

*Gema Perdamaian: Tourism, Religion and Peace in Multicultural Bali*¹

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Abstract

Balinese tourism has experienced serious challenges because of such negative incidents as the bombings by the Muslim terrorists in the Balinese resort of Kuta in 2002 and 2005. The inter-faith measures enacted as part of the crisis management for Balinese tourism after the bombings on 12 October 2002 are particularly interesting. These measures included joint-prayers to promote inter-religious harmony such as the prayer for world peace, *Doa Perdamaian Dunia dari Bali* ("Prayer for Peace of the World from Bali") on 21 October 2002, which was attended by the minister of religious affairs, who is himself Muslim. In this event the bombings were then interpreted by Balinese as an expression of the anger of gods, a consequence of bad *karma*. Therefore, a massive ceremony, involving the most powerful priests, was carried out on 15 November 2002 in order to cleanse Bali of the trauma of the bombing and restore peace. Since then the "prayer for peace" (*Gema Perdamaian*, literally "Echo of Peace") has continued to be held on 12 October every year. By focusing on this event and the Balinese peace movement after the bombings, this paper discusses a new relationship between tourism, religion and peace within the framework of multicultural Bali in the age of transnationalism.

Keywords *Gema Perdamaian*, tourism, religion, peace, multiculturalism, transnationalism

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1. Introduction

Bali has successfully become a prime tourist destination in Indonesia since the late 1960s, although tourism in Bali dates back to the 1920s under the Dutch colonial regime. This success was achieved by the development of cultural tourism based on Hindu religious traditions. However, recently, the Balinese tourist industry has experienced serious setbacks because of such negative incidents as the Asian economic crisis in 1997, the collapse of Suharto regime in 1998, the spread of SARS and bird flues in Asia since 2003, and particularly the bombings by terrorists in 2002 and 2005.² The tourist industry proved to be vulnerable to these events. The fluctuations in the number of tourists since 1997 reflect the negative impact of these incidents, though the total number of international tourist arrivals to Bali in 2010 increased to 2.58 million, the highest figure in the history of Balinese tourism (Table 1).

Table 1: The Number of International Tourist Arrivals in Bali from 1997 to 2010 (Source: Darma Putra 2008: 179, complemented by the data from Badan Pusat Statistik Propinsi Bali - Statistics of Bali Province for the years from 2008 to 2010)

Year	The number of tourist arrivals	Incidents
1997	1,230,316	Asian economic crisis
1998	1,187,153	The collapse of Suharto regime
1999	1,355,799	
2000	1,376,839	
2001	1,356,774	9.11 terrorist attacks in New York
2002	1,285,844	The first Bali bombings
2003	994,616	Spread of SARS and bird flu
2004	1,458,309	
2005	1,386,449	The second Bali bombings
2006	1,262,537	

² It is believed that various members of *Jemaah Islamiah*, a violent Islamist group in Southeast Asia, were involved in the bombings.

2007	1,668,531	
2008	2,085,084	
2009	2,385,122	
2010	2,576,142	

To examine the cultural process of contemporary Bali, particularly after the bombings, this paper focuses on a Balinese event called *Gema Perdamaian* or “the Echo of Love and Peace,” which started in 2003, one year after the 2002 bombings. The event aims to send a message of peace from Bali to the world by commemorating the tragedy of the bombings. Analyzing this event, the paper discusses a relationship between tourism, religion and peace within the framework of multicultural Bali in the age of transnationalism.

2. After the Terrorist Bombings: The Birth of *Gema Perdamaian*

After the terrorist bombings on 12 October, 2002, a series of inter-faith measures were taken (Table 2). On 15 October, three days after the bombing incident, *Doa Bersama*, a joint-prayer was organized by the Balinese Youth and Students Forum at the Australian Embassy in Denpasar. On the same day another joint-prayer was organized by Made Mangku Pastika, the Governor of Bali Province, in the neighborhood of Sanur district at the Monumen Perjuangan Rakyat Bali (the Monument of the Balinese People’s Struggle), also located in Denpasar. Then a Hindu ritual of *Pemlebeh Pemrayasita Durmanggala* was held at Kuta on 18 October by the Desa Adat Kuta (Kuta Customary Village),³ and another Hindu ritual, *Upacara Maha Shanti Puja*, was held at Kuta Beach on 20 October by the Balinese Youth and Student Forum. These events were followed by a prayer for peace from Bali, *Doa Perdamainan Dunia dari Bali*, on the

³ There are two kinds of village in Bali: *desa dinas* and *desa adat*. The former is an administrative village, while the latter is a village based on *adat* (traditional custom).

Table 2: Interethnic/Interreligious Ritual Activities after the Bali Bombings from 2002 to 2003 (Translated from Darma Putra 2008: 173)

No.	Activities	Date and Place	Initiator	Participants
1	<i>Doa Bersama</i> (Joint-prayer)	15 October, 2002 Australian Consulate, Denpasar	Forum Pemuda dan Mahasiswa Bali (Balinese Youth and Student Forum)	21 organizations including HMI, PMKRI, GMNI, and KNPI.
2	<i>Doa Bersama</i> (Joint-prayer)	15 October, 2002 Monumen Perjuangan Rakyat Bali (The Monument of Balinese People's Struggle), Denpasar	Made Mangku, Neighborhood of Sanur	Thousands of people from tourism sector and society in general.
3	<i>Pemlebeh Pemrayasita Durmangala</i> (Hindu ritual)	18 October, 2002 Kuta	Desa Adat Kuta	Thousands of people. Although this is a Hindu ritual, participants of other religions and foreigners also attended.
4	<i>Upacara Maha Shanti Puja</i> (Hindu ritual)	20 October, 2002 Kuta Beach	Forum Pemuda dan Mahasiswa Bali (Balinese Youth and Student Forum)	Hundreds of religious communities from Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam.
5	<i>Doa Perdamaian Dunia dari Bali</i> (Prayer for Peace from Bali)	21 October 21, 2002 Monumen Perjuangan Rakyat Bali (The Monument of Balinese People's Struggle), Denpasar	Provincial Government of Bali, supported by Bali Post, Bali TV, and tourism sector	Thousands of people with various national, religious, ethnic, racial backgrounds, and Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs from Jakarta.

6	<i>Doa Bersama Serangkaian (Ubud Festival of Peace and Unity)</i>	10 November, 2002 Ubud	Desa Adat Ubud	Thousands of people with various religions and ethnicities.
7	<i>Upacara Pamarisudha Karipubhaya (Purification)</i>	15 November 15, 2002 "Ground Zero" of the bombings incident, Kuta	Provincial Government of Bali, Regency of Badung, Desa Adat Kuta	Thousands of religious communities. Although this is a Hindu ritual, participants of other religions and ethnic groups. Menko Kesra Jusuf Kalla as a proxy of the then Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri.
8	<i>Gema Perdamaian (Echo of love and peace)</i>	12 October, 2003 Lapangan Puputan (Puputan Plaza), Denpasar	Balinese Tourism sectors including Bali Tourism Board	1500 people, including Buddhist priest from Tibet.

auspicious full moon afternoon of 21 October, which was attended by the Governor of Bali Province and the Minister of Religious Affairs from Jakarta, who is Muslim, with the support of local media companies, including the Bali Post and Bali TV, and the tourism business sectors in Bali.

Interestingly, as Hitchcock and Darma Putra (2005) wrote, the bombings were interpreted by the Balinese as an expression of anger by the gods, a consequence of bad *karma*. Therefore, the following month, a large purification ceremony, *Upacara Pamarisudha Karipubhaya*, involving the most powerful priests, was carried out on 15 November, 2002, at "ground zero," the place of the bombings incident in Kuta, with the participation of the deputy of Megawati Sukarnoputri, the President of Indonesia at the time. This massive demonstration helped to cleanse the trauma of the bombings and enabled the Balinese to put the terrible events behind them. It also contributed to the recovery strategy.

Hitchcock and Darma Putra (Ibid.) further pointed out that the crisis coincided with and added greater significance to the emerging debate on Balinese identity, regional autonomy, and a growing discourse of multiculturalism among the Balinese intelligentsia. With the development of the tourist industry, Bali was inundated by Jakartan investment money and non-Balinese Muslim migrants from Java and other islands. Prior to the bombings, many locals feared that Bali was inevitably heading toward serious interethnic tension and conflict (Couteau 2003: 42). After the bombings there was widespread popular support for the anti-migrant movement and the implementation of restrictions on inter-island migration, especially from Java.

This was the background against which the movement of *Gema Perdamaian* started. Gusti Kade Sutawa, one of the founders of the movement, once stated to me, "I was seeing the situation after the bomb's blast is not harmony between Hindu (Community of Bali) and Muslim. I was very worried that something could be happening. To keep the harmony, I and my friends initiated to make *Gema Perdamaian*.....for the harmony and peace for Bali, Indonesia and world."⁴ *Gema Perdamaian* was thus a culmination of a series of inter-faith measures after the Bali bombings incident in 2002. The first *Gema Perdamaian* was held on 12 October, 2003, one year after the 2002 bombings, at the Jagat Nata Temple, Lapangan Puputan (Puputan Plaza), Denpasar,⁵ with 1500 participants including a Buddhist priest from Tibet. Since then *Gema Perdamaian* has been held every year around 12 October.

It should be noted that Gusti was then the Chairman of Kuta Executive Club (Hotel's General Manager Association among Kuta, Legian and Seminyak), and also the chairman of

⁴ Personal communication by e-mail dated 7 September, 2011.

⁵ The Jagat Nata Temple is a temple which was built by Pari Sada Hindu Dharma, the organization of the reformist Balinese Hindu. Lapangan Puputan was the famous plaza where the royal family of the Badung Kingdom killed themselves as the Dutch colonial army invaded in 1906.



Fig.1 The Main Stage of *Gema Perdamaian* at the Monument of Balinese People's Struggle

the Working Group of Bali Tourism Recovery. Most of his friends such as Agung Suryawan Wiranatha and Made Suryawan who have become the core members of the Steering Committee of *Gema Perdamaian* are also from the tourism business sector in Bali. They are quite conscious of the fact that without peace tourists will not visit Bali. Therefore, it is not an accident that the *Gema Perdamaian* movement originated from the tourism business community in Bali. Tourism needs peace.

3. *Gema Perdamain* 2011 Observed

On 8 October, 2011, the 9th *Gema Perdamaian* was carried out at the Monumen Perjuangan Rakyat Bali (Monument of Balinese People's Struggle), in Denpasar, the capital city of Bali Province (Fig.1).⁶ The theme of the event was: "*melalui toleransi kita hidup*

⁶ In 2004, *Gema Perdamaian* was moved from the Jagat Nata Temple, Pempatan Plaza to the Monument of Balinese People's Struggle Monument, Renon, which has more space. In 2011, it was decided that the event will be held thenceforth annually on the last Saturday before October 12.



Fig.2 Procession of Love and Peace

damai dalam kebhinniekaan" (through tolerance we live in peace in diversity).⁷ According to the Organizing Committee, the event aimed, first, to promote the Balinese spirit based on love and peace, regardless of ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious differences; second, to seek meaning from conflict through introspection of the inner self; third, to educate people about tolerance in their everyday lives in order to make the world peaceful; fourth, to strengthen the bond of ethnicity, race, culture and religion; fifth, to construct a national image and commitment to Indonesia as a nation which loves peace; and sixth, to send a continuous message of peace to all over the world.

⁷ On October 7th, one day before the event, a national seminar on *Gema Perdamaian* was held at the Governor's office to discuss the theme of the event. The meeting started with opening remarks by Made Manku Pastika, the Governor of Bali Province, followed by panel discussion by various religious, spiritual, *adat* (customary law) leaders and the head of provincial police. Participants included university teachers as well as representatives from the tourism sector, business sector, and various other social sectors.



Fig. 3 Prayers of Multireligious Communities

At 5:00 pm in the evening, the event started with a procession of thousands of people from various sectors of Balinese society around the Monument: government representatives, religious and spiritual community leaders, those from the business and tourist industry sectors, university students (especially students from STP, the Bali Tourism Institute at Nusa Dua), and the general public (Fig.2). After the procession, participants were seated in front of the stage at the Monument. Religious and spiritual leaders, which included not only local but also international leaders from India and Tibet, were seated in front besides VIP guest such as the Governor of Bali and the Japanese Consulate General.

Then, Made Mangku Pastika, the Governor of Bali Province, opened the event. He stated in *bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian) that peace does not fall from heaven, and all the sectors of human society with good knowledge, thoughtful



Fig.4 A Japanese Music Group

insight, and religion should attempt to make peace and keep peace continuously. Further, he added that it may be not easy but we could prevent terrorism and extremism that threatens harmony of nation. Then, prayers for peace followed from various religious communities – Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and Islamic (Fig.3). The voices of prayer echoed around the Monument: first, the prayers followed one another sequentially, and then, they were voiced simultaneously. Finally, balloons and pigeons were set free into the sky, and nine torches which symbolize the 9th *Gema Perdamaian* were set on fire. These are the ceremonial parts of the event.

After the prayers, cultural performances followed, starting with Hare Krisna music performances. Most Balinese people believe in Balinese Hinduism (*Agama Hindu Bali*) but this event is not necessarily based on Balinese Hinduism: rather, this is a multicultural and multireligious event. That



Fig.5 Hare Krisna Musicians

year three cultural performance groups were invited: Japanese, Flores, and Chinese. A music group, *Suar Dwi Stri*, comprised of local Japanese who are based in Bali,⁸ played *gerantang pelog*, a Balinese musical instrument, together with *taiko*, a Japanese drum (Fig.4). To this music, a group of mixed-race children of Japanese women and Balinese/Indonesian men, danced Japanese dances. Then, Flores women who are migrants from the Island of Flores in East Indonesia, danced their traditional dance with their small hand-drum instruments. Finally, the Chinese who are also based in Bali⁹ performed the dragon dance and the Chinese lion dance. In the end all the people

⁸ There are over 2000 Japanese who reside in Bali. These residents include Japanese women who are married to Balinese men, their children, and long-stay elderly retirees (Yamashita 2003: Ch.7, Yamashita 2008, Yamashita 2012).

⁹ Regarding the relationship between Chinese and Balinese within the multicultural framework, see Beratha, Ni luh, I Wayan Ardika, I Nyoman Dhana 2010.



Fig.6 The Moment of “Communitas”

who participated in this event danced in circles in their own style to Hare Krisna music (Fig.5). The event ended around 8 pm in an atmosphere that could be described as what Victor Turner would call “communitas” (Fig.6).

4. *Gema Perdamaian* in Indonesian Multiculturalism: An Analysis

As I mentioned, with the development of tourism, Bali was flooded with Jakartan investment money and non-Balinese Muslim migrants from Java and other islands. After the bombings there was widespread support for the anti-migrant movement and the implementation of restrictions on inter-island migration, especially from Java. In these situations, the bombings provide a way of evaluating the evolution of the political situation in Bali (Couteau 2003: 43). The bombings thus brought local people back to their own, traditional, Balinese frame of reference. The recent Balinese slogan of *Ajeg Bali* –

“maintaining firmly Bali” or “Bali standing strong” – may reflect this direction. It is a new kind of Bali-ism emerging in reaction the perceived threat of globalization (Kumbara 2008, Nordholt 2007: 54-60, Picard 2008).

However, the *Gema Perdamaian* I observed indicates a different direction from *Ajeg Bali* in the construction of cultural values/identity. First of all, *Gema Pedamaian* stresses multiculturalism rather than a Bali-centric monoculturalism. The event respects not only Balinese Hinduism but also Buddhism (for Chinese), Islam (for Javanese), and Christianity (for Flores people) through their emphasis on the concept of “tolerance.” It is a movement that aims, therefore, to go beyond ethnicity, race and religion to attain harmony and peace.

In their edited book on multiculturalism in Asia, Baogang He and Will Kymlicka have commented: “In the first few decades following decolonization, talk of multiculturalism and pluralism was often discouraged as states attempted to consolidate themselves as unitary and homogenous nation-states. Today, however, it is widely recognized that states in the region must come terms with the enduring reality of ethnic and religious cleavages, and find new ways of accommodating and respecting diversity” (He and Kymlicka 2005: 1). This is the case with Indonesia as well. Indonesia has been a multiethnic and multicultural country from its birth. The national motto, *bhinneka tunggal ika*, or “unity in diversity,” has stressed “unity” rather than “diversity” to construct Indonesia as a nation-state. However, after the collapse of Suharto regime in 1998, diversity has come to the fore particularly due to new governmental reforms and democratization, involving decentralization and promoting regional autonomy (Nordholt 2007: 1). These changes have allowed for growing expressions of local diversity. In this transition one could observe that the relation between unity and diversity has changed.

In these situations, it is noteworthy that the slogan of the

9th *Gema Perdamaian* paid attention to the diversity/differences of ethnicity, culture and religion in Bali and sought to promote a way to live in peace in diversity through tolerance. These are the defining features of multiculturalism in the New Indonesia. Importantly, the kind of multiculturalism observed in the *Gema Perdamaian* is not a static type of multiculturalism which views culture as a bounded essentialized entity. It stresses hybridity. In the *Gema Perdamain* event in 2011 the Japanese group played the *gerantang pelog*, the Balinese musical instrument, in collaboration with a Japanese drum called *taiko*. The players were Japanese women who married Balinese/Indonesian men. The group name, *Suar Dwi Stri*, means “Lights of Two Nations.” To their music the mixed race children of Japanese wives and Balinese/Indonesian husbands performed a Japanese dance. In other words it is not the expression of Japanese ethnicity in Bali but that of a hybrid identity. So is the case with the Chinese: The performers were local, Chinese Indonesian. Gusti Kade Sutawa and Made Suryawan, the leaders of the movement mentioned, are also Balinese with Chinese ancestry.

Furthermore, according to Made Suryawan, the *Gema Perdamaian* movement is rooted in individual spiritual awakening. He says that he attempts to find meaningful solutions through the introspection of inner self. According to him, “religion” or *agama* is closed and ego-centric, while the “spiritual” is more open and universal to any individual mind.¹⁰ Therefore, they invited spiritual leaders such as Ida Dewa Mardiana (now Bhagawan Putra Nata), Ida Pedanda Bang Buruan Manuaba, and Indra Udayana of Ashram Gandhi Puri. Spiritualists from Tibet and India such as Rimpoche Zurmang Drukpha and Prabu Darmayasa once attended the event as well. Made Suyawan’s ideas are related to a new Hindu devotionalist movement in Bali which emphasizes the potency

¹⁰ Interview on October 8, 2011.

of spirituality, including that found in Sri Sathya Saibaba and the Hare Krisna which were imported from India (Howe 2005: 57-58, 74, 95, 105-106).

Finally, it is necessary to reiterate that this movement was set up by a group of people working in the tourism business sector. Tourism is not possible without peace and safety. Peace and safety are perquisites for tourism, as was seen in the slogan after the Bali bombings: “*Bali aman, turis datang* (As Bali is safe, so tourists come)” (Darma Putra 2008: 178). Therefore, the “prayer for peace from Bali” is not the ideological claim of peace lovers but rather a business minded assertion of peace without which Bali in the globalized world does not exist.

5. Conclusion

In the last chapter of his book, *Bali, An Open Fortress 1995-2005*, Henk Schulte Nordholt writes: “One of the biggest challenges facing Balinese administrators and intellectuals is to develop a more dynamic idea of their culture that offers room for hybridity and transnational dimensions” (Nordholt 2007: 82-83). Interrelating tourism, religion and peace, *Gema Perdamaian* seems to take up this challenge to open up a new dimension for a Balinese future beyond the kind of Bali fundamentalism represented in *Ajeng Bali*.

Examining the cultural process in Bali after the bombing incidents, this paper has argued that the *Gema Perdamaian* could be understood as a movement to promote peace in a Balinese manner in order to manage the contemporary “risk society” in the age of reflexive modernization (Beck 1992, Beck et al 2005, Yamashita 2010). In so doing, the paper has discussed a renewal of the relationship of tourism, religion and peace after the bombings within the framework of Global Bali in the context of post-Suharto Indonesian multiculturalism.

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