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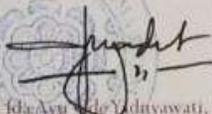
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# WESTERN INFLUENCES IN THE BALI TOURISM INDUSTRY: The Arts, Love and Power<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

*The Bali tourism industry which developed a long time ago did so due to Dutch colonial power in the Netherlands Indies. Though this power had already been in force for several decades, in fact, it was practiced informally and indirectly with direct and formal power applied only if necessary. The Dutch successfully colonised Bali after conquering the island at the beginning of the twentieth century and soon created an entry point for the tourism industry in the new colony. Starting with the announcement that Bali was an island paradise to attract numerous foreigners. In response, many foreigners, particularly artists, came; with some even staying in the palaces of the kings as in Gianyar. while others, through preference or lack of opportunity, in the succeeding periods, stayed in Balinese villages to practice their crafts and encourage the local Balinese painters to improve their skills. This strongly influenced the tourism industry in Bali, and until now most of those staying prefer the original Balinese atmosphere. In the light of this, there are some questions that need to be addressed in this paper: Firstly, how can we understand the colonial power after the establishment of Dutch government in Bali? Secondly, why did the Dutch introduce the tourism industry? and Thirdly, what kinds of impacts should be anticipated in the context of maintaining and preserving the Balinese culture? These questions will be discussed in order to understand better early and present day Balinese tourism.*

*Keywords:* Dutch colonial rule, arts, love, power and Bali tourism

## I. Introduction

Not many people realize that there are strong Western influences in Balinese arts. Not only in terms of cultural aspects, but also sociological ones, largely due to marriages which contributed to certain effects on the Balinese arts not only in the past but also more recently. This issue is important since in the recent times there have been many Balinese girls marrying foreign men. The question is, why is that happening? Does it mean that Balinese have started to adopt and adapt to foreign influences to strengthen their cultural traditions? Or were there other reasons for the

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foreign artists to marry Balinese girls perhaps due to the beauty of the girls and the environment of Bali? It seems that these aspects play a major role in the context of how western cultures have influenced Balinese arts up to the present (Tjok. Oka Artha Ardhana Sukawati, 2014, see also: Dahm and Roderich Ptak (eds.), 1999). The other issue is related to which level of the Balinese structural level system started with the idea of a mixed marriage system?

It seems that it started from the high level of the Balinese social structure or the palace level, meaning that the high culture of the Balinese palaces started to adopt and adapt to the influences of foreign cultures ahead of the lower levels of Balinese society. There are very limited documents and archival sources mentioning mixed marriages between local Balinese girls and foreign men or vice versa. However, a few can be seen in Singaraja, which was the capital of Bali from the nineteenth until the beginning of the twentieth century (See: Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, 1991).

Though Singaraja was the capital of Bali at that time, there are limited sources. Nevertheless, this situation is different if compared to what is happening in Ubud villages in recent times. It can be seen that in the past only at the high levels of Balinese society were there examples of mixed marriages while recently, we can see examples not only from the high level of Balinese society but also from the lower levels.

Mixed marriages between foreign men and Balinese girls have become interesting to elaborate as this issue is important to grasp in terms of understanding the multicultural society in Bali in particular and Indonesia in general (Cf. Ardhana et al. 2011).

## **II. The Dutch Colonial Policy and a New Era of Balinese Life**

Before the defeat of the Balinese traditional kingdoms by the Dutch colonial rule, the Dutch described Bali as a disordered island, in which an uncertain and chaotic situation existed. This chaos was attributed not only to Bali but also to other islands in the Indonesian archipelago. Therefore, the colonial rulers toughened the policy of informal and indirect rule to formal and direct rule and tried to approach the traditional rajas in order to cooperate with them and if not, to apply any strategies and tactics to defeat them.

From Aceh to the southern islands of the Indonesian archipelago, the Dutch attacked the traditional rulers in order to create a peace and order situation (*rust en*

*order*) in the case that the traditional rulers did not cooperate with them. However, in the case of Bali, though the Dutch had already arrived in the sixteenth century, they had only been successful in defeating the North Balinese rajas in 1849. The Dutch saw that the Balinese kingdoms were not united and integrated thus making it easier for the invaders to attack them and install Dutch colonial bureaucracy as in other parts of the Netherlands Indies.

Though the Dutch colonial power began to establish its colonial bureaucracy, this did not much disturb the daily life of the Balinese. It seems that the Balinese palaces as centres of artistic activities continued without any intervention from the Dutch. This means that the Balinese rajas played a major role in artistic activities through which many Balinese artists were invited to the palaces to continue to reinforce Balinese culture.

In this context, there was a strong patron-client relationship between the rajas and the artists in particular and between the rajas and the people in general. It is not surprising that since the Balinese rajas married more than two or even more than ten Balinese common girls that this had some impact on how artistic activities spread from one level to other levels and one region to other regions in Bali.

This became interesting with many cases of marriages between the rajas with both noble princesses and common girls. This was strongly related to the concept of a marriage system and the spread of power in the context of Balinese power particularly in the past eras of Balinese history. Through this system, the western influences in the context of the Balinese tourist industry can be explained as for instance in the case of the raja of Gianyar who married a European girl from France in the early twentieth century.

### **III. Other Paths towards Balinese Arts: From Nature to the Arts**

The beginning of the twentieth century, particularly after the end of the *Puputan* in 1906 when the Dutch began to introduce and install their colonial bureaucracy, was a period of change in Balinese history when new developments regarding the new more intense contacts with outsiders particularly Europeans occurred. The Dutch tried to improve the social, cultural, economic and political situation in Bali by creating an impression that Bali had changed from a chaotic to a peaceful atmosphere. The defeat of the Balinese rajas gave more chances to the new

developments in Bali not only in terms of economics and politics but also in terms of social and cultural developments. The Dutch colonial policies on economic and political aspects affected the social and cultural lives of the people as the Dutch tried to promote tourism and invite European tourists to visit Bali as one of the most glamorous tourist destinations in the world.

There were some books that had been written by Dutch writers that illustrated and depicted Bali as an interesting island in the Indonesian archipelago that needed to be visited. One reason was the difference of climate and flora and fauna between the island located on the Equator and other islands located in Europe. Many natural products of Bali in particular, and the Indonesian archipelago began to be known such as paddy rice, coconuts, betel nut (*pinang*) and others (Covarrubias, 1986). It is not surprising therefore, that many European writers began to look more closely at the flora and fauna in the islands of the Indonesian archipelago, particularly in the eastern parts with natural science writers focusing on the natural richness of the area.

The characteristics of natural resources indeed influenced the characteristics of the local people regarding their traditions, languages, ethnicities and other uniquenesses and diversities (Ardhana, 2012). There can be seen, for instance, the influences of the movements of wind, fire, water or ocean that dominated the dynamics of the Balinese dances as we can see in the *Kecak Dance* that became important and remains so until the present time particularly in accordance with the efforts to attract foreign tourists to visit Bali island. It can also be seen to what extent the influences of these phenomena had been observed by the local Balinese painters and depicted in the works which were initially in black and white but can still be seen in the more recent Balinese developments.

However, the Balinese painters not only painted nature but also the social and cultural aspects of the peoples' lives. They painted the daily life of the people, for instance, Balinese women taking baths in the rivers, praying to their gods and offerings related to certain rituals and ceremonies often held in the temples or their houses, on the beaches, in cemeteries, on lakes or mountains to mention a few. There were many opportunities for the Balinese men after they worked in the rice-fields or cock-fighting, to become involved in many artistic activities such as painting, dance, handcrafts and others.

These artistic activities were not only organized by the common people but also by the noblemen who were really concerned with Balinese cultural traditions.

## **IV. History, Arts, Love and Tourism in Bali**

### **4.1 Western Influences in Bali**

The Dutch were very interested in the Balinese cultural phenomena. Indeed, they tried to preserve and maintain these cultural traditions with their concept of *Baliseering*; to make stringent efforts to protect the Balinese culture (Bali Hinduism) from any negative impacts of foreign cultures (See, for instance: Gust, 1994, Ramstedt: 2004, and Dahm, n.d.). This situation affected the new developments of the Balinese culture, particularly in the context of the arts.

Not only in terms of economic aspects, but also the religious ones, for instance, the spread of Christianity or *Zending* was considered to disturb the Balinese cultural tradition. There were many opportunities to develop Balinese arts such as dances, paintings, handcrafts and the like, since the Dutch colonial government had a number of policies to protect traditional Balinese culture.

Since in the nineteenth century some Balinese traditional rajas did not cooperate with the Dutch, the colonial power attacked, for example the raja of Denpasar, Tabanan and finally Klungkung in the early twentieth century; Denpasar and Tabanan in 1906 and later, Klungkung in 1908. That period marked great change in Bali which among other things, meant that the Dutch should be careful to manage the Balinese of whom most are Hindu in a world of Islamic communities in the Indonesian archipelago.

However, this did not mean that all the Balinese rajas were antagonistic to the Dutch and had to be defeated in bloody wars, since certain ones such as Karangasem, Bangli and Gianyar were not. Accordingly, their palaces were saved from Dutch military attacks. This gives a different picture of how the Balinese rajas struggled against the Dutch both in terms of tactics and diplomatic strategies. However, it can be said that many people including artists in Denpasar and Tabanan were killed in the dramatic wars.

As in Gianyar, Bangli and Karangasem most traditional palaces were saved from the wars so in all of them Balinese arts and architecture can still be seen in the original depictions.

### **4.2 Balinese History and Arts**

It is important to look at the case of Gianyar, particularly at the raja of Ubud whose son, Tjokorda Gede Raka Soekawati was born on 15 January 1899. His title Tjokorda Gde indicates that Soekawati belonged to the highest level of ksatria (one of the four castes in Bali). Enjoying his hobby of photography, Tjokorda Soekawati studied at the SMP in Jakarta and later in Wassenaar in Holland. He died in 1967.

In his youth, Soekawati attended a school for Indonesian officials. In 1918 he was an official Indonesian candidate appointed by the Bandung auditors. At the end of the same year he became *mantripolitie* (a title for indigenous officials) in Denpasar. In 1919, in keeping with his political ambitions, he was promoted to be *Punggawa* (district official) of his birthplace Ubud. In 1924 he was elected member of the People's Council, a position he held until 1927. Then, in the same year, he became a member of the board of delegates of the People's Council. It is important to note that he himself was not a traditional or conservative figure. The Gianyar communities were proud of him, since he was a leading figure in the arts, politics and introduced the Balinese tourism industry in Gianyar in particular and Bali in general.

In 1924 Tjokorda Gede Raka Soekawati met the German artist/musician Walter Spies in Yogyakarta and invited him to come to Bali and stay in the palace called the *Puri Kantor* in Ubud in 1925 until 1927. Tjokorda Gede Raka Soekawati had asked his younger brother Tjokorda Gede Agung Soekawati, the sub-district head of Ubud, to prepare Spies' accommodation.

Other European and American artists who came to the palace were Hans Snell, Claire Holt, Antonio Blanco, Rudolf Bonnet, Miguel Covarrubias, Rolf de Mare, Colin McPhee, Katherine Mershon, and Jane Belo who promoted Ubud in particular and Bali in general. To them, the Tjokorda Soekawati introduced Balinese culture. It was also explained, that if they wanted to know Balinese culture, they had to come and see Bali. All of them witnessed how the sacred Balinese dances (See: Ardhana et al., 2015), such as the Barong and Rangda and Kebyar were performed under the banyan trees (cf. Gottowik, 2005). To many Europeans these dances by beautiful young people were most exotic so going to Bali appealed hugely (Pemerintah Kabupaten Gianyar, 2015: 9) and through these activities that Tjokorda Gede Raka Soekawati actively promoted Balinese tourism related to the Balinese nature and culture as can be seen in the Museum Tropen in Amsterdam and also in Den Haag in the Netherlands.

Tjokorda Gede Raka Soekawati appointed as the *Punggawa* of Ubud in 1927, in 1929 was invited to come to Batavia, exactly at the time of the Pasar Gambir

Festival when I Mario performed the Kebyar dance, Ni Gusti Made Rai and Ni Gusti Putu Adi the legong dance and I Gusti Alit Oka was the gamelan player with I Made Regog as composer and gamelan player and I Gejor Kelambu as Balinese singer. This performance was successful and received enthusiastically. The gamelan players came from the Banjar Belaluan in Denpasar. Later Tjokorda was appointed a member of the legislative Body or *Volksraad* and the *Dewan Pertimbangan* for the Netherlands Indies in 1930. In addition to this, he successfully promoted the integration of the arts and culture from different countries and continued to affect the development of the Balinese tourism industry in the 1930s.

It can be noted that in the 1930s there were increasingly more foreign tourist visits to Ubud, Bali (cf. Staab, 1997). This was caused by the skill of Tjokorda Gede Agung Soekawati who ruled in Ubud (the brother of Raja Soekawati – Tjokorda Gede Raka Soekawati). In addition to this, due to his capability in economic development he accordingly built a *guest house* for international tourists to stay. Therefore, it can be said that the development of the tourism industry in Ubud, cannot be separated from the role of Raja Soekawati, the brother of Raja Ubud, who had invited many artists and painters, like Walter Spies, to Ubud.

The numerous paintings of Walter Spies influenced many foreign artists to work and paint in Ubud. Through these artistic works, Ubud began to be well known to the international world, with a number of foreign painters, like Rudolf Bonnet, working there, depicting the daily life in Ubud and holding many exhibitions overseas. Tjokorda Gede Agung Soekawati, the raja of Ubud, together with Walter Spies, Rudolf Bonnet and local artists founded *Pita Maha* the aim of which was to integrate the Balinese artists and teach the young about the arts in Bali. Accordingly, due to his success, he was asked to manage the Balinese art team to the '*Paris Colonial Exposition (Exposition Coloniale Internationale)*' in 1931 where performances were held on the Netherlands Indies stage in Bois de Vincennes, in the eastern part of Paris from 6 May to November 6, 1931. At that time many Balinese dancers were invited (Tjokorde Gde Rake Soekawati, 1926). In addition to this, there were many Balinese paintings and handcrafts. At that time there was performed a Balinese Calonarang and Legong Klaton that became famous. The group consisted of 51 artists with most from Ubud and Peliatan such as Anak Agung Gde Mandra, I Ketut Rindha, Tjokorda Oka Tublen, Tjokorda Gde Rai Sayan, Dewa Gde Raka, Tjokorda Anom, Jero Tjandra and Ni Rimpeg.

### **4.3 Western Education, Love and Balinese Tourism**

Following the *Puputan* in Bali, the Dutch colonial regime tried to convince the world that their regime was different from that of other European countries. They established schools and a bureaucratic system. Although it can be said that the Dutch still used the traditional bureaucratic system, only changing it at several levels to later strongly play a major role not only in the Netherlands Indies in general, but also in Bali.

All this was initiated by the introduction of the “Ethical policy” in 1901, when the Dutch greatly improved the school system in their colony (cf. Reid, 1974). It is not therefore surprising that the aristocracy persuaded their children to study in the Dutch schools in order to be able to become Dutch government employees in the Dutch colonial bureaucracy in the Netherlands Indies. As happened in Java, Sumatra and other parts of the Netherlands Indies, the Dutch opened modern schools and many of the local noblemen brought their children to study in these schools as did the son of the king of Ubud in Gianyar. In 1931, Tjokorda Gede Raka Soekawati went to study in a Dutch school and one year later, in 1932, he continued his journey to the Netherlands to study agriculture and animal husbandry. It seems that Tjokorda had many experiences particularly in the context of education and the political atmosphere (Interview with Tjokorde Rai Sukawati at Puri Kantor in Ubud, April 2018).

During his education in Europe, Tjokorde Gede Agung Soekawati fell in love with a foreign girl although he already had six wives. By a Balinese wife Gusti Agung Niang Putu he had a son Tjokorda Ngurah Wim Soekawati. He married a French woman named Gilberte Vincent in 1933 and with this European girl had two sons. (Interview with Anak Agung Istri Vera Sukawati or Cokorda Vera at Puri Kantor Ubud, April 2018).

Inevitably there were some European influences due to his marriage with the European girl. However, though he had a foreign wife, in fact, he did not change his style of daily life. It is even that, he strongly preserved and maintained his traditions based on Balinese culture. The architectural buildings of the palaces or *puri*, for instance, were still preserved in the Balinese artistic styles. Though that happened, the name of the palace became well known by the European or Dutch name, the *Puri Kantor* meaning the “Office Palace”. This palace or *Puri Kantor* was decorated in the Balinese way with certain paintings in the Kamasan style. With his wife, besides

in Ubud, he stayed also for a long time in Bandung and later in Amsterdam. Due to her long stay in Europe later she was well known as “Niang Perancis” or the Grandmother from France (Interview with Tjokorde Gde Rake Sven Sukawati at Puri Kantor, Ubud, April 2018). It can be said that due to his long career not only in the social and cultural aspects, Tjokorda Gede Raka Soekawati was also well known as the only President of the State of East Indonesia from 1946 to its disestablishment in 1950 (Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, 1985).

## V. Conclusion

From this picture it can be concluded that besides the Indian and Chinese influences, there were also European cultural aspects in the Netherlands Indies in general and in Bali in particular. This can be seen in the context of the emergence of the tourism industry in Bali, especially in Ubud.

From the historical experiences of the son of the Raja of Ubud in Gianyar, can be seen the extent of the European culture in the Balinese culture. Starting from the ethical policy and *Baliseering*, the Dutch strongly preserved the Balinese culture.

Due to this development, the son of the raja of Ubud also got his education in the European or Dutch school. When he went to the European school in Europe he met a European girl and later married her. It can be noted that there were some influences namely in the way of thinking of the Tjokorda Gede Raka Soekawati in maintaining the traditional way of life and combining it with the European ways of thinking. He was successful in defending his palace from foreign influences and later successfully promoted not only his palace but also the whole region of Ubud as a tourist destination.

Understanding these developments, it can be said that the European culture empowered the Balinese tourist industry not only in the past but also at present.

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## **INTERVIEWS**

1. Nama: Cokorda Rai Sukawati  
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Alamat Puri Kantor Ubud, Gianyar
2. Nama: Anak Agung Istri Vera Sukawati atau Cokorda Vera  
Alamat Puri Kantor Ubud, Gianyar
3. Nama: Tjokorde Gde Rake Sven Sukawati  
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## CURRICULUM VITAE

**I Ketut Ardhana** is Professor of Asian History in the Faculty of Humanities - Udayana University. He was the former Head of the Southeast Asia Division-Research Center for Regional Resources-the Indonesian Institute of Sciences, Jakarta (PSDR-LIPI), 2001-2009. His research project is on tourism and border studies in the Southeast Asian region, including: Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines. Previously he took the English course at the School of Oriental and African Studies, (SOAS) - University of London-England (1990), at the University of Belconnen in Canberra-Australia (1992), the Dutch course at Erasmus Huis, Universiteit te Leiden in the Netherlands (1990), and the German course at the Goethe Institute in Mannheim and at Passau University (UP) in Germany (1996-1997).

He studied history in the Faculty of Letters in the Department of History at Udayana University, Denpasar, Bali- and continued his studies to obtain the Drs. (Doctorandus Degree) at the Faculty of Letters – Gadjah Mada University (UGM) in Yogyakarta in 1985. He graduated with his Master’s Degree (Master of Arts in Asian Studies) at Southeast Asian Centre-Faculty of Asian Studies, the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra, Australia in 1994. Then got his PhD degree or Dr. Phil. (Doctor Philosophie) at *Sudostasoenkunde, Philosophische Fakultat*, Universitat Passau in Germany with the predicate *Magna Cum Laude* in 2000. He was granted a Fellowship to carry out research in area studies at the University of Passau in Passau- Germany in 2003 and also a Fellowship in the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS), Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan, in 2004.

He was a Committee member on the collaborative project between Indonesia and the Netherlands at NIOD (*Nederlandsch Instituut voor Oorlog Dokumentatie*) or the Dutch Institute for War Documentation) from 2004 until 2009. He has been a member of IFSSO (International Federation of Social Science Organizations) from 2003 until now and was elected as the first Vice President. In Seijo University in Tokyo, in 2015, he was elected as the second Vice President. He is also a founding member of the World SSH (World Social Sciences and Humanities) and presented his paper in Buenos Aires, Argentine, in 2010. He wrote an article on the “Review of *The Encyclopedia of Indonesia in the Pacific War: In cooperation with the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation*” in *the Journal of Indonesia*, Vol. 91, 2011 published in Cornell, the US and one on “Early Harbours in Eastern Nusa Tenggara”, in John N. Miksic and Goh Geok Yian, *Ancient Harbours in Southeast Asia: The Archaeology of Early Harbours and Evidence of Inter-Regional Trade* for the Bangkok SEAMEO SPAFA Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts in 2013. His other work on “Archeological Sites in the Context of Heritage Cities in Indonesia”, is in Noel Hidalgo Tan (ed.), *Advancing Southeast Asia Archeology 2016, Selected Papers from the Second SEAMEO SPAFA International Conference on Asian Archaeology*. Bangkok SEAMEO SPAFA Regional Center for Archaeology and Fine Arts. He was appointed the Head of the Center for Bali Studies at Udayana University in Denpasar, Bali, in 2010, the Head of Postgraduate Program on Cultural Studies, Faculty of Social and Humanities Sciences at Udayana University, and the Director of the Widya Kerthi Foundation in 2017 a position he still holds.