

# THE NGEREBONG TRADITION: THE PRESERVATION OF “LOCAL GENIUSES“ IN THE MAELSTROM OF GLOBALIZATION IN THE KESIMAN TRADITIONAL VILLAGE IN DENPASAR CITY

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## Abstract

The Ngerebong tradition is a sacred ritual for the people in the Kesiman Traditional village, Denpasar City. It is held every six months, to be precise, every eight days after the Kuningan holiday. It involves numerous parties and cultural facets. However, this tradition is a challenge for the people of the Kesiman Traditional village, who do not close themselves off from the consequence of globalization. Thus, this research aims to discover and understand the concerns related to the maintenance of local genius amid the maelstrom of globalization. The results of the study revealed that; (1) the Kesiman Traditional villagers must continue maintaining the Ngerebong Tradition because their lives are motivated by the ideology of religion, conservation, power, and culture that drive them obedient to the traditions they hold; (2) along with the growth of the era, the Kesiman Traditional villagers bear the Ngerebong Tradition under the phases from generation to generation; (3) the consequences of implementing the Ngerebong Tradition in the present global era directly effect on the lives of the Kesiman Traditional villagers so that strengthening cultural values is a challenge in confronting various shifts in this global era.

**Keywords:** *The Ngerebong Tradition, The Kesiman Traditional Village, The Perservation of Local Geniuses*

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## 1. Introduction

The Ngerebong tradition in Kesiman Traditional village is a sacred ritual that has now evolved into a tradition since it is routinely carried out from generation to generation every eight days after Kuningan Day, to be precise at *Redite Pon Medangsia* at Agung Petilan Pengrebongan temple. Kesiman is one of the villages that still maintain its traditions. Kesiman village includes Kesiman Petilan village, Kesiman Kertalangu village, and Kesiman village. Kesiman village is known to have dozens of interconnected temples. *Krama* or people are known to hold tight to their customs. However, the Ngerebong Tradition is one of the preserved cultures that have been running for generations after the Puputan Badung war broke out in 1906, but now only a few people know about the historical background and transitions that have occurred in the Ngerebong Tradition in the Kesiman Traditional village.

In the context of Hindu religiosity in Bali, transformations are particularly felt in the dimensions of communality and ritual collectivity. Communality as the structural and cultural ground of Balinese Hindu society is marked by the strong values of *Manyama Braya*, *Pasuka-dukan*, and *Pasilih-asihan*, which are often escorted by social sanctions, both verbal (pakrimik and walek) and formal (dedosan and kasepakang). Moreover, the contribution of social structures and institutions in preserving communal values has been habituated to the society, so that collective socio-religious practices have been institutionalized into traditions. However, the pandemic has encouraged Hindus to adopt new ways of their habits, especially in the implementation of collective religious rituals, which eventually annulled the communal tradition from its establishment.

The adaptation of new socio-religious practices amid the pandemic also potentially constructs a structuration of the religious system within and through reflexive monitoring as well as the routinization of social motions. Structuralization is the prerequisite that governs the repetition and transformation of social structures. The structure is not a coercive social fact like the viewpoint of functional structure but includes rules, resources, and a set of transformative links organized in regular social practice. Reflexive monitoring becomes a crucial segment in structurization because the transformation of social structure arises when actors can monitor and reflect on their acts, as well as the actions of others, along with the form in which they are located. The latest socio-religious practice amid the pandemic will furnish a different experience for the actors who do it, and they even feel comfy with the convention and can maintain it regularly (Putri, et al., 2021). Structuring occurs when other actors perform similar activities so that the habit pattern is organized in a social structure.

Ideologically, the life of the Kesiman Traditional villagers in the global era tends to be busy fulfilling their daily needs. It drives them to place the capitalist economy in a central and prevalent role in their social network. In their lives, they tend to involve the construction of a dual capitalist market with a series of social relations, flows of commodities, capital, technology, and ideologies from various cultures around the world. These conditions drive them busy chasing and competing to win the struggle for financial gain. However, in their busy lives navigating the currents of globalization which is identical to the capitalistic economy, the Kesiman Traditional villagers continue to carry out the Ngerebong Tradition until now. The Ngerebong Tradition does not furnish financial benefits, but they must sacrifice time, materials, and so on to partake in the Ngerebong Tradition.

Based on the description of the background above, it is interesting for researchers to study further the existence of the Ngerebong Tradition in the Kesiman Traditional village to anticipate the shift in meaning and local genius values contained in the Ngerebong Tradition amidst the onslaught of today's capitalist currents. Moreover, the Ngerebong Tradition does not exist in other villages in Bali but only in the Kesiman Traditional village. The importance of further criticizing in an interdisciplinary method according to the characteristics of cultural studies is carried out to straighten the confusion of information regarding the practice of the Ngerebong Tradition to preserve customs and culture in Bali, especially the Ngerebong Tradition in the Kesiman Traditional village.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

To reveal the cultural practices of the Ngerebong ceremony amid the Covid-19 pandemic in the Kesiman Traditional village, this study utilized the Power Relation theory proposed by Michael Foucault and Hegemony theory purposed by Antonio Gramscy according to Ali (2017) as an analytical tool. This concept is employed to deliver a conceptual and theoretical instrument that is quite sophisticated and adequate in trying to reach an understanding of the simplification of the Ngerebong ceremony in the Kesiman Traditional village amid the Covid-19 Pandemic.

### A. The Theory of Power Relation

The concept of power is the core of Michael Foucault's philosophical thoughts and views. Without this basic idea of power, it is tough to understand Foucault and his thinking. In other words, his technique in analyzing the power helped to understand his ethical view about the subject or care for the self, which is the pinnacle of his thought. However, the practice of this power is impossible if there is no regime of discourse and truth which is essential in every culture and historical event. And Foucault's analysis of the exercise of power will direct to his basic idea of the intention to obtain the truth. In his book entitled *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault (1990) clarifies several power propositions as follows;

1. Power is not a possession such as something that is gained, achieved, utilized, or something that can be grasped or shared. The power cannot be inherited, nor can it become heredity. Thus, it must be practiced in daily life and is naturally shifting.

2. Power is not a hierarchical structural relation. Power is not based on groups that control and rule. Power is everywhere and comes from everywhere. 72
3. Power comes from beneath. In power, there is no longer a binary resistance distinction because it includes both.
4. Power relations are intentional and non-subjective.
5. Where there is power, there is anti-power

Regarding power, Foucault's priority of attention is not on the definition of power or the social and political structures within a nation. Foucault is more interested in how the mechanisms and strategies of power and how the practice of power is in people's lives. The practice may show how something is accepted as truth. According to Foucault, power is closely related to knowledge because there is no knowledge without power. Power is a fascinating subject discussed that has never been finished. It started in ancient Greece period and has been going on until today. Classical philosophers have associated power with goodness, virtue, justice, and freedom. Religious scholars have always associated power with God. Foucault believes that traditional political philosophy is always oriented to the question of legitimacy. Power is a dimension of relations. Therefore, Foucault emphasized social reality as a discursive arena which is a competition on how the meaning and organization of social reality (the Ngerebong Tradition) and all forms of social processes in it are given meaning uniquely, such as the material components in the implementation of the Ngerebong Tradition, which typically wears *poleng* or white and black clothes (Wirawan: 2012).

#### B. Theory of Hegemony

According to Ali (2017), Gramsci is an Italian Marxist figure who tends to see society as the basis for the struggle between interests through the domination of another ideology. Hegemony is not a direct impetus for action but corresponds to the framework of the entire dominant class competition, as in the fact that the class carries all alternatives in the form of a horizon. Although Gramsci never clearly declared the definition of hegemony, the theorist usually used it to clarify the phenomenon of trying to preserve power over the authorities. The ruler here has a comprehensive meaning, not only revolving around regional authorities or the government. Thus, hegemony can be interpreted as something that is accomplished not only by the ruling class. It is a process by which social groups, whether they are progressive, or repressive in attaining the power to lead, expand, and preserve it, just as the Ngerebong Tradition amid globalization.

Exploration of hegemony related to this research is crucial to use, apart from being a media for public awareness in considering diverse sociocultural phenomena in society, it can also be a wealth of references to address various activities. At the present level of globalization, the information in media containing propaganda has emerged that directs the people to flock to follow directions that have been regulated by some groups, for example, the emergence of the influence of capitalist culture, which has slowly led people to misinterpret the implementation of cockfighting or *tajen* in a series of the Ngerebong Tradition ceremony. *Tajen* is a series of sacred rituals called *tabuh rah* at every ceremony of the Ngerebong Tradition.

Along with globalization, the meaning and function of *tajen* have shifted as a gambling arena, which in fact, shifts in meaning are detrimental when viewed in terms of culture and society. Therefore, raising critical awareness in every individual, especially in the Kesiman Traditional village and the entire Balinese, becomes a fundamental part of the selection of this hegemonic theory. Gramsci's thinking can lead to delivering the right and firm decisions in starting an ideology, as the emergence of diverse issues of social change due to the influence of globalization.

### 3. Research Method

The method utilized in this study is the method and technique of collecting and analyzing qualitatively. The data was collected in the form of study outcomes and historical reality with interview techniques,

observations, and literature studies, then the results of the data were analyzed descriptively and critically. This research was conducted in the Kesiman Traditional village, which is an area that has a close relationship with the existence of the Ngerebong Tradition. Nevertheless, the Ngerebong Tradition, which has nowadays become a hereditary tradition in the Kesiman Traditional village regarding its role as one of the cultural heritages of Denpasar city is discussed critically based on its reality, without being limited to what is in previous studies. The reason is that the Ngerebong Tradition still has many confused perceptions from numerous parties.

#### 4. Result and Discussion

The Ngerebong ritual is a sacred ritual in the Kesiman Traditional village, which is held on *Redite Pon Wuku Medangsia* eight days after the Kuningan holy day. The Ngerebong Tradition practice is frequently rumored as the "galungan" of the Kesiman villagers because of its excitement. The Ngerebong tradition is the implementation of *ngereh lemah* in the Kesiman Traditional village.



**Figure 1. The Ngerebong Ceremony at Agung Petilan Temple in Kesiman Traditional Village**

The word Ngerebong is an onomatopoeia, which is a replica of the sound. Ngerebong is the word formed from the words "ngereh" and "bong". Borrowing the theory of Prof. Dr. I Nyoman Suarka in his dissertation on the 'Kidung Tantri Pisacaharana' stated that the term *kidung* is formed from the words "ding" and "dung", "i" or "ulu" in Balinese. The head symbol and the tribal "u" or "ang" in Balinese represent the symbol of the foot. Meanwhile, the word "bong" in Ngerebong is formed from "ba" and "ung", "a" or "ang" as a symbol of *akasa*, and "u" or "ung" as a symbol of *pratiwi*, as a union of vowels "a" and "u" to become "o" or "ong", which means voice *sandhi* in Balinese. Ngereh is a magical procession by chanting mantras requesting the Holy Spirit to remain in *Tapakan Rangda* or *Barong*. *Karehen* means to be first or foremost. Ngerebong is a magical procession of uniting *akasa* and *pratiwi*.

The Ngerebong ritual is the last Pangilen held at Agung Petilan temple in Kesiman. Ngerebong is held every six months or 210 days, to be precise on the day of *Redite Pon Medangsia* or eight after the Kuningan Holy Day. *Pengilen Ngerebong* involves all sites throughout the Kesiman District, besides the *sesuhunan* or spots in the Kesiman Traditional village. The Ngerebong ritual is held at 04.00 p.m, but the preparations start in the morning. Ngerebong is synonymous with *Galungan* for the Kesiman villagers because the atmosphere of Ngerebong is rousing during the procession. The excitement occurred because of the involvement of diverse elements of society, including traders, foreign tourists, domestic and *babotoh*. The Ngerebong ritual is also called *ngereh lemah* because the procession is carried out before sunset. The Ngerebong is based on three steps, which are;

1. *Ngilen Ngereh* is a procession requesting for the holy spirit to come down and reside at the sites of Rangda and Barong and Ngereh Ba (*Ang* or *Akasa*), *Ung* (*Ung* or *Pratiwi*), which is the procession of uniting *akasa* and *pratiwi*. At 04.00 p.m, after obtaining permission from *Jero Mangku Gede Dalem Muter*, *Juru Pundut Rangda* and *Barong* started preparing their equipment and wearing clothes according to their respective duties. After everything was ready, *Ratu Ayu* and *Barong*, *Pundut*, *Pepatih* and *Pengiring Bersila*, all took place in front of *Gedong Agung*, with the sitting position and attitude of *Pundut Rangda* in front of the *matimpuh*, *Ratu Ayu ngadeg*, *Pepatih*, and *Pangiring bersila*, while *Penyarikan Batur* prepared the *penyanjanpanuwuran* or *ngerauhang*, then proceed with offering prayers and *gelungsurwangsuhpada*. The next procession is the *Nuwur Juru Pundut Rangda* led by *Penyarikan Batur*, after the *Juru Pundut kerauhan* or *katapak* followed by the leaders of each site, followed by the *Nedunang Tapakan Rangda* and united to the *Juru Pundut*. This procession of unification of the *Tapakan* with the *Juru Pundut* is called *Ngereh Ba Ung* (*Ngerebong*). *Tapakan* is a symbol of *Ba* (*Akara* or *Akasa*), while the *Kerauhan Juru Pundut* is a symbol of *Ung* (*Ukara* or *Pratiwi*), while *Nuwur* or *Ngerauhang* is *Ngerehang*.



**Figure 2. Ngereh Ba Ung or Ngerebong Procession at Agung Petilan Temple**

2. At 05.15 p.m, the following ceremony is dancing accompanied by the leaders at all times *Ngurek* or *Nguning* around *Gulung Panyugjug* on the stage at *Madya Mandala*, precisely in front of *Kori Agung* or in the east of *wantilan* three times, moving *Prasawia* or counterclockwise, when it ends it moves past behind the stage to the *Utama Mandala* or *Jeroan*. The *Ngilen Ngerebong* procession was preceded by *Ratu Rangka* from *Tohpati*, *Ratu Rangda* of *Bekul* village, *Ratu Ayu* or *Barong Tohpati* or white hair, and *Ratu Ayu Barong Bekul* with black hair or *Goak* side by side, *Ratu Rangka Dajan Tangluk*, *Ratu Rangda Dauh Tangluk*, *Ratu Rangda Daging Tangluk*, *Ratu Ayu Barong Daging Tangluk* without a body or *Prarai*, *Ratu Rangda Suci Pakraman* village *Denpasar*, *Ratu Rangda Pakraman Pamogan* village *South Denpasar*, *Ratu Ayu Barong Pakraman Pamogan* village *South Denpasar*, *Ratu Rangda Sawangan Traditional* village *Bukit Kuta Selatan Badung*, *Ratu Ayu Barong Sawangan Traditional* village *Bukit Kuta south of Badung*, *Ratu Rangda Singgi Sanur South Denpasar*, *Ratu Rangda Kebonkuri Kesiman*, and finally *Ratu Ayu Barong Kebonkuri Kesiman* with white hair beside *Ratu Ayu Barong Singgi South Denpasar* with black hair called *Goak*. Moreover, during the *Ngilen Ngerebong* or *Pangider Bhuwana*, in the *wantilan*, *Tabuh Rah*, or cockfighting is held as a form of neutralizing the *bhuta*. The *Ngerebong* ritual procession can also be called *Ngarebuang* as a symbol of purifying the world, noticed from the existence of the white color element or *Sudha* and black color or *Mala* on *Ratu Ayu Barong*, which is the beginning and the last. *Ngilen Ngerebong* is accompanied by *Baleganjur Kebonkuri Kesiman* in its process.



**Figure 3. Ngilen Ngerebong Dancing Procession or Ngider Bhuwana**

3. At 05.20 p.m, *Nuur* or *Marerauhan Prakulit* is the next Ngerebong ritual procession. *Nuur* at *Utama Mandala* is held when the Ngerebong Rangda and Ratu Ayu ritual processes at *Madya Mandala* are in progress. The *Nuur* or *Marerauhan* procession is the same as in the *Ngilen Pangebekan* and *Pemagpagan* processions, but at *Nuur Ngerebong* there is an addition, namely *Nuur Ratu Sedan Mas Mataram* who is accompanied by *Ratu Mangku Bumi* as *Ulu Cepuk Poleng Papetet Kesiman*, as well as *Pangruran* and *Penyarikan* who are tasked with carrying dagger, *aruk*, mace and *tamiang* during *Ngider Bhuwana*. *Nuur* or *Marerauhan* also has the same role, namely a procession of personalizing the nature of God or *Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa* from *Nirguna Brahman* or God Impersonal to *Saguna Brahman* or God Personal. After everyone was dressed or *Mapangrangsuk*, *Ratu Agung Dalem Muter Manca Desa* and *Penampa* sat at the *Murdha Hall*, in the *Utama Mandala* court to prepare *Cepuk Poleng Papetet Kesiman*, which was utilized as a means for *Marerebu Bumi* or *Ngarebuang* or *Ngerebong*. The tip of the *Cepuk Poleng Papetet Kesiman* was tied around the neck of *Ratu Mangku Bumi*, followed by the *Ratu Sedan Mas Mataram*, followed by the *Sedan Salak Dalem* and *Pangerob*, until the *Cepuk Poleng Papetet Kesiman* was all stretched out. This *Cepuk Poleng Papetet Kesiman* is included in the *Wastra Wali* category, namely *Wastra Wali Poleng* or *Poleng Sudhamala*, which has multiple roles. Occasionally, the *Wastra Poleng* is worn by people in connection with the *Dewa Yadnya* ceremony, particularly by a prominent person in a certain temple under the coordination of the *Pemangku* or other related authorities. It indicates that the particular temple has awesomeness, which is to protect its people. Likewise, *Cepuk Poleng Papetet Kesiman* is a means to neutralize the universe to obtain harmony and prosperity. The *Nyelem Utihang* term in Bali means the powerful, formed from the words *Selem* and *Putih*, which merged to become *Poleng*.



**Figure 4. Ratu Mangku Bumi, Ratu Sedan Mataram with Cepuk Poleng**

## 5. Conclusion

The outcomes reveal that the Kesiman Traditional villagers believe that the ritual of the Ngerebong Tradition can retain balance and togetherness because they have a sight of life, the meaning of history, and an understanding of the balance of nature. Its continuity from generation to generation and during the procession, the Ngerebong Tradition is socially interpreted as a very high consistency of respect for community members for religious ideology in the Kesiman Traditional village. As a sacred ritual practice, the Kesiman Traditional villagers believe in the Ngerebong Tradition in a socially structural form. This belief has been internalized through demonstrative behavior in the Ngerebong Tradition. To avoid internalization, religious leaders and elders intensely carry on these cultural values by requiring residents to be directly involved in the Ngerebong Tradition series.

As local wisdom or local genius along with the consequence of globalization, the existence of the Ngerebong Tradition organizes the lives of its people in preserving peace by protecting life by caring for the environment through peaceful socio-cultural mechanisms to obtain safety, health, and welfare. The Kesiman Traditional villagers carry out the Ngerebong Tradition amid the onslaught of globalization gradually under traditions and customs from generation to generation. Its extended continuity indicates how vital the Ngerebong Tradition is for the survival of the Kesiman Traditional villagers. In addition, the Ngerebong ceremony also involves local authorities, both by custom and formal institutions, as is the involvement of the Denpasar city government. Therefore, in diverse phases of its activities, producing the Ngerebong Tradition as a cultural occurrence besides containing a religious meaning to reject reinforcements, social, and economic, it also has a political means.

The togetherness of all people in carrying out the Ngerebong Tradition is a symbol of the togetherness form that was built because of the implementation of the Ngerebong Tradition. The Kesiman Traditional villagers interpret it as a symbol of the high spirit of globalization in the form of the large number of people who participate in the Ngerebong Tradition series at Agung Petilan Pengrebongan temple without eroding the sacredness and cultural values in the Ngerebong Tradition, which is a factual symbol to sustain the local genius of the Ngerebong tradition nowadays.

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