

## **THE *BARONG LANDUNG* PERFORMING ART FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CULTURAL ACCULTURATION**

I Nyoman Cerita  
AA Bagus Wirawan  
I Nyoman Suarka

Doctorate Program, Study Program of Cultural Studies  
Postgraduate Studies, Udayana University, Denpasar  
email: [inyomancerita@yahoo.com](mailto:inyomancerita@yahoo.com)

### **ABSTRACT**

The *Barong Landung* performing art, as the acculturation of the Balinese culture and Chinese culture, has opened the new history of the relationship between the Balinese culture and Chinese culture. The acculturation has also become the peak of the Chinese cultural impact on the Balinese culture in general and the Balinese performing art in particular. Moreover, *Barong Landung* has also been considered the symbolic appearance of the Balinese King, Sri Aji Jaya Pangus, and his wife, Kang Cing Wie, who governed from 1099 to 1103 Caka Year. The qualitative method was used in the present study and the data were collected through library research. The data were collected through the secondary data source. The primary data were collected through interview, observation, and documentation techniques.

The result of the study shows that the *barong landung* performing art is a traditional Balinese performing art which has been affected by the Chinese culture. It has been strongly integrated into the elements of the people's performing art and culture in every region of Bali. In Bali it reflects the humanity-oriented culture. It can be classified as the sacred, magical, and religious performing art and is performed as part of the traditional and religious rituals in Bali.

*Keywords: Acculturation, culture, barong landung, sacred and religious*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Tracing the development of the Balinese culture constitutes a historic process which cannot be separated from the acculturation process. The Balinese culture has been made to exist and develop based on the local cultural norm or value which adjusts to the era development. The people's sociocultural life shows the strong impact of foreign cultures in general and the Chinese culture in particular. The Balinese performing art, culinary, household and ritual equipment, ceramics, porcelain, silky products and so forth show this.

In arts in general and in the performing art in particular, the acculturation between the Balinese culture and Chinese culture has implicitly and explicitly taken place. They have dialogically and naturally assimilated in such a way that a new culture with specific and strong profile has been created. The *barong landung* performing art illustrates this. The strong assumption that the Chinese culture has affected the existence of the *barong landung* performing art can be clearly seen from its appearance and characteristic. The *barong landung* is one type of *barong* in Bali which looks like a big and tall giant. The male one has irregular hair 'gobrang', protruding teeth 'jongos', looks frightening, and has hard characteristic and is referred to as *Jero Gede*. The female one reflects a cultural acculturation and has the characteristic which the Chinese girl shows. It has narrow eyes, protruding forehead 'jantuk', a long chin, and curly hair and is referred to as *Jero Luh*.

This study is intended to understand the constellation of the *barong landung* performing art in Bali from the perspective of cultural acculturation, to inventory it in the form of descriptive documentation, and to enrich the treasure of the performing art as a literary source.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The qualitative method is used in the present study. The secondary data were collected through the library research. The primary data were obtained through field research using the interview and observational techniques. The data were analyzed through open coding, axial coding, and selective coding using the critical theories of cultural studies.

## **DISCUSSION**

The term acculturation is derived from the Latin word "acculturate", meaning "growing and developing together". According to Koentjaraningrat, acculturation is a social process which takes place if a social group with its culture is faced with a different foreign culture. Affinity is needed to support the process of acculturation. Affinity refers to the cultural acceptance without getting surprised, which is then followed by homogeneity as a digested new culture resulting from the level of sameness and cultural characteristic ([www.carajuki.com](http://www.carajuki.com)).

Among the American anthropologists the term acculturation has appeared since 1936 as the reaction towards the historic reconstruction studies which were considered less complete as they did not talk about the socio-cultural change (Bee, 1974:94; in Hadi, 2006:35). So far the acculturation studies, if viewed from the perspective of cultural studies,

still analyze what is critically understood of the socio-cultural process. Now they are popular enough among the anthropologists. As a cultural change, acculturation is indicated by the relationship between two cultures which give and receive from one another “the counter between two cultures” as stated by Shorter (1988:5-8, in Hadi, 2006:35).

The acculturation between the Balinese culture and Chinese culture has taken place since the Old Bali era; the existence of what is referred to as “uang kepeng” (coin with square hole) in Bali proves this. It was introduced as the currency exchange and a means of formal payment before 1300s. Finally, through the process of acculturation, it functioned to equip the Hindu religious and traditional rituals performed in Bali (Harthawan, 2011: 30). Sidemen (2006:6-7) also stated that “uang kepeng” was predicted to be created in the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, namely the during Tang Dynasty era. It was carried to Bali through the trading relationship in the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

Apart from “uang kepeng”, the impact of the Chinese culture in Bali can also be seen from the existence of the *barong landung* performing art. This is an important historic datum. Based on the theories of acculturation mentioned above, it can be stated that in Bali the *barong landung* performing art is a magical religious performing art. The Balinese people believe that it has a magical strength; therefore, it is performed on special days as part of the traditional and religious rituals. The process of acculturation involving *barong landung* had taken place since the pre-historic era, indicated by the development of the Hindu and Buddha kingdoms. This era formed the institutions which a number of special characteristics strengthening the Balinese culture. R. Brandon, in his book entitled “Seni Pertunjukan di Asia Tenggara”, which was translated by R. M. Soedarsono, stated that most experts are in the opinion that the Chinese people migrated to the southern countries from 2500 to 1500 A.D. The anthropologists refer to them as the Indonesian people, Austronesian people, proto-Malay people or *deutro* Malay people. They are also called the pre-historic immigrants (1989:9).

Based on what is stated above, it can be stated that Bali Island with its beautiful nature and customs and traditions, which is located in Indonesia, cannot be separated from the Chinese immigrants. The historic datum which is closer to the acculturation of the Balinese culture and Chinese culture is the *barong landung* performing art. *Barong landung* is the symbolic appearance of the Bali King, Sri Aji Jaya Pangus, who reigned from 1909 to 1103 Caka year and was married to Kang Cing Wie, a daughter of a rich Chinese merchant. Their marriage changed the social life order within the kingdom and outside the palace. However,

the cultural acculturation and what was believed in Hinduism and Buddhism could not be separated.

According to Jero I Made Darsana, an artist and writer from Banjar Kedisian, Tegallalang, Gianyar, the marriage between the Bali King Sri Aji Jaya Pangus and Kang Cing Wie opened the new history of the relationship between China and Bali. Although they did not have any children, the King loved his wife. In addition, he reigned so wisely that the people were reluctant to him. Kang Cing Wie was wise, sincere, and kind; as a result, he was used as a model by the Balinese people. The Balinese people built several temples such as Batur Temple, Dalem Balingkang Temple, Gambur Anglayang Temple in Buleleng Regency and Besakih Temple in Karangasem Regency to respect and commemorate her. She has also been referred to as "Ratu Subandar" by the Balinese people living in Kintamani. The temples where "Ratu Subandar" is worshipped are not only taken care of by the Balinese people living in Kintamani but also by the other people who are Hindus and Buddhists (interview, 12 MEXH 2017). Apart from that, the Balinese people have created two *barong landungs* to eternalize King Sri Aji Jaya Pangus and his wife Kang Cing Wie for their greatness and nobility as husband and wife. So far *barong landung* has been performed, maintained and developed by the Balinese people. The regencies which maintain it are Gianyar Regency, Denpasar City, Badung Regency, and Tabanan Regency.

The *Barong landung* performing art, as a traditional performing art, is performed differently from the other performing arts in Bali. If viewed from the form of its performance, it is a result of the cultural acculturation process. The Balinese cultural values and the elements of the people's arts have harmoniously and dynamically acculturated with the Chinese culture. The acculturation does not deviate from the local people's socio-culture. Choreographically, the *barong landung* performing art is a dance drama whose style is different from region to region. Each has its own interesting element as its identity. The diversity in style can lead the *barong landong* performing art to becoming an impressive, unique and interesting performing art. As well, it is also performed as part of the traditional and religious rituals in Bali.

As a magical and religious performing art, it is performed to ask for blessing, safety and protection for everybody (Proyek Pengembangan Kesenian Kantor Wilayah Department P. and K. Provinsi Bali, 1981/1982:74). It is not surprising that the Hindus in Bali develop different types of traditional, magical and religious performing arts which are packaged based on the *siwam* values (truth, spirituality), the *satyam* values (sincerity, loyalty and honesty), and *sundaram* value (beauty). The art expressions differently expressed by the Balinese

people show that they are flexible as what is taught in Hinduism which maintains and develops what is created by its followers to show that they believe in the Almighty God “Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa” through the artistic and philosophical symbolic media as exemplified by *barong landong*.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

The openness and flexibility of the Balinese culture to the Chinese culture have been shown through the horizontal and vertical process of acculturation. During the acculturation process, the Balinese culture has not only directly received the Chinese culture but it has also filtered and packaged it as new forms within the multicultural framework. Socio-culturally, the Balinese people, who are Hindus with their own culture, are constructed from the religious magical values which have always dialectically, innovatively and dynamically developed in accordance with the local cultural values and norms and the era development.

The *barong landong* historically proves the movement and acculturation process of the Balinese culture and Chinese culture which contribute to civilization, humanity, culture and the Balinese culture itself. Therefore, it is suggested to everybody that they should maintain its greatness and holiness.

Seeing that the *barong landong* performing art is getting marginalized by the globalized culture, it is suggested to the society, government, and formal and informal institutions to pay a particular attention to its maintenance and development according to the Balinese cultural norms.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The writer would like to thank and appreciate Prof. Dr. A.A. Bagus Wirawan, S.U. for his attention and seriousness in supervising the process of the completion of this e-journal, Prof. Dr. I Nyoman Suarka, M.Hum. for his patience, sacrifice and thoroughness in supervising and constructively directing the process of the completion of this e-journal.

## **REFERENCE**

Brandon, James R. 1989. *Seni Pertunjukan Di Asia Tenggara*. Diterjemahkan Oleh R.M. Soedarsono ISI Yogyakarta.

Hadi, Y. Sumandiyo. 2006. *Seni Dalam Ritual Agama*. Yogyakarta: Buku Pustaka.

Harthawan, I Dewa Nyoman. 2011. *Uang Kepeng Cina Dalam Ritual Masyarakat Bali*. Denpasar: Pustaka Larasan.

Proyek Pengembangan Kesenian. 1981/1982. *Penggalian Data 8 Buah Kesenian Tari Tradisional Di Bali*. Denpasar: Wilayah Departemen P dan K Provinsi Bali.

Sidemen, Ida Bagus. 2002. *Nilai Historis Uang Kepeng*. Denpasar: Larasan-Sejarah.