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Author Affiliation:

Institute Hindu Dharma Negeri Denpasar, Indonesia; Email: nengahlestawi@gmail.com

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Ritual Sanction in the Balinese Tradition of exiling the family of *Manak Salah* at Julah Village, Tejakula District, Buleleng Regency

I Nengah Lestawi

ABSTRACT

One of the interesting old Balinese tradition is known as “*Manak Salah*” (Bearing Wrong Children). In the tradition the family bearing “twins children with different sex” is exiled. This research found that the tradition is kept at the *Julah* village, although the regulation issued in 1951 by the Provincial Legislators has terminated it. At *Julah* the parents with such children take their family voluntarily to leave the village because they felt afraid of “the unseen spiritual punishment from the God” and believe that the ritual is influential.

Keywords: Ritual Sanction, Exiling, Bearing Wrong Children, Balinese Tradition.

1. INTRODUCTION

Bali, as part of the Indonesian nation, is well known around the world. Its unique culture has made the people of the island seem to be inevitably free from the global influence. As part of the nation, the Balinese people preserve their own unique tradition with their own tongue and the local wisdom of Hindusim. One of the traditions is known as *Manak Salah*, literally means ‘bearing wrong children’. *Manak salah*, also called *Salah Wetu* (wrong bearing), refers to the married couple who bear twins children with different sex. The term is especially used to name the parents who are judged to “bear the guilty” for giving a birth to such twins. In relation with the Balinese social stratification, sanction for *Manak Salah* only affected the *Sundrawangsa* people, i.e. the lowest class group in the traditional caste hierarchy, but not the other ones. Among the royal circles, for example, twins with different sex were considered to bring fortune; therefore the sanction was not regulated. Yet among the *Sudrawangsa* families the parents with such children would be accused to *memada mada*, which means ‘to level themselves to the higher caste people’.

To exile the married couples with such twins was observed in some villages in Bali in the past. During the time the couples were excluded from the village for 42 days. Since they were considered to have ‘impured’ the area, there would be a big sacrificing ceremony too held at the crossing roads of the village. Although the

provincial legislator issued the regulation No 10/DPRD, on 12 July 1951 that abolished the tradition (Atmaja, 2006:12) some villages in Bali have been found to carry on the tradition. One of them is the village of Julah.

Tradition means custom or habit passed down from the people in the past to the ones today that characterize them as a society. Etymologically, the word “tradition” suggests the link between the past and the present time. It denotes something from the past that still functions at present time. When people talk about religious tradition they refer to the doctrines or teachings of religions from thousand years ago that are still alive today.

According to the latest Indonesian dictionary, the term “*mengasingkan diri*” (to alienate oneself) is derived from the word “*asing*” (adj.), which means “alien”. In Indonesian, the word “*asing*” may receive prefix “*me*” and suffix “*kan*” to be “*mengasingkan*” (v.), which means “to move self from the others” (Tim Reality, 2008:70).

2. DISCUSSION

Bearing the Twins with different Sex is considered as *Manak Salah*. According to Sudharta (1993:12) in the book entitled *Manusia Hindu dari Kandungan Sampai Perkawinan* (the Hindu Men from the Birth to the Marriage) birth is a super human moment that potentially invites danger. In order to remind its importance, a lot of taboo and prohibition are suggested. *Manak salah* is the term used by the Balinese to taboo married couple who bear twins with different sex (<http://www.parisada.org>). According to the tradition, such a couple with their twins is believed to bring bad fortune to the place where they live so that they have to be exiled from the area with some ritual. The purpose of the ritual is to save the area and the people living there. An interview with the head of Julah Village, Ketut Sidemen (Thursday, 15 April 2010) revealed that the term *Manak Salah* has been around since the 12th Century when Bali was under the rule of the King Masula-Masuli. *Manak Salah* was then considered as an odd birth because as far as the past understanding of the people is concerned, human beings were known to be able to give a birth to only one child at one time. Thus, couples with such twins were regarded to be abnormal or taboo that they were accused to bring bad fortune to the village and the people in it.

Following the words of the King, the ordinary people in the past were made to believe that only the royal family could have twins children with different sex. To the common people twins children are taboo. The sanction given for bearing twins with different sex at *Julah* village was heavy. First, they had to leave the village to stay in the so-called the “frog cemetery” near the village (the term “frog cemetery” was used generally to refer to the place in which a villager had to be exiled. In this case, such a villager was regarded to be like a frog). Second, they had to stay near the *Dalem* Temple of the village. The last, they were also to stay in the place named *pemuunan*, which is the place the villagers normally used to burn the rice belonged to a dead villager. The exiled family had to stay for 42 days in each of those three different places. When they had ended the period, a ceremony was done to purify the family and the village. Since the traditional customs for the Julah villages was issued in 1986, formally, the village ended the exiling. One of the reasons has been that the cemetery used for the exile, was owned privately since 1979. In addition to it, the humanitarian awareness among the villagers began to grow that they started to feel responsible for the health of the twins. However, the villagers still keep the fear for the consequences if the tradition is not done.

The Hindu texts never recognize *Manak Salah* and the ceremony related to it. All births are considered holy. According to Arjuliana (2004) the term *Manak Salah* was associated with the local Balinese manuscript called *Hindik Manak Salah*. According to the script anyone give a birth to twins with different sex are supposed to be exiled from their community. Other scripts discussing the case have been studied by Atmaja (2006:48). One of them is the script of I Goesti Poetoe Djelantik of Singaraja published on 28 Septembere 1912 in *Adatrechbundels Bali End Lombok* volume XXXVII, page 427-433 as quoted by Kerepun (2004). The first version of the script said that both *Sudrawangsa* and *Triwangsa* family who gave birth to twins children with different sex had to be punished. However, the second version said that the *Triwangsa* should be free from the punishment.

Table 1

The Practice of the Manak Salah Tradition among the Balinese according to the the first version of *Rontal Hindik Manak Salah* as found in *Adatrechbundels Bali end Lombok*

Wangsa/Caste	The Period in Exile	The Implication
Satriya (Satriya Dalem and his offsprings)	Away from home to do penance for three months (105 days)	The region is unsafe, outbreak, draught, heavy rain
Brahmana (The Priests of Catur Patah)	Move to the shrine and stay under the “bed” for a month (42 days)	The region is under the outbreak threat

The Shiva, Buddha, Ksatriya, and Bhujangga Priests		
Wesya	Move to the crossroads to stay there for 105 days	The region is unsafe
Sudra	Move to the cemetery for 105 days	The region will be attacked by a draught and outbreak

Source: Atmaja (2006:55)

In addition to the *Rontal Manak Salah*, according to Suastini (2005), *Rontal Widhi Papincatan* also discussed the tradition and its problem. The scripture described that the tradition *began* when a king had twins children with different sex named *Masula* and *Masuli*. During the time the birth of the twins was celebrated merily as it was considered a fortune that would bring prosperity to the region yet “should never be copied” by the ordinary people. Gunadha (1991:39) found the *Rontal Catur Pitaka* depicts the same case. In it, it is said that at the birth of the twins with different sex, the male baby should be out before the female one, but both should be removed from the village to the cemetery in which they are supposed to stay for a month plus a week. In addition to that, their house should be set on fire before being showered with the *Pemralina* holy water. The twins were given the *pedudusan* ritual as well as the *tataban sesayut sampurna* offerings.

An interview with Jro Kubayan Garsim (Friday, 16 April 2010) revealed that the *Manak Salah* ritual has been practised in the village since the 12th century. The ritual is divided into two levels. The first one is in the family level and the second is in the village level. For the family level, the ritual is carried out at four different places, namely at the ancestor shrine of the family, at the area of *Dalem* Temple of the village, at the *Tukad Palembang*, and at the *Bale Agung* temple of the village. The ritual at the village level should be attended by the family of *Manak Salah* and all *Julah* villagers. The ritual is done at three different places, namely at the beach, at the *Ponjok Batu* Temple, and at the *Bale Agung* Temple.

A) The Sanction at the Family Level

Wiana (2002:5) in his book entitled *Makna Upacara Yajna dalam Agama Hindu* said that the offerings made for a ritual should not be regarded as “the food for God” instead it should be seen as a symbol that visualize teachings of Hinduism. However, the ritual at the family level for *Manak Salah* requires different kind of offerings and be carried out according to the good day or *pedewasaan*, which is usually after the full moon night to relate to the festival of the *Dalem* Temple. In addition to them, the purpose of the ritual is believed to cleanse the family from the dirth carried by the birth of such twins children.

1) The Ritual at the Ancestor Shrine

The ritual at the ancestor shrine is named *ngaturang piuning* in Balinese language. The term literally means ‘to inform’. In the ritual the family is supposed to inform their ancestor about the fate that happens to them with the hope that they were kept away from the bad fortune and their place could be purified. The ritual at the shrine is lead by a *Jro Balian*, who is usually the eldest in the family that has been “cleansed” through a ceremony called *mawinten*. Based on what was said by *Jro Kubayan Garsim* the offerings prepared for the ritual include the ones below.

1. The *bobolan* rice and 12 sides dishes
2. A grilled pig
3. An offering placed on *dulang*
4. 4 *dulangs*
5. Grilled chicken, egg, cakes, and others placed on *ceper*
6. Rice, grilled chicken, boiled egg, banana, 225 pieces of *kepeng* coin, put in a *linggian*
7. *Santun* with rice, thread, *palm sugar*, raw duck egg, coconut, 1700 *kepeng* coins.
8. *Canang*

Since they know that a lot of money is to spend for the the ritual, the other villagers come to help the family to give some materials needed by the family for it, such as coconut, leaves, chicken, ducks, etc to show their solidarity.

2) The Ritual at the *Dalem* Temple

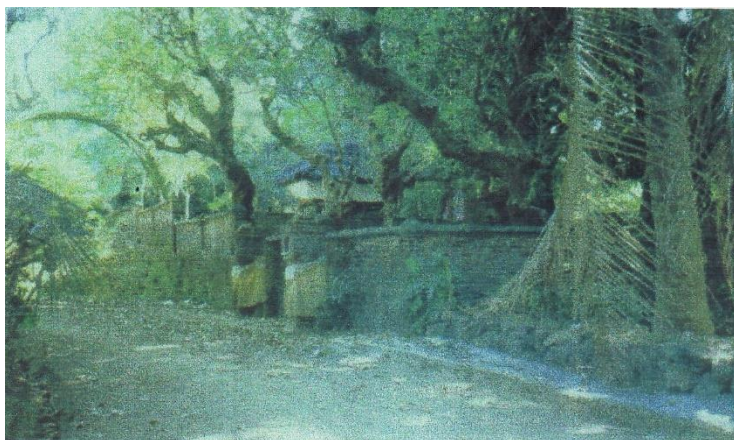
The other ritual is carried out at the *North outside of the Dalem Temple of the village*. It is not done inside the temple because the family is believed to be impure that if they entered the temple they would impure the temple too. Beside cleansing the family, especially the twins, the ritual is also aimed at helping the children so that they could grow up with good morals and ethics.

Under the guidance of a *Jero Balian* the ritual of *Manak Salah* by the temple should be accompanied with the following offerings:

1. The *Bobolan*
 - a. 5 tanding of rice
 - b. 7 pieces of *Ketimus*
 - c. 7 *Ketupat*
 - d. *Pelemuh*: rice in *tamas*
2. *Kumaligi* on *sidi*
 - a. *Sudamala* belt
 - b. Mirror
 - c. Scissors
 - d. Comb
 - e. *Pengutik*
 - f. *Kumaligi*
3. *Santun*
4. *Lis*
5. *Tetabuh*
6. *Toya pahit*
7. *Toya anyar*
8. *Kamben kapuh*: Balinese cloth with 225 pieces of traditional coins.
9. *Canang*

Other offerings are also prepared for the *Jro Balian* who leads the ritual. They are as below.

1. *Bukta* (rice, 11 pieces of traditional coins, *porosan*, thread, split *pinang*)
2. Torch
3. *Paketisan*, *cungcung*



Picture 1

Dalem Temple

Source: Sidemen Archieve (undated)



Picture 2

The Offering for Jro Balian

Source: Sidemen archive (undated)

3) The Ritual at the *Tukad pelumbahan*

The third ritual is carried out at the stream so-called *pelumbahan*. The ritual should be done by the family to purify themselves completely. The place of the ritual is to the east of the village area or the west side of the neighboring *Bondalem village*. The water of the stream has been for long time to believe to hold purifying or cleansing power. Therefore, it is also the place for other rituals.



Picture 3

Tukad Pelumbahan

Source: Sidemen Archive (undated)

4) The Ritual at *Bale Agung Temple*

The ritual at *Bale Agung Temple* is called *Balik Sampah*. It is the ritual in which the family ask for the God's blessings so that they are purified and the village is protected from the misfortune. The offerings prepared for the ritual is as below.

1. *Bobolan* in 22 plates
2. Buffalo *baying bayang*
3. *Kumaligi* on *sidi* that consists of:
 - a. *Sudamala* belt
 - b. Mirror
 - c. Scissors
 - d. Comb

- e. *Pengutik*
- f. *Kumaligi*
- 4. *Santun*
- 5. *Lis*
- 6. *Tetabuh*
- 7. *Kamben kampuh*: the Balinese cloth with 225 pieces of traditional coins and *tetuesan kampuh*
- 8. *Canang*

Other offerings are also prepared specially for the *Jro Balian* or *Jero Sengguhu*, the leader of the ritual. They are as below.

- 1. *Bukta* (rice, 11 pieces of traditional coins, *porosan*, thread, split *pinang*)
- 2. *Torch*
- 3. *Paketisan*, *cungcung*

The ritual takes place in the middle of the outer part of the temple. It takes a buffalo that is offered to the *Bhuta Kala* spirit and put on the mat on the ground to face North. What is interesting about the ritual is that the family (the parents and their twins children) are to eat and drink “like animal”. This has to be done so in order that they leave behind their bad luck destiny in their turn of the life circle.

B. The Ritual at the Village for the *Manak Salah*

The interview with the *Julah* Head, Ketut Sidemen (Sunday, 18 April), revealed that the ritual of *Manak Salah* in the village is carried out during the full moon night because the day is believed to be holy. The ritual takes place at three different temples, namely at *Segara* temple, *Ponjok Batu* Temple, and *Bale Agung* Temple. In order to put no burden too much to the family the cost of the ritual is under the finance of the villagers collectively.

1) The Ritual at the *Segara* Temple

The ritual at the *Segara* (beach) temple is often called *melis*. The ritual starts at the *Bale Agung* Temple in the village from which the villagers walk carrying all sacred *objects* to the beach where the purifying process takes place.

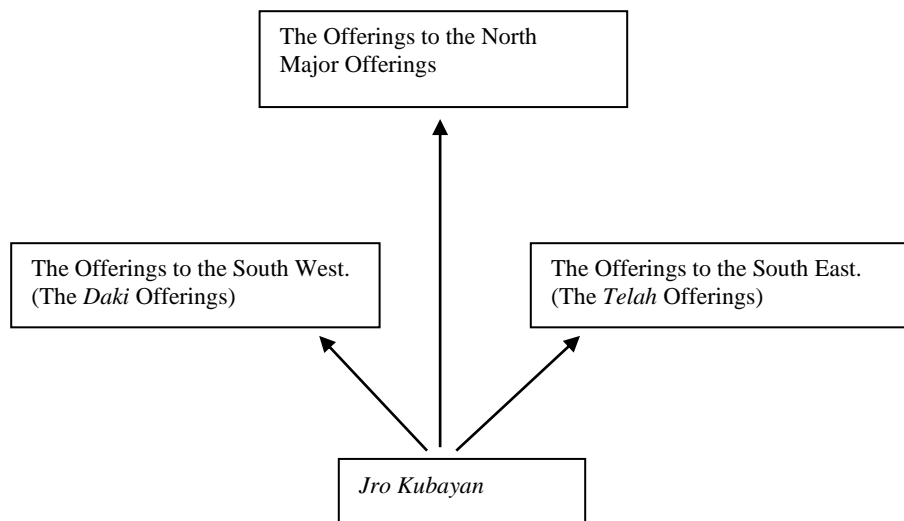


Picture 4

The Ritual at *Segara* Temple

Source: Sidemen Archieve (undated)

The ritual is led by *Jro Kubayan* and observed by the village officers. The offerings are of three kinds. The first ones, which are called *Banten Utama*, are placed on a stage to face North. The second ones, called *Banten telah*, are on the ground to face the South East. And the third ones, named *Banten Daki*, are put on the ground too to face South West.

**Picture 5**

The Map or Direction of Jro Kubayan

The offerings at the Segara Temple are of three kinds. The details are as below.

1. The offerings on the stage
 - a. *Bobolan* rice and its side dishes on 22 plates
 - b. Grilled pork
 - c. Offerings on *dulang*
 - d. *Bubu* and *ceper* filled with baked chicken, boiled egg, cakes, etc.
 - e. *Caru* on 4 *dulang*
 - f. *Linggian* filled with rice, baked chicken, duck egg, banana, 225 pieces of traditional coins
 - g. *Santun* filled with rice, *tukelan* thread, palm sugar, raw duck egg, coconut, 1700 pieces of traditional coins
 - h. *Canang*
 - i. *Kampuh* cloth (facing North)

**Picture 6**

The Offering on the Stage

Source: Sidemen Archieve (undated)



Picture 7

The Display of Banten Ngateb

Source: Sidemen Archieve (undated)

2. The *Daki* offerings placed on the ground consist of the following items.

A. *Banten*

1. *Linggian*
2. *Santun* and *lis busung*
3. *Bobolan* rice in 5 plates
4. *Sidi* (with mirror, comb, scissors, *sudamala* belt)
5. *Tetabuh* (plain water and *palm sugar water*)
6. bitter water
7. fresh water in *payuk bulus*

B. *Banten nganteb*

1. *Bukta* (rice, 11 traditional coins, *porosan*, *tukelan* thread, and split *pinang*)
2. Torch and flashlight
3. *Pasepan*
4. *Paketisan*, *cungcung*

3. *Banten Telah*, put on the mat on the ground, consists of the same offerings as the *Banten Daki*. The difference is that this offerings is without *sidi*, bitter water, and fresh water but completed with holy water in *sangku*.

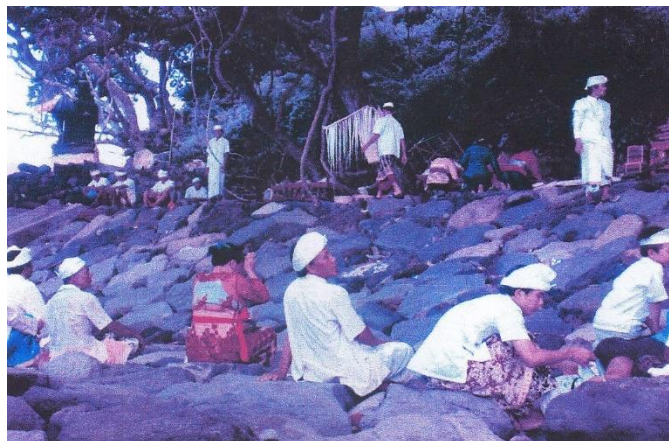


Picture 8

The Display of Banten Telah

Source: Sidemen Archieve (undated)

The ritual at the *Segara* temple is started with the citing a mantra to the *Banten Daki* by the *Jro Kubayan* aiming at purifying the twins. After that there is a cleansing stage carried out in a holy well. After these all are finished, the ritual is followed with the purifying the village and the villagers.



Picture 9
Ponjok Batu Temple

3) The Ritual at the *Ponjok Batu* Temple

The day after the ritual at *Segara* Temple is filled with the *Ngelebar* ritual at *Ponjok Batu* Temple. The ritual at the temple is filled with the same ceremonial activities. The purpose is also to purify bodies from the filth caused by the birth of the twins. The purification is done with the great holy water taken from the water source at the temple.

The ritual at the *Ponjok Batu* temple is led by *Jero Kubayan* and attended by the family as well as the Julah villagers. The offerings prepared for the ritual is as below.

1. *Banten Pinuning/Pejati (asoroh)*, which is used as a symbol for asking permit from the deity enshrined at the temple that there would be a ceremony of purification using the holy water from the temple.
2. *Banten Merebu*, which is used to cleanse the watersource area before the holy water is taken.
3. *Banten Sanganan Panyeneng*, which is used to consecrate the holy water.

4) The Ritual at *Bale Agung* Temple

The last ritual at the *Bale Agung* itemple is called *Madapetan*. It is carried out one day after the titual at *Ponjok Batu* temple. It is attended not only by the villagers but also by the officers of the village. The ritual is carried out as a symbol of informing the deity enshrined at the temple that the village has completed the ritual og purifying the area so that the “bad days” are over.

Wiana (2002:271) in the book entitled *Makna Upacara Yajnya dalam Agama Hindu* wrote that everything we do as religious people should be witnessed by the God so that we are guarded and guided. The presence of God in rituals are symbolised by the *Pesaksi* offerings. The ritual is accompanied with the following offerings.

1. *Banten Bobolan* (a slaughtered pig) placed at the ritual stage.
2. *Sesayut* for the twins (a grilled duck and a pig) and for the village (a grilled duck and a pig)

C. The Last Phase of the Ritual

The Head of the Julah Village, Ketut Sidemen, in an interview on Sunday 18 April 2010, described that after all of the rituals are completed, the family had to do another ritual called *Melis Bunga* at the *Bale Agung* temple. The ritual is only attended by the family and led by *Jro Balian*. It is purposed to cleanse the twins from all of the filth before they are given other rituals as “normal” children. The offerings prepared are of the same kinds as the ones made for the ritual at *Dalem* Temple.

The ritual of *Manak Salah* at Julah Village is maintained until these days. It is regarded necessary because such a ritual will return the peaceful feeling of the villagers, avoid them from feeling the guilty, and protect them from any danger, either physical or metaphysical. The ritual is also seen to be necessary as a way to keep the cultural heritage of the village predecessors.

3. CONCLUSION

Hindus call their system of belief *Sradha*. It is not merely a blind belief, instead an eternal and unshaken aspiration that will bring about wisdom and knowledge (Mantra, 1993:41). The Hindu texts do not say about *Manak Salah* because according to the religion any births never impure areas that rituals are needed to clean them as the one found at *Julah* Village. In Bali the sanctions and rituals carried out for the *Manak Salah* have been practised in some villages since the 12th century. At the *Julah* Village, the sanction of exiling the family of *Manak Salah* was ended in 1986. However, the rituals have been maintained. When seen from the system of belief, as proposed by Koentjaraningrat (1990:252), the ritual at *Julah* should be considered as an attempt to express mixture of several feeling, such as sadness, worrying, loving, and respecting, when facing the unseen power. This is basically the urge inside the self to connect to the metaphysical realm that produces the guilty to the ancestors.

The maintenance of the ritual suggests that the *Julah* villagers hold a strong faith in the metaphysical force. They may be regarded as the people who are not prepared for the modern age or social change and the problem in their tradition should be part of the agenda of the Bali government and the local Hindu leaders who have to solve it through the right method so that the solution is welcomed by the villagers.

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Conflicts of interests

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interests.

Data and materials availability

All data associated with this study are present in the paper.

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