

# The Gelgel Era of *Bale Samar* Myths: The Relationship with Cultural Heritage and Pandemic Prevention Policies

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**Abstract.** The political conflict between King Gelgel and Dalem Nusa was ended by the unification of the kingdom of Nusa under Gelgel accompanied by the surrender of Bale Samar (invisible troops). This myth is related to a number of cultural heritages in Nusa Penida, in Gelgel Village, and in Semarapura Klungkung. Bale Samar is believed to be a protective soldier and at the same time as a disease spreader. The Bale Samar myth also indicates the existence of local wisdom in preventing *gering*. This study seeks to examine the Bale Samar myth in order to identify related cultural heritage, and local wisdom to prevent pandemics as a form of public policy issued by the authorities at that time. To achieve this target, three ecliptic theories are combined, namely semiotic theory, hermeneutic theory and public policy theory. This research is qualitative with a cultural studies approach. The main type of data is qualitative data, supported by quantitative data. Data collection using observation techniques, in-depth interviews, and documentation, as well as inductive data analysis. The results of the study found that the Bale Samar myth of the Gelgel era is related to cultural heritage remains in Nusa Penida (toponyms of the names of the villages Ped, Sampalan, and Kutampi), in Gelgel Village and at Pura Pejenengan Puri Klungkung. The Bale Samar myth reflects local wisdom in the field of pandemics, especially the preparedness to face *Gering Agung* and efforts to overcome it on a *sekala - niskala* manner as a form of public policy issued by the king.

**Keywords:** Myth; Bale Samar; Cultural Heritage; Local Wisdom; Public Policy

## 1 Introduction

The Gelgel era of Bale Samar myth tells of the conflict between King Dalem Watuenggong and Dalem Nusa or Raja Dalem Bungkut. This story ends with the unification of the Nusa Penida region under the rule of the Kingdom of Swecapura. In addition to the territory, Bale Samar (invisible troops) was also handed over to King Gelgel. Wong Samar's troops live in the Keraton Swecapura Gelgel which is in charge of guarding the kingdom's territory and punishing citizens who do not obey their religious obligations by spreading disease. Every year on the fifth to sixth *sasih* (the name of the Balinese month) this wong samar looks for prey. The king as ruler did not allow Bale Samar to hurt obedient citizens, as indicated by people wearing *tridhatu* thread bracelets. Towards the full moon, *Sasih Kapat Bale Samar* is given offerings in the Moga

Kala ceremony in the central courtyard of the Pura Dasar Buana. The mythical story of Bale Samar in Gelgel is not just an oral story but is also written in the Babad Dalem and other traditional historiography [1]. The Bale Samar myth related to the site of Pura Dasar Buana and other places in Gelgel, as well as the Moga Kala ceremony tradition is a cultural symbol of the Gelgel community which is interesting to study.

The myth of Bale Samar as the Dalem Nusa troops is believed by the people of Klungkung as the source of the 'gering agung' outbreaks such as cholera, chronic illness and other pandemic diseases. There is a "taboo" belief or taboo for the community, especially in the fifth and sixth sasih, to travel at certain times such as during the day (tengah tepet) and late in the evening (sandi kala). These hours were considered the time for the Dalem Nusa troops to seek followers by spreading disease.

People also believe that epidemics can be prevented through rituals and spiritual-magic behavior. Spiritual - magical prevention is carried out with the moga kala ceremony at the Pura Dasar Buana, ceremonial offerings in each house, and offering prayer offerings asking for the safety of "nunas benang tridhatu" (three colored threads namely black, white, and red) at Merajan Pejenengan Klungkung Castle. The tradition of using three colored threads cannot be separated from the Bale Samar myth and the continuity of the king's power in the past. Puri Agung Semarapura Klungkung is seen as a continuation of the Gelgel Kingdom. It may be that the policy in preventing pandemics is a tradition from the past related to the dimensions of wisdom and power relations that show the relationship between patron client [2].

Local wisdom in preventing 'gering agung' is relevant to the current Covid-19 pandemic condition. Corona virus, which has become an issue and a global pandemic today, apart from prevention through a scientific approach to physical health, it seems that it is also taken through a wisdom approach and cultural traditions. Especially in Bali, the prevention of the Covid-19 pandemic utilizes the traditional village base which seeks to synergize government authorities, religious institutions, and traditional village institutions.

It is clear that the policies taken by the Bali regional government prioritize and accommodate the role of Parisada and traditional villages to mobilize community participation in preventing and overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic. The local wisdom that characterizes the behavior of the Balinese people can also be seen in dealing with the spread of the corona virus using a ritual approach such as the Pangripu Baya Ceremony, Neduh Jagat, and offering Segehan Wong-wongan, using tridhatu thread, and hanging pandan leaves in front of the house as a repellent against reinforcements [3].

Observing this trend, it is important to examine the Bale Samar myth in relation to local wisdom-based public policies in preventing the COVID-19 pandemic. The mythical story of Bale Samar related to the cultural heritage of the Gelgel era is clearly visible in the story of the characters, the context of the events, and the various meanings. The phenomenon of myth and its contextualization requires a detailed and in-depth study so that the Bale Samar myth of the Gelgel era is the focus of the study to reveal its relationship with cultural heritage, local wisdom as the basis for policies in preventing pandemics.

## **2 Research Methods**

Observing the location of the research conducted in the Gelgel Traditional Village, Klungkung District, Klungkung Regency, Bali. Administratively, Gelgel Traditional Village consists of three official villages, namely Kamasan Village, Tojan Village, and Gelgel Village. Gelgel Traditional village is known as the city of Sweca Linggarsa Pura which in the XIV-XVI

centuries became the center of the royal palace of Bali [1] [4]. The focus of the research is directed at examining myths on cultural heritage in Gelgel Traditional Village in order to carry out an inventory of cultural heritage and explore wisdom as the basis for policies in preventing outbreaks. This research is interdisciplinary in nature from the perspective of archeology and cultural studies.

The types and sources of research data consist of primary data and secondary data. Primary data includes forms of cultural heritage, related historical source texts, collective memory information about myths in that cultural heritage. Secondary data in the form of information from the government, community leaders, and reports or writings, pictures related to cultural heritage in Pekraman Gelgel Village.

In accordance with the characteristics of qualitative research, the main instrument of this research is the researcher himself. In its implementation, it is also supported by supporting instruments such as: recording forms, measuring instruments, interview guidelines, and audio-visual documentation tools, digitization in the form of smartphones. Data collection techniques applied in this study include field observations, focused interviews with a number of key informants, and documentation techniques.

Field observations were made on the physical condition of artifacts, sites, and environmental elements as the cultural background of the cultural heritage in the Gelgel Traditional Village. In-depth interviews were used to explore historical background, collective memory, and information to support physical data sources from field observations. The documentation technique seeks to collect secondary data sources from reports, historical records, and other written sources related to the existence of cultural heritage in Gelgel Traditional Village.

The data that has been collected is processed and organized through data classification and sorting for further data analysis. The analytical model applied is descriptive qualitative, combined with simple quantitative analysis (such as analysis of tables, graphs, number and size of artifacts). In addition, contextual analysis is also carried out to examine the relationship between data within the scope of a particular area, with related regulations, and is equipped with a public policy study to see the relevance of the current pandemic prevention policy. Furthermore, the technique of presenting the results is done by combining informal techniques (descriptive narrative) with formal techniques (making various charts, tables and figures). This informal presentation method is done by describing the condition of the subject being investigated as it is, based on the actual facts at the time the research was conducted [5].

### 3 Results and Discussion

The *Bale Samar* myth informs the existence of a number of places as the background of events and is also related to Cultural Heritage. In order to see the relationship between the *Bale Samar* myth and cultural heritage, it will be classified into four stages. First, when the Gelgel troops attacked Nusa Penida under the leadership of Gusti Peminggir. Second, the attack on Nusa Penida by I Gusti Jelantik Bogol. Third, after *Bale Samar* stayed at Gelgel. Fourth, the transfer of the center of the kingdom to Semarapura Klungkung. The story of the attack by Gelgel troops led by I Gusti Peminggir is related to the toponyms of 3 place names in Nusa Penida, and two sites in Gelgel. Three place names in Nusa Penida are Ped Village, Kutampi, and Sampalan.

The name is related to the story of Gelgel's troops when they landed in Toya Pakeh, they immediately attacked the interior. Gelgel's troops did not realize that they were facing an invisible army, they were slashed by a faint *Bale Samar* that it sounded "ped". The body part

that was cut was then handed over/thrown while saying “*neh tampi sempalane*” (this is part of the body). That is why until now there are three names of places in Nusa Penida, namely: Ped Village, Kutampi and Sampalan.

The Gelgel soldiers who had died by the *wong samar* troops were then sent to Gelgel and buried in a “tabug” hole, so that the burial place is still called Sema Bugbugan. As a tribute to the heroism of the Gelgel soldiers who died on the battlefield, a holy place was made next to Sema Bugbugan called Pura Dalem Prajurit. Two toponyms of names in Gelgel related to this event are the site of Setra Bugbugan and Pura Dalem Prajurit which are located in Banjar Minggir, Gelgel Village.

Paying attention to the toponyms of 3 place names in Nusa Penida and two sites in Gelgel which are sourced from the mythical story of *Bale Samar*, it can be compared with the Maya Denawa myth in Tampak Siring Gianyar and the Balingkang myth in Kintamani Bangli. The myth of the ancient King Maya Danawa who fought against Dewa Indra is associated with the place names of Manukaya Village and Tampak Siring. The name Manukaya when Mayadanawa turned into a big bird, while the name Tampak Siring, when he became a giant, wanted to eliminate the trail by walking sideways so as to leave a trail of slanted footprints. Likewise, the Balingkang myth when King Jaya Pangus married the Chinese princess Kang Ciwi, then places in the Lake Beratan valley (I kang Ranu Buah-an) are identical to the toponyms of Chinese names such as: Pinggan (Ping-an), Songan (Song-an), Buah-an (buah-an) and Trunyan (Turun-an).

Cultural heritage sites related to the second half of the attack on Nusa Penida by Patih Jelantik Bogol are the Dalem Ped Temple, the Prajurit Sunia Temple, the Uma Gunung site, and the Dasar Buana Gelgel Temple. When Patih Jelantik Bogol was able to defeat Dalem Bungkut with a Pencok Saang (*Taring Naga Basuki*) weapon, then Dalem Bungkut moksha and took a palace at Dalem Ped Temple. Dalem Bungkut handed over the territory of Nusa Penida and *Bale Samar* to Dalem Waturenggong, so that from then *Bale Samar* became a member of King Gelgel's army. Like ordinary humans, *wong samar* also has Prajapati Temple and graves. Prajapati Sunia Temple, which is located in Minggir Village, is believed to be a gathering location for the *wong samar* to carry out the task of guarding the central area of the Gelgel kingdom, especially the Dasar Buana Gelgel Temple.

In addition, if a *wong samar* dies, they have a place for the Ngaben (corpse burning) ceremony and a grave located in Subak Uma Gunung. Bale's duties in Gelgel are twofold, namely maintaining the security of the kingdom and punishing people who are not religious. In order to give gifts for the services of *Bale Samar* to protect the kingdom and so as not to punish innocent citizens, every time before full moon sasih kapat an offering ceremony is made to *wong/Bale Samar* namely the Moga Kala ceremony in the middle jaba courtyard of the Pura Dasar Buana. Moga Kala or the offering ceremony (bhoga) for the blind people can be seen as a repellent to reinforcements so that the blind people / *Bale Samar* do not disturb the community. Thus the cultural heritage associated with the *Bale Samar* myth consists of monumental (tangible) and intangible cultural heritage.

The *Bale Samar* myth is also related to the cultural heritage of the royal era after the center of the palace moved from Swecapura Gelgel to Smarapura Klungkung. The cultural heritage in question is the sacred Kentongan of Puri Klungkung and the tradition of wearing tridhatu thread bracelets. Kentongan in Puri Klungkung is believed to be able to sound itself (unseen sound) as a sign of imminent danger such as plague and other dangers. When the voice of Puri Kulkul's voice is heard by people who live far away, it is a sign that there will be danger. The people who heard the sound of the kentongan came to the Puri Klungkung, made offerings, and were then given a tridhatu thread bracelet. The use of tridhatu thread is believed to be a sign of 'rejecting reinforcements' so as not to be sacrificed by *Bale Samar*.

If you look closely at the contents of the *Bale Samar* myth, it indicates the source and means of preventing the outbreak. According to this story, the source of the pandemic outbreak that occurred in the community was spread by wong samar. In addition to being tasked with guarding the Gelgel kingdom, *Bale Samar* was given the task of punishing people who did not obey religious ceremonies. In his task of punishing people who neglect their religion, *Bale Samar* spreads disease outbreaks. Jero Mangku Gelgel (79 years old) stated that: "Every fifth and sixth *Bale Samar*, Dalem Nusa's plan, will look for prey to be used as troops by spreading disease. The people targeted are those who are not religious." The story about *Bale Samar* seeking followers by spreading disease is highly believed by the local community so that if a disease outbreak occurs, it is believed that the pandemic originated and spread by bhuta kala or wong samar.

Belief in the *Bale Samar* myth as the source of the plague is also related to how to prevent the plague. In the mythical story of *Bale Samar*, it is also stated that people will not be preyed upon if they are obedient to carry out religious ceremonies regularly. As a logical consequence of this belief, the Ngusaba Nini ceremony is held once a year. One day before the peak ceremony, a series of special ceremonies were held, namely *moga kala*. Moga Kala is an offering ceremony to Bhuta Kala / *Bale Samar* for his services that have guarded the Gelgel kingdom and at the same time so as not to spread disease. Jero Mangku Dasar Buana Gelgel (61 years old) said: "The purpose of the moga kala ceremony is not only to give offerings to butha kala and wong samar who have guarded the area of Bali, but also to neutralize the *Bale Samar* so they don't spread disease". The implementation of the *Moga Kala* ceremony in the context of preventing disease outbreaks can be seen as a form of refusing reinforcements using a magical religious approach.

Although the ceremony has been carried out regularly every year, the community believes that *Bale Samar* will always look for sacrifices at certain times periodically, especially during transition seasons such as the fifth and sixth sasih. Therefore, on the fifth and sixth sasih parents forbid their children to go out of the house. Parents advised their families to be careful traveling and avoid going out during the day or at dusk. This belief provides an indication of efforts to limit going out of the house by community members in order to cope with disasters including disease outbreaks that may be spread by *Bale Samar*.

It is quite interesting to reveal that the *Bale Samar* myth cannot be separated from the power relations of the royal elite. The existence of *Bale Samar* in Gelgel is an agreement between the King of Dalem Nusa and the King of Swecapura Gelgel. Likewise, the task of maintaining the security of the Gelgel palace area, obtaining offerings, and looking for victims or followers related to royal power. In the *Bale Samar* myth, it is stated that they will seek 'victim' followers for the people of the Balinese kingdom who are not religious. The king of Bali agreed, and emphasized that those who were allowed to become followers of *Bale Samar* were people who did not wear tricolor thread bracelets.

The use of tridhatu thread is a sign that the person is a religious citizen, so it should not be taken as a follower of *Bale Samar*. In other words, the King has the authority to determine the people who can be sacrificed by the *Bale Samar*. The tradition of giving tridhatu thread facilities to the community continues to this day at Puri Semarapura Klungkung. When the kentongan of Puri Klungkung sounds magically, the community offers offerings and will be given a tridhatu thread. People believe the use of tridhatu thread as a repellent for reinforcements so as to avoid the plague spread by *Bale Samar*.

## 4 Conclusion

Based on the study of the Bale Samar Myth during the Gelgel Kingdom, two things can be concluded as follows. The myth of Bale Samar in Gelgel is closely related to tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Tangible heritage concerns the toponyms of place names in Nusa Penida and sites in Gelgel Village and Semarapura City, Klungkung. Intangible cultural heritage includes the tradition of the moga kala ceremony, and the use of tridhatu threads as pandemic prevention. The Bale Samar myth reflects local wisdom in the field of sources and methods of preventing outbreaks. The source of the pandemic is believed to come from wong samar, while prevention is done on a sekala (physical) and niskala (nonphysical). This local wisdom can be seen as a public policy in preventing pandemics that are socio-religious magic based on castles.

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