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Pabean Sangsit: A Cultural Study Through the Lives of One Family

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PABEAN SANGSIT:

A CULTURAL STUDY THROUGH THE LIVES OF ONE FAMILY

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Bali-Indonesia Arts and Culture Program
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Introduction

The objective of this Independent Study Project was to investigate life in Bali as a cultural and religious minority. I had already spent nearly two months with my family in Bedulu, a typical Hindu Balinese family, and I was curious to see how other people in Bali live. I decided to spend the ISP period in Pabean Sangsit, living with a Muslim family with Bugis roots. The main question I wanted to answer through this study was: What is life like in Bali for the religious and cultural minority? I decided to look into religion, culture, and daily activities to find any differences that exist between this minority area and the rest of Bali. I garnered the vast majority of my information from informal

conversation with people who live in the village, most often from family members of the house I was staying at. Everyone was very open and willing to inform me about Bugis culture, the lifestyle in the village, and the Muslim religion. I also made many personal observations while participating in different activities in the village.

Through my research and observations I discovered that life as a minority in Bali is nearly identical to life in Bali as a member of the majority culture. Obviously some practices are different, for instance the practice of Islam as opposed to Hinduism, but there is definitely a commonality in the devotion and importance of their respective religions. Despite the minor differences that come from religious beliefs (such as clothing, food differences [no Babi Guling], and praying practices), life in Pabean Sangsit is no different from life in a typical Balinese Hindu village.

Village Background

On the north coast of Bali near Singaraja city is the village of Desa Sangsit. Within this village are seven separate banjars, most of which are composed of nearly entirely Balinese Hindu families. But there is one banjar, known as Pabean Sangsit, which is quite the opposite. Within Pabean Sangsit there are 142 *Kepala*

Keluarga,¹ often referred to as KK, comprising a total of 480 Banjar residents.² The religious make-up of Pabean Sangsit is quite the opposite from the make-up of the other banjars; of the 142 KK there are 123 Muslim families, 12 Hindu families, six Chinese Khonghuchu families, and one Christian family.³

To satisfy the diversity within Pabean Sangsit there are many different places of worship. For the Muslims there is Mesjid Al-Munawarah, an Islamic mosque first established in the year 1553. For the Hindus there are two temples: Pura Segara, established around 1700, and Pura Cangklong, established around 1500 by the Chinese. For the Christian family there is a Catholic Church, which was established in 1996 to take in the overflow of people from the church in Singaraja.⁴ There is not a place of worship for the Chinese followers of Khonghuchu within Pabean Sangsit, instead they often pray in their own homes or at the Tri Dharma⁵ building in Singaraja city.

Bugis Culture

¹ A *Kepala Keluarga* literally means head of the family and is defined as one family unit, including husband, wife, and any children they may have. In the house I stayed at there were two *Kepala Keluarga*, with Pak Abdurrachman as the head of one and Abdullah as the head of the other. All of the foreign terms with their definitions can be found in the glossary at the end of this paper.

² Muhammad Yusuf, personal communication, 27 April 2010.

³ Muhammad Yusuf, pc, 27 April 2010.

⁴ Muhammad Yusuf, pc, 27 April 2010.

⁵ This building is a location for followers of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Khonghuchu to pray and establish a community.

Bugis History in Bali

Of the 123 Muslim Kepala Keluarga, 116 of them are from the Bugis culture, originally from Sulawesi island of Indonesia.⁶ The Bugis people first came to Bali through the Singaraja harbor, in the 1400's to trade with the local Balinese people.⁷ The Bugis traded many fish products, such as dried salt fish and shrimp paste, to the Balinese in exchange for products such as sugar, tobacco, and fruit, which were abundant in Bali. The majority of the Bugis people in Sulawesi first and foremost work as fishermen and secondly as traders. Upon arriving in Bali for trade and realizing that there were great fishing opportunities on this island many decided to stay and establish new lives in Bali.

The first wave of Bugis immigrants were all men, since these were the people who ventured off of Sulawesi for trade, but soon their wives and children made the trip to Bali and to their new lives. These first settlements were on the north coast of Bali, exactly where Pabean Sangsit is, because this was the harbor nearest to Sulawesi. The Bugis people were the first fishermen in Bali and taught the Balinese how to fish. Even today, the experience of the Bugis fishermen shows in their bravery and expertise. The Balinese fishermen on the north coast go out into the ocean a maximum of eight kilometers to catch fish, but there are

⁶ Muhammad Yusuf, pc, 27 April 2010.

⁷ Abdurrachman Syachban and Abdullah Syachban, personal communication, 19 April 2010.

Bugis fishermen who go out 150 kilometers (a trip of 3 or 4 hours) to catch tuna as big as a person's body.⁸ These men leave the shore at 3:00 AM and don't return until at least 4:00 PM and sometimes as late as 7:00 PM. The sheer bravery and expertise that this trip requires is proof of the history and thus superiority of the Bugis fishermen.

Bugis Music in Pabean Sangsit

The Bugis people have their own traditional type of music, which is still very strong in Pabean Sangsit. They play for religious ceremonies, weddings, and even as a part of the Bali Arts Festival. The group is composed of two drums (*gendang*), a large gong (*kempom*), a small gong (*kenong*), small cymbals (*kecek*) and a Bamboo horn (*Serunai*).⁹ The Serunai is the leader of Bugis music and is made up a bamboo pipe with six holes in the front and one hole in the back. For all Bugis Serunai songs the second and sixth holes (counting from the mouth piece) must always be closed, but the rest of the fingers are free to move however they want.¹⁰ There are set songs for the Serunai, but the second and sixth holes still must always remain closed.

The two Gendang drums are always played as a set and are known as Ibu (mother) and Anak (child). The Ibu drum sets the pattern, while the Anak drum

⁸ Muhammad Yusuf, personal communication, 27 April 2010.

⁹ Abdullah Syachban, personal communication, 14 April 2010.

¹⁰ Abdullah Syachban, pc, 14 April 2010.

is free to improvise. To play the drums you hold a stick in one hand and can hit either drumhead with your hand or the stick. The only requirement for the improvisation of the Anak drum is that the stick does not hit the drumhead at the same time as the Ibu's stick hits the drumhead.¹¹ The sound of the two sticks must be staggered and never sound at the same time.

Bugis Language in Pabean Sangsit

Although the vast majority of the families in Pabean Sangsit have Bugis origins very little remains of Bahasa Bugis (Bugis language). Nobody in the village is able to speak Bahasa Bugis fluently. Most of the people speak Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Bali fluently, simply because their families have lived in Bali for many generations already. Bahasa Bugis is not spoken or understood fluently, but there are certain words that still remain as part of the vocabulary of residents of Pabean Sangsit. The most frequent word used is *Iyek*, which means yes and is used to be polite, for instance with your mother or an older relative.¹² Other words that are still used in the village refer to names for family members. For instance a child may call their Aunts' *Mak Tua* (when the Aunt is older than the parent) or *Mak Cik* (when the Aunt is younger than the parent).¹³ They may call their Uncles' *Wak Tua* (when the Uncle is older than the parent) and *Wak Cik*

¹¹ Abdullah Syachban, pc, 14 April 2010.

¹² Abdullah Syachban, personal communication, 26 April 2010.

¹³ Abdullah Syachban, pc, 26 April 2010.

(when the Uncle is younger than the parent).¹⁴ To speak to a girl whose name you don't know you can call them *Becik* and for a boy *Bacok*. An example of this is if you see a girl walking on the beach and you want to talk to her you can say, "Where are you going Becik?"¹⁵ This is an acceptable term and is still often used today in the village.

Because of the diversity and mixture of cultures in Pabean Sangsit the languages of Bahasa Indonesia, Bahasa Bali, and Bahasa Bugis have mixed together to form a language unique to this area. All three languages are even mixed into single sentences. For example *Jangan kau maling pao*, which means "don't you steal the mangoes," is a sentence that uses all three languages.¹⁶ *Jangan kau* comes from Bahasa Indonesia, *maling* comes from Bahasa Bali, and *pao* comes from Bahasa Bugis. This is a sentence that people outside of Pabean Sangsit would be unable to understand because of the even mixture of different languages, but inside Pabean Sangsit everyone understands.

Bugis Culture in Marriage Ceremonies

Bugis culture still remains very strong through certain ceremonies in Pabean Sangsit. For instance, marriage ceremonies are one instance where the distinctive culture of the Bugis people can be seen very clearly. Before a

¹⁴ Abdullah Syachban, pc, 26 April 2010.

¹⁵ Abdurrachman Syachban, personal communication, 26 April 2010.

¹⁶ Abdullah Syachban, personal communication, 27 April 2010.

marriage, the groom goes to the bride's house where they are entertained with traditional martial arts and music.

One of the most unique parts of a Bugis marriage ceremony is the poem battling, known as *Berbalas Pantun*, between the bride and the groom.¹⁷ These poems are made up on the spot, delivered quickly, and become a form of entertainment for all the attendants of the wedding ceremony. Today these battles usually last between ten and fifteen minutes, but in the past they could last for up to an hour of constant poem exchanges. The poems must always fit into a four-line A-B-A-B structure, with the first and third lines ending in a similar sound and the second and fourth lines ending in a similar sound.¹⁸ One example of a Bugis poem thought up right on the spot follows:

Kalau makan harus lahap (If you eat, you must enjoy it)

Kalau berlari jangan berdiri (If you run, please don't stand up)

Mohon maaf seribu maaf (I'm sorry, 1000 times sorry)

Apakah tujuan anda dating kemari (What is your purpose coming here)¹⁹

Two examples of these poems used for a final farewell to end the battle follow:

Kalau ada jarum yang patah (If there is a broken needle)

¹⁷ Abdurrachman Syachban and Abdullah Syachban, personal communication, 19 April 2010.

¹⁸ Abdurrachman Syachban and Abdullah Syachban, pc, 19 April 2010.

¹⁹ Abdurrachman Syachban and Abdullah Syachban, pc, 19 April 2010. (This poem was made up on the spot by Abdullah Syachban)

Jangan disimpan di dalam peti (Don't keep it inside the box)
 Kalau ada kata kata yang salah (If there are any wrong words)
 Jangan disimpan di dalam hati (Don't keep them in your heart)²⁰

Kalau ada sumur di ladang (If there is a well in the field)

Boleh kita menumpang mandi (We may bathe in it)

Kalau ada umur panjang (If there is a long life)

Boleh kita berjumpa lagi (We may meet again)²¹

These poem battles are not only reserved for marriage ceremonies, but are also used for entertainment purposes. When Pak Abdurrachman was a teenager, in the 1960's, the kids used to love taking part in this type of activity during the full moon. The teenagers would gather, divide into different groups, and exchange poems until dawn.²² The teenagers today still love to do this type of poem battling, but their poems do not always fit the A-B-A-B structure.

This form of poem battling is used as a form of entertainment in Bugis culture. It is fun to watch people think up poems very quickly or sometimes struggle to find the right words. They are also used as a way to build close

²⁰ Abdurrachman Syachban and Abdullah Syachban, pc, 19 April 2010. (This poem was made up on the spot by Abdurrachman Syachban)

²¹ Abdurrachman Syachban and Abdullah Syachban, pc, 19 April 2010. (This poem was made up on the spot by Abdurrachman Syachban).

²² Abdurrachman Syachban and Abdullah Syachban, pc, 19 April 2010.

relationships between people. Thus it is important to perform this ritual at marriage ceremonies to ensure a close relationship between the bride and the groom.

Islamic Practices

Prayer

In Pabean Sangsit around 85 percent of the families are followers of the Islamic religion.²³ Religion is very important in Indonesia and it is no different in this village. Five times every day the *Adzan*, or call to prayer, can be heard ringing out from Mesjid Al-Munawarah. The Adzan is an Islamic song that can be sung by any capable man and is the way that people are informed that it is time to pray. The Arabic words of the Adzan follow:

Allahu Akbar

Allahu Akbar

Ashadu alla ilaha illallah

Ashadu alla ilaha illallah

Ashadu anna muhammadar rosulullah

Ashadu anna muhammadar rosulullah

Hayya 'alas sholah

Hayya 'alas sholah

Allah hu akbar

Allah hu akbar

²³ Muhammad Yusuf, personal communication, 27 April 2010.

La ila ha illallah²⁴

The Adzan can be loosely translated into English to mean:

Allah is very big

Allah is very big

I know and testify that there is no God besides Allah

I know and testify that there is no God besides Allah

I know and testify that there is no other messenger besides Mohammad

I know and testify that there is no other messenger besides Mohammad

Please do prayer

Please do prayer

Please live life in the correct way (don't be arrogant)

Please live life in the correct way (don't be arrogant)

Allah is very big

Allah is very big

There is no God besides Allah²⁵

There are two types of prayer that devout Muslims, such as those in Pabean Sangsit, can perform. The first, known as *Sembahyang Wajib*, is mandatory and must be performed five times everyday at roughly 5 AM, 12:30 PM, 4 PM, 6:30 PM, and 7:30 PM.²⁶ *Sembahyang Sunah*, the other type of Islamic prayer, is optional, but a Muslim who performs any of the various types will receive a reward from God in the afterlife, known as *pahala*. The procedure for all Islamic

²⁴ Abdullah Syachban, personal communication, 26 April 2010.

²⁵ Abdullah Syachban, pc, 26 April 2010.

²⁶ Abdurrachman Syachban and Abdullah Syachban, personal communication, 19 April 2010. (All of the information from this section on Islamic prayer practices comes from this same interview source)

prayer is known as *Rakaat* and has a very exact form of performance. To perform one Rakaat there are seven steps:

- 1) The Muslim begins by standing with their arms crossed and their hands in front of their stomach
- 2) They bow (known as *Rukuk*)
- 3) Stand up again
- 4) Kneel, touching forehead to the floor (*Sujud*)
- 5) Sit on the floor
- 6) Sujud again
- 7) Stand up

Each prayer time has a different name and requirement for performing the prayer procedure. The 5 AM prayer time is known as *Sembahyang Subuh*²⁷ and the Muslim performs two Rakaat. Both the 12:30 PM prayer, known as *Sembahyang Zuhur*, and the 4 PM prayer, known as *Sembahyang Ashar*, are performed with four Rakaat. *Sembahyang Magrib*, the 6:30 PM prayer, is performed with three Rakaat. Lastly the 7:30 PM prayer known as *Sembahyang Isya* is performed with four Rakaat.

There are many types of *Sembahyang Sunah*, all of which are used to show true devotion to God, which is then returned with an answer or reward from God. An example of *Sembahyang Sunah* is *Sembahyang Mutlak*, which is

²⁷ *Sembahyang* is the Indonesian term for pray. I will be using the Indonesian terms because Pabean Sangsit is in Indonesia and this is the term that they use. The Arabic term for pray is *Sholat*. If using Arabic the five times for prayer are called *Sholat Subuh*, *Sholat Zuhur*, *Sholat Ashar*, *Sholat Magrib*, and *Sholat Isya*.

performed before travel and does not have a specific time for performance.

Sembahyang Tahajud is another type of optional prayer with very specific requirements. It must be performed before the 5AM *Sembahyang Subuh*, most often between 12:30AM and 3AM, and consists of five Rakaat. These five Rakaat are broken up into groups: first performing two Rakaat, then greeting *Assalamua'laikum* (the usual Islamic greeting which means may god bless you) to the right and left, performing two more Rakaat, greeting to right and left again, and performing the final Rakaat. One more type of optional prayer is *Sholat Istikharoh* and is used to ask guidance from God to help make a tough life decision. To perform this, one must pray before sleeping and God will provide guidance or signs through their dreams.

Prayer Preparation

Before praying a Muslim must wash at least their hands, feet, and face. Their clothes must be completely clean and full attention must be given to the practice of prayer. If, after washing themselves and putting on clean clothes, they get a small amount of dirt on their clothes or even fart they must start the whole process of washing over again.²⁸ If they fall asleep while praying they must return to the beginning of the process and wash themselves again so that they will be able to give full devotion to their prayer. After performing a "dirty" act,

²⁸ Abdullah Syachban, personal communication, 22 April 2010.

such as sexual intercourse, menstruation, having a wet dream, or giving birth, the person must bathe completely, including inside their nostrils and ears, before being allowed to pray again. Women are not allowed to pray during menstruation or for the 44 days following childbirth to ensure that their bleeding has stopped.²⁹

For prayer women must be completely covered, except for their hands, feet, and face. They most often wear *Mukenah*, a special dress that covers all required parts.³⁰ Men must be covered from the bellybutton down, except their feet. They usually wear a hat called *Songkok* to ensure that their hair does not touch the ground when they perform Sujud.³¹

Islamic Study

Beyond praying five times everyday it is required of the Muslims in Pabean Sangsit to study Arabic so they are able to not only read *Al-Qur'an*, the Holy Book of Islam, but also understand it. The children in Pabean Sangsit study Arabic five nights a week (with a break coming usually on Thursday and Saturday) in two different schools and learning styles. One school, with kids ages three to fourteen, study solely reading *Al-Qur'an*, while the other school, with

²⁹ Abdullah Syachban, pc, 22 April 2010.

³⁰ Abdullah Syachban, personal communication, 2 May 2010.

³¹ Abdullah Syachban, pc, 2 May 2010.

kids ages four to fifteen, teaches reading Al-Qur'an along with how to pray and how to read Arabic letters.³²

On different nights every week there are separate meetings for men, women, and adolescents to read Al-Qur'an together. These meetings, known as *Majelis Ta'Lim Al-Munawarah*, occur on Thursdays for the men, Fridays for the adolescents, and Sundays for the women and begin directly after the 6:30PM Magrib prayer.³³ Both the men and women's meetings are held at the mosque, while the adolescent's meeting is held at a different house in the village every week. The women's meeting draws the largest number of attendants, typically reaching 75, with women traveling as far as two kilometers on motorbikes.³⁴ Although it is important to attend these meetings it is not mandatory and bad weather can be a strong deterrent. One meeting, before which there had been strong rain, drew only about fifteen women. The Friday night meeting draws adolescents from SMA (middle school), SMP (high school), and University. Both boys and girls attend, but they must sit segregated by gender. The purpose of these meetings is to continue the study and reading of Al-Qur'an as well as creating a strong sense of community within the village.

³² Abdullah Syachban, personal communication, 21 April 2010.

³³ Hilma Syachban, personal communication, 30 April 2010.

³⁴ Nikmah Syachban, personal communication, 18 April 2010.

Friday is the Holy day for Muslims and special actions take place in Pabean Sangsit. At noon, all of the men must go to the mosque to pray and listen to the speech given by the *Kepala Adat Muslim* (Pak Abdurrachman). This speech, which is known as *Khotbah*, is given every Friday and is intended to teach people how to be good and kind.³⁵ There is a different topic every week, but the main purpose always remains the same.

Rituals

There are many rituals surrounding pregnancy and childbirth that are practiced in the Islamic faith. During pregnancy both the father and mother must read Al-Qur'an, either together or separately, every Magrib prayer time.³⁶ Every Monday and Thursday the father must fast from sunrise to sunset. The mother may fast as well, but it is more commonly performed just by the father, since the mother is pregnant. There is a Bugis and Islamic ritual, known as *Samban*, which is performed in the seventh month of a pregnancy. To perform this ritual the grandmothers of the unborn baby read certain parts of Al-Qur'an while placing bananas, smooth-skinned coconut, eggs, and candles on the mother's belly. Each object has a different significance according to its everyday characteristics. The bananas are used to create a child who always gives benefits to humans, just as

³⁵ Abdurrachman Syachban, personal communication, 30 April 2010.

³⁶ Abdurrachman Syachban and Abdullah Syachban, personal communication, 2 May 2010. (All of the information in this section on rituals comes from the same interview source unless otherwise footnoted).

bananas do. The coconut is used to ensure that the child does not forget where they came from, since a coconut that falls in water will always return to shore. The eggs are used to make sure that the child will always be protected from harm, just as eggs have a protective shell. Lastly the candles are used to make sure that the child enlightens the community around them and sacrifices their own happiness for the happiness of everyone else, just as a candle melts away while everyone else enjoys its light.

Directly after a child is born and bathed another Islamic ritual is performed. A family member of the child reads Adzan into the baby's right ear and then reads *Iqomah* (the same as Adzan except every sentence is only spoken once) into the baby's left ear. After this the same family member brings something sweet (such as honey or dates) to the baby's lips to taste. This entire ritual is performed to protect the child from harm, instill the importance of the Islamic faith, and ensure that the child is sweet in the future. One week after birth the child's head is completely shaved. The hair is then weighed, the equivalent of the weight of the hair is changed into gold (if the family is rich) or silver (if the family is not rich), and the money is donated to the poor people of the community. The purpose of this custom is to instill the importance of generosity and charity in the child, as well as to clean them and allow new hair to grow in.

A required Islamic ritual is the circumcision of male children, known as *Sunatan*. It is usually performed when the child reaches age four or five, but can be performed at any age. This is a required rite of passage for Muslim males because it is seen as healthier, cleaner, and better. When talking with Pak Abdurrachman on the subject of circumcision he jokingly asked whether I preferred a banana with skin or one that is peeled. Naturally I answered that I preferred a peeled banana. He responded, "Exactly, it is better that way" and laughed at the joke he had made.³⁷

There are numerous Bugis rituals that are performed throughout a person's life. One example is known as *Buang Ari-Ari* or throwing the placenta. After a child is born the Bugis people take the placenta and dispose of it by either burying it or, more commonly, throwing it into the sea and allowing the water to wash it away. Books, pens, and paper are included with the placenta of all children and a make-up kit is added if the child is female.

Distinct Village Activities

Fishing

³⁷ Abdurrachman Syachban, personal communication, 22 April 2010.

Fishing is one of the main occupations and pastimes in Pabean Sangsit. It is used to provide food for the families and, if many are caught, to sell in the market for profit. There are some Bugis fishermen in Pabean Sangsit who travel as far as 150 kilometers to catch tuna as large as the human body. This is a trip that takes over 12 hours and requires 100,000 rupiah every time.³⁸

Of course, there are people in Pabean Sangsit who fish much closer to shore. I went fishing with Pak Aspari Rhomadhoni (commonly called Pak Rom), a resident and longtime fisherman of Pabean Sangsit. He has been fishing for so long that it is all second nature to him. He knows where the fish are just by looking at the ocean surrounding him. We caught the most fish in areas where the water was calm and clear. The typical equipment used for fishing in this area is a very long line of fishing wire wrapped around a spool with eight hooks and a weight at the end. You must bait each hook with pieces of small fish or squid and drop the line straight down from the side of the boat until it hits the bottom of the ocean. By using just the line, as opposed to a full fishing rod and reel, it is much easier to feel when a fish bites. When you feel a bite, you yank the line up, but wait to reel it in; the intention is to catch more than one fish with every drop of the line, thus saving energy and time.

³⁸ Muhammad Yusuf, personal communication, 27 April 2010.

To catch squid a line with only one hook that looks like a fish and no bait is used. The line is let out behind the boat and the hook is pulled behind as the boat is slowly rowed. This is done close to shore and the water must be very calm, clean, and clear.³⁹ Fishing for squid is usually done in the late afternoon, while catching fish is usually done in the early morning, starting before sunrise. Everything that Pak Rom and I caught was given to one of the women of the house, who cleaned the fish and began to immediately cook them. Every meal I ate in Pabean Sangsit included fresh fish, cooked in many different ways; fried, grilled, cut up into a stew, or packed into a banana leaf are just a few of the many ways that the fish were prepared.

Latihan

A favorite nighttime activity in Pabean Sangsit is known as *Tenaga Dalam*, which translates to inner power, but is commonly just called Latihan, or exercise.⁴⁰ People come over to the Syachban compound and sit outside talking, drinking coffee, and eating snacks. Eventually people shift to the open space of the yard to partake in Latihan. Everyone finds their own space, and going at their own pace, centers themselves bringing their hands over their head and in front of their face into a ready position. Then, once they have cleared their mind and concentrated hard enough they begin to move, practicing any type of Kung

³⁹ Aspari Rhomadhoni, personal communication, 25 April 2010.

⁴⁰ Abdurrachman Syachban, pc, 30 April 2010.

Fu that is in their heart. Every person moves differently; some moving gracefully while others stumble and even fall down. Some even take on the personality of an animal, doing Kung Fu moves like that animal might.

The first time a person chooses to partake in Latihan Pak Abdurrachman must prepare them. The new person stands face-to-face with Pak Abdurrachman who takes their hand and tells them to concentrate, clear their mind, and focus in their heart on moving with any type of Kung Fu they feel. Then Pak Abdurrachman steps back and the new person centers themselves, bringing their hands up into the ready position. While the new person is concentrating and focusing him or herself, Pak Abdurrachman watches them then moves as though he is karate chopping the air. This is his way of passing the “magic” that is required for this type of concentration to the practitioner of Latihan.⁴¹

Those who have already been practicing for an extensive amount of time participate in mock battles that take up the entire yard. The two people (although sometimes there are more than two participating in the “fight”) start facing each other from across the yard. They both center themselves with their hands in the ready position, but only one person moves. The other person stands still with one arm extended as though they are pushing their opponent away. As the mover gets closer to their stationary opponent they begin to feel the power being

⁴¹ Abdurrachman Syachban, personal communication, 12 April 2010.

pushed towards them and are pushed backwards, unable to reach their opponent.

One night Pak Abdurrachman, the supreme practitioner and teacher of Latihan, took on three opponents at once. As they moved toward him he needed only to lean forward for them to stumble backward and break their concentration. It was clear that this was not fake, but that there was actually some sort of power emanating from Pak Abdurrachman that could affect the movements of other people.⁴²

Rumah Tangga

Pak Abdurrachman Syachban was raised from a very young age to follow in the footsteps of his father, grandfather, and countless generations above them. As the oldest child of the family it was his responsibility to study the art of traditional medicine and Bugis magic to become a witch doctor, just as his father had been.⁴³ This magic is not only received from the males, but also from his female ancestors. Pak Abdurrachman's grandmother was a traditional midwife during her life, helping deliver all of the babies in his generation. She was able to tell the gender of a baby before it was born and could use her hands to turn a

⁴² Nearly everyone who comes to the compound partakes in Latihan. One night while I was in Pabean Sangsit there were as many as 30 people in the compound with at least six or seven people practicing at once.

⁴³ Abdurrachman Syachban, personal communication, 20 April 2010.

baby still in the womb to prepare it for birth. Even professional doctors came to her asking for help with deliveries.⁴⁴

With this legacy of traditional medicine it is no wonder that there are people coming to the house everyday for consultations with Pak Abdurrachman. He is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and has had patients from as far away as Holland. The patients come bearing gifts of cigarettes, flowers, and food and in return receive traditional medicine in the form of leaves, herbs, or prayers. The Tenaga Dalam exercises that occur at night in the yard also fit under the umbrella of Pak Abdurrachman's traditional magic.

Another form of this Bugis magic that I experienced is known as *Rumah Tangga*, which is based on both Al-Qur'an and Bugis culture. Rumah Tangga is a form of prediction of the compatibility between two people and the household that they will create.⁴⁵ A person must speak the two names (using either their full names, everyday names, or both), while Pak Abdurrachman listens and assigns the names numbers based on the way they sound. These numbers come from Al-Qur'an and Abdurrachman knows what to assign immediately because of the length and intensity of his study. He then adds the numbers together and

⁴⁴ Abdurrachman Syachban and Abdullah Syachban, personal communication, 16 April 2010.

⁴⁵ Abdurrachman Syachban, personal communication, 27 April 2010. (All of the information in this section on Rumah Tangga come from this same interview source).

explains whether the couple is a good match and in what ways this is true or false. I provided three couples (my parents and my two brothers) of whose marital status and compatibility I knew and Pak Abdurrachman predicted their Rumah Tangga.

Example 1: Man: Silas Jonah Fred Dreamer (Silas)

Woman: Carol Lynn Erlewine (Carol)

Abdurrachman's prediction: This couple is a good match. Their full names create a nice, quiet household. Their everyday names (the name in parenthesis) are also balanced. Money comes in fast for this couple, but it goes out fast as well. The man is stronger than the woman in this couple. Lots of women like the man, but he must avoid the temptation that they produce and focus on loving only this one woman.

Example 2: Man: Stephen Mark Kovnat (Steve)

Woman: Susan Harriet Lichtenberg (Susan)

Pak Abdurrachman's prediction: This couple is a good match. For their full names they are equal in strength and talkativeness, but with their everyday names the woman is stronger and more talkative. If they have a lot of money come in at one time many people come and borrow it and it disappears quickly.

This couple's household is good, but it is somewhat up and down with highs as well as lows.

Example 3: Man: Lucas

Woman: Sharon (For this Rumah Tangga I only provided the couple's everyday names, but he was still able to make a prediction)

Pak Abdurrachman's prediction: This couple is also a good match and they lead a good and quiet household. They are rich, will continue to be rich, and will be able to accumulate a lot of possessions.

All of these predictions were accurate in explaining the status of the couples. For instance, the only couple that he said is rich are the wealthiest of all three couples; the man is a doctor and the woman is a writer who just finished her book. He knew no information about these couples before making these predictions, but simply listened to their names and assigned them numbers based on Al-Qur'an.

Many people in Pabean Sangsit come to Pak Abdurrachman for Rumah Tangga before they get married. If he tells them it is not a good match they can choose a new name, which is a good match and take on that name. For example Abdullah had a Rumah Tangga before he was married to his wife Amelia, but it was predicted to be a bad match. So his wife took on the name Camelia, which

was a good match, they got married and are still happily married today. Even couples that are already married come to Pak Abdurrachman for a Rumah Tangga. These couples are often having problems and fighting a lot. Pak Abdurrachman calculates the numbers for their names and discovers that it is not a good match. He then suggests that the couple choose a new name for one of them to take on. They choose a new name until the Rumah Tangga predicts that it is a good match. After this the couple must marry again with the new name in a small ceremony. In Pabean Sangsit there are many couples that often fought, but now, after choosing a new name that the Rumah Tangga says to be a good match, they are happily married and never fight. It is hard to believe that the Rumah Tangga is accurate, but it has been proven accurate many times over.

Overall Village Life

Life in Pabean Sangsit is very free. People are free to come and go from house to house as they please. If they are hungry they eat and if they are tired they sleep. There is no designated bedtime and some people often stay up until two or three in the morning. The only one who comes close to having a regulated bedtime is the eight-year old girl who has school in the morning, but even that is not strict. Beyond personal freedom there is also deep cultural and religious freedom that exists in this area. Balinese, Bugis, Javanese, and more live together in harmony in this small village. They even help each other during their

respective rituals. For instance, during Hindu cremation ceremonies in Pabean Sangsit many Muslim people help carry the cremation tower.⁴⁶ The residents of this village describe it as one big family, and this truly shows. Religion, although extremely important in a personal context, is no deterrent for friendship.

Conclusions

Life in Bali as a cultural and religious minority is no different from life in Bali as part of the majority. The people in Pabean Sangsit live their lives the same as those in the rest of Bali. In fact, their lives may even be freer than those elsewhere. This family spends nearly all of their time sitting outside on the *Bale Bengong*, a structure built for the intention of chatting, relaxing, and even spacing out. It seems as though spending time with family and friends is by far the most important thing to them. Islam still remains an extremely strong presence in Pabean Sangsit similar to the way that Hinduism influences the rest of Bali. Bugis culture can still be seen throughout the village, but its influence is slowly fading away. For instance, there used to be many *Rumah Panggung*, elevated traditional Bugis houses which are still very common in Sulawesi, in Pabean Sangsit, but now there are only two, one of which was built recently. It is not the mixture with Balinese culture that has caused the loss of aspects of Bugis culture, but instead the modernization of the area. Kids today are not interested in listening

⁴⁶ Abdullah Syachban, personal communication, 15 April 2010.

to and learning about traditional Bugis music, but instead prefer modern popular music.

Religious and cultural tension, of which I was expecting to find, does not exist in Pabean Sangsit. People of all religions and backgrounds are free to come here and are immediately taken in as friends. I was amazed by the openness and friendliness that I was immediately met with despite the fact that I had a completely different culture and did not understand a lot of what was said. It is clear that the people in this village take the teachings from Al-Qur'an about being a righteous and kind person to heart. They do not discriminate between races or religions, but instead look at each individual person. There is no hatred or dislike instilled in the people who live here, instead they are taught to be good, kind, and open human beings from a very early age. The people in Pabean Sangsit definitely live by the Indonesian aphorism "Bhineka Tunggal Ika," which translates to Different but the same.⁴⁷

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Recommendations for Further Study

This Independent Study Project looked at only one distinct village in Bali. Although I went into depth about the village activities, Islamic practices, and Bugis culture I received this information solely from residents of Pabean Sangsit. This ISP could be expanded upon by studying minority life in a different area of Bali, for instance an area that is less diverse or tolerant of other cultures. One could also investigate life in Bali as a different minority, such as Christian, Buddhist, or Chinese. I chose to focus just on the culture in Pabean Sangsit after realizing how truly rich and interesting it was. I think that was a wise decision for this ISP, but that the question of minority status and religious tolerance in Bali is one that still needs to be looked into more deeply. A broader study taken from different parts of the island, including different people's opinions focusing on this idea could answer this important question.

An interesting ISP could also expand upon the study of the traditional medicine and magic that is practiced by Pak Abdurrachman. It is a very popular form of healing and is still a very present part of the culture Pabean Sangsit. He is a very kind and generous man and is more than willing to talk about his status

as a witch doctor and his practices. His cell phone number is 08164736424 and he is almost always available to talk.

Glossary of Foreign Terms

Adzan: Islamic call to prayer, which occurs five times everyday at 5AM, 12:30PM, 4PM, 6:30PM, and 7:30PM

Al-Qur'an: The Holy Book of Islam from which Muslims live their lives

Bacok: Bahasa Bugis term for a boy whose name you do not know

Bale Bengong: A structure on which the Syachban family and their friends spend most of their time

Becik: Bahasa Bugis term for a girl whose name you do not know

Berbalas Pantun: Poem battling that occurs at Bugis marriage ceremonies with an exchange of poems that follow an A-B-A-B structure

Buang Ari-Ari: A Bugis life ritual where the placenta of a new born baby is "thrown," either by burying it or putting it in the sea and allowing the water to wash it away

Gendang: Drums for Bugis music group, there are two known as Ibu and Anak

Iyek: "Yes" in Bahasa Bugis

Kecek: Small cymbal set, that makes a continuous chang sound throughout Bugis songs

Kempom: Large resonant gong used for Bugis music

Kenong: Small dull-sounding gong used for Bugis music

Kepala Adat Muslim: Leader of a Muslim community who leads prayer in the mosque and delivers a speech every Friday

Kepala Keluarga: Head of a single-family unit, which is used to count population in Pabean Sangsit

Khotbah: Speech given every Friday intended to teach people the right way to live (to be kind and good)

Majelis Ta'Lim Al-Munawarah: Separate meetings for men, women, and adolescents to read Al-Qur'an together

Mak Cik: Bahasa Bugis term for an Aunt who is younger than the child's parent

Mak Tua: Bahasa Bugis term for an Aunt who is older than the child's parent

Mukenah: Traditional clothing worn by women for prayer which covers the entire body excluding the hands, feet, and face

Pahala: A reward from God received in the afterlife for performing any type of optional prayer known as Sembahyang Sunah

Rakaat: The seven-step process of Islamic prayer, including Rukuk (bowing) and Sujud (kneeling and touching forehead to the floor)

Rumah Panggung: Traditional elevated Bugis house of which only two remain in Pabean Sangsit

Rumah Tangga: Traditional Bugis and Islamic magic used to predict the compatibility of two people solely by hearing their names spoken

Samban: An Islamic and Bugis ritual where bananas, coconuts, eggs, and candles are placed on a pregnant women's belly to ensure the child is beneficial to humanity, knows where they came from, is protected from harm, and enlightens the community around them

Sembahyang Ashar: Prayer performed everyday at 4PM, which includes four Rakaat

Sembahyang Isya: Prayer performed everyday at 7:30PM, which includes four Rakaat

Sembahyang Magrib: Prayer performed everyday at 6:30PM, which includes three Rakaat

Sembahyang Mutlak: Optional prayer performed before travel

Sembahyang Subuh: Prayer performed everyday at 5AM, which includes two Rakaat

Sembahyang Sunah: Optional Islamic prayer, which results in a reward from God in the afterlife. There are many different kinds of this type of prayer

Sembahyang Tahajud: Optional Islamic prayer that must be performed between 12:30AM and 3AM with five Rakaat

Sembahyang Wajib: Mandatory Islamic prayer performed five times everyday

Sembahyang Zuhur: Prayer performed everyday at 12:30PM, which includes four Rakaat

Serunai: Horn made from bamboo and palm leaves used to lead a Bugis music group

Sholat Istikharoh: Optional Islamic prayer after which guidance for a tough decision is provided through a dream

Songkok: Traditional hat worn by men for prayer to ensure that the hair does not touch the ground when performing Sujud

Sunatan: Circumcision of the male child usually performed at ages four or five

Tenaga Dalam: A nighttime activity in Pabean Sangsit, which combines exercise and meditation, commonly called Latihan

Wak Cik: Bahasa Bugis term for an Uncle who is younger than the child's parent

Wak Tua: Bahasa Bugis term for an Uncle who is older than the child's parent