



# The Performance of the Baris Goak Dance in the Pujawali Ceremony at *Pura Puseh*, Selulung indigenous village, Kintamani, Bangli Regency

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the significance of religious ceremonies in Hindu communities, with a focus on the *Pura Puseh* temple and the Baris Goak dance in Selulung, Kintamani, Bali. *Pura Puseh*, an ancient temple of the Kahyangan Tiga, serves as a key site for rituals connected to prosperity and blessings. The Baris Goak dance, unique to Selulung, is a sacred performance that symbolically represents the battle between crows (seen as harbingers of death) and a spiritual hero, Mangku Pucangan. Rooted in cultural and historical narratives, this dance integrates traditional music, costumes, and rituals, reflecting the deep relationship between art, religion, and community identity in Balinese society. The historical development of Selulung village, driven by unity and leadership, further illustrates how these cultural practices have been preserved and continue to play a central role in maintaining spiritual and social harmony. The preservation of the Baris Goak dance, supported by village customs and regulations, highlights the enduring transmission of spiritual and cultural values across generations, ensuring the continuation of a rich heritage in the modern era.

**Keywords:** Baris Goak Dance, Selulung, Bangli.

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## INTRODUCTION

Religious ceremonies require specific locations, timing, facilities, participants, and a leader. For Hindu communities, the location of the ceremony is often chosen based on the type of ritual being performed. For instance, Dewa Yajna rituals are usually held in a temple (*Pura*) or a sacred place for the residents of Selulung in Kintamani, Bangli; one such Dewa Yajna ritual is performed at *Pura Puseh*. *Pura Puseh* is one of the temples that belong to the Kahyangan Tiga. The word "Puseh" comes from the word "pusar," which means "center." In this context, "center" symbolizes the core of worldly prosperity that brings wealth and happiness to humanity.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, ceremonies related to abundance and life's blessings are conducted at *Pura Puseh*. In Bangli, It is considered an ancient temple and a cultural heritage site.<sup>2</sup> It holds significant historical artifacts, including inscriptions, religious practices, and various ancient objects. Situated in a remote and quiet area, particularly in

Selulung indigenous village, *Pura Puseh* plays a central role in the community's religious life. Ceremonial practices in this village are deeply rooted in traditions passed down through generations, with rituals differing from those in neighboring villages.

One of the traditional dances performed in this context is the Baris Goak dance, unique to this indigenous village. This sacred dance passed down through generations, is an integral part of the religious ceremonies in the village. The dance holds spiritual and educational significance and is characterized by its distinctive costumes and storytelling. The performers include a dancer dressed in black, symbolizing a raven (*goak*), and another dressed in white, portraying Jero Mangku Pucangan.<sup>3</sup> Offerings are made before and during the performance as part of the ritual. Given the sacred and rare nature of the Baris Goak dance, research has been conducted to preserve it, culminating in a scholarly work titled *The Performance of the Baris Goak Dance*

in the Pujawali Ceremony at *Pura Puseh*, Selulung indigenous village, Kintamani, Bangli Regency.

## History of Selulung Village

Culture is recognized by seven universal elements or criteria in every society, no matter how simple or complex the culture may be. According to C. Kluckhohn, every ethnic culture contains seven cultural elements known as cultural universals, which include (1) Language, (2) Knowledge System, (3) Social Organization, (4) Tools and Technology, (5) Livelihood System; (6) Religion; and (7) Arts.<sup>4</sup> These seven cultural elements can be further divided into more specific categories. For example, the arts can be broken down into (1) Sculpture, (2) Relief Art, (3) Painting and Drawing, (4) Makeup Art, (5) Vocal Art, (6) Instrumental Art, (7) Literature; (8) Drama, and other arts.

In Bali, one of the significant forms of art is sacred religious performance art, which is deeply intertwined with both religious and cultural aspects of Balinese



**Figure 1.**<sup>5</sup> The Baris Goak Dance staged in 2019 at Puseh Temple, Selulung Village.



**Figure 2.**<sup>11</sup> Image of a raven, an animal which attacked the village of Selulung and became the inspiration of the Baris Goak Dance.

society. Among the many forms of performance arts are sacred dances (*wali*) such as Sang Hyang, Rejang, various Baris dances, Sutri, Pendet, and others. There are also Bebali arts like Gambuh, Baris Goak, Topeng, and others and popular arts like Legong, Arja, Kekebyaran, Drama Gong, and others).<sup>6</sup> Additionally, traditional performance arts in Bali include Gambuh dance-drama, Wayang Kulit shadow puppetry, Topeng/Prembon dance-drama, Calonarang, Arja dance-drama, Sendratari, and Drama Gong.<sup>7,8</sup> Topeng dance-drama, in particular, has

been popular for a long time and continues to be widely appreciated by the Balinese community.

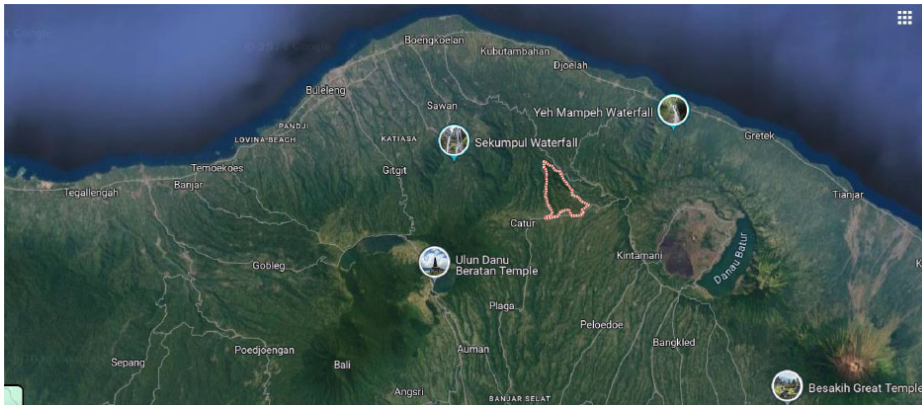
One of the religious dances is the Baris Goak dance, which symbolizes spiritual values and heroic character. The Balinese community cherished and preserved this dance. Baris Goak represents a living cultural art in Bali, combining elements of dance, traditional music, makeup art, and other artistic aspects. Dance and music are the most dominant elements. In Balinese Hindu tradition, art cannot be separated from religious ceremonies, making it an

integral part of yajna rituals. The history of Selulung Village's formation needs to be better documented, but insights from trustworthy sources provide a brief overview of its origins. Several villages, including Tanjung, Petabahan, Bunut, SukaPura, Tanguan, Tohmea, and Titioot, faced external attacks in ancient times. Due to a lack of unity among these villages, they eventually became fragmented. Recognizing this situation, the King of Tabanan sent a leader named Pasek Nyoman Sadri to reorganize and unite the seven divided villages. Through his persistence and determination, Pasek Nyoman Sadri managed to bring the villages together through consultations, establishing a new village named Selulung, which roughly means "sharing both good and bad together." The newly formed village was placed under the leadership of Pasek Nyoman Sadri. As the governance of Selulung Village stabilized, Pasek Nyoman Sadri was honored by the villagers and given a purification ceremony (*prayascita*). He was then appointed the leader of Selulung Village with the title Ki Dukuh Selulung. During his leadership, the village never again faced external attacks until Ki Dukuh Selulung passed away.<sup>9</sup>

### Multiple Attacks by Flock of Ravens Bearing Ill Omen

The Baris Goak dance, which depicts a battle between Tegal Badeng warriors and crows symbolizing death, is deeply revered by the Selulung community and is performed during Dewa Yadnya ceremonies. The dance is a fusion of multiple artistic elements, including traditional music, makeup, costumes, drama, and choreography. The preservation of this dance is closely tied to the customs of Selulung, where it is performed during temple ceremonies as part of the ritual offerings. Although the dance has been passed down through generations, its continuity is maintained through village regulations requiring the younger generation to learn and perform it.

The historical roots of Baris Goak date back to a tale from the Badung region, during the reign of I Gusti Kertalangu, when a swarm of crows plagued villagers. A local figure named Ki Mangku



**Figure 3.**<sup>1</sup> Satellite view of Selung Village.

Pucangan managed to infiltrate the crows, disguised as a white crow, and ultimately defeated them using a sacred whip granted by Dewi Danuh. The story has since been immortalized in the dance, which continues to be performed at religious ceremonies in Selung indigenous village, particularly during the temple festivals at *Pura Kahyangan Tiga*, *Pura Penulisan*, and other sacred sites.<sup>10</sup>

The spiritual significance of the Baris Goak dance is reflected in its role as a ritual performance that serves both as a form of cultural expression and a means to ensure harmony within the community by warding off harmful influences. This rich tradition highlights the integral connection between art, religion, and communal identity in Balinese society.

The Baris Goak dance remains preserved in the traditional village of Selung, Kintamani, Bangli, Bali. This sacred dance narrates the story of Ki Mangku Pucang, a figure wielding a magical whip to subdue a flock of crows. The performance is divided into three main parts: before, during, and after the dance. Before the performance begins, the dancers first perform the Baris Gede or Baris Tombak dance. As the musicians play the *tetabuhan bang gede* symphony, the dancers neatly arrange their spears and replace them with black cloth wings, symbolizing the transformation into crows. The first segment involves the Baris Gede dance, where dancers carry spears that the village priest has ritually purified. During this part, the dancers shout "puhh haaiyeee," a chant commonly used by the villagers of Selung to shoo away animals in their daily lives. This shout symbolizes driving away unwanted spirits that could

disturb the community's peace.

During the performance, the dancers imitate the flight of crows by flapping their wings while forming a circle in the center of the stage. The plot centers around a group of crows attacking a rice vendor, who cries out for help as they seize their goods. Mangku Pucangan enters, armed with a whip, to fend off the crows. He lashes at them, causing some to "die" and others to faint. In this climactic scene, Mangku Pucangan curses the crows to prevent them from causing further harm in Puri Pemecutan, Pasar Badung, and across Bali. However, the crows plead for a grand offering involving the sacrifice of a black chicken. After the performance concludes, a person enters the stage with the grand offering (*Banten segehan agung*). After the spear dance concludes, the spears are laid on the ground and then collected by the priest to be placed at the main gate of the temple, known as the Kori Agung. The second segment features the core performance of the Goak Dance, performed in a circular formation. The dancers, representing crows, emit the vocal sound "aaakkk" to symbolize the crows disturbing the villagers. The dancers also wield long black shawls, symbolizing the wings of the crows. The performance's climax depicts the character of Ki Mangku Pucang subduing the crows using his magical whip. After the crows are defeated, the dancers sit in prayer, and the offering of a grand segehan is made by the priest and Ki Mangku Pucang to neutralize malevolent spirits, ensuring the ceremony proceeds smoothly.<sup>12,13</sup>

The Baris Goak dancers, along with Mangku Pucangan, then gather to pray for safety. The musicians play the *gending*

*pakaad*, signaling the dancers to exit the stage. The costumes and props used in this performance are crucial for depicting the characters and the story. The Baris Goak dancers wear a Baris headdress, white clothing, and black cloth wings. The rice vendor is dressed in traditional attire, while Mangku Pucangan wears long pants, a headcloth, and a small belt. Props include spears for the Baris Goak dancers, a basket of rice for the vendor, and a whip carried by Mangku Pucangan. The third and final segment involves the return of the spears to the dancers, who once again perform the Baris Gede dance. This concluding segment symbolizes the successful transformation of negative traits, represented by the crows, into positive virtues. The dance performance ends as the dancers move back to the inner sanctum from the middle courtyard of the temple.

## CONCLUSION

The culture and religious practices in Selung Village, mainly reflected in the Baris Goak dance, demonstrate a profound connection between art, spirituality, and communal identity. This sacred dance, which narrates the battle between Ki Mangku Pucang and a flock of crows, has been preserved for generations as an integral part of religious ceremonies in the village. Its performance is carefully staged with symbolic costumes, rituals, and traditional music, emphasizing the importance of art in maintaining spiritual and social order in the community.

The history of Selung Village itself highlights the significance of unity and leadership. The village was formed through the efforts of Pasek Nyoman Sadri, who successfully united several fragmented settlements into a cohesive community. Under his leadership, Selung prospered and remained protected from external threats. This spirit of unity and shared destiny is encapsulated in the village's name, which translates to "sharing both good and bad together," symbolizing the communal values that continue to shape the village's cultural and religious practices.

The Baris Goak dance remains central to these practices, symbolizing the transformation of negative energies into



positive virtues. The dance's ritualistic role and artistic elements ensure that both spiritual beliefs and cultural heritage are passed down across generations. The preservation and performance of this dance not only maintain the community's spiritual balance but reinforce the identity and cohesion of the Selulung villagers, ensuring that their rich traditions continue to thrive in the modern era.

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