuary nestled on a rocky outcrop that was once attached to the mainland via a now eroded landbridge. Entrance to the ancient sanctuary, identified as the core of the Tanah Lot complex, is possible at low tide and only for Balinese. Inside it are shrines dedicated to Pura Batukau, amongst others. The two temples form opposing poles along a spectrum of mountain to sea, implying a directionality of movement from summit to coast.

Today's journey to Tanah Lot slopes gently toward the coast. As the procession nears closer, the single most forceful storm I can remember arrives from across the sea and unleashes torrential rain upon us. This coincides with minutes before the first appearance of the parade. It will take 60 minutes for the caravan of gods and people to pass through the main gate, as each group descends carrying their community's highest representative in a military-like parade. The sea is higher than normal because of the ferocity of the storm, yet their passage across the short length of water between the mainland and the rocky outcrop is cleared miraculously, I was told, the waters splitting for them to pass. The deities are then transported up the stairs cut into the rockface and proceed into the inner temple for the priests to perform the *melasti* ritual.

Despite the long build-up and energy spent arriving to the sea, the *melasti* is processed in four hours, passing faster than I had imagined. Afterwards, the deities and priests stay inside Tanah Lot to collectively rest while further offerings are presented. The *melasti* is normally interpreted by Balinese as the ceremonial washing of the divine symbols they carry to the sea. This amounts essentially to a purification that is performed annually by lowland villages, along with all the human community who participate in this collective cleansing of negative qualities that have accumulated over the year. The process of heading to the river or sea before a large ceremony is popularly described as taking a bath (*mesiram*), applying equally to the gods in preparation for an

event held in their name.

I suggest alternative explanations in Chapter 4 and briefly below. In short, it seems likely that the original reason for these processions to water sources was linked to their revitalisation as domain resources. Senior priests balked at my relaying of interpretations that gods were “bathed” or “purified” by rivers and seaside locations, insisting instead that what matters is that water is the source of all life on Bali. These processions typically involve the washing of divine symbols (*pratima*), such as statues, daggers, or other sacred paraphernalia that gods are said to inhabit during temple ceremonies. However, these permanent symbols are not typically used around Mount Batukau. Gods normally inhabit a plant-based offering (*daksina pengadeg linggih*) during ceremonies and procession, perhaps more precisely the river stones placed at the base of this offering. In any case, at the rear of the procession since leaving Pura Batukau have been carried three of the giant burial offerings (*banten pememben*) containing seeds of the earth (*asil gumi*) to ritually submerge into the various earthly domains targeted by the Pengurip Gumi. Now, those three burial offerings are taken to the edge of the rocky outcrop beside Tanah Lot and thrown into the sea. Subsequently, the priests request *tirta* from its depths, which is taken back to Pura Batukau for use during the culmination events in February. This submersion of the burial offerings at sea completes its revitalisation.

The rain does not stop. Being two days walk from home for many people, there is no other option but to huddle together under various pavilions and wait for their body heat to dry their clothes before walking again. From early evening they return to Tabanan city’s Puseh temple to sleep overnight, before the next day following the same path back up to Tengkidak village, just south of Wongaya, where they again rest for the evening. On the way, the Besikalung and Petali divinities return to their respective village temples from just south of Penatahan village where they first joined the procession, Pucak Kedaton goes back via Piling village, and tomorrow morning Tambawaras and Muncaksari will return home to Sangketan. The different caretaking communities of the Catur Angga must now ready those temples for the culmination events scheduled to be performed on February 20 across the entire temple network.



Fig. 7.19: View of the tail end of the procession as it leaves the gates of Pura Batukau. The forested domain of Mount Batukau flanks the road until entering Wongaya village downstream.



Fig. 7.20: The *joli* (palanquin) carrying the deities of Tambawaras passes in front of Tengkudak village's Desa temple, where the entire procession rests (*simpang*) for half an hour.



Fig. 7.21: Three *banten pememben* (burial offerings) are carried upon men's shoulders the entire journey until being finally thrown into the sea behind Tanah Lot temple.



Fig. 7.22: The procession continues through fields and across waterways toward the sea. Photo credit: Anindya Krisna Widarma



*Fig. 7.23:* The heavens open as the procession arrives to Tanah Lot. Above, the masses of people wait while the gods cross the water onto the rocky outcrop the comprises the original temple grounds. Photo credit: I Nengah Januartha



*Fig. 7.24:* Arriving to the beach, the congregation moves slowly in file, guiding the palanquins toward the water. Photo credit: I Nengah Januartha





*Fig. 7.25:* The rocky outcrop of Tanah Lot, surrounded by sea water during the storm, contains within it shrines dedicated to the deity of the sea and mountain. It occupies the final node of the ritual network tracing the path of life from summit unto the sea. The three burial offerings were thrown off the edge of the upper platform toward the open sea after a series of rites were completed in the inner temple seen in the photo above. Photos credit: Anindya Krisna Widarma

Kertih: Sea

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The coastal Tanah Lot temple is an ancient site intimately related to Pura Batukau as the seaside complement to the mountain, underscoring the synergy between these two opposing poles. Rituals performed by the sea in fact seek to connect with the energy deep within the waters, what is referred to as *tengahing segara*, rather than the temple itself. As is generally the case with all temples, despite the ways they have been transformed over ages into majestic architectural complexes with multifarious shrines, they are rooted in the idea that a territorial power can be worshipped by creating an adjacent sanctuary for a local deity to visit when summoned to receive offerings. In this case, the deified controller of the sea—known by the Hindu title Dewa Baruna who could just as easily be referred to as Ida Bhatara Segara (the honourable power of the sea)—is called to unite with the deity of Pura Batukau, resulting in a powerful *tirta* to return to the mountain temple.

The overall revitalisation of the sea occurs in two parts I was able to document only partially. First, on the morning before the arrival of the gods from the mountain procession, a large sacrificial ceremony (*caru*) is performed called *tawur labuh gentub* (roughly: payment for the coming of fertile soils). This is a major event including the slaughter of many kinds of animals with three *pedanda* administering the rite. It takes place beside the sea just across the passageway leading to the main temple. Like the other *kertih* ceremonies, the revitalisation of the sea is fundamentally about its renewal as a source of life for Balinese. It seeks the regularity of seasons, continuity of the rain cycle from sea to mountain, waters safe from the threat of tsunami, and the abundance of creatures harvested from its domain. The second aspect of its revitalisation is the submergence of burial offerings within the domain, as already described above.

## SACRIFICE

This segment of the Pengurip Gumi is characterised by three successive stages: a major sacrificial payment to chthonic powers (*tawur agung*), the revitalisation of the mountain forest (*wana kertih*), then the pinnacle known as *pucak karya*, literally “the work’s peak”. Each of the ceremonies involves the slaughter and dedication as offerings of a staggering number of diverse animals, each aligned with a cardinal direction and colour. One day is dedicated to the extraction of the soul of the animals followed by their purification, parade and then slaughter. Then the following afternoon the community places all the offerings into position for their dedication. And lastly, on the third day, the main event is undertaken.

February 6: Mepepada

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Today the first stage commences, entitled *mapepada*, referring to the parade of animals around the temple before their slaughter. A male *pedanda* administers the ritual. In exchange for the life the animal gives for the ceremony, the priest requests that their reincarnation will be at a higher rung on the cosmic ladder. The animal’s soul is first extracted, then the animals are paraded around the middle courtyard during which time they step over offerings designed to purify their bodies, and thereafter are led to the carpark where teams of men from different villages wait to butcher them. Sections of the animal’s body are then delivered to other groups of men standing by who begin chopping (*mebat*) the meat while mixing in spices to create all manner of offering parcels that comprise components of the larger offering to be made from that species. For the larger animals like water buffalos and cows, the head, tail, and legs are arranged to resemble it in life (*wangun urip*). This entire process is complete by mid-afternoon when the different villages called to work may return home. At the Catur Angga temples the same ceremony is performed for a smaller array of animals. Late in the afternoon on the following day, the offerings are placed into position and a *pedanda* performs a ritual called *memben* to prepare them for dedication. This important ritual step is attended by only a few people.



*Fig. 7.26:* Small packages are prepared in assembly lines for offerings (*caru*) to the earth.



*Fig. 7.27:* Larger *gayah* offerings made from the fat of pigs are prepared by senior men and priests.

Today's ceremony is named *tawur agung*, literally the great payment. The ritual is staggeringly complex and difficult to document fully or interpret all the intricate details of offerings used. Four *pedanda* conjointly perform the ritual, including from the Siwa, Buda and Bhujangga sects, along with the *pedanda* assigned to the Pengurip Gumi (*yajamana*). It takes place in the centre of the middle courtyard, where offerings today are dedicated to the chthonic powers of the land encompassed by the earth mother, Ibu Pertiwi. Whereas at Pura Batukau the highest level of *tawur agung* is performed, at the Catur Angga temples a smaller sacrificial arrangement called *panca kelud* is performed. The different levels of sacrifice are classified on a spectrum of rituals falling under the category of *caru* (see Stuart-Fox 1987: 190-195). These offerings are distinguished by their placement on the ground and association with the earth. As a general guide, the spectrum of *caru* begins with small packages of rice for localised chthonic powers (*segehan*), increasing to the more common five-coloured chicken sacrifice (*panca sanak*) usually aimed at cleansing the land, continuing to more complex arrangements involving ducks, puppies, geese, turtles, monkeys and cows. The highest kind of *caru* utilise water buffalo and it these which are generally referred to as *tawur* (payments).

This by no means exhausts all kinds of animals used, but hints at the logic at play. At each higher level of *caru* the lower level is incorporated and used as part of the larger ritual. Every kind of animal has its complement in colour and direction on the cardinal compass, so for example, cows are associated with the colour red, the direction *kelod* (downstream), and the god Brahma, whereas goats are associated with yellow, *kaub* and Mahadewa. Recall that the cardinal directions in Bali are anchored to the highest mountain peak of significance for the community. So, while the directions appear ordered around a centre with *kaja*, *kangin*, *kelod* and *kaub* forming opposing horizontal and vertical poles, in actuality, the dominant anchor is *kaja* (upstream) that points towards the mountain and determines the rest of the alignment. These cardinal directions are then elaborated through addition of four intermediary directions and then complemented by above and below directions to expand the system to eleven points at its maximum.

For today, offerings have been laid out on the ground in accordance with the cardinal directions. Each direction has assigned a bamboo altar (*sanggah cucuk*) with offerings dedicated at the upper part for the deity visiting from that direction, while at the altar's lower part are piled offerings dedicated to the chthonic realm. Outside of the directional offerings, at the *kaja-kangin* and *kelod-kauh* corners of the middle courtyard, two special rites are performed. First, a *mandala* is drawn with powdered chalk on the ground at the *kaja-kangin* corner. Small offerings are placed in each of the *mandala*'s corner while a *pedanda Boda* (Buddhist sect) dedicates these in an esoteric ritual said to *ngidupang gumi* (give life to the earth). Many offerings will later be buried into the ground in the same location. Second, a different order of rite occurs at the *kelod-kauh* corner. Multicoloured rice, each hue associated with a cardinal direction, is piled on the ground in an area demarcated by powdered chalk. A black piglet is beheaded and its blood poured into that rice, along with palm liquor (*arak*) and rice wine (*berem*). Then the ingredients are mixed from outside to inside, forming what is later termed *nasi tawur* (rice consecrated during the *tawur* rite). Villagers take (*nunas*) this home to be used in offerings (*segehan*) dedicated around their villages.

The main event may then proceed, wherein those sacrificial offerings placed around the cardinal directions are dedicated to the deities invited. *Tirta* thus consecrated from the *tawur* is placed in a large tub for people to take home with them, beside a similarly-sized vessel named *tirta Batukau* that was generated in the inner courtyard.

Synchronously, the Catur Angga temples complete their ritual equivalents of the *tawur* performed at Pura Batukau. Those rites (*panca kelud*) use a specially-marked puppy as its highest sacrificial animal. Once the major temples have completed their ceremonies, all the caretaking communities request a portion of the *tirta tawur* and *tirta Batukau* to sprinkle these over offerings dedicated in every family's houseyard temple. For the *segehan* offerings placed on the ground, *nasi tawur* is used. This special rice is also sprinkled across the land of the houseyard. In so doing, the rice and *tirta* consecrated in the core and regional temples is employed to perform a similar function of harmonising the land associated with every family's houseyard, drawing the powers of the centre into the periphery, as we saw last chapter.

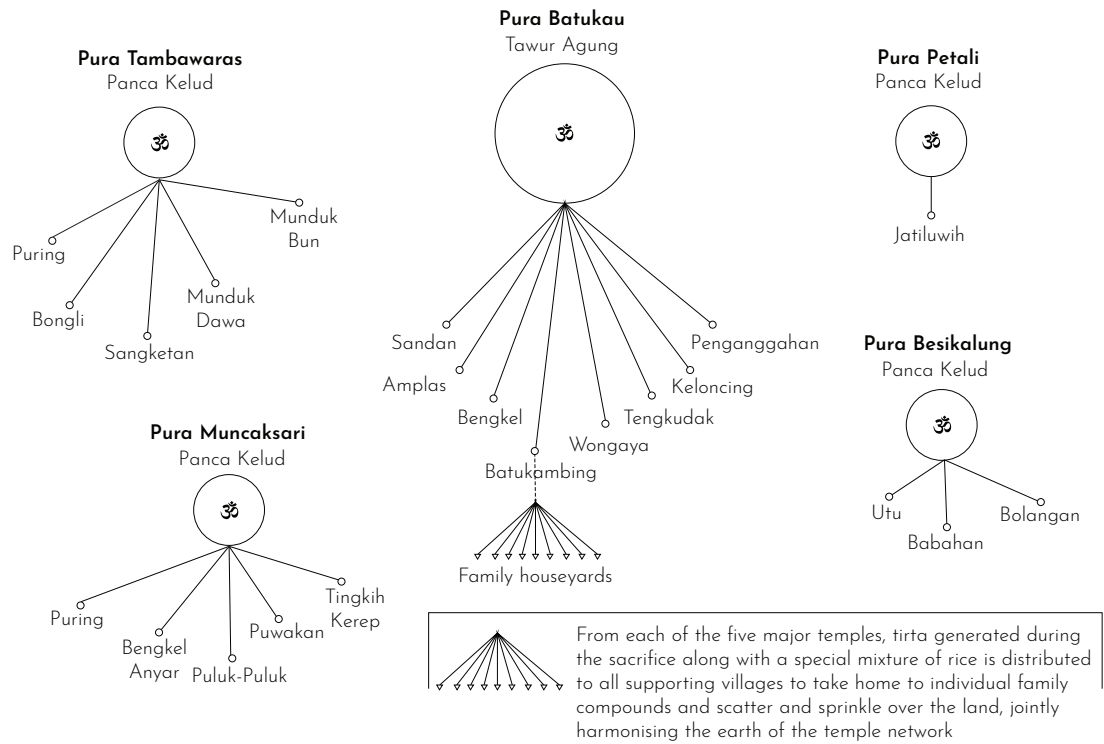


Fig. 7.28: The *tawur agung* and smaller *panca kelud* sacrifices occur synchronously across the temple network, from which a special *tirta* and *nasi* is generated and distributed to families to disperse over their respective lands.



Fig. 7.29: A small section of the offerings prepared for the day. The black coloured ones on the ground are dedicated upstream and associated with deity Wisnu.



Fig. 7.30: More offerings in the same courtyard used during the *tarwur agung*. The pink colour is associated with the southeast direction and the deity Maheswara.



Fig. 7.31: A *pedanda* from the Buddha sect performs the rite in the *kaja-kangin* corner associated with giving life to the earth.





*Fig. 7.32:* The different coloured rice that will become *nasi tawur*. Each colour is associated with a different cardinal direction and deity. Photo credit: I Nengah Januartha



*Fig. 7.33:* The coloured rice from above is placed on the ground in the *kelod-kauh* corner and mixed with plain rice and the blood of a beheaded piglet sacrificed directly into the grains. Photo credit: I Nengah Januartha



Fig. 7.34: The large terracotta dish contains the multicoloured rice called *nasi tawur* that has been consecrated during the ritual. Photo credit: I Nengah Januartha



Fig. 7.35: People line up to *munas* (request) portions of the *nasi tawur*, as seen in the dish carried by the man. Photo credit: I Nengah Januartha



Fig. 7.36: Huge containers filled with *tirta* from the deity and *tirta* from the *tawur agung* are made available for people to take home with them. The miracle of *tirta* allows for a drop of consecrated holy water from the gods to transform an entire container of normal water into *tirta*. This renders it an infinitely divisible medium.

The second component of the *tawur agung* is a rite named *mupuk pedagingan*. The words derive from *mupuk*, “to layer or stack”, and *pedagingan* meaning “a container”. Together, the title refers to the process of burying a package of precious ingredients in the base of a shrine, a phase typical of the *ngenteg linggih* (fortifying a temple’s shrines) type of ceremonies administered by *pedanda* on Bali. It is a rite symbolically attached to Javanese Hindu culture’s first arrival to Bali, recounted in the folk story of Rsi Markandeya’s initiation of this burial of a *pedagingan* container to harmonise the energies of the earth with his first settlement (see MacRae 2006; Stuart-Fox 1987).<sup>129</sup> The container (*pedagingan*) includes five kinds of metal (*panca datu*), each aligned to the cardinal deities and colours along with other objects of religious importance. During a shrine’s ritual initiation after finishing its construction, the containers are buried (*mendem pedagingan*) under the structure. Each subsequent generation should perform

<sup>129</sup> One of Sangketan’s senior priests commented that this rite of burying the *panca datu*, not traditionally practiced around the Mount Batukau highlands, in fact registers the Javanese newcomers need to mediate with the indigenous custom of venerating the earth already predominant across the island at that time, including at the megalithic foundations of Pura Besakih where Rsi Markandeya first settled.

the *mupuk pedagingan* ceremony to renew the energy of the shrine.

When asked about its purpose, most people use the analogy of a mobile phone. Like a phone's antenna, the buried package enables communication between human and divine parties—enabling the god associated with that shrine to be summoned—a signal which grows weak over time and needs recharging at periodic intervals. It is comparable to the *mulang dasar* rite performed when building a home that buries a stone with offerings as its first foundation, anchoring it to the earth and strengthening the structure (see Wessing and Jordaan 1997). Note, the most traditional communities around Mount Batukau have never performed the *mupuk pedagingan/ngenteg linggih* rituals because its practice is associated with Brahmanical tradition and their local shrines remain original *bebaturan*.<sup>130</sup> For the Pengurip Gumi, I was told the difference between the *mupuk pedagingan* used here and ceremonies elsewhere is that the former contain different ingredients and embody a distinct purpose: to revitalise the earth instead of the shrine itself. Hence, they are buried in the earth behind the shrine and not in the structure's base.

In preparation, small holes are dug behind each shrine. The hole is then purified through either a branch of the *kayu sakti* tree or the *keris* (magical dagger) of a lowland royal house. Thereafter, the container (*pedagingan*) is tapped three times onto the foreheads of those present, tapped three times on the shrine itself and then placed in the hole. Coin donations and minor offerings are then thrown in, and each participant sprinkles (*ngurugin*) soil three times over the offering before it is covered completely. This completes the ritual, after which time an offering is placed on top with incense lit.

Different people are involved depending upon the shrine. For the most important ones, the Kebayan and his family, the lowland king and regional political leaders of Tabanan participate. For the dynastic shrines of the Tabanan and Badung kingdoms in Pura Batukau's inner courtyard, the king and regional politicians lead the burial while the Kebayan and his wife stand beside them. Meanwhile, smaller shrines are administered

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<sup>130</sup> I confirmed this to be the case in Wanagiri and Batungsel and assume it also to be true for Sanda and Sarinbuana.

by the priest of the Kebayan *kawitan* clan and core family members. The joint act of burying these containers is another tangible expression of the broader social relations involved in supporting the regency's state temple, incorporating both palace and government into the maintenance of shrines ritually controlled by the Kebayan family.



*Fig. 7.37: Senior Kebayan priests install the pedagingan behind the Petaangan shrine.*



Fig. 7.38: The Kebayan *kawitan* priest touches the *pedagingan* on the heads of those present before placing it in the ground behind the shrine. This time it is installed behind the Wana Kertih altar in the temple.

The following day is called *nyepi*, from *sepi*, meaning quiet, when no ritual activity is undertaken in the temple.

Kertih: Forest

On February 14 continues the next phase of revitalisation events, the *wana kertih*. This is the third *kertih* ceremony, following the sea and lake domains previously revitalised. The *wana kertih* is performed in the forest beside Pura Batukau. Using a site within the actual forest enables a direct connection to the deity consubstantial with the domain. The stated purpose is to *maurip wana* (revitalise/bring to life) so that the forest *mentik* (increases) in abundance. Offerings are laid out on the ground in a similar fashion to the *tawur agung* with more of the staggering diversity of animals slaughtered. There is no shrine dedicated to the forest deity as one would expect within a temple. Instead, one priestly interlocutor explained that *wana kertih* is dedicated to the “boss” who controls all the creatures of its forest domain. This kind of deified controller is amorphous and one with all forests. Another priest speaks of this deity as Sang Hyang Sangkara, the

same god who is worshipped on the pan-Balinese annual ceremony called *tumpek bubuh*, when porridge and offerings are given to plants in one's garden while words of encouragement for growth are spoken.

Three *pedanda* work today. The Siwa dedicates the upper level of offerings and the middle and lower are addressed by the Buda and Bhujangga sects respectively. As the rite is nearing completion, priests are called to bring cut bamboo containers (*bungbung*) of *tirta pemuput* (for ritual completion) from the Bale Penegtegang. Recall that this *tirta pemuput* has been taken from high status temples all over Bali and beyond. The water is sprinkled toward all the temporary shrines inhabited by deities, then finally mixed into a large vessel containing *tirta Batukau* for people to take home later. To end, *nasi tarwur* (rice from the above *tarwur* ritual) is sprinkled around the perimeter. A smaller version of the same ceremony occurs within the forest beside each of the respective Catur Angga temples.



*Fig. 7.39:* The *wana kertih* ceremony is performed in the forest beside the temple. It is arranged similarly to the *tarwur agung* with altars prepared in alignment with the cardinal directions, deities, and colours.



Fig. 7.40: This photo shows the *wayang* (shadow puppet theatre). It is remarkable because the image plainly conveys how the participants perform toward the forest domain directly rather than the shrine of an individual deity. In so many instances, the god and agricultural resource are in fact consubstantial.

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### Aside: Demons?

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A much-repeated refrain in Balinese anthropology is that the species of being targeted by sacrificial rites (*caru*) called *buta-kala* are “demons” (Eiseman 1990: 226-234; Reuter 2002a: 30-31; Howe 2001: 69-72). *Buta-kala* are described as malevolent forces who destabilise the environment and negatively interfere with normal Balinese life (Warren 1993: 143). Chthonic rites (*caru*) are typically interpreted as either minimising their potential harm by paying them rice (a *tawur* or “payment”) in local interpretations, or through transforming their character into benevolent gods (*derwa*) in Hinduistic theology. Note first that *buta-kala* are Hindu metaphysical terms, imported alongside the moralistic projection of them as “demons” or “malevolent” because of their correspondence to a hierarchically-ordered cosmos split into a pure above and impure below (Howe 1980: 188). This is at odds with indigenous Indonesian conceptions of deities consubstantial with the earth who are essentially ambiguous divinities (Aragon 2000: 173; Domenig 2014; Waterson 2009), neither benevolent or malevolent by nature, but equally capable of dispensing life-giving and death-dealing powers (Sahlins 2022). Periodic ceremonies such as temple anniversaries performed to worship a god of the village have the same necessity as those dedicated to the so-called “demons” of the earthly domain: if either are neglected, they will both punish the local inhabitants.



One of my learned interlocutors, a senior priest from Sangketan, discussed this issue at length with me. He conveyed his surprise at my description of *buta-kala* as malevolent beings within the literature. For this priest, *buta* are the energies of the earth from which everything material and immaterial is formed. They do not have an intrinsic nature that one could say is immoral or malevolent, but rather require balancing after time through periodic rituals that reharmonise Balinese with their surrounding environment. Yet the priest was quick to point out that all gods require periodic worship through the dedication of offerings, not only what is categorised as *buta-kala*. The essential difference lies in the domain to which they are ascribed, which is generally the low, chthonic, world, as opposed to the upper world (*lubur*) assigned to temple and other deities.<sup>131</sup> This association of the below with what is impure, malevolent and “demonic”, it appears to me now, is not an intrinsic quality but rather the product of Hindu metaphysics superimposed upon the original worship of energies tied to the earth (see Chapter 10). Hence why *caru* rituals have the double entendre of purification and enhancing fertility: each meaning has its correspondence in its respective metaphysics.

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<sup>131</sup> Domenig (2014: 57-130) has an excellent discussion in his volume on indigenous Indonesian rituals about a phenomenon he terms the “earth spirit paradox”. Greatly simplified, his argument is that earth spirits were expelled to higher domains when clearing land associated with sacred groves, such as mountain summits, from where they are called down for worship during ceremonial events, as we see on Bali. This means that earth spirits, normally associated with a lower or chthonic domain, become somewhat confusingly identified as inhabiting the above domain once they have been integrated into high mountains. The trick, however, is to perceive that the earth is topographically graded in places like Bali, where its upper domain (*ulu, lubur*) is at once the head of the land and apex of an interconnected domain. I elaborate on these ideas further in Chapters 9 and 10.

## THE PEAK

In the lead-up to the *pucak* (peak) event of the Pengurip Gumi, a procession of rice stalks arrives to the middle courtyard from a temple in Wongaya. Two enormous piles are formed to await dedication during the *sarin tabun* ceremony that takes place two weeks from today. Additionally, five days before the culmination event on February 20, all male villagers bring a small-scale version of the larger bamboo post (*penjor*) that has been installed outside every houseyard in Tabanan since January. These smaller *penjor sawen* are the male complement to the Bhatara Nini created by each female village member that bonds them with the female generative principle, Dewi Sri. This *penjor sawen* awaits the *pengusaban agung* ceremony on the culmination day, after which time it is returned to the rice fields where a special *tirta* is sprinkled over it to permit the recommencement of work after the Pengurip Gumi's most climactic stages have ended.



*Fig. 7.41:* These two enormous piles of rice stalks have been assembled as donations for the upcoming *sarin tabun* exchange ritual. The rice stalks will be distributed by entranced men and women during the Sri Tumpuk ritual documented next chapter. Around these piles have been gathered the *penjor sawen* fashioned by each local male rice farmer. These will stay in the temple until after the climax ceremonies whereafter they are installed in each farmer's rice field.

As we edge closer to February 20, the same preparatory phases are initiated as with the *tawur agung*. This means the animals to be slaughtered and reassembled into offerings are paraded and then butchered on February 18 (*mepepada*). The following day on February 19 the completed offerings are put in position and then activated (*mendem*) by the *pedanda*. Today, the animals have their souls ritually extracted by the *pedanda* and thereafter teams of men dismember the animals in the car park of the temple. Different processing stations take larger portions of meat and distil them into complex assemblages, following an elaborate but familiar set of instructions. The animals used today are less in number than the *tawur agung* which is the largest single sacrificial event, yet the different animals today all have significant functions within the steps that will unfold on the day of the *pucak karya*.



Fig. 7.42: The two kings, Kebayan and Cokorda, converse during a moment of preparation for the *mendem karya* ceremony. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana



Fig. 7.43: The roostered *pedanda* performs the *mendem karya* ceremony with his wife standing behind as assistant. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana

February 20: Pucak Karya

By early morning the temple is heaving for the big day. An assortment of *pedanda* from around the island, palace leaders and government officials of Tabanan, the families of Wongaya Gede and hundreds of the general public are all present to witness this major event. The morning will be spent dedicating the offerings named Pengurip Gumi in the inner courtyard first, then at all major shrines around the temple. After this, a *pedudusan* ceremony will run that is essentially a purification ceremony drawing on offerings linked to the cardinal directions and use of live animals to make contact with different elements of the temple. Thereafter, a highly symbolic ritual called *mepelesang* runs in the Bale Pegat pavilion of the middle courtyard. Then the *pengusaban agung* runs in the Bale Agung that unites the powers of the temple deity with the instances of Dewi Sri embodied in the Bhatara Nini offerings. At each important phase a special *tirta* is consecrated that shares the same name as the ceremony from which it is generated. Then these four distillations of *tirta*—*pedudusan*, *pengurip gumi*, *pengusaban agung* and *peselang*—are taken by the head priest of each Catur Angga temple to their own temple to run minor versions of the Pengurip Gumi ceremonies synchronously, following the

same basic structure as at Pura Batukau. Finally, given this culmination day falls on the temple's normal anniversary, the annual temple ceremony (*odalan*) runs this evening through the entire night.

In the inner courtyard, the Kebayan and his wife sit in the central pavilion facing the principal shrine from where he alone announces (*mepekeling*) the day's schedule. He gives *tirta* to his wife and they sit and speak with offerings specialists to finalise today's agenda. Shortly after, they ascend to sit beside the *pedanda* rostered for the day, alongside the Cokorda Tabanan. Given the immense crowds I take note of the setup then move to the Petaangan shrine beside the inner courtyard where a smaller scale version of the ceremony will run, as is occurring at major shrines all around the temple today. After the ceremonial work in the inner courtyard is complete, the *pedanda* at Pura Petaangan is free to commence. The complex procedures occurring around the temple synchronously are in fact simply the dedication of offerings designated for this culmination event to all gods participating in the Pengurip Gumi. In exchange, *tirta* is consecrated and consolidated in a large vessel entitled *tirta pengurip gumi* and stored at the temple entrance for visitors to take home (*nunas*) and for use in future ritual actions.

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#### Aside: Maturan Nunas

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As with all Balinese temple ceremonies, the core focus today is an exchange of offerings for *tirta* and other divine powers. The exchange is administered by temple priests whose role is mediation, while priests' wives (*serati*) work in tandem to light the incense and activate offerings until *tirta* is consecrated and delivered by male priests to the community. An observer like me becomes lost in the infinite series of miniature transactions taking place, where bowls of *tirta* are fetched, activated, and removed, at the same time as offerings are opened and the *lis* (plant-based "sprinklers") are unpackaged and animated. Each group of offerings is composed of oftentimes more than 100 individual ingredients, a single package being only part of a larger assemblage of five or more items offered as a group to the god. I found tracing those dizzying combinations of offerings distracting after a while, especially since their growing complexity tends to obscure what is a relatively unchanging core of exchange.

Gods possess powers desired by the human community, who negotiate for these with offerings, the preferred currency of *niskala* beings. As Linda Connor found on Bali, "[t]he idiom of the

marketplace is often used to describe the way offerings are used. Offerings are a currency that is acceptable to spirits and deities” (1996: 57). This structural operation, what the Balinese refer to as *maturan nunas* (offer to receive), is the basic ordering principal of ritual on Bali. The pinnacle event known as *pucak karya* is no different. It is the culmination of hundreds of other smaller steps combined with separate offerings over the months preceding. Now is the moment all past preparation has led up to, a journey which is figuratively imagined as an ascent that reaches its climax today, hence its name “the work’s peak” (*pucak karya*). The actual exchange is over in a couple of hours, those offerings having been dedicated, the *tirta pengurip gumi* secured, the collective work thus realised. As a result, now begins the figurative descent from this “peak” whereby an array of commemorative rituals will continue over the coming weeks until the ceremony ends in just over a month’s time and is finally sealed another month later.

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The day now continues to its next phase called *mepeselang*. This is a feature of all major ceremonies administered by *pedanda* around Bali. A long white cloth (*kain*) is unrolled for the temple deity to be carried upon, while the Kebayan and his wife ascend the Bale Saren Suci to face the deity. The Kebayan announces their plans to transport the god to the Bale Pegat of the middle courtyard where the *mepeselang* ritual will be performed. Accompanying the deity will be the temple gods associated with rice cultivation—Penyaum, Jero Sasah, Petaangan and Pengubengan—led by the Kebayan himself walking over the cloth. During all processions of the Pengurip Gumi, those rice cultivation gods are accompanied by their own Bhatara Nini offering that is eventually offered up to the deity once they finally take residence in their shrines at the end of the Pengurip Gumi. Before ascending to the Bale Pegat, the Kebayan crosses a symbolic bridge (*titi mamah*) composed of a dismembered water buffalo rearranged into a living form (*wangun urip*) for only divine beings to cross. A small bamboo ladder has been constructed for the deities to then ascend to a multitiered structure waiting in the Bale Pegat made for this day. The Kebayan receives each god and gathers them together at the highest level thereafter seating himself on the next tier below to face them.

The *mepeselang* ceremony is highly symbolic and difficult to interpret. The mountain end (*kaja*) of the Bale Pegat has been arranged into a tripartite structure, the highest level for the deities, a middle level where the Kebayan and wife alone may sit, followed

by a lower level where scale models of boats and traditional rice barns have been sculpted. This arrangement explicitly identifies the Kebayan as mediator between human and divine realms given his status as embodying qualities of both—the Kebayan's wife informs me no ordinary human can ascend where he sits now. Two *pedanda* sit at lower levels and at a distance from the structure where they begin a series of rituals, while the Kebayan follows their lead and takes a large offering (*lis*) to sprinkle *tirta* on the assembled deities.

The term *mepeselang* literally means to borrow, referring to the space in the pavilion borrowed for a special joining of human and divine. I am told this moment signifies the unity of generative forces of the cosmos, *purusa* and *predana*, *nyegara* and *gunung*, man and wife, sky and earth. Although Balinese don't generally speak of a vital-force, they do speak of an energy produced through this joining of *purusa* and *predana*, male and female generative principals. Applied generally to ritual contexts, reproduction of life in the broadest Hocartian (1970) sense emerges from the joining of those two complementary forces. Once merged these powers are the universal life-force animating all living things, and now is a moment when through his meeting with the deities, the Kebayan may participate in their unity, bringing power and life to the realm. Such is my interpretation of the meeting that takes place behind a curtain drawn once those initial offerings have been made, the Kebayan, his wife and gods gathering alone for roughly 20 minutes.

With the *mepeselang* meeting completed, communal prayers are made and *tirta mepeselang* is distributed. From there begins the *pengusaban agung*. The deities gathered in the Bale Pegat descend in the same order of procession toward the Bale Agung, where they encircle it three times, and then the Kebayan places them facing one another at the mountain end (*kaja*) of the pavilion. *Ngusaba* literally means to meet, although this concept in other contexts encompasses varied meanings. This *ngusaba* is briefly administered by the *pedanda* and there is little to observe apart from him undertaking his ritual procedures while the gods remain together in the Bale Agung. After this is complete the prayers are made and *tirta pengusaban agung* is consecrated. At this point, the different head priests of the Catur Angga may return to their temples carrying four

varieties of *tirta* to complete their own culminations of the Pengurip Gumi.

As the sun goes down, one last major ceremony of the culmination day occurs in the outer courtyard named *mepedanan*. The gods are assembled in a special bamboo structure accompanied by the Kebayan and wife that has been decorated to resemble a market stall. This ceremony is said to recognise the economy as an essential aspect of social life and to bring prosperity to all its related activities. After this short exercise, the gods are carried once more to the inner courtyard where they may finally take their seats (*ngelinggihan*) upon their respective shrines. As such, the time has come for the temple anniversary (*odalan*) to run at Pura Batukau, the *pucak karya* event of the Pengurip Gumi timed so it falls on the date of the regular annual festival.

So I stay through the night for another *odalan* at Pura Batukau, observing the sacred dances and revelling in the mesmerising sounds of the ancient gamelan (*gong durwe*). The *nganteb* (dedication of offerings) runs as per normal, a moving spectacle that brings together the chanting of men and women (*kidung*) and the unmatched melodies of the temple's gamelan, as we sit shoulder-to-shoulder in silent meditation on the ground of the sacred inner courtyard (*jeroan*) listening to one priest's bell ring alone. The Kebayan has risen upon a ladder to dedicate offerings (*mebanten*) from the upper level of the central pavilion of the *jeroan*. From this elevated position he looks directly upon the principal shrine (*candi agung*), standing above his family members seated below and the congregation filling the courtyard ground, mediating between the temple deity and gathered community. I look up to see the moon has rendered Mount Batukau in silhouette, illuminating this beacon of life for highland society, toward which we uniformly align ourselves.





*Fig. 7.44:* The Kebayan sits alone in the *peselang* (borrowed) space after the deities have been assembled above him. He is joined by his wife alone as they mediate between the gods and images of Balinese culture like the rice barns and outrigger boats are on display below. *Pedanda* conduct this ritual from behind the photo. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana



*Fig. 7.45:* Men help carry the Batukau temple deities associated with rice cultivation as they travel for the *mepeselang* ceremony. The man to the left is the brother of the king of Tabanan and two along from him with the black glasses is the political deputy of Tabanan's regional leader. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana



*Fig. 7.46:* The Kebayan family. On our left, the grandson of the previous Kebayan and nephew of the current leader. In the centre are the Kebayan and his wife, with their son to the right. They sit together in the Bale Singasari which is dedicated to the Kebayan core-line ancestors, a space strictly forbidden for anyone else to enter. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana

Kertih: Mountain

The day after the *pucak karya*, a team of around 160 villagers head to Mount Batukau's summit for its revitalisation through the sacrificial *pekelem* rite. Carried by them are an abundance of offerings for each forest shrine along the trail and the summit itself, as well as the black duck and chicken used in the *pekelem*. As with the triennial *pekelem* rite performed at Pucak Kedaton, these animals are not killed but *melepasan* (liberated) to signify life's renewal. In local belief, the mountain is normally conceived to encompass the forest, but this domain is vitalised separately during the Pengurip Gumi (see *wana kertih* above). This divine mountain is the arbiter of good weather for agrarian life as realised through abundant rain, sunshine and wind, though its symbolic association extends far beyond that to stories of origin and other powers. However, for these rituals concerned generally with bringing life again to the world, the *gunung kertih* rite performed today enacts a symbolic sacrifice to the mountain deity in exchange for continued prosperity in the realm of divinised forces of nature it controls.

## Interlude

The preceding sections have advanced toward the climactic Pengurip Gumi event at Pura Batukau. Regional centres of power that fall under the authority of Kebayan spiritual control have reunified once more with the mother deity and accompanied her and the father deity to sea and back again. After this journey they returned to their respective Catur Angga temples and underwent corresponding *wana kertih*, *tawur agung* and *pucak karya* ceremonies on the same day, effecting synchronic ritual events across the network. These temples proved to be one and inseparable, a single body demonstrating its force and composite number through a procession by foot from the mountain all the way to the sea, a human column spread over hundreds of metres participated in by tens of thousands of people. The parade through one of Bali's most populous cities brought it to a standstill while an obscure group living most of their life in the highlands, led by the Kebayan, brought the remote mountain and some of its most potent deities through the city, sleeping in its central temple for two evenings.

From its outset the whole edifice of ceremonial action has developed towards a peak moment, an ascent towards a climax, that has brought life again to the domain of Tabanan and restored cosmic balance to the shared universe of Mount Batukau. Now begins a set of commemorative and exchange rituals that incorporate more of the region's communities and island at large into the festivities playing out on the central stage of Pura Batukau.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### Pengurip Gumi: Part III

#### Commemoration, Exchange and Closing

*This interpenetration between ritual and daily life, or between people and spirits and gods, is nowhere more apparent than in Bali, where every act seems to be an art form, designed to please the gods.*

Robert Wessing, *A Community of Spirits*

#### Introduction

Since the **Reunification** of the Catur Angga temple network, and subsequent **Procession, Sacrificial** and **Peak** events of the Pengurip Gumi, we now enter a new theme of development. I have labelled this next phase **Commemoration** for it mostly pertains to the performances of the local Sanghyang, yet also includes the *ngremekin*, *ngebekin* and *penganyar* ceremonies. Those latter ceremonies are tied to commemorating the passing of the work's peak (*pucak karya*). *Ngremekin* is dedicated to disposing of the sacrificial offerings' components used over the past week, while *ngebekin* signifies abundance, a rite which endeavours to increase in yield all the positive effects sought through the ceremonial activity. Finally, the *penganyar* ceremony is split over ten days which involves the eight other regencies of Bali sending representatives from their respective regions to renew (*nganyarin*) offerings at each shrine. In addition to those regencies, Denpasar city and the Governor of Bali's office also contribute. During these moments, offerings are the exchange medium by which those regions participate in commemorating the completed series of events comprising the Pengurip Gumi.

This same theme becomes most apparent during the final substantive ceremonial phase of the Pengurip Gumi. I have named this **Exchanges** after its many different instances taking place. All components of Balinese ritual have an element of exchange, underscoring the transactional nature of human and divine relations on Bali. However, the following sequence of events I believe embody the spirit of exchange most explicitly, especially in one of the most significant rituals of the Pengurip Gumi. *Sarin tahun* is a ritual exchange that takes place each year by farmers all around Bali who offer 'fruits' of their harvest to the deity associated with fertility over their rice-fields. For the Pengurip

Gumi, the reciprocal component takes the form of divine recompense for all accumulative works rendered thus far, when the temple deity imparts a special *tirta* for farmers of the nearby region. This holy water is analogous to divine fertiliser, poured into the fields to vitalise them for another generation that is only bestowed after all the previous ceremonial phases have been completed.

Not limited to only offerings, exchanges in this phase also take the form of the second largest procession of the Pengurip Gumi. Occurring in the first week of March, this three-day walk called *ngelelawā* journeys the *taman sari* of Pura Batukau, its figurative garden. The procession embodies another aspect of intervillage relationships whereby the deity of Pura Batukau overnights in the village of Sangketan, where the temples of Tambawaras and Muncaksari are located, and with whom the Kebayan of Wongaya retain an elder brother relationship with the core-line of Sangketan. The following night is spent in Tengkudak, who have been faithful defenders of the temple in their role as *pecalang agung* (chief protector) of the Batukau deity. Most interlocutors explained *ngelelawā* as a process analogous to when a person holds a party for which the invitees all contribute gifts and services, after which the party host will visit those guests to thank them. This reciprocity of prestations underscores the intervillage dependency when preparing for and undertaking rituals that generate prosperity for the entire region, on a scale that no single community can perform alone. Lastly, on the day the ceremony comes to a close (*nyineb*), there is a ritual exchange reproduced for the Pengurip Gumi that is normally performed during the *odalan* at Pura Batukau. It is a regular fixture of the temple ceremonies held at each Catur Angga temple as well, and unique to this temple network region as far as I am aware, being a vital element of their annual series of human-divine exchanges revolving around rice cultivation.

The final phase named **Closing** encapsulates a few key movements. Principally, the different deities who are still present in the temple are requested to depart at different points during the closing ceremony. The common name for this closing ceremony is *nyineb*, which comes from the storing (*nyineb*) of permanent objects of sacred value to altars (*gedong simpen*) that house them in the temple. However, at Pura Batukau, rather than returning sacred objects (*pratima*) that gods inhabit during temple ceremonies in

other parts of Bali, the offering receptacles (*pengadeg daksina*) which the deities participate in are ritually cremated and buried back into the temple grounds. This same practice occurs throughout the temple network, both for the Pengurip Gumi and regular temple anniversaries, and applies equally to the Sanghyang effigies created especially for the ceremony. It underscores the fundamentally aniconic nature of divine worship around the Mount Batukau highlands.

The closing phase also involves the final dispersion of the Bhatari Nini offerings. This movement traces the flow of fertility from the core power of Pura Batukau back to each subdistrict's village temples, and then ultimately all individual houseyards of the caretaking community (*pengempon*). In parallel, the specially-formulated *tirta nangluk merana* configured to cleanse the fields of pests is used to purify the land after its dissemination from the core sanctuary during the *ngelawa* procession. Over the course of the evening of the closing ceremony, the burial offerings (*banten pememben*) which have accompanied the ceremony's many phases, originating in the **Ingredients** section of Chapter 6, are finally activated and buried. This activation is a standard procedure of *pedanda*-run events around the island, where the *keris* (sacred dagger) of kings is inserted into each offering, and then these towering structures must await the excavation of deep-enough holes by men to cover them entirely. In total, 21 of these burial offerings are buried around the temple network, including several in each courtyard of Pura Batukau and one in each of the Catur Angga temples.

## COMMEMORATION

February 21: Sanghyang

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For three days following the *pucak karya*, a major feature of Wongaya tradition (*dresta*) is performed in the temple. As outlined in Chapter 6, the different Sanghyang effigies of Wongaya village were brought to Pura Batukau in mid-January. These effigies are brought out to perform over the course of three evenings. On the final night, I arrive earlier to speak with the two principal carers of the effigies, a husband-and-wife pair who belong to the Bande family temple in Wongaya. They are in the temple repairing the effigies after the two nights' previous performances, renewing threads and retying bells. We discuss how the Sanghyang are fashioned from local trees on a full moon and how they are cared for, all of which I reported in Chapter 6. In a remarkable memory from fieldwork, the pair recalled to me how a Japanese fieldworker called Yasuyuki Nagafuchi spent time with them in the 1980s. I found this anthropologist's research online and established contact with him, explaining where I was and relaying how the husband-and-wife pair from Wongaya remembered him fondly. Upon receiving my messages, Nagafuchi sent me photos from his fieldwork showing performances of the Sanghyang, including photos of Wongaya and its residents. I took some of these to the temple the following day to show to my interlocutors, who delighted in seeing photos from over thirty years ago of their fellow residents and the same ceremonies still being performed. Nagafuchi granted me permission to include some of his photos from 1986 here.



*Fig. 8.1:* Sanghyang rituals performed in 1986 in Wongaya village. Here the young girls enter trance during the *dedari* performance (compare with Chapter 6's photos of Sanghyang). Photo credit: Yasuyuki Nagafuchi.



*Fig. 8.2:* The Sanghyang *deling* performance in 1986 featuring a man and a woman partly entranced as they rattle the two Sanghyang effigies suspended on a string. Photo credit: Yasuyuki Nagafuchi.





Fig. 8.3: Left: The Sanghyang *sampat* (broom). Fig. 8.4: Right: The Sanghyang *cecing* (dog) performs.  
Photos credit: Yasuyuki Nagafuchi.



Fig. 8.5: From 2020, the two primary caretakers of the Sanghyang effigies from the Bande family in Wongaya Kaja, photographed during the Pengurip Gumi by the author.



Fig. 8.6: The different effigies for the Pengurip Gumi. From left to right: the *sambat* (broom), then two matching *deling* effigies, then the *cecing* (dog) in the background and *lelipi* (snake) to the right.

Tonight, will feature all five kinds of Sanghyang, including the Pengurip Gumi's only performance of the snake (*lelipi*) effigy. First, people gather around the Bale Sanghyang beside the middle courtyard. The priest from Merajan Bande handles all ritual activity relating to the Sanghyang. Prepubescent girls sit facing the altar storing the effigies. We wait for dusk to become fully realised, darkness being a prerequisite of these spirits' appearance. A group of elder women begin singing the Sanghyang specific hymns as the priest begins his ritual invitation for the spirits to inhabit the effigies, smoke from incense filling the air. As the singing continues, the female leader of the Sanghyang entourage, who is often simply referred to as *jegeg* (beautiful), rises to her feet and turns to face the young girls seated there, dancing around them while patting their heads and shoulders affectionately. The female leader embodies a figure of beauty and motherhood, caressing the girls, gesturing for them to belong to her. Slowly, one then another of the young girls falls forward with their hands flat on the ground, then rise, incorporated, as if involuntarily and slightly limp, they rhythmically begin to encapsulate their leader, following her beckoning. As they elevate, others standing by wrap the girls in yellow cloth to signify their entrancement. This is the Sanghyang *dedari* performance.

I follow as the group enters the inner courtyard, accompanied by the singing troupe. The leader takes the girls to the Sri Sedana shrine, which is dedicated to male and female aspects of fertility. There they dance together, accompanied now by the sacred gamelan. These days the temple is filled with hundreds of visitors all day and night from across the island who have come to pray during the Pengurip Gumi. Those people now sit astonished at the female entourage entering the sacred inner space of the temple, lightly weaving between the attendees. The group returns to the Bale Agung of the middle courtyard where they congregate at its southern end, below the Bhatari Nini offerings gathered from Wongaya Gede. This location will be the stage tonight, explicitly incorporating relations between rice cultivation and the Sanghyang deities. Full darkness now completes the atmosphere.

The Sanghyang performances are distinct from regular temple ceremony dances and hymns. Balinese temple dances, including the sacred *rejang* performed around Wongaya, are heavily choreographed, with women's movements expressly under overt control, creating an ordered unison that conveys the beauty of tradition collectively reproduced through ritual contexts. The Sanghyang dances, by contrast, are marked by trance and individual expression. To my amazement when first seeing them after already close to two years documenting the regular temple dances, women's bodies would move autonomously, responding to spontaneous feeling, each individual distinct from another and far slower than the usual pace of choreographed Balinese dance. The leader is stunning to watch, distilling those above qualities of creativity into an embodied femininity, surrounded by three generations of female participants. She is both gentle and coaching to the girls, with hands on their crowns, stroking their faces. I watch her and the other elder women all entranced, their fingers not contorting in patterned movements like most other Balinese dances, but as if floating amongst the hymns and influenced by their own impulses, shifting direction softly as the wind might. Throughout the performance the leader holds and rattles her Sanghyang effigy, its miniature bell sounds colliding with the gamelan. When this performance ends, the leader uses *tirta* to recall the deities from the young girls before she herself exits the trance.

Then continues the other series of performances that I cannot describe fully here. They included the *sampat* (sweeping broom) effigy, a *cicing* (dog) effigy, a *lelipi* (snake) effigy and finally the *deling* performances that involves two effigies representing male and female powers, suspended on a line held by a man and woman at either end who begin to uncontrollably shake and thus animate the symbols through whom the line runs. Each of the effigies and dances has their own set of performative meanings. This night completes the spotlighted performances of the Sanghyang, though they will participate in the final major ceremonies and procession.



*Fig. 8.7:* The *cicing* (dog) goes for a walk, being fed rice on the ground as it travels around the temple and its hymns are sung. The entranced female leader of the Sanghyang entourage carries the *sampat* effigy.  
Photo credit: I Nengah Januartha



*Fig. 8.8:* Prepubescent girls become entranced then rise to their feet during the *dedari* performance, the female leader encroaching them to join her. Photo credit: I Nengah Januartha



*Fig. 8.9:* A man and woman hold either end of the Sanghyang *deling* effigies being rattled along a line. Photo credit: I Nengah Januartha

Earlier this morning, the *ngremekin* ceremony was run. This is a standard ritual occurring three days after the culmination of any major ceremony, at which time a particular set of offerings already dedicated are disposed of, namely those relating to the *tawur agung* and other sacrificial animals used in the *pucak karya*. At the same time, traditional cakes (*jaja*) are offered as thanks to the deities inhabiting each shrine around the entire complex, as well as savoury rice-based snacks (*besor* and *intil*). The *ngremekin* ritual is run by a *pedanda*. At the Catur Angga temples the same ceremony is also performed.

The following day the *ngebekin* ritual is undertaken. The term *bek* means abundance, so this ceremony seeks to amplify the fullness of all domains related to Pura Batukau. It is tied to growth and the fruits of agricultural production. The rite is performed by a *pedanda* in the middle courtyard for around two hours accompanied by the Kebayan. During the ritual procedure, different *tirta* vessels are wrapped in coloured threads to match the cardinal directions in ways that normally index earth-focused *caru* rituals, emphasising the link between chthonic rites, fertility and the land. Once the offerings have been presented and their energy wafted towards all the invited deities, the *tirta* is mixed into a special vessel from which the villagers may request some of this liquid for sprinkling at home and in the fields. Afterwards a *rejang penyaksi* (sacred dance of witnessing) is performed in the middle courtyard by Wongaya women. The commemorative phase has come to an end. We break for lunch, then begins setting up for the final sacrificial *kertih* rite scheduled for this afternoon.

Kertih: River

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The shape of Mount Batukau's peak does not appear conical like Mount Agung. Its crater's southern end is open where there would normally be a continuation of the rim that constitutes a conical peak. This opening forms two major ridges that descend into the forested base of the volcano. Villagers ascend those ridges when trekking to the summit. At the peak of the crater wall lies Pucak Kedaton, from which one can draw a

line through the crater's southern end, down the central valley, directly connecting to Pura Batukau at the mountain's base. The stream starting at the highest point in the regency eventually becomes the tributary river Yeh Mawa, which first reaches human settlement beside Pura Batukau. The river itself is flush with volcanic boulders hinting at the forceful past of Mount Batukau.

This locality underscores Pura Batukau's status as the paramount agricultural temple of the regency. It is the Kebayan's responsibility, as head priest of Pura Batukau, to administer the triennial *pekelem* rites discussed in Chapter 5. Normally, for the triennial *pekelem* rite held at the river, a black duck and chicken along with an offering filled with the seeds of the earth are drowned in the currents. Today, on February 24, a black goat will be sacrificed along with the other offerings. As with the *pekelem* and *mapag toya* ceremonies (see Chapter 5), the process begins at the riverside shrine called Pura Pekiisan. While the name *kiiis* suggests it is a place to undergo purification rituals, as with other contexts, the shrine doubles as a place to worship the deity who controls the river locality, as well as all rivers in general. The encompassing deity in the latter context is known by the Hindu name, Ida Bhatara Gangga. Once the initial dedication is presented to the deity of that shrine, the focus shifts to the large rock lying in the river's centre about 50 metres upstream from Pura Pekiisan. Note that as with all *pekelem* rites, the Kebayan and local priests undertake these ceremonies, never the *pedanda*.

Once the downstream component has finished, all high-ranking representatives come up to the boulder where a local priest begins the ritual. The Kebayan family members stand ready in thigh-high water, where the animals are handed to them and then plunged with great speed underwater, drowning them in the flowing river. The carcass is left to travel downstream with the offerings, completing the *pekelem*. Today's *kertih* ceremony aims to renew the supply of water to the countless rivers across the regency, ensuring the circulation of water is plentiful, and as a means of retention for rainwater falling over the tropical rainforest. This is the final *kertih* ceremony during the Pengurip Gumi, completing the cycle of revitalisation for *gunung* (mountain), *segara* (sea), *wana* (forest), *danu* (lake) and *tukad* (river) domains.



*Fig. 8.10:* A priest dedicates offerings before the Kebayan priests submerge a goat in the river. The same boulder upon which the offerings rest is where the annual *mapag toya* (welcoming the water) rite is performed.



*Fig. 8.11:* Looking upstream one sees how these rites are performed toward the mountain/forest resource domain itself, given there is no purpose-built religious structures at this point.



## EXCHANGES

February 25: Memitang Penjor Sawen

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The events of this phase begin five days after the *pucak karya*. Today is entitled *memitang penjor sawen*, referring to when the miniature bamboo post (*penjor sawen*) created by every male farmer of Wongaya Gede leaves the temple. Recall that the *penjor sawen* arrived five days before the *pucak karya*, after which time they have been incorporated into the ritual procedures, receiving the blessings of the gods. They have been gathered around the centre and perimeter of the middle courtyard with the four subdistricts of Wongaya village occupying the centre and the other eight subdistricts of Wongaya Gede resting along a boundary wall, signifying the hierarchical differentiation of core to periphery.

Each of the male household members arrives with a cut bamboo (*bunbung*) to carry a holy water called *tirta pengendag* consecrated this morning in the inner courtyard. The term *pengendag* refers to the commencement of work in the fields. The *tirta* is at once a permission and blessing from the Batukau deity to recommence the farmers' rice cultivation after a long hiatus due to the Pengurip Gumi. Those overgrown fields may after today be cut and processed (*ngolah tanah*) to initiate the first steps of rice growing. The different subdistricts of Wongaya Gede are called one-by-one and the men taking their *penjor sawen* form a giant procession from the temple down to the Bale Agung of Wongaya, walking in two-man file. One priest invites me to follow him to his field to witness the events after stopping for lunch at his family home. Before leaving for the field, his wife hands him *tirta pengendag* from today, *tirta pengurip gumi* from the *pucak karya* and *tirta pekelem Yeh Mawa* that was consecrated during the recent sacrificial rite held by the river beside Pura Batukau. On the way out we pick up the *penjor sawen* and cut bamboo (*bunbung*) which were resting outside the houseyard entrance, forbidden to enter residence complexes.

At the rice-field, the priest immediately embeds (*nanceb*) the *penjor sawen* into the ground at the corner of the field (*ulun carik*) where the water first enters from the

irrigation channel, considered its most sacred location. It is placed adjacent to a temporary bamboo altar (*sanggah cucuk*) with an upper platform used to hold offerings. Two of the most common forms of offerings (*daksina* and *ketipat*) are placed in the platform, whereas another offering (*segehan putih kuning*) is placed on the ground to dedicate to chthonic forces. Altars like this encapsulate sky and earth dualism, wherein both domains are addressed in every ritual use of the *sanggah cucuk*. When performing the ritual, the farmer stands beside the altar so that he faces the mountain with flower and incense in hands.<sup>132</sup> After his initial announcement (*mepekeling*), he first sprinkles *tirta pengurip gumi* and *tirta pekelem Yeh Marwa* and then *tirta pengadeg* toward the offerings on the upper platform. Finally, he offers the lower offering to the earth, pouring rice wine and palm liquor to finish the offerings dedication. The priest then clears some grass (*ngarit*) and takes a hoe (*congkod*) to dig into the earth. Before doing so he holds his breath and then breaks the earth three times, only then exhaling, a ritual one must perform before commencing work in the fields. This process is called *numbeg* (breaking the soil). Coloured rice taken from the *mepeselang* ceremony is then scattered (*mesambeh*) around the fields to promote fertility.

As we travel by motorbike, I see the entire village is busily enroute to undertake the same ritual in their own fields. Teams of husband and wife pass me by smiling, the motorbike's passenger holding their *penjor sawen* as they bump along winding, gravelly paths dividing the terraced fields. In this high-altitude settlement, the forested slopes of Mount Batukau feature as the backdrop to sweeping vistas of staggered rice fields cut into the earth, their flooded grooves embracing the rich volcanic topography. This normally majestic panorama is now tempered by fields overgrown with weeds, the farmers unable to fully devote attention to anything but the recent ceremonial activity at the temple. With the return of the *penjor sawen* and application of *tirta pengendag*, the recommencement of work in the fields may begin. The mountain is symbolically bound to male fertility, the gods and sky, and this bundle of powers represented by the *penjor* is now embedded into the land, the body of the earth and repository of female nascent

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<sup>132</sup> This process is remarkably similar to dry-rice swidden cultivation undertaken by the Karo Batak in highland Sumatra. Van der Goes (1997: 387) explains how planting commences with a stick planted in the field's centre directed toward the mountain where their rice deity Si Dayang dwells. This act invites the rice deity down to inhabit and fertilise the field with its powers of growth.

fertility. Moreover, once the Bhatari Nini offerings are returned to each family's houseyard after the temple ceremony's closing, seeds incorporating the essence of those ritual activities will be transported to the fields, thus completing this merging of male and female generative principals.



*Fig. 8.12: Tirta pengendag is distributed to rice-field owners to take to their fields.*



Fig. 8.13: Left: Men leave carrying their *penjor sawen* and *tirta pengendag*. Fig. 8.14: Right: A priest faces the mountain while performing a small ceremony to ritually initiate work in the fields.

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February 25 to February 29: Nodya Jero Kebayan

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Intervillage relationships also feature prominently in this **Exchange** phase of ceremonial activities. The Kebayan, his wife and other Pura Batukau priests, as well as the Sanghyang effigies and their female entourage, travel together to each of the Catur Angga temples and Piling village over several evenings in late February. This official visit (*nodya*) by the Kebayan is a time for him and the Pengurip Gumi staff to formally thank these communities for their ceremonial contributions. They are greeted at each temple by the local head priest and his wife, along with other high ranking village officials. The Kebayan and other officials make speeches and then everyone joins together in communal prayer. Without fail each evening, some of the elder women from the Sanghyang group rise and begin dancing for a short while amongst the courtyard, often intermingling with the local temple priests, before the evening ends with *tirta* being distributed.

Today the major ceremony *ngaturang aci sarin tahun* is performed. The term *sarin* comes from *sari* which has several meanings, including “donation”, “part or division” and “essence”, and *tahun* refers to “year”. *Sarin tahun* is undertaken every year by farmers who deliver a division of the crop to the temple deity, due to the divine forces at work in its successful yield. In short, a thanksgiving ceremony. Of central importance today are the two enormous piles of rice stalks that have been in the temple’s middle courtyard for a month already. These collective gifts from farmers will now be exchanged for *tirta sarin tahun*. I understand this *tirta* to be the ultimate gift (*pica*) of the gods, a concentration of divine essence those farmers most desire for revitalisation of agrarian lands. It should not be understood as a holy water exclusively exchanged for wet rice cultivation (*cariik*) but rather the generation of fertility in the earth governed by this deity, including the rain-fed gardens (*tegal*).

A *pedanda* runs the ceremony from mid-morning after all the rice farming cooperatives (*subak*) have arrived with their cut bamboo (*bunbung*) for storing *tirta*. Only now does a priest adorn the two piles of rice stalks with decorations (*orti* and *bagia*) and yellow flowers. At the summit of the piles is placed the *dewasa* symbol of *lanang* (husband) and *istri* (wife) that is also used in Bhatari Nini offerings, symbolising the coupling of male and female powers. After the initial purificatory rites by the *pedanda* are completed, a Kebayan family member is sent to fetch *tirta pemuput* from the inner courtyard to finish the ceremony.

A call is then made to *memendak* (welcome) the deities and everyone swarms the inner courtyard. There, the rice-cultivation deities of Pura Batukau, namely Penyaum, Petaangan, Jero Sasah and Pengubengan, are invited down from their special pavilion to join a procession toward the middle courtyard, each accompanied by their own Bhatari Nini offerings. Throughout the slow-moving procession, the Sanghyang troupe chant their hymns as their female leader performs a wonderfully evocative dance, at first beside those carrying the gods, then separating to the front and remaining at the deities’ feet

after the procession has ended. She remains entranced before those deities, lying on the floor with eyes closed and tears streaming in a strikingly evocative moment, while the village performs two dances (*rejang tereot* and *rejang dayung*) after which time grains of rice are sprinkled around the two piles of rice stalks first, then up to the inner courtyard and around the Bale Agung.

The *pedanda* has continued his ceremonial work throughout, completing a process known as *ngusaba nini*. This moment unifies the most significant actors in rice production for the region: the rice-cultivation deities assigned to different phases of rice growth around Pura Batukau, the temple deity itself as paramount agricultural temple (Ulun Suwi) for the region, and the Bhatari Nini offerings representing the rice-mother Dewi Sri brought to the temple by every individual family. This moment of human-divine unity occurs precisely after the dedication of the farmers' harvest piles (*sarin tahun*), thus instantiating an exchange of this donation for lasting fertility in the fields. Thereafter, the leaders of farming cooperatives take a portion of that *tirta sarin tahun* to their respective agricultural temples (*bedugul*) controlling their fields, where it is divided once more and distributed to each individual farmer to bless their respective lands. It is also sprinkled on the Pura Perasat (shrine of the garden's spirit-owner) found in each family's garden, reinforcing the idea that *sarin tahun* is a generalised exchange for the powers of fertility to all productive lands. With this important ceremony complete, preparations turn to the final procession called *ngelelawā* of the Pengurip Gumi.



Fig. 8.15: Final decorations applied to the two piles of *padi* before their dedication during *aci sarin tabun*. The priest pictured is placing the *dewasa* male and female symbol above the rice.



Fig. 8.16: *Tirta* consecrated from the *sarin tabun* ceremony is sprinkled toward all the villagers' Bhatari Nini offerings gathered in the temple's Bale Agung.



Fig. 8.17: *Tirta* is received in bamboo containers (*bungbung*) by each farming cooperative's (*subak*) representative (*pekaseh*) to be further shared amongst each individual farmer and poured into their respective fields.

March 4: Ngelelawa

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On the morning of the *ngelelawa* procession we depart westwards, crossing first the river Yeh Mawa. This waterway serves as the central dividing point between east and west Tabanan. Men form a barrier on both sides holding rolls of cloth so that everyone may cross the gushing river safely, including those roughly 20 men carrying each of the palanquins (*joli*) across the waters and up the treacherous, muddy paths of jungle flanking the river. Once the temple deity leaves Pura Batukau, there is an interdiction on farming in any fields nearby until it has returned. This is also the case during any major ceremonial events taking place in the temple up to this point. By late afternoon the parade arrives in raucous fashion to Sangketan's Puseh temple, led by the many entranced protectors at front, then a bustling column of people that takes around twenty minutes to pass me and travel up the steps to the temple courtyard. The Kebayan and his wife will tonight sleep in the central pavilion of the temple, beside the deities who are assembled in the Bale Piasan. Tonight and tomorrow night a *pedanda* is invited to work in Sangketan and Tengkudak to present a number of offerings to the deities, both



those local and travelling gods from Pura Batukau. These stays are part of an exchange whereby the deity and spiritual leader offer thanks for the extensive contributions both communities have made to the successful running of the Pengurip Gumi.

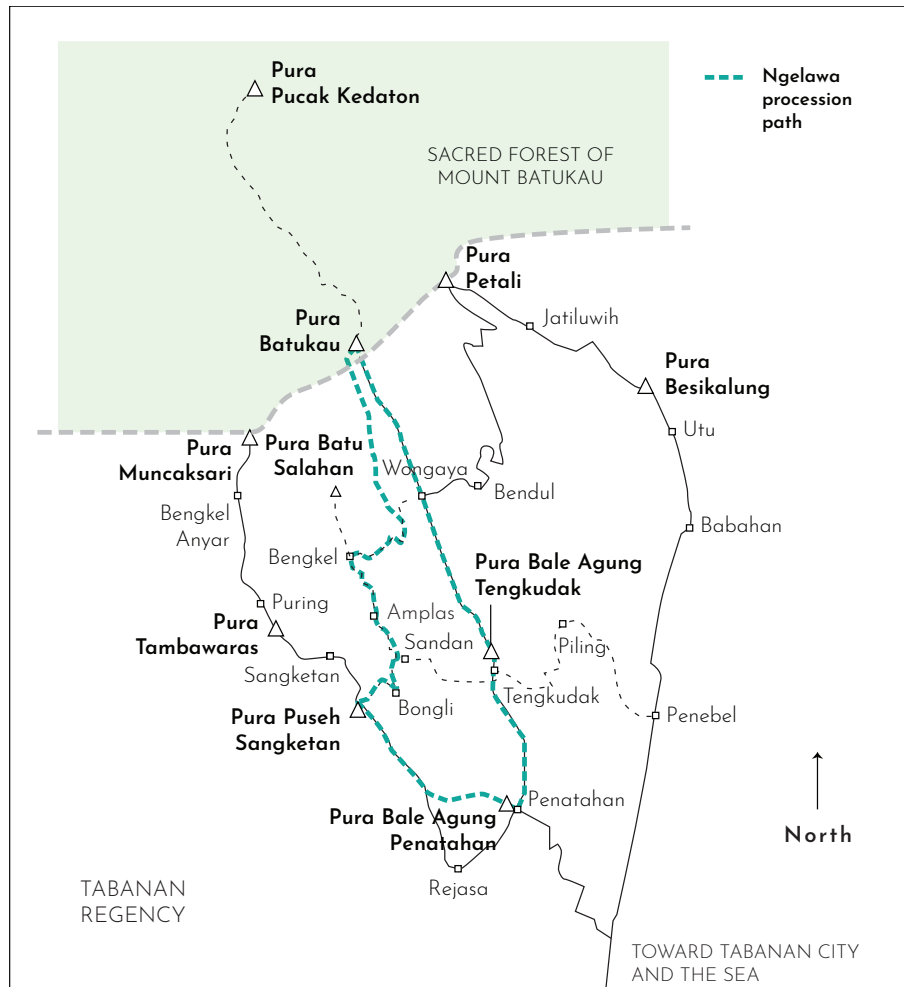


Fig. 8.18: Map showing the path of the ceremony's final procession named *ngelawa*.

The following morning, we head south then east across three rivers and rice-fields under the scorching sun. An hour before arriving to Penatahan village, a special *tirta* named *nangluk merana* consecrated in Pura Batukau's inner courtyard on the morning of our departure is distributed to all the farming cooperative leaders (*pekaseh*). Until now it had been sprinkled upon bamboo altars in fields we passed by. The farmers use this *tirta* to perform a rite that protects the fields from pests and disease. In this way, distribution follows a model we are already familiar with by now, originating from a source identified with the temple deity to each farming cooperative's leader who takes it to their respective agricultural temple and then shares it amongst every individual

farmer. We stop at the Puseh temple of Penatahan village where lunch is distributed, and dances are performed in the middle courtyard, underscoring again the character of commemorative exchange that recognises the intervillage dependency required for large feats of ceremonial activity.

From there begins the ascent back to Tengkidak village. I take note how the *ngelawa* procession is divided into two halves. The Kebayan and Pura Batukau deity, along with their specific entourage and paraphernalia, travel in front before an explicit break of about twenty metres. From there begins the second half, which is led by the Sanghyang dancers, including the female leader and three women accompanying her who remain entranced the entire journey, while dancing to the sounds of the *angklung* (a traditional kind of gamelan) beside them. The rice-cultivation deities of Batukau then come next. This marks a symbolic separation where the Sanghyang and rice deities associated with the female powers of Dewi Sri and Bhatari Nini travel as one bloc behind the male-represented powers of the Kebayan and mountain deities. The road back to Pura Batukau on the following day is not long, but steep, and it will take until the afternoon before the procession arrives back to the temple. The Kebayan walks first through the entrance to the temple followed by hundreds of others. The deities are returned to the inner courtyard, the Sanghyang effigies to their special pavilion, thus completing the final procession of the Pengurip Gumi.



*Fig. 8.19:* Mount Batukau dominates the vista with Mount Sanghyang behind it and Mount Adeng to the side.



*Fig. 8.20:* The rice-cultivation deities of Penyaum, Sasah, Petaangan and Pengubengan crossing the river in their palanquin heading toward Penatahan.



Fig. 8.21: The raucous parade led by Tengkudak's elder Pasek priest arrives to Sangketan's Puseh temple.

March 9: Sri Tumpuk

On the final day of every temple anniversary (*odalan*) held at Pura Batukau an exceptional ceremonial act named *sri tumpuk* is performed, which ritualises the distribution of rice from the core temple to the community. From what I could gather, this is unique to the Catur Angga temple region (see also Wardi 2017a). This highly symbolic performance replicates the harvest process of creating piles (*tumpuk*) of freshly-cut rice stalks in the fields to later return those bunches home. It displays a connection between the female powers of generation embodied by Dewi Sri and portions of blessed rice dispersed from the temple. The true chronological order would have this ritual occurring one hour after the activation of the burial offerings (*banten pememben*) that I have placed under the **Closing** section below. Yet given this ritual's emphatic focus on exchange, I have included it here under the same classification.

Once the closing ceremony elements have been completed, the heaviest rainfall we have seen in weeks begins. This torrential rain continues for over three hours. Right as the deluge begins, the *sri tumpuk* ritual commences. We know the time has come because

the gamelan melody quickens. First, shrieks made by women are heard, one quickly following another, raising the hairs on my skin as their calls add to the collective anticipation rising for this final exchange. Those women move forward and form a core group in the courtyard's centre. They are both young and old, encircling an invisible centre. Then begins their ritual collapse. One-by-one, eleven women in total fall intentionally to the ground, piling (*tumpuk*) one on top of another, layering themselves as newly-harvested rice stalks are by farmers in the fields. Once the eleven number is reached, there is a loud call by one of the temple staff and the encroaching crowd steps back as the women rise again to their feet, who are then adorned with coloured cloth to signify their incorporation. The different spirits entering the bodies of those women have distinct demands: often one sees a woman forcefully instructing those around her to use a different coloured cloth, to which adjustments are rapidly made. As with most trance contexts I witnessed in temple ceremonies, the scene blends deep sincerity with comic relief. Those watching the entranced women's complaints will often giggle from afar at the dramatic extremity, while those face-to-face with the god speak with great deference to any demand.

Then begins the next phase. The women incorporated by divinities dance expressively, not following a choreographed pattern, and around the entire middle courtyard to the fast-pasted gamelan melody. At the same time, they distribute (*memica*, "give gifts") portions of the two enormous piles of rice assembled in the temple since over a month ago. Normally, the rice used in the annual *sri tumpuk* ceremonies comes from the temple's barn, donated by farmers during each of their *sarin tabun* ceremonies. Today, the rice distributed comes from the two piles of rice dedicated during the *ngaturang aci sarin tabun* event sourced from the wider caretaking community. The villagers wait, huddling together in the different temple pavilions, sheltering from the rain while kneeling with an offering dish on their heads. As the entranced women pass, they plant a stalk of rice and sample of *tirta* into the offering. This is then brought home to blend with their own rice, thus instantiating the substantive mingling of rice, divinity and the sharing of agricultural products across the community. That is, the farmers' donations of rice from their fields to the temple have subsequently mixed with those of the entire community, whereafter those same rice stalks and seeds are dispensed randomly so that

each villager possesses the spirit of another in addition to the infusion of the temple deity's powers enacted through the preceding rituals.

After those present have received (*nunas*) their gifts of vitalised grains they begin filing out of the temple. This completes the **Exchange** phase of the Pengurip Gumi. The seeds of life embodied by rice here will be taken home and stored until the next planting cycle, when the stalk-bearing seeds travel back to their fields and are first planted (*ngurit*) in the plot adjacent to where irrigation waters flow into the land. This intermingling of blessed seeds with those normally stored in the barn (*lumbung*) at home integrates the regional core of rice cultivation, Pura Batukau, into waves of planting new seeds that begins once the ceremony is complete.<sup>133</sup> Analogously, the *ngaturang aci sarin tabun* event achieved the consecration of *tirta* which fertilises all the lands, including both dry and wet domains. Again, life radiates outwards through the medium of *tirta*, the essence of the temple deity reinvigorating the territory villagers occupy for agrarian purposes.



Fig. 8.22: The local Wongaya dance of *rejang penyaksi* is performed before the ritual enactment of Sri Tumpuk. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana

<sup>133</sup> Compare this with my earlier comments in Chapter 5 on the ritual supremacy of the Kebayan when compared with the Tabanan kingdom and their minimal role in agricultural fertility.



*Fig. 8.23:* The gamelan quickens its pace as the incorporated men and women now huddle closer to the centre. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana



*Fig. 8.24:* Women collectively pile/layer (*mupuk*) on top of one another to imitate freshly-harvested rice in the fields. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana



*Fig. 8.25:* Once they have arisen, both entranced men and women take bunches of rice stalks to disseminate amongst the awaiting congregation. Photo credit: I Made Ari Yudiana



*Fig. 8.26:* Entranced people are dressed in different coloured cloths to signify their divinity. Photo credit: I Nengah Januartha





Fig. 8.27: The distribution begins, normally termed *memica*, literally “to gift”. Worshippers wait in the rain to receive the divinised *padi* to take home to mix with their own store of rice. Photo credit: I Nengah Januartha



Fig. 8.28: The rice is treated as divine by awaiting villagers, who exchange a small offering for the stalks that are kept in a dish above their heads.

## CLOSING

March 9: Nyineb

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Regular temple ceremonies (*odalan*) in the regional temples here typically run for four nights, after which time the closing ceremony (*nyineb*) is run early on the fifth morning. Today's *nyineb* is undertaken around 20 days since the *pucak karya*, and approximately five months from the Pengurip Gumi's initiation. It is a deceptively simple ritual, including offerings being dedicated by the rostered *pedanda* in the inner courtyard, and a formal request that the deities take their leave. The term *nyineb* normally refers to the return of sacred objects (*pratima*) to a temple's store. However, Pura Batukau does not use sacred objects like the daggers (*keris*), inscriptions (*prasasti*) or masks (e.g. Barong and Rangda) that would normally feature in ceremonies of lowland Bali. Indeed, those masks are prohibited from entering the temple's inner courtyard when parades of other villages come to pay tribute to the deity. However, the temple's gamelan (*gong durwe*) is of the utmost sacred value and returns today to the village of Kesiut. Additionally, the special bell (*genta*) used by the Kebayan and other paraphernalia will return to the Bale Saren Suci of his home, effectively making that the storage site for those kinds of objects.

After this brief ceremony of *nyineb*, the day turns over to a more local affair. An enormous *rejang penyaksi* (dance of witnessing) is immediately performed in the inner courtyard by only the priest's wives (*serati*) dressed in their finest white ceremonial attire. The leader of the Sanghyang entourage conducts them from the front, walking backwards and facing the other women, whose movements are stunningly choreographed to dip and rise, arms falling left and right to the slow, hypnotic melody of the temple's gamelan, creating a creeping, serpentine procession of arms fanning outwards along the line. The Kebayan and family sit in the centre of the courtyard with members of the palace and other high-ranking representatives seated in an adjacent pavilion, implying the dance encircles them also. After encircling the courtyard three times, they move to the Bale Agung as many other women become entranced and join the troupe. Meanwhile, the focus returns to the inner courtyard where the *pedanda*

instructs the energy of the closing ceremony's offerings (*banten*) to be wafted towards all the deities present, then we join in communal prayer, and the *nyineb* is complete. The *pedanda* packs up, their responsibility for the Pengurip Gumi now complete. As with all ceremonies replicated in the Catur Angga temples, the *tirta penyineban* consecrated in the core temple is taken by motorbike to each subordinate sanctuary and used to finish their own rituals, tying them together through the medium of transubstantiated water.



Fig. 8.29: The majestic *rejang penyaksi* performed by all priests' wives (*serati*) in the temple's inner courtyard (*jeroan*) for the closing ceremony forms a serpentine procession.

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#### Aside: Taksu

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Brahmanical *pedanda* along with every other outside priest who has contributed to the Pengurip Gumi will receive a gift of offerings and food for their participation. This is a standard process for major events named *rsi bhojana* (e.g. Stuart-Fox 1982). Normally, they are invited back together on a day to receive the gifts in person, but the temple staff decide it will be easier to travel to the different priestly homes around the island and deliver the package themselves. This return gift is a reciprocation but not as simply defined as it first seems. All temple priests (*pemangku*), and Brahmanical *pedanda* too, have power invested in them to efficaciously mediate with the various divine (*niskala*) beings through a kind of spirit-power known as *taksu*. This is the closest equivalent to the concept of *mana* found in other Austronesian-speaking

societies, with some cultural distinctions. Priesthood positions are generally inherited (*keturunan*) from one generation to the next. Yet the transmigrating soul of the person is not which grants the next generation its powers to mediate with a temple deity. Rather, the *taksu* which is stored in a special altar in the priest's houseyard is the enduring spirit-force. Once a priest dies and his son or grandson assumes the role, the *taksu* of the forebear continues its work for the newly-ordained priest. In this view it is more akin to a spirit-helper than the charismatic power often attributed to *mana*.<sup>134</sup>

*Taksu* is vital to the efficacy of ritual. For example, on the day before a local person requires priestly services at their family temple around the highland villages, the family brings a special package of offerings called *pengolemin* to the priest's home to offer to his *taksu*. This is because the priest's *taksu* will be invited as his or her spirit-helper to accompany them and ensure the ceremony is good. After the event, another package is delivered by the family to the priest's home called *leluaran* that is offered both to the *taksu* and the houseyard entrance to ensure no malevolent forces disturb it after its journey. Without these two processes, priests would inform me that the spirit-helper would not accompany (*sing nyak milu*), resulting in them not being able to *mebanten* (dedicate offerings) and their wives (*serati*) not being able to *ngae banten* (make offerings). To be clear, it is only through the power of their *taksu*, this spirit particularised to different talents in work, that priestly men and women become capable in spiritual activity. In short, *taksu* is an invisible element essential to priestly activity, which underscores the principle of the gifts of gratitude (*rsi bhojana*) mentioned above: the temple staff, on behalf of the Batukau community, thank the priests and their powers (*taksu*) in ways analogous to the *pengolemin* and *leluaran* offerings presented by villagers to local priests for their services.

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## March 9: Mendem Banten Pemendem

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Continuing later the same day, in the middle courtyard the eight remaining burial offerings (*banten pememben*) have been assembled. Recall from Chapter 6 that these offering towers contain seeds of the earth (*asil gumi*), distinguished by kind and layered into a vessel close to two metres high. The final act for the Cokorda and Kebayan to perform together is the ritual initiation of these offerings. Beside them stands the

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<sup>134</sup> Alternatively, this description comes very close to that of *mana* provided by Valerio Valeri: "The mana of the canoe builder is his divinely originated and ancestrally transmitted ability to build canoes with success" (1985: 100). In other words, *taksu* refers to a person's divinely originating "talents", the latter term often being used to translate *taksu*.

regional politician (*camat*) of Penebel and other high-ranking officials. The Kebayan pauses while in prayer, waiting for inspiration, then he is first to insert a magical dagger (*keris*) into the offering, cutting downwards (*nuwek*), injecting the energy of the *keris* to prepare the offering for submersion and amalgamation with the energies of the earth. The Cokorda then takes his turn of inserting another *keris*. This same process is repeated for two other burial offerings in the outside courtyard and three more in the inner courtyard. After the offerings have been prepared, the Kebayan directs the dagger into the ground where a hole will be dug to bury the offerings in each courtyard. Finally, a sacred dance (*rejang pemendak*) is performed by Wongaya women in the middle courtyard in preparation for the upcoming *sri tumpuk* ritual (see above) to follow immediately after.

The temple now empties out after the end of the *sri tumpuk* ritual and the teams of men from Wongaya begin the long work of digging large burial holes for the *banten pememben* offerings. This work lasts until late into the evening before there is sufficient space to bury each offering that stands over two metres tall and around 60 centimetres in diameter. During excavation in the inner courtyard, artefacts are dug up from the burials during previous ceremonial events in 2006<sup>135</sup> and 1993, everyone marvelling at the hundreds of Chinese coins (*pis bolong*) recovered after all these years.

Around 8pm, the men lower the burial offerings into the ground by crossing two long strands of red cloth, sitting the offering in the centre, and then, somewhat precariously, lowering them slowly into the hole. Afterwards, every person still present takes three handfuls of soil and throws them into the hole where the offerings stand. The holes are then covered to ground level. This signals the completion of returning the seed-filled offerings to the earth-mother. It intends for those species to be reciprocated in abundance across the fields and gardens operating across local territory. In total, 21 burial offerings (*pememben*) were made for the Pengurip Gumi, with 13 of those buried

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<sup>135</sup> In 2006, a similarly large ceremonial event (*karya agung*) occurred that is distinct from the Pengurip Gumi mainly through its procession to a major river shrine (*beji agung*) close to Besikalung temple. While slightly smaller and less fondly remembered than the procession to sea, this event is important for us because it shows how the alternating focus on salt water and fresh water points to the importance of bringing the mountain deity to those sources of life, as opposed to vague and overtly Hindu preconceptions with purity.

in Pura Batukau. The same burial process happens in the Catur Angga temples tonight, where one of the offerings is lowered into the inner courtyard of each temple.



*Fig. 8.30:* Inserting a *keris* into the burial offerings to activate them with magical energy before returning them to the earth, here with the Kebayan, Cokorda Tabanan and *bupati* (regency leader) of Tabanan. Photo credit: I Nengah Januartha



*Fig. 8.31:* The eight *banten pememben* (burial offerings) to be buried in the middle courtyard.



Fig. 8.32: Men work for several hours in each courtyard preparing the deep cavities in which to submerge the offerings.

#### March 10: Mupuk Kembang & Ngelinggihan

Once the burial is complete, we sleep in the temple from around 2am until 4am when an especially intimate ritual begins. The now vacant receptacle offerings inhabited by the deities are ritually burned and their ashes buried in the inner courtyard. The main priests of the temple must all be present, including the Kebayan and his wife. Some other priests and family always join but today there are not more than 40 people in total. Before commencing, the Kebayan sits in the pavilion opposite the principal shrine and leads a discrete prayer for all those present. It is rare to see him holding the priest's bell except for special moments like this. After his interaction with the god, the Kebayan himself stands up and fetches the vessel (*sangku*) to distribute *tirta* to all present. It is a quietly beautiful moment watching those present exchange with their spiritual leader, a man who has demonstrated time and again his humble nature and generosity, despite the incessant burden of ceremonial activity.

The ceremony's title *mupuk kembang* has varied meanings. *Mupuk* means to layer in

addition, while *kembang* means to blossom, or flower. But the terms together generally refer to the turning point in time, from when the night transitions to early morning. As a result, this ritual must only be performed between 4am and 6am. The senior priests gather around three terracotta dishes spread out on a palm-leaf rug laid in front of the principal shrine. The leader brings down each divine effigy, including the *lanang* (male) and *istri* (female) symbols which flank the shrine, along with any other sacred objects. Each time they are passed down through the file of priests, they touch them once to their heads. Only a few items are reserved to the side, such as the gold leaf used to decorate the offerings and a large collection of cotton threads (*benang*). The rest is assembled on the terracotta dishes to burn.

While we sit and watch the flames consume the effigies, the priests chat amongst themselves jovially. Then after around 20 minutes once all the symbols have been extinguished, each person present, in hierarchical order, takes three portions of ash using a folded leaf and places them into a yellow coconut. First the Kebayan and wife, then those senior priests, followed by their wives, then the other priests and wives present, followed by the rest. The yellow coconut is wrapped in white cloth, which the Kebayan lifts it above his head, straining while others stand around to support him, and he quickly moves to place it in a hole dug into the earth in the northeast corner of the courtyard. All present throw soil over the top, then adornments (*bagia* and *orti*) seal the site. Such brings the Pengurip Gumi's major ceremonial activities to a close until a month and seven days (*abulan pitung dina*) passes, when a final commemorative ceremony is performed on April 2.





*Fig. 8.33:* The elder priests of Pura Batukau gather to ritually cremate the effigies inhabited by temple deities. Includes representatives of the four priestly groups, Pasek, Kebayan, Penyarikan and Kesinoman, and priests of the *beji*, Penyaum, Pengubengan and Petaangan shrines.

As anyone who has conducted research amongst the Balinese will testify, they have seemingly unlimited stamina for ceremonial work. With two hours sleep at most for many of the senior participants, the final day arrives wherein a major exodus of deities and offerings will leave the temple to their respective homes. Firstly, the rice-cultivation deities return to their individual shrines, including Penyaum, Petangan, Jero Sasah and Pengubengan. Only women gather in the inner courtyard with a cloth held above their

heads, upon which the deities alongside their Bhatari Nini offerings travel in procession. Once they have reached their respective shrines and the deities have assumed their seat (*ngelinggihan*), the offerings which have accompanied them throughout the Pengurip Gumi are dedicated, along with others to conclude with thanks for their participation. Thereafter, in a conjoined procession, the gods who function as protectors of the temple deity, Pecalang Agung Tengkidak and Ida Bhatara Batusalahan, return to their respective homes. Following them in procession, the women representatives from every family of the caretaking communities will receive their Bhatari Nini offerings packages from the Bale Agung to return to their houseyards around Wongaya Gede and place this blessed rice in their respective rice storage barns.

The final component of the departure procession includes the Sanghyang effigies. Once they leave the temple and arrive to their origin in Merajan Bande temple in Wongaya, a special ceremony is held this evening to thank them for their presence. After this time, the deities are requested to leave and the temporary effigies created for the Pengurip Gumi are ritually burned in the same way as during the *mupuk kembang* ceremony held earlier this morning. The ashes are buried thereafter in the northeast corner of the family temple. The *tirta penyiben* consecrated during the closing ceremony at Pura Batukau is then sprinkled over the Merajan Bande temple, as with each of the villagers' family temples around Wongaya Gede. From tomorrow until April 2nd, Balinese homemade cakes and minor offerings are given daily to shrines around the temple complex as a sign of continuing gratitude for their divine participation. This process is called *mejauman*.

#### March 12: Nangluk Merana

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With the Pengurip Gumi complete and work in the rice-fields recommencing, a special *tirta* that was consecrated during the *ngelelarwa* procession is now delivered to each farming cooperative's Bedugul temple. After a small ceremony in the temple, the *tirta nangluk merana* is taken by each woman present and poured into the irrigation channel of each one's fields, along with instructions for a particular set of offerings to be dedicated at the corners of the fields that further protects the growing rice. Due to their

neglect during the Pengurip Gumi, there is now an abundance of mice and other pests to be cleansed from the fields before beginning cultivation again.

March 15: Meguru Piduka

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The final post-ceremony ritual I observe is called *meguru piduka* which follows all major events, including the regular temple anniversary. It involves all the temple priests and many of the caretaking community coming together to collectively seek forgiveness from the gods for any mistakes or shortcomings. A series of offerings are laid onto the temple's principal shrine. Then the essence of two kinds of offerings (*prayastita* and *biakiuning*) is wafted toward us, at once vitalising our bodies and extracting impurities, akin to the first announcement rite back in November. At the completion of this short ceremony, we are given a white cotton thread (*benang*) to wear around our wrists and another placed on our heads that symbolises unity and community in the collective undertaking that was the Pengurip Gumi.

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Thus concludes my description of the months-long Pengurip Gumi. In the next chapter I write its conclusion and place some of the ceremony's themes into regional context.

## CHAPTER NINE

### Pengurip Gumi: Part IV

#### Conclusion and Context

*Balinese religion is not concerned with the relation between a congregation or individual and a god or even gods that can take place anywhere: both worshippers and worshipped are highly localized. It is not a “transportable” religion”.*

—Anthony Forge, *Balinese Religion and Indonesian Identity*

My detailed exposition of the Pengurip Gumi was intended to document not only its monumental undertaking but also exemplify the research themes of this thesis. I presented the events in linear fashion so that the reader experiences the ceremony as a journey embarked upon jointly by its many participants. Over the course of almost six months, the different worship communities of the temple network, along with representatives from regional governments and royal palaces, shared participation in an event designed to restore life to the earth. This involved the assembly of variegated ingredients and *tirta* from disparate locations to consolidate these into gifts dedicated to the divine controllers of different domains, including the deities of the network temples themselves. The reunification of those deities brought about a procession of staggering proportions, descending over the earth from the mountain unto the sea and back again in a four-day parade not undertaken since 1993. At every phase, exchanges were enacted between gods and congregations, yet this reached its culmination during the *pucak karya* and *sarin tahun* events, where we saw a clear dispersal of the powers of life embodied in *tirta* and different ritual objects, such as the *penjor sawen* and Bhatari Nini offerings, from core sanctuary to dependent temples, fields, gardens and houseyards. Time and again, this struck me as a key theme of grand ritual undertakings around the highlands: enacting the transfer of energy from a powerful centre to its ritually linked periphery via the temple networks surveyed herein.

#### Revitalisation of the Sources of Life

At the heart of the Pengurip Gumi, I discerned a focus on the revitalisation of agricultural resource domains. These are named *kertih* in Hindu theology and I have retained this term for its meaning is commonly understood, though it is rarely used

locally around Wongaya. Without my earlier chapters documenting the periodic *ngusaba* ceremonies undertaken in other villages around Mount Batukau, it would have been harder to perceive this as one of the underlying purposes of the Pengurip Gumi, especially given the ways in which *pedanda*-run rituals are intermingled with the ceremony. Those *ngusaba* performed in villages like Wanagiri, Sarinbuana and Sanda demonstrate the same concern for uniting the village's core temple with the mountain/forest, sea and river/lake—domains which are considered sources of life. As described in Chapter 4, those villages' revitalising ceremonies trace the flow of life (*jalur kehidupan*) from the mountain summit through the village to sea, which parallels the flow of water and expresses an ideology of the land as an interconnected body.<sup>136</sup> While proceeding over a longer timeline and interspersed with different ritual elements, the Pengurip Gumi was similarly presented to me by one senior Kebayan family member as principally concerned with revitalising those resource domains.

This same man presumably has some authority to speak on the matter, given that he was the head administrator (*ketua*) of the previous Pengurip Gumi ceremony held in 1993.<sup>137</sup> At its core, he claimed, the ceremony's purpose was regenerating the *sad kertih*.<sup>138</sup> As explained in Chapter 6, this translates as six domains ritually attended to during large ceremonial events such as this one.<sup>139</sup> According to my observations, the primary focus of the Pengurip Gumi was limited to the five domains of mountain, sea, forest, lake and river. Since the forest is symbolically identified with the mountain in local religious thought, and therefore not typically a separate focus of the *ngusaba* ceremonies occurring elsewhere around the mountain, the Pengurip Gumi can be seen

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<sup>136</sup> I shall elaborate this idea further below.

<sup>137</sup> He told me that back then they did not yet use the name Pengurip Gumi but simply *karya agung*, meaning great ceremonial work. Previously, the family of temples was known simply as *jajar-kemiri* and incorporated nine primary sites, including: Tambawaras, Muncaksari, Batusalahan, Pucak Kedaton, Besikalung, Petali, Batu Lumbang and Bukit Puun. Despite the name change, the same sacred sanctuaries are integrated within the procession to sea. Somewhat strangely, the offerings manual from 1993 he allowed me to photocopy has the titled "Pengurip Gumi" listed on the first page!

<sup>138</sup> This concept is the ancient forerunner of the immensely popular formulation of Balinese religion as *tri hita karana*, which translates as three sources of well-being. These are defined as balanced relations with nature, other people, and gods. Despite being the intellectual product of a conference held in the 1960s (Roth & Sedana 2015), it is now commonplace to refer to Balinese Hinduism as having *tri hita karana* as its essence.

<sup>139</sup> The list of six *kertih* I was told around Wongaya include: mountain (*gunung*); sea (*segara*); forest (*wana*); river (*tukad*); lake (*danu*); and humans (*atma*). However, other lists including different elements of Balinese religious life are widely available.

as an elaborate expansion of the triennial core of rituals performed by the Kebayan for the wider community. By this I mean those sacrificial rites known as *pekelem* undertaken at lake, mountaintop and river on the fourth full moon (*puhnama kapat*) of the Balinese calendar. For this interlocutor, the purpose of those *pekelem* was to “*mengembalikan ke seimbangan alam*”, which means to “restore balance in nature” as it relates to those different domains.

An example of how this relates to local religious thought can be drawn from folklore. I was told variations of a story that relates the function of Pengurip Gumi by two different spiritual authorities. In the first, there was a time when the *pekelem* regularly undertaken by the Kebayan were interrupted. The senior priest informing me of this story connects this time to the early seventeenth century when the king of Buleleng, Ki Gusti Ngurah Panji Sakti, ransacked Pura Batukau on his way to Tabanan city. Due to the subsequent feud between Tabanan’s and Buleleng’s kingdoms, the *pekelem* rites could not be performed at Lake Tamblingan, a condition he describes as “*pekelem macet*”, the rites were obstructed. This led to an ecological crisis affecting the entire world when plants would not grow. Only after reconciliation was achieved through an agreement between Gobleg village by Lake Tamblingan and the Batukau community could the *pekelem* rites be renewed, and the world thus restored to be once again fertile.

The second story starts out with description of an extended drought (*kekeringan*). There was no water, animals perished, and plants withered. In order to survive under such conditions, mothers shared their babies’ breastmilk with men and children. To resolve the drought, the most powerful ascetic priests of different sects gathered on the peaks of each of the seven mountains that encircle the old Buyan-Beratan caldera, including Mount Batukau, its highest point. There they engaged in meditation and called upon the powers of the *naga* of the region that resides in the cave named *naga loka*, a volcanic plug on the flank of Mount Lesung. After emerging, the *naga* was petitioned to enter the ground, its normal habitat, identify the blockage of water in the underground tunnels, and burst open the waterways connecting the lake to the surrounding mountains. After the *naga* reinstates the flow, the world is restored to its normal balance, the lands becoming fertile and waters filling again. Both stories underline the

purpose of performing sacrificial rites like the *pekelem* to regulate the flow of the ritual system, akin to the circulation of a body whose cyclical rhythms, if stopped, would cease to generate life.

### **Joint Involvement of Autochthonous and Foreign Sources**

One of the recurring themes in my earlier chapters has been describing the basis for highland villages' ritual autonomy from the Brahmanical priestly tradition. It is therefore confusing that the involvement of *pedanda* takes place in the Pengurip Gumi at so many significant stages. My local interlocutors, including members of the Kebayan family, hinted at possible explanations. The predominant reason given was that offerings of such great complexity used during the Pengurip Gumi necessitate the use of *pedanda*, for only they understand the esoteric *mantra* (ritual formulae) and *mudra* (hand gestures) accompanying their dedication. One member of the Kebayan family described how they invite *pedanda* to contribute work (*ngayah*) alongside the local priests and Kebayan leader during this time, but do not relinquish control of the ceremony. In this way, *pedanda* appear as "contracted" for their highly developed ritual expertise and their inclusion demonstrates a sense of cooperation between the two traditions.

The same senior interlocutor explained how different levels of understanding and operation occur at each phase of the Pengurip Gumi. Most importantly, they do not transgress their traditional prohibition on *pedanda* completing rituals on their lands because a member of the Kebayan family always requests *tirta pemuput* from the temple deity for use in significant phases of the ceremony, implying that the local divinity finishes those rituals (*muput karya*). This blending of autochthonous ritual control with the use of a foreign-derived Brahmanical priesthood becomes mediated thus using their own conceptual framework. While this reasonable interpretation addresses the combination of both traditions into the ceremonial undertaking at Pura Batukau, it does not explain why such complex offerings are needed in the first place, given that, for example, *pedanda* are not invited to participate in regular temple anniversaries (*odalan*) at Pura Batukau nor the triennial *pekelem*.

Seen within the broader context of contemporary Balinese religion and the importance of Pura Batukau to an island-wide network of temples (*sad kahyangan*), it is hardly surprising that these changes are taking place. Alongside the waning significance of Bali's precolonial kingdoms has risen the influence of both local and regional levels of government. During the final commemorative stages when leaders from each one of Balinese regencies attends Pura Batukau to refresh (*nganyarin*) the offerings dedicated at each shrine, exchanges of reciprocity occur at the political level as well. Those foreign leaders are welcomed into the state temple of Tabanan, in the same way Tabanan's leaders have attended past ceremonial events in the other regencies' major temples. This institutes status competition at the regency level which would previously have been unknown in large ceremonial events held around Mount Batukau, mostly due to the lack of accessible transport between regions until recently. Moreover, backed by the official institutional body Parisada representing Hinduism in Indonesia (see Chapter 1), *pedanda* are more than ever seen as integral to grand ceremonial events held at other public temples on Bali, such as Pura Besakih, the exemplary centre of Balinese Hinduism. As major financial contributors to the undertaking, then, I suspect the involvement of politics places increasing pressure on large public temples like Pura Batukau to conform to the religious traditions already commonplace around Bali.

### **Pengurip Gumi in Regional Context**

Domain revitalisation ceremonies like the Pengurip Gumi and *ngusaba* performed around Mount Batukau are found elsewhere on Bali. Prominent examples include those held at Pura Besakih. There, ceremonies like Eka Dasa Rudra held every 100 years and Panca Wali Krama performed every 10 years are similarly massive in scale. They involve obligatory temple work by neighbouring associations, contributions from all over the island, and a procession to sea (Stuart-Fox 1982; Nagafuchi 2017; Forge 1980; see also Reuter 2013). Furthermore, as I discussed in Chapter 4, the ritual domains (*banua*) of the Bali Aga residing in north and eastern Bali are another obvious reference for comparison with the highland communities I documented on Mount Batukau. In the Bali Aga case, however, the different villages are drawn together to worship at a common point of origin (*karwitan*) associated with the oldest village participating in the



ritual domain, such as Sukawana village for the *banua* centred on Pucak Penulisan temple (Reuter 2002a).<sup>140</sup>

A notion of shared origin is rarely a consideration for the worship communities featuring in the Pengurip Gumi. The key origins of concern are those of the founding line, whose descendants bear ritual responsibilities due to their covenant with a local- or regionally-significant deity (see Chapter 2). Thus, founding ancestors are principally venerated for their facilitation of relations with the forces of the landscape embodied by deities associated with the mountain, lake, rivers, sea and those governing specific localities, such as the gods enshrined in regional temples comprising the Catur Angga. It would be misleading to suggest that the founding line or descent group is the object of veneration in village temple ceremonies around the Mount Batukau communities I studied. Admittedly, one could argue that the ancestral founding line and deity of a place merge over time, as Mus (1975; see also Domenig 2014: 90-96) himself recognised, and then the deified ancestors progressively become the site of worship in temple ceremonies. This would, however, disregard their separation in Pura Batukau's inner courtyard of the ancestral Kebayan shrine and that of the temple deity, to mention just one example. But over and above that, it would go against the principal reason temples of the kind featured in the Pengurip Gumi are built in the first place (see Chapter 3).

Fragments of a founding story for Pura Batukau shared with me helps illustrate what I mean here. During an early time (*jaman pida*), the first ancestors lived higher on the slopes of Mount Batukau. From an original religious site named Batu Lumbang, a megalithic structure located about an hour's trek upstream from Pura Batukau, deep in the sacred forest of the mountain, the founder witnessed a light emerging from the forest below toward the sky, drawing them to the place.<sup>141</sup> There were no permanent settlements during that time—instead they established a *pedukuban* named Tuka nearby to the light-energy, some distance west of Pura Batukau, where the boundary between

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<sup>140</sup> Hauser-Schäublin (2004a) makes a counterargument against shared origins being the basis for Bali Aga temple networks in her research on the northern indigenous village of Sembiran.

<sup>141</sup> At the time of fieldwork, it was common for the family to reference the third century A.D. as roughly the time this foundation occurred.

forest and the highest fields today stands. At the place emitting the energy from the earth, the ancestor established a shrine to worship those energies as a god, around which the Batukau temple was founded. Only later, and my interlocutor was specific about this, did the community erect a shrine to venerate the founding ancestor, the Kebayan individual who first established a covenant with the temple deity. This distinction is maintained in the material structures of the temple and ritual phases outlined in previous chapters. The nonhuman deity embodying the divine energies of the region, furthermore, gradually became elevated to the paramount status of Tabanan's state temple, as demonstrated in the Pengurip Gumi. Today, the deity of Pura Batukau is known by different names (see Chapter 5), but most commonly to outsiders as Dewa Mahadewa, the Indic name for the great god of gods.

For further regional context, consider Roxana Waterson's exposition of the largest fertility-enhancement rite undertaken by the Tana Toraja of Sulawesi known as *ma'buu'*. She explains how *buu'* forms ritual communities assembled for the express purpose of undertaking rites to ensure the fertility of humans, animals and crops (Waterson 2009: 332-33). Waterson informs us that in Torajan traditional religion (Aluk To Dolo), deities are consubstantial with the landscape (2009: 319), dwelling in mountain slopes or besides springs, which are then summoned from different localities during ceremonies (2009: 313). She describes how "the deities residing on the earth (*deata lan kapadanganna*), who dwell in mountains, rivers, forests, stones, wind, and so on ... are the deities most commonly addressed in ritual" (Waterson 2009: 316). This consubstantiality of energy and place is so apparent that its mediation through temples is not necessary; offerings are instead dedicated directly upon the edges of rice fields or on the sides of mountains (see also Allerton 2013: 108-110). In this way, Aluk To Dolo bears similarities to the *pekelem* rites undertaken by the Kebayan that submerge offerings within the domains of lake, mountain and river on a triennial cycle.

Additionally, the Tana 'Ai ceremonial domains of eastern Flores are relevant to our contextualisation of the Batukau family of temples. Recall that in my study of the *jajar-kemiri* (Chapter 4), I spoke of those highland communities' shared belief in and common veneration of Pucak Kedaton as the defining feature of the collective highland

traditions around the mountain. E.D. Lewis's (1988) brilliant exposition of the Tana 'Ai ceremonial order similarly finds that each of their domains is characterised by a centre, its *mabé*, around which collective ritual revolves. These *mabé* are always enveloped within sacred forest that is not entered except for reasons relating to ritual, alike the forested domain of Mount Batukau. The grandest revitalisation ceremony performed by the Tana 'Ai is named *gren mabé*. Lewis writes that if its complexity could be narrowed to only a single purpose, it would be "the invocation of the deity and the sacrifice of animals to it in order to ensure the well-being of the earth and its continued fertility" (1988: 81). For our purposes, it is important to highlight that this deity is no ancestor, but rather known in ritual language as "Land and Earth, Sun and Moon", which governs the whole of the earth, while clan and house rituals are addressed to the ancestors of the particular groups that perform them" (Lewis 1988: 89). Of further interest, these domain ceremonies oblige the participation of all constituent clans and their members, whose purpose is to restore the energies of the earth and secure lasting fertility, as we have just seen take place in the context of the Batukau family network of temples.

The most important Tana 'Ai domain is named Tana Wai Brama, and like the others, is made up of different clans normally concerned with their own territory. During its revitalisation, they come together under the ritual authority of a single individual. This figure is known as the "source of the domain" (*tana pu'an*). Lewis writes that he is "heir to the earth of Tana Wai Brama by virtue of membership in the clan that first settled his domain (tana) and his descent from the elder of the founding brothers of that clan" (1988: 71), a clear instance of the Austronesian theme of precedence. The source of the domain is key because he "bears ritual responsibility for the maintenance of crucial relationships between the land and its inhabitants" (Lewis 1988: 92). The ceremonial order thus described resembles closely Kebayan control over the Batukau family of temples, who embodies spiritual leadership over and responsibility for the earth (*gumi*) in Tabanan. These regional examples help illustrate the Southeast Asian character to features of the Pengurip Gumi I have hitherto described.

## Gods of the Landscape

A final comparative feature I wish to explore is the ways in which the idea of a divinised landscape pervades so much of what has been documented in the Pengurip Gumi.

When the ceremony calls for the reunification of the network, it draws on the powers of the landscape concentrated at different regional temples, including the Catur Angga, mountain summit and other minor deities also tied to defined localities. These gods are all affiliated with the upper (*lubur*) domain of the earth, given their location in the highlands, as is expressed by all of these sanctuaries bearing the prefix *Luhur* in their names, e.g. Pura Luhur Batukau, Pura Luhur Tambawaras. This prefix is not included in temple names of the lowlands or by the coast, marking a zoned difference in religious thought between the highland temples and those of lower regions.

The highland temples' collective identification with *lubur* illuminates how the landscape is perceived within the ritual context of expansive temple networks like those participating in the Pengurip Gumi. It is common for Austronesian-speaking groups to conceive of the land as having a head (*ulu*) and tail or feet (e.g. Traube 1986). In eastern Indonesia, for instance, the head of the land is identified with the east toward the rising sun (e.g. Forth 1998; R. Barnes 1974; J. Fox 1997). On the volcanic topography of Bali, *ulu* always points mountainward/upstream toward the apex of a regional summit of significance (see Reuter 2006a; 2002b). With respect to the activation of temple networks for the Pengurip Gumi, this idea may be expressed in the following diagram.

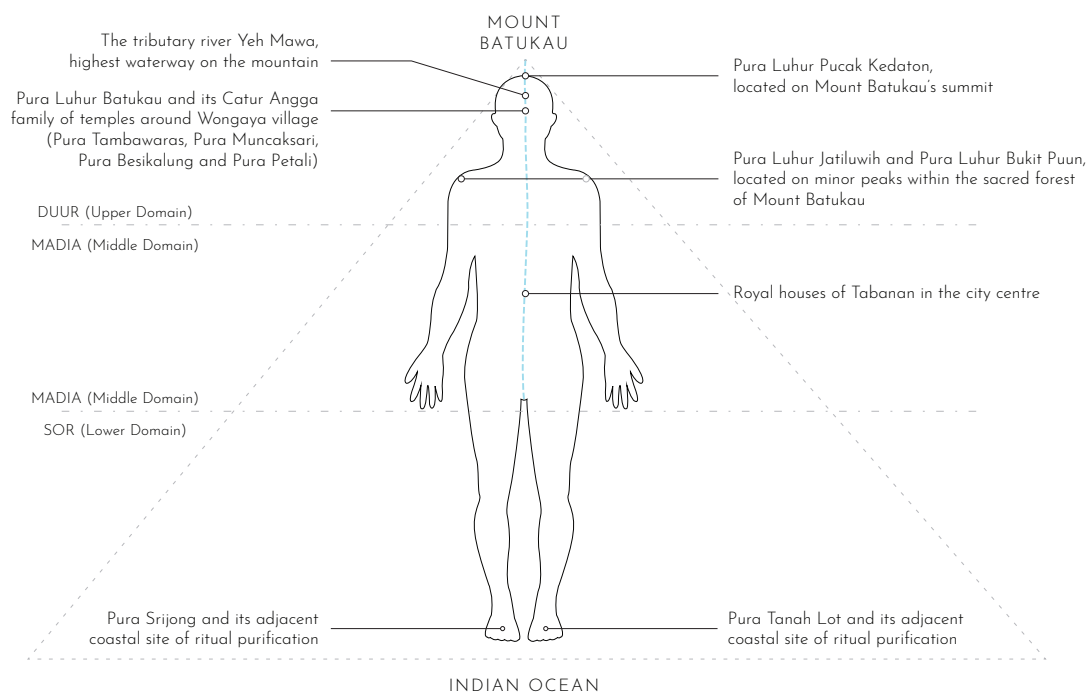


Fig 9.1: Anatomical metaphor of the human body as representing the network of temples interconnecting some regions of Tabanan.

As seen above, the highland temples are conceived of as the upper elements of an integrated ceremonial body. This cosmic structuring of the landscape into different divisions identifies the mountain temples as the source of life for the region, sustaining the other sites of the body. By undertaking processions that bring those gods associated with life down through the domain, I was told that the ceremonies bring about the regeneration of the world (*gumi*). Following this logic, we do not see deities associated with the sea travelling upwards to the domains of the highland sanctuaries for the same purpose. The above (*luhur*) may therefore be considered a transcendental domain in relation to the lowland and coastal areas. For this reason, the highland villages, especially those acknowledged as custodians of the summit temple, are responsible for restoring fertility for the region. This same notion of cosmic superiority recalls how the central powers of Pura Batukau are channelled into dependent entities like subordinate temples, fields or gardens, to bring about their regeneration. The volcanic topography of Mount Batukau thus marries the idea of a divine centre with that of a sacred upper domain, both of which convey the value of life, defined most clearly throughout the Pengurip Gumi by the passage of *tirta* from core to periphery, mimicking the flows

from headwaters into downstream rivers.

## CHAPTER TEN

### Conclusion

*[I]n Bali how could the earth be considered as the primary source of life when hierarchy dictates that whatever is below is inferior to what is above?*

Leo Howe, *Pujung, an Investigation into the Foundations of Balinese Culture*

This thesis explored the culture of the highland Balinese villages circumnavigating the base of Mount Batukau. Through analysis of revitalisation ceremonies, stories of origin and temple foundations, megalithic structures dotting the landscape, similarities and differences within the Southeast Asian region, the earthly basis of temple worship communities, and models of ritual authority amongst single villages and vast temple networks, it documents a shared set of cultural features held across my fieldwork area. Together, they comprise a collection of village traditions operating within the diverse field of Balinese anthropology, united largely by their common reverence for the summit temple as source of life for the region. Yet within this regional culture, this thesis found the highland villages of Mount Batukau to be surprisingly distinct and deeply territorial, their respective ritual practices rooted in exclusive relationships with a landscape that is governed by deities worshipped in village sanctuaries. These relationships are the foundation of an array of territorial cults spanning my fieldwork region, each concerned with the ritual care of their respective worlds (*gumi*). In this Conclusion, I wish to synthesise these shared cultural features into what I perceive as a ritually autonomous system, one that is fundamentally tied to the earth and its prominent features. In practical terms, this system serves to ground those communities' independence from non-local sources of *tirta*, especially those represented by the Brahmanical tradition.

#### **A Ritually Autonomous System**

So, what do I mean by a ritually autonomous system? Principally, I am referring to how the powers to “complete” (*muput*) highland village ceremonies come from within the locality itself, drawn from ancestral sources of *tirta*. Through this practice, local deities enshrined in temples that each village maintains finish the major rites occurring on their land, because *tirta* embodies the essence of those gods. This very Balinese concept refers

to the highland tradition *mesiwa ke dewa* I outlined in Chapter 2. Its core features are helpfully illuminated via contrast with the Brahmanical tradition of *mesiwa ke griya*, which reveals an underlying dichotomy of local to foreign origins characterising the two systems: the *mesiwa ke dewa* practice enacts relationships with the tutelary deities of a locality mediated by their own roles of authorised ritual leadership, whereas *mesiwa ke griya* involves dependence upon the foreign-derived *pedanda* priests consecrating *tirta* on behalf of the community (see Chapter 1). By this opposition, the ritual autonomy of the Mount Batukau villages offers us insight into how the lowland communities have become “ritually dependent” clients of Brahmanical *pedanda*. For example, if we were to accept that prior to the Majapahit conquest of the island, all Balinese villages practiced a comparable method of consecrating *tirta* from ancestral sources, then the Javanese empire’s incursion involved the displacement of this system by one that positions the *pedanda* as exclusively capable of uniting with the non-local, non-ancestral god, Siwa. Recall that the special relationship between *pedanda* and Siwa enables the god to enter the priest as he or she formulates *tirta* for completing rituals (*muput karya*). Frederick Barth describes this moment as when “the High God Siwa himself is incarnate in them during their liturgy, and they are his emanation. When they make the holy water during their rite, they are not asking Godhead to bless it: they *are* God and *create* the blessing of the holy water” (1993: 225, original emphasis). The villages around Mount Batukau, however, have a longstanding prohibition on *pedanda* performing this ‘ritual completion’ service for those communities. Any investigation into the ritual autonomy of the highland villages, then, at the same time searches for an answer to the question as to why this prohibition exists.

Keeping this in mind, this thesis has investigated the significance of inherited ritual authority to the villages around Mount Batukau. Each highland village inaugurates worship communities for temples which, most evidently in the case of single core sanctuaries, are cultic by nature. Holly High defines the term “cult as a set of devotional practices that are conventional within a given cultural setting, but which do not necessarily adhere to the official doctrines of a major religion and which are usually related to a particular figure and/or place” (2022: 8). In the case of Wanagiri explored in Chapter 3, for example, once married and resident in the community, the villagers bear



obligations to both participate in the ritual upkeep of their core temples and request *tirta* from their collective ancestral source (*siwa*).<sup>142</sup> Village membership also means submitting to village-specific conventions (*dresta*) that require burial upon death, the loss of caste status if marrying into the group, and acceptance that *pedanda* are not allowed to complete rites in the village. Furthermore, collective participation in village ceremonies requires adhering to a model of ritual authority that is integral to its cultic conventions. In their community, the descendant of its founding ancestor leads the group as its chief (*penghulu*), supported by temple priests (*pemangku*) and four origin-specific groups who collectively witness (*nyaksi*) each ceremonial event. This structuring of roles, responsibilities and authority remain central to the cultic nature of the ritually autonomous system.

This thesis discovered that ritual autonomy was typically related to the existence of a Siwa temple around the highland villages. In the founding story of Sanda village discussed in Chapter 2, for example, we learnt that settlers who initially established their community became disciples of a hermit known as *jero dukuh sakti*, who practiced meditation and eventually achieved liberation (*kelepasan*) at an emplaced stone assemblage (*bebaturan*) in the forest. This transcendental act inaugurates the Siwa temple of Sanda. From birth until death, I was told, the entire community, including migrants who come to reside upon the lands, are obligated to request *tirta* for completing village rites from the Siwa temple. This relationship encapsulates an exclusive identity between residents of Sanda and their collective territory that is integral to village prosperity and cannot be disrupted. In Chapter 2, when I questioned the Siwa temple priest about the possibility of temple priests (*pemangku*) completing rites there, he informed me that this is expressly not allowed. It is the god itself, through transubstantiating its essence into *tirta*, who completes village rites in Sanda, as is the case elsewhere around the mountain. In this way, the ritual autonomy of Sanda, derived from the cultic relationship with a founding ancestor (*dukuh*), is also the reason

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<sup>142</sup> Recall that the word *siwa* has multiple meanings. Most simply, it refers to the spiritual mentor, or guru, of a client community who are collectively known as *sisia*. In more expanded relations, *siwa* refers to the centre of a four-around-one arrangement, its core power. And, of course, it refers to the high god Siwa, identified on Bali with mountains, which are centres and sources of life. This kind of “teleological determination” (R. Fox 2015) and ambivalence in meaning are standard practice for Balinese discourse.

for prohibiting *pedanda* from completing rites on their lands. The original relationship established with the *dukub* takes precedence over novel forms of religious practice, and the territory of Sanda remains conceived of as under divine control of its respective tutelary deities.

In other Mount Batukau contexts, the cult is more specifically identified with a nonhuman energy associated with the place. In this case, the ritually autonomous system depends on genealogical descent being traced from the founding ancestor down to the core-line's prime descendant, who is both chief and priest for the group. This thesis found that to be most explicitly true for Batungsel and Wongaya villages. Over countless generations, those villages' spiritual leaders' principal responsibility has been to unify with the locally-significant deity in ritual contexts. Today, around the Catur Angga temples comprising the Pura Batukau temple network, the Kebayan represents the prime descendant of an ancestral source that I have discussed at length in Chapter 2. As outlined in Chapter 5, his preeminent ritual authority for not only the Pura Batukau temple network but also custodianship of triennial sacrificial rites (*pekelem*) performed for the entire regency of Tabanan's prosperity is an exceptional instance of spiritual power, which underlies his status as *raja gunung* (mountain king). Irrespective of the expansive territorial affinity of the temple deity's power, however, the same principle applies whereby an original agreement between a founding ancestor and the energies of a place continue to structure ritual authority down generations. In Chapters 2 and 5, this thesis argued that the elevation of core-line descendants like the Kebayan is predicated on their privileged and exclusive access to local divinities, grounded in their localised origins. As discovered in Chapters 6 through 8, this relationship proved essential to even the monumental scale of the Pengurip Gumi, despite *pedanda* priests' inclusion in this event (see Chapter 9).

I chose to call this a ritually autonomous system because I believe it brings together the different research themes of this thesis and will help formulate the contributions it makes to local and regional anthropology below. I feel it is important to add that I documented no explicit animosity toward the Brahmanical tradition—the Mount Batukau system did not present to me as ideological resistance toward the religious

forms which developed alongside the lowland kingdoms over past centuries, despite the highland communities collectively recognising their own precedence. Rather, this thesis proposes that the prohibition on Brahmanical *pedanda* derives first and foremost from the local community's preservation of a cultic system through which fertility is secured in the fields, by which life thus reproduces itself. Indeed, the agricultural rites this thesis has documented show fertility being disseminated from core village sanctuaries via the mediums of *tirta* and blessed seeds, illustrating the flows of life from centre to periphery.

### **Pengurip Gumi: An Exemplary Instance of Regional Culture**

In the Pengurip Gumi, the research themes of this thesis are exemplified within the space of a single ceremonial event. As the Batukau temple network's chief priest and prime descendant of a sacred lineage, the elder Kebayan encompasses all human participants in his liminal position between the temple deity and its vast communities of worship. As evidenced during the god's descent for the event (Chapter 7), the deity and congregation commune through their chief and delegate (see Mus 1975). In this ceremony, the Kebayan's family of priests uphold their exclusive function of requesting the temple god impart its essence into *tirta* for completing the constitutive phases. The territorial sovereignty of the deity is evidenced by its pinnacle position within the family network, embodying a synergic dualism between summit temple and Pura Batukau that reinforces the latter's status as state temple for Tabanan. Ongoing patronage by lowland institutions like the royal houses and regional governments implicitly recognises the autochthonous monopoly on fertility around Mount Batukau, and their support is further indicated by instructions given by the central government to erect bamboo posts (*penjor*) outside every home in the regency in preparation for the family of deities' descent unto the sea. Moreover, the Pengurip Gumi targeted the revitalisation of different resource domains of significance to the entire regency, including the sea, rivers, lakes, mountain, and forest, as documented in my exposition of its sequential phases. Once more, these revitalisation ceremonies point toward the prominence of the earth as a key religious object, and its worship as a source of life being the basis of autochthonous cults spanning the region.

When viewed in regional perspective, those highland revitalisation ceremonies (*ngusaba* or *pengurip gumi*) result in a topography of centre-oriented communities each conceiving of themselves as occupying the core of separate axes running from the mountaintop unto the coast. These are the “paths of life” (*jalur kehidupan*) specifically traced through ritual during those ceremonial events. Down these axes course the river currents that mimic the flow of life originating at the summit, as if the ridges and valleys cascading down the volcanic slopes were arteries bearing life-giving powers to those communities situated at the foot of the mountain, whose ceremonies ensure the perpetual circulation of this system. This regional perspective on the highland culture has entailed comprehending the intrinsic relationality of temples, seeing the land as an interconnected body as similarly viewed by Austronesian-speaking societies elsewhere (see Chapter 9). Its contribution further identifies how Balinese indigenous groups around Mount Batukau structure relationships with a divinised landscape in ways akin to other insular Southeast Asian groups (e.g. Waterson 2009; Bovensiepen 2009; Allerton 2013).

Keeping the landscape in mind has been key to the original insights of this thesis. Time and again, my interlocutors gestured toward the earth and its inherent energies in temple foundation stories. Grand revitalisation ceremonies like those spoken of above, including the triennial series of sacrificial rites, aim to bring back to life (*pengurip*) the sources of life the region’s agrarian societies depend upon. Moreover, the materiality of boulders, immense trees, and megalithic structures I encountered reinforced the idea that cultic worship of temple deities is rooted in the land around Mount Batukau. In this regard, the contributions this thesis makes may be viewed in relation to Stephen Lansing’s (1991) ground-breaking study of water temple networks around Bali. Here, especially, I refer to his analysis of the relationality of water temples:

All water temples are physically located at the upstream edge of whatever water system they purport to control. ... Temples and shrines are situated in such a way as to exert influence over each of the major physical components of the terrace ecosystems, including lakes, springs, rivers, weirs, major canals, blocks of irrigated terraces, *subaks* and individual fields. (Lansing 1991: 53)

Lansing finds a kind of “hydrologic” underlying this kind of relationality, which in other

terms might be described as the partibility of divinity (see Sahlins 2013; Mosko 2010) or an instance of the one over the many (see Sahlins 2017, 2022; Endicott 1970). In its analysis of the Batukau family of temples and *jajar-kemiri* megalithic network, this thesis found a similar logic applies, even though these systems predate the creation of irrigation systems in highland Tabanan (see Ottino 2000).<sup>143</sup> Therefore, it may be that the logic of water temples Lansing documents is, in fact, the application of a wider-ranging phenomenon that underlies the relationality of networks maintained by the autochthonous cults of Mount Batukau as well.

### **Life Comes from Above**

On Bali, mountains are typically classified as the abode of gods and this research found that unmistakably to be the case. Yet the findings of this thesis also invite a reconceptualization of the mountain as a domain of the earth itself (see also Domenig 2014)—as the greatest representation of its energies and a macrocosmic instance of the stones worshipped in village ceremonies (see also High 2022). As part of the triennial sacrificial rites (*pekelem*), the mountain is classified as a source of life along with the lakes and rivers from which water originates. In its role in revitalisation ceremonies documented in this thesis, the mountain deity enshrined at the summit temple, Pucak Kedaton, is understood to hierarchically encompass all the temples and villages downstream from it, including Pura Batukau, due to its apex position within the interconnected networks. As Ottino found in her research, Pucak Kedaton “conveys the value of totality. It is both the geographical and cosmological centre of the realm of the mountain, as well as of the kingdom of Tabanan. It is also the symbolic origin point from which every element in that realm including rice and human beings, originate” (2000: 105). In this case, the mountain’s superior height and core position in the landscape translates to it being the ultimate cause of life for the region, from which course the paths of life particular to each community documented in Chapter 4.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> About the highland Batukau region, Ottino explains that “[d]ry-land rice (*padi gaga*) was the only crop cultivated there until the late thirties. Even after the opening of the first system of waterways by the Dutch, the proportion of fields transformed into irrigated terraces remained insignificant until 1958” (2000: 171).

<sup>144</sup> Consider how seamlessly the Indic concept of Mount Meru translates to the indigenous Balinese context. This is not coincidental, as Mus would point out, but due to both Hindu and Balinese religions

Life comes from above (*luhur*), as it were. With respect to Lansing's research, I suspect that water, as revealed through its configuration as *tirta*, becomes the vehicle paralleling these flows of life imagined as emanating from source domains, most prominently at the mountaintop. Recall that despite its associations with rain and the male-associated generative principle (*purusa*), Pucak Kedaton is not actually a water source temple—the summit area is dry, and tributary streams begin at elevations below the peak. In a word, water itself is not revered, but the passage of life from above.<sup>145</sup> The upper deities' descent for the cyclical series of temple network ceremonies suggests they bear the power to revitalise the world (*gumi*) from above, stepping over (*napak*) the earth and combining with bodies of water and land to create life for the domain. Moreover, in terms of divine sovereignty, interlocutors framed Pucak Kedaton as reigning supreme over the lands descending unto Tabanan's shorelines. As a result, this thesis proposes that Mount Batukau as a source of life combines two main religious themes: its conception as the navel (*puseh*) of a sacred topography; and the deity's power over that domain. In this way, the flow of life from above via temple networks indexes regionally-specific ideas about divine "ownership" (see High 2022; Århem & Sprenger 2016) and the "immanence of life" (Fox 1987).

Both divine ownership and immanence point to the kinds of animism broadly associated with indigenous societies of the region, with some qualifications due. Speaking generally, for the agricultural groups of Southeast Asia, this is not an egalitarian animism like has been documented in Amazonian and non-sedentary varieties elsewhere, but one that revolves around asymmetrical relations with divine owners who hold mastery over the land (see Århem & Sprenger 2016; High 2022; Tannenbaum & Kammerer 2003; see also Costa 2018). Indeed, there is a fundamental asymmetry to the dualism pervading Balinese religious thought (see Hobart 1978), and this is equally present in the relationality of temples, the flow of life from above, and gendered principles of generation (i.e. *purusa* to *predana*). In his explication of this kind

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deriving from the same cultural basis that expressed itself in autochthonous cults spread across the monsoon zone.

<sup>145</sup> My point is to underscore that non-water distributing temple networks express the same kinds of relationality as the ones Lansing studied.

of “hierarchical animism” prevalent across Southeast Asia, Kaj Århem suggests that one of its defining features is “an asymmetric relational matrix of dominance and submission epitomized by the institution of sacrifice” that differentiates itself from the “horizontal, egalitarian and symmetric cosmos” (2016: 25) of standard animism. In sum, the asymmetry traced by paths of life emanating from ever-higher upstream sources, including their ritual renewal through repeated cycles of sacrifice, suggests that the networks of autochthonous cults spread around Mount Batukau contribute to our understanding of hierarchical animism.

### **Localising the Region and Layering its Religions**

Lastly, one of the striking features of these cults has been their adaptability to religious layering whilst maintaining an everlasting sense of potency unique to each place. After a locality’s energies are harnessed through founding contracts with a place-deity, its associated meanings may shift and material forms evolve into seemingly unrecognisable structures.<sup>146</sup> The god of a place may become incorporated into island-wide temple networks like the *sad kabhyangan* explained in Chapter 6, a megalithic sanctuary may become a place overtly functioning as one to pray toward the holy trinity of Hinduism like detailed in Chapter 3, and an ancestrally-specific worship site may become perceived as the portal to direct prayers toward an omnipotent being when interpreted through the monotheism of Balinese Hinduism. Nevertheless, the belief in a locality-defined power inextricably tied to that place remains unshakable. Today, this idea is perpetuated by the commonplace Balinese practice of travelling great distances across the island to receive *tirta* consecrated at remote sanctuaries. Clearly, those sites have something substantively different to the temples worshipped in a person’s home village to motivate these voyages—something which might be described as the “tengetness” that determined “above all if and where a temple should be erected” (Lovric 1987: 52-53) in the first place.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> High equally finds the cases analysed for *Stone Masters* convey “the dynamism of territory cults, with abandonment, revitalisation and reinvention all possible outcomes” (2022: 15).

<sup>147</sup> Recall that *tenget* is a quality associated with places and objects identified as magically powerful.

By suggesting that religion is multilayered around Mount Batukau I am proposing a particular conception of the subject for Balinese anthropology. I wish to avoid classifying its different religious sources as constituting a syncretic blend, because multiple layers of influence imply instead an accumulation of potential interpretations and the concomitant effect of “teleological overdetermination” (see R. Fox 2015). This is evident in the local recourse to different metaphysical frameworks for meaning. These layers were skilfully navigated by my interlocutors, seeing, for example, both the immanence and ultimate relationality of an omnipotent Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa in all the earth’s features, while also identifying its boulders and trees as owned by *penunggu* (invisible controllers) to whom they make offerings to ensure safe passage through adjacent lands. Just as multidimensionally, the mountain divinity (*hyang*) is identified with the high god Siwa and at the same time acknowledged as the autochthonous owner of the land. It becomes a matter of perspective and context with respect to which layer becomes the lens through which relations are explained.

These insights form a bridge to the fabric of indigenous religious traditions comprising Southeast Asia. In drawing this connection, I am thinking especially of how Richard O’Connor defines the shared cultural understandings across the expanse of Southeast Asia as “a lingua franca of localism” (2003: 271). At its core he identifies localism as a set of “locality-creating rites and customs” (O’Connor 2003: 274), which is worth unpacking in the final part of this Conclusion. Following O’Connor, the Mount Batukau villages’ intense localisation may be interpreted as rooted in the ways in which a locality comes into being. As is widely understood (e.g. Belo 1953; MacRae 2006; Wessing 2017; Lehman 2003), the land upon which humans traverse in Southeast Asia is divinely owned and remains under divine control. Founders’ cults, land conversion rites, temple founding stories, obligatory participation in worship communities, and even prohibitions against foreign-derived priesthoods all comprise part and parcel of the mediations which must be undertaken between a community and the divine owners of land. Those actions and their renewal through periodic ceremonies are expressions of the locality-defining agreements held between human occupants and their local gods. This is their cultic territoriality defined above by High (2022) as particular to each place.



It must be reemphasised that territoriality in this instance implies the temple deities are consubstantial with places. This further entails that village gods are particular to a locality, illustrating the characteristically perceptive statement by Mus that “each collectivity occupies a limited area, and that in basing its religion upon its association with this area, its cults imply not only a contract with the soil, but also the recognition of other contracts in the neighbourhood” (1975: 37).<sup>148</sup> These insights contribute to the finding this thesis has claimed throughout: the religion I documented around Mount Batukau was inextricably local. Each of the highland worlds (*gumi*) was concerned with renewing its exclusive ties to a divinised landscape from which the means to prosper its community flow. The earth’s energies are thus venerated in the revitalisation ceremonies undertaken respectively by the stewards of separate ritual domains around Mount Batukau. In sum, the local and variegated traditions found across the region form part of the rites and customs each village enacts to define a locality as their own, traditions which are inherited and continue to develop across generations.

In its various investigations, this thesis has benefited from regional studies of both insular and mainland Southeast Asia and especially the interpretive framework developed by Mus. In return, this thesis extends his theory of the religion of monsoon Asia to the villages of Mount Batukau where it found an earlier ritual core preserved beneath the religious forms now encapsulated by Balinese Hinduism. Indeed, the centrality of geographic features to temple foundations, worship of territorial *hyang* in highland temples, emphasis on fertility in village rites, and revitalisation of resource domains during large ceremonies all point to the vitality of the earth (*gumi*) as essential to life in the Batukau highlands. The principal tenets of the highland culture this thesis examined showed great affinity with those extending into western Indonesia and the mainland, in terms of both religious ideas and language. This suggests that Balinese ritual practice has roots in a wider web of religious ideas than that represented by Hindu or Austronesian-speaking sources alone. Indeed, the enduring regional affinities and

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<sup>148</sup> For a similar reflection but relevant to the Balinese context, see Boon’s comment: “The *desa* congregation is likewise distinguished by the particulars of its customary religious life, which are always in heightened contrast to neighboring *desa* congregations” (1977: 94).

“trans-local cultural motifs” (Wessing 2017) this research explored demonstrate that Bali still exemplifies traditions that place it emphatically within the vast cultural panorama of Southeast Asia.

## APPENDIX

The following set of photographs were taken of the surface of a boulder in Tabanan that contains petroglyphs of unknown age and origin. The boulder face containing the engravings is protected from sun and rain due its location under a part of the rock which protrudes out, providing a natural shelter for the petroglyphs and obvious choice for their placement by the original engravers. The boulder is located within Mount Batukau's forest at an altitude of 673m above sea level. Today, rice fields are located quite near to where the boulder lies in the forest, and there are dirt paths one can drive a car close enough that it is only a 10 minute walk to the petroglyphs, if one knows where to go. There are no villages close by.

There are in fact two large boulders at the site, one containing the petroglyphs and the other is named Batu Belah and identified as the Siwa temple of the core-family of Kebon Tumpalan village. The village leader (*bendesa*) is also the head priest of this Siwa temple, a position he inherited from his father and grandfather. This man invited the local archaeological team to examine the petroglyphs, who prepared a report including photos of some of the more apparent engravings at the site. I returned one day alone to take the photos below which contains petroglyphs not previously captured by the archaeological team. Without the requisite expertise, I am unable to comment in any detail about their regional context.

In my opinion, they are of interest because no other petroglyphs were documented on Bali at the time of my fieldwork. Since approaching the local archaeological office in Denpasar, they informed me that another set of two petroglyphs were discovered in Karangasem recently. These appear considerably younger and of a different style than those in Tabanan. Given that there are hundreds if not thousands of similar kinds of boulders on the slopes of Mount Batukau and inside the Buyan-Beratan caldera, it stands to reason that other petroglyphs may exist in the forest. They suggest occupation in this part of Bali by people who still roamed the forest, given the distance of the boulder from permanent settlements. However, proper excavation of the site is the only means for knowing more about the people who created the engravings.



The boulder in front contains the petroglyphs, where are located on the rock face that is in shadow, sheltering it from sun and rain.



The rock face containing the petroglyphs.



Petroglyph 1.



*Left: Petroglyph 1. Right: Petroglyph 2..*



*Left: Petroglyph 3. Right: Petroglyph 4.*



Petroglyph 5.



*Left:* Petroglyph 6. Note the style of this petroglyph and markings appear to be of a different style and age than the others. *Right:* Petroglyph 7.



Petroglyph 8.



Petroglyph 9.



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