**Elements of Tantrism in the Balinese Rituals**[[1]](#footnote-1)

Ida Bagus Putu Suamba

**Abstract**

There is no Balinese religious tradition without the involvement of ritual; it is part and parcel of Balinese life.  Rituals (*upacara*) as outer expression of faith is another manifestation or extension of metaphysics (*tattva*)---in the frame of *Tri Kerangka Agama* (three main and interrelated principles of religion). However, common people are perhaps unaware that they practice Tantrism blended in local culture. Despite the fact that the term ‘Trantric’ is hardly found either in textual or oral tradition, Tantric elements expressed in various forms and symbols pervade ritual in a subtle way. This study aims at finding some elements of Tantrism in Balinese ritual through observing instruments, tools, materials or elements used to compose rituals - either regular or occasional - and tries to explore the significance of them. A closer observation on various rituals performed by Balinese can show a number of elements known as *Panca M-kara*, viz. *mada, mamsa, matsa, mudra*, and *mithuna* found in various forms of *banten*, i.e. offering through which power (*sakti*) may be manifested*;* in addition to *mandala, yantra, mantra* and *yoga*. The commoner practices them with faith and devotion, however, they perhaps lack the knowledge about the deeper meaning of them in performing a particular ritual. The novelty of this study is that it explores various rituals in the frame of *Panca-maha-yajna* in which Trantric elements are embedded in a subtle way.

**Key words**:  ritual, *Panca-makara*, *mandala, yantra, yoga*.

**Introduction**

Rituals is a part and parcel of Balinese Hindu religion. It is hardly said that there is no life without ritual. It ranges from small to larger scale involving elements / substances (*dravya*), god (*deva*), sacred syllable/letter (*aksara*), spells (*mantra*), people, days, and preparations covering five kinds of religious sacrifices (*panca maha* *yajna*)*.* With this fact, we may assume that elements of Tantra seem to be prevalent for Tantrism is generally associated with ritual. But we may be cautious in this point that ritual can be of Vedic in nature. In Brahmana period, the Vedic religion is so ritualistic and interpreted from *karma kanda* perspective. Brahmana treatises testify the existence of ritual either of domestic or public. Ritual practices in a period when metaphysical speculation did not exist yet; this point came later in Upanishad period of Vedic tradition. In Bali, whatever ritual is performed, it is based on philosophical principles (*tattva*) and ethics (*sasana / sila*), which contained in *tutur* or *tattva* texts. Owing to this fact, it is quite difficult to see whether the ritual prevalent is Vedic or Tantric or the combination of both. As generally acknowledge that all cults/schools of Hinduism consider Veda as the highest authority in truth, causing Tantric elements seems to be overshadowed by the Vedic ritual.

Some people who may adopt *jnana kanda* approach in understanding Veda start enquiring the nature and significance of the ritual looked from different thoughts. Some who prefer *jnana kanda* approach relegates ritual; despite the fact for those who profess *jnana kanda* cannot fully avoid the practice of ritual in whatever small it is. This perspective often raised by many people; it is perhaps due to the current trend prefers to have *jnana kanda* in interpreting the Vedas. Being a Hindu ritual, looking at Balinese ritual from only Vedic perspective seems to be unfair and misleading as some elements have been noticed of not really Vedic even in opposition with Vedic especially early Veda; but also, Tantrism for being associated with rituals. Archeological remains and textual tradition in Java and Bali confirm it. The nature of Hinduism in the archipelago, especially Bali, is “inclusive” accommodating those Indian thoughts or traditions which had arrived in this region during long span of time; each of them interacting and has been received the elements including local culture. Owing to this fact, the outer expression as well as the deeper philosophical foundation of it is in different from any other Hindu tradition in the world. In different from India in which the corpus of the texts is called Tantra or Tantra sastra, in Bali the sources are generally known as *Tutur* texts written Sanskrit-Old Javanese, Old Sundanese, and Balinese; they mention various form of rituals for various purposes.

As it is a complex and sometimes delicate involving elements / substances either tangible and intangible showing its practice has a philosophical principle in it, of the rituals being complex and time consuming, Tantrism is suspected available influencing and penetrating its values and principles to the practice of rituals; expressed in local culture. Despite the fact, the word ‘*tantra*’ is hardly found either in texts or tradition in practice, Tantrism has subtly penetrated the rituals causing its forms / manifestation and the way to offer is not purely Tantric or Vedic. The penetration of Tantric principles or elements is possible to due of being liberal character and not only pervade but transcend various religious traditions across the borders. Orthodoxy and heterodoxy meet and both negotiating in some level/domain and yielded the tradition inherited until today. Hatley (2020) mentioned that this tradition has historically influenced Buddhism, Jainism, and Indian Sufism in and beyond South Asia; despite the fact Tantra or Tantrism is still widely misunderstood dimension of Hinduism (xx). With reference the spread of Indian culture worldwide, including South East Asian region, some of its aspects has colored the flourish of the culture; the mode or form of expression may be different from India.

Keeping this point in mind, Tantrism or whatever the term may be coined for it, cannot be understood in a comprehensive way when it is separated from the culture in which it lives.

This phenomenon of Tantrism has been noticed at least in textual tradition as the basis of rituals by Western scholars like Hooykass and Goudrian. Recently Stephen (2005) has written about Tantric aspect in the worship of Saiva priest in Bali called Surya Sevana. He states that

“The surya-sevana rituals cannot usefully be regarded as truncated versions
of South Asian rituals based on flawed texts, as I have argued above. Nor
can they be described as “rituals without religion”—not unless one totally
ignores the text of the practitioner’s manual which reveals a complex Tantric
philosophy, theology and symbolism, as I have shown. Despite the title,
Sūrya-Sevana is primarily concerned with the production of holy water, not
sun worship.39 Furthermore, the text reveals that this “holy water” possesses
a deep Tantric significance, being composed of the sexual fluids of Siva and
Uma in mystical union. Views quoted earlier that the intention is to bring
about unity with Paramaśiwa, or the incarnation of the Supreme God Siwa
on earth, or to induce a trance state enabling the deity to enter the body of
the priest, seem closer to the mark in that they recognize that the central aim is to achieve a temporary union with the divine, but are nevertheless subtly
misleading in that they fail to recognize the distinctively Tantric nature of this conjunction and of the means used to achieve it”.

 In so far researcher has not been conducted in the field of ritual to look at the aspects of tangible as well as intangible of Tantrism. Or, tantric perspective is less conducted comparing to Vedic, Vedantic or puranic one. It is perhaps due to the fact that people in practicing it were not aware of the existence of the rituals had been influenced or penetrated with some principles of Tantrism. This fact may be different form the practice in India that some actions related to tantrik has a particular connotation different even opposite to Vedic tradition. Negative stigma on Tantrism causing it lack study on it. This point has been noticed by researchers on Tantrism; this field of study is getting increasing interest amongst scholars/students. Increasing interest have yielded valuable information on Tantrism. Perhaps this point may be the reason why the literature available in *tutur* texts are not so interested in using the terminology of trantric despite the fact principles, values and practices of it are pertinent. The essence is much more meaningful than its surface structure. The process of adaption and assimilation had worked well accommodating almost all ideas/principles/schools/cults originating from India in ancient times.

This paper attempts to study a rather broad observation on Balinese rituals and to look at elements of Tantrism.

**The Spread of Tantrism**

The emergence of what the so-called Tantra came later in the post-Gupta or early medieval period from the fifth or sixth century C.E. It started to spread to all over India and neighboring regions like South and South East Asian in the 12th century (Hetley, 2020). This period was the growing of it influencing Saivism, Vaishnawa and Buddhism. When and how did Tantrism arrive in the archipelago, is a difficult question to answer as long as the data available is too meagre for that purpose. We can assume its spread along with other Indian traditions facilitated perhaps by trade. Local authorities were interested in learning and practicing it for being a way to have power used in ruling the country. There are obviously some evidences of archaeological remains or artefacts and textual tradition testifying of its arrival and spread. The spread of Indian culture to wide region of South East Asia leaving us a collaborative religion under the leadership of Saivism. Being a collaborative in nature respecting every ideas / principle / cult this religion is unique as well as having resistance to survive amid the flows of various current thoughts reaching this land. However, as the blow of global thoughts is so intense and rapid equipped with modern system of communication and transportation, it needs to be protected for its survival, so that next generation still can inherit it.

Western scholars who explored ancient Indonesia noticed elements of Tantrism. As noted by Surasmi (2007:47) that the existence of Tantrism firstly noticed during Sriwijaya period in Sumatra as it can be seen in an inscription known as Talang Tuwo dated 684 AD. Sarkar (19xx) mentioned that as early as 15th century this tradition had arrived in Java based on the inscription issued by Pala dynasty in West Bengal. The evidence of it in ancient Java is the forms of inscriptions, statue, temple, and texts. Surasmi stated that since the reign of King Udayana Warmadewa with his consort Sri Gunapriya Dharmapatni (989-101 AD) during the ancient Balinese period, Tantrism was thought to have developed in Bali, although this researcher used magic instead of Tantra (2007: 78-79). The Durga statue in Kutri is often associated with Dharmapatni as a follower of Tantrism. Likewise, a number of texts are often associated with the existence of the Tantric tradition, such as Calonarang, although no text clearly uses the title Tantra; nor have any texts been found that specifically speak of Tantra, as is the case in India. The idea of Tantra spread to both the Saiwa and Bauddha schools so that both became Tantric. As Goris (1956?) stated that there are nine religious cults had existed in ancient Bali; and one of them is the worship of Bhairawa, which is one form of Tantrism. The image of Bharawa statue enshrined in Kebo Edan temple in Pejeng Gianyar testified the existence of it in ancient Bali. Most king who needed spiritual power to control the kingdom learned and practiced Tantrism. As commonly acknowledged that Tantrism is associated with spiritual or divine powers; and hence the worship of goddesses is one of its characteristics.

It is true what Samuel observed in the Balinese context based on the notes of Hooykaas (1973a, 1973b in Samuel, 2009: 325) that one can see a relatively similar picture in Burma or Thailand where the label *"tantra"* has disappeared, but the pragmatic ritual procedures that similar to Tantric practices are still a part of religious life at all levels (2009:324-325). Conditions in Bali may not be that bad because the existing texts and religious traditions are dense with Tantrayana nuances. The use of *Panca Makara*, one of the characteristics of Tantrayana, in the ritual tradition is still living (Suamba, x:x).

Looking at those ideas/ principles had arrived on the archipelago, what is pertinent is that there are no single ideas/ schools dominating which arrived here, rather there are a number of ideas/ principles/ schools collaborating in multiflorous ways within a long span of time ranging from 4th century AD up to now. Similarly, the religious tradition is of collaborative in nature of Indian schools or ideas and Balinese; and expressed in indigenous ways. To look at Tantrism as a single and distinctive religious and spiritual tradition is difficult. A new religious tradition is fresh and living an expression of its own and become identity and pride. Evidences of it can be traced in textual traditions, archeological remains, and ritual traditions as preserved in Bali. Surasmi (2007: 85-110) discussed some texts in Old Javanese like *Negara Krtagama, Sutasoma*, and *Calon Arang* contain elements of Tantrism.

**Balinese Ritual**

The frame work of Balinese Hindu religion is three pillars [known in bahasa Indonesia as *Tri Kerangka*] containing three related principles, namely metaphysics/ theology (*tattva*), ethics/ morality (*sasana/ sila*), and *upacara/acara* (ritual/ rites). They form an integral unit known as *agama* (religion); they are interrelated and none can be separated from the whole unit. The core is the tattva; ethics and ritual are the extensions or rather manifestations of tattva in physical form. These domains are reflected in its literature known as *tutur*: written Sanskrit-Old Javanese and Balinese (known as Kawi-Bali). Ritual matter usually contains in *Kalpha Sastra* literature including *plutuk, indik*, etc. This genre mostly contains detail description / manual of ritual including *wariga* (astronomy).

Ritual is the extension of principles of metaphysics/theology following ethics in preparing as well as in using it in a worship. Religion for the masses is ritual in whatever simple it is. Ritual is quite powerful in keeping the social cohesion and ethics of the community. When the world proceeds to getting more individual life style, ritual can be taken as a way to practice religion. For Balinese there are three kinds of ritual with reference to the volume or quantity of a ritual: *kanistha* (the smallest), *madhya* (medium), and *uttama* (the biggest); and each of them can again be sub divided into three parallel categories composing nine types of ritual based on the quantity or substance used. The practice is also based on the three considerations: locality (*desa*), time (*time*), and condition (*patra*). Hence, the practice of ritual is flexible depending on the performer’s ability, time, and single-hearted. Actually, there is no reason one refuses the practice of ritual provided that s/he is devoted. This act shows the faith and conviction of the believer in the existence of divinity.

Looking at the three pillars above, there is no ritual devoid of principles of metaphysic/theology and ethics; and to reduce, modified, change or even replacing --- due to some reasons---it should be based on principles of metaphysics/theology as found in *tutur/tattva* literature, like *Brhaspati Tattva, Tattva Maha Jnana, Ganapati Tattva*, *Brahmokta Widhi Sastra*, etc. The changes on the domains of ethics and ritual are possible with reference to time, locality and condition prevalent, but tattva which is a form of knowledge of the reality should be held to guide the changes. The role of the elite persons, i.e. priest is important. This is based on the ideas that ritual or ethics may be changed to suit needs of people in every era/period in the course of human history. After all, the three elements are the frame bone of this religion despite the fact common people only practicing it without knowledge of metaphysics/tattva or the essence of significance of a ritual performed, which is commonly the domain of the elites like priest, scholars, *acarya*, etc.

Balinese Hindu rituals can be divided into five according to types of *yajna* (rituals), namely *deva-, pitr-, manusa-, rsi-,* and *bhuta-yajna* originating from the concept of five great sacrifices (*panca maha yajna*) found in Vedic tradition. The practice is also based on locality (*desa*), time (*time*), and condition (*patra*). These can affect the practice without spoiling the main spirit or intension of it. These kinds of rituals are still living performed based on the calculation of Balinese calendar. The role of priest is essential in guiding people in performing it. With these principles, the rituals are flexible and can be practiced by anyone at any place, time and condition prevailing in practicing it.

Looking at the spread of Indian culture to the neighboring regions and being collaborative or inclusive in nature, Balinese Hindu rituals contains some elements of Tantrism in addition to Vedic, puranic even Buddhist elements. In this regards we may be more interested in finding the message or ideas of Tantra which be noticed or identified as a form/manifestation of Tantra in rituals.

**Sadhana**

*Sadhana* as a spiritual discipline is not again purely Tantric rather, we would like to say it has been incorporated with Vedic, Buddhist, and local traditions; it is a harmonious blend of various traditions under the dominance of Saivism. Tantric nuances have colored the rituals like the use of *mandala*, sacred syllable, *mudra*, various substances, *yoga*, etc. When it is purely Tantric which is sometimes viewed in opposing position to Vedic tradition, Tantra has received a negative stigma from the community causing people are not interesting to know it. It is at the same time to show that the earlier tradition cannot give satisfactorily answer to the spiritual quest of the people. In Bali the elements of Tantrism are melted with other traditions; it is incorporated in rituals; so, everyone can perform it without a negative stigma.

The performance of rituals is based on ethics as prescribed in *sasana* or *tutur* texts, whose basic teaching is about *yama* and *niyama* [both are known as ‘*Dasasila*’] as the foundation of *yoga*. The goal of performing ethics is to have life purified as the means to reach the very source of purity. By proper ethics followed, the doer can perform the ritual in a proper way too to attain the goal either of mundane (*pravrti*) or spiritual (*nivrti*) in nature. And, as stated by Woddroffe (2008: 73) one of them is to produce *siddhi*. *Siddhi* is required in life utilized for various purposes. He described *sadhana* as “the means, or practice, by which the desired and may be attained, and consists in the exercise and training of the body and psychic faculties, upon the gradual perfection of which *siddhi* follows; the nature and degree of which, realization of the *atma*, whose veiling vesture the body is”. (2008: 73). *Siddhi* perhaps is the most motivating aspect of Tantra for people practice Tantra. In ancient time when means of transportation and communication was still undeveloped, people were keen on learning Tantra. The emphasis is given here on practice or exercises based on ethics prescribed involving physical body (*sthula sarira*) and psychic body (*suksma sarira*) to have the consciousness of self-developed and shining.

The human body is the place to practice; and self-transformation may be acquired in the progress. In this regard, Tantra is going inward and to understand the organs of human body in transcending life. The use of sacred syllable (*aksara*) is dense as a part of *sadhana*. In other words, any *siddhi* desired is attempted by oneself; it is not given by somebody else. As stated by Woodroffe (2008: 73) that the means employed are various, such as worship (*puja*), exterior or mental; sastric learning; austerities (*tapas*); the *panca tattva, mantra* and so forth. Meanwhile Thakur (2001: 105) mentions a number of things composing tantrik *sadhana*, amongst the others are *pancamakara* *sadhana*, ritualistic etiquette for *sadhaka*, the paramount position of guru, the importance of *diksa, abhicara* and *sat-karma, siddhi, mantra, mudras*, *nyasas, yantra* and *mandala, kundalini* and *cakras*, and *yoga*. These things are available in Balinese rituals in its own modes of manifestation.

**Mandala**

*Mandala* is the foremost step that should be determined prior to performing a ritual; a ritual is performed within a *mandala* even though this term ‘*mandala*’ is not popular. It is a concentric an altar or space. One prior step in the performing a ritual is called “*nyukat karang*” (Balinese) in the a *bhuta yajna* is a way to determine a space / an altar [which is none but *mandala* in the sense of Tantrism] where ritual is to be performed. In other words, no ritual can be performed without the availability of *mandala*. When a ritual is performed in a temple, the temple itself is considered as a *mandala* where deities enshrined inside. There is a border or fencing as the mark of the *mandala*. In the ritual known as *tawur*, the mark used is lime powder. In a bigger temple, the space is divided into three mandalas: *uttama mandala* where the deities are enshrined, *madhya mandala* where supporting hall or shrine is established, and *kanistha* *mandala* where social-culture activity is performed in support or related to the temple.

A *mandala* is often associated with *yantra. Mandala* signifies a decorative motif (*mandayati bhushayati*), which also focusses attention on the essential details (*mandam lati*). It is usually circular in shape (hence *chandra-mandala, surya mandala, tejo mandala*), and signifies the spread of light or luster, influence or impact uniformly all-round. The *mandala* is the natural extension of the central light point (*bindu*). If the central point is the unmanifest power (*avyakta*), the *mandala* has therefore invariably a central point, while a *yantra* may or may not have it. The constituent areas of the *mandala* are grouped around the central point and have thus a certain symmetry of arrangement, suggesting harmony and balance (Rao, 1988:16). In Balinese context, the determination of the center is the most important for it is the center or starting point from where other ritual arrangements or shrine are built or performed. In developing the concept of nine protective deity (*dewata nawa sangha*), the center is to be determined first before established temple in respective point of quarter either of *dik* or *widik* direction. Besakih, the biggest complex temple in east Bali is viewed as the center (known as *madhyanikang bhuwana*) of Bali Island. In Besakih complex itself is establish temple in *dik* direction enshrined by respective deity. The whole island is viewed as form of *padma* (lotus) with eight petals in which is established temple with the respective deity in each point of the quarters, hence Bali is considered as a *padma mandala*.

In performing *Bhuta Yajna*, e.g. *Tawur Kesanga* held once in year in the ninth month of Saka era, it is performed in in the center or zero point of a city and village. The small unit of a housing complex, village, city, province, and the whole island is considered as a *mandala*. These should be purified through performing ritual to establish harmonious relationship between human and nature [of biotic and non-biotic] as the basis for happy and peaceful life.

**Yantra**

The term “*yantra”* is hardly found in Balinese ritual comparing to *mandala*, however a similar concept is available known as “*banten*”. *Banten* as a form of offering or manifestation of a deity was developed in Bali in the 15th century post Majapahit kingdom period of East Java. It is typically Balinese form different from those offerings in Java. So, *banten* is the fundamental element of a ritual; in other words, no ritual can be performed without *banten*. There are various forms of *banten* and usually female prepares for this task. In a bigger ritual, like *Ngenteg Linggih* ritual in a temple, all *bantens* required for it is the responsibility of female priest called *wiku tapini*. In her job, she is assisted by many persons called pancagrha [five person who is competence in making offering (*tukang banten*), drawing (*tukang orten*), preparing various food for offering (*belawa, tukang ebat*), preparing building/shrine (*tukang wawagahan*), and painting (*tukang pulas*). Battacharyya (1990: 172) states “*yantra* as symbol of deity. It is generally in the form of a diagram or geometrical pattern serving as chart for revealing the characteristics of the deity. *Yantra* is variously interpreted as instrument, the body and abode of a deity, amulet, mental faculties, pure consciousness, doctrinal intricacies, microcosm of human body and so on. *Yantra* are drawn or engraved on cloths, paper, leaves, stones and metals”. In Balinese tradition, *banten* represent instrument/means, the body or manifestation of the deity, amulet, microcosm and macrocosm, and offerings. *Jajna Prakrti* text mentions: “*sahananing bebanten pinaka raganta, tuwi pinaka warna rupaning Ida Bhatara, pinaka anda bhuana”* [every banten is viewed as the body of the deity, as the color and performance of the deity, and also represents the macrocosm] Looking at it closely, the material or substance use to compose it can be in geometric forms of circle/round, square, triangle and the combination of these; and are created in aesthetical way involving colors and various substance. It is believed it can create spiritual nuances and power. This is in line with Rao (1988: 11) that the protective power that is supposed to be possessed by a *yantra* lies in the shape of the design. The shape consisting of one or more of geometric forms

interwoven to constitute a whole pattern, is believed to represent the spirit or spirits that one seeks to communicate with, in order to derive strength and succor.

Rao (1988: 11) further states that “the forms involving points, lines, triangles and squares represent energies in various modes. The point (*bindu*) is the focal aspects of energy. It is the intense concentration of energy, which functions like a store-house from which energy is derived by the other forms. It is described as the home of the spirit, whose estate is the space comprehended by the *yantra*. When the spirit is also symbolized by a seed-syllable (*bija aksara*), this imperishable seed-syllable is inscribed on the point. The point is surrounded by successive enclosure, viz. a triangle, two triangles, intersecting, a circle, and so on. These forms indicate outward manifestation of the spirit so as to exert its influence in the desired manner. A line denotes movement of the spirit, or line of energy; a triangle represents a concerted pattern of three-fold energy-lines. These lines of triangle are described as the aspects or attendants of the Spirit”. In different from India, *yantra* as interpreted by Balinese as a form of three dimension composed by various substances including *aksara* and are placed in a particular arrangement in a ritual. The substance used can be classifies into element of *panca maha bhuta:* earth(*prtivi*)*,* liquid(*apah*)*,* heat(*teja*)*,* wind(*vayu*)*,* and space (*akasha). Prthivi* materials are like wood, bamboo, leaves, flower, incense stick, cloth, metal, stone, coin, etc. *Apah* materials are like various forms of liquid, like plain water (*tirtha*), liquor [*arah, tuak, brem* (fermented rice)]. *Teja* materials are like heat, fire, etc. They are artistically and spiritually composed based on the guidance given by *sastra* (i.e., *kalpha sastra, plutuk, indik*). This text contains guidance to prepare *banten*.

*Banten* is manifestation of a deity. *Pelutaning Yajna* and *Tapeni Yajna* Balinese manuscripts mention that *banten* is the manifestation of a deity who is to be worshipped in a ritual ceremony. A person who is in charged to prepare *banten* should follow the rules prescribed. The whole composition of *banten* (which consists of of many units/parts) can be classified into three parts known as *tri angga ning yajna*, viz. *uttama angga* -- the head (*huluning yajna*), *madhya angga --* the body (as *angganing yajna*), and *kanistha angga* -- the leg (as *sukuning yajna*). Each of these represented by various forms of *banten*. A *banten* specialist knows the substance, the way to make, and the place to put.

In composing a unit of *banten*, one should follow the concept of *asta karaning yadna* which is developed into eight *banten ayaban* (offering)—*asta dala* as manifestations of microcosm (*bhuwana alit*) in which they can be seen as a shape / posture of human body consisting mainly of head, body, and leg. (1) *banten pejati* symbolizes *huluning yadnya* (head), (2) *gebogan* symbolizes *guluning yadnya* (neck), (3) *banten pengambean* symbolizes *bau kiwa* (left shoulder), (4) *banten peras lan soda* symbolizes *bau tengen* (right shoulder), (5) *jerimpen* symbolizes *lengan kiwa lan tengen* (right and left hand); (6) *dapetan* symbolises *hredayaning yadnya* (epigastrium); (7) *tebasan lan sesayut* symbolize *garbaning yadnya* (stomach); (8) *segehan lan caru* symbolize *sukuning yajna* (leg).

*Banten* also symbolizing macrocosm (*bhuwana agung*): (1) *pejati* symbolizes the realm of god (Hyang Widhi), (2) *gebogan* symbolizes the energy of macrocosm (*bhuwana agung*), (3) *pengambean* symbolizes the power of unconsciousness (*acetana*) or ocean; (4) *peras lan soda* symbolizes consciousness (*cetana*) or mountain (*gunung*); (5) *jerimpen* symbolizes the sun (Surya) and the moon (Candra); (6) *dapetan* symbolizes the life energy of the world *(uriping jagat*), (7) *tebasan lan sesayut* symbolizes cosmic law (*rta*) of the universe, and (8) *segehan* and *caru* symbolizes the earth(*pertiwi*)and the sky(*akasa*)*.* A *banten* called *daksina*, as stated in the Yajna Prakerti text that *daksina* is considered the symbol of Hyang Guru, Hyang Tunggal, and Hyang Vishnu. In addition to it, *daksina* is the base on which a deity is enshrined, the ultimate, or the abode of the Lord (Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa). The Daksina is also meant a *Yajnapatni*, which means the consort or magic of the *yajna*.

Each of them has its own form, arrangement and place. These are placed within a mandala. Some can be put in a seat like tray, table, shrine, a temporary building made of bamboo, wood, etc.

**Rwa-Bhineda**

What is the concept of *rwa bhineda* (two different and opposing principle but always present together) in the ritual of Hindu Balinese? Whatever the ritual, it has metaphysical foundation of *rwa bhineda* in the *Siva Tattva*, which uses that of Sangkhya dualism. However, in this tradition the Sankhya becomes monistic and theistic under the dominance of Saivism. In other words, one should not stop when *rwa bhineda* is encountered, rather it should be transcended or united into one. Nevertheless, *rwa bhineda* is a way to look at the world as composing of consciousness (*cetana*) and unconsciousness (*acetana*). And, from these two the universe created composing of these two elements in various levels of life. The binary opposition interpreted in various forms in ritual. The discussion of metaphysics or theology can be found in *tutur / tattva* texts.

The use of *aksara* is another feature of Balinese ritual. The *aksara* can be scribed / written / drawn in various media: slate, cloth, cake, food, surface of water, earth, leaf, human body, etc. The use of *aksara rwa bhineda*: *ang* and *ah* in *Pitra Yajna* is clear represents the concept of *rwa bhineda*. *Ang* and *Ah* are the sacred *aksaras* used for death (*pati*) and life (*urip*). In every *kajang*, a kind of white cloth drawn picture of human body along with *aksara* (sacred letter), is used to wrap the human body, which is also basically composed of *aksara*. The dead person is represented by *aksaras* like that of *pengawak*, a wood slate scribed/drawn a human body and respective *aksara* for respective point of human body.

 There are many instances can be seen in ritual: (1) The *banten* called *smara-ratih* used in the ritual called ngenteg linggih in a temple, wedding and tooth filling rituals also represents *rwa bhineda*. (2)

**Panca Makara**

One of distinguished feature of Tantrayana is practicing *Panca Makara* as the *sadhana*. *Panca Ma* is also called *Panca Makara, Panca Tattwa,* *Panca Mudra, Kuladrawya,* and *Kulatattwa* (Bhattacharyya, 1990:116). *Panca Ma* is a Tantric *sadhana* which is esoteric/ secret in nature the impart of it is limited to a disciple (*sisya*) who is devoted and faithful on the teaching and the spiritual master (*guru*). ‘*Panca*’ means five; ‘*Ma’* is a word starting with the sound '*ma*'; So, the five words that start with the sound '*Ma*' are (1) *Mada/ madya* (alcohol/liquor), (2) *Mamsa* (meat), (3) *Matsya* (fish), (4) *Mudra* (grain/ hand/ body movements), and (5) *Maithuna* (sex). Only teacher and disciple know and practice it; consequently, it is public in imparting or practicing the teachings. The authority of a *guru* (spiritual master) is of paramount in this teaching. Disciple should observe the ethics (*sasana*) as prescribed in *sasana* text as well as additional ethics prescribed by the master.

Balinese did not accept Tantrism boldly rather some adaptations and assimilations in long span of time conducted and selective elements included in the ritual/ *upakara* expressed in indigenous way. The Panca Makara are not exclusive rather they are incorporated in ritual. It is interpreted in a symbolic way rather than in bold way practicing them. In ritual practice path of knowledge (*jnana-kanda*) and path of action (*karma-kanda*) of Vedic traditions meet forming a new tradition pluralistic and accommodative in nature. The vulgar implementation as commonly found in the *vamana-chara* is not found, but more subtle/sublime symbols are used. It stimulates followers to search the deep meaning of every symbol as the manifestation of the metaphysical principles of Siva-Shakti. Vulgar implementation and even that one of contrary to general ethics can be avoided.

The *Panca Makara* can be traced in ritual, since some elements (substance) of it has Tantrik significance. To observe parts or element of *banten* (*yantra*) is helpful in finding elements of Tantra.

1]. *Madya / Mada* (liquor / alcohol): In *bhuta yajna* (sacrifice dedicated to the nature, bad spirit) alcoholic beverages are used: *arak, tuak, brem* as elements of a *banten* (*yantra*) to pacify lower spirit/ demoniac power (*bhuta kala*), or convert the power of demoniac in nature to become God like character. These are alcohols which can stimulate spirit; and if they are added plain water, it is called *tetabuhan*. In the use, these liquids are sprinkled/poured over the *segeh/caru/tawur* (offering to lower spirit). In every ritual, the purification of nature or environment should be performed first before the worship of God. *Banten* called *prayascita* is performed whose main feature is sprinkling the holy water over the *banten* called *segeh* / *caru* / *tawur* to purify the shrine or building inside the temple starting the north-east direction (*airsanya*). For the *bhuta yajna* (purification of nature), the *banten* (*yantra*) used is placed on the ground at a pointed place; and the *mada / madya* are sprinkled three times over the *banten* according the arrangement of the ritual. This is to be performed under the guidance or leadership of the priest.

In other ritual like in the worship of God in Galungan day held once every six month, the *banten* contains *tape* (fermented rice / casava) as a substance along with the oethers, which contains element of alcohol / liquor. In making *banten catur* (offerings) used in *Dewa Yajna*, *tape* (fermented food) made of white-, yellow-, red-, and black- rice (*injin*) are used; they are arranged in such way as prescribed by the text, like Rare Angon, etc.

2]. *Mamsa* (meat). The use of meat, processed meat or food made of meat of a particular animal is used in ritual (*panca maha* *yajna*). The flesh of animal used can be divided into three categories representing *tri gunas: satwan*: e.g., duck, swan; *rajas*: e.g., chicken; *tamas*: e.g., pig. The *bhuta yajna* ceremony in the form of *tawur/caru* either of regular or irregular in its practice use animal skin, blood, meat / flesh, etc. with its processing and procedures.

The animal’s meat used can be grouped according to place they live, viz. (1). Animal that lives in water [i.e., sea and fresh water]. (2). Animal that lives on land include plains and mountains, both domesticated and wild animals. (3). Animal that lives in air, like that of winged animal that can fly in the sky. Meanwhile, animals that have wings but cannot fly in space are classified as land animals.

The sources / lontar (palm-leaf manuscripts) which mention the use of animals (*sato*) in ritual are: *Dangdang Bungalan, Dharma Kauripan, Bhama Kretih, Perembon Banten, Eka Dasa Rudra, Sodosiwikarana, Tegesing Sarwa Banten, Tattwa Sang Hyang Ganitri*, etc.

3]. *Matsa* (fish): Various fish / shellfish are used in certain ceremonies. In making *banten catur*, for example, the *banten* is placed above in *sanggar tawang* temporary shrine of a temple uses nine types of fish: (1). mackerel, (2). snapper, (3). sudamala, (4). gulama, (5) milkfish, (6). pakung (small shrimp), (7). baning, and (8). kuiya. In making a simple *banten*, like *soda* offered to God or purified spirit of ancestor, fried fish called *gerang* is used along with kacang, komak, sawur, and other substances.

4]. *Mudras* (grain, hand or body movement). Almost all *bantens* use seeds as the elements of a *banten*. Rice and its varieties [sticky rice, rice of different color like black rice (*injin*) and kinds], and the manner to prepare it, it is used in almost every kinds / level of ritual. Making simple offerings, like *soda* using the *mudra* elements: rice, peanuts, komak, sawur (it is made of coconut), and others. Banten called *daksina pejati* representing the macrocosm is made from various grains elements: rice, tingkih (kemiri), pangi, coconut, and duck egg. Underground peanut, komak and various grains are commonly used when making offerings, such as *soda*. In the making upakara substance called *banten catur*, various types of seeds are used: joleh, kekara, komak (with various colors), celagi, waluh, inja lilit, maja kane, maja rivet, lotus fruit, saga, phala, etc. *Wiku tapini* who is responsible in preparing it knows these objects and their way to arrange each elements forming unit of *banten* (*yantra*).

In the Rare Angon text, nine types of young coconut fruit (*klungah*) are used in ritual called *pedudusan* of *Dewa Yajna* along with its position in the quarters: (1). *bulan* (moon)-east (*purwa*), (2). *kuning* (yellow) -west (*pascima*), (3). *mulung*-north (*uttara*), (4). *udang* (shrimp)-south (*daksina*), (5). steadfast-southeast (*gneyan*), (6). solar- southwest (*neriti*), (7). *empas/sangket*-northwest (*wayanbya*), (8). *bojog-* northeast (*ersanya*), and (9). s*udamala*-middle (*madhya*).

*Mudra* also means the hand /body movements of the priests (*sadhaka*) when he/she is performing doing *puja* or officiating a ritual; and also used by dancers. In Indian tradition, *mudras* also exist using tongue/mouth/lip movements, for example, the *kechari mudra* in *vamana* or *daksina cara*. This point is not recognized in Balinese tradition. It is interpreted in a symbolic way. Such movements known as *nyuku tunggal* (standing up with one leg in yogic posture) as a part of *yoga* practice, are also used in the practice of *kawisesan / pangiwa* to transform one’s form to another form of appearance or to create / generate power required, which is esoteric in nature. Image of the Ultimate Reality called Acintya represents ‘The Oneness’ is in the form of *nyuku tunggal* (‘*suku*’ means leg; ‘*tunggal’* means one). Body movement of clock-wise direction known as *purwa-daksina* for creation (*utphati*) or anti clock-wise direction (*prasawya*) for delusion (*pralina*) is performed in a ritual like *dewa yajna, bhuta yajan*, and *pitr yajna*.

5]. *Maithuna* (sex). Every *banten* must contain *porosan silih asih*. It is a symbol showing copulation between male and female represented by betel leaf of male (*purusa*) and female (*pradhana*), gambier, areca nut, and *pamor* (lime betel). These elements are arranged in a such way, so it looks like a couple in copulation.

 These elements are used together as integral parts of a ritual. *Mada, mamsa, matsya* and *mudra* (in the sense of cereal), and maithuna are represented through physical objects /substance, while *mudra* is hand or body movement/gestures.

**Mantra**

The use of *mantra* in any *puja* (worship) in this tradition is pivotal; *mantra* is an integral part of a ritual. There is no ritual without the chanting of *mantra* since *mantra*;and no ritual is considered completed without the chanting of *mantra*. And, here is the fundamental existence and function of a priest to officiate a *yajna*. *Mantra* is the manifestation or form of a deity as well as the aid/means of concentration. When they properly chanted by a holy person faithful in his *sasana* (ethics), the *mantra* can have a power for purification and other purposes. Priest who performs *puja* followed by people chants *mantra* along with instruments/tools used. In this tradition the *mantra* used is known as Veda in the form of *stuti* and *stava*. Book written by Hooykaas and Goudriaan, “Stuti and Stava of Saiva, Baudha and Waisnawa Priests” is an excellent work contains various *mantra* used in worship (*puja*) by the Balinese priest. Even though the *mantra* is not really taken from *Catur Weda Samhita*, these *mantras* known as Veda also. Hence, *mantra* is part of the corpus of the *tutur* literature. Veda is considered as the highest authority by the Balinese. By *puja* as an action (*karma*) presupposes God (*devata*) and substance (*dravya*) offered. The substances compose offering known as *banten*, which is another form of *yantra,* as mentioned above. With reference to Saivism, the *Panca Aksaras* and *Panca Brahmas* as the seed *mantras* are chanted along with other *mantras* in *puja*. These are fundamental *mantras* in Saivism.

The *mantras* are to be considered as the integral part of the *Tantra-sastra* even it is called as the *mantra-sastra* for the *Tantra-sastra*. The word ‘*mantra’* is said to be derived from the root’s ‘*man*’ (to think) and ‘*tra*’ (to achieve), hence *mantra* should mean ‘by thinking which, one is saved’. As the *Kulanava tantra* says that *mantra* is so called because it saves from all dangers, and, as the *sadhaka* is thereby led to ponder over God of immeasurable refulgence which is the only principle in the world (Thakur, 2001:139-140). Chanted by a competent *sadhaka* or priest, *mantra* can mystically be powerful to protect or save a *sadhaka* from danger, illness, and other unfavorable condition in life. When science and technology was not yet developed like that of present time, people use *mantra* to protect life from danger. This is more pertinent in *kavisesan* or healing practice.

*Mantra* is meaningful not in any descriptive or even persuasive sense, but within the mystical universe of discourse; that is, it constitutes a particular phase of literary expression belonging to that discourse, *mantra* is verified not by what it describes but by what it effects. (Thakur, 2001: 140). Of this fact, the vibration of *mantra* chanted with purity in a yogic manner, is supposed to be powerful and has an effect as desired. The power of *mantra* can transgress and penetrates the surrounding environment. Thus, ritual performed since it can generate power of purification, it can purify the environment. Purity is the base for harmonious and happy life. This point can be seen in the so-called Tawur Ritual of Bhuta Yajna held once a year one day before the Nyepi (silent day) in the month of Kasanga (the ninth month).

In *Bhuwana Kosa* text [71a] written in Sanskrit-Old Javanese, it mentions the progress of spiritual ascendence from outer part to inner part or from grosser to subtlest one, that is, from *arcana, mudra, mantra,* *kuta mantra*, and *pranawa mantra*.Following these successive arrangements of the elements of ritual: *mudra* is more excellent than *arcana, mantra* is more excellent than *mudra,* and *kuta mudra* is more excellent than all *sarwa mantra. Pranava kuta* is more excellent than all. All *kuta mantras* or called *pranawa kuta* are the manifestations of the Lord [71a]. *Pranava mantra* is also called *ekasara* or *pranava*. This at the same time shows the position and significance of a *yantra* and *mantra* in ritual performed.

Further the *Bhuwana Kosa* text describes that *ardha candra, windu,* and *nada* are parts of *Ongkara* (*Pranava*); and hence, it is *Aksara* symbolizing cosmic principles. In building a form of symbolic meaning, *Arda candra* is placed/contemplated above *Okara*, it is a half-moon shape/form. Above it is *Windu* (dot), which is round, and *Nada* at the top, it is a cosmic sound and symbolically it is manifested in a triangle form. As the top most position, it informs us that the origin of this universe is sound, and it is known as *Nada*. In *Upanisad* treatise, it is called *Nada Brahma*, the ultimate and the highest Brahman is essentially sound (*Nada*). From the sacred syllable *Ongkara*, it informs us that the highest reality is sound (*nada*); and letters or *mantra* is manifestation of the *Nada*. In the first part of the text more spaces are devoted to describe layers (*kosa*) or component/principles (*tattva*) of the world, in the second part of it, it talks the same issue but in a different approach, i.e., discussing cosmic principles from spiritual approach. How the world is originated? In the first part of *utpati karana*, everything comes out from Rudra till *Bhutas.* In the second part: *Windu* comes out from *Nada*, *Ardha Candra* comes out from *Windu*, and *Ongkara* emits from the *Ardha Candra*. In a reverse direction of [*pra*]*lina karana*: *Ongkara* disappears (?) in *Ardha Candra*. *Arda Candra* disappears in *Windu*, *Windu* disappears in *Nada*. And, *Nada* disappears in *Niskala* (void) [62b]. In another context it is mentioned: from *Nada* is born *Windu*, from *Windu* is born *Ardha Candra,* and from *Ardha Candra* is born the universe.These is an excessive element proceeding to evolute from one principle (*tattva*) to another, or from subtle to gross principle, and vice-versa. Thus, the universe is essentially *Ongkara* in physical and in non-physical forms. That is the course of creation (*utpati), s*ustenance(*shtiti*)*,* anddelusion(*pralina*) happens repeatedly***,*** which is in many places manifested in ritual practices.So, the *Ongkara* (*Okara*) is the manifestation of the entire world (*rat kabeh*). That is also called *Pranava Tattva* [86b].

In another place it is mentioned like this*: Ardha Candra* takes form of *Aghora*. *Bamadewa* and *Sadya* take forms of *Pradhana* (materiality) and *Purusa* (consciousness).From *Niskala* (the unperceived) is born *Nada* (cosmic sound); from the *Nada* is born *Windu* (dot); from the *Windu* is born *Ardha Candra*, and from the *Ardha Candra* is born *Wiswa*. That is the course of the sacred *Pranawa* as *Utpati* (creation). Sang Hyang Wiswa disappears in *Ardha Candra*. *Ardha Candra* disappears in the *Windu*. *Windu* disappears in the *Nada.* And, *Nada* disappears in *Niskala*. That is the course of destruction (*pralina*). These are personalised gods in concrete three forms [75b].

**Discussion**

Observing Balinese ritual, a typical kind of Tantra ritual is found different from that of the Tantra flourishes in India, which somehow has a general feature agreed amongst them. One still differentiates Vaidika from other traditions like Saiva, Waisnawa, Buddhism, Jainism, etc. Even though Saivism and Waishnawa are considered in line with Vaidika thoughts, their rituals may not directly have its sources in Veda especially in Brahmana literature; hence they do not look alike; more ever local traditions in a vast region are also taken into account. These theistic religions develop their own ritual and tradition; they may accept some Vedic and Tantra elements. Interestingly, Balinese ritual is considered still a Hindu ritual even though it is not purely Vedic or Tantric for its inclusive nature and tolerance; still elements of Tantra can be traced. The use of *Panca Makara* as a part of the sadhana shows it is distinct from Vedic ritual despite the fact similarity in the substance used is the same but the final purpose is different. Tantra was born in the same culture, use the same language, and way of thinking in medieval times make it has a common cultural expression despite the fact there are some varieties.

Bali has received and interpreted the Tantra which is foreign in its own way without relegating other traditions. All are incorporated in harmonious way causing it inclusive in nature. This is possible perhaps due to tolerance which happens in almost all Indian traditions. This is line with Sanderson’s remark when observing the plurality of traditions pf India that “It is also widely believed that this complex unity displays an exemplary degree of religious tolerance, not only between Vaidikas, Vaisnavas, Śaivas, Śāktas, and Sauras, but also between these and the followers of the other major Indian faiths of the age, namely Buddhism and Jainism”. However, this natural characteristic of Indian traditions needs to be interpreted with reference to those claim itself as “universal region” which is sometimes promote the universality of religion, but they could not stay in peace with the others either within Indian or non-Indian traditions. The role of a spiritual master (guru) is getting so prominence to promote his teaching also current trends needs to be considered when speaking about tolerance. Most of them interpreted Vaidika from spiritual knowledge (*jnana kanda*) is not interested in ritual even opposing it for many reasons. When a cult or religion is getting more systematic, institutionized, and has spirit of expanding to cross the borders, spirit of tolerance and pluralism may not be in conformity with the natural characteristic of Indian culture. Sanderson states “in this perspective it may be said that Indian and Southeast Asian states generally propagated tolerance in matters of religion. But it is not the case that any
of the individual religions that came within the purview of this tolerance were
tolerant by nature. The long-entrenched contrary view, that the Indian religions
were essentially tolerant, cannot reasonably be maintained in the face of the care-
fully formulated views of the adherents of these Indian traditions and evidence of
sporadic outbreaks of intolerance and persecution”. This may be based on the awareness of long Indian history in which some dark periods of Hinduism happened due to some conflicts either internal or external happened; and they do not want such unpleasant or even bad things happened again; and this cause people give emphasis more on protecting themselves, making the religion/cult more systematic and the role of guru becomes prominence; and consequently, less attention is given on the open mindedness and tolerance to live together in a pluralistic community.

Sanderson further states that “if the religions that flourished
during the early mediaeval period in the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia
enjoyed in many regions and periods an enviable degree of peaceful co-existence,
this must be explained not through an argument from essence, which leads in
evitably to the overlooking or dismissing of contrary evidence, but in terms of a
balance of influence in which no one religious tradition was in a position of such
strength that it could rid society of its rivals, a balance of power sustained by the
policy of governments. [p. 159]. For the role of the authorities at a particular period in the past Java and Bali in promoting peace and welfare for the people is evident; they use religious approach to manage the power. With reference to East Javanese period in 11th century the effort to bring all traditions to live in peace even the king after death was personalize din the form of an image or stone statue in the form of Siva and Buddha in the case of Kertanagara. However, with reference the essences as Sanderson remarked that despite of the fact there were many religious traditions arrived in the archipelago, the religion which is now in modern period called Hindu is basically Saivism which accepts different principles/ideas from other tradition, including Buddhism. Even tough Siva-Buddha cult has reached the harmonious blend since East Javanese period, the ultimate reality is called Siva-Buddha. But the philosophical principles as revealed in texts is mostly described from Siva tattva.

With this feature, the tradition can be of a choice for varieties of people with referent to preference, spiritual orientation, cultural background, etc. To see all aspects of Tantra as prevalent in India is not possible rather the spirit of Tantra is interpreted and manifested in ritual. Elements of Tantra can be seen in either public or that of stereological one causing Tantra can be accepted and practiced by all. Negative connotation can be dismissed since the elements of Tantrism has penetrated the public ritual.

**Conclusion**

Looking at the spread of Indian culture to the neighboring regions and being collaborative or inclusive in nature, Balinese Hindu rituals contains some elements of Tantrism in addition to Vedic, puranic even Buddhist elements. Those elements: mandala, sadhana, panca tattva, ritual, yantra, rwa bhineda, and mantra.

Balinese did not accept Tantrism boldly rather some adaptations and assimilations in long span of time conducted and selective elements included in the ritual/ *upakara* expressed in indigenous way.

Balinese is more interested in symbolic message rather the bold acceptance of Tantrism.

**Bibliography**

Bhattacharyya, N.N. 1990. *A Glossary of Indian Religious Terms and Concepts*. Delhi: Manohar Publications.

Rao, S.K. Ramachandra. 1988. *The Yantras*. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications.

Stephen, Michele, Sūrya-Sevana: A Balinese Tantric Practice, *Archipel*
Études interdisciplinaries sur le monde insulindien, 89 | 2015, pp. 95-124.

Surasmi, I G A. 2007. *Jejak Tantrayana di Bali*. Denpasar: CV Bali Media Adikarsa.

Thakur, Manoj K. 2001. *The Tantras: An Introduction Outline*. Delhi: Worldview Publications.

Woodroffe, John. 2008. *Introduction to Tantra Sastra*. Madras: Ganesh & Company.

Sanderson. A. xxx. “Tolerance, Exclusivity, Inclusivity, and Persecution in Indian Religion During the Early Mediaeval Period” xxx

1. Conference: Tantric Text Practices as Intersection: Between Magical Knowledge and Self-Liberation, 28-29 October 2022 held in CATS Heidelberg University, Germany. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)