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Cultural Ceremonial Reinterpretation for Balinese Christian Believers

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Abstract

Bali community lives in a lively tradition oriented on the beliefs and Hindu culture. Balinese rituals and culture is strongly felt and sustained by all community members as an icon of Balinese community. Bali is not only an island that inhabited by Hindu believers, but also non Hindu believers who highly value the rituals and cultures on personal lives. Acculturation within social and institution structure happen in a group level, but acculturation that involves behavioral changes happened within individual level. This research aims to find out the reinterpretation and assimilation occurs in the religious ceremonial of Christian community in Bali. This research analyzed through qualitative method and depth interview with both Christian and Hindu priests. Cultural reinterpretation that occurs in Balinese Christian society arises because of the adaptation and acculturation of culture. Basically the cultural assimilation that occurs in Balinese Christian community can be seen as a form of preservation of culture and tradition.

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Bali community lives in living tradition based on Hindu beliefs and culture. Balinese rituals and culture are strongly sustained by all members of the community as an icon of Balinese community. Bali, however, is not an island occupied merely by Hindu believers, but also by non-Hindu believers who also highly value their own rituals and culture. Acculturation is the process of cultural changes resulting from the contact of two different cultural groups with each other (Rudmin, 2003). Social and institutional acculturation happens in a group level, but acculturation that involves behavioral changes occurs within an individual level. This research, using the qualitative method, aims to reinterpret rituals within Balinese Christian community.

Keywords: reinterpretation, culture, Balinese community

1. Introduction

Every human activity is almost inseparable from the socio-cultural element. Social culture refers to the relationship between individuals, communities, and individuals with society The manifestation of culture created by man in the form of behavior and objects that are real, such as patterns of behavior, language, equipment of living, social organization,

religion, art, etc., all of which are intended to help humans in the life of society. The Balinese Hindu community in their daily lives is always guided by the Hindu Religion, especially in the implementation of ritual ceremonies in human relationship with God, human, and nature. Hinduism and its implementation of Religious Ceremonies based on the *Panca Yadnya*. What is meant by *Panca Yadnya* is: *Panca* means five and *Yadnya* means a sincere sacred ceremony before God.

Culture is not a constant thing, but something that can change. Koentjaraningrat [3] stated that culture change may be happened through some process such as: 1) learning process; 2) evolution process; 3) diffusion process; 4) renewal process; 5) acculturation process. The culture concept denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, as a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about attitudes towards life [1].

The term "acculturation" was introduce by American anthropologists, as early as in 1880, to describe the process of culture changes between two different cultural groups who come in contact with each other [5]. Ward [8] proposes that there are two distinct dimensions of adapting to the host society. The first one, termed as psychological adaptation, refers to personal well-being and good mental health. The second, sociocultural adaptation, refers to the individuals' social competence in managing their daily life in the intercultural setting. Acculturation therefore basically entails learning to deal with new cultural situation. In previous research, Junaid [2] and Rahman [4] stated that acculturation is a dynamic thing that can be happened when two cultures meet and influence one another.

Milton M. Gordon (1968) proposes an assimilation model that occurs in a multi-stage of assimilation. This assimilation model has seven levels, namely:

1. cultural or behavioral assimilation

2. structural assimilation

3. marital assimilation

4. identificational assimilation

5. attitude receptional assimilation

6. behavior receptional assimilation

7. civic assimilation

2. Method

This is a descriptive-qualitative study. The data are collected in the form of primary data and secondary data. Primary data is obtained through in-depth interviews and discussions with the Hindu, Hindus who are coming from the differences *kasta* social status, and Christian priests. Secondary data are taken from *Awig-Awig Suka Duka GKPB Kerobokan* and *Buku Tata Keagamaan Agama Hindu*. The religious system of Hindu society consists of many rituals, but in this paper only the rituals of birth to marriage that have some of its similarity function, adopted, and reinterpreted by the Christian community in Bali. The data that obtained from the interview and books are compared and analyzed in order to find the similarity and what are the meanings of each ritual. The conclusions are made based on the result of comparison about the religious activities between Balinese Christian and Hindu communities.

3. Findings

Human faith of Bali ethnic believed as a holy offering that aims to maintain and cleanse on him/her since he/she is inside the mother's womb to the end of his/her life. According to Hindus faith, for whom have strong inward then the cleansing can be done through discipline Yoga or Meditation, but for those who claimed themselves has less inward, then the cleansing process needs helps from others. It will be different than Christians, each person has the responsibility to carry and conduct on their own faith to Jesus. Both faith will be presented through different kind of rituals, yet it has the stressing reinterpretation to make everyone understand on it rituals.

There are many differences in Hindus and Christian believers in Bali in order to do the ceremonial. The table below will show the differences:

TABLE 1: Balinese Ceremonial.

Ritual	Hindu	Christian
After birth ceremony	Nyambutin	Baptisan
Potong gigi	Mepandes	Sidi
Engagement and wedding Ceremony	Memadik	Ngidih
	Pedewasaan	Pertunangan (engagement)
	Nyemput anten	
	Mekalan-kalan	
	Mesakapan	Pernikahan (wedding)

Started from ritual of a new born baby, in this research discuss on on *Tigang Sasih* or often called *Telu Bulanin* or *Nyambutin*. This ritual is also often related to Child Baptism in Christianity. In Hindus ritual, *Tigang Sasih* is acknowledged as first time of a baby out from the house. It takes place when a baby 105 days old and on this ceremonial, a baby will be given a necklace, bracelet, and earing (if girl) and the most important is baby's name will be announced, followed by a ceremony where baby will do his/her first step on the ground which is believed that it is a pray to the mother earth. This unique ritual is differ to Christians, where believed that Child Baptism is a ritual where parents are agree and willing to teach their kids on Christian faith. In this ceremonial, baby's name is also announced in front of the congregation and it will be written in the church's statistic data.

Figure 1: *Nyambutin*.

When little baby is growing into teenager, Hindus faith believe a ritual if *Menek Kelih* (*Munggah Deha*) is a mandatory when teen is growing by asking *Hyang Semara Ratih* to lead their way to their future. During the ceremony, parents is asked to give kids some message to be kept during growing up period.

After the *Menek Kelih* ceremony, Hindus is conducting Tooth Filing (*Mepandes*) which it aims to reduce the "Sad Ripu" which are 6 human characters include: 1) Greedy, 2) Deceive, 3) Looking for complement, 4) Anger, 5) Harms other human being, 6) Slander. Tooth filing ceremony is symbolized by file the 4 upper front teeth and 2 of the canine, which the 6 teeth likened the Sad Ripu. Like the Hindus ritual, Christians held A Confirmation as a ritual where a person confirm his/her faith independently, unlike the Child Baptism where parents are obliged to keep child's faith. In order to do a

confirmation, they have to follow a class that is called *Katekesasi*, which aims to giving better knowledge of Christian faith. During Confirmation, priest will ask the willingness of a person to be called as Christian and responsible of what his/her faith till death.

Figure 2: *Mepandes*.

Both of the ritual in Hindu or Christian are having the same aims to state his/her willingness in order to keep their faith during their adult life. Adult person will enter a life stage where family become important in their life. The ritual will be started from the Engagement process. In Hindu there are some steps from the proposed family visit until the engagement day, such as: 1) *Memadik*, 2) *Pedewasaan*, 3) *Nyemput anten* (Pick up). In the ritual is also clearly identify *purusa* (groom) and *pradana* (brides). The first step is *Memadik*, which is groom's family will visit the brides family and discuss about their proposal planning. After both families are agreed upon the engagement plan, groom's family will try to get 2) *Pedewasaan*, is believed as a good day for the engagement ceremony. This consultation process will be discussed with the Hindu priest. When the agreement of both families are reached and the good day has been set, then the engagement day is held. Both brides and groom will go to the house temple of brides' resident and pray in order brides is leaving her house and no longer stated as owner of the temple. It is called *Mepamit* (saying goodbye). Then the brides will go to the groom's house, stay until the wedding held. *Mekalan-kalan* is the most important ceremony on wedding. At this ceremony is a spiritual cleansing of the bride. The ceremony is witnessed by family and society. After *mekalan-kalan* then proceed with the *natab* and *mepejati* which aims to clean up the inner birth of both brides, and provide life guidance and determine the status of one party. Finally the wedding is called *Mesakapan* where the groom and bride is blessed on holy matrimony.

The engagement and wedding ritual for Christian believers is almost the same, however Christian do not honor the *Pedewasaan* (good day) because it's believed that all

Figure 3: *Mesakapan*.

days are good. During the engagement day, both groom and bride will have a devotion lead by priest and during the devotion; the engagement will be confirmed through the ring exchange as a symbol of the engagement. After the engagement, brides stay at her own home and have to follow the pastoral class with her groom in order to strengthen the Christian faith and prepare them to enter the marriage life. Finally there is a wedding on holy matrimony held in the church and witnessed by family and congregation.

4. Conclusion and Suggestion

Cultural ceremonial activities in Christianity are not as detailed and as many as religious activity in Hinduism. Certainly some cultural adaptation is done by the Christian community in Bali. For Hindus, all series of custom and religious events are still going on in detail, only in the few executions of community activities can choose which ceremonial arrangement they will use, whether small scale ceremonies or larger scale ceremonies. Cultural reinterpretation that occurs in Christian society in Bali arises because of the adaptation and acculturation of culture. Basically the cultural assimilation that occurs in Bali Christian community can be seen as a form of preservation of culture and tradition. Assimilation assumed as an adjustment to local majority group. In this case, the group of Hindus which is very represented the Balinese culture. However, this is not an attempt to leaving and forgetting the Christian's culture and values. It's only an attempt to adapt without losing its identity and enrich the local culture itself.

This research is expected to create a strategy on how to maintain the culture that have to be honored by all of community in Bali. Balinese culture is the identity for Balinese society; whatever your belief is you are obliges to maintain your culture.

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