

Essence of the Balinese *Yajna Sesa* Tradition in Jati Bali Village, West Ranomeeto District, South Konawe Regency, Southeast Sulawesi

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20220425>

ABSTRACT

This study is aimed at describing the process of the *yajna sesa* tradition and the research is qualitative using primary and secondary data sources. Informants were selected by purposive sampling technique and data collection are obtained from observation, interviews, and documentation. The results show that the first process of the *yajna sesa* is to prepare ingredients, namely banana leaves, rice, salt, side dishes, vegetables, water and incense (fire) as the witnesses. After the ready materials are arranged, the tradition begins by physical cleansing or bathing, and by wearing simple prayer clothes with a scarf. The properly arranged ingredients are put in a prayer place in the house, on the stove or cooking area, in a storing water or a well, in a rice bowl, in a prayer room in the house, and terrace. After mantra is spoken, the flowers in the tirta (water) are sprinkled in the house corners. The last place to receive water is front yard of the house.

Keywords: Essence, *yajna sesa*, Jati Bali village, Balinese tradition

INTRODUCTION

One of the traditions in Hinduism, especially in Balinese Hinduism, is the *yajna sesa* (YS), meaning 'daily tradition'. The term is in Balinese word but it is called *prasadam* in Indian word. The YS refers to the time to enjoy food after performance of the YS tradition to mark

gratitude. In some places in Bali, the YS is called *mesaiban* or *mejotan*. [1] Balinese Hindu community in Southeast Sulawesi commemorate the tradition with a purpose to absorb and maintain the local culture in which Hinduism develops. The absorption of local culture during the YS performance is possible because Hindu followers try to understand the concept of local village (residence), namely the implementation of Hinduism on the basis of local conditions which is directed to the uniqueness of local culture. [2,3] On the basis of the concept of a village (place to live), in everyday life we can find differences in the implementation of this daily tradition from one region to another in Indonesia.

The YS tradition, or also called *ngejot* or *banten saiban*, becomes the implementation of *Yajna* which is carried out every day. [4,5] The *yajna* tradition like this is usually carried out after cooking in the kitchen is finished cooking. The implementation might become one of the proofs in the Hindu teachings, that before eating food, one must first offer it by sharing it with other God's creatures as a form of our gratitude to God. Therefore, it is very important to celebrate the YS even in simple way. The Hindus in Jati Bali village obey to carry out all forms of ceremonies according to what their religion teaches. For

example, they generally feel proud because they are able to carry out such tradition that have been passed down by their ancestors. But it is a shame that they generally do not understand the exact meaning implied in the tradition. They mostly only care about the grandeur of the tradition, not its spiritual value. They put more emphasis on the amount of costs that must be incurred so that the tradition looks luxurious and grander, and no one else can counterbalance. In principle, the emphasis of Hindu teachings is always based on meaning contained in the implementation of the YS itself; the sense of sincerity and the form of devotion in the offering do not serve as its splendor.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The research is part cultural dynamics of YS. Culture as a way or attitude of human life in a reciprocal relationship with nature and the environment in which all the results of creativity, taste, initiative and work, both physical and material, ideal and spiritual are included. Ranjabar further argued, culture includes everything that humans get or learn as a community group. Culture consists of everything that is learned from normative behavior patterns, meaning it includes all ways or patterns of thinking, feeling or acting.[6] The scope of cultural change places more emphasis on ideas that include changes in the norms and rules that serve as the basis for behavior in society. Meanwhile, social change refers to changes in the structure and patterns of social relations, which include status, politics and power systems, population distribution, and relationships within the family.[7]

The *yājna sesa* or offerings of saiban is one of the *yājnas* or offerings made every day which is often called *nitya karma*. [8] The YS is usually done after cooking and before enjoying cooked food. [9] Carrying out offerings or *yajna* is an obligation and duty for Balinese Hindus, especially in Jati Bali village, to fulfill them.[10] In carrying out these duties and obligations, it should be based on a sincere feeling, with good dharma and ethics. As it is known that *yājna*

as a means to connect one's self with the Creator to obtain purity of soul. Not only do we connect with God, but also with His manifestations and His creatures, including the universe and its contents. Thus, *yajna* is a sincere offering and devotion without any hope of getting any rewards. The YS So should indeed be done after cooking because at that time the food is still considered sacred (*sukla*). So first offer from the food we cook is addressed for the Gods before we serve it for ourselves.[11]

MATERIALS & METHODS

This research was conducted in Jati Bali village, West Ranomeeto District, South Konawe Regency. The research is qualitative involving Ni Komang Sudarmini as the key informant and other five informants. The data collection techniques were carried out by observation, interviews, and documentation. The collected data was analyzed by interactive analysis and the data analysis techniques include data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing.

Field observations were carried out by seeing directly the process of the YS with *banten saiban* in the research location. The research generally used unstructured or semi-structured, non-standardized, informal, or focused interviews starting from general questions in a broad area of research. Data presentation appeared in the form of brief descriptions, charts, relationships between categories, flowcharts and the like. Document study was in the form of reports, namely the profile of Jati Bali village and text books explaining the YS tradition, especially the *panca yājna* guidelines. [12]

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the YS tradition is carried out through several processes; one of which is to prepare the ingredients in advance. The ingredients for *mesaiban* are taken from environment around the house (Sukrawati et al, 2006), such as, banana leaves for rice base, salt, side dishes, vegetables, and water.[10] The use of salt means that all efforts can be felt or enjoyed

by the results. Side dishes are also available and whatever type of side dishes are cooked would be offered for the mesaiban. Vegetables are a means of completing the mesaiban offering. Water is also provided for the tradition since human beings drink water as they finish eating; water might function to bring food into the stomach.

All the ingredients are arranged in such a way that they look beautiful and start from the base of banana leaves with a pinch of rice on it plus side dishes and vegetables. In reality, the mesaiban is also equipped with water and incense as a symbol of tribute. Mesaiban is performed with sincerity and gratitude as God has given gifts to human kinds. There are differences in the use of materials between Hindus living in Bali and in Jati Bali village. Banana leaves are sometimes replaced with paper, with the reason that it is more practical although the essence of meaning has not changed.

The mesaiban mantra or prayer addressed to Bhuta reads Om atma tat twatma sudhamam swaha swasti-swasti sarwa bhuta, kala, durgha sukha pradhana ya namah swaha (oh God, You are the creator for every creature; may all Your creations be happy, like Bhuta, Kala, and Durgha).[13] There are different prayers recited during mesaiban, which are adapted for the purpose of its implementation. Therefore, the prayer that is used with the intention of giving thanks is especially given to bhuta kala (lower creatures). This is done because prayer is an introduction and a complementary expression in a yajna.

Yajna sesa is done after finishing cooking and before enjoying the food that has been prepared. Carrying out offerings or yajna is an obligation and duty for Hindus to fulfill it. Carrying out these duties and obligations should be based on good deeds, ethics, and sincerity. As it is known that yajna is a means to connect oneself with Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa or God the Almighty to obtain the sanctity of the soul. Not only do we connect with God, but also with His manifestations and His creatures, including nature and its contents. Therefore,

yajna is a sincere offering and dedication without any hope of getting anything in return.

It is believed that any effort brings results and carrying out YS is meant to ask for the grace of God to always bless the seeds and enjoyment of life in this world. How ashamed are we when we only prioritize our own interests, and live to please ourselves at the expense of others, in which a life that only pursues personal satisfaction while others are in misery and suffer; then such a human being is no different from the personality of a thief.

The food enjoyed by humans is not solely the result of their own efforts, but they obtain it jointly between one human and another, or with one creature with another. Also, help is also needed from other elements of natural forces called panca maha butha namely the power of water (apah), earth (pertiwi), wind (bayu), heat (fire or teja), ether/beautiful sky (angkasa). The existence of rice and side dishes are also due to the power or omnipotence of God through several forms called Tri Murti, namely three kinds of God's power who protect and bestow mankind. Rice can be cooked or made because of such three powers, namely Lord Brahma with the power of heat, Lord Vishnu with the power of water, and Lord Shiva with the power of suppressing or changing its function. From these three forces, they are united together as they are symbolized as rice which is cooked until it is ready to eat.

CONCLUSION

Mesaiban/ngejot is implemented during the yajna sesa (considered daily yajna) consisting of banana leaves with a little rice, salt, chili sauce, and other freshly cooked side dishes. The performance of YS especially for the Balinese Hindu community in the research location has a change, for example the side dishes might be only rice and instant noodles offered as YS. The Mesaiban means an expression of gratitude to God for all His gifts and is symbolized as a form of penyupatan (status

enhancement) to animals that are unwittingly killed while human kinds cook or do activities or while work to meet their daily needs. The ingredients provided in the mesaiban are banana leaves, rice, salt, side dishes, vegetables, water and incense as a witness. The mesaiban starts by first physical and spiritual cleansing and participants wear prayer clothes, equipped with a senteng or scarf. The banten saiban is placed on the bed, on the stove for cooking, in a place for storing water or a well, in the storage of rice, in the yard, in a monument/corner of the yard, on a stand or a place of worship, and at the entrance to the yard.

Acknowledgement: None

Conflict of Interest: None

Source of Funding: None

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How to cite this article: Komang Suwarsini, I Ketut Suardika, Wa Ode Sitti Hafsa. Essence of the Balinese *Yajna Sesa* tradition in Jati Bali Village, West Ranomeeto District, South Konawe Regency, Southeast Sulawesi. *International Journal of Research and Review*. 2022; 9(4): 199-202. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20220425>
