

Ubud: From The Origins to 1920¹

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Abstract

Today's historians often try to weave together unquestionable facts with a narrative that consciously gives room to past myths and legends. The following article about the famous "cultural" resort of Ubud freely applies this approach to history. Myths and legends about the origin of Ubud combine with unquestionable historical facts to convey, beyond the Ubud's raw history proper, the prevailing atmosphere of Ubud's pre-modern past. Thus the mythical seer Resi Merkundaya is made to appear alongside the story of the kembar buncing (fraternal, non-identical twins) of the House of Ubud, and the history of Western presence and intervention.

Keywords: prince of Ubud, knowledge of tradition, modernizing Bali

Ubud: In the Legendary Haze of History

To those who truly know Ubud, that is, Ubud such as it was, when its life was still governed, through rites, by the harmonious encounter of Man and Nature, Campuhan is a magical spot, which marks Ubud as a place bestowed by the favors of the

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1 This text rests on three main sources of information: Hilbery Rosemary, *Reminiscences of a Balinese Prince, Tjokorde Gde Agung Sukawati*, SE Asia Paper No 14, SE Asian Studies, University of Hawaii, 1979; an interview of Cokorde Niang Isteri, the wife of Cokorde Agung Sukawati; and in-depth interviews of Cokorde Atun, Cokorde Agung Sukawati's daughter. Various other informants from the Puri Saren provided additional information. All are thanked by the writer.

gods.

Campuhan, where right meets left, and male meets female; the point of confluence of two rivers, *Wos Tengen* (right) and *Wos Kiwa* (left), whose waters join and blend from there into one single stream. Hence its name, Campuhan (from *campuh*=mix). Not only do the two rivers meet, but they do so in a deep gorge, above which looms a grassy hill (*Gunung Lebah*) with a path that leads to Taro, the village of the legendary origins of the Balinese.

Old people say that this place, where river meets hill, water meets mountain, is the environment for which Dewi Danu, Goddess of the Lakes, yearned when she came to Bali. So she did not hesitate to stay there for some time before taking her final position higher up, on the mountain lake by the side of Mount Batur. It is in remembrance of this divine visitor, the legend says, that the temple of *Gunung Lebah* was built: a sacred temple, near the sacred confluence of two rivers, on a sacred hill.

Long ago, so goes the legend, there were *raksasa* living in caves at Campuhan. Were these *raksasa* true ogres, as the translation would have us believe, or a group of indigenous people? The story does not, nor cannot say. What it does say is that although known to meditate inside their caves, these *raksasa* were man-eaters, and as such, were creating havoc in the surrounding area. This situation lasted a long, long time, until the arrival of the first true humans – that is to say, the first Hindus, followers of a holy man called Rsi Markandaya, a wandering Indian sage.

Arriving first in Java, Rsi Markandaya traveled eastward from mountain to mountain with a group of 200 followers. When he arrived at the extreme eastern tip of Java, he could go no further. Beyond the straits, he could see the wilderness of Bali Pulina. It looked so wild, he thought it could not be penetrated. So he opened a hermitage opposite it, on the slopes of Mount Raung.

Bali remained there, across the strait, beckoning. Eventually, mustering a crowd of 800 followers, Rsi Markandaya crossed to the other side, a mere three kilometers away, and headed for the big mountain far to the east, Mount Agung, named *To Langkir* in

those days. His followers were all gifted peasants. They knew what to do when it came to clearing the forest and making irrigation canals. But somehow, everything went wrong. Tigers attacked isolated farmers, diarrhea killed whole families. The situation got so bad that Rsi Markandaya decided to return to Raung.

On Mount Raung he meditated. After he had been doing so for 35 days, a voice spoke to him from heaven:

“Markandaya, my son, you wish to know why we gods have not granted you our divine protection in Bali. This is why, my son. You may be Hindu and believe in me and my fellow gods. You may worship us, as indeed you should. But, regarding your presence in Bali, this may not be sufficient. You must make offerings: offerings to cleanse the land, offerings to the gods, and offerings to your ancestors. Only if you do that, Oh, Markandaya, will we bless you and your followers and protect you from the island’s many woes and evils.”

Having uttered those words, the god disappeared in a flash. Rsi Markandaya now knew what to do. He crossed the strait again, with a smaller following, but one made up of people who knew how to respect the gods. They went back to Gunung Agung, but this time they did not immediately begin clearing the forest. They made a big purification ritual first. From then on, before building any house or temple, they always remembered to first bury symbols of the five cosmic elements, *Panca Dhatu*: water, fire, air, water and void.

Indeed, Rsi Markandaya now realized that all human actions must have their rites, and every rite must be addressed to the three cosmic components of the world: the demonic *Bhur Loka*, the human *Bhwah Loka*, and the divine *Swah Loka*. Only then could Man fit harmoniously into the larger cosmos. This is why he gave Bali the name Bali, which comes from the word *wali* or offering.

But Rsi Markandaya did not stay forever at the foot of the great mountain. Once the temple of Besakih was stable, he resumed

his wanderings and preaching. On his journeys westwards, he came upon a place with beautiful trees called Taro (tree=*taru*). He felt so happy there that he set up a temple he called Pura Gunung Raung. Praying there, he called upon all the gods he used to worship when he was living on the slopes of Mount Raung to descend upon this temple.

Rsi Markandaya and his followers cleared the forest around Taro and southward down to Ubud. There was little the ogres could do to stop them, and so they met their fate. Campuhan was now ogre-free. It became one of the favorite places of the holy man, now grown old, to meditate in preparation for his voyage to *moksa*, the ultimate goal of all Hindus, the melting of body and soul in the great whirling of elemental forces. His eternal spirit, some say, adds power to the magical appeal of this place of confluence, where the two rivers meet.

From that time onward, humans have lived in and around Ubud. Some have left names and legends behind, such as Gusti Batu Lembang and Balian Batur. Whilst the historical presences of most have faded into anonymity, they have left, lingering about Ubud to this day, in its dancers, painters and musicians, a persistent taste for all things of art and beauty.

Ubud under the Sign of the Gods

When old generation people in Ubud talk about their former king, Cokorde Gede Agung Sukawati (1910-1978), or of his father, Cokorde Gede Sukawati (reign: 1880 - 1919), who founded Ubud as a seat of power, or even of his brother, Cokorde Raka Sukawati (1899-1967) who became president of the short-lived East Indonesia Republic (12/1946-12/1949), they refer to them all as Raja Batara (Ancestor-god Kings). They do not detach their historical existence from their continuing spiritual presence. To them, as to all the people of Ubud, and indeed all Balinese, the kings of the past are the most revered of the ancestors who descend for visits as the honorary guests of temple festivals, both small and great. They are among those who symbolically reside

in the godly figures carried in musical procession on sumptuous palanquins along the streets of Ubud on these occasions. They are a looming presence in its streets.

When one is a Balinese, one is not merely born as the son of one's mother and father. One is born within a continuing chain of lives and enchained to it and by it. Yet if birth and life are moments of cosmic importance for any and every Balinese, this is all the more so when the individuals concerned are, like the princes of Ubud, the descendants of Bali's most ancient lineage, that of the warrior kings sent from the 14th century Javanese Majapahit empire to conquer and subjugate the neighboring island of Balidwipa, across the sea from the roaring Raung volcano in Belambangan, on the easternmost tip of Java.

Cokorde Gede Sukawati, who established Ubud as an important Balinese principedom at the end of the 19th century, was arguably the last and most powerful of the great Balinese warrior kings. His father, Cokorde Rai Batur, had come to prominence in 1874, when he waged a victorious defensive war against the kingdom of Mengwi² on the border village of Kedewatan, and by way of reward, gained control over several neighboring villages as well (Mac Rae 1997:303). From this moment on, Ubud began to exert a major influence in the politico-military domain of the small kingdom of Gianyar, which was then in a state of deep crisis, with its king held prisoner by his Klungkung rival.³

In 1891, just before Mengwi fell to Badung and Tabanan, Cokorde Gede Sukawati led a coalition of Ubud, Peliatan and Tegalalang in a swift attack on Negara, near present-day Batuan, whose ruler – also their relative – was intent on building an

2 The kingdom of Mengwi had appeared in the 17th century following a crisis in Gelgel, during which power passed into the hands of Gusti Agung Maruti (1651). The royal line of Gelgel was later reinstated by Dewa Agung Jambe (circa 1700), who set up his new *puri* (palace) in nearby Klungkung, but the island was now fragmented into numerous contending kingdoms and principalities. On the kingdom of Mengwi, see Nordholt, Henk Schulte (1996), *The Spell of Power, a History of Balinese Politics 1650-1940*, Leiden: KITLV Press.

3 Gianyar was for a time occupied by Klungkung and its king was kept prisoner in Satria, to the east of Klungkung, from 1885 to 1893.

expanding kingdom that had declared itself independent of Gianyar.⁴ According to local legend Cokorde Gede Sukawati conquered Negara in a fantastic raid from Ubud, magical *keris* in hand and riding nude astride a magnificent white horse, his erect penis keeping his enemies in awe. Its king dead, Negara was quickly ransacked and its magical *kulkul* (slit gong) taken to Ubud to be added to the great warrior's regalia.⁵

Magic apart, it is an ascertained fact that Cokorde Gede Sukawati attained through those war feats great wealth and power. He gained control over a large area extending all the way from the highland of Taro – near today's Tegalalang – down to the villages of Gemicik and Ketewel in the south, which provided him with a port outlet to the sea. Two years later, he subdued disloyal Pejeng. All told, "He had succeeded in expanding his domain from about 40 to 130 villages," and "demonstrated his ability to mobilize, with his allies, up to 18,000 followers" (Schulte-Nordholt 1996:200). He became by these deeds the richest⁶ and most powerful *punggawa* of Gianyar, even richer and more powerful than his nominal lord, the Dewa Manggis of Gianyar.

Cokorde Gede's claims to greatness were not without historical precedents in his family line. He was a Sukawati – the name now given to the small town of the same name between Denpasar and Gianyar. The House of Sukawati is a branch of the royal House of Klungkung, which traces its own roots back to the Javanese Majapahit warriors who invaded Bali in 1343. According to local chronicles, the House of Sukawati sprang up in the early 18th century as an offshoot of the kingdom of Klungkung, in an area located between Klungkung (to the east) and the powerful kingdom of Mengwi (to the west), which had been for years controlled by an upstart adventurer and reputed magician, Balian

4 MacRae has shown that Cokorde Gede's military superiority over his rivals was due to his better access to modern firearms. See MacRae 1997, pp. 310-319.

5 For a report on the Negara war, see MacRae 1997, pp. 306-324.

6 He was so rich, goes the story, that he fed all of his Ubud dependants for free. There was an open kitchen for this purpose in Puri Kauhan, run by Anak Agung Krebek, a refugee from Mengwi.

Batur.⁷ After killing the magician, the newly endowed prince, Dewa Agung Sirikan, established his *puri* (palace) in the village of Timbul, now renamed Sukawati, and settled in the village artists and craftsmen from his father's court in Klungkung – which explains the cultural richness of today's Sukawati.

Harmony did not rule for long at the new Sukawati court. Two generations later, the king then in place, Dalem Petemon, feeling old, decided to retire in Petemon (Bedulu) and leave his two eldest sons in charge. However, instead of showing interest in affairs of state, these sons preferred reveling in alcoholism and debauchery and paid little attention to their ailing father. It was at this point that another party intervened, a lower-ranking Satria called Dewa Manggis Api, from the village of Beng, to the north of today's Gianyar, who had married one of their sisters. Some say that Dewa Manggis was well-behaved and considerate towards his father-in-law, while others contend that he was deceitful and manipulative. Whatever the case, whether due to deceit or to the incompetence of his brothers-in-law, it was to Dewa Manggis that the dying king bequeathed his powers.⁸

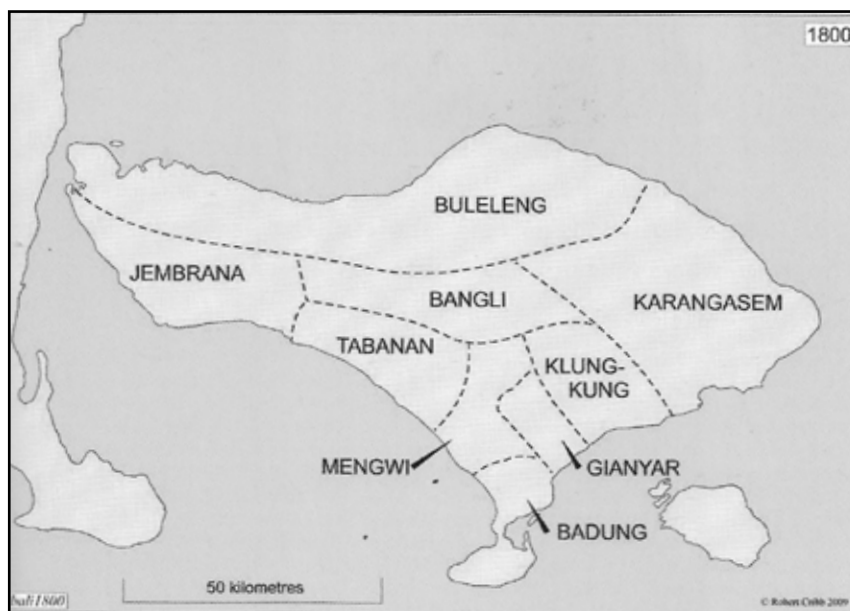
Internecine conflicts ensued until Dewa Manggis moved the capital of his newly acquired kingdom to what is now Gianyar, near his Beng birthplace, taking along the Sukawatis' magical weapons.⁹ His Sukawati in-laws meanwhile moved north, where each of them cleared a bit of the then largely uninhabited area

7 On Balian Batur, see MacRae 1997, pp. 271-275.

8 The story goes that when he felt that death was approaching, Dalem Petemon called his sons to his bedside but none came. So he asked Dewa Manggis to tell his sons that whoever would suck the tongue of his corpse would become king. When Dewa Manggis duly reported this to them, none of them would do it. So Dewa Manggis eventually did it. He thus inherited the magical powers of the Sukawati king for up to seven generations. See MacRae 1997, pp. 285-288. According to modern pro-Ubud interpretations of the story, the eighth generation corresponded to the time of Cokorde Gede Agung Sukawati.

9 It is noticeable that in his memoirs, AA Gede Agung, the descendant of the Dewa Manggis of Gianyar and ruler of Gianyar, does not mention this episode, probably because it would amount to acknowledging the superiority of Ubud's lineage over that of Gianyar; see Ide Anak Agung Gede Agung (1993), *Kenangan Masa Lampau, Zaman Kolonial Hindia Belanda dan Zaman Pendudukan Jepang di Bali*, Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia.

and set up his own court or *puri*. Thus were constituted the micro-kingdoms or principalities of Peliatan, Ubud, Tegalalang, Kendran, and Negara. As the populations of the new settlements grew, the various branches of the House of Sukawati regained some of their original power. By the middle of the 19th century, the *punggawa* of Ubud was already considered as powerful as his lord, the King of Gianyar, who was then threatened by the kings of Klungkung to the east and Bangli to the north. It is under these circumstances of unease and competition, mixed with fickle vassalage toward Gianyar, that Cokorde Gede Sukawati surged into history as a great warrior king.



Balinese kingdoms. c. 1800 (From: Robert Cribb, *Digital Atlas of Indonesia history*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press. 2010 [reproduced with permission])

THE KINGDOMS OF BALI

Led by Sri Kepakisan, the Javanese landed in 1343 and quickly defeated the King of Bali, whose capital was in Bedahulu, near Ubud. They then settled, first in Samprangan, near Gianyar, and then in Gelgel. Much like the Normans who invaded Britain under William the Conqueror, the Javanese brought a new language and culture to Bali.

As Java quickly Islamized throughout the 15th century, Gelgel became the heart of a Javanized Hindu culture that preserved many of the features of the declining and soon dead Majapahit empire. Thus, Middle-Javanese literature reached its apex at the court of Gelgel, which welcomed the men of letters and priests who had refused to yield to the new religion from Mecca propagated by the merchants of Demak on the northern coast of Java.

As links with Java were severed, Bali grew into a power of its own. During the 16th century reign of Watuarenggong, it claimed suzerainty over Lombok and the easternmost tip of Java. But the political and cultural balance of the island was changing. As the Gelgel kings spread the wings of their power, they also dispersed this power. Princes, often married to the daughters of indigenous chiefs, would clear the forest and open new settlements in which the culture of the descendants of Javanese warriors became increasingly more Balinized, and through which new sources of power soon appeared.

In 1661 a coup took place at the Gelgel palace, fomented by Gusti Agung Maruti. Even though members of the original ruling lineage came back to power a couple of decades later and rebuilt their royal court near Gelgel in Klungkung, the unity of the island was broken forever. Contending kingdoms and principedoms constantly vied for power with one another in ever shifting alliances. They were still symbolically bound to a formal allegiance to the House of Klungkung, but could in fact still wage war with it. The principal center of counter-power was long located in Mengwi, in a kingdom set up by a prince from Gusti Agung Maruti line. The area in which Ubud and Gianyar are located long found itself in the crossfire of the direct or hidden contentions between Klungkung and Mengwi.



Tjokorda Gde Sukawati, c. 1908 (From: *Tropenmuseum Amsterdam*. Coll.nr.10023783)

After his 1891 defeat of Negara, which had challenged Gianyar's overlordship, Cokorde Gede Sukawati found himself in the position to dictate to his weakened lord. Yet, he was considered a threat by almost all of his neighbors, Badung and Bangli in particular, but also Klungkung. Now and again, up to the end of the century, he had to stave off sporadic attacks by those parties or their stooges. He was a military genius of sorts, but, surrounded on all sides, he needed allies.

Luckily for him, the Dutch were already showing their noses from the north, across the mountains, and from the south, where they controlled the sea routes. Already well installed in North Bali since the end of the 1846-1849 Buleleng war, they were now insisting that all Balinese kings acknowledge the suzerainty of the Queen of Holland. Their looming presence, both military and commercial, had long been a disturbing factor in the power struggles between the various Balinese potentates, and it had doubtlessly played a role in the upper hand that the King of Badung – the richest in harbors – had gained in 1891 over his rival, the King of Mengwi, whose House had once ruled over the western half of the island, as well as the easternmost tip of Java in Belambangan.¹⁰

Under such uneasy circumstances Cokorde Gede Sukawati reasoned: "If Gianyar became a protectorate, it would mean the end of the incessant fighting with neighboring enemies and, since the appointed *stadtholder* [viceroy] would be one of the returning king's sons, his power would be 'so slight that Ubud's strong man [would] have little to fear.'"¹¹ So, following negotiations led by Cokorde Gede Sukawati, Gianyar was proclaimed a *Gouvernementslandschap* (Protectorate) in 1901, and its king appointed as *stadtholder*.¹² Thus, at the beginning of the century,

10 On Mengwi, see Schulte Nordholt, 1996.

11 See Schulte-Nordholt (1996:200). There are, however, discordances regarding the circumstances that led to the restoration of Gianyar's royal line to power. According to some (Cokorde Agung), the princes asked for Ubud and Peliatan's help to escape from Satria; but according to Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, they just left at their own convenience. See MacRae 1997, p.336-337.

12 Vickers says that "Ubud looked poised to take over the whole of the kingdom at

Cokorde Gede Sukawati was ruling a secure fiefdom that no Balinese enemy could dispute. He found himself one of the richest Balinese.¹³ The only constraint was that he had to suffer, once in a while, the presence and ‘advice’ of some Dutchmen, including *controleurs* and others.

Thus, when the Dutch landed in Sanur in 1906 and then marched north to Badung, nobody moved to the latter’s help across the river from Batubulan, where the border between Gianyar dan Badung lay;¹⁴ it was Badung, their rival kingdom that was being hit, while Gianyar and Ubud were spared. The Dutch defeat of the great kingdoms of Badung and Klungkung had important consequences. Whereas the Badung nobility was decimated in the ensuing *puputan* or fight to the death, and Klungkung’s two years later met with a similar fate, Gianyar remained intact and Ubud rich, splendid and filled with a promising future. It had lush landscapes and all the range of Balinese arts. All that was necessary to enchant the rich Westerners eager to escape to ‘paradise’ from under the shadows of the Bolshevism and fascism poised to cloud the West’s horizon.

the end of the 19th century, but the new King of Gianyar saved himself by agreeing to subject himself to the Dutch.” See Vickers, A. (1989), *Bali, a Paradise Created*, Penguin Australia, p. 75. For a discussion of other measures taken by Cokorde Gede Sukawati and his son Cokorde Raka Sukawati to establish Ubud as a political force under the Dutch through membership in the Batavia-based People’s Council, see Vickers 1989, p. 140.

13 This is acknowledged by Ide Anak Agung Gede Agung 1993, pp.4-5; it is also documented by a report written by a Dutch parliamentarian, which says that he was the “wealthiest king in Bali, who, when he gambled, could find no one to place bets that equaled his kerosene tins full of ringgit.” See MacRae, 1997, quoting van Kol 1914.

14 Nyoman Wijaya explains that the political situation in Bali in 1906 and the subsequent fight to the death of Puputan Badung cannot be read simply as a patriotic war against an imperial power, with the neutral or pro-Dutch Balinese understood as unpatriotic traitors opposed to Badung’s patriotic heroes; it should also be read in the light of the inter-Balinese struggle for power. Those who did not side with Badung in its fight against the Dutch still had in memory the total destruction of Mengwi 15 years earlier in the Mengwi war, which also ended in a *puputan*. See Wijaya, Nyoman (2006), *Dua Lembar Dokumen: Perang Badung versus Belanda 1906*, Seminar Peringatan Dies Natalis ke-44 Universitas Udayana dan HUT ke-48, Fakultas Sastra UNUD, Denpasar, Selasa 19 September 2006.

As a footnote to this history it must be added that, although they were allied against the other kings, the rulers of Gianyar and Ubud, nominally lord and vassal, had uneasy and even (albeit hidden) hostile relations.¹⁵ One story has it that the King of Gianyar had *surudan banten* (leftovers from ceremonial food) sent to Cokorde Gede Sukawati. They were sent back. Accepting the Gianyar king's leftover food would have amounted to acknowledging the superiority of his line and blood. This was unacceptable to Cokorde Gede Sukawati.¹⁶

The Marriage of the King and Birth of Cosmic Twins

Powerful and potent, Cokorde Gede Sukawati had more than his fair share of wives and concubines – in 1902 he had 60, from a peak of 130 (MacRae 1997:371) – as was indeed the fashion of the times. Apart from being an affirmation of sexual prowess, taking yet another wife was a means to establish alliances with neighbors and vassals. Especially if they had pretty daughters.

Before Cokorde Gede married the mother of the future Cokorde Agung Sukawati, he had already fathered five sons and five daughters by various wives, respectively from Yeh Tengah, Manuaba and Carangsari. Only Cokorde Gede Raka (1899-1967), born of a Manuaba mother, was later to play an important role in Cokorde Agung's Sukawati's later life. He became, among other things, a good violin player, which was to determine his friendship with the European who put Bali on the map of the world, Walter Spies (1895-1942). Of all this, more below.

Even though Cokorde Gede recognized all of his children as his own, not all of their mothers were *prami*, or wives of

15 Anak Agung Gede Agung insists that the bond between Ubud and Gianyar was very strong until Cokorde Gede Sukawati's death in 1920. However, Nordholt, a more objective historical commentator says that the inauguration of the King of Gianyar as *stadtholder*: "marked the beginning of a stubborn rivalry between the royal puri of Gianyar and the puri of Ubud, a rivalry that was to continue throughout the colonial period." See Schulte Nordholt 1996, p. 200.

16 This story, which circulates in Ubud, may well be an apocryphal one, to justify an enmity of a more recent origin.

equal royal rank.¹⁷ This is why, around 1905 (Rosemary 1979:1), Cokorde Gede officially married, in great pomp, the princess Anak Agung Raka, later known as Anak Agung Biang Raka, the granddaughter of the former King of Mengwi, who was, people say, 40 years his junior, and was going to rule over the palace's other queens, concubines and mistresses. Old people say that she was lured into accepting the Ubud king's marriage proposal by a song that depicted "Ubud country as a land of bounty, with tree of silken leaves and flowers of gold" (Rosemary 1979:6). In 1905, the kingdom of Mengwi had been wiped from the face of Bali's map for almost 15 years, since the 1891 combined attack by Badung and Tabanan – hence the bad blood between Ubud and these kingdoms – but the name of Mengwi still carried high prestige. And, the Dutch-guaranteed security being recent, with no one knowing whether it would last, it seemed strategically sound for an Ubud prince inimical to Badung to look for alliances on the other side of the latter kingdom. A *prami* from Mengwi, whose allies still ruled Carangsari and lesser kingdoms at the foot of the mountains, was a perfect choice.

Apart from strategic considerations, and the fact that the Mengwi alliance was a high-prestige marriage for the powerful prince, what he wanted most from his new *prami* queen were male children, future bearers of his line. At first, there seemed to be a curse on the royal couple. The queen fell pregnant and a child was born, but after a couple of years the baby died. The same thing happened a few years later. This was obviously the sign of some mishap at the level of the *niskala* (invisible) cosmic world: the souls that came down from the ancestors' abode to reincarnate were not ready to do so, not yet fully cleansed in the realm of hell (*neraka* or purgatory hell of Balinese lore); hence the passing away of the

17 Cokorde Gede had a total of 11 children of royal rank: Cokorde Gde Putra Sukawati, Cokorde Istri Raka, Cokorde Gde Raka Sukawati (1899-1967), the future president of the State of East Indonesia (Negara Indonesia Timur), Cokorde Gede Rai Manuaba, Cokorde Gde Ngurah Carangsari, Cokorde Gde Oka Sukawati, Cokorde Istri Rai, Cokorde Istri Oka, Cokorde Gde Agung Sukawati (1910-1978), Cokorde Isteri Muter (1910-204) and Cokorde Istri Ngurah.

children at a very young age.

Cokorde Gede was undeterred. To *niskala* obstacles, there should be a *niskala* answer. Luckily he had a cousin and a brother-in-law who were men who 'knew'. He went to consult them, and they told him to do what kings of yore and others did to get rightly born children who survived. Basically it consisted of ritual cleansing and offerings aimed at asking the gods to bestow their favors (*pica*).

And so, Anak Agung Biang Raka went around presenting offerings and prayers to the gods in the temples.¹⁸ She had lost two children, so two should be given to her, she thought. One night, as she was praying at Pura Batukaru in Sambahan, she sensed something was afoot; she took hold of her husband's leg. Then, in a flash, she felt as if she were on Mount Agung; in another flash, she was on Mount Batur. Then nothing. Stunned by what had just happened to her, she hurried back home and addressed a potent offering (*bungkak nyuh gading*) at the palace's family shrine. She also prayed, addressing her husband's family's ancestors – their fully cleansed waiting souls. Had she failed to do all this, another woman might have become the pregnant recipient of their incarnating souls.

In any case, those were signs. The road to a royal incarnation was now opened and, as expected, the queen became pregnant again. It remained for them to wait. Nine months. When the first signs of birth came, on Kalapaksa day of the Balinese Wuku calender, on January 31st 1910, she was taken to the house of Pedanda Ketut, a priest from the Suniawati Brahman *gria* in Mengwi who had moved to Ubud,¹⁹ where she eventually gave birth amidst a long litany of mantra-based prayers ordering the womb to open and release its burden to the world. Yet, it was a difficult birth. After the waters came out, it took some time before the head came through the vaginal entrance and, oh, what a

18 A written version of this story is found in Hilbery 1979.

19 According to the *puri* people, the birth could not take place in the nearby palace (*puri*), which was considered ritually impure.

surprise, after the head and then the whole body of an infant boy had finally emerged, the midwife felt another head popping out. There was a second birth: a girl. The queen had given birth to *buncing* or false twins. Twin boy and girl of royal blood, a most extraordinary event – a final response by the gods to the king's prayers for an heir.

In Balinese tradition, the birth of *buncing* is usually considered catastrophic. It brings impurity and portends woes for the village in which the twins are born. Until recently, the unfortunate parents of *buncing* were expelled from their village and compelled to hold lengthy and expensive purification rites before they could come back to their village of origin, which the birth had sullied. But for families of aristocratic blood, the opposite that holds true. As in ancient Egypt, and based on the literature of old, *buncing* are considered to be the incarnation of married ancestral deities or cosmic couples bent on continuing their love affair on earth. Their 'descent' is taken to announce a period of prosperity (*gemuh ripah loh jinawi*) for the kingdom and families concerned. This was indeed the case upon the birth of the Ubud royal twins, the still unnamed Cokorde Gede Agung Sukawati (1910-1978) and his sister Cokorde Isteri Muter (1910-2004).²⁰

Even though it was never proclaimed in these terms, the *buncing* birth was read in the eyes of the still very traditional Balinese as a cosmic sign in a cosmic context: it was not simply twin 'children' who were incarnating. These children were 'drops falling' (*nitis*), alias gods coming down from the two magic mountains of Bali, Mount Batur and Mount Agung. Had not the great Cokorde warrior made all the required ceremonies at the Gunung Lebah temple in Campuhan, a temple linked to the great seer Empu Markandaya, as well as the Batukaru temple in Sambahan, and beseeched the gods for a cosmic 'gift' (*pica*) at their respective temple shrines? Had not his wife Anak Agung

20 On the tradition related to twins, see Belo, J. (1935) 'Study of Customs pertaining to twins in Bali' in *Tiljd. Ind. TLV*, Deel LXXV, alf 4. Also see Covarrubias, M. (1937) *Island of Bali*, New York: Knopf, pp. 126-129.

too implored the gods for a birth, the ultimate justification for her presence in Ubud and her marriage to such an old king? The belief that *niskala* forces were afoot did not remain a conjecture for long. It became a certitude when, a few days later, a *balian* trance medium was asked in a waft of incense to communicate with the descending souls. The pitch of the voices and cosmic rumble that accompanied his entranced voice left no doubt. Beneficial incarnating forces were at work, even though the true identity of the incarnating children could not, and would never, be revealed. Which was a revelation in itself. To the king, it was the crowning moment of a long conquering career in the *sekala* (visible) world and a guarantee that *niskala* forces would now guarantee the continuation of the cosmic-based prosperity (*kerta raharja*) of his small piedmont kingdom.

Extraordinarily, history, and the rise of Ubud as a 'center' of Balinese culture, have proven these predictions of prosperity, born of traditional beliefs, true in the quickly arriving days of modernity.

The king's subjects from Ubud and its dependencies had no doubt about the meaning of the event. As soon as they heard that *buncing* twins were born from their king, they came in droves to the king's palace. They too felt they should benefit from the *pica*, which was indeed addressed by the gods not only to the king, but to the whole land (*gumi*) over which he ruled. What they asked for, and got, were the birth waters collected from the ritual bathing of the two children. These waters were then taken in procession to the Campuhan dam, from which they were ceremoniously thrown into the waiting stream, thus guaranteeing the *subak* (irrigation association) of the lower stream the benefits of the prosperity promised by the birth of the twins.

Nothing has been reported of the first days and months of the newly born royal twins. We can only surmise that they went through all the post-birth rites and cleansing ceremonies, destined to secure the newly incarnated souls their proper place on earth. Their after-births, considered to be the 'four cosmic brothers'

brothers (*catur sanak*) of the incarnating children, were ritually buried in the nearby palace, as befits tradition, so that they could, as divine forms of the directions of the rose of the wind, protect the incarnating *dewa* (gods) throughout their lives.²¹ Upon the third month of the Balinese calendar, the two children were for the first time in their short lives made to touch the ground and given individual names. They were now incarnated for good. From that time onward, be it in shifting from their mother's left to right hip, crawling nude in the yard of their father's palace, or avidly sucking their mother's breasts, they remained royals, but were definitely children ...

Born *buncing* twins, on a Kalapaksa day, thus, two extraordinary things to happen for any Balinese, one easily imagines the power of the cosmic forces set in motion by Cokorde Agung and his sister's birth. They were obviously destined to lead lives no less extraordinary than their coming to life.

Alas, all too soon, the twins' mother fell ill and was eventually 'taken away' (*kaambil*), as the Balinese put it – called before her time by what were deemed mysterious *niskala* forces. Were jealous women eying the king's favor involved? Rumors sprang up. There is no way to know what had really happened.²² The queen's corpse was burned and her soul cleansed and sent, as befitted it, to the old world of the family ancestors. The twins, however, had not yet lost their first teeth, thus they were not yet of an age when they could participate in the ceremonies for their departed mother.

The loss of their mother was a private sorrow. But Bali as a whole was in the midst of cataclysmic shocks. When Badung had fallen to the Dutch in 1906, and Klungkung in 1908, these were political events that did not at first have much impact on Ubud's pace of life – it was in fact the elimination of a dangerous rival. But in 1917 came what is called to this day 'the day of the shaking of

21 Young children are often call '*dewa*' by reference to their status as incarnated ancestral 'gods'.

22 As Vickers recalls, the big earthquake of 1917 was followed by an epidemic of Spanish influenza, which claimed tens of thousands of victims. This might well be the reason for the queen's death. See Vickers 1989, p 134.



The Ubud Palace, c. 1912 (From: *Tropenmuseum Amsterdam. Coll.nr.10024054*)

the world of Bali' – *gejer gumi Bali-e*: a huge earthquake. In spite of their light wooden architecture, temples and palaces collapsed all over the island. Whole villages were flattened, and the human cost was high: 1,350 people were killed (Vickers 1989:134). Among them was the Ubud palace overlooking the heights of Campuhan, and in its rubble, one of the king's concubines – discovered only four days later because of the smell of her decaying body (Hilbery 1979:3).

The land just before Campuhan temple (which linked the palace to the holy place that had brought such joy to Cokorde Gede) subsided and fell on top of the river which had formerly run underneath it. This resulted in the path to the temple being cut off (Hilbery 1979:3-4).

Temporary buildings were erected for the palace household on the site where the Ubud market now stands. Later, a new palace was built across the way, where the Puri Saren now stands and has been the residence of the ruling line of the royal family since then.

Looming Change

Yet, the period of trials was not over. First, Cokorde Agung tells us in his memoirs,²³ there was an attempt to poison his father. Who could possibly be behind it? According to the culprit who was caught, a cook, it was none other than the King of Gianyar, Cokorde Gede's suzerain. This tells something about the power and wealth accumulated by Cokorde Gede Sukawati, whom the King of Gianyar obviously considered a rival. True or not, this could still be considered a matter of politics. Far worse yet was in store for Ubud and for all of Bali: a *grubug* (epidemic) probably cholera. It successively took the lives of one of Cokorde Agung's brothers, Cokorde Putra, and the latter's wife and daughter. Cokorde Gede himself fell ill, but was lucky to survive.

Cokorde Agung recalls that the king, when told of his son's death, simply said: "Well, it is his time." (*wantah panumayane* in Balinese). This remark shows, not an indifference to death – it is a common Western misconception to think so – but rather the fact that when cosmic forces are at work, as happens when epidemics occur, there is nothing to do but accept reality and then purify the world – in this context, the kingdom of Ubud. We can guess that following the toll of the epidemic, Ubud went through the required processes of ritual purification and exorcism, no doubt including the performance of the 'ritual struggle' between Barong and Rangda – which has now evolved from a rite into a dance performed every day for tourists in Denpasar and Batubulan. It is all but certain too that the deceased prince and his wife, who had first been simply 'buried' in the cemetery instead of being cremated, owing to the general impurity, were exhumed and cremated in this period.

Meanwhile, the orphaned Cokorde Agung and his sister were not raised any differently from the other children who hung about the palace, that is, their half-brother and sisters borne by the king's other wives.

23 As recorded in Hilbery 1979.

'Until the age of seven or eight we did not wear any clothes or shoes except for special occasions such as temple festivals or [when] important visitors [came]. After that age we wore a sarong, but nothing more. No one used soap or towel; we washed in the river twice a day and dried in the warm air,' reminisces Cokorde Agung (Hilbery 1979:3).

Life was very simple, learning about cricket fight betting from servants from the village of Singapadu and at times joining these same servants when they took cows to the rice fields. But Cokorde Agung particularly enjoyed living in Bunutin, where his father had one of his mansions, which housed several of his wives and concubines.

There was a big river,' he says, 'Tukad Ayung, one of the biggest in Bali with beautiful scenery on both sides of it. From time to time we would go down and take a bath in the evening ... Despite the size of the river there were no shrimps... [We would] roast young corn, take young coconuts from the tree to drink. We started planting onions, corn and a kind of bean, katjang utju. The flower of this bean is very delicious with young corn (Hilbery 1979:5).

Yet, the children were of royal blood and therefore the beneficiaries of peculiar attentions, such as when Anak Agung Ngurah Agung, the King of Gianyar from the Dewa Manggis House – attempted poisoning now forgotten – whose niece had recently become yet another wife of Cokorde Gede, gave Cokorde Agung a horse and a beautiful *keris* handle in the shape of a caterpillar.

The New World Takes Root

While the Balinese from Ubud and elsewhere kept busy, through rites and ceremonies, trying to keep the cosmic balance between the positive and negative forces that they held ruled the world, changes of another nature were taking place, brought about from Batavia and Denpasar by the expanding colonial administration. The Dutch were building bridges across the until then virtually impassable north-south gorges that separated the various

kingdoms from one another. They were hiring Javanese labor to build roads across the island. And Balinese were called up for *corvée* labor to build a big harbor jetty in Benoa. As a result, goods started circulating at an increasingly accelerating pace.

Other important changes were taking place as well. The Dutch discovered in Bedahulu the remnants of an ancient kingdom and of anchorite Buddhist communities.²⁴ This brought a flow of scholars and visitors to the area, and eventually, the building of a road up to Ubud. Meanwhile, schools were being built in Gianyar and Denpasar, and a still elementary, but nevertheless efficient network of health services was set up across the island, which soon wiped out the *grubug*. Last but not least, major kings and *punggawa* were appointed as salaried colonial government officials, including the King of Ubud, Cokorde Gede.

The old warrior, now a man of peace, was one of the main beneficiaries of these changes. He was already rich by Balinese standards, “owning many rice fields, dry fields and even coconut and coffee plantations,” many of his assets spoils of war seized from enemy princes during his victorious campaigns against Negara and Pejeng. He also found himself drawing a salary of 2,200 ringgit (Hilbery 1979:3) which he would personally collect every month in Gianyar. He went there by horse-drawn carriage, visiting on these occasions his liege lord and the Dutch *controleur* attached to the latter. He would go to Denpasar no more than once a year. To do so, he first went to Batubulan, also by horse-drawn carriage. Once in this village, located on the border between the two kingdoms of Gianyar and Denpasar, he changed horses and paid a short visit to a cousin he had there. He did the same on his return (Hilbery 1979:3).

Cokorde Agung comments in his memoirs that his father had little incentive to travel much, on account of the forty-six wives and thirty-five concubines waiting on him in his Ubud palace. His

24 For an introduction to the archeology of ancient Bali, see Kempers, B. (1991), *Monumental Bali: Introduction to Balinese archaeology & guide to the monuments*, Berkeley/Jakarta: Periplus.

main journeys were short trips between Ubud and Bunutin, where he was building himself another residence, or tours around his lands. When going through gorges or difficult paths, he would be carried on a palanquin by strong-bodies *parekan*, the young prince (Cokorde Agung) sitting on the lower steps. Otherwise he would use a horse-drawn carriage. He became quite an aficionado with regard to horses, which were rather rare commodities in Bali. He was in this matter one of the first in Bali to take advantage of the fact that the archipelago had become, under the Dutch, a unified economic space. Not only did he have ordinary horses from Bali, he also imported horses from the islands of Sumba in the Lesser Sundas, from the Batak hinterland in Sumatra, and even from Australia. Such horses added to the king's regal presence.

In ruling his small principality, the king paid much attention to religious matters. Aside from visiting temples when required by his duties, such as during the festivals of his clan temples, he also liked to meditate in remote temples he knew were inhabited by powerful gods, whom he would beseech for *pica* protective gifts or *taksu* power. He built and rebuilt many such temples, often upon 'hearing', while meditating, the whispered request of some invisible deity. Such practices, in the days before formal schooling existed, were as ingrained in Cokorde Gede as they were in other Balinese. There was as yet no alternative to the beliefs in *niskala* forces and the presence of various *duwe* gods and spirits that haunted all corners of the land, and whom one had to placate through offerings and prayers. The teachings of this 'religion' – then still simply called *Agama Tirta* (Religion of Water) and not yet Hinduism – the king had picked up in his youth, through the antics of clowns and shadow plays of puppet masters, and now studied, in the *kakawin* kept in his father's *lontar* (manuscripts). As he grew older, the warrior prince was slowly immersing himself in traditional knowledge and wisdom.

Yet, as the Dutch colonial 'eye' maintained over Bali an unprecedented era of peace among heretofore contending kingdoms, things started slowly changing in the Ubud palace,

and beyond, in the Balinese world view. Traditional courtiers, many of whom were former men of war or artists, little by little lost their traditional roles or saw them diminish in importance. The number of palace courtiers or *parekan* servants thus decreased. The Dutch appeared more often. Some were officials from the colonial government appointed in Gianyar.²⁵ Others, following the opening of a sea-route between Batavia and Singaraja, were soon to come down from the north by motor car.

Most portentous for the future, several of the king's children were taken away by the Dutch to be educated in Dutch schools – the modern version of court-hostages of old. They first went to a Dutch-run primary school in Gianyar, before being sent to Java, to the Opleidings School that had been opened for the children of the nobility in Probolinggo, and later in Makassar. For these as well as other high-caste children taken for education under similar circumstances, there ensued important changes in their perceptions of the world. They became, to various extents, Westernized and/or 'Indonesianized'²⁶ since Malay was used along with Dutch as a medium of teaching.

One of the princes from the House of Ubud, Cokorde Gede Raka – Cokorde Agung's oldest brother from a different mother²⁷ – was among the first young princes thus educated in Probolinggo, where he prepared, apparently 'doing very well'²⁸ for a career in the Dutch colonial administration. He willfully adopted Western tastes and manners. As Cokorde Agung puts it, "He was very

25 They were setting up the taxation and corvée systems. On those topics, see MacRae, op.cit. 1995, p. 370-377.

26 Indonesia as a political concept did not yet exist, but what is meant by the use of this word is that archipelagic solidarities were being created that were soon to take a political turn.

27 She was from Yeh Tengah, like her sister Anak Agung Raka, who was married to the King of Gianyar, Anak Agung Ngurah.

28 See MacRae 1997, apparently referring to the Van Kol report. MacRae, commenting on this report, says that Van Kol visited Cokorde Gede Sukawati a second time in 1911, and that the meeting was attended by the young Cokorde Raka, then attending school in Probolinggo. This suggests that Cokorde Raka went to school shortly after the Dutch established their protectorate over Gianyar – and Ubud.

interested in Western music. He had violin and flute lessons and became an accomplished musician. He also spoke fluent Javanese" (Hilbery 1979:3). The Westernized and pan-Indonesian milieu in which he later lived owing to his studies and achievements were to be of high significance for the fate of Ubud. While in Probolinggo, he met princes from the most powerful families of the archipelago and established personal bonds with several of them, which were later to function as links between Ubud and other royal houses.

Cokorde Agung's memoirs speak, for example, of a visit to Ubud by a Solo prince, a cousin of the former Susuhunan named Pangeran Kesumoyudo (Hilbery 1979:2). This visit was the occasion to demonstrate one of the magic objects brought by the Dutch, a camera with a tripod and black cloth. A picture was taken in which, comments in his memoirs (Hilbery 1979:2), it is obvious that the jacket worn by the Cokorde Agung was a borrowed one, as the sleeves were at least three centimeters longer than they should have been. Of more durable import was the fact that Cokorde Raka retained a lasting friendship with many of his Javanese friends from their Probolinggo days, particularly those who shared his musical inclinations. By 1925, as he was launching a successful political career, this in turn brought him in contact in Yogyakarta with a young painter-musician-cum-adventurer by the name of Walter Spies, then conductor of the Sultan's classical Western Orchestra. Cokorde Gede Raka invited him to Ubud, where he met young Cokorde Agung. The rest is history, as we shall explain below.

In Ubud, meanwhile, a new magic was at work. Not the magic of the dangerous *niskala* world, which one 'captured' through trips to faraway mountain shrines or through the intercession of witch-doctors, but the magic of modernity, which one accessed through Westerners. The king was a pioneer in the matter: in his pre-Dutch warrior days, contrary to the myth, he had defeated Negara not only by *keris* and spear, but with the magic of imported guns. The power over his peers that this brought him made him a fan of anything Western.

He already had a telephone, and wanted to own one of the strange new machines, automobiles, which were now beginning to appear on Bali's newly opened roads. The kings of Karangasem and Gianyar each had one, and for a man as wealthy as Cokorde Gede, such a luxury was therefore a must. He thus had one brought from Java by Cokorde Gede Raka: a Jeffray, an American car. It must have been an extraordinary vehicle, as it got transformed into a sort of royal calèche, complete with sculptures of Balinese dragons on its wings. Cokorde Agung recounts:

The goldsmiths were at the palace to make a gold decoration on father's car, because the Dutch Viceroy, Governor General Graf van Limburg Stirum, was coming, and since there were so few cars [in Bali] he might wish to use it.²⁹

Some old people from Mas still recall the passage of the king's strange machine, with the two fantastic dragons fitted onto its two front wings. It often stopped on its way to Denpasar, not because the engine had broken down, but because there were things the king could not fail to do: pay homage at a temple shrine, or make a small offering at a roadside *bedogol* (statue) known to be the dwelling of some local tutelary *duwe* god.³⁰ It was best to be protected against all possibilities, wasn't it? And whenever the motorcar stopped on the side of the road, it was impossible to avoid the crowd, which was also a sign of the prestige earned by owning the new machine. Better than most nobility, Cokorde Gede knew how to harness to his own advantage the changes dawning in Bali.

Yet, in Bunutin, where the king lived, things still were as they always had been, or so it seemed: people continued coming "from everywhere to the palace bringing the best fruits and all kinds of

29 Graaf van Limburg Stirum was Governor General from 1916 to 1921.

30 In Hilbery, R, (179:4), Cokorde Agung says that whenever his father "had to pass the temple of Dalem Puri, he would stop the car before reaching the temple and get out and walk past, then get back in the car again on the far side." The information given here was obtained from an anonymous elderly informant in Mas.

fishes. There was always plenty of food" (Hilbery 1979:31), most of it as an homage or a token payment from family members or dependant peasants for their use of land in the large royal estate.

The Schooling of Cokorde Agung and Death of the King

Sometime before he passed away, Cokorde Gede, who wanted to school his children, looked for land and a house in the center of Denpasar, the administrative town then growing around the former *puri* of Pemecutan and of Denpasar. Old people from the *puri* claim that the land in Denpasar was granted to Cokorde Gede by Puri Denpasar on account of the fact that they "were not enemies anymore." The property also presented a good opportunity for Cokorde Gede's younger children to attend a modern school in Denpasar.

Before going to the city to study, the knowledge and culture that the Ubud princes had been taught was that of classical Bali. Cokorde Gede had had a *pedanda* (high priest) from *gria* Suniawati come to the Ubud palace to teach. Princes had to know *Kawi* (Old-Javanese), the language of the *lontar* (palm-leaf manuscripts) and of the great classical Ramayana and Baratayudha epics. Yet, the priest taught not so much the language as the didactic meaning of these epics: through reading them they were metaphorically taught the rules of proper government and *dharma satria*, or duties of the *satria* caste.

Yet literature was but a part of the curriculum. Princes, when competing with one another peacefully, did so more through the beauty of dance than the tediousness of the pen. Dancing was their true realm, although it would become increasingly less so as the higher aristocracy moved to the cities to take up the newly opened bureaucratic positions, leaving commoners and lower aristocrats to serve as the main bearers of village culture. To teach dance to Cokorde Agung, the king Cokorde Gede had a lesser raja from Sukawati, Anak Agung Rai Perit, known as Derai, come to teach the *legong kraton*. He was the original creator of this dance. He had transformed what was originally a temple offering dance, ac-

accompanied by a narrative, into a dance that would soon come to epitomize the 'Balinese feminine'. Other dance and music teachers were also invited from as far away as Kuta and elsewhere.

It should also be noted that the more the king and the Sukawati House in general affirmed their political influence and flouted their wealth, the more traditional architects, craftsmen and decorators were attached to their *puri*. The most famous was undoubtedly Gusti Nyoman



I Gusti Nyoman Lempad, c. 1970

Lempad (1862-1978), later recognized as the greatest and longest-lived Balinese artist ever. Originating from Bedulu, he arrived in Ubud as a boy in the late 19th century, as a refugee together with his father, following a squabble with the King of Blabatu. He was subsequently employed as a decorator for the *puri*, before becoming an outstanding black and white artist from the 1920s down to the 1960s. Chinese craftsmen were also involved in the construction of the new Puri Saren, as was later revealed during a 1951 visit by Mrs Sun Yat Sen. The presence of a strong ruler eager to show the artistic signs of his new power undoubtedly played a

role in the presence in and around Ubud at that time, of a strong and talented traditional artistic community. It is by dwelling on this treasure trove of local talent that the 'crown prince' Cokorde Agung would later firmly assert Ubud's supremacy in the field of the arts in a modernizing Bali.

Cokorde Gede Sukawati was initially reluctant to let his sons go to Denpasar to study. He had yielded to the Dutch for his older sons, especially Cokorde Raka, who had completed his studies. But considering the conditions of the birth of his younger son as a *buncing*, he wanted to keep Cokorde Agung in Ubud, educate him fully in Balinese ways, and prepare him to lead Ubud to a phase of still higher prosperity – as the 'signs' had foretold.

Fortunately, Cokorde Raka, now an official in Denpasar, saw things differently. To him, as to his peers, the newly educated elites of the archipelago, these were the days of *kemajuan* (progress). Things had to move forward, some of the old ways be relinquished and new ones adopted, including schooling. The Dutch manners he had picked up at the Opleiding Schoold enabled him to openly urge the king to let Cokorde Agung and the other princes and princesses go to school in Denpasar where they would be under his care. At first the old man would not yield:

It is not necessary that your brother go to school yet,' he would say, 'leave him here where he has the priest already teaching him Kawi and also teachers for music and dance. As you know, I never refuse what you ask, but there is no reason for my youngest son to go to school. Leave him with his father and sister at home (Hilbery 1979: 7-8).

But Cokorde Raka insisted, until he wore the old king down. Cokorde Agung could finally go to school in Denpasar. The young prince was almost ten.

The schooling of young princes in Denpasar was not what it has come to be. The youths could not be left on their own. They had to be entrusted to the proper kind of people, preferably high-caste friends or relatives who would know best how to protect

them from visible and invisible (*sekala-niskala*) malevolence. They were first put under the custody of Puri Kaliungu relatives, while waiting for Cokorde Raka to be fully installed. Yet, this was not enough. The children were going to school, as a concession granted to the Dutch government, but the Balinese had to retain careful control over the ritual aspects of the endeavor. Because, indeed, there were rituals to be performed at the school. To guarantee that things went well at the level of *niskala*, a *pedanda* priest was appointed to look after the young Ubud princes. At the beginning he even attended classes with them. This was not without its own Balinese logic. Since the reading of *lontar* was one of the means people in Bali employed to charge themselves with magical power, so it must be too with the modern books the young princes would study. They undoubtedly carried some 'power' so it was proper to have someone who knew how to ward off the negative influences that might emanate from them.

Besides the priest, and to look after more common matters, there were also a lot of servants. Cokorde Agung talks of a youth from Penestanan of 15 or so who was especially appointed to look after him. So it was as if a small community of Ubudians and dependants were now settling in the new city, most of them related in one way or another to the House of Sukawati and to the schooling of its children. What did Cokorde Gede Sukawati do to support them? He bought increasingly more land, and was soon to find himself one of the main landlords of the Blaluan area.³¹

Some time after he had given in to his oldest son's wishes, Cokorde Gede passed away, and with him, passed away too, one of the last great leaders of Bali's pre-colonial days – when Bali was ruled by Balinese using purely Balinese rules, thinking exclusively in Balinese terms. With the old king dead, the Pandora's box was laid open. The year was 1919.

Of course, the fact that drastic changes were taking place in Ubud and Bali was not allowed to appear. On the contrary.

31 The area corresponds to present-day Jalan Gajah Mada in the center of the city of Denpasar. The land own by Puri Ubud in Blaluan was later sold at an unknown date.

The great cremation that followed his death was, as always, an occasion to reassert, at least outwardly, the dominance of the old Balinese way of thinking. Cokorde Gede was to be given a proper cremation, and enshrined, like his father and his father's father before him, as a 'Raja Batara' or God King. The corpse was laid in state in Ubud and a date decided by the chaplain. As the cremation was a royal one, not only did the king have to be carried to the burial ground in a cremation tower of 11 tiers, corresponding to Indra's heaven, and the body burned in a bull sarcophagus. It also had to travel through the proper walls and gate. As these were not yet complete, they had to be finished first. The best traditional architects and carvers from Ubud and its immediate dependencies were summoned for the purpose, the famous Lempad in particular.

The cremation was the biggest ever, or so it was proclaimed, and the Raja Batara soon found his place both in his ancestral abode, above the Balinese mountains, and, when *odalan* festivals came, at the *merajan* (family temple) of the House of Sukawati among all the other visiting ancestors.

Thus, by 1920, all the Ubud princes, Cokorde Raka Sukawati and Cokorde Agung Sukawati foremost among them, had been to or were still going to school. They had a strong knowledge of tradition and a sufficient understanding of the changes underway to become, in the years to come, important mediums of development in Bali. In this role, supported by the beauty of the environment of this piedmont principality, they were to make of Ubud the Mecca of Balinese tourism and culture.

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