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## Being Muslim-Balinese : The Music and Identity of the Sasak Community in Eastern Bali

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## Being Muslim-Balinese: The Music and Identity of the Sasak Community in Eastern Bali

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### 1. Being Muslim in ‘Hindu Bali’

#### 1.1 Hindu and Muslim as Minority and Majority

This chapter examines the musical tradition of the *rebana*, a frame drum, in two Sasak-descendant Muslim-Balinese communities, namely Nyuling and Danginsema in Karangasem District, East Bali, Indonesia (see Map 1).<sup>1)</sup> The *rebana* is the most distinctive musical instrument among the Muslim Balinese; it is seldom used in performances among the Hindu Balinese and is associated with Islamic propagation and enlightenment elsewhere in the archipelago, including in Java, Lombok, and Sumatra.



Map 1 Bali (Created by the author)

Although lesser-known, there are several long-standing Muslim communities in Bali, with cultural traditions and histories spanning hundreds of years. The people of Nyuling and Dagingsema still keep their own faith, customs, and traditions as a religious and ethnic minority on the island. The people of Nyuling speak the Sasak language within their own community or *kampung*, but they also fluently speak Balinese and Indonesian to their neighbours and colleagues, with whom they share their daily lives, and the majority of Dagingsema people speak Balinese even in their own *kampung*. Until recently, however, Muslim-Balinese culture has generally been overlooked. From tourism posters to academic studies, Bali is regarded as a ‘living museum’ of ancient Indo-Javanese Hindu culture and ‘an enclave of Hinduism at the heart of the largest Muslim country on [E]arth’ (Picard 1996: 11; see also Vickers 1989: 12). Balinese culture—especially its performing arts—has been represented almost exclusively by that of the Hindu Balinese, who comprise the majority on the island, with only a few important exceptions, such as Fredrik Barth’s (1993) ethnography and Erni Budiwanti’s (1995) work on the Muslim communities in Pegayaman, North Bali. It is only lately that the cultures of non-Hindu communities, such as Christians (Wiebe 2014; 2016; 2017), Chinese (Hauser-Schäublin 2014), and Muslims (Mashino 2011, 2014, 2016; Pedersen 2014; Rieger 2014), have aroused academic interest. Being Balinese has often been regarded as synonymous with being Hindu, both by outsiders and by the Hindu-Balinese majority; in fact, Balinese society is a ‘luminous mosaic’ of various communities with different faiths and cultures (Barth 1993: 9).

Indonesia is a multi-religious country, in which six religions or denominations (Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism, recently added) are officially recognised. Although Muslims are a religious minority in Bali, they are the majority at the national level. According to the 2010 Sensus Penduduk (population census), the largest portion of the population in Indonesia is Muslim (87%), and Hindus overall are a minority (1.7%). However, in Bali, the Muslim-Hindu ratio is completely reversed: Hindus make up 83.5% of the population, while Muslims only comprise 13.5%, although their numbers have been increasing recently (Badan Pusat Statistik Republik Indonesia 2010). The designation and definition of ‘minority’ versus ‘majority’ is clearly relative in this case, dependent upon the viewpoint and scope under consideration. Therefore, any minority–majority relationship should be examined multi-dimensionally because power politics operate in a complex way on each dimension.

As Michel Picard (2011) describes, the Hindu Balinese have considered themselves to be ‘a religious minority threatened by [the] aggressive expansion of Islam as well as Christianity’ (120) since the colonial era, and this perception deeply affects the discussion surrounding the definition of Balinese-ness.<sup>2)</sup> They have feared that the national Muslim preponderance would suppress their Hindu customs and values, that Javanese capitalists would buy large portions of Balinese land to erect hotels and then carry off all the profits, that an overflow of migrants from other islands would threaten their safety, and that fundamentalist Muslim politicians would impose their characterisation of Hindu dance costumes as ‘obscene’, as evidenced in the many explosive discussions about the Bill Against Pornography and Porno-Action (Undang-Undang Anti Pornografi dan

Pornoaksi).<sup>3)</sup> Most shocking and violent was the Kuta bombing by Islamist terrorists in 2002, which killed more than two hundred people.

Further, they are at times prone to placing the blame for increasing crime and unsettledness as well as damage to traditional values largely on ‘Muslims’ and the ‘Javanese’, whom they roughly jumble together as *pendatang* (newcomers), that is, non-Balinese outsiders (Allen and Palermo 2005: 8–10, 11; Shulte-Nordholt 2007: 39–40), although they seldom intend to disparage their personal acquaintances who are Muslim or Javanese. A kind of xenophobia against ‘Javanese’ and ‘Muslim’ people as potentially evil or threatening ‘others’ mirrors the conscious and unconscious fear, social pressure, and dissatisfaction that the Hindu Balinese feel as a religious minority at the national level. Correspondingly, the concept of Balinese-ness has become more inclined towards Hinduism, reinforced by the Ajeg Bali (Strengthen Bali) campaign that began in 2002, in which Hindu-Balinese culture and customs are privileged and the contrast with Islam is emphasised (Allen and Palermo 2005: 12–13; Schulte Nordholt 2007: 54–60).

## 1.2 The Muslim-Balinese Dilemma

In such a social context, the Muslim-Balinese people, whose ancestors have lived on the island for centuries, are frustrated with the misunderstanding and ignorance surrounding the difference between *pendatang*, who presumably only recently arrived in Bali, and themselves. Once, when my Hindu-Balinese friend and I visited a Muslim-Balinese musician at home during my fieldwork, my Hindu friend asked him, without any malice, ‘*Dari mana, Pak?*’ (Where are you from?) to which my Sasak friend sullenly but patiently replied, ‘*Saya dari sini, saya orang Bali*’ (I am from here, I am Balinese). Although asking about a person’s hometown is a common starting point for conversation upon first meeting, it is a bit odd to pose such a question to a man in his own home because the question assumes that he comes from elsewhere. The Muslim man seemed to be slightly offended, although he answered politely, but the interlocutors relaxed after a while. In the view of the Muslim Balinese, they are Balinese as well as Muslim and should therefore be distinguished axiomatically from the *pendatang*, although many Hindu Balinese tend to overlook the difference.

The first Muslims in Bali may have been envoys from Java, who were sent to the island for the purpose of persuading the Balinese king to convert to Islam around the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Although they failed in that endeavour, they were allowed to settle in East Bali, where they established their own communities and served the monarchy as guards and merchants (Tim Peneliti Sejarah Masuknya Islam di Bali 1980: 14).<sup>4)</sup> Beginning in the sixteenth century, when the northern Balinese kingdom conquered Blambangan in East Java, many Javanese came to settle in northern and western Bali, and in the seventeenth century, the Bugis from southern Sulawesi also emigrated to northern, western, and southern Bali, where they assimilated into the previously-established Muslim communities.

From the seventeenth century until the nineteenth century, when the Karangasem kingdom in East Bali increased its control over and finally conquered the neighbouring island of Lombok, many Sasak people—the majority population in Lombok, of Islamic

faith—also migrated to Karangasem. Nyuling and Danginsema, the two communities I discuss here, are largely populated by the descendants of the Sasak from Lombok.

Each Muslim community has its own history, with distinct roots, time and purpose of migration, and cultural and historical background. In some communities, Muslims of various origins have mingled over the course of time. Generally speaking, though, the people who belong to these older Muslim communities definitely distinguish themselves from the so-called *pendatang*, who are presumably more recent newcomers, in that they were born, grew up, and make their living in Bali, almost always speak Balinese fluently, and have adjusted to accommodate themselves to Hindu customs and tradition.

The people in Nyuling and Danginsema often identify themselves as Balinese in terms of their birthplace and locality, while also maintaining their identities as the descendants of their Sasak ancestors through their culture and language, and as Muslims in terms of their faith. They have resided in their present location for generations, maintaining a close relationship with the neighbouring Hindus, especially the *puri* (the former royal family and their residence) of Karangasem. The ancestors of these two *kampung* came to Bali from Lombok, following the king of Karangasem.<sup>5</sup> Puri Karangasem offered them the land adjacent to the *puri*, and they have faithfully served the *puri*. In terms of rituals, they offered labour or brought goats as offerings, and the *puri*, in turn, up until recently, provided financial support for the building of mosques or for pilgrimages to Mecca. Today, they still invite each other to their important communal events.

Muslim-Balinese identity is comprised of multiple elements, such as ethnicity, faith, locality, culture, language, history, and a social relationship with the surrounding peoples, which overlap with each other in a multi-faceted way. Being Balinese, being Muslim, and being Sasak are not incompatible for them.

## 2. The *Rebana* of Nyuling and Danginsema

*Rebana* is a term for the frame drums that are commonly found in Indonesia; however, there is also a variety of local names for them, such as *tar*, *kendang* (Bali), *terbang* (Central and East Java), *genjring* (West Java), and *rapa'i* (Sumatra). *Rebana* are used in performances in several Muslim-Balinese communities in different areas, but the *rebana* in Nyuling and Danginsema are clearly distinct from the others in terms of their structure, group instrumentation, performance practice, and repertoire.

In Bali, *rebana* on which rattan and wedges are used to fix the membrane to the wooden frame are today used in performances only in Nyuling and Danginsema, while elsewhere some utilise studs, and others use rattan but not wedges. *Rebana* that use similar materials and have a similar musical structure but are beaten with a mallet can also be found in West Lombok; however, in Bali, they are always beaten with the bare hands (See also Seebass et al. 1976).



**Figure 1** A *rebana* ensemble in Danginsema, Karangasem, Bali (Photo by the author, 27 December 2013).

The *rebana* in Nyuling and Danginsema comprise their own ensemble, including:

- a) around six *rebana*, all beaten with bare hands, each of which differs in size and is tuned to a scale;
- b) a few *manolin*, a plucked zither with keys; and
- c) a few *suling*, vertical bamboo flutes (see Figure 1).

The *rebana* music of Nyuling and Danginsema is unique in that it is purely instrumental, while in other Muslim-Balinese communities, *rebana* provide accompaniment for dance and the recitation of Islamic poetry.<sup>6)</sup> The *rebana* ensembles from Nyuling and Danginsema are quite similar, although there are differences with regard to their musical terms and repertoire. Here, I mainly use Danginsema terminology to avoid confusion, making reference to Nyuling terminology when necessary. Central to the ensemble is a set of four *rebana*: the *pemoto*, *penengah*, *pembawak*, and *penyimbang* (called *kempul* in Nyuling). These four *rebana* are believed to comprise the prototype of today's ensembles, which the ancestors of Muslim-Balinese of both communities brought to Bali.

Another *rebana*, called *tok* (*kempul dua* in Nyuling), keeps the beat, while the largest *rebana*, the *kempul* (*jidur* in Nyuling), punctuates the melodic cycles. These two *rebana* are not used for making a melody and are therefore not as strictly tuned as the central set of four *rebana* in Danginsema; meanwhile, the *jidur* should be tuned an octave lower than the *kempul* in Nyuling.

The *manolin* (*mandolin* or *nolin*) is similar to the Japanese *taisho-goto*, that is, a plucked zither with four to nine strings and keys for changing the pitch.<sup>7)</sup> The Hindu

Balinese also use *manolin* and *suling* in their performances, although the former is only found in a few Hindu-Balinese villages, while *suling* are commonly used in various musical forms. According to the musicians, two *rebana* for punctuation, and the *manolin* and *suling* for melody were added later, probably after their arrival in Bali, while the *rebana* ensemble in Lombok also features other instruments, such as a large *rebana* for punctuation called the *gong*, and a *rincik* or a set of small cymbals (Seebass et al. 1976: 24–25). The development of Nyuling's and Dangingsema's present-day instrumentation is thought to have involved the absorption of Hindu-Balinese musical influences.

### 2.1 Similarity to Hindu-Balinese *Gamelan*

The musical form and structure of the *rebana* ensembles of Nyuling and Dangingsema bear close similarity to those of the Hindu-Balinese *gamelan* and are acknowledged to have been much influenced by the latter. For example, a portion of the *rebana* repertoire in Nyuling, known as *gending bali* or Balinese melodies, is said to be adapted from the Hindu-Balinese *gamelan angklung* repertoire.<sup>8)</sup>

The *gamelan angklung* is commonly used for performances during Hindu-Balinese ceremonies, usually employing ten metallophones with four keys, eight gong-chimes in the four-tone *slendro* scale, gongs of various sizes, drums, and *suling*. Some also mention the similarity of *rebana* to *beleganjur* (*baleganjur*), another form of Hindu-Balinese *gamelan*, which are used in ritual procession performances. *Beleganjur* does not include metallophones or flutes; rather, several sets of cymbals are used. Among the similarities between Sasak-Balinese *rebana* and Hindu-Balinese *gamelan*, the most salient and significant are as follows:

- (1) tuning in the *slendro* scale;
- (2) interlocking to create a melody;
- (3) musical structure and instrumentation based on cyclic repetition; and
- (4) how to start and end the musical piece.

The four components of the central set of *rebana* (*pemoto*, *penengah*, *pembawak*, and *penyimbang* or *kempul*) are tuned to a four-tone scale that is similar to *gamelan angklung*. The notes used to be called *ding*, *dong*, *deng*, and *dung*, the same as in *gamelan angklung*, but now they are called *do*, *re*, *mi*, and *sol*.

Four *rebana*—each playing a single note—make a melody as a group by interlocking with each other. *Reyong*, a set of bronze gong-chimes used in *gamelan angklung* and *beleganjur*, are used in performance in a similar way; that is, each musician, with only one note at his disposal, must play at the proper point in the sequence in order to create the melodic line, although *beleganjur* is based on another scale, the *pelog*.<sup>9)</sup> *Gangsa*, the metallophones used in *angklung* and other *gamelan* ensembles, also interlock to create a melody, but their musicians usually play two notes on each. However, I should note that the use of the *slendro* scale and interlocking are two common features found in other *gamelan* styles and traditional music in general and are not particularly unique to

*gamelan angklung* or Sasak-Balinese *rebana*, as they are also found in Sasak *rebana* ensembles in Lombok (Seebass n.d.a, n.d.b; Seebass et al. 1976).

*Rebana* music is based on the cyclic repetition of melodies. The concluding beat of each cycle is always marked by the instrument with the lowest tone in the ensemble, the *jidur* (*kempul* in Nyuling). In Hindu-Balinese *gamelan*, a large hanging gong, the *gong agung* or *kempul*, which also has the lowest tone in the ensemble, is usually assigned the punctuating role. In the *rebana* ensemble, the musical role of the *tok* (*kempul dua* in Nyuling) is to maintain the tempo, in the same way as the small gong called *tawak-tawak*, *kempli*, or *kajar* does in *gamelan*. In Nyuling, the role of *kempul dua* can be performed by two *rebana*, which alternate to make on- and off-beats.

At the beginning of a piece, a single performer (or a pair of performers) plays one melodic cycle with a slight modification, and the other instruments in the ensemble join in at the end of the first cycle. In the *rebana* ensemble, the *manolin* or *suling* starts first, whereas in *gamelan angklung*, a *gangsa* (metallophone) plays initially, and in *beleganjur*, the drums start first.

The *gamelan angklung* is led by a pair of interlocking *kendang* drums, namely the *kendang wadon*, which has a relatively low tone and the *kendang lanang*, which has a higher tone. Transitions between sections, changes in tempo, and the ends of melodies are signalled by specific *kendang* rhythmic patterns. In the *rebana* ensemble, two of the four in the *rebana* set—the *rebana* with the highest tone, the *pemoto*, and that with the lowest, the *penyimbang*—occasionally assume this ‘*kendang*’ role, while continuing to play their assigned notes in the melody line. Their ‘*kendang*’ strokes are struck in the centre of the membrane, while the melody notes are played on the upper side, and thus they can be differentiated by sound quality. The *kendang* notes of the *pemoto* and the *penyimbang* are interlocked, as is the case with the *kendang wadon* and *lanang*.

Overall, the Sasak *rebana* ensemble bears a close similarity to Hindu-Balinese *gamelan* music, although this does not necessarily mean that the *rebana* adopted all of these characteristics from Hindu-Balinese *gamelan*. Interlocking, repetition, and punctuation are widespread features of Indonesian music, and they are largely shared by *rebana* ensembles in West Lombok. Further research and careful examination should be undertaken to clarify the history of *rebana* and the influence of Hindu-Balinese *gamelan* on it.

However, I would like to emphasise that the musicians of Nyuling and Danginsema, as well as many Balinese who know *rebana*, acknowledge the similarity between *rebana* and *gamelan angklung*, and consider it to be the outgrowth of their history of cultural exchange. Further, they believe that these musical similarities distinguish their music from that of the other Muslim-Balinese communities, as well as those of the Sasak in Lombok. For example, Sasak-Balinese musicians sometimes rather proudly describe the *rebana* of Sarenjawa (which is another old Muslim-Balinese community of Javanese descendants in Karangasem) by saying ‘*Tidak pakai gending*’ (They do not use a melody). Haji Koseh Ukudsih, the leader of the *rebana* group in Nyuling, who often visits Lombok, told me that the musical tradition of the Sasak in Lombok has changed even more than that of the Sasak Balinese. According to Haji Ukudsih, the Sasak in

Lombok today sometimes beat *rebana* with sticks instead of their bare hands, while in some communities, *rebana* have been supplanted with other ensembles, such as the *gendang beleq*, featuring two-headed drums and cymbals. He asserts that Nyuling's music maintains the original form to a greater degree than Lombok's.

According to Haji Hasim, the leader of *rebana* in Danginsema, *rebana* flourished in many Sasak-Balinese communities around Karangasem, such as Jeruk Manis, Gelumpang, Banglas, and Ujung, in the 1940s. A *rebana* competition among the Sasak-Balinese communities was held around 1948, although most groups have since gone extinct. In 2007, I observed a man from Karang Langko, another Sasak-Balinese community in the neighbourhood, mingling with Nyuling musicians for a *rebana* rehearsal because his own community's *rebana* tradition had already died out.

### 3. The Performance Context of the *Rebana* Ensemble

#### 3.1 *Rebana* Performance among the Muslims and the Hindu

The *rebana* ensemble has been performed at joyous community events, such as weddings and celebrations for *haji* (those who have completed the pilgrimage to Mecca). Since they do not involve praying to Allah, such performances are thought to be essentially *hiburan*, a form of entertainment for human beings. Generally speaking, *rebana* do not produce ritual music in the sense that temple performances involving *gamelan angklung* or *beleganjur* do for the Hindu Balinese. In Nyuling and Danginsema, *rebana* performances are not appropriate for the other Islamic *hari besar* ('big days' or days of religious significance), such as Idul Fitri (the end of Ramadan and a month of fasting). Although Maulud (Mawlid, the anniversary of the Prophet Muhammad's birth) is, in the other Muslim-Balinese communities, the most prominent occasion on which to present *rebana* and other traditional performing arts (see also Mashino 2016), the people of Danginsema and Nyuling generally do not give *rebana* performances in celebration of Maulud. However, many rites of passage, such as *khitanan* (circumcision) and *potong rambut* (cutting a baby's hair for the first time), are held during the month of Maulud, and these sometimes involve *rebana* performances for entertainment.

In 2006, I observed a *rebana* performance during a wedding ceremony marking the union of a man from Nyuling and a woman from neighbouring Karang Ceremen. A day before the marriage, a group of thirty to forty people from Nyuling, including musicians playing *rebana* and *manolin*, walked to the bride's home in Karang Ceremen (see Figure 2).

After arriving at her home, a female *qasidah* group from Nyuling, flawlessly attired in beautiful scarlet costumes, gave a performance. *Qasidah* refers to a group performance that entails dancing and singing accompanied by an ensemble of different types of *rebana*. The *rebana* for *qasidah* have studs instead of rattan and are smaller than those in the previously discussed *rebana* ensemble. They are usually not tuned to a scale, but they interlock rhythmically. The songs' Indonesian lyrics contain Islamic teachings and morals that are sung in a musical style that is similar to Indonesian pop songs. After the *qasidah*, there came a performance by the *rebana* ensemble. Following that, the representatives from Nyuling spoke with the bride's family and sought formal permission to take the



**Figure 2** A *rebana* ensemble in procession. Nyuling, Karangasem, Bali (Photo by the author, 27 August 2006).

bride to Nyuling for marriage. On the journey back to Nyuling, the *rebana* performed again. The whole event had a festive, joyful atmosphere. The *rebana* and *qasidah* performances did much to express the communal identity and tradition of Nyuling through the offering of a lively form of entertainment that had already been extinguished in Karang Ceremen.

*Rebana* musicians have also frequently been invited to ceremonies or to entertain special guests in the *puri*. Whenever there has been a series of huge rituals in the *puri*, such as weddings and tooth filings, the *rebana* group from Nyuling was invited to perform. Anak Agung Made Arya from Puri Kangin Karangasem recalls that the Nyuling *rebana* even performed at *puri* funeral ceremonies in his childhood, around 1966, although the music had never been used for Muslim funerals.<sup>10</sup> In these Hindu ceremonies, the *rebana* is expected to accompany the procession, in a manner that is similar to that of *gamelan angklung* or *beleganjur*.

Performances in the *puri* contributed to establishing and maintaining the close relationship between Hindu-Balinese rulers and their Muslim-Balinese subjects in the feudal past, and today, they still provide opportunities to show respect and reassert their friendship, while simultaneously representing the Sasak-Balinese cultural identity in the public domain. In this social context, the similarity of *rebana* music to Hindu-Balinese *gamelan* may help people understand and integrate *rebana* music with Hindu ritual music.

### 3.2 Wearing Hindu-Balinese Costumes

The *puri* often offers both Hindu and Muslim performing groups a set of costumes to honour their contribution to the ritual, and the *rebana* musicians are also expected to wear them during their performances. This means that Sasak-Balinese *rebana* players perform dressed in the so-called Hindu-Balinese style—*pakaian adat Bali*—consisting of an *udeng* (a headdress), a *baju* (a shirt or jacket), a *saput* (an apron), and a *kain* (or *kaman*, which is a cloth for covering the legs).

Wearing the Hindu-Balinese costume could be controversial among Muslims, as it might be interpreted as a deviation from their own customs or a holdover from the feudal past, when they were the Hindu kings' subjects. In another Muslim-Balinese community in North Bali, I have been privy to serious discussions about whether wearing Hindu-Balinese garb during an Islamic poetry recital with *rebana* is 'authentic' and 'traditional', compared to wearing garb that is more specific to Indonesian Muslims, i.e. a *celana* (trousers) or a *sarong* (a cloth covering the legs), a *baju* (shirt), and a *peci* (hat) (see also Mashino 2011). However, I did not note any negative comments in Nyuling, where the people seemed to understand that the costume represented the *puri*'s appreciation for their contribution to the ritual.

Clothing is one of the most visible representations of one's identity, with multi-fold meanings in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, faith, status, and personality, to mention just a few. However, one's actual choice of clothing is dependent upon the multi-dimensional social context. Muslim women might wear *jilbab* (veils), not solely because they are pious women or because they believe it to be compulsory, but also because they feel that the *jilbab* is a beautiful and quite fashionable garment (Pedersen 2014: 188; Nonaka 2015). Sometimes the factor that is more decisive in terms of choice of clothing is its suitability for the context, that is, whether one's appearance fits the social, religious, and cultural codes of a particular event. Just as there are cases in which non-Muslim women should cover their hair and arms with a headscarf in a mosque, and non-Hindu tourists entering Hindu temples are required to tie a *selendang* (sash) around their waists, it can be natural for *rebana* musicians playing in *puri* rituals to don Balinese garb in a gesture of respect for their hosts' customs, as is required by the social context. Pedersen also discusses a case where Muslim-Balinese students wore Hindu-Balinese clothes to school on full moon days, which mark special occasions for Hindus on which they make offerings and send up prayers; one of the students pointed out that they accept wearing the costume to 'appreciate' and 'show respect' for Hinduism. They strategically treat the garments as 'just a clothing issue', distinguishing it from the realm of *agama* (religion) and instead categorising it as *budaya* (culture) or *adat* (custom) in Indonesia, especially in accordance with government policy (Pedersen 2014: 189–190; see also Harnish 2014; Hauser-Schäublin and Harnish 2014: 1–31).<sup>11</sup>

## 4. Identity, History, and Music

### 4.1 'Assimilation' as a Positive Term

The Hindu–Muslim cultural exchanges and the consequent similarities in their musical

forms are generally emphasised today in interfaith *toleransi* (tolerance) discourse. Both Haji Hasim from Danginsema and Haji Ukudsih from Nyuling offered positive acknowledgement of the *assimilasi* (assimilation) of Hindu-Balinese *gamelan* into *rebana* and interpreted the similarity as historical evidence of peaceful cultural exchange across differences in faith and ethnicity. The term ‘assimilation’ suggests hegemony and power politics, which might force the subordination of the minority to the majority in their cultural contact; however, in the context of Muslim-Balinese culture, the term usually emphasises the fruitful aspects of the interaction. Actually, Muslim and Hindu Balinese in East Bali have maintained a relatively peaceful relationship throughout history, although there might have been minor conflicts and problems between them, probably because the Hindu-Balinese kings never forced the Muslims to convert to Hinduism and largely allowed them to maintain their own faith and customs. Adrian Vickers writes that perhaps ‘Islam was not the “outside” to be contrasted with Hinduism “inside” Balinese culture’ (1987: 52). With the increasingly anti-Muslim social climate in recent times, however, more of the Muslim minority are exposed to social pressure, possibly making it more important to stress the shared, harmonious aspects of the Muslim and Hindu cultures in the vicinity.

The Muslim Balinese have selectively adopted Hindu-Balinese cultural practices and customs. For example, Muslim Balinese, including the Sasak and others, seem to have avoided using *gamelan* and other bronze instruments, probably because they were regarded as more deeply embedded in Hindu ritual and religion. Some Muslim Balinese feared that adopting Hindu-Balinese practices would fatally jeopardise their own faith. Haji Hasim once told me a story from his youth in the 1960s, when he was eager to learn *Baris*, one of the most popular Hindu-Balinese male dance. He gave it up because the elders declared it to be *haram*, meaning prohibited for Muslims, while *rebana* and *cakapung* (*cepung*), which definitely belong to Sasak culture, were allowed.<sup>12)</sup> Haji Hasim is now a respected village elder and an *imam*, a religious mosque leader, who believes that practicing Hindu-Balinese performing arts is not necessarily *haram*. However, it seems that there is not much interest in Hindu-Balinese traditional performing arts among Muslim-Balinese youth today.

#### 4.2 *Rebana* Activities in a Global Age

Today, *rebana* traditions among the Sasak Balinese seem to be on the verge of extinction, as the number of *rebana* musicians is gradually decreasing and the younger generation is not fully involved in performance activities in both communities.

In March 2014, Haji Ukudsih politely declined my request to take video documentation of the Nyuling *rebana* performance due to the small number of performers. He told me that he should even have declined a few of the *puri*’s invitations to perform for the same reason. Some experienced older musicians had passed away before the next generation could master the arts, and the younger musicians do not have enough time to dedicate to rehearsals because most work outside of the community.<sup>13)</sup> Some are working or studying in Denpasar City, which is around 50 km west, and thus they only come back home one or two days per week. Nevertheless, Haji Ukudsih did

not survey the worsening situation with a passive, sullen attitude. Back in 2006, when I visited Nyuling, younger musicians, led by Haji Ukudsih, had just started rehearsals to continue the tradition. In 2008, he said that he was trying to teach *rebana* to kids in elementary school, although his efforts apparently did not go well. There has been neither official nor financial backing for maintaining the tradition, which would go a long way to support his personal efforts. In 2007 in Danginsema, the *rebana* ensemble was still complete and well-maintained, though they had the bare minimum in terms of members and included only a few young musicians.

Generally speaking, the Indonesian government has been greatly concerned with unearthing (*menggalikan*), preserving (*melestarikan*), and developing (*memperkembangkan*) traditional performing arts and has encouraged documentation and education in accordance with the national cultural policy (see Lindsay 1995; Yampolsky 1995; Harnish 2007). The richness of the performing arts that flourish in Bali has never escaped official efforts and support; however, those in the Muslim-Balinese communities seem to be almost entirely out of the picture.<sup>14)</sup>

The reason for the decline of *rebana*, however, cannot simply be reduced to limited societal support; rather, it results from changes in the social environment, lifestyle, and cultural values of the Muslim Balinese. To the older generation, *rebana* was possibly the one and only medium for enjoying live music, since it was forbidden to practise Hindu-Balinese performing arts. Today, the Sasak-Balinese belong not only to the local Balinese society in which they are a religious and ethnic minority, but also to the pan-Indonesian and even worldwide Muslim network and its culture through mass media and the Internet, as well as via people's physical comings and goings. Most of the Sasak Balinese whom I met in Karangasem had relatives in Lombok or Java, and many have visited those places on various occasions for various reasons, including to study, conduct business, attend ceremonies, or just to see family. Meanwhile, there are a few who have been to foreign countries, especially on pilgrimage to Mecca.

The accessibility of other musical entertainment through recordings, television, and the Internet has grown drastically. Sasak-Balinese youth definitely have more entertainment choices than previous generations. For their wedding receptions, the young people in Danginsema prefer band music over *rebana*, and since *rebana* is not rooted in religious obligations, it can easily be replaced by other musical forms. The youth also enjoy consuming pan-Islamic popular culture, which is widespread across the archipelago in the form of novels, movies, and television shows and dramas aired during Ramadan in particular. *Qasidah* is typically a part of such Indonesian Muslim culture, although I could not discuss it here. On the day of *Idul Fitri*, during the 2013 celebration of the end of Ramadan, I heard young people playing *lagu takbir*, a special song that chants 'Allāhu akbar' (God is greatest), with heavy-metal-flavoured beats, over a loudspeaker in a Muslim-Balinese community near Denpasar.

The decline of *rebana* in Nyuling seems to be a result of a transformation affecting their recognition of their identity and their social circumstances. The changing social context may drive the people to reconsider and reinterpret their tradition, including the significance of the relationship between *puri* and Muslim communities. Mass media and

frequent travel have opened wider pathways to national and global Islamic cultural networks, in which they recognise their religious identity. However, the Sasak Balinese and the other Muslim Balinese I met during my fieldwork still have a strong sense of belonging to Bali, which would not be fully replaced and represented by Indonesian or pan-Muslim cultural practices. The Sasak Balinese live in Bali as Balinese, but they are simultaneously Muslim and the descendants of the Sasak. The musical practice and form of *rebana* traditions in Nyuling and Danginsema can effectively represent their social and cultural identity, which are defined by various elements, such as history, religion, locality, and their cultural relationship with the Hindu Balinese. Rather, the significance of such art forms seems to be increasing today by virtue of their ability to express the people's own character while simultaneously entertaining their neighbours of a different faith.

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### Notes

- 1) This chapter was originally presented as a paper at the ICTM Study Group on Music and Minorities Symposium in Osaka, 19–23 July 2014 and revised based on later findings from field research during 2014–2017. The work was supported by a Toyota Foundation Research Grant (2014) and JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP15K02098.
- 2) At a very early stage in the founding of Indonesia, the Hindu Balinese were already under strong policy and political pressure over religion, and their faith could not, at first, be officially acknowledged as a legitimate *agama* (religion). The Hindu Balinese struggled to systematise and reform their traditional religious practices to fit the strictly monotheistic and scriptural standards of Islam and Christianity. (See the detailed discussion in Nagafuchi (2007: 163–82) and Picard (2004)).
- 3) The bill was proposed in 2006 and was finally passed after a fierce dispute in 2008. Major criticisms of the bill were that it would largely restrict and seriously damage regional tradition, the performing arts in particular, and dismiss the cultural values that are particular to the traditions. (See Pausacker (2008) for details)
- 4) It is difficult to pinpoint the exact arrival of the first Muslim in Bali, although there are several resources and oral traditions that suggest that it would have been during the reign of the first king of Gelgel, Dalem Ketut Ngelesir (1380–1460), and his son, the second king, Dalem Waturenggong. *Sejarah Masuknya Islam* (Tim Peneliti Sejarah Masuknya Islam di Bali 1980: 14–16) describes a few possibilities: (1) There is an oral tradition suggesting that a group of around forty Muslim men who attended King Ngelesir came from Majapahit to Bali. (2) According to the Balinese chronicle *Babad Dalem*, a group of Muslims came to Bali to persuade King Waturenggong to convert to Islam. Although they failed to accomplish their

- mission, they were allowed to stay in Bali.
- 5) According to Haji Hasim of Danginsema, who was born in 1933, he belongs to the eighth generation of immigration from Lombok. (personal communication, 5 August 2017)
  - 6) *Rebana* in Danginsema used to be performed in *cepung* (*cakapung*), an entertaining performing art form that includes vocal and dance elements, and to accompany the recitation of Islamic poetry. Today, *cepung* is seldom performed in Danginsema, and the recitations are made without *rebana*.
  - 7) For details on the *manolin* used in Hindu-Balinese villages, see Umeda (2010, 2011).
  - 8) I did not hear a specific term corresponding to *gending bali* in Danginsema, although they also acknowledge that a portion of their repertoire came from Hindu-Balinese *gamelan* pieces.
  - 9) There are regional variations in *gamelan angklung* instrumentation, and there are also ensembles that do not include *reyong*.
  - 10) Anak Agung Made Arya, personal communication, 26 August 2006.
  - 11) Academic discussions about costuming and Islamic faith, including Pedersen's, have primarily been focused on female rather than male costumes, typically pertaining to the wearing (or not) of *jilbab*. I describe male costumes here. As an anonymous reviewer suggested, wearing Hindu ceremonial wear, such as *udeng* and *saput*, represents less of a problem of faith for men than the idea of women not wearing *jilbab*, since the former is not contrary to Islamic law. Covering the head using an *udeng* or another kind of cloth is also very common in Indonesia, in Muslim communities and elsewhere, and thus does not necessarily signify 'Hindu' Balinese tradition.
  - 12) Haji Hasim, personal communication, 24 August 2008. Another genre in which Hindu and Muslim cultural interaction is recognised is *wayang kulit* (shadow puppetry). There was once a Sasak-Balinese *dalang* (puppeteer) who learnt his art from a Hindu master.
  - 13) In Lombok, bronze *gamelan* have been problematised for their association with Hindu and pre-Islamic culture and religion. (Harnish 1988; 2011: 92)
  - 14) There are a few cases in which Muslim-Balinese music and dance were performed in official settings, supported or organised by the government. For example, *rudat* dance performers from Kepaon, South Bali, participated in the opening procession of Pesta Kesenian Bali (The Bali Arts Festival), which is Bali's most prominent art festival. There might possibly be more such cases, though they are definitely fewer than examples of support for Hindu-Balinese performing arts.

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