

Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Lamak : ritual objects in Bali

Brinkgreve, L.F.

Citation
Brinkgreve, L. F. (2016, September 21). *Lamak : ritual objects in Bali*. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/45614

Version:	Not Applicable (or Unknown)
License:	Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden
Downloaded from:	https://hdl.handle.net/1887/45614

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle http://hdl.handle.net/1887/45614 holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation

Author: Brinkgreve, Francine
Title: Lamak : ritual objects in Bali
Issue Date: 2016-09-21

Chapter 2

The *lamak* as ritual object

2.1 Inspiration

It was Tuesday 5 October 1982, the day before the festival of Galungan. I was in Kerambitan to watch the preparations for a temple festival in Pura Puseh, one of the main temples in the village, and then afterwards return to Sanur, my 'home' village. While early in the morning the adult men in the household were busy preparing various kinds of meat offerings, required for this special day, I went to the market together with Sagung Putu Alit (whom I called Ratu Biang, the term for 'mother' in high Balinese), a specialist in making ritual decorations. I was surprised that Ratu Biang who was well-known for her skills in making beautiful, refined (*halus*) palm leaf objects, of which she herself was very proud, bought two *lamak* at the market for 150 *rupiah* (at that time about 10 eurocents) each. She explained that it was much easier to buy them instead of making them herself, since making *lamak*, which she called *ceniga*, is not her 'hobby'. In the afternoon, Ratu Biang suspended one of these *ceniga*, about a metre long and with a slender female figure as main motif, from a small bamboo shrine which was attached to a *penjor*, a decorated bamboo pole erected by her son in front of her house.

On my way back to Sanur, I saw hundreds of these *penjor* in front of almost every gateway I passed. They all had palm leaf decorations hanging from their tips, which bend graciously down, transforming the village streets into beautiful archways. Back home in Sanur, Kakek, the grandfather of the family, had just erected a *penjor* in front of the gateway of our house. Everywhere, hanging from shrines in the family temple, from small wooden shrines on the walls of buildings in the compound and from the ricebarn, I saw dozens of small *lamak* with as motifs a simple flowering tree, made by Nenek, the grandmother. Next to each of them she fastened a pair of palm leaf decorations. All these fresh leaves, cut-out and fastened into beautiful designs and objects, gave my home a very festive and 'natural' appearance. In the evening, during a small ritual, Nenek wafted the essence of offerings towards the members of the family, after she had sprinkled some holy water upon them. Afterwards we all ate from the special meat dishes that Kakek had prepared that morning after he had presented the meat offerings.

Next morning, colourful flowers and rice cakes and fruits enhanced this impression, as Nenek and Ibu, my 'mother', put a large number of offerings in all places decorated the day before with a *lamak*. Even on the ground of the courtyard there were small and simple *lamak* without motifs now, as base for small offerings. The smoke of incense added another dimension to the festive sphere. Outside the gateway, the whole street was lined with *penjor* and small shrines with *lamak* and offerings, and small offerings had piled up at the nearby crossroads. Next to the crossroads, in the centre of the village is the Pura Bale Agung, one of the main village temples. From the four sides of the *bale*

kulkul (tall pavilion for the wooden slit-gongs) four long *lamak* with different motifs were suspended.

People in festive dress moved about in all directions.Women walked with offerings on their heads or balanced with baskets full of offerings on the back of motorbikes. That morning Ibu and Nyoman, my 'sister', brought offerings to the family temple of Ibu's own parents, and to the graveyard where a family member was still 'sleeping' (he was temporarily buried, since the family has not yet collected enough money for a proper cremation). In the afternoon I accompanied them to a number of village temples, especially to the Pura Desa, which celebrates its anniversary festival, *odalan*, that same day.

Even in just our own street and neighbourhood, I noticed numerous different *lamak* motifs. But when later in the day I travelled to the area of Ubud and surroundings, since people had told me that the *lamak* and *penjor* there were most "artistic" (*seni*) in the villages famous for their arts, I was overwhelmed by the enormous variety of *penjor* and *lamak*, literally decorating every street I travelled along. I noticed countless different geometric patterns, female figures, trees, triangles and circles in all kinds of combinations applied to the *lamak* and numerous delicate palm leaf figures waving in the wind from the tips of hundreds of *penjor*. In the village of Sayan I noticed for the first time a variety of *lamak* which was many metres long, decorated with different motifs, and suspended from a very high bamboo shrine, next to two instead of one *penjor*. And I came across many more such impressive *lamak* in this area, the significance of which at that time was still a mystery to me (fig. 2.1).

Almost 30 years later, on 12 May 2010, I was 'home' in Sanur again for Galungan. Again I was impressed by the 'natural' sphere, but also by the number of *lamak* which seemed to have increased over the years (fig. 2.2). The family temple had been enlarged, many family members came to pray and present offerings, and some of them brought also their own *lamak* to decorate the shrines. Also the bases of the shrines were now decorated with *lamak* and other palm leaf decorations (fig. 2.3). The *bale kulkul* of the Pura Bale Agung at the nearby crossroads (again packed with offerings) was again decorated with four different *lamak*.

With my 'younger brother' Wayan Teja and his wife and children I went in his car to Ubud, curious whether I would still find the special large *lamak* in this area (fig. 2.4 and 2.5). On the roads it was extremely busy now with cars and motorbikes, filled with people carrying offerings. Some streets, totally lined with shops, did not have *penjor*s anymore. But despite all the changes in Ubud and surroundings, I was pleased to see that the impressive long *lamak* were still there, that this beautiful tradition had not been lost (fig. 2.6).

2.2 Rituals in Bali

In this chapter, I introduce the *lamak* as ritual object. What is a *lamak*, what do Balinese do with *lamak*, and what does a *lamak* do, what is its purpose?

I start by presenting an overview of the various meanings of the word '*lamak*', and of the different varieties of this ritual object.Then I describe what Balinese actually do with *lamak*, how they use them in ritual and why they do that, what according to them is the purpose of a *lamak*. I also present a number of ritual objects that are directly related to the *lamak*. As examples of religious ceremonies in which *lamak* play an important role, I will present the Bali-wide Galungan festive period, and the *odalan* or temple festival, which is specific for each individual temple on the island. Finally the question "What does a *lamak* do, or what is the purpose of a *lamak*?" will be discussed by presenting the viewpoints of informants and comments found in various Balinese publications. But first, as general background for the *lamak* as ritual object, I say a few words about Balinese rituals.[1]

---

1 In anthropological literature, much has been written about ritual. According to Victor and Edith Turner (1982:201), "Anthropologists usually call religious practices 'ritual'. […] Rituals celebrate or commemorate transhuman powers which, though invisible, are regarded by believers as the first and final causes of natural and cultural phenomena." For Barraud and Platenkamp, "rituals are generally concerned with socio-cosmic relationships, and give expression to the ideas and values of each society conceived of as a whole" (1990:121). In this thesis, I limit myself to the Balinese use and definition of their concept of ritual, *yadnya*. Derived from the Sanskrit word *yajña*, it means 'act of worship'or 'sacrifice'. Its usage in Bali is confined to religious contexts, at the heart of which is contact between deities, ancestors and human worshippers. In Bali, this usually involves offerings.



Figure 2.2: I Ketut Teja Astawa presents offerings in his family temple at Galungan. Banjar Gulingan, Sanur, 12/5/2010.



Figure 2.3: Family temple decorated for Galungan. Banjar Gulingan, Sanur, 12/5/2010.



Figure 2.4: Car of I Wayan Suteja decorated with lamak for Galungan, 12/5/2010.



Figure 2.5: Lamak with tree motif, made for Galungan. Ubud Kaja, 12/5/2010.



Figure 2.6: Lamak nganten in Junjungan style, made for Galungan. Ubud Tengah, 12/5/2010.

The religion of the Hindu Balinese, Agama Hindu Dharma, is a unique form of Hinduism that is the result of creative contact between indigenous Balinese thought and practices and Indian thought and practices that came to Bali over a period of more than a thousand years, in former times mostly via Java but more recently directly from India itself.[2] Indigenous elements include ancestor worship and the veneration of life forces present in nature. Balinese believe that the Supreme God, Ida Sang Hyang Widhi pervades the universe and as Creator forms a unity with the Creation. Particular gods and goddesses (*dewa*, *dewi* or *betara*, *betari*) and spirits who are manifestations of Ida Sang Hyang Widhi have specific cosmic powers and are associated with certain aspects of the created world. The Sang Hyang Trimurti, the gods Brahma, Wisnu and Siwa, respectively create, maintain and destroy the universe and are responsible for the continuous rotation of the cycles of life on earth. Demonic forces, called *buta* and *kala* (or collectively *buta-kala*), are associated with the five elemental substances of nature: solids, liquids, radiance, energy and ether. The souls of the deceased are venerated as deified ancestors who have it in their power to protect and to bestow prosperity on their descendants on earth.

All these many invisible (*niskala*) beings in the world are for the Balinese equally important as the visible (*sekala*) creatures and phenomena. The religion of Bali is characterized by many rituals,[3] most of them carried out to maintain relationships with the (*niskala*) beings of upper world and netherworld, in order to be protected and to ensure renewal of life and regeneration of nature. These in turn are related to the reproductive cycles of crops and human beings and the perpetuation of society.[4] In short, for the Balinese, rituals "protect the living, bring them prosperity and make their fields fertile" (Howe 2005:57).

The Balinese divide their rituals into five categories, the *panca yadnya*, those in honour of deities (*dewa yadnya*),[5] demons (*buta yadnya*),[6] souls of the dead (*pitra yadnya*), souls of living humans (*manusa yadnya*), and holy men (*rsi yadnya*). Often, a specific ritual combines aspects of more than one of the *panca yadnya*. Consisting in general of the fruits of the earth, arranged and decorated in the form of a festive meal, offerings to the gods and to the demons are

2 Also in contemporary Bali influences from India, called "the contemporary Hinduization-cum-Indianization of the Balinese religion" by Picard (2011:137), continue to take place (for example in the form of new Hindu movements such as Sathya Sai Baba), partly in response to state politics and institutionalization of Islam in Indonesia. See for discussions of the 'changing world of Bali' and the complex relationship between tourism, economy, politics, culture and religion: Picard 1996; Ramstedt 2004; Howe 2005; Schulte Nordholt 2007a, 2007b; Picard and Madinier 2011. Despite the changes in Balinese society and religion, the actual ritual practices, the enactment of rituals, seem to remain relatively unaffected. It is still the maintainance of the relationship with deities and ancestors, the ritual exchange of offerings and blessings, which is at the heart of Balinese religion and ritual.

3 During his fieldwork periods in Bali in the 1950s Clifford Geertz observed an "astonishing proliferation of ceremonial activity." According to him, "The stress is on orthopraxy, not orthodoxy – what is crucial is that each ritual detail should be correct and in place" (1973:176). Indeed from my observations in the context of making of offerings and ritual decorations, like *lamak*, the emphasis on correct ritual detail is still important. Also Howe (2005:58) stresses that since rituals are about security and prosperity, "the important thing is to get it right".

4 Barraud and Platenkamp, in their edited volumes of articles on rituals in Eastern Indonesia, stress that ritual is foremost a social activity (1990:103). They state that "rituals are concerned with the involvement of the society in an overall socio-cosmic circulation of life which ensures not only the reproduction of crops but also that of the society as a whole, including its founding ancestors and its social structure" (1990:113).

5 "*Dewa yadnya* ceremonies involve the adoration and worship of Ida Sanghyang Widhi and Ida Sanghyang Widhi's sacred manifestations, known as gods and goddesses, […] since Sanghyang Widhi is believed to influence and regulate the movement of life on earth". "*Upacara dewa yadnya adalah pemujaan serta persembahan kehadapan Ida Sanghyang Widhi dan sinar-sinar suci-NYA yang disebut dewa-dewi* […] *karena beliau yang dianggap mempengaruhi dan mengatur gerak kehidupan di dunia ini*" (Putra 1988:1).

6 *Buta yadnya* ceremonies are those that worship or pay respect to the *buta*, personifactions of powers that destroy or disturb, in order that they bring well-being to humans. They are thought of as unseen *niskala* beings (Kamus 2005:22).

part of all ceremonies.[7] For example, in a wedding ceremony specific offerings are directed towards the gods, the demons, the ancestors, and the soul of the person for whom the ceremony is held.

Any ritual may be performed at one of three levels – elaborate (*utama*), average (*madia*) and simple (*nista*) – which may be further subdivided. These various levels of elaboration depend on the social status of the people involved, their wealth and the occasion. The numbers, size and complexity of the offerings vary accordingly.[8]

In any ritual, elaborate or simple, purification by means of holy water and the presenting of offerings to the *niskala* beings are essential elements. What is exchanged for worship and offerings, what people hope to receive in return, are blessings[9] and protection, life, fertility, prosperity and fruitfulness for individual people, for their families, communities and their land, everything that is necessary for life on earth.[10] In historical texts this concept of prosperity is often described as "everything planted grows well, everything bought is cheap" (Stuart-Fox 2002:280).

Rituals usually take place in sacred space, often temples (*pura*) which are the shared responsibility of different social groups. Most Balinese are members of several temple congregations who look after the upkeep of the temples and organize their rituals. In the past decades, increase of wealth (partly due to ever-growing mass tourism[11]) has caused major rebuilding and enlargement of temples, both of village temples and of temples belonging to families and descent groups. Accompanying inauguration rituals are often large, conspicuous ceremonies,

7 Offerings will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

8 See Stuart-Fox 2002:129-158 for a discussion of this 'hierarchy of ritual elaboration'.

9 According to Schefold, "an aspect that is at the basis of most ritual behaviour [… is] the fact that people expect such behaviour to bring about a concrete result" (2001:360). As expected result, existing within the majority of Indonesian cultures, he identified three different sources of "ritual blessings". What he called the "affinal flow" are "blessings streaming from the wife-givers to the wife-taker, evoking the image of the Flow of Life as it has become well known through Fox 1980" (2001:362). The "ancestral flow" are the blessings of protection of the real and mythical progenitors, the genealogical ancestors of the community (2001:363). The "autochthonous flow" are the favours of well-being and prosperity from spirits of the original wilderness (2001:366). One aspect which is prominent in all three cases is fertility. Schefold also notes the important aspects of ritual dependency and reciprocity. Receivers of the blessings admit their dependency upon the givers. And they regard these givers as partners who should be compensated for their gifts by appropriate offerings (2001:369-370). In this study, I will concentrate on the "ancestral flow" of blessings, the favours from "above", as expected by the Balinese from their deities and deified ancestors. These favours of prosperity and safety are frequently called *restu*, *rahayu* or *kerta raharja* in Balinese. Whereas what J. Fox (1980) called the "flow of life" has foremost the connotation of the flow of life which circulates by means of women, life-providing brides, within societies with a circulating connubium as prescribed marriage pattern. For Thomas Reuter, who worked among the Bali Aga in some of Bali's mountain villages, "Life is the road through time and space that has been travelled by the ancestors (2002:336). "The value of origin – the collective source of life – thus finds its counterpart in the value of fertility – the source of any particular life" (2002:341). According to him, in Austronesian societies the "flow of life" is related to "intergenerational connection and continuity" (2014:229). In his discussions "with people who were considered wise and knowledgeable men and women in their own society", they told him about "numerous experiences of unity wherein the flow of life is no longer looked at just as an idea or metaphor but becomes a lived reality, a space wherein what is initially a mental reflection on time, on an endless succession of ancestors and descendants, leads one on to a sense of connectedness beyond time" (Reuter 2014:249).

10 Eiseman (2005:32-34) did a small survey among his informants in Jimbaran about the reasons why they made their daily offerings. It appeared that the first reason was satisfaction, fulfillment of duty, followed by insurance against possible future disasters and reward, expecting something for one's efforts. But also thanks for favours granted and devotional love without any expectation of reward of any sort were among the reasons for making offerings.

11 The tourist boom (the yearly number of tourists is already much more than the total population of Bali itself) has, however, also a destructive impact on the environment, leading to the rapid disappearance of irrigated rice-land and serious water shortages (Schulte Nordholt 2007a: 390-391).

usually carried out at the highest (*utama*) level of ritual elaboration.[12]

The structure of a temple, which is decorated for the duration of the ceremony with special textiles and other decorations and objects, is usually based upon vertical and horizontal spatial classifications, which are very important in Balinese cosmology. At the place of the ritual, the various groups of offerings are placed according to their destination and function. Gods and ancestors receive their offerings on high shrines and altars, whereas demons receive theirs on the ground. Offerings required for each specific ritual are placed in a pavilion or on a temporary platform, or close to the officiating priest. Offerings are related to the shrines and other forms of ritual space and structure by means of *lamak*, since they are placed on top of the upper end of a *lamak*, of which the main part hangs down in front of the shrine, altar or platform.

The timing of rituals, especially of *dewa yadnya* and *bhuta yadnya*, is structured according to the Balinese calendars. Two calendars determine rituals in Bali, the lunar-solar calendar and the Javano-Balinese 210-day *wuku* calendar.[13] One of the rituals celebrated all over Bali is the festival of Galungan, incorporating rituals of purification, sacrifice to demons and thanksgiving to the deities and ancestors, that recurs every 210 days (*wuku* calendar). An *odalan*, or temple festival, celebrates the anniversary of the foundation of a temple, and its occurrence is specific for each individual temple on the island, according to one or other (or sometimes both) of the two calendars. Galungan and *odalan*, both *dewa yadnya* rituals, are discussed in this chapter, for they are the ceremonies for which *lamak* appear most frequently and in the largest numbers.

2.3 What is a *lamak*?

2.3.1 The word 'lamak'

The subject of this dissertation is the *lamak* as ritual object, used in temples, but the word *lamak* in Bali has other meanings as well. It is not only a ritual object, but also an element of (especially dance-) costumes hanging down in front from the neck of the dancer. Moreover, a *lamak* is not only an object, but also (though rarely) a human being, and sometimes a linguistic concept, meaning 'cause' or 'reason'. These other meanings will be discussed briefly as well.

The entry *lamak* in the 'standard' Balinese-Indonesian dictionary reads:

Lamak I 1. *Hiasan penutup dada* (decoration to cover the chest); 2. *Nama 'jejaitan' sebagai hiasan depan pada bangunan suci* (name of a 'palm leaf artefact' as decoration at the front of a sacred building);

Lamak II (*Asi*)[14] : *istri selir* (literally 'concubine', but in fact often referring to wife of lower caste);

Lamak III *lamakan* : *alasan* (cause, reason) (Kamus 1990:384).

The word *lamak* has not entered the vocabulary of Bahasa Indonesia, but *lamak* does appear in languages linguistically related to modern Balinese, such as the languages of the neighbouring Sasak (Lombok), Javanese and Sundanese (West Java),

12 Besides the enactment of temple rituals at greater levels of elaboration, there is on the other hand a tendency to reduce costs for the formerly elaborate death rituals by carrying them out as communal ceremonies. However, as Howe (2005:67) notes, "When Balinese can spend more on ritual, they often do. The rationale for this apparent extravagance comes both from the desire not to be outdone in status competition, and also because most Balinese believe that offerings are not an optional extra but an absolute requirement for success."

13 On the calendars, see Darta, Couteau & Breguet 2013.

14 *Asi* means '*alus singgih*', high language when speaking to or about someone of higher status.

and peoples in southern Sumatra.[15] And although no conclusions can be drawn about the actual use of *lamak* as objects in these cultures, the meanings of the word in these languages show a certain coherence and can be compared with the *lamak* in Bali. In fact, scholars of historical linguistics have concluded that *lamak* or *amak* is an ancient Austronesian root, with the meaning of 'mat', and is found as far apart as Madagascar and the Solomon Islands (Blust 1980:101-102, 255). It does not have Sanskrit origins.

To return to the Balinese language, the word *lamak* is found in Old Balinese inscriptions dating from the tenth and eleventh centuries.[16] Goris (1954:II, 266) defined it as "a measure of cooked rice, perhaps a portion on a piece of sugar palm leaf." However, it seems likely that it is not so much the name of a measure of rice but the object on which the rice is placed, which is a mat of the leaves of the sugar palm.[17] This connotation of the word *lamak* as being a base for something is comparable to the meaning of the word *lamak* in cognate languages.

In modern Balinese (as is clear not only from the dictionary but also from remarks of Balinese informants), the word *lamak* does not have the general meaning of basis or mat anymore. Only the derived meaning of *lamak* as 'cause' or 'reason' refers to this idea.

However, as I describe in the course of this chapter, in Bali a *lamak* as ritual object is both a base for offerings (which are put on the upper end of the *lamak*) and, at the same time, a decoration of the shrine from the front of which it hangs, and in which the offering is placed.

This simultaneous use of the *lamak* as base for offerings and decoration of shrines is already mentioned in the Kawi (Old Javanese)-Balinese-Dutch dictionary by Van der Tuuk, a Dutch linguist who lived in Bali between 1870 and 1894. According to his entry (Van der Tuuk 1897-1912:III, 770),[18] "a *lamak* is a base on which something rests (the base of an offering called *canang*). It is made of the leaves of the sugar palm, on which motifs are applied. Being a hanging object itself, on both sides extra 'hanging things' (*gantung-gantungan*) are added to a *lamak*, for example hanging from the shrine (*sanggah*). A *lamak* can also consist of strips of leaves, hanging from a *penjor*, on the upper part sometimes decorated with a figure, which represents a child.'[19] Van der Tuuk also mentions the two other meanings of the word: "a breast cloth of a male dancer, decorated with gold leaf; a woman of lower caste married to a man from the Brahmana caste".

---

15 Bahasa Sasak: 'underlayer, mat' (*onderlaag, matje*), as verb 'to give as underlayer, to put something underneath something' (*een onderlaag geven, ergens iets onder leggen*) (Goris 1938:163); also referred to as 'banana leaf as a base for cooked rice' (*daun pisang untuk alas beras yang ditanak*) (Thoir et al 1985:154). Javanese: 'underlay (carpet, etc)' (*onderlegsel (kleedje, enz.)*) (Albada & Pigeaud 2007:445); while *lémék* (also *tilémék*) means 'underlay, anything used to place underneath something or on which something is put on, such as a sheet on a bed, something on the ground on which to sleep […]; a carpet under a table, piece of cloth or mat on which to place something' (*onderlegsel, alles wat gebruikt wordt om onder iets te leggen of om er op te liggen of iets op te zetten of the plaatsen, zoals een onderlaken op een bed, iets op den grond om op te slapen* […]. *Een karpet onder een tafel, kleedje of matje om iets op te zetten*) (Gericke & Roorda 1901:II, 147). Sundanese: 'a bit of cloth' (*lap, stuk goed*); *lalamak* 'a sheet (on a royal bed)' (*sprei (op 'n staatsiebed)*) (Eringa 1984:441). Old Javanese: *lalamak* means 'something laid down to put something else on, a mat, a basis'; *lamakan* 'a basis or preparation for?'; *malamak* as 'to have as basis' (Zoetmulder 1982:I, 968). In South Sumatra, according to textile scholar Gittinger, the word *lamak* is used there for what she defines as "small, rectangular cloth normally less than one meter square", elsewhere called '*tampan*' (Gittinger 1972:208).

16 For example in the inscription Sembiran AII, in the year AD 965 (Saka 897), villagers were subject to a tax of 10 *lamak* (translated as '10 *bladen* (*onderleggers*)') of rice, and in Sading A, dated AD 1001 (Saka 923), *aren* leaves and plaited mats (*gevlochten onderleggers*) are mentioned (Goris 1954:78, 145; 87, 156).

17 In size, perhaps, these *lamak* mats may be rather similar in size and function to the plaited mats on which rice is placed, used in group feasting in some parts of Bali.

18 In Dutch: *Onderlaag waarop iets rust en met een slip afhangende (dasar canang), van ron, waarop figuren zijn aangebracht, hebbende aan weerszijde de gantung-gantungan, b.v. van de sanggah; plat op de pependjor hangende bladstroken, soms bovenaan van een figuur, een kind voorstellende, voorzien; borstlap van gandrungs, met klatergoud versierd; een gewezen vrouw van lage kaste, getrouwd met een Brahmaan.*

19 This 'representation of a child', in fact a *cili*, I will discuss in Chapter 3, together with the other motifs on a *lamak*.

2.3.2 Lamak, ceniga and tlujungan

For the sake of the discussion so far I have used the term '*lamak*' in a collective sense, but in fact Balinese distinguish between several closely related objects and there is also regional variation in terminology. One common term for this kind of object is *ceniga, caniga,* or *candiga*. (I shall use *ceniga* as standard spelling, unless otherwise quoted). In the dictionary, *ceniga* is defined as a "ritual decoration, made from young coconut palm leaves or the leaves of the sugar palm, smaller than a *lamak*, without decorations" (Kamus 1990:130).[20] The ritual expert I Gusti Agung Mas Putra likewise defines the word as "a small *lamak*" (Putra1975:8).[21]

The word apparently does not exist in related languages like Old Javanese. One author has suggested it may derive from Sanskrit, with the meaning 'the road to or base of a *candi* (temple)/mountain' (Titib 1976:13). However, I did not find further evidence for this. Other than suggesting *ceniga* may be derived from the word *cenik*, meaning 'small', none of my informants knew of another meaning other than the object itself. But almost everybody agreed on the *ceniga* being a smaller variety of *lamak*; only in Kerambitan and other places in the regency of Tabanan does the term *ceniga* or *ceniga gede* (large *ceniga*) refer to objects which elsewhere are called *lamak*.

Both *lamak* and *ceniga* have in common that they are fashioned from palm leaves, which are cut and pinned together traditionally with small bamboo pins (*semat*), nowadays also with staples. These palm leaf artefacts belong to the category of *jejaitan*, literally: what is sewn (*jait*) together.[22]

The difference between *lamak* and *ceniga* is not only a matter of size, but also of ways of decoration. The material for a *ceniga* (outside Tabanan) is the young, light coloured leaves of either the coconut palm or the lontar palm. A *ceniga* is fashioned by pinning together strips of these leaves in such a way that patterns are formed by the openings between the strips. A *ceniga* sometimes receives a more specific name given to the pattern formed by the leaves. An example is the *ceniga paku pidpid* (*ceniga* in the form of a fern) (fig. 2.7). A *ceniga* is most often rectangular, but sometimes tends towards a triangular form. The offerings are put on the protruding upper ends of the vertical palm leaves. The length of a *ceniga* varies from 40 to 60 cm.

In contrast to a *ceniga*, a *lamak* almost always consists of two layers, and most often leaves of the sugar palm or the coconut palm are used.[23] For the base layer the lighter coloured younger leaves are used or sometimes the lighter coloured underside of mature leaves. Ornaments from contrasting darker green leaves are fastened onto the lighter coloured base of the *lamak*.

A *lamak* is always rectangular and narrow (15 to 40 cm), but can vary in length from about 30 cm to more than 10 metres. Often the very top of the base layer has a triangular form and is left undecorated, and it is on this part that an offering can be placed (fig. 2.8). When long strips of leaf are used to make a border along the two sides of the *lamak*, sometimes those at the top protrude to such a degree that they can be used to fasten the *lamak* to the shrine or be placed underneath the offerings.

---

20 *Hiasan dalam upacara dibuat dari janur atau daun enau lebih kecil dari lamak, tanpa hiasan*.

21 In the dictionary of Van der Tuuk, *caniga* is defined as: "particular kinds of leaves as base for offerings, (for example *intaran, kayu mas, temen*, etc), in place of an *aled* for presenting offerings" (*zekere soort van bladen als onderlaag voor offeranden (zooals die van intaran, kaju mas, temen, enz.), in plaats van aled bij 't aanbieden van offeranden*) (Van der Tuuk 1897-1912:I, 576). An *aled* or *taledan* is a square kind of mat, made from palm leaves, fastened together by means of little bamboo skewers (*semat*), commonly used in Bali as a base on which to arrange the contents of an offering. However, these particular leaves are (as far as I have always heard) called *plawa* or *don kayu*, and a *ceniga* does not replace the offering base, but is always put underneath the actual base for the food content of an offering.

22 As already noted in the introduction to this dissertation, a *lamak* is not always made from ephemeral palm leaves, but also from more permanent materials. In Chapter 4, I will return to these varieties of *lamak* made of cloth that are decorated in various ways (for example painted, embroidered or woven in special ways), of coloured paper or plastic, and of combinations of wood, little mirrors and Chinese coins (*kepeng*). Then I will also discuss the important fact that for ritual purposes**,** a *lamak* made from permanent material always has to be completed by an ephemeral *lamak* or *ceniga* or *tlujungan* on top of it.

23 In Chapter 4, all the different leaves used for a *lamak* or *ceniga* and the different techniques involved in making these objects are discussed more extensively.



Figure 2.7: Ceniga of young coconut palm leaves, made for Galungan. Ubud, 14/1/1989.



Figure 2.8: Lamak of sugar palm leaves with mountain motif, made for Galungan. Ngis (Manggis), 1/2/2012.



Figure 2.9: Tlujungan of coconut palm leaves under offerings laid on the ground at Galungan. Banjar Gulingan, Sanur, 12/5/2010.

The smallest variety of '*lamak*' is called *tlujungan* (from the root *ujung*, point), *layah sampi* (the tongue of a cow), or *tuktuk cunguh* (the tip of a nose), and is usually a very simple *jejaitan* in the form of a long narrow triangle (fig. 2.9). Usually it is made from the leaves of the coconut palm or the sugar palm. A *tlujungan* is made from leaves of two different colours, often light-green young coconut palm leaves with a border of the mature darker green leaves. Or a very basic pattern of two vertical stripes is formed by using both sides of the mature leaves of the sugar palm, which differ considerably in intensity of green. In Budakeling this particular variety of *tlujungan* is quite common, and is there called *ceniga*. A *tlujungan* does not have any special decorative motifs. Its length can vary between 20 and 40 cm. Small offerings, usually the ones on the ground for the *buta* and *kala*, can be placed on the upper tip of the *tlujungan*. Besides the single layer of leaves, in contrast to the *lamak* (proper), the other correspondence between a *tlujungan* and a *ceniga* is, that the leaves are fastened to one another lengthwise (in the vertical direction) and not horizontally, as is the case with the *lamak*.

2.4 What do the Balinese do with *lamak*?

2.4.1 Where, when and how are lamak used?

The only offerings that do not require an extra base are the smallest offerings (*banten jotan* or *saiban*) which are presented every day in large numbers, and which consist of little pieces of banana leaf on which some rice and tiny bits of salt and spices are placed. But otherwise, the Balinese always separate an offering, regarded as pure, from where it is placed and which may be impure, by putting an extra layer in between. In principle, this layer is more or less part of the offering itself, it is part of what is being presented. This is always the case with offerings which are put on the ground, like *canang* offerings (palm leaf containers with flowers and betel chewing ingredients). But also in shrines in the house temple where usually there is permanently a little mat or piece of cloth which could serve as base for the daily offerings**,** often a leaf or some flowers are put between this layer and the base of the offering itself.

As many informants told me, offerings preferably have to be presented on something taken from the natural world ("*dari alam*"), like the contents of the offerings themselves.[24] Such a natural base for the offering can be the tip of a banana leaf (*don biu*) or the leaf of another plant, or some flowers, in general referred to as *don kayu* or *plawa*.[25] Besides the most frequently used varieties, like *don kayu piring, kayu mas* or *mas-masan* (croton, *codiaeum variegatum Bl.*) *don kayu sugih* (soap tree, *Dracaena angustifolia*) and *bunga ratna* (globe amaranth, *Gomphrena globosa L.*), many villages have their own customs in what is regarded as *plawa*. In Kerambitan for example, *paku pidpid* (sword fern, *Nephrolepsis exaltata*) and *don pucuk* (hibiscus, *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*) are also classified as *plawa*.[26] Most of these important plants grow in the courtyards of people who specialize in the making of offerings.

Essentially, all three varieties of '*lamak*', *tlujungan, ceniga* and *lamak* proper, are a human-made creation, and can conceptually be considered as being developed out of the leaves which are otherwise placed under offerings. The Balinese do this more or less "in the same way as one puts a tablecloth on a table before presenting a meal", as I Gusti Agung Mas Putra put it. She added "One shows respect if the altars or shrines where the invisible powers are invited to receive their offerings are dressed for the occasion" (pers. com. 25/9/1982 and 21/9/1985).

In her publications she explained that *lamak* are a prerequisite or requirement for ritual, that their function (*fungsinya*) is to form a base (*alas/tatakan*) for the offerings. According to her, since *lamak* are hung from shrines or altars or elsewhere where offerings are to be placed, a *lamak* indicates to the temple priest (*pemangku*) or offering specialist where the offerings must be placed (Putra 1975a:10; 1975b:6). In a later publication (Putra 1983:41) she listed four functions of a *lamak/ceniga*:

---

24 This idea will be further developed in Chapter 4.

25 According to Van der Tuuk, *plawa* means "the leaves of flowers, with which offerings are adorned, used as underlay" (*de bladen der bloemen, waarmeede de offeranden versierd worden, tot onderlaag gebezigd*) (van der Tuuk 1897-1912:IV, 246).

26 See Eiseman 2005:184-185 and Sardiana 2010 for names and photographs of plants whose leaves are used in rituals.

a. As clothing (*busana, pangangge*) of a sacred building
b. As base, especially for offerings
c. As a sign that the building or place has a connection with the ritual that is in operation, and will contain offerings
d. As decoration, and that is why sometimes *lamak* are very beautiful.

Also according to Made Titib, the function of the *lamak* is as a base for offerings which are presented at every shrine (Titib 1976:13).

While the *tlujungan* is mainly used as base for offerings for the netherworldly beings on the ground, *ceniga* and *lamak* are mainly used as base for offerings directed to the deities or ancestors, which are usually placed on a shrine or altar, but not on the ground. Besides acting as base for offerings, their second important use is to decorate any construction that acts as a seat for invisible beings. As my informants explained, it is a sign that a ritual is being held and that deities and ancestors are invited.

I Gusti Putu Nonderan, well-known *tukang lamak* (*lamak* maker) from Padangtegal, said "a *lamak* is a costume or dress, the hip cloth (*kain*) of a shrine".[27] And I Wayan Koya (pers. com. 21/10/90), *tukang lamak* in Sibetan (Karangasem), phrased it like this: "A *lamak* is a sign of respect, just as people wear a sash (*selendang*) when going on a visit or receiving guests." Also the high priestess Ida Pedanda Istri Ketut Jelantik in Budakeling said that a *lamak* is a shrine's clothing, like a hip cloth, while the *gantungan-gantungan*, hung next to a *lamak*, are "additional clothing, like a sash" (pers. com. 23/10/2013).

Almost always a *lamak* or *ceniga* simultaneously acts as base for offerings and as decoration of a shrine, because an offering is placed on the upper part of a *lamak* or *ceniga*, while the largest, ornamented part hangs down in such a way that the decorative aspect, the motifs, are clearly visible (figs. 2.10; 2.14; 2.17; 2.39).[28]

At any ritual, all the places to where deities, demons and ancestors are invited to receive their offerings, are decorated with a *lamak*, *ceniga* or a *tlujungan*. These places range from the ground itself and natural objects like large stones or the trunk of a tree (fig. 2.11) to permanent shrines or pavilions, and temporary bamboo altars of various shapes and sizes, such as for example the small temporary offering shrines for Dewi Sri in the rice fields (fig. 2.12). Sometimes an offering is not actually placed on a *lamak*, but a *lamak* is attached to the shrine in close vicinity to the offering. Also, in cases of larger rituals, if offerings are placed on or in front of, for example a watertank, a fireplace, a stove, a roof of a building, a statue or a car, a *lamak* or *ceniga* will be attached to them. And occasionally, certain categories of objects or instruments useful to mankind receive offerings, and therefore also *lamak* or *ceniga*. For example on Tumpek Landep, the day to honour *keris* and metal objects, cars and motorbikes have a festive appearance from the *lamak* and their related *gantung-gantungan* (palm leaf artefacts (*jejaitan*) in the form of 'hanging' ornaments) attached to them. On this occasion leaves are sometimes dyed red, since red is the colour of fire, associated with smithing. On Tumpek Uduh, the day to honour useful trees, all fruit-bearing trees in a courtyard are decorated with a *ceniga* and small *canang* offerings are placed on their branches. In these examples, the watertank, motorbike or tree functions as shrine, as vessel for the spiritual being present.

Offerings themselves, if they are regarded as temporary seats for deities as for instance the large *sarad* and *sate tegeh* (fig. 2.13) or the *dangsil*, but also the small *daksina palinggih*, are often decorated with a *lamak* which is not put underneath, but is directly attached to it.

And finally, there are cases where a *lamak* or *ceniga* is related not so much to offerings but more directly to the deities or deified ancestors, by being a base for or decorating their statues or other vessels in which they descend during the ritual. For example the palanquins in which small statues of deities are carried in processions are always decorated with a *lamak*.

Lamak and *ceniga* are never the only ritual decorations. For temple ceremonies all shrines are "dressed" with textiles of many kinds, plain coloured or decorated in various ways, including painted cloths. Also long pieces of yellow and white cloth

27 *Lamak adalah busana, pakaian, kain dari sanggah* (pers. com. 27/12/1987).
28 Motifs will be dealt with extensively in Chapter 3.



Figure 2.10: A lamak hangs from a temporary offering shrine, set up for Galungan in front of a house in Tegallalang, 13/5/1987.



Figure 2.11: A lamak hangs down under piles of canang offerings which are placed on a very large stone at the foot of a tree. Temple ritual (usaba) in Pura Dalem, Budakeling, 23/3/2016.



Figure 2.12: A ceniga decorates a small offering shrine in the rice fields, dedicated to Dewi Sri. Komala, 31/5/2015.

often hang down from the openings of important shrines, as an underlay for the *lamak* on top (fig. 2.14).

Lamak are used at any type of ritual where offerings are involved. During *manusa yadnya* (rituals for human beings, such as weddings) and *rsi yadnya* (consecrations of priests) only the shrines of the family temple that are actually in use for offerings to deities especially called down for the ritual, like the *sanggar kemulan* (shrine of origin), are completed with a *lamak*. Other shrines for deities who only witness the ceremony, only receive a *ceniga* or a *tlujungan* or even just *plawa* as a base for small offerings. In Singapadu, for a wedding sometimes before the entrance to the house two *sanggar* are erected and adorned with two long *lamak*, representing male and female, according to one informant. Also in Kerambitan for *manusia yadnya* ceremonies such as weddings and toothfilings a temporary shrine with a long *ceniga*, is erected before the entrance to the house.

Prior to death rituals (*pitra yadnya*), *lamak* decorate the *wadah* or *bade,* the towers on which the dead body will be carried to the cremation ground, during the consecration ritual of these structures. *Tukang lamak* I Gusti Putu Nonderan, who is also a specialist in the making of such *bade*, said that a *lamak* at that time is used on a *bade* because "the *bade*, when it is sanctified, is thought to be like a temple (for the dead person), like a *meru*. The *lamak* is used to make it look clean and decorative" (pers. com. 23/5/89). When the body is placed on a bier or lies in state, a *lamak* is suspended from the temporary offering shrine next to the body, as W.O.J. Nieuwenkamp describes when he saw a cremation ceremony in Mataram, Lombok (1906-1910:119, 222 and 1910:213, 216).[29]

For rituals mainly directed to deities, deified ancestors and demons, *dewa* and *buta yadnya*, the size and different types of *lamak* used can vary. The longest and most elaborate *lamak* are usually hung from the highest shrines, the *padmasana* (fig. 2.14) and the temporary *sanggar Surya* or *sanggar tawang* (fig. 2.15) inside the temple, and, visible from outside the temple walls, suspended from the *bale kulkul* (fig. 2.16) and beside the gateways.

Sometimes one structure or shrine has a number of *lamak* and they might have partly different motifs. The *bale kulkul* for example and the temporary *pengubengan* or *panggungan* shrine erected in front of the temple gateway, where deities are believed to gather before they enter the temple, have four sides, oriented towards the cardinal directions. Each side has a *lamak*, although the *bale kulkul* often has one *lamak* only. The *padmasana* and temporary *sanggar tawang* shrine sometimes have three compartments, directed to Brahma, Wisnu and Siwa. Each compartment has its own *lamak*.

Size and number of *lamak* and other offering bases are also dependent on the level of ritual elaboration, since the level of a ritual determines the number and size of all the offerings. A ceremony at *nista* (lowest) level requires only a couple of *ceniga*, whereas a ritual at *utama* (highest) level requires the large *sanggar tawang* shrines with long elaborate *lamak*, for important offerings to the highest deities. These offerings are called *banten catur*, and the *lamak* suspended from these shrines are in Karangasem called *lamak catur*. The special motifs on these *lamak* will be discussed in the next chapter, on the motifs on *lamak*.

For elaborate rituals, the importance of the occasion is often stressed by putting a *tlujungan* or various kinds of *plawa* on top of a *lamak*, directly underneath the offerings, or an already large *lamak* is made "even more complete", as informants explained, by a smaller *ceniga* on top.

Sometimes the number of *lamak* is greater than the actual number of shrines. For example in 2005 I noticed three layers of *lamak* in some shrines of a family temple in Kerambitan. The explanation was that three families were responsible for this temple, so they had each brought their own *lamak* to the ritual. In any case and for ritual purposes, a *lamak* made of permanent material always has to be completed by an ephemeral *lamak* or *ceniga* or *tlujungan* as an extra layer on top, as will be discussed later.

Finally, the size, kind and number of *lamak* that are used are to some extent also dependent on the materials and money available. As Ibu Komang Soka, *tukang lamak* in Padangkerta said (pers. com. 22/4/1994), "Whether you use a *lamak* or a *ceniga* depends on the ceremony, but also on ma-

29 Afterwards he collected one of the *lamak* he depicted in his books for the then 's Rijks Ethnografisch Museum, now part of the National Museum of World Cultures, inv. no. RV-1586-99 (see Appendix 1).



Figure 2.13: Lamak placed underneath sarad and sate tegeh offerings from Bangli, at the Panca Wali Krama ceremony at Pura Besakih, 8/3/1989.



Figure 2.14: Lamak hanging from a padmasana for an odalan at Pura Bale Agung, Intaran (Sanur), 9/4/1994.

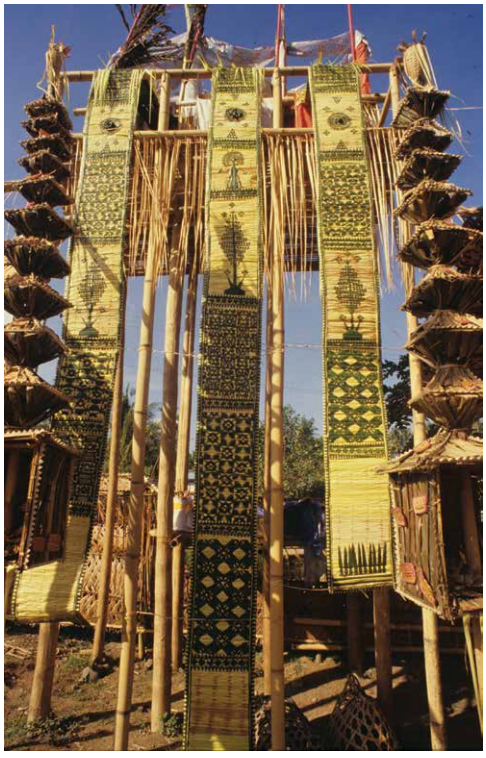


Figure 2.15: Three lamak hanging from a sanggar tawang for an odalan at Pura Dalem Sekar Mukti, Singapadu, 10/7/1988.



Figure 2.16: Lamak on a bale kulkul for an odalan at Pura Dalem Sekar Mukti, Singapadu, 10/7/1988.

terial means, for a *ceniga* is cheaper than a *lamak*." The more materials (leaves) that are available, the longer and larger in number the *lamak*. Also *lamak* rather than *ceniga* are made, since these require more material.

2.4.2 Gantung-gantungan

A *lamak* rarely hangs from a shrine just by itself. Hanging usually on both sides of it are two *jejaitan* which are called *gantung-gantungan* (from *gantung*, 'to hang'), or *sampian gantungan.* In fact, almost every offering in Bali is topped by a *sampian*. This is a special artefact (*jejaitan*) made from young leaves of the coconut palm (*busung*), which contains flowers and a small betel quid wrapped in *plawa* leaves (*porosan*).[30] The *sampian gantungan*, which often contain *porosan* as well, besides the function of decorating the shrine, accompany the *lamak* in the same way as the *sampian* is attached to an offering. These *gantungan* have different names, according to their size, and depending on local tradition. In Kerambitan for example the smallest variety is called *sampian guling memeri* (roast duckling), and a larger one with a beautiful fanshaped crowning piece, a *senteg*. In Budakeling (Karangasem), they are called *capah* and they have the shape of a stylized human being (fig. 2.17). They make the shrines look more beautiful and the *lamak* more complete (*lengkap*), as many Balinese told me. The word *capah* also means 'to split', and thus there always have to be two *capah*, hanging at either side of a *lamak*.

Also I Gusti Agung Mas Putra stressed that *lamak* or *ceniga* always have to be accompanied or completed by *plawa* (sacred leaves) and two *gantung-gantungan* from young coconut palm leaves (Putra 1975a:10; 1983:52). This was also one of the decisions made during a conference in 1975 when the issue of using religious symbols and objects for non-religious purposes was discussed. In the section about ritual implements and offerings (*alat-alat upacara dan sesajen*) it was stated that "If *lamak* and related objects are used for non-religious reasons they should not depict the full range of symbols (for example as decoration in hotels), and when hung up they should not be accompanied by *gantungan* and *plawa*" (Putra 1975b, lampiran I).[31]

2.4.3 Penjor

A special kind of temporary bamboo altar which is always completed with a *lamak*, is the altar attached to or erected in the immediate proximity of a *penjor*.

A *penjor* is a long bamboo pole whose upper end curves downwards (figs. 2.18 and 2.21). Only used for *dewa yadnya* (rituals for deities and deified ancestors), a *penjor* is erected besides the gateways of homes and temples where ceremonies are being enacted. It is a sign that a ritual is being held, and it serves as a kind of invitation to the invisible powers to witness the ceremony and to enjoy the offerings, especially the God of Gunung Agung (often identified as Mahadewa or Giripati), and the deities who live on its summit. Attached to the pole itself are all kinds of *jejaitan*, white and red *jaja* (rice-dough cookies), small offerings, fruits, sheaths of rice, and pieces of cloth. They are regarded as 'the fruits of the earth' (*hasil bumi*) or 'the produce of the (rice)fields' (*sarin tahun*), both raw and cooked (*mateng-mentah*), and of different local categories of plants, like tubers (*pala bungkah*) and hanging fruits (*pala gantung*). "All God's creations are presented to God as a sign of thanks"[32] is the view of most informants. Towards the foot of the *penjor*, about one metre above the ground, one or two coconuts and thick bundles of leaves (*plawa*) of different colours are fastened to the pole. In Kerambitan, great spherical-shaped decorations made of *busung*, called *bakang-bakang*, are attached to the foot of the *penjor*.

Many informants said that the *penjor* is a symbol of Gunung Agung, or acts as a representative (*panyawangan*) for it, and especially of the forests on the mountain. The *sanggar penjor*, the small shrine attached to it, is then thought of as a cave (*goa*) on

30 *Porosan* is a betel quid, placed on top of almost all offerings, because the combination of the components to chew betel, areca nut, betel leaf and lime, are a symbol of Brahma, Wisnu and Siwa (the Trimurti) (Putra 1982:19).

31 Putra 1975b, Keputusan (by I Gst Ag. Gde Putra), Lampiran I.

32 *Semua penciptaan tuhan, disembahkan kepada Tuhan, sebagai tanda terima kasih.*



Figure 2.17: Capah or sampian gantungan on either side of a lamak on a shrine decorated for an odalan, Pura Paibon Pande Besi, Budakeling, 1/6/2015.



Figure 2.18: Two penjor for Galungan. Komala (Bebandem), 2/2/2012.



Figure 2.19: Sampian penjor in the form of a cili, for Galungan. Beraban (Kediri, Tabanan), 13/5/2010.



Figure 2.20: Two lamak on penjor at Galungan. Banjar Songlandak, Sulahan, 6/7/1988.

the mountainside. From the top end of the *penjor* hangs a *sampian penjor*, an elaborate version of the *sampian gantungan* which hang beside a *lamak*, and often a slender human figure with a long skirt (often called a *cili* [33]) can be recognized in the shape of this *sampian* (fig. 2.19). One informant, who is also a healer (*balian*), called the *penjor* a *gunung-gunungan* (a small or model mountain) and the *sampian* on top as 'someone climbing the mountain, someone on the summit of the mountain'.[34] The water that flows down from the mountain is symbolized by the coconut at the foot of the *penjor*.

I Gusti Agung Mas Putra (pers. com. 21/9/1985) called everything on the *penjor* an offering to the deities who have their seats on Gunung Agung. She likened the *penjor* to a water container, since the hollow bamboo is appropriate for such a purpose. It is the symbol of the circular flow of water, which first rises into the air, falls as rain, and then flows downwards. God gives life through water. Like water, the mountain is associated with the earth, and thus a *penjor* is also a symbol of Ibu Pertiwi, Mother Earth, and her fruits. At the same time though, according to her, the *penjor* is a symbol of a serpent (*naga*), and in particular of Anantabhoga (who represents food given by Ibu Pertiwi) and Basuki (who represents welfare given by Ibu Pertiwi).[35]

This identification of *penjor* and *naga* is related to the idea that Gunung Agung itself is equivalent to Naga Basuki. The base of Gunung Agung, identified with Pura Besakih, Bali's paramount temple, is the seat of the *naga*. His tail is the top of the mountain, from where water flows down to the sea via the rivers, providing life-giving sustenance to mankind, while the head of the serpent is positioned in the sea. So water also is closely associated with the *naga*. In this interpretation, the serpent Anantabhoga is likened to the skin of the world, the source of clothing and food. Moreover, the Supreme God, Sang Hyang Widhi in his manifestation as Sang Hyang Trimurti provides food and fertility for human beings, and thus Brahma whose seat is in the earth is related to Anantabhoga, Wisnu in the water to Basuki, and Iswara (Siwa) in the sky to the winged Naga Taksaka (Putra ca. 1982:14-16).

The relationship between *penjor*, and especially the *penjor* erected at Galungan (see next section), and the *naga* is also understood in a more direct manner. The *sanggar* with the *penjor*, together with the coconuts, is the head of Taksaka. The *sampian penjor* is the tail of Basuki. Rice, cassava, and other foods hanging from the *penjor* are the skin of the world, and that is Anantabhoga. Thus according to his analysis, by means of the *penjor* the Balinese thank Ida Sang Hyang Widhi who sustains humankind through His manifestation as the Trimurti, or as the three great cosmic serpents.

Another interpretation, presented by Ida Pedanda Istri Ketut Jelantik (Budakeling) (pers. com. 23/10/2013), is that the *penjor* is in fact directed towards all the deities, but especially to Batara Gana, or Ganesha, the god of wisdom and remover of obstacles.

Sometimes a *lamak* is directly attached to the *penjor* itself (figs. 2.20 and 2.21), which, as already noted, in that case is probably regarded as one large offering, consisting of the fruits of the earth. A *penjor* is always constructed by men, whereas the *sampian* and other *jejaitan* are fashioned by women. As is the case with *lamak*, the variation in different *penjor* is considerable, depending on '*desa, kala, patra*', 'place, time and circumstances'. Not only the decorations attached to bamboo *penjor* can vary considerably, but there also exist *penjor* made from other materials. For example in Kerambitan a decorated branch of a *dadap* tree (coral tree, *Erythrina poeppigiana*), called *penjor dadap*, is carried around in procession during a ceremony for a child who is three months old, or a *penjor* from sugarcane is used for a ceremony at a rice barn.

Since also the *penjor* is often seen as seat for the deities, the *lamak* and *penjor* are regarded as complementary to one another. As Ni Wayan Jenjen, *tukang lamak* in Kutri (Singapadu) explained (pers. com. 18/1/1988), "each *penjor* has a *lamak*, and it is not complete without it. The *sanggar penjor* is a representative (*panyawangan*) of Gunung Agung, similar to the *padmasana* (lotus seat for the highest deity) in a temple. A *lamak* belongs here, it does not feel right if there is no *lamak*." Another *tukang lamak*, in Jasan (pers. com. 27/2/1988): "There is

33 See Chapter 3 for a discussion of the important motif of the *cili*.

34 Desak Patupang, Kediri-Singapadu (pers. com. 18/1/1988).

35 See also Putra 1975a.



Figure 2.21: Rows of penjor along the road through Pujung at Galungan, 21/8/1985.

a connection; if there is a *penjor*, you must use a *lamak*. The *lamak* is like the base of a *penjor*, like a cloth, so that it is not naked. The *lamak* belongs to the *penjor*, it is a companion."

2.5 Galungan and *odalan*

2.5.1 Galungan

By far the largest range of different *penjor* and *lamak* can be seen at its very best every 210 days on Galungan.[36] Galungan itself falls on the Wednesday of the week Dungulan of the Javanese-Balinese calendar, but the day is actually the high point of a sequence of holy days which starts on the Thursday of the week before, a day called Sugihan Jawa, includes not only Galungan but also Kuningan 10 days later, and ends on the day Wednesday Kliwon of the week Pahang, one Balinese month (of 35 days) after Galungan. Considered one of the major *dewa yadnya* rituals (although with an important *buta yadnya* component), during this great holiday period which in Bali is often called "*piodalan jagat*" or "*piodalan bumi*", anniversary celebration of the world, and also "*kemenangan dharma*", victory of justice or order, the entire island of Bali is decorated as if it were one enormous temple. In front of almost every houseyard a *penjor* is erected with a small bamboo shrine attached to it from which a *lamak* or *ceniga* hangs (figs. 2.18, 2.20, 2.21).[37]

Being one of major festivals of Balinese Hinduism, Galungan has received a great deal of attention, from both western and Balinese writers, over a period of some two hundred years. In the context of this study, the following presentation concentrates especially on the role of *lamak* and *penjor* within the ritual and calendrical context.

The first mention of the festival period of Galungan in western literature is by John Crawfurd, who visited Bali in 1814 (Raffles 1817:239). He reports: "The first in point of time is Galunggan and is of five days duration; the second is termed Kuningan, and is of three days duration. […] These festivals are dedicated to rejoicing, festivity, and the worship of the gods, not deemed incompatible with each other. All serious occupation is interrupted; even war at all other times carried on with the relentless ferocity common to Barbarians, is deemed unlawful during the celebration of these festivals" (Crawfurd 1820:140). Also the Dutch who worked in North Bali in the second half of the 19th century all wrote about Galungan, describing it as a kind of New Year celebration. They also noticed the many *penjor*, but only Van Eck mentions something that is probably a *lamak* though without naming it as such, what he calls "*een geknipt patroon*", a cut-out pattern, hanging from the *penjor* (Van Eck 1874:122).[38] He was the first to mention the association of *penjor* with the god(s) of Gunung Agung.

However the westerners who worked in Bali in the 1920s en 1930s, like Roelof Goris, Walter Spies, Jane Belo, Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, were all impressed by the beauty of both *penjor* and *lamak*, which they could see everywhere along the streets at Galungan. Miguel Covarrubias, for example, wrote in his famous *Island of Bali* (1937): "On

36 Between 6 October 1982 and 21 October 2013 I have seen *lamak* at Galungan 13 times, most extensively in the districts of Gianyar, Tabanan and Karangasem. (Regional variation in the design of *lamak* and other ritual decorations and the developments in the course of those 30 years will be discussed in Chapter 5).

37 The other time when the entire island of Bali (or whole regions) is decorated in such a way is during great island-wide purification ceremonies, such as Ekadasa Rudra every 100 years (Stuart-Fox 2002:333).

38 In translation: "According to the prescriptions of the religion every Balinese is duty bound at the beginning of a new [Balinese] year to offer prayers at the feet of the god whose throne is established on Gunung Agung (the highest mountain on Bali). On account however that this can be onerous in person to make the journey to the top, they have created the *penjor*, on which a cut-out design hangs from the house temple [shrine attached to the *penjor*?], as proof that they have willingly done at home what should have been done elsewhere but is difficult to accomplish." In Dutch: "*Volgens de voorschriften van de godsdienst is iedere Balinees verplicht om bij het begin van een nieuw jaar zijn gebeden neer te leggen aan de voeten van den god die zijnen troon op Goenoeng Agung (de voornaamste berg op Bali) gevestigd heeft. Aangezien echter bezwaarlijk gevorderd kan worden, dat de lieden in persoon de reis naar boven zullen maken, zoo heeft men de pendjor uitgevonden, waaraan* ***een geknipt patroon*** *van den huistempel afhangt, ten bewijze dat men te huis gaarne doet, wat elders moet, maar moeielijk kan geschieden*" (Van Eck 1874:122).

all the roads, at the gate of every home, tall *penyors* were erected, meant perhaps to be seen from the summits of the mountains where the gods dwell, together with a little bamboo altar from which hung a *lamak*, one of those beautiful mosaics on long strips of palm-leaf" (Covarrubias 1937:284). And elsewhere, stressing the artistic aspect of the *lamak*, he writes, "These are magnificent ornaments, perhaps the purest examples of the Balinese native art, last only for one day [….]. Spies has collected every different type of *lamak* design for a period of years and he has hundreds of them" (Covarrubias 1937:170).[39]

P. de Kat Angelino, who worked as civil servant (*controleur*) in Gianyar, was the first to devote a study to the *penjor* (1921a).[40] He explains the origin of the use of *lamak* and *penjor* at Galungan on the basis of two Balinese texts, the Usana Bali and the Sri Jayakasunu.[41] In legendary times, the demonic, heathen king Maya Danawa was defeated and Hinduism was established in Bali. The gods announced that from then on, on the third day in the week Dungulan (that is the day before Galungan), *byakala* (*biakala*) offerings had to be presented. However, the kings neglected these prescriptions, and as a consequence they each reigned for only a few years. When it was the turn of Sri Jayakasunu to become king, he consulted the goddess Durga, and asked her what he had to do to have a long life as king. She told him that it was necessary to follow the old prescriptions and in the week Dungulan to present *byakala* offerings to the *kala-kali*, the demonic spirits, for otherwise they would devour human beings. Also all Balinese should make offerings in the temples and place a *penjor* outside all house compounds. These *penjor*, tall bamboo poles, should include the produce of the rice fields, coconuts, palm leave decorations and a small temporary shrine with a *lamak*. A month after Galungan the *penjor* and *lamak* should be finally pulled down and burned, and the ashes buried in the courtyard.

According to the informants of De Kat Angelino, through the offerings on the shrine of the *penjor*, which represent everything that serves as food for human beings, the people worship the deity(ies) of the Gunung Agung, in the hope that he will return this gift with his blessings for a good harvest the next year. But because it is not possible to go to the Gunung Agung to present the offerings, they erect a *penjor* in front of their houses, so that the God can descend to this replacement of the mountain to receive and enjoy the offerings. With the *byakala* offerings which contain mainly meat and blood, the demonic *kala* are appeased and the land is purified. This happens on the day before Galungan, called Penampahan, so that Galungan itself is for the Balinese really a feast of renewal. De Kat Angelino also noted down another story, from Balinese oral tradition, in relation to the use of *penjor* at Galungan. The essence of this story is that because the land was purified and decorated with *penjor*, and offerings were made in the week of Dungulan, a king named Sang Hyang Kala, who had turned into a demon who ate his wives, transformed back into a just king who ruled his people for a long and happy time (De Kat Angelino 1921a:195-200).

In numerous publications by Balinese authors on religious matters, the Galungan festival is often discussed, and like De Kat Angelino, these authors usually refer to the Usana Bali and the legend of Sri Jayakasunu.

To quote the text itself, based on an Indonesian translation of the Usana Bali, the last part of this advice from Durga to Sri Jayakasunu is formulated as follows: "And furthermore at the time of the Three Demons (Kala Tiga) of the Week Dungulan which falls on the day Tuesday Wage, at that time it is fitting that you perform the ceremony *biakala*,

---

39 On Walter Spies and his *lamak* project, see Chapter 5.

40 In this article "*De beteekenis der pependjorans*" (1921:195) he mentions the many *lamak* at Galungan as follows: "Standing next to every pole is an offering shrine, also made of bamboo, in which various offerings are placed; from this shrine there hangs down to the ground a decorative plaited mat; on the mat proper (the *lamak*) all sorts of figures (cut-outs from banana leaf) are fastened using small pins (made from the *lidi*, the rib of the palm leaf), by which very beautiful mats are obtained which from a distance appear to be, as it were, rare fabrics." In Dutch: *Naast iederen stam staat een offernisje, ook van bamboe gemaakt, waarin verschillende offers worden neergelegd; vanaf die offernis hangt tot op den grond een sierlijk matvlechtwerk; op de eigenlijke mat (de lamak) worden allerlei figuren (knipsels uit pisangblad) door kleine naalden (gemaakt uit de lidi=palmbladnerf) vastgespeld, waardoor heele mooie matten worden verkregen die er op een afstand uit zien als waren het de zeldzaamste weefsels.*

41 The Sri Jayakasunu is often considered part of the Usana Bali. See Hinzler 1986 for discussion.

which must be followed together by all devotees on the island of Bali, so that they can enjoy themselves with food and drink in each person's village territory, but only after having presented offerings in each person's temples, and to erect a *penjor* in the ground in front of each person's house gateway; give priority to fulfilling this religious duty as in former times" (Warna & Murdha 1986:92).[42]

But in a few manuscripts the main Jayakasunu text is followed by other ritual items, in which further details are provided concerning ritual practices related to Galungan and its broader calendrical context.[43] These include further information on the *penjor* and associated *lamak*. The text reads as follows: "Erect a *penjor* on the day Tuesday Wage of the week Dungulan, having as contents the produce of the rice fields, two coconuts, cakes, *sate lembat*, *sate asem* [two kinds of meat dishes on skewers], *kekuwung* accompanied by *sampian*, *lamak* and all kinds of fish. On the day Wednesday Kliwon of the week Pahang, clean up all the leftovers from Galungan, present the offering *tumpeng mapucak manik*, *canang*, all of them to be placed on the shrine, followed by pulling up the *penjor*, burning the *lamak*, then to be buried in the middle of the house courtyard" (Arwati 1988/1989:8).[44]

Although all my Balinese informants celebrated Galungan in one way or another, there was much variation both in practical details and in the interpretation of the many different aspects of the festival, not always precisely according to the written tradition.

Women especially always know when Galungan is drawing close, because they have to make all the offerings and ritual decorations. They start making preparations, like cleaning the compound and purifying the house temple for the arrival of the ancestors, on the day Sugihan Jawa. On that day small offerings (*banten canang*) are placed on the tip of a banana leaf (*don biu*) and laid down at the places where larger offerings with *lamak* will be presented at Galungan. This, according to Ibu Made Latri (Sanur), is to let the invisible beings know that Galungan is getting close and that they will be invited. For as Ida Pedanda Oka Gede Timbul (Sanur) explained, "On Sugihan Jawa everyone must prepare for the descent of the Five gods (*Panca dewata*), cleanse themselves and all the shrines on the outside, since *Jawa* means 'outside'. The next day is Sugihan Bali, where *Bali* refers to *wali*, a symbol of spirituality, and thus spiritual purification." On the Sunday before Galungan, the day known as Penyekeban, continued the *pedanda*, "the Three Demons (Sang Kala Tiga) descend, who like to cause disturbances. Among them are Kala Wisesa who is very powerful magically and who is difficult to defeat and Kala Amangkurat who has power over the world".

As the main day approaches, women make (or buy) many *jaja*, rice-dough cookies and cakes for the offerings, especially on the Monday before Galungan which for this reason is called Penyajaan. Men are particularly busy in the early morning of the day called Penampahan, the day before Galungan, when they prepare meat offerings. Penampahan is from the root *tampah*, meaning to slaughter (an animal), and in this context refers especially to the slaughter of a pig to be offered to the Three Demons, "as a way of saying thanks, as they are our brothers, and so that negative aspects do not enter, neither into the home nor into the body. Thereafter, one should not give way to anger, and so Galungan can be celebrated with success, in a family environment that includes the ancestors" (pers. com. Ida Pedanda Oka Gede Timbul). The purpose of this sacrifice to the demons, the *biakala* of the texts, is to "purify, free (*membebaskan*) Sang Kala

---

42 *Lagi pula apabila saat Kala Tiga Uku Dungulan yang jatuh pada hari: Selasa, Wage, ketika itu Anakda patut melaksanakan upacara Abeyakala, yang diikuti bersama-sama oleh umat di Pulau Bali, mereka agar bersenang-senang makan dan minum di wilayah desanya masing-masing, dengan terlebih dahulu mempersembahkan sesajen di puranya masing-masing, serta menancapkan penjor di halaman depan pintu rumahnya masing-masing, utamakanlah Anakda mematuhi tata karma di masa silam.*

43 For example, Candi Darma K.41 (K.41a Jayakasunu): 25b; Tutur Usana Bali (Geria Pidada, Klungkung, HKS 1833/L.Or.14977): 10a (incomplete, just the last few lines of the text). For a published version, see Arwati 1988/1989.

44 *Mendirikan penjor pada hari Selasa, Wage Dungulan, berisi hasil sawah, kelapa dua butir, kue, sate lembat, sate asem, kekuwung disertai sampyan, lamak dan segala jenis ikan. Pada hari Buda Keliwon Pahang, membersihkan sampah Galungan, menghaturkan tumpeng mapucak manik, canang, yang semuanya diletakkan pada sanggar, dilanjutkan dengan mencabut penjor, membakar lamak, selanjutnya ditanam ditengah pekarangan rumah. Habis.*

Tiga, so that they return to their original form, Ida Sang Hyang Tiga Wisesa/Ida Sang Hyang Widhi in His form as Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer [the Trimurti: Brahma, Wisnu and Siwa]. In this way harmony and well-being of the Buana Agung and Buana Alit can be realized, and Dharma can be maintained" (Putra 1985a:34). This particular ritual is the important *buta yadya* component of the Galungan celebration.

There are rules about the timing of the appearance of *penjor* and *lamak*: they may be erected and suspended only after this *biakala* offering on Penampahan. Only then can the final preparations for Galungan take place. Men make and erect *penjor*. In readiness for Galungan 23 October 2013, I watched in Budakeling how a father and son spent the whole afternoon of Penampahan Galungan making and decorating a *penjor*: in front of the gateway on the street they attached all the leaves and food, pieces of cloth and other ingredients and elements, whereas the mother and daughter-in-law were inside the house yard busy making all the *jejaitan* that had to be suspended from the pole. Every family erects a bamboo offering altar in front of their homes with a *lamak* hanging from it, next to the *penjor*, or attached to the *penjor* (fig. 2.16, 18, 19). "This is meant as an invitation to the ancestors, to welcome them for Galungan," said my informants.

Meanwhile the women are busy making the offerings (*matanding*) for the following day and decorating the shrines in the house temple with textiles (as a kind of clothing), complete with palm leaf *lamak* and *gantung-gantungan*. For example in my Sanur 'home' in the 1980s no less than 65 *lamak* were needed. In Budakeling, Ni Nyoman Ngetis made dozens of the offerings *banten pajegan* for presenting (*maturan*) in the various temples and 56 small offerings (*ceper*) for the demons on the ground, one larger *banten nasi* and one *banten* Galungan (pers. com. 29/1/2012).

In the words of Ni Made Latri (Sanur), "the ancestors arrive on the day before Galungan, and it is then that the *lamak* are hung up, for they show the way to the shrines" (figs. 2.2, 2.3). If some shrines or altars already have a more permanent cloth *lamak* or a *ceniga* made from the more durable *lontar* palm leaves, for this festive occasion fresh new *lamak* are always put on top. Besides the numerous *lamak* and *gantung-gantungan* hanging from the shrines in the house temple and the courtyard, they are also placed on the small wooden altars attached to the walls of buildings in the compound, such as the bedroom, kitchen, rice barn, and well.

Although *lamak* on a *penjor* are seldom longer than one metre, the district Gianyar has its own elaborate variation.[45] In front of the houses where a wedding has taken place since the previous Galungan very tall bamboo shrines (called *bale nganten*, 'wedding pavilion') are erected from which beautiful *lamak* are hung, five to eight metres long, the so-called *lamak nganten*, wedding *lamak* (figs. 2.1, 2.6, 2.22-2.25). Besides attracting the deities, they also serve as a kind of invitation to members of the neighbourhood to come and visit the newly-wed couple to present offerings (*banten tumpeng*) and take home special sweets (*tape*). The offerings are meant to wish the couple happiness in their new life and the hope they will soon receive offspring. Sometimes next to these *lamak nganten* there are two *penjor* instead of one, representing the married couple, the taller one to the right being the groom and the smaller one to the left the bride. However, usually there is only one *penjor*, but more elaborately decorated than the usual ones. This visiting and presenting of offerings in the neighbourhood is called *ngejot banten*. In Lambing (Badung) this is called *nekaang*, and I noticed women carrying some very tall offerings, *jrimpen gede*, to their neighbours. Also in Kerambitan (Tabanan) *banten jrimpen* are taken to the homes where a wedding has taken place and/or a first child has been born in the previous period, but these offerings are much smaller, and the tradition of *lamak nganten* does not exist there. Also in Budakeling (Karangasem) no special wedding *lamak* are hung outside, and *banten jrimpen ketipat* are only taken to the families where a child has been born recently (pers. com. Ni Nyoman Ngetis, 29/1/2012).

In Karangasem, where I happened to be for Galungan on 24 October 1990, 1 February 2012 and

45 From observations during my trips along the roads of Bali at Galungan, in the 1980s *lamak nganten* were present in a wide area around Ubud, in a kind of ellipse on the map, starting as far east as Gianyar, and then clockwise as far as Keramas, Singapadu, Mambal, Kedewatan, Tegallalang, to as far north as Tampaksiring (see map in figure 1.2.).



Figure 2.22: Lamak nganten made by Ni Wayan Klepon (Junjungan) for Galungan. Peliatan, 13/5/1987.

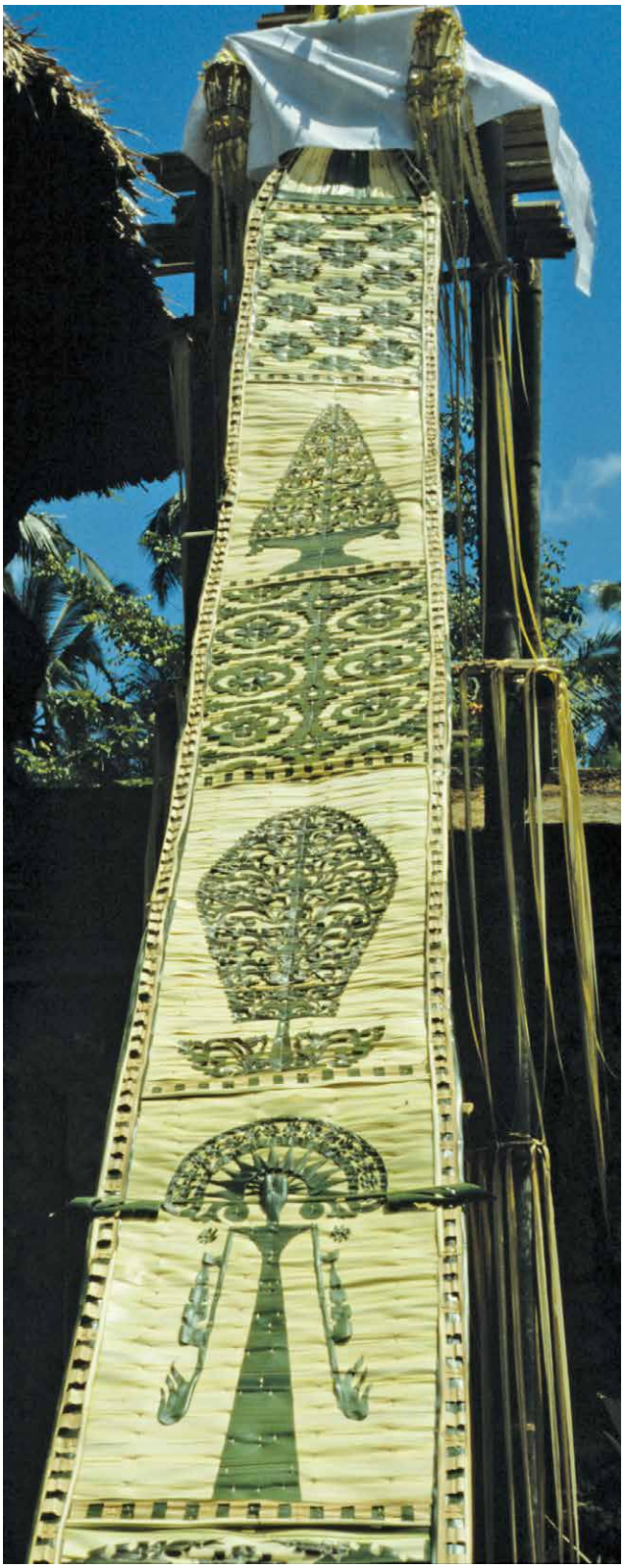


Figure 2.23: Lamak nganten probably made by I Made Sadra (Padangtegal) for Galungan. Peliatan, 21/8/1985.



Figure 2.24: Lamak nganten at Galungan. Sayan, Kedewatan, 6/10/1982.



Figure 2.25: Lamak nganten at Galungan. Singapadu, 11/12/1987.

23 October 2013, I noticed that fastened onto many *penjor* was another palm leaf artefact called *ubag-abig*. This *jejaitan* had the long rectangular shape of a *lamak*, towards the tip slightly narrower, with two long chains hanging from the bottom or the sides, called 'legs with feet' or 'arms with hands'. According to some informants the *ubag-abig* represents the human body, and the chains with its connecting links are a symbol of unity, and of marriage.

The main day of this festive period, Galungan, the day after Penampahan, is nowadays often interpreted as the celebration of the victory of Dharma [sacred order and right conduct] over Adharma [the opposite of Dharma]. Ida Sang Hyang Widhi (God) in His many manifestations and the ancestors are invited to receive the Galungan offerings, among which the *tumpeng*, rice cones, are important ingredients. The presentation of offerings and worship "are directed to the deities, the forces of nature, the ancestors, small creatures (*gumatap-gumitip*) and even anything that is thought to be of help, that accompany us in life, like betel box, utensils for kitchen, weaving, and pounding rice, broom, water channel, automobile, and so on" (Putra 1985a:42). "After presenting all the offerings, then pray and receive holy water, … and the next morning … waft the essence of the offerings in the house or shrine and request blessings from Sang Hyang Sarining Galungan/Sang Hyang Dharma" (Putra 1985a:48).

Not only is there extensive regional variation in the ritual decorations for Galungan, it also makes a difference whether Galungan happens to fall on the day of a full moon or *purnama*. This is called Galungan Nadi, and it happened for example on 13 May 1987. In Ubud and surroundings the *penjor* were called *penjor nadi*, and a white effect was achieved by removing completely the skin of the bamboo poles. Older people from Buleleng and Karangasem remembered that in their youth there were only *penjor* and *lamak* at Galungan Nadi, not at ordinary Galungan.

Ten days after Galungan, on Saturday of the week Kuningan, is the holy day Kuningan. The deities are asked for their blessings of prosperity, peace and protection, and it is hoped that prosperity and Dharma will always be present in the world. This marks the end of the main part of the festive period, and ancestors and deities are believed to return again to their *kahyangan*, their heavenly abodes. To bid them farewell, they again receive offerings, although somewhat smaller in size and variety than at Galungan. *Kuning* means yellow, and on this day offerings include yellow rice, *nasi kuning,* and side dishes. Furthermore, all Galungan *lamak* or *ceniga* are replaced by freshly made ones, usually of a smaller variety, or these new *jejaitan* are simply put on top of the previous ones. In most areas in Bali, for Kuningan the *gantungan* near the *lamak* are replaced by a *jejaitan* in the form of a circle, called *tamiang*, meaning 'shield' (fig. 2.26-2.28), which informants explain as a symbol of protection. Sometimes a *sampian penjor* is replaced by a *tamiang* as well.

In Budakeling, the ordinary Galungan *lamak* or *ceniga* are replaced by so-called *ceniga jan banggul*, "so that Ida Betara can return to heaven." *Jan banggul* refers to a ladder made from a single piece of bamboo, with notches (fig. 2.28). In this area, for these *jejaitan* only the light-coloured young leaves of the coconut and *lontar* palm trees are used, since these are rather yellow (*kuning*) in colour. For Galungan the colour of the leaves had to be dark green. In Budakeling, replacing the *gantungan*, a *capah* on the right side of a *lamak* and a *tamiang* on the left side are said to be related to one another as human being and rays of the sun, as microcosm (*buana alit*) and macrocosm (*buana agung*).

Also in many parts of Badung including Sanur a special kind of *lamak* is used for Kuningan. It is the *endongan*, which elsewhere consists of a little palm leaf pouch-like artefact filled with bits of food, the same as in small offerings: sugar cane (*tebu*), banana (*biu*) and cookies (*jaja*) and flowers, betel quid (*porosan*) and sacred leaves (*plawa*) from the trees *kayu sugih*, *bingin* and *cemara*, "all for the ancestors to take on their journey home to the heavens", Ni Made Latri said. In Sanur it does not exist by itself, but the pouch is fastened onto a kind of *lamak*, which as a whole is called *endongan*. Not all *lamak* are replaced by *endongan*; in my Sanur 'home' compound only 25 *endongan* were needed (fig. 2.29).

Finally, on the day Buda Kliwon of the week Pahang, 35 days after Galungan, the end of the Galungan-Kuningan festive period is marked by a small ritual. All *penjor* are finally pulled up. The *lamak* and other decorations, including elements from the *penjor*, have dried out completely by then and according to informants these are burned and



Figure 2.26: Lamak and two tamiang hang from a sanggar penjor at Kuningan. Buruan (Tabanan), 16/7/1988.



Figure 2.27: Tamiang made for Kuningan. Banjar Sigaran Jegu (Penebel), 2/11/2013.



Figure 2.28: Tamiang and ceniga jan banggul made for Kuningan. Banjar Pande Mas, Budakeling, 11/2/2012.



Figure 2.29: Endongan made for Kuningan. Banjar Batujimbar, Sanur, 15/4/1994.



Figure 2.30: At the end of the Galungan period, I Wayan Teja burns the lamak and other jejaitan. Banjar Gulingan, Sanur, 17/3/2016.

the ashes are buried in the courtyard, as is prescribed in the texts. For example, on Buda Kliwon Pahang 16 March 2016, in the Sanur courtyard where I had lived before (fig. 2.30), the *penjor* in front of the gateway was pulled up, and Wayan Teja set the *lamak*, *sampian penjor*, *tamiang* and other *jejaitan* on fire. The dry leaves burned very quickly and afterwards he cooled them off by sprinkling them with some holy water. Then he buried the ashes at the foot of a tree in the centre of the courtyard and finally placed a small *canang* offering on top of the earth. According to I Gusti Agung Mas Putra (1985a:60), the ashes are buried so that they are returned to Ibu Pertiwi, Mother Earth, accompanied by offerings, "with the request for life force and well-being".

In interpreting the meaning or significance of the Galungan-Kuningan rituals, different writers at various times, based on available knowledge, have emphasized different aspects, and analyses and interpretation have changed over the years.[46] Informants, in their own words, likewise express varying explanations.

Ida Pedanda Oka Gede Timbul (Sanur) (pers. com. 28/8/1989 and 3/4/1994), basing himself on the *lontar* manuscript Sri Jayakasunu, interprets the meaning of Galungan in these terms: "In a philosophical way one could say that Galungan celebrates the victory of Dharma over Adharma; through meditation and concentration one has to control one's emotions and follow God. But Galungan is also the Festival of the Earth or World, everything is given offerings, and all Hindus participate. The ancestral gods (*dewa hyang*) and all the other gods witness the celebrations enacted by the Hindu believers. Galungan is a celebration of thanks to Betara Guru (the High God) and his 3,5,9 and 11 manifestations, and also to the deified ancestors, with the request for a long and prosperous life."[47]

Many Balinese informants saw Galungan as a kind of thanksgiving period, because "the ancestors are at home during Galungan". They had heard about the "victory of Dharma over Adharma", but did not know what this meant exactly.

But some, like I Made Windia, head (*klian banjar*) of Banjar Gulingan, Sanur, provided explanations with philosophical content (pers. com. 6/10/1982): "The Galungan-Kuningan period is a remembering of the struggle within a human being between good and evil. During the ten days of the Galungan-Kuningan period the ancestors are present in this world in order to help human beings in this struggle."

His daughter-in-law Nyoman Murni said (pers. com. 12/5/2010) that since Galungan celebrates the victory of Dharma over Adharma, one should not get angry, "because those who are coming to visit will remember". Her husband did not pay much attention to this aspect. For him "Galungan is busy and expensive!", although he likes the social aspects of the festival and the opportunity to spend time with his children.

---

46 Among the many publications by Balinese authors on the Galungan-Kuningan festival, one of the earliest is in I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa's book *Hari Raya Bali Hindu* (1952, 2nd ed. 1957). His work is very detailed as regards the various *mantra* to be used in all the different stages of the rituals. According to him, a *penjor* is a special symbol of the Gunung Agung as a seat for Bhatara Mahadewa or Bhatara Giripati (Lord of the Mountain), but he does not specifically mention the use of *lamak* (Sugriwa 1957:9-28). Another important author on ritual matters (especially offerings and ritual decorations), I Gusti Agung Mas Putra, gives a full description of and many prescriptions (including details of offerings) for the entire Galungan period (Putra 1985a: 31-78). She mentions *lamak* on the day before Galungan, the *endongan* for Kuningan, and the burning of these ritual objects 35 days after Galungan. According to her, the Galungan festival celebrates the victory of Dharma (right order, justice, goodness, truth) over Adharma (chaos, ignorance, untruth). She also interprets the sacrifice to the Sang Kala Tiga as a purification so that they can return to their original form, the Sang Hyang Tiga Wisesa, as the Trimurti. She interprets the *penjor* as a sign of victory of Dharma over Adharma, and more specifically as a symbol of the earth/mountain with all its fruits and crops that give prosperity and life on earth, whereas the offerings and the other requirements form the *sarin tahun*, the produce of the (rice)fields. And publications on Galungan continue to appear, almost on a yearly basis, e.g. Sudarsana 2003: 30-79, and Adnyana 2011. Among western accounts, see Stephen 2005:118-121 and Hobart 2003 for two recent discussions with different perspectives.

47 *Galungan juga Hari Raya Gumi atau Jagat, seluruhnya diupacarai, dan seluruh umat Hindu ikut. Dewa Yang (leluhur) dan Dewa2 yang lain semua ikut menyaksikan umat Hindu bagaimana melaksanakan Hari Raya Galungan. Galungan adalah terima kasih kepada Betara Guru dan semua 3,5,9,dan 11 manifestasi Beliau dan juga leluhur. Supaya panjang umur, dan hidup baik.*

Nowadays, Balinese first learn about the meaning of Galungan and the significance of the *penjor* as part of their religious education in primary school. According to the teacher's manual, the children learn that the essence of the ritual is to present offerings, consisting of all the contents of the world that we enjoy and make use of, namely leaves, fruits, flowers, etc. This is given form in the *penjor*. The meaning of the *penjor* is to thank Sang Hyang Widhi for His enormous gift of prosperity to us. At Galungan the whole family prays to Sang Hyang Widhi and the ancestors to thank them, whereas at Kuningan the protection of Sang Hyang Widhi and the ancestors is requested, so everyone can live in safety and prosperity (Mardana 2005:21-23).

From the various written sources, observations and interviews with informants, the essentials of the Galungan and Kuningan festive period can be summarized as follows.

As *odalan gumi*, anniversary celebration of the world, Galungan has the characteristics of a cosmic ritual, a 'New Year' celebration of the renewal of relationships of both the invisible (*niskala*) and the visible (*sekala*) inhabitants of the island of Bali. Through the *biakala* sacrifice presented to Sang Kala Tiga, demonic forces are purified and returned to their original form, transformed back into the Sang Hyang Tiga Wisesa, the Trimurti, Brahma, Wisnu and Siwa. The deities, manifestations of Sang Hyang Widhi are invited to descend to earth from their heavenly abode, represented by the summit of Gunung Agung. The deified ancestors descend to their family temples to be worshipped, but offerings are also brought to the graveyard (for the not yet cremated family members) and the Pura Dalem (the Death Temple), to other village temples and to the family temple for the ancestors from the side of the mother in each household.

Also the relations within the *banjar* (neighbourhood) play a role, especially in the households where a new family has been formed. Galungan is also very much a social event, a period of visiting and *jalan-jalan* (outings), eating together and strengthening family ties.

Throughout the festival period various forms of *lamak* make their appearance. When on the day Sugihan Jawa small offerings are presented to the invisible beings to prepare them for the upcoming invitation for Galungan, they are only placed on the tips of banana leaves (*don biu*), in combination with some flowers (*bunga ratna*), but not yet on a *ceniga* or *lamak*.

Only after the *biakala* sacrifice on Penampahan, when the world has been purified, are the *penjor* with *lamak* erected in front of every household, as prescribed in the ancient texts. As a symbol or representation of the Gunung Agung, the *penjor* is connected to this invitation, and to the actual descending of deities and ancestors.

On the actual day of Galungan offerings are presented, placed on the upper ends of all *lamak*, in thanks to deities and ancestors for their benevolence and gifts, including a good harvest (symbolized by the contents of the *penjor*), and to ask for a new year of abundance and fertility (also offspring for newly-wed couples), necessary for the continuation of life in the world of Bali.

Kuningan marks the end of this period of divine presence on earth, when the deities return to their heavenly abode. The *endongan* and *ceniga jan banggul,* hung in addition to the *lamak*, are specifically meant to facilitate this return. The *tamiang* (shield) is a symbol of the protection from danger, granted by the ancestors.

Finally, 35 days after Galungan (on Buda Kliwon Pahang) the *penjor* are pulled up, and the *lamak* and other *jejaitan* burned and buried.

2.5.2 Odalan

Besides Galungan, the other major rituals within the Dewa Yadnya category in which *lamak* are very prominent are temple anniversary festivals, which celebrate the 'birthday' of their consecration. When this ritual returns every 210 days, the festival is called *odalan*, when it is connected to the lunar cycle it is often called *usaba*. Each of the thousands of temples in Bali celebrates its own festival on its own specific day.

Just as at Galungan, deities or deified ancestors are invited to come down from heaven and visit their shrines in the temple, which for this occasion are all decorated with *lamak* and *gantung-gantungan* (figs. 2.14, 2.17, 2.32-2.38). In front of the entrance gate to the temple stand *penjor*, usually with small altars with *lamak* (fig. 2.31). In the 1980s and 1990s I often noticed spectacular *lamak* decorating the gateway to the temple and the

bale kulkul, the 'drum tower' in the corner of the temple's outer courtyard (fig. 2.16).[48] But although currently *lamak* are still there, they are shorter and less striking than they used to be.

And just as at Galungan, the main purpose of the ritual is to ask the gods to grant well-being and protection, in exchange for offerings which represent the fruits of the earth. Besides the offering groups associated with the ritual, each family worshipping in the temple brings its own offering (fig. 2.34, 2.37). During the ceremony a priest by means of prayers and mantras invites the invisible powers to descend into the offerings to enjoy the food, and to bestow prosperity, long life, health, safety and fertility. The people receive the blessings from the deities in the form of holy water and the 'left-overs' of the food content of the offerings.

I visited dozens of temple celebrations,[49] in all regions of Bali, varying from small family temples in the houseyard to major complexes like Pura Besakih and Pura Batur, from '*nista*' or smallest level rituals to the '*utama*' or highest level of ritual elaboration. In some temples, for example in Intaran (Sanur) where I lived, the ritual always required the presence of a *pedanda*, priest of Brahmana descent, in other temples by a temple priest or *pemangku*.[50] In some temples the ritual always lasts for just one day only, in others three or more days, or alternating between one or more days.

Although the variation is enormous, especially in the design of offerings and ritual decorations, the main structure and sequence of events were in most cases comparable to the summary given by Jane Belo of a temple festival she witnessed in Sayan (in the neighbourhood of Ubud) in 1937-38:

"The basic theme of every temple festival is the invitation to the gods to descend, to imbue with their presences the sacred objects (*artja*) or god-figures which form their support (*tapakan*) for the time that they are to be given homage.

The little figures which represent the gods must be awakened (*tetangi*), they must be dressed, escorted to the bath, given an elaborate toilette. They are given a reception (*pemendak*) with dancing. Nymphs are invited for their entertainment, and gods of neighbouring temples asked to attend as guests. The gods are seated (*malinggih*) on a central shrine, and a feast (*piodalan*) is spread out for them. Later, more refreshments are offered, again with dancing (*mendet*). Music accompanies their coming and their going. All through the night the entertainment continues. The next day, and the next, while their visit lasts, they must be offered refreshments at regular intervals, until at last, when it is time for them to go home (*boedal*), they are given a final rousing send-off (*ngeloearang*)" (Belo 1953:11). Belo's detailed book is complemented by that of C. Hooykaas (1977), who focusses on "what a priest says and chants in order to obtain a better understanding of the ritual." He does this on the basis of the contents of *lontar* manuscripts and other texts, mainly manuals for temple priests.[51]

In relation to the question "What do Balinese do with *lamak*?", in the following section I concentrate on the stadia of a temple festival in which Balinese actually do something with *lamak*, on the basis of my own observations and the descriptions in Belo's book. And on the basis of Hooykaas' book and some additional material I present the (few) passages in which *lamak* and/or *ceniga* are specifically mentioned in the texts. Note that there is often some (scribal) variation in these *mantra*.

Usually a few days before the actual ceremony, the people who are responsible for the temple start making preparations. Materials are collected, offerings made, temporary constructions built. From the shrines "also will hang the intricate palm leaf panels (*lamak*) cut out by the girls with the cleverest fingers. Those who undertake to provide for the temple the *penjors* and the *lamaks* are let off from part of the usual routine work. […]. On the third day of the preparation, that is, the day immedi-

48 In 1930 Miguel and Rose Covarrubias attended their first *odalan* in Sanur. As Williams and Chong (2005:15) write "Miguel was given his first *lamak* (a colourful palm leaf runner), an extraordinary lovely one, which sadly by morning had wilted."

49 Most recently on 23 March 2016, the *usaba* of the Pura Dalem in Budakeling on Purnama Sasih Kesanga, the day of the full moon of the ninth month.

50 See Hauser-Schäublin 1997 for a discussion of the temples and their different relations with priests in this village.

51 In the numerous publications on Balinese art and religion, the temple festival always plays a role. For recent examples see Hildred Geertz 2004 and Jenkins 2014.



Figure 2.31: Lamak with cili motifs at the entrance to the temple during an odalan at Pura Desa, Beraban, 13/5/2010.



Figure 2.32: Different kinds of lamak decorate shrines during an odalan at Pura Batur, Beraban, 13/5/2010.



Figure 2.33: Different kinds of lamak decorate shrines for a temple ritual (usaba) in Pura Dalem, Budakeling, 23/3/2016.



Figure 2.34: A worshipper places her offering in a shrine decorated with a lamak for an odalan in Pura Paibon Pande Besi, Budakeling, 1/6/2015.



Figure 2.35: A worshipper sprinkles holy water on her offerings which are placed on top of a lamak. Temple ritual (usaba) in Pura Dalem, Budakeling, 23/3/2016.

ately proceding the *odalan*, […] from the corners of every shrine dangled festoons of palm leaf confections, *gantoeng-gantoengan*, their crisp fringes stirring in the breeze. From the door or opening of every shrine hung *tjenigaan* [*ceniga*] of patterned palm leaf, smaller editions of the great *lamaks* hung without" (Belo 1953:18).

Often I observed myself these preparations for a temple ritual, including the making of the *lamak, ceniga* and *gantung-gantungan* (as will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5). After they were finished, they were usually hung and fastened on the shrines by either the offering specialist who was responsible for all the offerings and decorations, or by one of her helpers. The big platforms on which people place their own family offerings during the ritual usually received each one set of *lamak* and *gantungan*. In most cases the *lamak* were hung in their respective places one day before, or in the early morning of the day of the ceremony. Then, after she had completed the offerings intended for each shrine and high altar, the *tukang banten* (offering specialist) or her helper put them on each of these seats for the deities, on or near the top end of each *lamak*.

I never noticed, or heard that the person who handled the *lamak* pronounced a prayer at that time. However, in the manuscripts that Hooykaas studied, mention is made of the following mantra the *pemangku* (temple priest) had to pronounce when he fastened the *lamak* or *caniga*, as one of the preparatory activities in the temple:

"*Macaniga: OM Nini Puspa Dewa-Dewi kottami wara ning Dewa ning puspa, rastu ya siddhi ya namah swaha*", translated as: "When fastening (?) the runners of patterned palm-leaf: OM Grandmother Flower(s) Gods Goddesses supreme gift of Gods of flowers, honour and hail, may there be results" (Hooykaas 1977:31).

Also in a published version of a similar text, Kusuma Dewa (1985:6), we find a similar mantra: "*Makena caniga, mantra: 'Om, hening puspa dewi, uttamam parama hening dewaning puspa, siddhir astu ya namah swaha'*, "Om! The flower goddess is pure. The God of Flowers is the purist of the pure. May there be success! Honour! Hail!"[52]

According to Made Titib, when a *lamak* is hung or fastened, one should pronounce the following mantra: "*Om Hyang ning Hyang lamak candi gunung, sapala ya namah.*" His own free Indonesian translation of this mantra reads in English: "Om Hyang Widhi of great purity, your servant requests forgiveness to fasten the *lamak* as the base of the Candi Gunung (literally Shrine Mountain), the seat of Hyang Widhi" (Titib 1976:15).[53]

A similar mantra is mentioned by Ida Pedanda Gede Oka Timbul, in a letter to me (12/7/1991). He found this mantra in his text of the Kusuma Dewa: "*Mantra memasang lamak: Ong Hyang ning Hyang, lamak candi gunung sempurna, ong, samplawa ya namah swaha*"; in English translation: "God of Gods, *lamak* depicting mountain and shrine, ong honour to the leaf", with the remark that *samplawa* is a leaf of certain flowering plants, not just an ordinary leaf.[54]

I Gusti Agung Mas Putra, who based her information on the text *Gagelaran Pemangku Kusuma Dewa*, from Abianlalang, mentions that for very large rituals, before the *lamak* is suspended, the place has to be swept first in a ritual way, with a special broom, accompanied by the offering *sumping-keladi*. After that, the following mantra has to be uttered by the priest: *OM Hyangning Hyang, lamak candi gunung, ampura angelarakan pasantigan. Om. Saplawa ya namah* (Putra 1975a:9; 1975b:6; 1983:41-53); in English translation: "Om! God of gods, *lamak candi gunung*, bestow forgiveness and spread piece of mind (tranquility). Om. Honour!"[55]

In some of Hooykaas' manuscripts it is specifically mentioned that "Only after *kamaligi* [kind of offering] it is permitted to hang up the *lamak*

52 This mantra, for the most part in Sanskrit, was kindly translated for me by Prof. Peter Worsley from Sydney University.

53 In Indonesian: "*Om Hyang Widdhi Yang Maha Suci, hamba memohon ampun untuk memasang lamak sebagai dasar candi gunung (Sthana Hyang Widdhi)*".

54 As translated into Indonesian by the *pedanda*: "*kira-kira artinya: Ong, Dewa nya Dewa, lamak bergambarkan gunung & candi, ong samplawa ya namah swaha. (Samplawa = daun bunga, bukan daun biasa (leaf)*".

55 This mantra was kindly translated for me by Prof. Peter Worsley from Sydney University (email 11/8/2014).

and put the offerings in the temple" (Hooykaas 1977:23).[56]

When the temple is adorned and cleaned, the next phase is "the dressing of god-figures: they are wrapped first in a *kamben*, a skirt, then an upper scarf, *tjerik*, and lastly a gold-leafed panel, a *lamak* such as dancers wear, was bound from their breasts with a brightly colored sash, *saboek*" (Belo 1953:21).

After the god-figures are dressed, the temple priest (*pemangku*) extends an "invitation to the gods to descend, by the same means as that by which they enter the god-figures, the ladder of smoke from the incense brazier" (Belo 1953:12). According to the texts, "The gods are now descending, borne on fragrant frankincense, following the way of a soft rain, acting as sprinkling by the gods, giving the potion of immortality by way of rain, this annihilation of all impurities, misery and evil, illness and ailment of mankind in the world of mortals" (Hooykaas 1977:41). Also the tinkling of the bell serves as means of drawing the attention of the deities (Hooykaas 1977:35, 40).

Before the offerings are presented to the deities, they are first purified. The manuscripts say the following: "After the preceding sprinkling with Holy Water of all offerings, first sprinkle fresh water over the *caniga* and *gantung-gantungan*" (Hooykaas 1977:58,59).

However, there is in the manuscripts no mention of a mantra for the *lamak* or *ceniga* at the time of the presentation of the offerings. Ida Pedanda Gede Oka Timbul confirmed this when he told me (pers. com.19/1/1990) that he himself does not use a special mantra for *lamak* or *ceniga*, because they are not *banten* (offerings), only *upakara*, ritual utensils. During a temple festival his main role is to present the offerings to the deities, by means of special mantras in which he invites the gods to descend into the offerings themselves. Also Ida Pedanda Wayan Djelantik Singharsa (Gria Tangi, Budakeling) confirmed (pers. com. 12/6/2015) that a *lamak* or *ceniga* does not have its own mantra, because it is not an offering itself, it is only the base of an offering.

And also the *pemangku* of the Dadia Pande in Budakeling said (pers. com. 29/4/2014), when I asked about the mantras after he just had performed the inauguration ritual (*melaspas*) for our house, that there was no special mantra for *ceniga* or *lamak*, because they were already included in all the offerings of the ceremony.

Finally, at the end of the celebrations, "after the third day […], the burning of the temple's *lamak.* When there is a big celebration, […] all of that has to be burnt. The ashes must be put in the shell of a yellow coconut [..]. This has to be buried in the northern part of the temple, inside the walls" (Hooykaas 1977:22). Actually, I have never seen this happen. Usually all *jejaitan*, including *lamak*, are just taken off the shrines and together with the leftovers from the ground offerings are burned or left to decay.

In contrast to the extensive prescriptions in *lontar* manuscripts about the content of the numerous offerings, in the texts and manuals that deal with such matters, there are almost no prescriptions as regards the form of *lamak* and neither is the specific purpose of a *lamak* or *ceniga* mentioned. I found only one text, "About offerings" (HKS 2774 = Or 15.918, *Makudang bebantenan dewa-, bhutayadnya, Griya Talaga, Sanur,* p.15, 10b/24-11a/4), which mentions that the *lamak* on the *sanggar tawang* at *nista* level should be a *cepuk* cloth, at *madia* (medium) level a *patola* and at *utama* level a silk *patola*. "If it is not visible in this way, the ritual will not be successful, it will not be noticed by the gods."[57]

So from my own observations, the descriptions by Jane Belo of what the people actually do with the *lamak* and their *gantung-gantungan*, and the passages about this in the manuscripts compiled and translated by Hooykaas, the conclusion can be drawn that the most important purpose of the *lamak* and their *gantung-gantungan* are their very presence; they have to be there.

Special attention is given to their making, in the texts mention is made of hanging them up,

56 "*Wus ing akalamigi wahu wenang makena lamak, muang ngunggahang banten ring parhyangan*". Although Hooykaas uses both spellings *kamaligi* and *kalamigi*, the former is the usual. Another variant spelling is *kumaligi* (Kamus 1990: 302).

57 In Balinese: *Yan tan samangkana byakta tan sida karyané, tan kahulatana den i watek déwata*. English translation by David Stuart-Fox.



Figure 2.36: Two lamak decorate the main shrine of Pura Agung for its odalan. Intaran (Sanur), 13/2/2012.



Figure 2.37: A family offering is placed on top of a lamak for an odalan at Pura Dalem, Sibang, 1/2/1989.

Figure 2.38: Lamak under canang offerings in front of the deity figures at the odalan of Pura Bias, Budakeling, 19/10/2013.



there is sometimes a short mantra to accompany this, when the offerings are purified the *lamak* are purified as well, at the same time, but they are not presented to the deities with a mantra as in the case of offerings, and afterwards all *jejaitan* have to be returned to the earth. And other than the one time it is mentioned that certain cloths as *lamak* must be hung from shrines because otherwise the gods would not notice, a more specific role of the *lamak* is not explained in the manuscripts.

However, although it is clear they have to be on the shrines before the gods are invited to descend, the *lamak* themselves are not the actual "pathway" for the travelling of the gods, since that is the function of the "ladder of smoke" from the burning incense, "frankincense and *majagahu*, fragrant materials with lovely scents", in the words of the priests' manuals (Hooykaas 1977:38, 42).

2.6 What is the purpose of a *lamak*, what does it do?

When asked their opinions and thoughts about why they used *lamak*, most Balinese informants explained that a *lamak* mainly acts as a base for offerings and as decoration of shrines and altars. As an underlay or mat the *lamak* makes the place where the offerings are placed clean and suitable for these gifts for the deities. In the meantime, as decoration of the shrines (including *penjor*) from or in front of which they hang, *lamak* 'dress up' these places for offerings. In these two ways, the *lamak* acts as an invitation, a sign of welcome for deities, ancestors, spirits and other invisible (*niskala*) beings.

Moreover, from the examples of the role of *lamak* during Galungan and temple anniversary it has become clear that *lamak* show the invisible beings the way to the shrines where the offerings are. And this is important, because should these places not be clearly visible for the gods, the ritual will not be successful, as was mentioned in the text quoted in the paragraph above. The *lamak* have to be there.

So what a *lamak* is supposed to do, what its purpose is in ritual, is to attract the invisible beings to the offerings in the shrine, "in order that offerings are received", as Ida Pedanda Gede Oka (Sanur) said (pers. com. 13/4/2014).

He, and other priests and specialists in religious matters who have access to more spiritual sources of knowledge, also interpret the purpose of a *lamak*, its presence in ritual, in a more metaphorical way. In their interpretation of what a *lamak* as ritual object does, they sometimes make use of the other meaning of the word *lamak*, or *lamakan*: cause, reason. In the words of Ida Pedanda Gede Oka: "The word *lamak* is related to *lamakaning*, which means 'because' (*sebab*), 'in order that' (*supaya*), so a *lamak* means 'in order that offerings are received'" (pers. com. 13/4/2014).

They also sometimes refer to the two other kinds of *lamak* that exist in Bali, and which I will briefly discuss in the following section.

2.6.1 Other meanings of lamak

At the beginning of this chapter, two other meanings of the word *lamak* were mentioned: a breast cloth of a dancer; and a woman of lower caste married to a man from the Brahmana caste. At first sight there seems to be no connection with the *lamak* I have discussed so far, ritual objects related to offerings and shrines. However, the meaning of *lamak* as part of a costume of a dancer is to a certain extent also a ritual decoration. It is not part of the "clothing" of a shrine, but that of a human being. Being made of permanent (non-ephemeral) material, it is often found in museum collections.[58]

Wayan Pugeg, a well-known artist from Singapadu (pers. com. 1/4/1994), said that he used to make *lamak* himself as part of costumes for dancers. For male Baris dancers he applied patterns of gold leaf (*prada*) to rectangular pieces of cloth and for the female Legong and Condong characters he made leather *lamak*, with cut-out motifs like a *wayang kulit* puppet. According to him, the motifs are comparable to those on palm leaf *lamak* used in temples. And also the ways both kinds of *lamak* are attached are similar: on a human body the *lamak* is attached around the neck, right under the head, and in a temple a *lamak* is fastened under the "head" of the shrine, the opening where the offerings are placed.

According to Ayu Bulantrisna Djelantik, a famous Balinese dancer herself, Legong and other dancers wear a *lamak*, because a *lamak*, like per-

58 These particular kinds of *lamak* will be discussed in Chapter 4 and Appendix 1.

forming the dance itself, can be seen as a bridge between the *sekala* (visible) and the *niskala* (invisible) worlds (pers. com. 21/04/2015). In a recent publication on Legong, edited by Djelantik (2015), it is noted that *lamak* are not only used in the Legong costume, but also in the costume of dancers of Gambuh, Arja, Topeng Telek and Baris (Arini 2015:125). A *lamak* is first of all a "spiritual bridge. Because a *lamak* is a base from which to worship Sang Hyang Widhi, the All Powerful God, it is thus like a bridge between our world and God's world. Although the Legong is categorized as a spectator's dance (*tarian balih-balihan*) or a fully secular dance, nevertheless the essence of the Legong is still one of worship and an expression of gratitude for God's benevolence. Dance is prayer, to dance is to pray."[59] A *lamak* is also an aesthetic and dramatic ornament; being long, straight and relatively static, it forms a dramatic contrast with the movements of the dancer (Arini 2015:125-126).[60] Cokorda Putra Swastika from Puri Menara in Ubud added (pers. com. 18/3/2016) that a *lamak* is the part of the costume of a dancer which is most in front, most visible, comparable to a *penjor* in front of a gateway, which makes visible that a ritual is being held inside.

The use of the word *lamak* for a woman who marries "upwards" was confirmed by Ida Pedanda Gede Oka Timbul (pers. com. 24/3/1994). He said the children of such a marriage are the descendants, the *keturunan*, "coming down" through the *lamak*. In this case a *lamak* is not attached to a shrine, a statue or a human body, but the *lamak* is itself a living entity, a woman, who by marriage is attached to a "higher" man. "Its nature is to join together, like an intermediary," he said.

I Gusti Ngurah Ketut Sangka (Kerambitan), in a letter (dated 24/4/1991) confirms the view of the *pedanda*. He writes: "*Lamak*, according to the explanation of my wife, is a *jejahitan* whose form is like that of a *ceniga*. *Lamak*, as far as I know, means 'something to sit on' or 'cushion to sit on' (*lungka-lungka*). In Karangasem, *lamak* means a secondary wife (*panawing*). The noble wife of the raja, for example from the same caste as the raja, is called '*padmi*'. A wife of the raja who comes from the *jaba* or Sudra caste is called '*lamak*' (in Karangasem, and probably in Klungkung too). In Tabanan it is not usual to call the *jaba* wife of a raja by the term '*lamak*', but instead the term '*panawing*' is customary. '*Lamak*' in Karangasem means 'wife from the *jaba* caste' (in high caste circles),[61] and this seems also to be based on the idea of "something to sit on", for someone from the *jaba* caste is seated at the lowest level, is not permitted to sit next to or at the same level as her husband (aristocrat or raja), but must be lower."[62]

One could also argue that a 'lower' wife by connecting herself to a 'higher' husband, makes it possible that his descendants (*keturunan*) literally 'descend' (*turun*), come down to earth via her as *lamak*. Not only in Karangasem, but also among the Balinese in Lombok, at least formerly, the term *lamak* as wife is known. If a woman of lower caste marries someone from the Triwangsa (three highest castes), the wife is called *orang lamak* (N.M. 1926:55-56).

59 *Jembatan spiritual. Karena Lamak adalah alas untuk persembahan kepada Sang Hyang Widhi, Tuhan Yang Maha Kuasa, maka ia adalah seakan sebuah jembatan antara alam kita dan alam Illahi. Walaupun Legong termasuk tarian jenis balih-balihan atau tontonan murni yang sekuler, toh tetap inti dasar tarian Legong adalah persembahan dan sebuah ungkapan syukur atas karunia Tuhan Yang Maha Esa. Tarian adalah doa, menari adalah berdoa.*

60 The chapter about the Legong costume is based on interviews with Ayu Bulantrisna Djelantik (Arini 2015:125).

61 This use of the word *lamak* is also found in genealogical texts (*palalintih*), e.g. Palalintih Brahmana Buddha (L.Or 11856).

62 *Lamak menurut keterangan istri saya jajahitan yang bentuk/rupanya seperti 'caniga'. Lamak sepengetahuan saya berarti alas duduk atau lungka-lungka. Lamak di daerah Karangasem berarti istri panawing. Istri raja yang bangsawan, misalnya sama derayatnya dengan kasta si raja itu disebut 'padmi'. Istri raja yang datangnya dari kasta 'Jaba' (Sudra) disebut lamak (= di daerah Karangasem, barangkali juga di daerah Klungkung. Di daerah Tabanan tidak umum orang mengatakan istri jaba dari raja itu lamak. Yang lazim digunakan isitlah 'panawing', dari orang Jaba. Lamak di daerah Karangasem berarti 'istri orang Jaba' (di kalangan orang bangsawan) rasanya juga dasarkan atas pengertian 'alas duduk' sebab orang Jaba didudukkan paling bawah (di bawah), tidak boleh bersandingan, sejajar dengan suami (bangsawan, raja), melainkan harus di bawah.*

2.6.2 Lamak as metaphor

2.6.2.1 *Lamak* as intermediary, bridge, or path between heaven and earth

Just as a *lamak* is a woman who marries 'upwards', also the palm leaf *lamak* according to Ida Pedanda Gede Oka Timbul (pers. com. 20/9/1985) can be thought of as an intermediary (*pengantar*), a means by which one's thoughts can reflect on God's creation. In a letter (12/7/1991) he explained this further: "Concerning the meaning of the *lamak*, I say again that *lamak* = means = bridge, with the aim of helping reach the goal of bringing one closer to the creator, God, Sang Hyang Widhiwasa as creator of the world and all its contents. Because of that, the *lamak* is a portrayal of nature, such as heavenly bodies, forest, mountain and house. With these images or designs, human beings become aware of the power of God or of Nature, and become aware of the importance of nature for human life, and thus it must be protected. There are many ways and means to God."[63] "A *lamak* is like a bridge between humankind and the gods, for all creation is depicted on it" (pers. com. 30/12/87).

Also I Made Windia (Sanur) said that "A *lamak* is the way by which human thought reaches upwards."[64] Thus, according to him, the *lamak* hangs from the shrine, with the triangular end upwards, just as a person in prayer holds the hands above the head, with the fingertips touching one another (pers. com. 25/9/85). Likewise to Ida Wayan Jelantik, head of the *adat* village (*klian adat*) of Budakeling (Karangasem), a *lamak* means: "connection or relation (*perhubungan*) between God and mankind" (pers. com. 25/4/2014).

Talking about the *lamak* as a way to approach God, Mangku Gede, *klian adat* of Lodtunduh, explained that God can be imagined in his creation: "Ida Sang Hyang Widhi has no form, but exists. Like the rays of the sun, God is everywhere. Humankind 'creates' the gods, the gods create humankind"[65] (pers. com. 26/3/1989). Also according to Wayan Pugeg, specialist in ritual art from Singapadu, "the *lamak* is like a path, a bridge to Sang Hyang Widhi. All ritual paraphernalia are symbols of Sang Hyang Widhi." But he added that "A *lamak* in a temple is a path or bridge for Sang Hyang Widhi"[66] as well (pers. com. 1/4/1994).

The *lamak* as connection or path between the world of the deities and the world of human beings was also by other informants seen as a path down from heaven towards the offerings. They all used the word *lantaran,* which means 'path' or 'road' (*jalan*), but also 'because' (*sebab*) and 'base' (*dasar*). A *lantaran* is also a very long piece of cloth, used in ritual processions, as base to walk on with the symbols of the deities, spread out on the ground to maintain the ritual purity of those stepping over it (Kamus 1990:391). Talking about Semara and Ratih, the deities of love who come together in the *sanggar nganten*, the high temporary "wedding" shrine in the Gianyar district, from which *lamak nganten* are suspended, Ida Pedanda Gede Padangrata from Gria Kutri said: "The *lamak* is like a road, a path for the gods to reach the shrine" (pers. com. 14/1/1988).[67] This is similar to the view of Desak Patupang (pers. com. 18/1/1988), *lamak* maker (*tukang lamak*) and offering specialist (*tukang banten*) and traditional healer (*dukun*) from Kediri, who explained that the purpose of a *lamak* is "so that there is a path for Sang Hyang Widhi, a path for Ida Betara (deities) to descend to this world."[68]

---

63 *Tentang arti lamak perlu saya ulang lagi informasikan, yaitu: lamak =sarana = jembatan dengan maksud untuk memudahkan mencapai tujuan dalam arti mendekatkan diri kepada pencipta (Tuhan, S. H. Widiwasa), sebagai maha cipta alam & semua isinya. Oleh karena itu lamak selalu berlukisan alam, seperti: macam-macam planet, hutan, gunung dan rumah. Dengan gambaran-gambaran atau lukisan itu, manusia menyadari akan kekuatan Tuhan atau Alam, dan menyadari kebusanaan hidupnya dan manfaatnya untuk kepentingan manusia; oleh karena itu perlu dilestarikan. Banyak jalan dan cara menuju Tuhan.*

64 *Lamak adalah jalan pikiran manusia ke atas.*

65 *Ida Sang Hyang Widhi kosong bentuknya, tapi ada. Sama dengan sinar matahari, Tuhan dimana-mana! Manusia mencipta Dewa; Dewa mencipta manusia.*

66 *Lamak sebagai jalan, jembatan ke Sang Hyang Widhi. Semua upakara adalah lambang Sang Hyang Widhi. […] Lamak di pura adalah lantaran, jembatan untuk Ida Sang Hyang Widhi.*

67 *Lamak sebagai lantaran, jalan untuk beliau ke sanggar itu.*

68 *Supaya ada lantarannya voor Ida Sang Hyang Widhi. Lantaran untuk Ida Betara turun ke dunia.*

2.6.2.2 *Lamak* as base or seat for deities and as offering itself

According to I Gusti Agung Mas Putra**,** the offerings that are placed on the top end of a *lamak* form themselves a symbol of Ida Sang Hyang Widdhi and his manifestations. This viewpoint was confirmed by Ida Pedanda Gede Oka Timbul, when he said that by means of his mantras the deities were actually seated in the offerings. When one invites an honoured guest, one prepares a seat as fine as possible. So if Ida Sang Hyang Widdhi and his manifestations are present in the world of Bali (in the form of the offerings), one offers a *lamak* as His base or seat (Putra 1975a:10). Other authors and informants share this opinion, for example Sudarsana (2000:29) states that a *lamak* is a *kekasang dewata*, a *kekasang* being a cloth used in ritual as base for a sacred object. Offering specialist Dayu Made Mirah Kendran (Tegallalang) said "because offerings (*banten*) are a representation of the deities, and a *lamak* is a base for offerings, a *lamak* is like a mat, a base, a seat for deities" (pers. com. 25/3/89).[69]

I Gusti Agung Mas Putra also often stressed that a *lamak* is not only a base for offerings, but, because it is created as beautiful as possible, can also be regarded as an offering itself. "A simple leaf can serve as a base for offerings, but a *lamak* is much more beautiful. Everything must be made as beautiful as possible, so that the gods also find it beautiful." "Beauty is necessary in every offering. Beauty is one aspect of the Hindu religion", she said (pers. com. 25/9/1982). Moreover, according to her, like an offering, a *lamak* also has a palm leaf artefact (*sampian*) containing a small betel quid (*porosan*). Whereas in an offering this *sampian* forms a crowning piece, to a *lamak* 'belong' two *sampian gantungan* which are also suspended from the shrine.

I Ketut Lagas, a teacher of religion educated at the Institut Hindu Dharma, confirmed this viewpoint (pers. com. 25/12/1987): "There are different ways to worship God; first, the way of thought, meditation, concentration, but for those who are less gifted, by means of making things. It is all about making from basic materials something beautiful. One does not just offer a piece of palm leaf, but one makes something beautiful from it, for example a *lamak*. A person must do something himself or herself within the religion: *karma marga* is doing, creating."

2.6.2.3 *Lamak* as channel for divine blessings

In his article "*Lamak, Mana Identitas Dirimu*?" (*Lamak*, what is your identity?) (1979), Arya Utara Wungsu[70] ties together the different meanings of *lamak*. He starts with the word *lamak*, which means 'cause' or 'reason' in Old Javanese and Balinese,[71] and with the fact that *lamak* can also means low caste wife, but only in case of a wife from lower caste marrying into a higher caste. The author points out that according to traditional knowledge, the wife has the role of a vessel for the soul of the ancestor of the husband who descends from heaven to reincarnate in their offspring. So via her body as 'steps' (*tangga*), or 'path' (*lantaran*), the wife as *lamak* connects the world of ancestral deities with human life here on earth.

The purpose of the *lamak* as ritual object is related to the other meanings of *lamak*. For example for a temple festival (*odalan*), *lamak* are suspended from each shrine in such a way that the *lamak* hangs from the entrance of the opening of the shrine. And precisely this space is divine space, a temporary residence of a deity. It forms as it were within our world a 'pocket' (*kantong*) of the upper world, *Suah loka*, the world of the gods. During the ritual, the gods are asked to come down from their world and instil their gift of energy, power and life (*meresapi dan menganugerahkan daya suci-Nya*) into our world, the middle world, *Bhuah loka*, with all its contents; and also into the lower world, *Bhuh loka*, with all its manifestations of life. And the road (*jalan*), or walkway (*lantaran*) or steps (*tangga*) via

69 *Lamak adalah alam semesta, isi bumi. Sebab banten seperti gambar dewata dan lamak seperti tatakan banten, lamak seperti tikar, alas, tempat duduk dewata.*

70 Arya Utara Wungsu is the pseudonym that I Gusti Ketut Kaler, one of the most knowledgeable scholars of Balinese adat and religion, used for his newspaper articles in the Bali Post over a number of years.

71 He gives as examples the expression *Nahan ta lamakania dateng*, meaning 'this is the reason for his coming' (*alasan kedatangnya*); or *lamakan matinyane*, meaning 'cause of his death' (*lantaran/sebab kematiannya*).

which the divine blessings come down to our world is given form in the *lamak* and suspended from the shrine. So, according to the author, a *lamak* is a medium connecting the three worlds, the Triloka, Bhuh-Bhuah-Suah (Wungsu 1979).[72]

Also I Gusti Agung Mas Putra said that "God descends, via the *lamak*, from the shrine downwards [to the human world] to give his love, the necessary conditions for life in the world, to humankind." (pers. com. 21/9/1985). And so a *lamak* is not only a metaphorical path down from heaven for the deities to reach the offerings, but also a path down to earth for the deities in the form of their blessings.

In connection with the concept of divine blessings flowing down via the *lamak*, Made Titib (1976:15) compares the *lamak* hanging from the shrine of a *penjor* (which is sometimes regarded as the mouth of the serpents of prosperity Anantabhoga and Basuki) with a tongue, via which the elixir of life (*amertha*) streams down. Titib refers to I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa who has explained that a *lamak* is a symbol of the water that flows down from a source of holy water (*patirthaan*) on mount Mahameru, the throne of Ida Sang Hyang Widhi.

2.6.3 Lamak as 'spirit lure' or 'spirit ladder'?

As discussed in this chapter, the purpose of the *lamak* in ritual is to attract deities to the offerings in a shrine, and to facilitate the flowing down of divine blessings from above. Whereas some informants compared the *lamak* with a bridge, a path or a road, Wungsu in his article (1979) mentioned also specifically a staircase or steps (*tangga*) for the descent.

At the beginning of this chapter we have seen that in various cultures of Indonesia (at least in their vocabulary) *lamak* is known as object, related to concepts of underlay, base, though not necessarily in a ritual context. But to what extent can the Balinese *lamak* as a ritual object, as path or staircase to attract invisible beings to the shrine with offerings, and to facilitate their descent from above, be compared to objects with similar purpose in other cultures within island Southeast Asia?

For example, rice rituals of the Saribas Iban in Sarawak require a pole, which is worked into the form of a ladder, to be stuck into the ground. This ladder is called *tangga petara*, a ladder down which the gods descend to receive offerings (Sather 1977:158).[73] Also elsewhere stakes or poles stuck into the ground serve as invitations to the inhabitants of the upper world. On Bali itself the *penjor* is a good example of this.

In several cultures of Indonesia sacred textiles or mats are or were hung up or suspended from poles as an invitation to the ancestors at important rituals and as a representation of fertility and prosperity. Well-known examples of this are the *tampan* of Lampung, South Sumatra and the *baté* of the Sa'dan Toraja of South Sulawesi (Maxwell 1991:110). Among the Sa'dan Toraja, *sarita* textiles, long banners which are "dense with symbolism expressing the hope for wealth and abundance" (Waterson 2013: 198), serve "as ritual conduit, linking together house and tree and persons; a *sarita* serves to channel the energies of the ritual, ensuring that the blessings reach the recipients" (Waterson 2013:178). Among the Baleh Iban *pua* textiles "are used as a sign that a ritual is underway […]". "Similarly, the use of cloth informs the gods that their presence and assistance is being sought. In this context, cloth often serves as a pathway or bridge upon which the gods descend and attend festivities held in their honor" (Gavin 1996:25).[74]

However, in fact, I have found little comparative material concerning objects which, like the *lamak*, hang from an offering shrine as invitation to whoever is going to receive the offerings. By the Karo Batak, ladders of bamboo are said to be tied to offering shrines, so that the spirits can easily reach the offerings on the shrine (pers. com. Juara Ginting). By the Hindu Tenggerese of East Java, little ladders made of palm leaf hang from the offering altars. They look like simplified forms of the

72 The Three Worlds will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

73 The word *petara* is probably related to the Sanskrit *bhatara*, in Bali also a common word for god, deity.

74 Elsewhere in Asia, particularly in cultures where Buddhism and Taoism play an important role, long narrow decorated cloths or banners are hung in temples where they serve as offerings. Among them are the *tung* of north and northwest Thailand, Laos and Yunnan, banners or narrow hangings that just like the *lamak* can be made of various materials, including palm leaf. Sometimes they are explicitly said to represent a ladder, a link with the upper world, especially in the context of death rites. By means of a *tung* offered by the family of the deceased, the soul it

Balinese *lamak* and *ceniga* (pers. com. Clara Brakel and Barbara Luem).[75] But I do not know whether these objects are supposed to act in a direct sense as actual little ladders for spirits to climb upwards towards the offerings, or whether they are supposed to act as an invitation, to attract deities from above to the offerings, as is the case with the Balinese *lamak*.

An extensive overview of what he calls 'spirit lures and spirit ladders', from many parts of Indonesia, has recently been published by Domenig (2014). "In short: to put an offering on a simple table was not enough; one also had to provide elements that could attract and receive the spiritual entities and guide them to the offerings" (2014:4). "The custom of decorating altars in one way or another was apparently based on a religious ideology according to which an altar without decoration could not function, as the spirits would not care to approach and accept the offerings" (2014:139). "Bamboos and large palm-leaf fronds were widely used as spirit attractors and were sometimes regarded as pathways, bridges or ladders along which spirits would approach or descend" (2014:143). One of his examples is the *anjapan* altar of the Pardembanan Batak (a subgroup of the Toba Batak), described by Bartlett. Attached to a platform for offerings are a sugar palm leaf frond, called 'the path of the gods (*dalan ni debata*)' and a notched pole, 'the ladder of the gods (*tangga debata*)'. Since according to Domenig many "spirits see everything inverted relative to humans, so they climb down with their heads foremost" (2014:215) and "the custom of sometimes presenting offerings both on top of and below an altar was once widely spread in Indonesia" (2014:220), in this case spirits and deities were expected to arrive by the air and descend along the 'path' of the palm leaf to taste the offerings on the platform and climb down (head foremost) the 'ladder' to offerings on the ground (2014:179, 183, 217).

Similarly, Domenig also interprets the Balinese *penjor* as a spirit lure and the *lamak* as spirit ladder. Referring to the interpretation by some Balinese of the *penjor* as a cosmic serpent (*naga*), of which the tip of the tail is the tip of the *penjor* and the mouth is the shrine (see par. 2.4.3 in this chapter), and to his informant who states that the *penjor* should be seen by the deities who live on the summit of Gunung Agung, Domenig supposes that these deities descend headlong from the *penjor* to get at the offerings in the shrine (2014:170, 176). And he writes about the *lamak*: "The *lamak* may have originated as a symbolic spirit ladder of the hanging kind. Its frequent combination with a *penjor* suggests, moreover, that it was meant to symbolize a spirit *ladder* leading downward." "The *lamak* is something of the same sort as the *penjor* but related to the earth. Seeing that the *penjor* is obviously a spirit lure and a 'ladder' leading down to the altar, the *lamak* as its counterpart is best explained as sort of spirit ladder leading from the altar down to the ground" (Domenig 2014:222-226).

However, although I agree with Domenig that a *lamak* can be interpreted as a 'spirit lure', since the Balinese themselves say that the ritual purpose of a *lamak* is to attract deities to the shrine with offerings, and also that a *lamak*, as a hanging object, is indeed directed towards the ground, I do not agree with the rest of his interpretation. As I have shown in this chapter, a *lamak* is certainly not a ladder for spirits to reach offerings on the ground, whether descending head foremost or not. Offerings on the ground would never be eaten by deities (who also would never descend with their head – the most sacred part of their 'body' – lower than their feet), but they are meant for the demonic *buta* and *kala*, who do not have to climb down anyway. These offerings for the demons are placed on their own offering bases, in the form of a *tlujungan* or sometimes a *ceniga*. Offerings on a shrine, altar or platform are meant for the deities and deified ancestors in the upperworld, and the *lamak* hanging from

---

is hoped can in this way reach the hereafter. Living people can also influence their own position in the afterworld by presenting a *tung* as an offering to the Buddha. According to a myth, the animals depicted on the *tung*, such as the elephant, can take the place of an actual animal offering (Gittinger & Lefferts 1992:130-140). The desired effect of these banners, *tung*, is according to Rebecca Hall (2008) and others, to gain blessings, merit, for and from the ancestors. So just as the *lamak* a *tung* could be interpreted as a path for a back and forth movement, for communication with the inhabitants of the upper world, for an exchange in which those on earth can expect something in return.

75 I thank Juara Ginting, Clara Brakel and Barbara Luem, who kindly provided this comparative material in the form of drawings and photographs.

the shrine is not a ladder to climb upwards in a direct sense, but an invitation in a more general sense. What does come down or flow down via the *lamak* are the gifts or blessings of the deities, from heaven or from the *sanggah* where the offerings are, towards the world of human beings.

2.7 Conclusion

Balinese religion, Agama Hindu Dharma, is characterized by many rituals, most of them carried out to maintain relationships with the invisible (*niskala*) beings of upper world and lower world, in order to ensure continuity (through renewal) of life and regeneration of nature. A complex offering system is an essential part of any ritual. What is exchanged for worship and offerings, what people hope to receive in return, are blessings from the deities.

These divine blessings consist of protection, fertility, prosperity and fruitfulness for individual people, for their families and their land, everything that is necessary for life on earth. Offerings are placed on top of a *lamak*, a hanging with a rectangular form, decorated with various motifs. Whereas the upper part of a *lamak* is used as a base for offerings, the lower and largest part of the *lamak* hangs down from the shrine or altar where the offering is placed.

One of the rituals during which *lamak* are very prominent is the festival of Galungan, a calendrically recurring ritual of purification and thanksgiving for which the ancestors are invited to come down from heaven to visit their families, celebrated all over Bali. In front of the entrance to every house yard the Balinese erect a *penjor*, a decorated bamboo pole with a small shrine attached to it, from which a *lamak* hangs. Another ritual for which many *lamak* are required is the temple festival or *odalan*, the celebration of the anniversary of a temple, for which the deities of that specific temple are invited to descend from heaven. All shrines in the temple are then decorated with a *lamak*.

As is the case with many forms of (ritual) art in Bali, *lamak* exist in an enormous variety, which is dependent on, as the Balinese say, '*desa, kala, patra*', 'place, time and circumstances'. Different types of *lamak* range from the small *tlujungan*, placed on the ground as a base for small offerings to netherworldly beings, the *ceniga* which consist of one layer of palm leaf only, the *lamak* whose motifs are fastened onto a base layer, up to the large, tripartite *lamak catur*, which form the base for the elaborate *catur niri* offerings for the highest deities. A special case is the spectacular *lamak nganten,* the sometimes metres long 'wedding' *lamak*, at the Galungan festival in the Gianyar area displayed in front of houses where a wedding has taken place in the previous year.

According to Balinese informants, as a base for offerings and decoration of shrines, the purpose of *lamak* is to attract deities and ancestors, to invite them to come down from their heavenly abode to the world of human beings, to the shrines which have been decorated with a *lamak* and to enjoy the offerings for which *lamak* serve as base. A *lamak* is not only a sign of welcome, but also shows the way to the shrines, where the offerings are. Therefore, *lamak* are made attractive and prominent, so that they are indeed seen by the invisible beings.

Some more learned Balinese informants call a *lamak* a bridge, path or staircase linking the worlds of human beings and of deities and deified ancestors. The desired effect is that the offerings are accepted by the deities, and that their gifts in return, blessings of prosperity and protection, will descend or 'flow down' via the *lamak* into the middle world of human beings. The purpose of the *lamak* in ritual is to facilitate the flow of blessings, to make the offerings work and the ritual successful.

Since the purpose of the *lamak* is very much related to its vertical structure and its decorative motifs, this will be the subject of the next chapter.



Figure 2.39: Two lamak hang from a temporary offering shrine, set up for Galungan in front of a house in Banjar Jasan, Sebatu, 13/5/1987.



Figure 3.1: Lamak nganten made under the supervision of Anak Agung Gede Raka Sandi (Tampaksiring) for Galungan. Puri Kaleran, Peliatan, 9/12/1987.