

Book Reviews

Staying Local in the Global Village: Bali in the Twentieth Century. Edited by Linda H. Connor and Raechelle Rubinstein. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999. 353 pp.

This book grew out of the papers presented at the Third International Bali Studies Workshop held in Sydney and Wollongong in July 1995. It is the third book in this series of international Bali Studies Workshops; after the first one, *State and Society in Bali: Historical, Textual, and Anthropological Approaches* (edited by Hildred Geertz in 1991) based on papers presented at the first international workshop in 1981, and the second one, *Being Modern in Bali* (edited by Adrian Vickers in 1996) based on papers presented at the second international workshop in 1991. It is edited by two Australian Baliologists, Linda H. Connor from the University of Newcastle and Raechelle Rubinstein from the University of Sydney.

Despite their anthropological background, Connor and Rubinstein have used the sociological dialectic between “structure” and “agency” in balancing the book’s chapters on the social structures in which Balinese people live with chapters focusing on “agency”; namely, on how several categories of Balinese people — students, farmers, Bali Aga, and village women — deal with those structures.

Also, in the various chapters focusing on structures the authors have exposed how those structures emerged and developed from interactions with Balinese agents who constantly confronted the challenges faced by them; first by the East Javanese refugees who established their Hindu kingdoms in Bali, then by the Dutch colonial forces who annexed Bali into their Dutch East Indies colony, followed by the New Order state of General Soeharto after the massacre of 5 per cent of the island’s population in 1965, and finally by the wave of tourism which entrenched Bali

into their numerous fly-and-play-golf package tours in collusion with Soeharto Inc.'s five-star hotels imperium.

The discussions on structures begin with Michel Picard's chapter on the transcultural constructions of Balinese identity, which describes the evolution of identity of Balinese intellectuals from the mid nineteenth century to the late twentieth century. In this chapter Picard highlights the evolution of Bali's Hindu identity, which in the terminology of the Indian neo-Gandhian, Ashis Nandy, may be called the "semitization" of Bali's folk Hinduism. Therefore, Picard's chapter should better be read in conjunction with Pitana's Chapter 6 on "Status Struggles and the Priesthood in Contemporary Bali".

As with Nandy's description of the semitization tendency of Hindu reformists in colonial India, Hindus in Bali also faced strong pressure from the Indonesian state to conform with the semitic features of Indonesian Muslims and Christians in three ways. Firstly, to form a single representative body, the Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia (PHDI), secondly, to compile the different practices and beliefs of folk Hinduism and to streamline and codify these practices and beliefs into a "holy book", and thirdly to forsake Hindu polytheism by adopting a paramount Hindu deity, Sang Hyang Widi.

Picard's chapter is followed by Margaret J. Wiener's Chapter 2 on the appropriation of local history by the New Order state. This chapter is best read in conjunction with Chapter 5 by Thomas A. Reuter, which focuses on the Balinese indigenous Balinese mountain people who opposed the Hindunisation of their island by the refugees from East Java and are still fighting to preserve their own pre-Hindu culture.

Wiener describes how the New Order appropriated the *puputan*, the heroic struggle in 1906 when the Badung and Klungkung kings and their followers committed mass-suicide by confronting the Dutch invading troops, dressed in white. These events which completed the Dutch conquest of Bali have been immortalized by using *puputan* to name monuments and public squares in Bali, by staging annual commemorations of these events in those public squares, by representing it in the "Beautiful Indonesia" Miniature Indonesia Park of the late Mrs Soeharto, and by using it to justify the inclusion of Bali in the state's

development projects.

As described by Reuter, this type of battle to win the people's hearts and minds has been preceded by the predecessors of contemporary Hindu Balinese to justify the take-over of Bali from the pre-Hindu, indigenous Balinese kings by the refugees from Majapahit, the last Hindu kingdom in Java. This invasion of Bali in AD 1343 has been described as a civilizing mission by these East Javanese Hindus. This new religion has indeed been embraced by the majority of the Balinese population, and preserved by the Dutch colonial regime by prohibiting Christian missionaries from entering Bali.

However, about 80,000 people, or between 2 and 3 per cent of the island's total population still strongly adhere to their pre-Hindu beliefs, calling themselves "Bali Aga" and calling the descendants of the East Javanese refugees and their followers, "Bali Majapahit". Continuous contestation over temples, ceremonies, and the rights of priests to lead ceremonies, especially ceremonies relating to irrigation — the liveblood of most rural Balinese wet rice farmers — still reflect the ongoing cultural battle between "Bali Aga" and "Bali Majapahit". The formation of an overarching Hindu Balinese religious structure, PDHI, can thus be seen as a way to justify a rather monolithic control over the life of all Balinese peoples.

The Indonesian state, however, does attempt to preserve for itself — and not for the PDHI — the right to call the last hegemonic shots. That is the reason why in Bali, unlike in many other Indonesian islands and provinces, there was a constant battle in defining the parameters of *agama*, or religion, and *adat*, or customs, as well as between *kebudayaan*, or culture, and *kesenian*, or art. That is why the state attempted to co-opt Balinese by often appointing Balinese scholars to head the Director General of Kebudayaan, while simultaneously attempted to control the curriculum of Bali's performing arts college, STSI (Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia) through the Director-General of Higher Education, which both fall under the same Department or Ministry. These dynamics are described by Brett Hough in Chapter 8.

Another form of ideological control by the New Order was through control over the media, including the electronic media, especially tel-

evision, which has deeply penetrated into the Balinese households and countryside. Control over the programmes allowed to be broadcast by all state and private television stations in Bali — and for that matter, in the whole of Indonesia — falls under the Department of Information. This is described by Mark Hobart in Chapter 9.

The third set of structures which influences the livelihood of the Balinese people, apart from the state and the religious hierarchy, is tourism, which is dealt with by Graeme MacRae in Chapter 4, focusing on Ubud, a tourist town in the mountains.

Although all the chapters include elements of agency, or how Balinese deal with those structures, such as turning their television channels off during long speeches of government officials, four chapters deal more exclusively with this side of the sociological equation. These are Chapter 3 by Putu Suasta and Linda H. Connor (“Democratic Mobilization and Political Authoritarianism: Tourism Development in Bali”, Chapter 5 by Reuter, Chapter 6 by Pitana (mentioned earlier), and Chapter 7 by Ayami Nakatani on the role of women weavers.

Suasta and Connor focus on the protest movements against the two most controversial tourist projects in Bali in the late 1990s, namely, the Garuda Wisnuu Kencana (Golden Wisnu’s Garuda) monument to be constructed near the Ngurah Rai international airport, and the Bali Nirwana Resort hotel-cum-golf course near the Tanah Lot Temple in the district of Tabanan. Opposition to these projects helped to motivate many Balinese to support the presidential candidacy of Megawati Soekarnoputri, daughter of the disposed first president of Indonesia, whose mother is a Balinese.

Suasta and Connor’s chapter, however, also has a Balinese angle, which parallels the focus of Pitana’s chapter: both chapters describe how ordinary Balinese used their interpretation of Hinduism to confront the power structures. In the case of the anti-BNR protests, various groups of young protestors used Hindu labels in their names, such as the Forum of Balinese Hindu Students and the Indonesian Hindu Youth and Students Communication Forum. In addition, a smaller protest event consisted of a prayer session led by a neo-Gandhian Hindu activist, Gedong Bagoes Oka. All these protest actions forced the Hindu religious

hierarchy, PDHI, to issue a decree with a moral force for Hindus, a *bisama*, stipulating the spatial limits of the “zone of sanctity” around major temples. In other words, these protestors relied on their Hindu credentials to oppose the non-Hindu Balinese capitalists and military commanders, while indirectly helping to legitimize the government-sanctioned Hindu religious hierarchy, the PDHI.

In this sense, the anti-BNR movement differs radically from the type of struggle described by Pitana, who focuses on the movement of so-called “outsiders” (*jaba*), namely, Balinese who do not belong to the three high status groups (Brahmana, Satria and Wesia, collectively known as *triwangsa*) to persuade the PDHI to recognize the rights of their priests to preside over ceremonies. This religious bureaucracy formerly only acknowledge the right of members of the Brahmana caste to priesthood, which implied that all Balinese should use the services of Brahmana priests, or *pedanda*, to preside over ceremonies.

Finally, Ayatani’s chapter focuses on how village women in the district of Karangasem compensate their families’ declining income from farming with an increased production of hand-woven clothes, *songket*, to be sold to the tourists. This chapter is, unfortunately, the only chapter in this book which focuses on women, and, also unfortunately, only deals with the conventional “women-in-development” angle of many donor agencies, rather than the feminist angle now increasingly adopted by Indonesian non-governmental agencies.

Nevertheless, as a whole I find this new book on Bali to be highly recommendable not only for academics but also for lay persons who are contemplating Bali as their next tourist destination. Including Australian surfies who regularly visit Bali without understanding Bali’s history, culture, and contemporary struggles to cope with the world in and around the island.

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