



## History and Existence of Sanghyang Janger Maborbor Dance in Bangli

Nyoman Sabda\*

### ABSTRACT

In Indonesia, dance serves both artistic and religious functions, particularly in religious ceremonies. This is exemplified in the village of Yangapi, located in the Tembuku district of Bangli Regency. Beyond its well-known waterfall tourism, this village maintains a rich cultural tradition in the form of Janger Maborbor sacred dance. This dance is considered unique due to its religious function, which is closely tied to the local belief system, particularly in its role as a medium for connecting with astral entities. This study aims to examine the ongoing existence of Janger Maborbor sacred dance in Yangapi village as an integral part of Balinese culture that has endured to the present day. This research employs a qualitative descriptive research method. Data collection is conducted through field observations and interviews. The findings are presented in textual form, supplemented by visual documentation as supporting evidence. During the performance of the Sanghyang Janger Maborbor Dance, transcendental communication takes place in the form of a dialogue between humans and the Divine. This dialogue is expressed through sacred mantras and prayers recited by the temple priest (pemangku), as well as through the trance-induced (kerauhan) movements of the dancers. Additionally, offerings (banten) serve as a symbolic expression of devotion and gratitude to God. Through this sacred communication, Hindu devotees and all those involved in the performance of the Sanghyang Janger Maborbor Dance experience a spiritual closeness with the Divine.

**Keywords:** Bali, Sanghyang Janger Maborbor, Dance, Bali, Sacred .

**Cite This Article:** Sabda, N. 2024. History and Existence of Sanghyang Janger Maborbor Dance in Bangli. *Bali Tourism Journal* 8(3): 61-65. DOI: 10.36675/btj.v8i3.117

\*Freelance writer  
obatsakitampuh@gmail.com

Received: 2024-12-21  
Accepted: 2024-12-19  
Published: 2024-12-26

### INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, dance serves both artistic and religious functions, particularly in religious ceremonies.<sup>1</sup> This is exemplified in the village of Yangapi, located in the Tembuku district of Bangli Regency. Beyond its well-known waterfall tourism, this village maintains a rich cultural tradition in the form of Janger Maborbor sacred dance. This dance is considered unique due to its religious function, which is closely tied to the local belief system, particularly in its role as a medium for connecting with astral entities. As a result, Janger Maborbor sacred dance is classified as a form of transcendental communication. The people of Yangapi continue to preserve this dance tradition, as it is believed to bring fertility and serve as a means of healing during outbreaks of disease.<sup>2</sup> The performance of Janger Maborbor sacred dance conveys non-verbal messages, wherein communication is not expressed through words but through movements,

commonly referred to as non-verbal language. The dance movements in Janger are rooted in classical Balinese dance, particularly in the structured gestures employed in this performance. Dance itself is a rhythmic bodily movement that serves as an expression of the creator's emotions, ultimately producing elements of beauty and profound meaning.<sup>3</sup> Dance emphasizes conceptual and choreographic creativity, wherein choreography can be interpreted as a form of non-verbal communication—a mode of expression frequently employed in performances. This form of communication relies not on words or vocalization but on bodily movements, often referred to as sign language.

A message is a set of meaningful symbols conveyed by a communicator. Messages can take the form of ideas, opinions, or concepts that have been formulated and communicated through symbols to a recipient or audience. Essentially, a message represents the

entirety of what is being conveyed by the communicator. A well-structured message should have a central theme that influences the audience's attitudes and behavior.<sup>4</sup> Although messages can be presented in extensive detail, it is crucial to focus on their ultimate objective. Messages (or communication content) consist of two key aspects: the content of the message and the symbols used to express it. In most forms of communication, language serves as the primary symbolic medium, as it is the only system capable of articulating thoughts, emotions, facts, opinions, both concrete and abstract ideas, as well as past and future experiences.<sup>5</sup>

This study aims to examine the ongoing existence of Janger Maborbor sacred dance in Yangapi village as an integral part of Balinese culture that has endured to the present day. Furthermore, this study explores the nonverbal symbols expressed through the performance of Janger Maborbor sacred dance. This research employs a qualitative descriptive research

method. Data collection is conducted through field observations and interviews. The findings are presented in textual form, supplemented by visual documentation as supporting evidence.

## THE EXISTENCE OF SANGHYANG JANGER MABORBOR DANCE

In general, Balinese dance is classified into three categories: Wali Dance, Bebali Dance, and Balih-balihan Dance. Wali Dance refers to sacred dances performed exclusively within religious ceremonies. This typical dance is restricted in its presentation and is typically showcased only during rituals. Bebali Dance, while also sacred, is more culturally and traditionally integrated within the local community. Unlike Wali Dance, which is highly exclusive, Bebali Dance is more commonly performed for a broader audience. Lastly, Balih-balihan Dance is a form of artistic performance created primarily for entertainment. Unlike the first two categories, Balih-balihan Dance is not bound by specific times or locations for its presentation.<sup>6</sup>

However, the Janger Dance in Yangapi Village, Tembuku District, Bangli Regency, differs significantly from typical Janger performances. The tradition of performing Sanghyang Janger Maborbor in this village classifies it as a Wali Dance, making it a sacred ritual rather than a purely entertainment-oriented performance. A linguistic breakdown of the term Janger Maborbor sacred dance originally from translation of Tari Sanghyang Janger Maborbor. It reveals three components: Sanghyang, Janger, and Maborbor. Sanghyang Dance is categorized as a Wali Dance due to its ritualistic function in warding off misfortune, its use of simple musical accompaniment, and its historical significance. Janger Dance, on the other hand, is a social dance performed by youth groups across Bali. As a traditional folk dance, Janger represents Balinese cultural pride and is often performed as Balih-balihan Dance, serving both as entertainment and as a social interaction medium.<sup>8</sup>

The origins of this dance trace back to Penyimpenan Dukuh Bukti temple, where it has been historically performed as a mandatory part of temple ceremonies



Figure 1.<sup>7</sup> Illustration of Trance in Balinese Dance

(Piodalan). According to informant, Jro Mangku Widana, an elder and spiritual leader, the tradition began when the people of Bhukti Hamlet, Yangapi Village, were afflicted by an incurable epidemic. During that time, a divine revelation (pawisik) instructed the community to perform the Janger Dance. Following the performance, the epidemic subsided, and the community regained health. This dance, also known as Ilen-Ilen dance, continues to be performed during Piodalan ceremonies, which occur every six months on Anggara Kasih Kulantir day at Dalem Metra temple, indigenous Metra Village. To this day, the Janger Maborbor sacred dance is regarded as a protective ritual against calamities. The local community firmly believes that during Yadnya ceremonies, Janger Maborbor must be performed, as failure to do so may invite misfortunes such as disease outbreaks or other disasters.

The Janger Maborbor Dance is performed by five to ten pairs of male and female dancers, all of whom are pre-adolescent children. The male dancers are referred to as Kecak, while the female dancers are called Janger. The performance incorporates elements of dance, vocal music (Sekar Rare), instrumental accompaniment, costumes, and makeup. While the dance movements and songs

generally adhere to the conventional Janger style, Janger Maborbor stands out due to the incorporation of fire-based performances. The ritual unfolds through a series of carefully orchestrated stages, each carrying deep spiritual and cultural significance. It begins with the Opening Ceremony, where temple priests (Pemangku) and religious leaders conduct sacred rites within the Jeroan Pura (inner sanctum). Offerings (Banten) are meticulously arranged, and ancient mantras are chanted, invoking divine blessings for the ceremony. This solemn initiation sets the spiritual tone, ensuring the ritual is performed with purity and devotion.

Following the prayers, the Processional Entrance marks the beginning of the performance. From behind a ceremonial curtain (Langse), the Janger and Kecak dancers emerge into the Jaba Pura (outer temple courtyard). Their movements are initially simple, with Janger dancers gracefully carrying hand fans as symbolic props. This stage introduces the audience to the visual and rhythmic harmony that defines the performance. As the ritual progresses, the dancers transition into the Sitting Formation. Janger dancers kneel, while Kecak dancers adopt a cross-legged position, engaging in a mesmerizing

call-and-response chanting. This cyclical pattern repeats three times, culminating in the formation of a circle, leaving a sacred empty space at its core—symbolizing the spiritual energy that will soon manifest.

The intensity of the ritual escalates with the Fire Ritual. The Pemangku, assisted by community members, arranges dried coconut husks (sambuk) at the center of the formation and sets them ablaze. The flickering flames create an ethereal ambiance, signaling the transition to the most mystical phase of the ceremony. Reaching its climax, the Trance and Fire-Walking segment showcases an extraordinary display of spiritual possession. As the Pemangku recites his final prayers, the fire pit is prepared for the possessed dancer. Entering a deep trance-like state, the dancer interacts with the flames—stepping onto, handling, and even consuming the embers. Astonishingly, despite direct contact with fire, they remain unharmed, a phenomenon believed to be the result of divine protection. Beyond its dramatic spectacle, this sacred performance serves as a spiritual safeguard for the community, reinforcing the Janger Maborbor Dance as an integral part of Yangapi Village's religious and cultural heritage. The ritual not only pays homage to ancestral traditions but also strengthens the collective faith of its people, ensuring the continuity of their deeply rooted spiritual legacy.

## TRANSCENDENTAL COMMUNICATION IN THE SANGHYANG JANGER MABORBOR DANCE

Transcendental communication refers to the interaction between humans and the Divine.<sup>10</sup> In the performance of the Sanghyang Janger Maborbor Dance in Yangapi Village, the Hindu community in attendance engages in transcendental communication through supernatural forces. This communication process occurs during the Dewa Yajña ritual, employing both verbal and non-verbal symbols.

Verbal communication in the Sanghyang Janger Maborbor Dance is expressed through Jejangeran chanting, a traditional song that serves as a symbolic element in every performance during the Dewa Yajña ceremony. The movements in



Figure 2.<sup>9</sup> Janger Maborbor sacred dance

the Sanghyang Janger Maborbor Dance act as a medium for conveying messages, facilitating communication between the communicator and the communicant through language. This concept aligns with Dedy Mulyana's (2005:73) assertion that verbal communication encompasses all forms of symbols composed of one or more words, with nearly all speech stimuli falling within the category of verbal messages. Language, therefore, can be understood as a structured system of symbols governed by rules, allowing a community to communicate and comprehend meaning. Verbal language serves as the primary means of expressing thoughts, emotions, and intentions, where words represent various aspects of individual reality.<sup>11</sup>

In the Sanghyang Janger Maborbor performance, verbal communication manifests in the sacred mantras recited by the temple priest (pemangku) during the opening of the ceremony. This represents a direct communication process where 1) The communicators include the pemangku, the Sanghyang Janger Maborbor dancers, the Sekaa Gong (musical ensemble), and the attending Hindu community at the temple. 2) The communicant is Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa (the Supreme God in Balinese Hinduism). 3) The message conveyed is an expression of devotion and reverence for the Divine. 4) The medium used is language in the form of sacred mantras.

According to Suarjaya (2010:78), a mantra is a sacred set of syllables used by priests (sulinggih) and temple priests (pemangku) to lead religious rituals and awaken spiritual energy within yajña ceremonies.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, Linguistically, Saussure (1996:7) argues that language is a sequence of names applied to pre-existing concepts in the historical evolution of a linguistic system, ensuring that these concepts remain stable. Language is structured as a system of signs, each consisting of two fundamental aspects: 1) Signifier, the form or structure of language and 2) Signified, the content or meaning it conveys.

For sound to be considered a language, it must be able to express or communicate ideas; otherwise, it remains merely a meaningless sound. Mantras are composed using specific characters and arranged in a structured manner to create a particular vibrational sound. To be effective, a mantra must be recited consistently in accordance with the prescribed rhythm and intonation. A mantra's unique resonance is intrinsic to its power; therefore, when translated into another language, its spiritual essence may be diminished. Furthermore, according to Titib (2000:442), mantras possess an inherent spiritual force, making them powerful utterances that, when properly recited, yield spiritual accomplishments (Siddhi). Thus, in the Sanghyang Janger Maborbor Dance, the



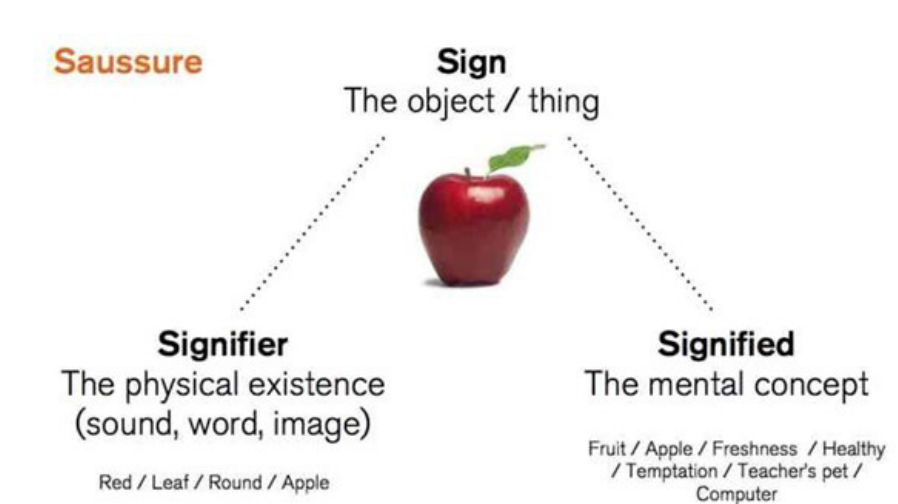
recitation of mantras serves as a form of transcendental communication, allowing ritual participants to connect with divine forces and invoke spiritual protection.<sup>13</sup>

The second form of transcendental communication in the Sanghyang Janger Maborbor Dance performance is nonverbal communication, which utilizes symbolic offerings (Banten) presented before the performance and the stacked “Sambuk” (coconut husks) that are set ablaze as part of the ritual. Banten is a sacred offering composed of specific elements, including flowers, fruits, certain leaves (such as betel leaves), food (such as rice, side dishes, and traditional cakes), and essential ritual elements like water and fire (Titib, 2000:80). In this context, Banten functions as a medium of communication, conveying prayers and messages from all parties involved in the performance, including the Hindu devotees attending the piodalan ceremony to God, as an expression of devotion.<sup>15 16</sup> Transcendental communication in the Sanghyang Janger Maborbor Dance performance aligns with Jürgen Habermas’ theory of communicative action, which posits that human communication is fundamentally symbolic. According to Habermas’ communicative interaction theory, symbolic interaction enables dialogue not only between humans but also between humans and the Divine. This dialogue aims to establish mutual understanding through the symbols employed in communication.

Habermas’ theory of communicative action emphasizes that communicative actions are primarily oriented toward achieving consensus (mutual understanding). He asserts that an interaction qualifies as communication when all parties involved can coordinate their intentions through consensus. The agreement reached at each stage is continuously evaluated in relation to intersubjective recognition or validity claims.

In communicative action, speakers assume that:

1. They share the same understanding of specific expressions.
2. Their statements will be comprehensible to the listener.
3. Their propositions are true.



**Figure 3.**<sup>14</sup> According to Saussure, Language is structured as a system of signs, each consisting of two fundamental aspects Signifier and Signified.

4. They are sincere and committed to achieving consensus.
5. They engage in dialogue by actively listening to one another (Habermas, in Culler, 1985:34).<sup>17</sup>

During the Sanghyang Janger Maborbor Dance performance, transcendental communication manifests as a communicative interaction in which the communicator expresses emotions and spiritual devotion. This expression facilitates a dialogue between humans and the Divine, primarily conveyed through sacred mantras recited by the temple priest (pemangku) and the trance-induced movements of the possessed dancers.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, the symbolism of transcendental communication is embodied in Banten offerings, which serve as a profound expression of gratitude and devotion to God. Through this ritualistic communication, Hindu devotees and all participants in the Sanghyang Janger Maborbor performance feel a deeper spiritual connection with the Divine. The preservation and continued performance of this dance are essential, as they are likely to protect the community of Yangapi Village from misfortune. The spiritual power within the dance is believed to originate from the local deities (sesuhunan) who possess the dancers. After the fire ritual concludes, the dancers are sprinkled with holy water (Tirta), restoring their consciousness.

## CONCLUSION

The Janger Dance is a cultural pride of the Balinese people. Traditionally, it serves as entertainment (balih-balihan) and a social dance. However, the Janger Dance in Yangapi Village, Tembuku District, Bangli Regency, differs in nature. The Sanghyang Janger Maborbor Dance is classified as a sacred wali dance, with its origins traced to Pura Penyimpnan Dukuh Bukti. As a ritual dance, it is considered obligatory to be performed during piodalan (temple anniversary ceremonies).

During the performance of the Sanghyang Janger Maborbor Dance, transcendental communication takes place in the form of a dialogue between humans and the Divine. This dialogue is expressed through sacred mantras and prayers recited by the temple priest (pemangku), as well as through the trance-induced (kerauhan) movements of the dancers. Additionally, offerings (banten) serve as a symbolic expression of devotion and gratitude to God. Through this sacred communication, Hindu devotees and all those involved in the performance of the Sanghyang Janger Maborbor Dance experience a spiritual closeness with the Divine.

As a result, this dance is preserved and continually performed, as it is believed to protect the Yangapi Village community from misfortune. The spiritual power

within the dance is thought to originate from the local deities (sesuhunan) who possess the dancers. Once the fire ritual concludes, the dancers are sprinkled with holy water (tirta), restoring them to consciousness.

The performance of this dance is deeply intertwined with religious and aesthetic values. The community's belief system, which is inherently personal and spiritual, is reflected in the dance movements, the rhythmic melodies of the Batel gamelan ensemble, and the songs performed. These elements embody the philosophical concepts of Satyam (truth), Sivam (sacredness), and Sundaram (beauty), ultimately creating harmony within the ritual and the community.

## REFERENCES

1. Dewi, A. P. (2016). Komodifikasi Tari Barong di Pulau Bali (Seni Berdasarkan Karakter Pariwisata). *Panggung*, 26(3).
2. Ni Wayan, P. (2006). FUNGSI TARI SANGHYANG JANGER MABORBOR DI DESA YANGAPI BANGLI. *Mudra (JURNAL SENI BUDAYA)*, 18, 1-1.
3. Sutini, A. (2018). Pembelajaran tari bagi anak usia dini. *Cakrawala Dini: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 3(2).
4. Aufirandra, F., Adelya, B., & Ulfah, S. (2017). Komunikasi mempengaruhi tingkah laku individu. *JPGI (Jurnal Penelitian Guru Indonesia)*, 2(2), 9-15.
5. Denton Jr, R. E. (2004). *LANGUAGE, SYMBOLS, AND MEDIA*. Society, 42(1).
6. Sankara, A. (2020). The Sanghyang Dance: from its prehistoric origin to conservation effort. *Bali Tourism Journal*, 4(3), 54-57.
7. Image by Wikipedia contributors. (2024). Trance and dance in Bali. Wikipedia. Available from URL: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trance\\_and\\_Dance\\_in\\_Bali#/media/File:Trance\\_and\\_dance\\_in\\_Bali\\_Bateson\\_Mead\\_still\\_3.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trance_and_Dance_in_Bali#/media/File:Trance_and_dance_in_Bali_Bateson_Mead_still_3.jpg)
8. Laksmi, D. M. S. (2022). Janger Bali: Sejarah dan Popularitasnya. *Journal of Music Science, Technology, and Industry*, 5(2), 325-337.
9. Image by News Dewata. Instagram. 2024. Available from URL: <https://www.instagram.com/dewatanewsofficial/reel/C9FKifop9MN/>
10. Deddy Mulyana. 1999. *Ilmu Komunikasi Suatu Pengantar*, Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
11. Deddy Mulyana. 1999. *Nuansa-Nuansa Komunikasi ; meneropong politik dan budaya komunikasi masyarakat kontemporer*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya,.
12. Suarjaya, I W. dkk. 2010. *Analisis Upacara Wana Kertih Di Pura Batukaru Desa Wongaye Gede*. Paramita. Surabaya
13. Titib. I Made. 2003. *Theologi Dan Simbol-Simbol Dalam Agama Hindu*. Paramitha, Surabaya
14. Gambar
15. Selian, Rida Saufan. 2007. *Analisis Semiotika Upacara "Ngerje" Kajian Estetika Tradisional Suku Gayo Di Dataran Tinggi Gayo Aceh Tengah*. Universitas Negeri Semarang.
16. Suamba, Ida Bagus Putu. 1996. *Yajna Basis Kehidupan (Sebuah Canang Sari)*. WARTA Hindu Dharma. Denpasar
17. Culler, J. (1985). Communicative competence and normative force. *New German Critique*, (35), 133-144.
18. Subagiasta, 2006. *Tatwa Hindu Bagi Pandita Dan Pemangku*. Paramita, Surabaya

