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Rivalling rituals, challenged identities

Accusations of ritual mistakes as an expression of power struggles

Introduction

The tiny island of Bali (Indonesia) is well-known for its “thousand temples” and their prolific Hindu rituals as advertised in tourist promotions all over the world. Though depicted as an backdrop of Balinese culture that has unchangeably existed for hundreds of years, temple rituals are a dynamic and contested arena. Most of the temple rituals are carried out according to a “script” focussing on the day the ritual has to be carried out, the number, contents, and composition of the offerings to be dedicated to individual deities and their shrines as well as on its plot and the main actors. To some extent rituals may indeed appear as firmly standardized and being simply reproduced at regular intervals. However, a ritual needs to be successful in order to reach its goal: to please the gods and the ancestors and to ensure the well-being of the humans, their livestock as well as their fields. This goal can be reached only if the rituals are carried out according to explicit rules on the one hand and exigencies set by the gods, sometimes without conveying them ahead to the human actors, on the other; such exigencies, therefore, are beyond human control. It is failure that people mostly fear since it will result in catastrophes like illness and unexpected death of humans and animals (even epidemics), or droughts destroying the fields. Failure implies a disrupted relationship between humans and gods/ancestors that can be restored, if ever, only with great difficulties and sometimes even after suffering great loss.

Each temple ritual inherently carries the risk of failure. Most risks of failure evolve around two crucial issues: 1) trespassing the rules of purity, and, closely associated with them, 2) disrespecting taboos, the breaking of rules of conduct, such as sexual relations that fall under the incest taboo and sexual intercourse with animals thereby disrupting the boundaries between humans (*manusa*) and animals (*buron*). Impurity (*sebel*) is inflicted by those who have been in intimate contact with death, illness, wounds, and menstruation. In one sense or another, they are all associated with crisis. Death, the spilling of blood and the threat of disease attract beings of the world below, *buta kala/buta kali*, to invade pure space restricted to deities. *Buta kala/buta kali* are kept off the temples by blood sacrifices, and among other offerings, of rice wine and liquor poured onto the ground. Both, incest and bestiality result in cataclysms, the dissolution of categories that social order carefully separates. Such cataclysm inflicts *sebel* on the whole body of a village community and puts it into a state of emergency. No temples may be entered and no rituals held until whole cycles of purifications have been held. Impurity in this encompassing sense implies a collapse of distinct spaces, deities – and values; it invokes a world of chaos, destruction, and failure.

Apart from failure, the actors may be liable to commit mistakes either unintentionally (Hüsken: proposal p.2), only later being acknowledged by the gods or, often in combination with them, as a contentious issue among the rivalling actors. By contrast to failure, mistakes are subject to negotiation; they mostly can, at least partly, be corrected by repeating a sequence or juxtaposing an additional one. The boundaries between failure and mistakes are blurred as soon as causes apprehended to lead to failure, that is ineffectiveness of the ritual or even opposite results than anticipated, are subject to negotiation among the actors.

In this paper I shall put Balinese temple rituals in the context of power relations between different groups of people. The politically and socially sometimes tense relationship between

such groups are reflected in the performance of rituals and the discussion about “correct” and “wrong” ways of performances. I shall describe and discuss contested temple rituals by using two different examples, a recent one from a village in South Bali, Intaran, and a historical one as reflected in oral histories and religious practices from North Bali, Sembiran.¹ The two villages today display remarkable differences concerning their social organization. The former was ruled (in pre- and early colonial time) by a local lord who was part of a segmentary kingdom with hierarchically ranked title-bearing status groups. Apart from nobles, there were (and still are) several *brahmana* compounds located in the village. These were the ritual leaders the noble ruler cooperated with not only to perform all the rituals necessary for a successful and prosperous life for himself and his people but also for achieving his political goals (Hauser-Schäublin 2004a).

By contrast, Sembiran was, at the time of the advent of the Dutch (mid-19th century), apparently more or less egalitarian in organization²: there was no local ruler attached to an overarching kingdom and there existed no clear-cut status groups hierarchially ordered. Instead, still today there are two associations, the assembly of delegates, one from each clan (*sekehe gede*) and the ritual village association (*kerama desa*) consisting of all married couples of the core village. This latter organization is based on the sex and age (or rather the duration of their marriage) of its members. This village association and its mainly ritual tasks was formerly complemented by some temple priest and, additionally, a Great Priest who held an outstanding position; nowadays he is one among others. The priests, even the Great Priest, however, never had the status of a *pedanda*, a high priest of high-standing descent such as *brahmana siwa*, *brahmana budha*, other ritual specialists bearing respectable titles such as *sri*

¹ Fieldwork in Intaran was carried out between 1988 and 1993; for a detailed description of temple and temple rituals see Hauser-Schäublin 1997. Fieldwork in Sembiran and adjacent villages started in 1995 with several stays of different length, each ranging from 2 to eight months and with a total of about 2 years. Fieldwork took place under the auspices of the Indonesian Institute of Science (Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia) Jakarta and Universitas Udayana in Denpasar with Prof. Dr. I Wayan Ardika as my sponsor. I am indebted to the German Research Council and the University of Göttingen supporting my research between 1997 and 2004.

² As Ottino recently showed (2003b), those villages with no title-bearing status groups were far from being egalitarian; they nevertheless were less hierarchically ordered than others.

empu, sri resi . While such office-holders generally intermarried only with members of the same status group the Great Priest did not.

These only briefly outlined differences in social, political and ritual organization between Intaran and Sembiran do not represent unbridgeable oppositions. Rather, they have perhaps to be understood as poles within a wide range of variations that through time often underwent transformations from one form into the other (Ottino 2003a). Nevertheless, I suggest that disagreements about the way temple rituals have to be properly carried out, the deities to be worshiped, and the contents of the offerings to be presented to these gods can be related to the different social and political contexts of these two villages and, consequently, to the differing means the villagers have at their disposition to deal with such conflicts.

I shall start with Intaran (see Hauser-Schäublin 1997) and its particular way by which social difference is translated into disagreements about rituals and the uttering of threats by the gods.

Brahmana's ritual control and the netherworldly deities' complaints

According to Intaran's stratified society, there exist deified ancestors and deities of different standing, too. Except for gods of the Hindu pantheon that recently gained supreme status due to their official recognition/acknowledgement as core part of Hindu religion (*agama Hindu*) within Indonesia and transnational Hindu movements, there are many other beings from the other world (*niskala*) worshiped in Intaran. These beings are either linked to a mostly autochthonous commoner clan and/or a status group or they are bound to specific sites within Intaran and its surrounding. The most powerful deities are associated with the netherworld and the sea rather than the upperworld: these are much feared for their magical power. In the upperworld dwell those of "real" Hinduism propagated as *brahmana* priests.

Like in many other villages in South Bali, each deity has a shrine at a particular site within the temple courtyard according to his or her standing within the hierarchy among the deities represented there. Since a clan or rather lineage is also responsible for the maintenance of “its” deity’s shrine, the arrangement of the shrines in a temple also reflects the relationship among the different social groups within a village. As a historical analysis revealed, several of the local temples already existed when gentry clans immigrated. Over time, these local temples became gradually appropriated by the immigrants. Through processes of temple renovations and expansions the local deities became spatially displaced and, thus, socially subjugated. As a result, many of the powerful deities associated with commoner clans are nowadays mostly located in the forecourt of a temple while the ancestors and deities acknowledged by *brahmana* or nobles reside in the innermost court. As a rule, a worshipper usually proceeds from the outmost court to the innermost by praying at different shrines; however, people of high standing often do not stop in the first court but directly proceed to the innermost courtyard where the highest standing deities are located (Hauser-Schäublin 1997: 160-161, 264-267).

Balinese temples are not visited except for fixed calendar dates. A temple comes to life during its anniversary, that is once a year of differing length depending on the calendar applied. During the temple festival, rituals are carried out during which the deities are invited to descend and to accept the offerings dedicated to them. In most temples where deities of different standing (“netherworldly” as well as “upperworldly”) are located, the ceremony reaches two completely different climaxes represented by contrasting, even rivalling, rituals. One of them is carried out under the guidance of a *brahmana* priest (*pedanda*). Accompanied by his assistants, the *pedanda* enters the temple almost unnoticed while hundreds of worshippers (with women carrying on their head prolific offerings consisting of whole towers of fruits, cookies and sometimes a chicken) continuously move in and out of the temple. In a

small open hall opposite the shrines he establishes himself above the head of the worshippers. He carefully puts on his ritual attire while gradually setting up his paraphernalia with the holy ingredients, the fire, the incense, flower pedals and the holy water being among the most important among them. The crown-like head covering is the last element of the *pedanda*'s dress to be put on; he continues to perform *mudra* and utter *mantra* while he also sprinkles holy water over the whole display and himself. When he has completed these preliminaries, people gather in front of him, sitting or kneeling on the floor facing the lavishly decorated shrines. Under the guidance of the *pedanda* (sometimes invited from somewhere else) the congregation communally prays together, the climax being reached when he rings his bell (*bajra*) this being a sign of accomplished communication between the humans and the gods; the gods are then perceived as ready to accept the offerings and the devotion of the congregation. Shortly afterwards, the temple priests and their assistants distribute holy water (*tirtha*) and some blessed rice grains (to be put to on the forehead and the temples. While the community remains seated on the floor until the holy water and the rice grains have been distributed, the *brahmana* priest packs up his paraphernalia again and then quietly leaves the temple, again without attracting the attention of the worshippers. The *brahmana* ritual is highly formalized and standardized.³ Today, these rituals have almost reached the status of a *sine qua non* for every temple festival. At the same time the presence of a *brahmana* priest's performance is considered more or less to guarantee a successful ritual.⁴

In many temples of Intaran I investigated, there is a second climax; during my fieldwork many people called it the climax of the temple festival consisting of a ritual, too, that is completely different in character. Instead of a meticulously performed and almost rationalized

³ By contrast to "ordinary" temple priest, the *brahmana* novice has his own master (*nabê*) who teaches him over years and makes him read the *lontar* scriptures. His initiation into full priesthood is acknowledged by a whole board of *brahmana* and other learned men; this board has developed a canonizing function with respects to *brahmana* knowledge and the performance of rituals.

⁴ I have never seen a disputes or disagreements between the worshippers, the representatives of the most important clans and the *brahmana* priest arising over the *brahman*'s ritual, whether it was successful or not. According to the official religious authorities, the Parisada Hindu Dharma, major temple festivals should ideally be complemented by the *brahmana* ritual even in villages which formerly had their own priests and denied access to *pedanda* (see Pidada 1999)

ritual lead and controlled by a single specialist who establishes himself above the congregation, a trance séance with many people actively participating, with outbursts of yells and abrupt motions, with people fainting and wildly dancing around is at the core of this second ritual (Hauser-Schäublin 1997: 158-168). Such rituals mostly take place late at night with the temple crowded with people. The ritual starts with the gong orchestra playing intensely, the temple priests kindle incense and incense sticks until a thick intoxicating smoke fills the temple. Together with the beats of the gong orchestra this creates an intense atmosphere. Then dozens of men and women clad in white or black and white chequered (*poleng*) attire sit down in the centre of the courtyard while the audience gathers around them. These men and women in white and *poleng* are *sadeg* or *kulit*, people chosen by the local deities as their human vessels. During this ritual, the deities are expected to descend into them in order to let those responsible for the organization of the temple festival and its rituals know how successful it was. At the moment a god descends the person falls into trance.⁵

At the beginning of such a séance, the temple priests are busy with kindling the sandalwood fires and the incense. Then, suddenly one of the *sadeg* starts to tremble and to whisper while another throws his/her arms up, accompanied by a sharp yell and then slowly sinks back into the lap of somebody behind. Immediately, the gong orchestra reduces its pace and its volume. One after the other, the *sadeg* fall into trance, some remain quiet with closed eyes and slightly shaking, sometimes smiling, others start to cry, to shout or to talk. Some stand up and begin to dance, either slowly or violently, the audience trying to escape from the bold steps of the *sadeg* who sometimes grabs a weapon fiercely wagging it in the midst of the crowd or a piece of glowing coal and puts it into his mouth. The temple priests immediately try to calm down those gods who behave violently by sprinkling holy water over them and fanning the smoke of a incense sticks to them in order to bring the *sadeg* back to consciousness. The descent of

⁵ Only if somebody is regularly visited by the same deity is he/she acknowledged by the assembly of the major *sadeg* as one of theirs. If somebody is visited by changing deities this is interpreted as not yet having reached the firmness and stability required for a *sadeg*; for the person concerned this carries the danger of becoming *gila*, haunted by ghosts and loosing control over him/herself.

the gods is a testimony that the efforts invested in the temple festival to attract the deities in order to promote well-being and prosperity has not been in vain. However, this does not automatically imply the acknowledgement of a successful temple festival since the gods are expected to “talk” and to “evaluate” the performance. The priests and the audience anticipate that the gods will reveal mistakes, the breaking of taboos, incompleteness – thus a lack of ritual efficacy. In several such rituals, I was able to witness how the gods – through their human vessels – uttered not only severe critique but also disappointment, some even cried. They informed the human actors of the mistakes they had made. The deities interpreted them as disrespect and maltreatment.

The interrogation the temple priests carry out aims at appeasing and satisfying the deities. They attempt to bring the temple festival to a successful end in spite of the flaws or mistakes they are accused to have committed before. The audience – participants not only of commoner descent – was in all cases I followed up ready to comply to the wishes and demands/orders of the gods since nobody wanted to be responsible for the consequences in case the deities’ wishes were denied.

On some occasions I witnessed, the gods uttered some wishes for food or ingredients they had not received though they had expected them. Sometimes they even called the name of a brand of cigarettes, or biscuits. Some wished some textiles fetched from an offering tray to be spread over them. These were wishes to be easily fulfilled. If the deities are satisfied, they will retreat, thus signalling that the ritual and the whole temple festival has been successful. Then, the ritual is immediately concluded and the temple festival is accomplished. Some of the deities leave only after they have given some orders of what they will expect for the next temple festival, either other offerings; sometimes they ask for the promise that the temple will be renovated or they will be given a new site within the temple courtyard.

Sometimes the deities cannot be easily satisfied as I once witnessed in another trance séance in the innermost court of a temple nowadays owned by a *brahmana* family. There, one of the

deities who descended revealed herself as a netherworldy goddess. In other rituals (ritual dance dramas) this female deity usually appears in a (demon-like) *rangda*-mask. Her shrine is located in a forecourt of the *brahmana* temple. When the deity descended into her *sadeg* she asked for her mask (displayed on a shrine) to be brought into the innermost court. This was immediately done. She (it was, as far as I can remember, a male *sadeg* who represented the goddess) put it on and started to dance. Usually, it would be unthinkable to have such a mask performance in this most sacred part of the temple. While she slowly danced, she lamented that she had been separated from “her brother” who had a shrine in the innermost court whereas she was given a shrine outside only. Those responsible for the temple and its festival had allocated the wrong site to her; how did they dare to commit such a mistake that implied disrespect and humiliation, apparently even without fearing retaliation? She asked to be reunited with her brother by being given a shrine in the same courtyard. The priests tried to appease her by telling her that she now (during her performance) was reunited with her “brother”. However, she did not easily give in and then asked to be given a blood sacrifice. Thus one of the priests fetched a small chicken which he killed on the spot – though, under “normal” conditions, a blood sacrifice there would be considered inappropriate even polluting. The deity immediately grabbed and devoured it thereby displaying her blood-thirsty netherworldy character. She also asked for liquor and rice wine both also liquids offered to deities of the world below. It took quite a long time until she agreed upon promises given by the priests to increase her status in the near future, however formulated in words that left open different interpretations. The deity was finally satisfied and retreated, too.

Another such a ritual took place in a temple owned by commoner clans. These clans were attached to a *brahmana* compound. Therefore, this *brahmana* family sent two of their (adult) sons to the temple festival in order to acknowledge the bonds between the two families of unequal status. When they entered the temple, the preparation for the final ritual had already started and everybody was sitting on the floor as usual to make sure to be lower seated than

the gods. When the two *brahmana* men entered the temple, they went to an open hall and took a seat on an elevated platform.⁶

Only a little later the gong orchestra started its thronging rhythms; from the incense containers rose thick smoke. The *sadeg* had already seated themselves and it was only a little later when they gradually fell into trance and the deities took possession of them. It was a violent performance. One *sadeg* sprang up and began to run back and forth speaking in a foreign language (said to be Chinese) while wildly gesticulating. Some deities pointed out mistakes committed during the temple festival; the priest tried to appease them by presenting them all they asked for and by begging pardon.

The trance lasted for quite a long time and while all other *sadeg* regained consciousness when the gods had retreated, one deity still was not satisfied and threatened to disrupt the concluding ritual. All attempts by the temple priests to bring the *sadeg* back to his normal state of mind failed. The (male) deity resisted to withdraw and criticised those responsible for the temple and its annual festival for various mistakes. Finally, he requested black and white chequered textile offerings – such textile patterns are preferred by netherworldly deities – to be brought to him by one of the two *brahmana* men; those men already had moved down to the floor before. Their facial expression and their body gesture had drastically changed. Instead of displaying proudness and self-confidence, they looked intimidated. Under the eyes of a staring audience the two men fell in trance, too, acting as the deity's servants who moved on their knees to the offerings and fetched what the deity had ordered them to bring. Slowly one of them approached him while showing total deference. The deity first seemed unwilling to accept these offerings but when the man implored him to accept he finally did, though more or less reluctantly. With a sigh the *sadeg* regained consciousness when the deity finally

⁶ Ruling nobles as well as *pedanda* rarely sit on the floor like ordinary people but demonstrate their higher standing by choosing a higher seat as well.

withdraw, satisfied. The temple priests and with them all participants were relieved that the ritual, in spite of what they had anticipated, ended in harmony.

The two rituals, those of the *brahmana* priest and the trance session, sharply contrast each other. First of all, a *pedanda* is not supposed to fall in trance. He is a learned man, a specialist of the scriptures and also the holder of an office restricted to privileged descent, that is, *brahmana* descent. Self-control or control over the clearly structured ritual (he “guides” the ritual) characterize his performance. Except for assistants and temple priests acting on his behalf, the *brahmana* priest is the only – superior – actor; it is he who directly and exclusively communicates with the gods and invokes them for the benefit of the worshippers. There are almost no direct interactions between him and the congregation. As his elevated position shows – and this is underscored by the ritual investiture –, he is not an ordinary human being but transforms himself into a god (mostly Siwa) when he puts on his ritual attire, the necklaces, and finally his crown (*bauwe*). As a matter of fact, the well-known Hindu gods of Indian mythology (and their Balinese variations) never reveal themselves in trance séances this being a privilege or characteristics (depending on the perspective and the social standing of the speaker) of the local deities. By contrast, the séance ritual is a public revelation. When the deities descend into the *sadeg*, who are ordinary members of the community, they do it in front of all the participants. Moreover, it is never predetermined who of the worshippers (without being a *sadeg*) may be also touched by one of the gods too and, therefore, may fall into trance as well. In contrast to the *brahmana* ritual, the trance séance, its precise plot, the particular gods descending, the issues to be negotiated and its outcome are open.

The major mistakes admonished by the deities are, apart from requests for personal care and deference, social in origin and political in their implications: the netherworldly deity in the *brahmana* temple did not care that the humans had dedicated this courtyard to different, allegedly “higher” standing deities, the deified *brahmana* ancestors, and their shrines. The

netherworldly deity played her power off against other “purer” deities; she performed in a way that would have been unthinkable during the *brahmana* ritual that took place at the same site a few hours earlier: the request of a blood sacrifice and her wearing a *rangda*-mask with fangs protruding from mouth, bulging eyes and wild hair, features typical for demon-like beings.

The deity was able to behave in such a way, too, since, as Schieffelin pointed out, every ritual – and in Bali a temple festival as a whole – bears the risk of failure (1996: 88). Thus, all the deities who descend into *sadeg* and inform the congregation of their opinion about the degree of success or failure exert power over the organizers of such temple festivals and over the whole congregation regardless of the social standing of its individuals; all of them have contributed to the festival with money and labour. The netherworldly deity’s performance contained rebellion (Gluckman 1954): Her criticism of having been displaced and degraded by being allocated a shrine only in the forecourt aimed at a reversal of the order established by the temple “owners”. This displacement within the temple area implied also a displacement in the social space (see Hauser-Schäublin 2004b). Her rebellion also mirrored the “commoner” clan’s discontent with regard to its standing in relation to the superior *brahmana* that nowadays dominates both the temple and the “commoner” clan.

In the second ritual described, the rebellion even ended in a reversal of the existing everyday hierarchy by turning a *brahmana* man into the servant of the netherworldly deity. Gluckman (1954) and Turner (1969) suggested that ritual rebellion or even reversal of the social order ultimately serve the reinforcement of the established social order in everyday life. However, two dimensions seem to me prevalent: 1) Intaran’s stratified society is the result of the immigration of title-bearing groups that probably started in the 17th century and continued even during the early colonial time.⁷ Oral traditions tell of how immigrant nobles and

⁷ Intaran lies next to the famous tourist resort of Sanur. Most of the adult inhabitants work in one way or the other for the hotels, restaurants, and shops. Some are even wealthy owners; others have reached high positions in the government administration and in business life. Mobility in space – immigration as well as emigration – and

brahama (thus, both gentry clans) established themselves above today's "commoners". The redesigning of temples and rituals constituted an important way of subduing local clans and their deities (Hauser-Schäublin 2004b). Therefore, these trance séances also serve as a means of preserving the memory that the social order of men and deities once differed from today's. Through the ritual, resistance is kept alive probably even containing a grain of revolution. 2) The "mistakes" the deities convey to the temple community and the request for compensation have a bearing also on the future. The reshaping of temples and shrines, the alterations carried out during the rituals are initiated by gods as well and humans are eager to comply to their wishes. In one case, the main deity insisted that he did not want any renovations to be carried out. Thus, the deities exert much power with regard to sustaining traditions, cultural conservatism as well as promoting change.

The relationship between all these rituals in which the deities reveal themselves to the humans and those with *pedanda* reflects in many ways the relationship between "commoner" clans and those of noble or *brahmana* origin. It is indeed a kind of relationship between dominant and demotic discourse (Foucault 1994) though each of these rituals raises to the dominant discourse during its performance while the other is subdued; it is therefore a dynamic, changing relationship. The example of the *rangda* mask who danced in front of the brahmana ancestor shrines illustrates this well. Many of the temples housing local deities are interrelated (Hauser-Schäublin 1997) as are the clans and wards responsible for them. The members of these clans and wards, or at least their *sadeg* and temple priests, often participate in the annual festival of several such temples. Through the same *sadegs*, who are often formally invited, the deities also of other temples are present, too; they all interact with each other. Therefore, during these trance séances a community with a shared identity becomes manifest, an identity that is regularly reconfirmed through the rituals. It is an identity that ties its members to a

in social life are part of these processes that intensified since the 1970s. Space does not allow to deal with these aspects though they have consequences on temples and rituals as well.

specific locality, the place where people live and the gods have their shrines and temples amidst them (see also Platvoet/Tooren 1995: 351-353). This identity was framed until recently in the term *adat*, the village-specific “traditional way of life” and its “customs”. Over the past few years, however, the term *adat* has been replaced the term *agama* (religion) (Picard 2000, Hauser-Schäublin 2004a). In the effort to define an independent pan-Balinese Hindu identity, *adat* increasingly implies “belief” only and also locally limited idiosyncrasies rather than membership in a world-wide recognized religion, Hinduism. *Adat* runs the risk of entailing “inappropriate” or even “wrong” if applied to rituals with a pan-Hindu claim. It is *brahmana* rituals, the reference to canonized religious literature (emphasizing its Indian roots) promoted by religious and intellectual elites that is considered as true *agama* and, thus, is able to serve as basis for a pan-Balinese identity. This pan-Balinese identity stresses what the Balinese – though dispersed in many different regions with their own histories – consider as a unifying force especially with regard to the non-Hindu Balinese, the drawing of a boundary and defining exclusion in a state that is dominated by a large Muslim majority. The political dimension of this identity construction through ritual is self-evident. The *brahmana* ritual in Intaran, therefore, has to be seen in this context, too. It conveys an identity of belonging to a community encompassing individual villages. The two rituals described above for Intaran, therefore, supplement each other also from the perspective of identities, however on unequal levels.

Rivalling rituals, challenged identities

The negotiating of identity between different groups by designating some ritual practices as more appropriate than others, however, seems to have existed already in pre-colonial time as the example of Sembiran gives proof of (Hauser-Schäublin 2004a). There exist no written sources on how such a process of negotiating rituals associated with originally separate

identities took place in pre-colonial time. The memory of how two groups, immigrants and the autochthonous villagers, with contrasting rituals finally achieved a common ritual practice and, as a consequence, a shared identity has been kept alive by telling the oral histories, performing the ritual practices as well by calling the names of particular deities. Although historical memory in Sembiran is in many respects weak, the recalling of how difference and mutual exclusion became mediated, is still vividly spoken of. The stories have to do much with Sembiran's identity as a village with a particular *adat* that significantly differs from others'. At the same time these oral traditions have a normative function in so far as they constitute a kind of script for correctly performing the rituals; they contain instructions what kind of offerings should not be presented to which deity.

As I have described elsewhere (Hauser-Schäublin 2004a), Sembiran had been exposed to contact with the outside world due to its location near the coastline where foreign traders stopped on their way to the spice islands and back for thousands of years (Ardika/Bellwood 1991). An international harbour and a community of foreign merchants of probably Indian origin are mentioned in 10th century copper plate inscriptions for the area. This important nodal point of transmaritime trade relations seems to have existed until the beginning of the 18th century. Sometime in the 17th century Moslem migrants arrived in Sembiran and decided to stay there.⁸ There are indications that the Moslem immigrants were traders with relations across the island. One of the major deity's name, Ratu Pasisi or Ratu Subander, indicates that this deified ancestor once had the function of a harbour master who was in charge of the levying of taxes on imports; he was also responsible for the security of the foreign merchants, most likely on behalf of a king who resided in the interior of the island. The tasks the harbour mostly was responsible for were presumably carried out in cooperation with the local population. The immigrants seemed to have gained a leading position within the village. Furthermore, two major figures among these immigrants, Ratu Pasisi/Ratu Subander and

⁸ The date is the result of my attempt to reconstruct the context and the process of these interactions between the immigrants and the locals.

Ratu Kamasan, are described as cultural heroes who attempted to reorganize the social organization and the religious practices of the village.

My reconstruction brought forward economic bonds, everyday necessities, that tied the Muslim immigrants and the autochthonous group together. Therefore, they seem to have formed in some respect a localized bounded community. Beyond everyday economic cooperation, however, there apparently existed fundamental disagreements with regards to rituals, each group accusing the other of using the wrong animals for sacrifice. The disputes on this questions threw the village in one of its most serious crisis and led it to the verge of disintegration. While the autochthonous population insisted that pork was the major food to be offered to the deities, the Muslim strictly refused to accept this perspective and declared that the practice of the autochthonous villagers was impure and represented an insult to their ancestors. Instead, the Muslim claimed that their deified ancestors required now and then a cow to be slaughtered. For the autochthonous villagers this was an abhorrent idea since cows though they raised them for different purposes were not considered food, neither for the humans nor for the gods. Therefore, the killing of cows for food represented an act of breaking a taboo that inflicted pollution. The Muslim called their sacrifice *suci*, pure, an attribute not used in relation to the sacrifice of pigs; the offerings of the locals were called *kala*, those representing the local traditions. These contrasting perspectives indeed seemed irreconcilable because they involved fundamentally diverging notions of edibility/inedibility of animals, purity/impurity and taboos.

As Connerton has pointed out (1989), the crucial point in the constitution of a community's identity are not stories or even myths but rituals. Oral traditions can be reproduced without agreeing with its contents; moreover there always exist many version even of a myth leaving space for individual variations. By contrast, performing a ritual implies to comply to its rules and to accept its basic meaning. Though different participants may attribute various meanings

or goals to a ritual, one has to consent to its major outline in general and the nature of sacrifice in particular, especially if tabooed animals are at stake. Therefore, it is obvious that within Sembiran the conflict over the appropriate animals to be sacrificed – each being categorically banned by the opposite group – touched the heart of each group's identity in spite of the bonds that otherwise tied them together.

The oral histories mention that the Muslim immigrant had succeeded in establishing themselves above the locals. The leaders of the traditional village association however seem to have kept an important saying over the rituals and sacred sites, all clearly embedded in Sembiran's geocosmology. The Muslim reformers faced severe resistance from the locals who did not want to give up what perhaps over centuries constituted the core of the villagers' identity, their rituals.

One of the oral histories tells that at a certain stage in the process of integrating the immigrants into Sembiran village, the boundaries between people practicing different food habits (either eating pork or not) gradually dissolved. Before, intermarriage had given rise to conflicts even within families, separating brothers from each other. According to one of the stories, the Muslim younger brother decided to leave for Java (considered the homeland of Islam) after he had lived in disagreement with his elder brother who followed the *kala* rituals. Before he left he instructed his older brother who he should pay respect to the deified ancestors/deities by presenting them *slem* offerings. Conversely, he continued, humans would hence be free to choose pork as well as palm wine/liquor since it was no longer a strict form of Islam practiced in the village but a kind of syncretism. Everybody should personally decide about his/her food habits depending on individual liking/disliking and even situations.

We do not know how in detail the negotiating was carried out between the two groups and mediation achieved, especially whether violence was involved. However, the result is clear: the locals and the immigrants managed to find an agreement that apparently satisfied both parties. It also resulted in a single community that today displays a common identity through

shared rituals. However, some of the deities – those associated with the immigrants and their deified ancestors – are still never allowed to be offered pork; they are by origin of what people call “*agama slem*” (Islamic religion). Instead, such offerings contain only flowers and leaves, sometimes with some additional chicken. For deities associated with the locals, pigs need to be sacrificed. Still, both types of deities reside side by side in the same temples. Nowadays, the offerings presented during temple festivals consist, as a rule, of twenty-one offerings with pork and twenty-two without; the former being called *baktian bauwi* (pig offering), the latter *baktian slem* (Islamic offering). People argue that they stick to the regulation of diverging offerings in order to maintain purity and avoid impurity for particular deities. These distinct offerings dedicated to different categories of deified ancestors/deities are, as people nowadays say, a characteristic trait of Sembiran, it constitutes their *kalapatra*, their ritual practices as a means of performed identity.

It is interesting to note that cows – by contrast to pigs and chicken – are never killed in the temple today; their meat is never deposited on a shrine. Cows and cow meat apparently are never brought into temples. Therefore, the sacrifice of cows – all of them associated with the sea, the dark side of the year, and death – takes place outside the temples even of those with deities adhering to *agama slem*; the same applies to the sacrifice of goats. Although the deities are still differentiated according to their preferred offerings (either *slem* or *kala*) there exist no binding rules of conduct for humans. I have never met a living person in Sembiran who categorically refused to eat pork in Sembiran (though I have never carried out a systematic investigation in this respect). Conversely, there were several people who said they would not eat cow meat even if these animals were slaughtered during a ritual.

Apart from the script and the legitimation the story about the conflict over rivalling rituals provide for the performance of rituals today, their main goal is to emphasize people’s capacity

of integration whereby something positively new is produced. This is an important message these stories convey. It is perhaps this message that makes people of Sembiran nowadays to rather easily give up some of their traditions in favour of innovations such as the new form of prayers and rituals propagated by intellectuals and a religious elite. These new forms correspond with the new pan-Balinese Hindu identity people are able to acquire through following this ritual form of modernity already mentioned above.

Contested animals: dogs, cows, pigs

As has been demonstrated, the conflict between the immigrants and the locals arose over the appropriate animals to be sacrificed in rituals. Therefore, these animals apparently are at the core of identity constructions and the question is, why. In this paragraph I shall outline today's discourse about animals in Sembiran. It is therefore necessary to briefly follow up the discourse about animals in Sembiran.⁹

In the stories told, a prominent immigrant Muslim man is described as “black dog” who stealthily married a girl, the “daughter of a pig”. The couple was expelled from the village since this union was considered a mismatch. This is an important aspect to be considered further (see below). The dog though impure to Muslims is portrayed as an ancestor (father) of today's population of Sembiran. Conversely, the daughter of a pig symbolizes the indigenous inhabitants, a woman¹⁰ who married an immigrant. Still today, the pig is the most important animal people of Sembiran sacrifice and consume. The stories emphasize the fact that a human child was born to the dog and his wife, the daughter of a pig. The human being born to the couple, therefore, displays unequal descent, the father being a full-fledged animal, the

⁹ Many inspirations to the following paragraph originate from Ellen (1999) and Valeri (2000).

¹⁰ In fact, Sembiran's character, given by the gods, is that of a woman who shrinks back rather than attacks, the latter behaviour said to be typical for neighbouring Julah village.

mother a semi-animal. Through procreation the couple achieved a transformation from animality to humanity¹¹.

Dogs are, by contrast to pigs, not considered as food though dogs are sacrificed in certain contexts, too. Both pigs and dogs are linguistically classified as animals and therefore characterized by a marker that distinguishes them clearly from humans. The dog is considered man's closest companion though there exist different categories of dogs, some are closer to humans than others. The one closest to humans is called *asu*: This type of dog has a long muzzle and possesses, in contrast to other dogs, on all his paws a thumb-like finger. *Asu* dogs are mainly used as watchdogs, for hunts (at least in former times since there are no longer any deer or wild pigs), and also as companions. Another task dogs had (formerly, before toilets were established) to perform was to clean up the faeces of humans.

Asu are said to quickly learn whatever humans expect from them. The relationship between a man and his dog is a personal relationship. The dog is said to understand what his master tells him; the dog is also able to communicate with him. An *asu* dog definitely wants to be fed by his master and tries to follow him wherever he goes. *Asu* females give birth to the young in immediate neighbourhood of the house or even in it. The intimate relationship that exists between a man and his dog is expressed also in calling the dog by a name. These names may be identical with those of humans or may be taken from some particularities of the dog, due either to its behaviour or the patterns of its coat. No other animals are called by names, not even cats or fighting cocks that are so carefully and intensively nurtured. Thus, only humans and some dogs are given names. Nevertheless, a clear distinction is kept between dogs and humans even through the names. Humans not only bear personal names but also birth order names (first-born, second-born etc.) while dogs do not. To call a person by his/her name is considered impolite, even rude; instead, either the birth order name is used or teknonymy (such as "father of x", x implying the name of his child) practiced. This is an important

¹¹ In similar stories from other islands, the dog is explicitly interpreted as the ancestor of the (immigrant) Moslem (van Eerde 1902, Kleiweg de Zwaan 1915).

distinction that separates man from his closest animal companion. They are not equal partners, nor are both person as Ellen suggests for the Nuaulu (1999: 63). What they have in common is personality, certain individual traits allowing mutual communication and the acknowledgment of similarities; however they do not display shared identities.¹² The relationship between both is shaped by various elements of superiority and inferiority as well as dependency that are continuously reconfigured depending on the context (see also Ellen 1999: 62). The dog used as a metaphor for the Muslim man was of the *asu* type. From the perspective of the man/dog relationship this metaphor, though it attributes full animality to the foreigner, expresses also closeness nevertheless in terms of master/subject.

Other types of dogs, like *kuluk* and *kizing*, are said to have no “thumb” and only a shorter muzzle; these dogs are said to be “naughty” because they steal food. Dogs are ambiguous beings: They belong to some extent to the world of the humans and are, therefore, not generally considered as food. Nevertheless they are (or rather were) used as sacrificial animals, that is, food for specific categories of deities. A food offering implies, at least theoretically, its final consumption by humans. Dogs are killed during rituals addressed to the ground/sea in order to avert ill fate and danger. If destined for a sacrifice, a dog is not selected according to its behaviour and its skill but according to the patterns of its coat.¹³ This means that a different type of classification is applied, one that is not concerned with “intelligence” but with colours and patterns as is typical for selecting animals in general destined for sacrifice.

Dog meat is considered “hot” (*panes*) as are cow and goat meat. The classification “hot” is applied to animals ambiguously classified. “Hot” alludes to its inherent power that may have

¹² A person is constituted through its relations to other living members of the community on the one hand and to the invisible birth sibling (*kanda mpat*), their foreparents, and the ancestors on the other. A person undergoes various transformation in the course of his/her life, accomplished through life cycle rituals (see Ottino 2000 and Riemenschneider in press).

¹³ During my fieldwork I never came across a case in which a dog was indeed sacrificed. People explained it in terms of the difficulty to find a dog with the required patterns. Instead, the dog was replaced by a sack of Chinese *kepeng* coins.

negative consequences on its human consumers. Moreover, it is meat that not all deities may consider as appropriate; some may relish it, others may perceive it as impure and, therefore, strictly refuse it. All animals or rather their meat classified as hot have in common that these animals may not be killed within a temple and their meat may not be deposited on a (elevated) shrine. Such meat offerings are deposited on the ground; they are destined to appease netherworldly deities, thus deities feared for their power that may easily turn against the humans.

It is important to note that the dog metaphor for a human actor is not restricted to the story of the Muslim immigrant. Perhaps even more importantly, creation myths have it that Bhatara Guru, the highest god, often identified with Siwa, created dogs as primeval beings who made the world inhabitable for humans. It were dogs who, by depositing excrements in the semi-flooded world and by treading the still swampy ground in order to prepare a place for sleeping, produced the first solid ground. The dogs expanded the ground in different directions of the compass until there was enough space for the humans to live in. It were these primeval dogs, too, who implored Bhatara Guru to create humans. And, again, it were dogs who taught the humans how to behave as human beings, to work the land, to prepare food etc. The first dogs, created by Bhatara Guru, were intermediaries between the most respectable gods and the humans. Without these dogs, mankind would never have come into existence.

From this perspective the dog metaphor for the Muslim immigrant gains a further new facet, one that turns animality into a kind of semi-divinity. The dog as a sacrificial animal illustrates well the ambiguity of this animal, an ambiguity that oscillates between extremes of man/dog relationships, namely the dog as 1) humankind's divine promoter and protector 2) man's best companion and assistant in hunts, 3) the scavenger devouring man's faeces, and 4) a sacrificial animal whose meat is to be consumed by netherworldly deities (and only rarely by humans).

The cow, one of the animals at stake in the conflict about the appropriateness of animals to be sacrificed, is classified as ambiguous, too. People cannot say why it is taboo to sacrifice a cow in the temple nor why cow meat should not be deposited on a shrine. As is well-known, the cow is intrinsically linked to Hinduism in general and to Siwa in particular. There are, from an outsider's perspective, many siwaitic elements in Sembiran culture though people do not produce such rationalizations. Concerning cattle, there are never adult individuals sacrificed but always calves (*godel*) of either sex, the only exception being a death ritual for high-ranking members of the ritual village association. Then a castrated bull (ox) accompanies the dead from his home to one of the temples where usually cattle is sacrificed. The ox is killed in front of this temple. From there the corpse is carried to the burial ground.

Cows are kept in stables in the gardens their dung being used for fertilizing the gardens. In former times they were used, too, for ploughing but nowadays, due to climatic change, only horticulture is possible the hoe being the major tool. To some extent, cattle represent wealth; it takes years until they are mature and start to reproduce. In this dry region, a peasant or his wife sometimes spend several hours a day to gather enough fodder for these animals. Cattle are well cared for and regularly taken to the sea shore or to a well to be washed. Calves are continuously needed for sacrifices (mainly in the context of life cycle rituals) and can therefore easily be sold.

The ambiguity arising over cows has another dimension, too. One of the most severe taboos in Sembiran is bestiality. Bestiality, of course, needs to be brought to the attention of the village community in order to be recognized as such. Here, a further divide between humans and animals becomes visible. Animals are associated with unregulated sex. Among animals, sexual intercourse takes place even between siblings, parents and their children, people say with abhorrence. What characterizes humans are rules of conduct, especially regulations concerning incest. Committing bestiality, therefore, not only tears down the boundaries between animals and humans in general but is also a threat towards what is considered the

basis of human order: the regulation of sexual relations, mainly the incest taboo. The breaking of these taboos puts the whole village in a state of impurity (*sebel*) that needs elaborate and costly rituals to bring this crisis the village has been thrown into to an end and to restore its normal condition. During a period of *sebel*, no rituals and temple festivals may be held; the contact with the gods is disrupted.

The cases of bestiality I heard of always involved a man and a cow. The idea of sacrificing a calf that incorporated a man's sperm and then offering its meat to deities only to be eaten later by humans, is one of the most horrifying imaginations dangerously close to cannibalism. The socially established and carefully maintained separation of sexual partners (=humans) from animals, divine offerings, and food thereby collapses.

In this context it needs to be pointed out that the story of the *asu* dog (the Muslim man) uses the topic of bestiality, too: The dog who impregnated the girl, daughter of a pig, therefore, involved the breaking the taboo of bestiality, too. The story thereby emphasizes the social cataclysm that the clash between the immigrants and the locals incurred upon the village.

By contrast to the classification of dog and the cow meat as "hot"¹⁴, pork is regarded as *nyem*, "cold", and therefore as not dangerous food for humans.¹⁵ Pigs are nowadays kept in pigsties at some distance from the dwelling houses (sometimes in the gardens); however, in former times they were kept in immediate neighbourhood of the living quarters. Pigs are given all sorts of food though people emphasize that they regularly need to be fed with cooked food especially prepared for them. Male pigs are castrated after one month and seven days. This schedule corresponds with a ritual performed for babies, though this analogy receives no

¹⁴ As briefly mentioned, goat meat is considered „hot“, too, as are snakes and monkeys. The latter two animals, however, are never sacrificed.

¹⁵ The same applies to the meat of the water buffalo. The sacrifice of such animals rarely takes place in Sembiran.

further explanation.¹⁶ The pig is the major sacrificial animal. All meat is first and foremost presented to the deities, the essence of the offerings (or rather its fragrance) being consumed by them; their materiality, in this case the actual meat, remains to be later consumed by the humans. Some rituals require piglets (of either sex), *kucit*, to be sacrificed. But mostly the decision whether a piglet or a grown-up pig is killed depends on the amount of money to be spent. The term *celeng*, usually translated as pig, applies only to castrated males; these are the only pigs to be sacrificed. Adult female specimens (*bangkung*) which have already littered are not fit for sacrifice nor are boars.

Sembiran's major indigenous female deity, Bhatara Licin, who, according to one set of creation myths, raised the first humans, is also called Ni Bangkung, Lady Sow; thus this primordial deity is associated with the nurturing qualities of a sow and her "litter", the humans. Again, this throws an additional light on the story of the immigrant Muslim (dog) who married the daughter of a pig; the pig metaphor, therefore, indeed symbolizes a woman of indigenous descent.

The sacrifice of a *celeng* goes far beyond the mere presentation of its meat to the deities. A pig is butchered and cut up into pieces attributed with hierarchically ranked values and meanings. The most highly valued piece of pork is the right ear, followed by the left ear, then the right hind thigh, the left hind thigh, the lower right hind leg, the lower left hind leg, the right jaw, the left jaw, etc. The most highly valued piece, the right ear, is always presented to the deity whose annual festival is celebrated. As a rule, each deity residing in a temple has his/her individual annual festival celebrated at his/her shrine while some others only "witness" this ceremony and are served with a minor part of the pig only. After the deities have consumed the essence of the pig, the individual pieces of the pig are reassembled and the divided up according to the hierarchically organized individual positions (according to principles of seniority) within the ritual village association: the right ear is put on the *kawos*

¹⁶ Before this ritual is held, a baby is supposed not to be brought into contact with the ground nor to leave the house because it is liable to attacks from demons. After the ceremony these restrictions are lifted.

(food portion consisting of all elements of the former food offerings displayed in the long assembly hall) for the highest ranking member of the ritual village association; the left ear is put on the *kawos* of his junior. Each member of the ritual village association thereby receives a portion of the pork (sometimes in form of a little bit of sausage or minced meat etc.). The reassembling of the pig (*wangun urip*) and its display in the long hall symbolizes the unity of the ritual village association. The consumption of these “left overs” from the deities’ meal represents a *communio* of the whole village body and, at the same time, also a *communio* with the deities. The pig, therefore, is one of the strongest social as well as religious unifying symbols of Sembiran.¹⁷ Without pigs, Sembiran’s village community would, at least on a symbolic level, not exist.

Looking back at the story of the conflict between the immigrants and the autochthonous villagers it becomes understandable why the animals so hotly debated constituted indeed a crucial issue in the construction of formerly separate identities.

Conclusion

The two examples given of how the accusation of ritual mistakes are dealt with in two villages in Bali allow, in spite of their apparent difference, some general conclusions: I shall put forward my conclusion in four theses:

First, the question of committing mistakes in the performance of rituals has to be put into the context of power relations. In the case of Sembiran the mutual accusation of sacrificing the wrong animal in rituals as reported in oral traditions took place between immigrants and locals. The immigrants apparently were in such a powerful situation that they were not forced to simply follow the ritual norms of the autochthonous population but were able to set up

¹⁷ The individual parts of a calf are divided up also according to the status of deities and humans though in a very limited way and never displayed in the long hall of the village temple.

claims concerning the appropriateness of the ritual sacrifice.¹⁸ Here, in contrast to the case of Intaran, the evaluation of mistakes and the mutual accusation of committing mistakes is the result of cross-references. Mistakes in this sense were not the result of the wrong application of generally approved rules but stemmed from applying one's own rules to rituals of the other's. We can assume that the conflict did not arise over the form, the structure or the sequences of the rituals. Rather, the two groups disagreed upon the interpretation of rituals norms with regard to the core sacrifice animals, and, consequently, their implications for ritual purity/impurity. Nevertheless, these mutual interactions and accusations mirror competition, power struggles expressed in the mutual claim to possess the authority to decide about the correct ritual norm of sacrifices for the village community as a whole.

In the case of Intaran, the right to point out mistakes and to ask for their correction is held by a transcendental authority, the deities who speak through their human vessels. Their ritual criticism cannot be anticipated in detail by the organizers of the temple festivals and the participants though everybody knows that the descending deities always have a critical voice. They are attributed the right and the power to continuously modify the script of the temple festival inducing change or insisting on conservatism. Characteristically, this transcendental authority is held by the subdued local deities who also revolt against their (human) suppressors. These deities have managed to appropriate the power to finally evaluate whole temple festivals even if these are organized by high standing title-bearing groups. They are acknowledged to have the ultimate performative authority by all parties involved (Schieffelin 1996: 80). The power context there is, like in the case of Sembiran, that of immigrants and locals, too. However, the interactions apparently differed from those reconstructed for Sembiran. Among the socially and politically high-standing status groups that migrated to

¹⁸ One has to take into account that the immigrants probably also had missionizing goals. By contrast, other oral histories emphasize that a local lord ruling over Sembiran requested every immigrant had to give up the rituals and beliefs he brought along and to follow those of Sembiran if he wanted to stay there.

Intaran were ritual specialists, the *brahmana*. Through their contact with their place of origin, the *brahmana* ritual specialists were able to continuously draw on external sources of prestige and power, such as prestigious holy water from outside the village, the assistance in personnel and additional ritual paraphernalia. Moreover, they were backed by the noble lord (of *wesia* or *satria* noble descent) in whose service and on whose behalf they acted. The immigrants therefore managed to establish themselves above the local clans – and their deities: the asymmetrical relations between them were turned into a social hierarchy with the immigrants at the top.

The local deities and their voicing ritual mistakes represent a ritual rebellion but not one, as Gluckman and Turner have it, that finally re-enforces the social structure dominating everyday life. Their entrance and their voices serve as a kind of memory that keeps alive the reminiscence of the local deities as powerful leading figures associated with mainly commoner lineages and clans; such rituals contain a germ of subversion. It is a former and still latent social reality that emerges during the performance (Schieffelin 1996: 81).

Sembiran's immigrants apparently lacked such continuous translocal contacts that the *brahmana* and their noble lords of Intaran had. There apparently existed no external sources from where these Muslim could draw ideological support. If ever they cooperated with a superior lord, this cooperation definitely was not in matters of rituals but economics. This lack of external support may be one of the reasons why the immigrants were not able to permanently establish themselves above the locals.

Second, the negotiating of how to correctly perform rituals reflects socially and politically tense relationship between two groups. Such mutual accusations may be experienced as a threat to the individual group. As a reaction to such threats, rituals, that lie at the heart of their identities, and ritual rules as their normative setting, seem to be bound to become standardized and even canonized. Under such conditions inequality between these groups persists as long as

they perceive each other as entirely different though they are dependent from each other in other respects. If one group is no longer able to display legitimising proofs and means of superiority over the other but still both groups decide (or are forced) to stay together in the same place, a process of levelling of social inequality sets in. According to oral tradition, such a process was initiated by intermarriage resulted in a dissolution of boundaries between formerly separate ritual communities. It is likely that the immigrants were for what reason soever not able to establish or maintain endogamy. Only when intermarriage becomes “normal”, rituals begin to change and “syncretism” is produced, as in the case of Sembiran. In the case of Intaran, inequality has remained though not the existence of two separate ritual communities. Endogamy among gentry clans is favored, nevertheless both groups form an integrated though stratified society with a specific social division of labor.

Third, as both examples have shown, one’s own ritual rules considered as the only correct way to perform rituals, are at the core of a group’s identity construction. Therefore, the mutual accusation reflects separate identities as the case of Sembiran demonstrated. The case of Intaran reveals not mutually exclusive identities but those on different levels: a local identity supplemented by a translocal identity that gradually has become more and more important in today’s pan Hindu Balinese context within a state dominated by Islam. The present-day processes taking place in Sembiran with its reformation of the temple rituals carried out at great pace and following pan-Balinese standards strongly supports this thesis. Therefore, a new form of identity arises that is expressed in its reformed rituals as well. There, too, I suggest, power plays an important role: the reformist movement is led by a new elite, the intellectuals and publicly acknowledged ritual specialists from urban and semi-urban centres and not by the traditional leaders of the ritual village association.

Fourth, the definition of mistakes as described in the two Balinese examples moves along the lines either of incompleteness or the threat of loss of purity and the breaking of taboos with the ultimate threat of an imminent chaos. Indeed, ritual failure implies chaos, the collapse of the ordered world. In both ethnographic examples, retaliation from the deities are feared. Accusation of ritual mistakes from non-group members and the threat of failure therefore are strategies applied in power context, strategies, as I suggest, that target beyond the ritual as such. In Intaran, the uncovering of mistakes only comes from one party, the subdued local deities, while in Sembiran the accusations were mutual. Such strategies of accusing one another for serious mistakes serve as self-defence, too, to maintain and reinforce one's own group identity by attempting at the same time to undermine that of the rivals. Mutual accusations of ritual mistakes anticipated to lead to failure are social explosives, however, they apparently do not necessarily lead to social disintegration and chaos.

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