

## **SANGHYANG DEDARI DANCE AND SAPUH LEGER PUPPET PERFORMANCE: Ritual Arts in Bali during Pandemics\***

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### **Abstract**

The Covid-19 pandemic which started in Wuhan, China at the end of 2019 which then spread to the other parts of the world, has led to the revival of sacred and spiritual rituals as an effort to curb the pandemic in addition to putting in place strict implementation of health protocols. Such efforts are also made by the people of Bali, Indonesia, by holding the ritual dance Sanghyang Dedari and Wayang Sapuh Leger (Sapuh Leger Puppet) performance. Both rituals are believed to be an antidote to disease outbreaks, including the Covid-19 pandemic. The purpose of this article is to analyze the relevance of ritual arts in Bali in strengthening the mental health of the Balinese people amid the pandemic. The objects of this research are the Sangyang Dedari dance in the traditional village of Cemenggaon of Sukawati, Gianyar, Bali and the Wayang Sapuh Leger performance in Bali. The analysis was carried out using the ritual theory and the habitus theory. The results of the analysis revealed that the ritual dance Sanghyang Dedari and the Wayang Sapuh Leger (Sapuh Leger Puppet) performance are held from generation to generation, as a form of a social habitus of the Balinese people in developing collective positive mental resilience. The ritual art performance takes place without structures (i.e. without any creation patterns, floor patterns, and stage settings), and driven by social habitus, namely the belief system, control rituals, and ritual ideology. The Sanghyang Dedari dance and Wayang Sapuh Leger are controlled by rituals performed to help the community to cope with their fear and worries of the pandemic. The rituals carried out during the pandemic are ways to release frustration and stress due to physical distancing and social restrictions put in place during the pandemic. This practice is aimed at building collective mental strength.

**Keywords: Ritual Arts, Sangyang Dedari Dance, Wayang Sapuh Leger, and Pandemic**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Balinese people have cultural traditions that are relevant in an effort to prevent various disease outbreaks. Among the cultural traditions, the prominent ones are the ritual arts of the Sanghyang Dedari dance and Wayang Sapuh Leger performance. The book (palm script) that teaches the Balinese people to anticipate disease outbreaks, is *Lontar Widi Tatwa Rongga Sengara Bumi*. This book suggests that the government and the people of Bali be aware of what may happen in the Kali

Yuga era, namely, among others various natural phenomena including disease outbreaks that strike humanity. When this phenomenon occurs, various types of rituals, including ritual arts, must be performed.

Ritual arts including the Sanghyang dance and the Sapuh Leger puppet show are considered possessing supernatural powers to ward off disease outbreaks. There are many types of Sanghyang dances spread throughout Bali, among others, Sanghyang Dedari, Sanghyang Deling, Sanghyang Celeng,

Sanghyang Jaran, Sanghyang, and others (Walter Spies and Baryl de Zoete, 1938; Soekawati, 1925). One of the villages that organizes the ritual art of Sanghyang dance as a means of warding off disease outbreaks is Desa Adat (traditional village of) Cemenggaon. The Sapuh Leger puppet ritual is still held by Balinese people, especially those born in Tumpek Wayang. The Covid-19 outbreak that strikes humanity has strengthened the Balinese people's belief in the rituals of Sanghyang dance and Wayang Sapuh Leger.

For the people of Cemenggaon, the *gelungan* (headdress) is a symbol of Ratu Sanghyang Dedari, and as such, putting it on means serving the higher being, namely the deity, Sanghyang Dedari. I Wayan Suka, mentions that the *gelungan* (headdress) is a sacred object, and the ritual to honor the headdress is held on the Saturday of the *wuku* (the week of) wayang, namely on Tumpek Wayang. Sanghyang Dedari in the traditional village of Cemenggaon is symbolized in a form of a *gelungan* (headdress). It is a *pratima* (a Balinese sacred object) belonging to Pura Dalem (a community temple in Bali). Therefore, it is kept in in the Pura Dalem, precisely in a *gedong* (a storage room), located some distance from the village hall (from the interview conducted on 12 February 2021).

The Sapuh Leger puppet ritual is held as a means of cleansing Balinese people who are born on the Tumpek Wayang day. Tumpek Wayang, among Balinese people, is considered a sacred day, because the life of people born in tumpek wayang could be taken by Bhatara Kala. I Made Sidja, an artist and cultural observer as well as a *dalang* (Balinese puppeteer), said that children born on *wuku* (the week of) wayang, especially on Saturday of the week, must be cleansed through *pengelukatan tirta* (holy water) from the Sapuh Leger puppet show. Sapuh Leger means cleansing or purification, to leave no dirt sticking to the human body to avoid being taken by Bhatara Kala, which means to be able to prevent ourselves from getting infected by a disease (based on the interview conducted on 12 February 2021).

From the information above, the ritual processes and practices of Sanghyang Dedari and Wayang Sapuh Leger are a means of

preventing disease outbreaks. When associated with the Covid-19 outbreak that hit Bali, as well as the rest of the world today, the ritual arts of Sanghyang Dedari and Wayang Sapuh Leger can be interpreted as a means to increase immunity (like vaccines), so that people are not easily infected by diseases.

## METHOD

The study on the Sanghyang dance ritual and the Sapuh Leger puppet ritual, requires data on the meaning of these rituals for the Balinese people. This study used the qualitative research method to collect data on the rituals. The qualitative research process started with collecting data, and was followed by analyzing data, developing the data in line with the research theme, and providing interpretation of the collected data (Sugiyono, 2016: 228). The purpose of qualitative research is to present a social view based on the concepts, attitude and perceptions of the research subject concerning an object of the study (Moleong, 2011: 6). The objects of the current research are the Sanghyang Dedari dance ritual in the traditional village of Cemenggaon and Sapuh Leger puppet performance. The research subjects are informants, namely, I Made Sidja, an artist and cultural observer, *bendesa adat* (the traditional village head) of the traditional village of Cemenggaon, and *pemangku* (a Balinese Hindu priest) of Pura Dalem. In relation to the research objects and subjects above, the open interview method was used as the main basis combined with a library research method to explore the meaning of the data.

The theory used to analyze data is the ritual theory. The ritual theory suggests that a ritual is built based on the concept that emerges from beliefs, symbols and myths (Bell, 2009: 19). Beliefs, symbols and myths are the concepts that humans have, while rituals are the expressions, or the realization of such concepts. A ritual is built based on the concept which is applied repeatedly (habitual) (Bell, 2009: 19). Bell also explained how control rituals and the ideology of ritual play a role in maintaining social harmony, including in facing a pandemic. The Sanghyang Dedari ritual as an antidote to plagues is a belief that is repeatedly implemented in the Cemenggaon traditional

village. Therefore, the study of the rituals of Sanghyang Dedari and Wayang Sapuh Leger as social practices can be supported by the habitus theory. Bourdieu stated that habitus is a set of dispositions created and reformulated through the conjuncture of objective structures and personal history. Dispositions are acquired in various social positions that exist within a field, and imply a subjective adjustment to these positions (Harker, Mahar & Wilkes, 1990: 10). “Habitus is a product of history, produces individual and collective practices, or in accordance with the schemes generated by history” (Bourdieu, 1977: 82). This means that habitus is closely related to the belief system of a society which influences the mentality, subconscious mind, and spiritual sensitivity. Bourdieu suggests that habitus also emerges from the deposition of knowledge or beliefs of a person and society supported by accumulated intellectual, social and cultural capital (Mutahir, 2011: 61-68). The rituals of Sanghyang Dedari and Wayang Sapuh Leger have been performed from generation to generation as the social habitus of Balinese people in the face of a pandemic.

## DISCUSSION

The history of performing arts has developed from time to time, and changed in line with the change of the times. The change of the times will have an impact on the change in the meaning and function of performing arts. Traditional societies that have strong devotion in honoring the forces of nature have promoted various types of performing arts to function as ceremonial means with sacred meanings. The change in society from a traditional society to a more developed society in the royal times revealed that the art performances were not only held to honor the forces of nature but also the king. In modern society, money has increasingly become more important, and some people hold performing arts to fulfill their need for money which in turn can commercialize the performing arts. Changes of the times have led to changes in the function and meaning of performing arts which have resulted in the loss of various types of performing arts including the Sanghyang dance. Awareness of the importance of maintaining traditional cultural values, including

performing arts, has led to some instances where traditional performing arts have been revived as a means of creating the safety of Balinese people.

The Balinese people believe that disease outbreaks normally occur in *sasih kenem* (the sixth month of Balinese calendar). The first month of the Balinese calendar coincides with July, hence the sixth month coincides with December. From generation to generation, the Balinese people have passed on their belief that a plague usually occurs in the sixth month of Balinese calendar, and thus the sixth month is called month of ‘*sasih grubug*’ (a month of plague). The word ‘*grubug*’ means a social phenomenon of disease outbreaks that take the lives of many people. In order to prevent disease outbreaks, Balinese people perform a ritual called ‘*nangluk merana*’. The word ‘*nangluk*’ means to contain, and ‘*merana*’ means a plague. *Nangluk melana* is a ritual to curb disease outbreaks or prevent disease outbreaks. The *nangluk merana* ritual process begins with *mecaru* (a purification ceremony) on *sasih kelima* (the fifth Balinese calendar which falls on November) by making *sanggah cucuk* (a small shrine usually made of bamboo) which is placed in front of one’s house gate, and decorated with *kober* (cloth) with *god gana* image on it. There are also Balinese people who do not make *sanggah cucuk* and *kober* with the image of the god Gana, but straight away do the *mecaru ceremony*, and then perform the *ngadegan* ceremony (to pray for the presence of) higher beings to protect the residents for one month and seven days.

The variation in the procedure for the implementation of the *nangluk merana* ritual in Bali is influenced by the concept of *desa kala patra*, which means that each village has its own procedures. In addition to the above rituals, Balinese people still practice the Sanghyang Dedari ritual and the Wayang Sapuh Leger ritual to ward off disease outbreaks. A village that still holds the Sanghyang Dedari ritual is Cemenggaon village in Sukawati-Gianyar which is the object of this research. The Sapuh Leger puppet ritual is a self-cleansing ritual that is held by Balinese people on people who were born on the Saturday of *wuku* (the week of) Wayang, known as *tumpek wayang*.

### The ritual of Sanghyang Dedari

The ritual performance of the Sanghyang dance in Balinese society is believed to be a powerful spiritual means to ward off epidemics. Various types of Sanghyang dances which are used as a means to prevent disease outbreaks and promote public safety, include: 1) Sanghyang Dedari, with dancers wearing a white kebaya and *gelungan legong* (legong headdress), 2) Sanghyang Deling, which is a Sanghyang dance where the dancers bring a doll in the form of a Deling and this is practiced in the community around Lake Batur, 3) Sanghyang Dengkluk, a Sanghyang dance which is a variation of Sanghyang Deling which still exists in Tabanan, 4) Sanghyang Jaran, a Sanghyang dance performed by boys and is often found in the Gianyar area (Pejeng and Blahbatuh), 5) Sanghyang Celeng, a Sanghyang dance that is performed by boys with movements like pigs, and still practiced by the people of the village of Pesangkan, Selat, Karangasem. There are many other Sanghyang dances such as Sanghyang Memedi, Sanghyang Kidang, Sanghyang Janger, and Sanghyang Penyalin (Zoete and Water Spies, 1938). Of the many types of Sanghyang dances above, the Sanghyang Dedari Ritual is the most frequently performed by Balinese people.

The Sanghyang Dedari ritual can be recognized from its process and practice in society. The dance is performed by two or more girls who have not reached their puberty. In the Sanghyang Dedari ritual dance, the dancers are first wafted with incense smoke, and then they will slowly fall unconscious. After they fall unconscious, they will move gracefully with their eyes closed. The girls are dancing in a trance, possessed by a deity, called Sanghyang Dedari. In the Sanghyang Dedari ritual, the girls dance in front of a *pelinggih* (a shrine) wearing a legong headdress (*gelungan legong*). Some villages may have more attributes, according to their local beliefs.

The additional attributes led to variations of names of Sanghyang Dedari dances in villages in Bali. In the village of Ketewel, Sanghyang Dedari is called Sanghyang Legong or Sanghyang Topeng. It is called Sanghyang Legong because the dancer puts on a Legong headdress, while it is called Sanghyang Topeng

because the dancer puts on a mask. The term mask is used following a myth which says that when I Dewa Agung Made Karna meditated, he saw a goddess who was flying with her hands covering her face. After his meditation, he ordered the traditional village head of Ketewel to use a mask in the ritual. In the Banjar Bengkel, Denpasar, Sanghyang Dedari dance is called a sacred legong dance, because the Sanghyang Dedari headdress is the same as the sacred legong headdress. In Cemenggaon Village, which is the object of this research, the headdress is a sacred object and put in a special place, and the headdress is called Ratu Sanghyang Dedari. Sanghyang Dedari in the traditional village of Cemenggaon Sukawati, Gianyar is sacred and is known to be able to serve as a means of warding off disease outbreaks.

Based on the belief of the Balinese people, including the Cemenggaon traditional village community, a disease outbreak usually occurs in December. A disease was described by the people of Bali to have entered the island from the south coast in the late afternoon (*sandikala*), marked by the appearance of a fire ball emerging from the direction of Nusa Penida. It then floated on the sea water, and burst into sparks. The sparks then entered the land (Soekawati, 1925: 321). Thousands of sparks entered the land as a sign that the evil forces had begun to spread the plague causing the Balinese to fall sick and led to many deaths (Soekawati, 1925: 321). Based on the myth that spread in Bali, the fire ball is the embodiment of a supernatural figure who has an extraordinary black magic. He is Jero Gede Mecaling of Pura Dalem Peed, Nusa Penida who comes to the island of Bali to take lives by sending an epidemic of disease. In order to ward off disease outbreaks, the people of Cemenggaon, Sukawati, Gianyar Bali perform a Sanghyang Dedari ritual known as Nangiang Sanghyang Dedari.

The Covid-19 disease outbreak which spread widely and has taken many people's lives can be interpreted as a phenomenon of *grubug* in Bali. The Covid-19 pandemic is considered a '*gering agung*' (a deadly disease outbreak) phenomenon. The belief in the emergence of disease outbreaks is also illustrated in the palm

script *Widhi Tatwa Rongga Seangara Bumi* as one of the marks of the Kaliyuga era. Kaliyuga era has become a social discourse in the society, and it is related to the current situation. In *Widhi Tatwa Rongga Seangara Bumi*, it is stated that:

In part 1a “*ritatkalaning ganti kaliyuga bumi, dewa matilar ring madhyapada, mantuk ring swarga mahameru, ginatiyan bhuta sabhumi, sami wang kesusupan butha, baur ikang jagat, prang semulur, ratu memeseh pada ratu, gering sasab merana tan pegat, endah laraning wang, mantra usadhi punah*” (Meaning: In the Kali Yuga era, the gods leave the human realm to return to heaven, and in the human realm, the gods are replaced by butha kala. Humans are influenced by butha kala; life becomes uncertain; wars never end; conflicts between officials occur; disease outbreaks never end; and people face difficulties in various fields of their life). The sentence above is followed by the sentence below:

Part 1b, “*mantra tan pasari, ajwa tan yatna sang bhujangga haji, angemit praja mendala, ngawe kayowaning rat, dana kna watek pandhta aji angucarkan aken wedha, angundur aken gering mara genah iki, sedana aweya, suci 3 soroh, saji tigsng soroh, sesayut dirgha yusa bhumi, pras panyeneng mepanggungan ring pengabhaktian sang ratu, ikat ikang bumi antuk oma tirta, duluring penawa ratna maideran, tkaning jadma kabeh, kon abhakti nunas uri*” (Meaning: Advice and appeals are ignored; the authorities should stay alert to keep the country’s safety; [they should] assign priests who are knowledgeable to spread *wedha* to prevent plagues in the region; the offerings consist of three portions of *suci* (offerings for purification), *sayut dirgha yusa bumi*, and *pras panyeneng* to be presented at temples or shrines; keep the harmony among people with *tirta* (holy water), *penawa ratna* to all the people, and tell them to pray for their lives to be spared).

From the contents of the palm script (*lontar*) above, we can see that in the Kali Yuga era disease outbreaks strike humanity, cause confusion among people and result in distress in various sectors. The *lontar* also reminds the authorities to never stop praying to God for the safety of the people by assigning priests to perform *puja* (prayers) by means of *bebantenan*

(offerings) as mentioned above. The Kali Yuga era is understood by the community as an era with unfavorable characteristics, as it poses adverse impacts on humans, nature and states. Disease outbreaks strike humanity, people get confused and anxious, and conflicts affect their lives (Sidemen, 2010: 381). Therefore, the Balinese people believe that the phenomenon of disease outbreaks is not sufficiently countered by a *sekala* way, namely by implementing a health protocol, but must also be supported by a *niskala* (spiritual) way. In an effort to support with a *nisakala* (spiritual) way, the Balinese people have been encouraged by Parisada Hindu Bali (a Balinese Hindu association) to ask for safety by means of *bebantenan* (offerings) in the form of *pejati* and *nasi wong-wongan* (a small human-shaped offering made of rice). In addition to the *bebantenan* (offerings) appealed to by Parisada Hindu Bali, the community of the traditional village of Cemenggaon Sukawati has a ritual tradition of Sanghyang Dedari to ward off the presence of the plague.

In general, Balinese people and the community in the traditional village of Cemenggaon consider the Sanghyang Dedari dance as a sacred dance, and therefore the performance of the Sanghyang Dedari dance is called *nangiang Sanghyang*. The word *nangiang* in Balinese means ‘to awake’, but in the context of Sanghyang Dedari, *nangiang* means *nyolahang* (to perform a dance). Jro Mangku Dalem (the priest of Pura Dalem) of the traditional village of Cemenggaon, said that *nangiang* Sanghyang Dedari in the traditional village of Cemenggaon is done based on *bisama* (order from the leader) of the village as part of the tradition passed on from generation to generation. Because it has been a tradition passed on from generation to generation, the community agreed to incorporate it in the *awig-awig* (traditional regulations) of the traditional village. Thus, *nyolahang* (performing the dance of) Sanghyang Dedari has become a part of the traditional village *awig-awig* (regulations) based on the agreed *bisama* (decision). The Sanghyang Dedari dance is performed every three (3) years upon a *pawisik* (a vision) of Jro Mangku. Based on the village customs, Sanghyang Dedari dance is performed after the

*puja wali* (a temple festival) of Pura Desa of Cemenggaon (interview, 17 February 2021).

At the traditional village of Cemenggaon, Sanghyang Dedari is highly sacred to the local people and they place the crown (*gelungan* or headress) as a symbol of the deity. As proof that the local people treat Sanghyang Dedari as sacred, they venerate the crown (*gelungan*) the way they do *rangda* (the demon queen of the Leyaks in Bali) which is made sacred through a ritual called *Ratu Ayu*, and *barong* (the king of the spirits, leader of the hosts of good, and enemy of Rangda), through a ritual called *Ratu Gede*. The *gelungan* or headress of Sanghyang Dedari is made sacred through a sanctifying ritual called Ratu Sanghyang Dedari. The benefit that Sanghyang Dedari has compared to Ratu Ayu and Ratu Gede is that Sanghyang Dedari has a *piodalan* or ceremony that falls on a *tumpek wayang* day. According to I Wayan Suka, the *bendesa adat* or the traditional village head in charge of organizing any kind of and religious activities, the people of the traditional village of Cemenggaon inherit the *gelungan* (crown) of the sacred Sanghyang Dedari as a means to ward off the presence of disease outbreaks. The *piodalan* ceremony is held every Saturday of the week of Wayang, referred to as *tumpek wayang* by the Balinese people.

The *piodalan* ceremony is a ceremony to commemorate the birthday of a holy place or the day someone was born. The *piodalan* ceremony of Sanghyang Dedari falls on the day of *tumpek wayang*, which means that on the day of *tumpek wayang* the first ceremony was set for Sanghyang Dedari headress, which was then made a symbol of Sanghyang Dedari. The Sanghyang Dedari ritual in the traditional village of Cemenggaon, Sukawati, Gianyar, is held every November, starting with a *mecaru* ceremony (a purification ritual held to maintain a harmonious relationship between human and the environment). The *mecaru* ceremony in Balinese society is the Buta Yadnya ceremony, in which a holy sacrifice is offered to the Buta Kala (the evil spirits) so that they do not to interfere with human life. After the *mecaru* ceremony is carried out, Sanghyang Dedari is performed around the village to drive away Buta Kala from the village. This act is a ritual to ward

off disease outbreaks and an effort to create safety and harmony for the people of Cemenggaon village (interview, 12 February 2021).

The ritual of performing the Sanghyang Dedari dance is not only a performance around the traditional village of Cemenggaon that is carried out in accordance with *pawisik* (vision), but is a ritual activity to ward off disease outbreaks. Therefore, preserving Sanghyang Dedari from generation to generation is not only about preserving art and cultural values, but it carries a great purpose, namely to ward off disease outbreaks. Thus, the ritual significance of maintaining the safety of the local people of the Cemenggaon traditional village takes precedence over aesthetic values. Therefore, there are no specially trained dancers; instead, the dancers are teenage girls who have not reached their puberty. The girls have the right to perform the Sanghyang Dedari dance as long as they are chosen by Ida Bhatara Dalem. Ida Bhatara Dalem's choice is made through the mediation of Jro Mangku Dalem (the priest of Pura Dalem) supernaturally.

According to Jro Mangku Dalem, the process and performance of the Sanghyang Dedari ritual begin with *mendak* (collecting) the *gelungan* (crown) as a symbol of Sanghyang Dedari from Pura Desa (a village temple, one among three temples of Kayangan Tiga (Desa, Puseh and Dalem temples)) to be taken to Pura Dalem. The *gelungan* is placed at Pura Dalem in a *sanggar agung* (a temporary shrine structure erected for making offerings), which is made of *dapdap* trunk (from the *dapdap* tree or *Erythrina variegata*). After the *gelungan* is placed in the *sanggar agung*, it is then presented with welcome offerings. After offerings are made, teenage girls are gathered before the *gelungan* to be chosen to perform the Sanghyang Dedari dance. The girls are then wafted with incense smoke by Jro Mangku Dalem so that some among them will be possessed. Girls being in a trance is a sign that they are the girls that are chosen by Ida Bhatara Dalem to perform the Sanghyang Dedari dance. The costume worn in performing the dance consists of white cloth and a white blouse, without footwear.

Clothing in a social context has a function of providing comfort, maintaining

modesty, and for showing off (Setiawan, *et al.*, 2016:140). In the context of entertainment performing arts, dancers' clothes serve to provide an aesthetic quality, but in the context of ritual performing arts, clothes have their own meaning as a symbol of chastity and purity. The color white is a symbol of purity, and dancing barefoot is a symbol of chastity, authenticity, and clarity. Based on the local belief of the Cemenggaon traditional village community, Sanghyang Dedari is performed barefoot so that the dancers can be in direct contact with the land (*napak pertiwi*). Land in Balinese society is considered the source of life. Land fertility is of great importance to create happiness, safety, and health.

After the dancers are adorned with clothes and *gelungan* (headdress) as a symbol of Sanghyang Dedari, the selected girls dance in an unconscious state with gentle, flexible and graceful movements and their eyes closed. The Sanghyang Dedari ritual takes place for six months. According to Jro Mangku Dalem of the traditional of Cemenggaon, the ritual of the Sanghyang Dedari dance is carried out continuously for six months starting from Bude Kliwon Matal through the next Bude Kliwon Matal. For six months, the girls chosen as dancers must be chastened by the community both in the way they are provided with food and the way they sleep. They are not allowed to get of their house and must stay in a sanctified room. They may leave the house only to go to Pura Dalem and to the house of Jro Mangku Dalem. The performance of the Sanghyang Dedari dance is carried out every holy day (*kajeng kliwon*, full moon, and *tilem* (dead moon) for six months (interview, 17 February 2021).

In this paper, the process and performance of the Sanghyang Dedari ritual in the traditional village of Cemenggaon are analyzed using the ritual theory and the habitus theory developed by Bourdieu. Ritual theory states that a ritual is built based on a concept inherent in the community with a specific purpose. The concept in relation to rituals is a deposition of beliefs, myths and symbols (Bell, 2009:19). In accordance with the information above, the ritual of Sanghyang Dedari in the traditional village of Cemenggaon was built by

involving the concept with the aim of warding off disease outbreaks in the community. This concept is a deposition of their beliefs in the myth about Jro Gede Mecaling who brings plagues to Bali. The Sanghyang Dedari's *gelungan* is a symbol of *niskala* (spiritual realm) power which is considered to have supernatural powers to ward off disease outbreaks. The Sanghyang Dedari ritual is a performance or the execution of a ceremony which is the result of the deposited beliefs about traditions that have been passed down in the community from generation to generation.

The belief in the myth of the presence of Jro Gde Macaling to spread disease outbreaks is supported by predictions contained in literary works. This belief has turned into a deposited thought and is passed down from generation to generation and demonstrated in the form of ritual activities into social habits. Repetitive habits that cover the cognitive and affective dimensions can be considered as *habitus* (Bell, 2009:19). According to Bourdieu, *habitus* is a social disposition formed by history (Bourdieu, 1977:82). *Habitus* in this case is the performance of the Sanghyang Dedari ritual which is carried out every year from time to time. The intellectual capital in this case is the belief in the emergence of a plague every November and December. The social capital is the support of the community, and the sacred identity is manifested by a *gelungan* (crown) symbolizing Ratu Sanghyang Dedari. The field is the place where the ritual is performed, namely at Pura Dalem, and the social practice consists of holding a *piodalan* ceremony, carrying the *gelungan* around the village, and performing the Sanghyang Dedari dance.

In accordance with Bourdieu's theory, the Sanghyang Dedari ritual is a social practice that has been passed down from generation to generation through the interaction between the interests of the community and the interests of tradition preservation. The Sanghyang Dedari ritual as an expression of faith, belief, and tradition is a conception of thought that aims to save the community from various disease outbreaks. It is recognized that disease outbreaks have an impact on various areas of life. Therefore, the people of the traditional village of Cemenggaon consider it important to maintain

the ritual traditions that they have inherited. An epidemic such as Covid 19 cannot be predicted as to when it will end, and therefore requires mental strength to deal with. This mental strength can be formed based on the belief in supernatural powers that emerge from the spiritual realm through the ritual of Sanghyang Dedari in the traditional village of Cemenggaon, Sukawati, Gianyar, Bali. Visible psychological effects in the form of fear and anxiety in the community age group of children and adolescents. Without realizing it, the idea of using the pocong figure is a demythization which was originally a sacred object into a form of media used to deliver messages. (Wegig & Susanto, 2021). This visual play actually reinforces the myth of pocong as the spirits of the dead that can be met in real life by modern people who claim to have faith (remythology)

A ritual is a concept that is expressed or demonstrated and oriented towards a desirable goal (Bell, 2009). The goal to be achieved in the performance of the Sanghyang Dedari ritual in the traditional village of Cemenggaon is for the community to be protected from disease outbreaks. The Sanghyang Dedari ritual is performed and carried out through a process that begins with the preparation for *mendak* (collecting) Ratu Sanghyang Dedari, who is symbolized in the form of *gelungan* or headdress, from the Pura Desa (village temple), to then be brought to Pura Dalem. At Pura Dalem, a shrine for the Sanghyang Dedari is made in the form of a Sanggar Tawang (a temporary shrine structure erected for making offerings), which is made of *dapdap* trunk. At the Sanggar Tawang, Sanghyang Dedari is given a ceremony with offerings, as well as holy water and incense. At this time, the girls who have not reached their puberty are summoned, and then before Ratu Sanghyang Dedari they are cleansed with holy water. The Pemangku Dalem (the priest of the Pura Dalem) then performs worship with mantras and performs meditation in order to receive *pawisik* (a vision) to appoint two girls as the servant of Ratu Sanghyang Dedari. After receiving a *pawisik*, Jro Mangku Dalem points to two girls according to the *pawisik* and then waft them with smoke from the incense that had been lit.

The process of *pedudusan* (wafting incense smoke) is accompanied by Sanghyang's *gending-gending* or singing which is very soft and magical, and touches very deep feelings and emotions. The *pedudusan* performed on the Sanghyang Dedari dancers is a purification process accompanied by chanting and vocal singing. The singing also guides the feelings of our souls, especially with the dancers being in a state of unconsciousness, making it highly possible for a trance to occur. After the two girls are in a trance, with their eyes closed while performing dance movements, Ratu Sanghyang Dedari is carried and a dance is performed to her, which is called *nyolahan* (performing the dance) for Ratu Sanghyang (interview, 17 February 2021). The performing arts of the Sanghyang Dedari dance ritual are presented without a structure, but the people associate the performance with carrying out the plays of Jobog, Kuntir, Lasem, and others. Likewise, when the Sanghyang dancers are served food, the dancers are associated with dancing the Cupak Gerantang, even though formally there is no clear choreography (without a performance structure).

### **The Wayang Sapuh Leger Performance Ritual**

Balinese people consider Tumpek Wayang Day as a sacred day, because the life of the people born on Tumpek Wayang could be taken by Kala (or also known as Bhatara Kala). This belief is based on the existence of a religious myth that describes the birth of Kala, the son of God Shiva on the Tumpek Wayang Day. Shiva also has a child named Rare Kumara who was also born on Tumpek Wayang. Kala did not want anyone to have the same birthday as his, although in fact his younger brother was also born on the same day, namely on Tumpek Wayang. He then asked his father (Lord Shiva)'s permission to take his younger brother's life so that no one would have the same birthday as his. Shiva gave his permission on a condition that Kala should wait until his younger brother became an adult. Kala agreed to it and looked forward to the time his father could fulfill his promise. On the other hand, Shiva called his son Rare Kumara, to bless him with a power so that he would never grow up. After waiting for a long time, Kala realized that Rare



Kumara never grew up. He could not wait any longer, so he chased Rare Kumara.

Rare Kumara knew that he was being chased, so he ran away and came across a puppet show. He then took refuge in the puppeteer. When Kala arrived at the puppet show, he did not find Rare Kumara. Kala was fascinated by the Wayang performance. When Kala was there, the *dalang* (puppeteer) asked Rare Kumara to go into the resonator (a bamboo hole) of the puppet *gender* musical instrument, so that he could survive the pursuit. The success of the *dalang* in rescuing Rare Kumara caused Shiva to bestow upon him an ability to perform a cleansing ritual on people who are born on Tumpek Wayang. The purification ritual by a puppet show on the day of Tumpek Wayang is known as Wayang Sapuh Leger.

I Made Sidja, an artist and cultural observer as well as a *dalang* (Balinese puppeteer), said that children born on *wuku* (the week of) wayang, especially on Saturday of the week, must be cleansed through *penyelukatan tirta* (holy water) from the Sapuh Leger puppet show. The word '*sapuh*' means 'to clean', while the word '*leger*' means *leteh* (dirt), so *Sapuh Leger* means cleaning the dirt that sticks to the human body from birth (interview, 12 February 2021). Based on the information provided by I Made Sidja, it can be said that the ritual of the Sapuh Leger puppet show can be interpreted as a means to increase immunity, so that one will not be easily infected by a disease. Sapuh Leger puppet show can be considered as a means to cleanse one from any disease that he/she has. Therefore, the Sapuh Leger puppet show can be interpreted as a vaccine in order to increase immunity in the face of the Covid-19 outbreak.

The ritual of Wayang Sapuh Leger performance is a religious practice held when humans cannot overcome social phenomena that they cannot explain (Sudarma, 2017: 22). The Sapuh Leger puppet show ritual, is a religious activity carried out by people who believe in supernatural power. The ritual process of the Sapuh Leger puppet show begins by determining the time for the ritual, namely on Saturday of the *Wuku* (week of) Wayang (Tumpek Wayang). It starts with the preparation of ceremonial means and the designation of a *dalang* (traditional Balinese puppeteer) who has already undergone

a *mewinten* (purification) ritual, and is considered to have spiritual abilities to communicate with supernatural beings.

I Made Sidja mentions that the process of the ritual starts with making the stage using a banana trunk to which the puppet sticks will be stuck. A *dapdap* trunk is stuck on each far end of the banana trunk, on the right and the left ends of the banana trunk. A cotton string is then tied on one *dapdap* trunk and then extended to the other *dapdap* trunk. As many as 11 pieces of old Chinese coins are attached to the left *dapdap* trunk, while 200 pieces of old Chinese coins are attached to the right *dapdap* trunk. After the performance ends, the puppeteer presents *bebatenan* (offerings) with holy water in a *sangku* (a bowl). The offerings and the holy water are blessed with mantras. The holy water is then sprinkled and drunk by the person blessed in the Sapuh Leger ritual.

From the process and performance of the Sapuh Leger ritual, it can be seen that there is a very strong belief in Balinese society, that supernatural forces (*niskala*) can help Balinese people avoid a disease. This belief stems from a deposition of knowledge that has been passed down from generation to generation, becoming the belief of the Balinese people. The belief is an intellectual and cultural capital that is applied repeatedly in the Balinese society in the form of the Sanghyang Dedari ritual and Wayang Sapuh Leger and such belief has become a habitus. Bourdieu, cited in Mutahir (2011: 61-68), states that social practice is carried out in the presence of habitus, capital and fields. Consistent with Bourdieu's theory, the Sanghyang Dedari ritual and the Wayang Sapuh Leger ritual are social practices. The ritual is carried out by the Balinese people based on a tradition, namely a habit from generation to generation, and the belief in the presence of disease outbreaks which may come every year (cultural capital). As for the Sanghyang Dedari ritual in the traditional village of Cemenggaon, the place (the field) where the ritual is performed is Pura Dalem, and then the Sanghyang Dedari is then paraded around the village. The place (the field) for the Wayang Sapuh Leger ritual can be the *dalang*'s (puppeteer's) house or the house of the person who has the ritual performed.

### **Ideology of Ritual**

The performing arts of Sanghyang Dedari and Wayang Sapu Leger are controlled by a ritual system. Durkheim views ritual as a dramatization of a collective image driven by a mystical and communal experience (Durkheim in Bell, 2009: 171). This view points to the presence of ritual performing arts which is a unitary ritual event itself. Control ritual is a community adaptation effort in dealing with external pressures, including the Covid-19 pandemic, with a set of belief systems, *upakara* (means of ceremonies or offerings), and the processions.

The Balinese people believe that after holding the ritual arts of Sanghyang Dedari and Wayang Sapu Leger, all members of the community can feel safer and healthier both physically and mentally. A sense of optimism emerges collectively eliminating the adversity and fear caused by the pandemic. Scientifically, Douka suggested that traditional dances develop physical fitness and happiness, especially among the elderly (Douka, et.al., 2019: 1). Douka explained that dance is a combination of music and movement skills, which coordinates body movements with rhythmic stimuli so as to build movement sensitivity. The results of this research bring us closer to the fact that the function of ritual performing arts is not only to support psychological health, but also builds physical fitness.

The ideology of ritual revives the social habitus of the Balinese people in the face of the pandemic by offering ritual performing arts as an answer. This habitus has been going on for generations and remains relevant today. Roy views that the corona virus is God's way of getting us back to thinking and acting correctly. This virus reminds us to pray, and it has temporarily halted our busy activities (Roy, in Maqin, et al. (ed), 2020: 57). Roy's viewpoint shifts ritual from being practical to being contextual in dealing with the situation. The handling of the Covid-19 pandemic should not only involve the clinical dimension, but what is important is that it should also engage a spiritual method with a set of rituals.

## CONCLUSION

Based on what has been described above, in addition to enforcing health protocols, disease outbreaks that hit the Balinese people

such as the Covid 19 pandemic are also overcome through ritual arts. The belief of the Balinese people, especially the community in the traditional village of Cemenggaon, is that the plague can be countered with the help of the spiritual power. The spiritual power will be able to help ward off the plague through the performance of the ritual art of Sanghyang Dedari dance. To increase immunity from diseases, Balinese people also believe in the Wayang Sapuh Leger ritual, especially for people born on the day of *tumpek wayang*.

The ritual process of Sanghyang Dedari in the traditional village of Cemenggaon involves a *medudus* (incense wafting) ceremony so that the dancers can become possessed by the spirits of the deities, so that they perform the dance in an unconscious state accompanied by a female choir and a male choir. The performance of the Sanghyang Dedari dance ritual is carried out through a series of *piodalalan* ceremonies every six months, and a *nangkluk* ceremony honoring Sanghyang Dedari every year. The process of the Sapuh Leger Puppet ritual is carried out by involving a puppeteer who has undergone a *pewintanan* (purification) ceremony, so that he is able to make *tirta pengruwatan* (holy water for healing) with his spiritual abilities. The performance of the Sapuh Leger Puppet ritual is on Saturday of Wuku (the week of) Wayang, referred to as *tumpek wayang*) which is considered a sacred day, the day for the Buta Kala or the evil spirits to roam around to negatively affect human health.

The ritual arts of Sanghyang Dedari and Wayang Sapuh Leger are control-ritual art performances. Ritual serves as the main tool, and then comes the aesthetic of the event, with various processions and ceremonies. The involvement of ritual practitioners, such as priests, customary leaders, offering makers, and others is important. The ideology of ritual is an effort by the Balinese people to build harmony between physical and mental-spiritual health. In facing the Covid-19 pandemic, people need mental and physical strength at the same time.

\*Translated from Bahasa to English by Ni Luh Windiari and Verra Mulianingsih

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