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## **Lamak : ritual objects in Bali**

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## Motifs of life

### 3.1 Insight

On 17 January 1988 I visited Anak Agung Gede Raka Sandi, in Puri Kawan, Tampaksiring. I decided to visit his palace because it was said that he made the beautiful *lamak nganten* I had photographed during the previous Galungan festival (9 December 1987) in front of Puri Saren in Peliatan (fig. 3.1). This friendly gentleman, probably in his early seventies, was busy carving a mask when I entered his richly decorated compound. Enthusiastically, he told me about his life, devoted to art and religion. He originally came from the palace of Peliatan and he had been to Europe with the famous Peliatan dance troupe, where he even met Queen Wilhelmina. He specialized in ritual art, had learned to read *lontars* already at an early age, and “God taught him” how to make woodcarvings and stone statues. Many of the statues in Pura Tirtha Empul in Tampaksiring are his work.

I gave Ratu Raka (as he was called) the photograph of ‘his’ *lamak*, which actually he had not made himself, since “that is work done by women”, he said. He had given girls instructions about the contents of a *lamak nganten*, but the result was not completely according to religious teachings as he understood them. For example, this *lamak* had only one circular motif, representing the moon, whereas, he explained, both moon and sun should have been depicted, since they both have a strong influence on the mutual love of a couple who are just married. This is symbolized in the wedding ceremony. When the bride and groom return from the river where as part of the ritual they bathe together, they are ready to “walk together” from now on and this is witnessed by Sang Hyang Surya, god of the sun, and Sang Hyang Bulan, goddess of the moon. The bride offers a white rice cone and a white chicken to Bulan and the groom offers a red rice cone and red chicken to Surya. Afterwards, they exchange white and red flowers, “to become one”. From now on, the couple is “released from their own parents”, they will be looked after by God, Ida Sang Hyang Widhi.

The upper part of the *lamak* is not visible, since it forms the base for the offering inside the shrine itself. “This part of the *lamak* is empty,” he said, “since nobody can imagine Ida Sang Hyang Widhi. He is also called Siwa, who creates everything, male and female, for everything always consists of two parts.” Siwa himself always has a spouse: “When on earth, his wife is Uma, when on the mountain it is Giriputri, when in the fields it is Dewi Sri. Just like Surya and Bulan, or Semara and Ratih, there are always male and female.”

The tree beneath the moon he called “*kekayonan* or *kayunan*, all thoughts are offered towards the summit of the mountain.” The human figure under the tree is a *cili* and the small figures at her feet are “plants.” And he continued: “The female is the same as the earth, she gives life, she gives birth. Siwa,

on the male side, only provides the seed, but the female has rights, is honoured, without her life is not possible.” When I asked him if that is the reason that the ‘bride and groom’, the *cili nganten*, are both represented as a woman, he looked at me and said with a certain stress in his voice: “Their life is represented, not their (human) form! Life is the same for male and female, consisting of two parts, left and right; this is the *cili nganten*.”<sup>1</sup>

From this moment, I felt I was starting to understand something about the meaning of ritual art in Bali: how the essentially invisible or unimaginable is given visible expression, in this case through the motifs depicted on Balinese *lamak* and their interrelationships.

### 3.2 Motifs on *lamak*

In the previous chapter we have seen that as a base for offerings and decoration of shrines a *lamak* or *ceniga* is according to the Balinese an invitation, a sign of welcome for deities, ancestors, spirits and other invisible beings. The *lamak* shows the way to the shrines, where the offerings are. The hoped-for effect is that the offerings are accepted by the deities and in return that their heavenly gifts or blessings, prosperity and protection, will ‘flow down’ to the earth via the *lamak*. Since one purpose of a *lamak* is to attract invisible beings, it is understandable that *lamak* are made attractive and conspicuous by means of decorative motifs. In this chapter I explore how these motifs are related to the purpose of the *lamak*. What are the main decorative motifs on a *lamak*, and what do they look like? How are the motifs related to one another within the structural frame of a *lamak*? What is their meaning, according to Balinese informants and written sources?

The motifs which decorate the plain bottom layer (*dasar*) of a *lamak*, vary from very simple to extremely complicated patterns. The longest *lamak*, like the *lamak* on the tall *padmasana* or *Surya* shrines in a temple, and the *lamak nganten*, the Galungan wedding *lamak*, have the most varied and elaborate motifs.

The large variety of *lamak* motifs all belong to one of two main categories or groups: composed, geometrical patterns called *ringgitan*, and single, representational designs called *raka*. *Ringgitan* means ‘something that is cut out or punched out of a flat material’, so this word is also used to refer to *wayang kulit* figures which are made from leather. *Raka* means ‘fruits used in offerings’, in other words: content.

I Gusti Agung Mas Putra, who in her publications about offerings and ritual decorations was one of the first Balinese authors to pay attention to the *lamak*, divided the different *lamak* motifs, which she called ‘painting’ (*lukisan*), according to their position on the *lamak* as a whole: main motifs, motifs for the lower and upper borders, and motifs as divider (*selingan*), placed between the main motifs. Examples of main motifs are the celestial bodies, mountain, tree, ‘pond trickling over’ (*telaga ngembeng*), and human being (*cilicilian*). The *ringgitan* motifs as divider consist of numerous different kinds, often without specific names. She concludes that a *lamak* as a whole can be regarded as a symbol of the world and its contents (Putra 1975a:10; 1981:8).<sup>2</sup> Also in personal conversations she explained that “the base of the *lamak* is the empty earth on which the creation is depicted in the form of the various motifs” (pers. com. 21/9/1985). This viewpoint was shared by all my Balinese informants.

#### 3.2.1 Relationships among *lamak* motifs

Although the people who make and use *lamak* were always able to identify the representational *raka* motifs, and often also could say something about their meaning or symbolic significance, this was less often the case with regard to specific geometrical *ringgitan* motifs. However, the totality of the motifs on a *lamak* was always considered as a symbol of the world or cosmos, and the representational and geometric motifs were all related to each other within this general concept.

1 *Hidupnya digambarkan, bukan bentuk manusia! Hidupnya sama untuk laki dan perempuan, terdiri dari dua, kiri dan kanan; ini cili nganten.*

2 Also Seraya & Widia, in a little catalogue accompanying an exhibition of *lamak* from the village of Batur, held in the Bali Museum in Denpasar, note that all motifs represent elements of the cosmos (1973:9-10).

Therefore, before going into the details of the most important *lamak* motifs, I will first present some examples of interpretations by a number of *lamak* makers about the interrelationships of the different motifs represented on their own specific *lamak*.<sup>3</sup>

**I Made Sadra** from Padangtegal Kaja was the first *tukang lamak* I met, in April 1983, when I ordered from him two *lamak* made of *lontar* leaves for the collection of the National Museum of Ethnology.<sup>4</sup> He was a farmer, and his knowledge of *lamak* concerned especially the many names of motifs, and also when and for what kind of ritual certain motifs could be used. He was very skilled in cutting the patterns, but he found it difficult to talk about the meaning of the motifs. However, when we talked (pers. com. 25/3/1989) about a photograph of the *lamak nganten* (fig. 3.2) he had made for his own son for the previous Galungan (1/2/1989), he explained that the empty background is the world, the motifs are “its living contents”. The bottom motif which he called *timpasan* (knife pattern) represents the soil, earth, and is protected by *cracap*, sharp points. Then, pointing at the *cili*: “this is the heart of the matter, the *cili* is like a living tree, a *cili* is a living person.”<sup>5</sup> The *cili* has flowers in her headdress, “like someone getting married”. Above the *cili* is the *kekayonan*. Above the *kekayonan* he always depicts a *gebogan* offering. “*Gebogan* implies bearing fruit, the fruits all brought together”. Between the main motifs are different kinds of flowers, like *candigara bunder* and *candigara merpat* which grow from the earth and function as dividers (*penyelak*) or borders between the main motifs.

3 These were mainly the long and spectacular *lamak nganten* which I had seen and photographed at Galungan. After I found out who the makers were, I visited them with photographs, and talked to them about their *lamak*. They all lived in the region (*kabupaten*) of Gianyar, in villages not far from Ubud. More background on the various *tukang lamak*, professional *lamak* makers, will be given in Chapter 5 and about the more technical aspects of their way of working in Chapter 4.

4 See Appendix 1, inv. nos. RV-5258-96 and 97.

5 *Ini untuk intikan, cili seperti kayu yang hidup. Cili adalah manusia hidup.*

**I Gusti Putu Nonderan**, who lived opposite I Made Sadra in Padangtegal, made *lamak nganten* very similar to those made by Pak Sadra.<sup>6</sup> Although he was also a farmer, I Gusti Putu Nonderan had a wider mythological knowledge than Pak Sadra, since he often worked with the famous painter I Gusti Nyoman Lempad from Ubud. Lempad shared with him the myths he used to paint, and “inspired” him to make *lamak* already in the 1930s. He also passed on to him his knowledge of the meaning of the motifs: they are connected with the developments of thoughts. “*Cili-cili* are thoughts that form the individual, beginning when still young. The *kekayonan* means firm thoughts, from *kayun* meaning memory or thoughts. *Gebogan* is unity of many thoughts. Thus the *gebogan* must be above the *kekayonan kayonan* and not the other way round, that is a mistake, and the maker does not understand the meaning.”

“Between the main motifs are *bunga kapu kembang*, a water plant, and *candigara*, that also lives in the water, like a lotus. This creates an association with Wisnu, god of *amerta*, source of life, and so an association with plants, and all their seeds. The one *cili* can also be seen as the start of a household from which develop the two other *cili*. The moon illuminates the married couple, although this motif is seldom found on *lamak* from Padangtegal. The design *mas-masan* (golden jewellery), which augments or improves whatever is depicted below it, is only used when the number of required metres must be filled up.”

According to I Gusti Putu Nonderan there is a connection between *lamak* and *penjor*, since a *lamak* is the hip cloth (*kain*), the clothing (*pakaian*) of the shrine of the *penjor*. The symbols on a *lamak* are “witnessed by the god of Gunung Agung, for the *sanggar penjor* is the shrine to make contact with the god (*panyawangan*), the representative of Gunung Agung.”<sup>7</sup> And he told the story of Bawi Serenggi (a pig) who fell in love with Dewi Sri (daughter of Siwa and Giriputri). Not wishing

6 On 27/12/1987 I talked to him about the *lamak nganten* (fig. 3.3) he made for his son for the previous Galungan (9/12/1987). Afterwards, I visited him quite often, since his son I Gusti Putu Taman made the drawings of the *lamak* patterns in this book.

7 *Disaksikan Gunung Agung, karena sanggar penjor seperti panyawangan, wakil dari Gunung Agung.*





Figure 3.2: *Lamak nganten* made by I Made Sadra for Galungan. Banjar Padangtegal Kaja, Ubud, 2/2/1989.



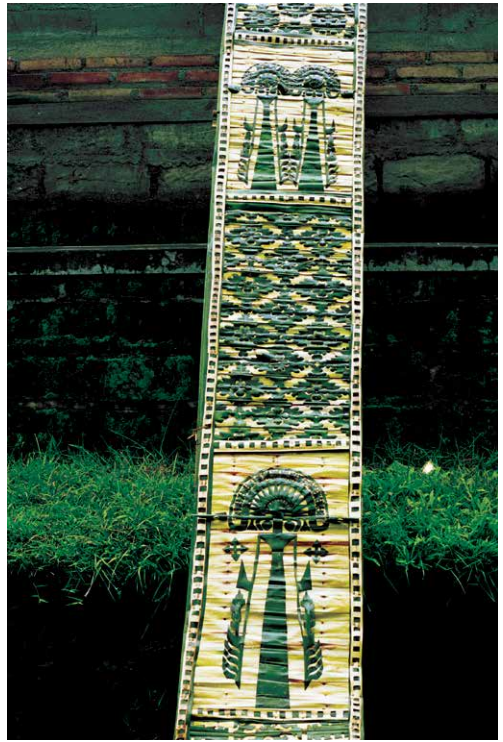


Figure 3.3: Lamak nganten made by I Gusti Putu Nonderan for Galungan. Banjar Padangtegal Kaja, Ubud, 9/12/1987.



Figure 3.4: Lamak nganten made by Ni Wayan Klepon for Galungan. Banjar Pande, Peliatan, 9/12/1987.

to respond, she fled to the god Siwa for help. He killed Bawi Serenggi, but since he had done nothing wrong, his body partly changed into illnesses that disturb the growth of rice, and partly into the spirit of the *penjor*, Sang Kala Penjor. Sang Kala Penjor became the servant of Gunung Agung. The *cili* on the *lamak* hanging from the shrine of the *penjor* is a representation of the love of Bawi Serenggi for Dewi Sri. Dewi Sri does not want to marry anyone, also not with Wisnu. She does not want to stay in one place, she wants to be able to go everywhere, because she looks after all the plants which provide food for people.

The *lamak nganten* made by **Ni Wayan Klepon**, from Junjungan (fig. 3.4), I discussed with the person who ordered this *lamak*, I Wayan Pande in Peliatan (pers. com. 25/12/1987): “Above the *cili nganten* flowers can be seen, with two half suns, for the sun is in the east and in the west. Underneath the *cili nganten* is their hip cloth (*kain*), below the *kain* is the base of the world, the soil (*dasar dunia, tanah*), and the top motif is the sky, the beginning (*langit, permulaan*). The radiance of the sun causes plants to grow, but also the offspring of the newly married couple, and that is the purpose of marriage. The *cili nganten* have flowers on their heads, for the flower is a symbol of peace and quiet, and that belongs to a marriage, doesn’t it?” The in-laws of Ni Wayan Klepon provided further explanation on the motifs of her *lamak*: “*cili nganten* is the symbol of the married couple. There is no difference between male and female, because they are one. Like one gateway (*kori*) always has two sides. The *ringgitan* are a symbol of the world, because of the plant motifs. The plant *kapu-kapu* lives in the water, so is related to Wisnu. The moon can be round (full) or consist of two half-moons. That is why there are two, the symbol of two halves, so that they become one in marriage and there is offspring. In the world are people and plants. The names of the plants are not fixed, the motifs are decorative.”

*Tukang lamak* **Ni Wayan Jenjen**, Banjar Kutri, Singapadu, was clear about the motifs on three similar *lamak nganten* that she made for Galungan of 9 December 1987 (pers. com. 18/1/1988) (fig. 3.5). The top (square) motif she called “*ibu*, representing the world (*bumi, alam*)”. The pattern beneath the *ibu* represents the sky (*langit*), and then comes Betara Surya, god of the sun. And thereafter the

*kekayonan*, representing plants or garden. Betara Surya radiates its light, and gives life, and the harvest from the plants, like flowers, are used for what is important for mankind. The motif below that is a *janger*, a female dancer offering worship through dance. Below that are two kinds of *ringgitan*. One of these depicts the *gumatat-gumitit*, various small creatures that live on the earth, such as *dongkang* or frog, and the one below represents Ibu Pertiwi, earth (*tanah*). The lowest, pointed motif she calls “grass”. Thus the *lamak* depicts the whole of nature. “Because the sun shines its radiance on the natural world, living things exist, like animals, plants, humans. All the contents of the natural world have uses for the sake of humankind,” she said.<sup>8</sup>

**Ni Ketut Pilik** is an experienced *tukang lamak* who lives in Loddunduh.<sup>9</sup> She explained (pers. com. 1/1/1988, 5/7/1988) that the uppermost motif of her *lamak nganten* (fig. 3.6) is the moon, for the moon just like the sun illuminates everything, and especially the *cili nganten*. The *ringgitan* is like a cloth, or like water. But the function is the same: to cleanse or purify, for the wedding couple must be beautiful. The tree motif she called a “*kekayonan ingin-ingin*, used in wayang performances at the start of a play”.<sup>10</sup> Ni Ketut Pilik knows no specific name for the *ringgitan*, but she had heard of names like *kapu-kapu* and *blatung-blatung*. When I visited Ni Ketut Pilik again 22 years later (16 October 2013), and showed her the old photographs again, she mentioned exactly the same group of motifs on her *lamak*.

In the previous examples, all *lamak nganten*, the explanations of the informants were mainly about the influence of the different sources of life on the *cili nganten*. But at Galungan of course most people do not have a *lamak nganten*, but only an ordinary *lamak* in front of their house, usually hanging from the shrine on the *penjor*. For example **Mangku Gede** (Loddunduh) talked about two *lamak*, made by his wife for two different Galungan, 9 December

8 Karena matahari kasih sinar kepada alam, disamping alam itu ada yang hidup, binatang, tumbuhan, manusia. Segala isi alam itu berguna untuk kepentingan manusia.

9 See also the introduction to Chapter 5 and figures 5.1a and 5.1b.

10 With *ingin-ingin* she probably meant *bingin*, the Balinese term for banyan tree.





Figure 3.5: Lamak nganten made by Ni Wayan Jenjen for Galungan. Banjar Kutri, Singapadu, 9/12/1987.



Figure 3.6: Lamak nganten made by Ni Ketut Pilik for Galungan. Banjar Teges, Peliatan, 6/7/1988.





Figures 3.7-3.8: Lamak made by the wife of Mangku Gede for Galungan. Banjar Abiansema, Loddunduh, 10/12/1987 and 6/7/1988.

1987 (fig. 3.7) and 6 July 1988 (fig. 3.8). They are very similar, but the little figure motif on the left *lamak* (made in 1987) is not found on the *lamak* made in 1988, but instead was moved to a small separate *lamak* attached directly to the *penjor*.

Mangku Gede did not know the name of this little figure, which other people called *mangong*. According to him, it looks like vegetation on a mountain. It stands indeed on the same kind of little hill with two shoots as the *kekayonan* above. He provided thus an explanation based on the outer form of the motif. In his view, life derives from fruits and flowers, which is why the *kekayonan* is an important symbol. The base of the *lamak* is the land, and above the land are the mountain and plants and moon. The moon gives its light to the plants. The spirit of the moon is Ida Betari Ratih. Moon, plants, mountain are all depicted on the *lamak* to remind us of Sang Hyang Widdhi.

### 3.3 Individual motifs and their meanings

The interpretations of the *lamak* makers of the different motifs on their own *lamak*, in relation to one another, were all connected to concepts of life and fertility within the world. The moon illuminates the married couple, the rays of the sun and water make plants grow, life is protected by the sharp points at the bottom of the *lamak*, and so on.

In the following section I will focus on the individual *lamak* motifs in more detail. I present their forms visually by means of drawings made by I Gusti Putu Taman, son of *tukang lamak* I Gusti Putu Nonderan, of Padangtegal, in 1989, 1990 and 1994, on the basis of my photographs of actual *lamak*. The various interpretations per motif provided by Balinese informants and written sources will in a number of cases be supplemented by remarks about the subject of the motifs in the context of Balinese ritual.

The representational motifs most frequently depicted are sun and/or moon, mountain, tree, and *cili*. This is the case not only on the *lamak nganten* and other *lamak* with more than one representational motif, but also on *lamak* with only one motif. Together with the *ibu* motif, these are also the motifs Balinese informants were most able to reflect upon. Far less often could informants re-

flect on individual geometric or abstract patterns (*ringgitan*). The variety of these patterns is almost endless, and as I Gusti Agung Mas Putra already wrote in 1975, most Balinese do not know specific names for specific *ringgitan*, but talk about them as a group. However, I will present around fifty different *ringgitan* motifs, of which I was given some information, in many cases just a name. I will start with some terms related to the structure of a *lamak*.

#### 3.3.1 Motifs as structural elements of a lamak

As already noted, the motifs which decorate the plain bottom layer, the base or *dasar* of a *lamak*, can be divided into two main categories: geometrical patterns called *ringgitan*, and single, representational designs called *raka*. A small *lamak* contains only a *ringgitan* pattern, or a combination of *ringgitan* or *raka*, but never just the latter.<sup>11</sup> On a small *lamak* the representational motif is placed at the upper end, and the geometrical one at the lower. On a larger *lamak* these different kinds of motifs alternate, but a geometrical pattern is always placed at the bottom.

Sometimes between the various representational motifs narrow bands of geometrical patterns are fastened. They are called *penyelak*. *Menyelak* means: “to push something aside”, so *penyelak* is something that pushes apart the representational motifs, what I Gusti Agung Mas Putra called a ‘divider’. They are also called *baluan*, from *luan*, meaning ‘first, front, top’. Their structure is often different from the other geometrical patterns. Examples are *kancing-kancing* (knot, button) (fig. 3.9)<sup>12</sup> and *tingkang katak* (‘frog sitting with legs apart’) (fig. 3.10).

At the bottom is a special pattern, usually called *cracap* (‘something with a sharp point’) (fig. 3.11). The sides and bottom of a *lamak*, called *sebeh* (‘frame’), are either just plain leaf or are decorated

11 However, recently I noticed in Karangasem small *lamak* with only a flower motif.

12 The drawings that accompany the *lamak* patterns were made between 1989 and 1994 by I Gusti Putu Taman from Padangtegal, on the basis of my photographs of *lamak*. Place and date of these photographs and the person who made the *lamak*, are given in the list of figures in Appendix 3.

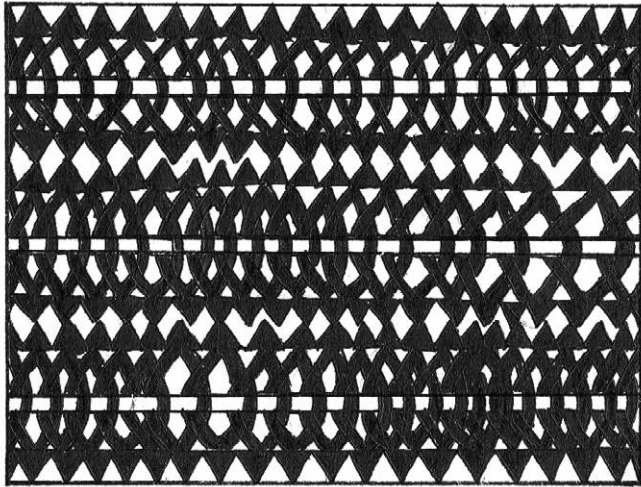


Figure 3.9: Kancing-kancing.

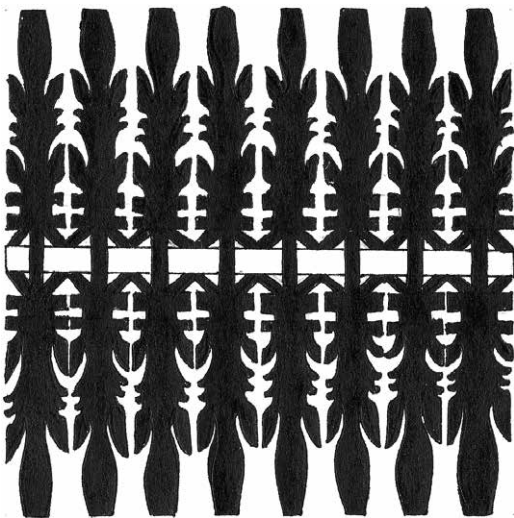


Figure 3.10: Tingkang katak.

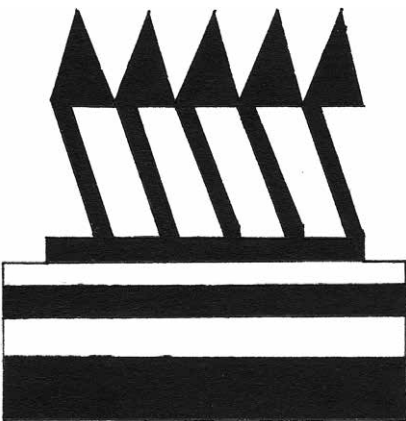
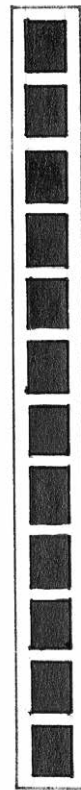


Figure 3.11: Cracap, padang or akar-akaran.



3.12



3.13



3.14

Figure 3.12: Batu-batu, compang banggul, ringring or bungbung jangkrik.

Figure 3.13: Gigin barong.

Figure 3.14: Ganggong or taluh kakul.

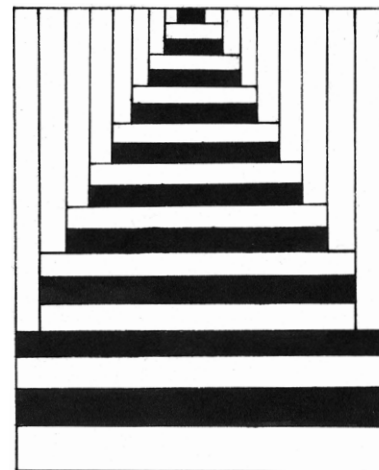


Figure 3.15: Umpal.



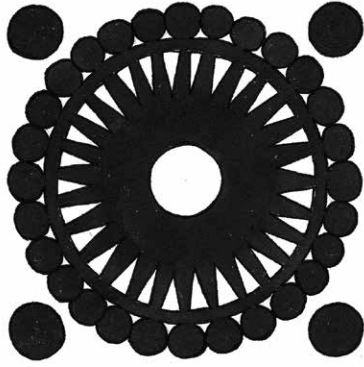


Figure 3.16: *Bulan*.

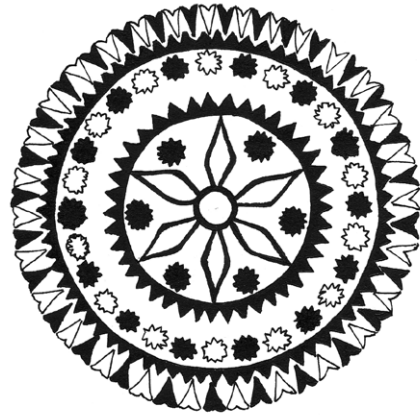


Figure 3.17: *Matanai*.

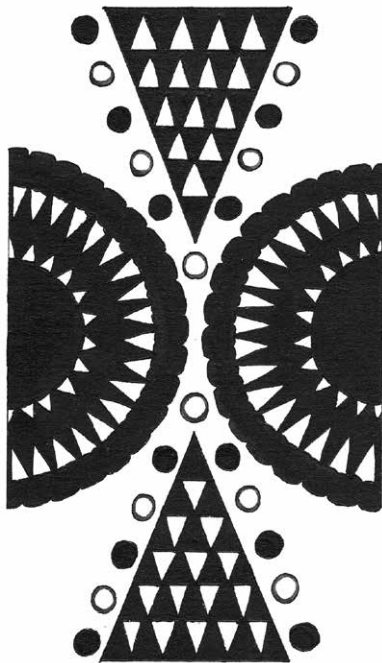


Figure 3.18: *Bulan sibak*.

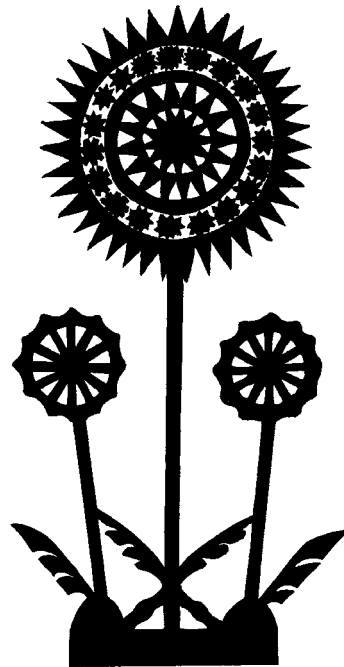


Figure 3.19: *Bulan matunjuk*.

with little motifs (figs. 3.12, 3.13, 3.14), each with their own names. One of them (fig. 3.13) is called *gigin barong*, the teeth of a protective, mythical animal, which like the *cracap*, is said to protect the contents of the *lamak*.<sup>13</sup> The top of a *lamak* often has the shape of a triangle, and is called *umpal*.

This is also the word for a long piece of cloth used to tie a hip cloth (*kamben*) around the body. Sometimes a kind of a triangular structure is realized by interweaving the uppermost palm leaves (fig. 3.15).

13 This motif is widely used in Bali, especially as border motif, for example on textiles. It also appears on the famous prehistoric bronze kettledrum in Pura Penataran Sasih at Pejeng (Bernet Kempers 1991:16).

### 3.3.2 Representational motifs, *raka*

#### 3.3.2.1 *Bulan* and *matanai* (moon and sun)

Either the sun (*matanai*) (fig. 3.17) or the moon (*bulan*) (fig. 3.16) or both sun and moon are often depicted in the form of a disc composed of several little elements around a centre. They are placed at the top of the *lamak*, since they belong to the sky or heavens or the upperworld. The sun and the moon are accompanied by stars, *bintang-bintangan*, in a square structure around them. The moon is sometimes represented by two half circles, instead of a whole circle, and is then called *bulan sibak* (fig. 3.18). In Lodtunduh (Gianyar) a special kind of moon is known, called *bulan matunjuk*. It has the form of a big flower on a stalk with two sidebranches or shoots (*katik*), with little moons or flowers. These flowers are called lotus flowers, *tunjung* or *padma* (fig. 3.19).

Both the sun and the moon were said to have a strong influence on the development of life on earth. Separately, the moon gives light to the *cili nganten*, bridal couple, so that they soon will have children, and the rays of the sun, Ida Betara Surya, fertilize the earth, so that plants can grow. Together, sun and moon, the deities Aditya and Candra, are related to each other as man and woman. The sun and the moon are also associated with Semara and Ratih, deities of love.

According to Ida Pedanda Gede Oka Timbul, "The source of life are the gods. Semara and Ratih are everywhere where creation takes place" (pers. com. 19/12/1990).

The moon not only gives light to the *cili nganten*, but her light also allows plants to grow. That is why in Lodtunduh the moon is depicted with flowers of the lotus, itself a symbol of life, sprouting from it. The moon is not only the dwelling place of Dewi Ratih, goddess of love, but according to some informants is also associated with Dewi Sri, goddess of plants and of rice in particular. But fertility of the land is also dependent on Ida Betara Surya, god of the sun, who fertilizes Ibu Pertiwi, Mother Earth.

When the sun or the moon are represented by two half circles instead of one full one, informants said that this depicts the situation when sun and moon have just arisen in the east and set in

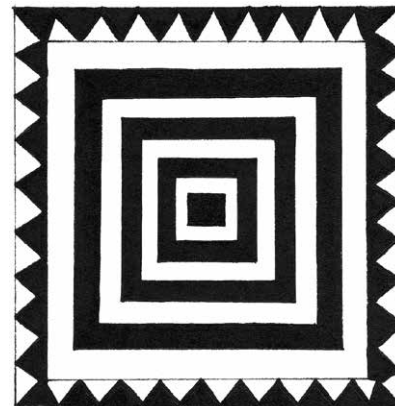
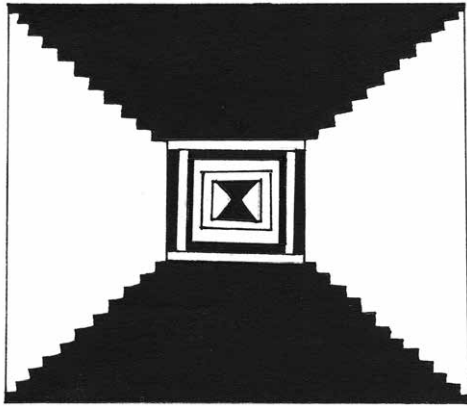
the west, or when they are just visible behind the mountain. But the two halves forming one totality are also regarded as a symbol of marriage, of unification of two opposites which makes life possible.

Both the sun and the moon play an important role in Balinese ritual. The cycle of the moon determines one of the calendrical systems in Bali. Household rituals are held every new moon (*tilem*) and full moon (*purnama*), and many temples hold ceremonies on a new or full moon. Unlike the goddess of the moon who is not honoured with her own temple shrine, the sun god, Ida Betara Surya is worshipped as a very important manifestation of the Supreme God. His shrine, the open-seated *padmasana*, is one of the highest and most important shrines in a temple. In major rituals, a temporary shrine is always present in honour of Betara Surya as witness. Furthermore the daily rite of the *pedanda* high priests bears the name *surya sewana*, adoration of the sun.

#### 3.3.2.2 *Ibu*, *gumi*, *gedong* or *telaga* (mother, earth, building or pond)

The motif (fig. 3.20) which is usually called *ibu*, mother, but also sometimes *gedong*, (closed) building, or *telaga*, pond, consists of a big square, divided by two diagonals into four parts, two light and two dark, around a little square in the centre. However, the design is also often composed of a series of square bands in alternating colours around a centre (fig. 3.21). I have never seen this motif as a single representational motif, but always in combination with other motifs, almost always at the very top of a *lamak*.

The *ibu* motif is most often interpreted in association with Ibu Pertiwi, Mother Earth. She gives life; because of her fertility life on earth is possible. The four sides of the square motif are related to the four cardinal directions, a representation of the world-order on the horizontal plane, so this motif is also a symbol of the whole world and is then called *bumi* or *gumi*. The *ibu* motif should be depicted at the top of the *lamak*, because Ibu Pertiwi is most respected and because "we are all born from the mother". Sometimes, instead of one big square, two little squares next to one another form the pattern, called *susu*, breasts.



Figures 3.20-3.21: *Ibu*.

Pedanda Gede Oka Timbul (pers. com. 24/3/94) formulated it like this: “We are like children of nature. We must look after nature, be careful with the creation. Children cannot make parents, whereas parents can make children. Thus we must have respect for parents. Ibu Pertiwi is our origin, we owe her a very great debt, for everything is born of her. Ibu Pertiwi keeps safe all the elements necessary for life and livelihood, and releases them (through birth). She contains earth, fire, water; and Bapa Akasa (Father Sky) contains wind, water, and light. Ibu contains within herself the source of life, but thereafter she takes care of the food for her children, through her milk.”<sup>14</sup>

Ibu Pretiwi is in Bali widely known as the goddess of the land, the ground, the earth.<sup>15</sup> In Sanskrit her name means “the broad or extended one” (Zoetmulder 1982:1421). She is called Ibu, Mother, by which is stressed that she carries the seeds of all new life in her womb. Her fertility is the ultimate source of life on earth, including that of human beings. Another name for her, Wasundari, “Bearer of Riches”, refers to the stability of the earth itself and the inexhaustible fecundity possessed by her. In hymns she is some-

times requested to bear the worshipper (Goudriaan & Hooykaas 1971:421).

The concept of the earth as a womb or vessel, container of life, is related to the idea of origin and ancestral source of life. *Ibu* or *paibon* is the name of a shrine in an ancestor temple, whose three compartments, dedicated to the deities Brahma, Wisnu and Siwa, symbolize the cycle of birth, life and death. This, more than perhaps any other, is the reason why this motif is placed at the top of the *lamak*. Sometimes *ibu* or *paibon* is the name of the ancestral temple itself.

Mother Earth is also in other Indonesian cultures often regarded as the partner of Bapa Akasa, Father Sky. Their union procreates and sustains the life of the universe (Fischer 1929:35). Together they are called as witnesses (*pasaksi*) at many Balinese rituals (Hooykaas 1977:97). Sometimes the three compartments of the ancestral shrine are said to be dedicated to Pretiwi, Akasa and the ancestors. The holy water in the container in front of the priests is regarded as a result of the meeting of Akasa and Pretiwi, as Husband and Wife (Hooykaas 1964:139).<sup>16</sup>

14 Kita sebagai anak alam. Kita harus melestari alam, ciptaan berhati-hati. Ibu Pertiwi seperti asal mula kami, kami punya utang budi besar sekali terhadap beliau, semua lahir dari Ibu. Ibu Pertiwi menyimpan segala unsur hidup dan kehidupan, dan lepaskan (kalau melahirkan). Dia berisi: tanah, api, air dan Bapak Akasa berisi: bayu, apah, teja. Ibu mengandung sumber kehidupan, dan sesudah itu menyiapkan makanan untuk anak-anaknya melalui susunya.

15 In Brinkgreve 1997 I analysed two major offerings in relation to the goddesses Durga and Pertiwi in Bali.

16 Ibu Pretiwi is not often depicted visually. A figure of a kind of womb, representing her, together with Father Sky in the form of a cloud, is illustrated in Hooykaas (1974:86), while a statue from Tenganan is published by Ramseyer (1977: pl. 178). However, much more common are representations of her son, Boma. His big face, with bulging eyes and open mouth and his outstretched hands are found crowning the entrance to many Balinese temples, comparable with the heads of Kala in ancient Javanese temples.

In Sanur and other places in Badung the square motif is called *gedong*, a closed building, especially in temples, but also the building where husband and wife sleep. When the motif is called 'building' it is not necessarily placed at the top of a *lamak*; in the middle is also possible. As a building in which husband and wife sleep and the traditional place for giving birth, it carries the association of fertility and new life arising.

As a closed building in a temple, it is often where important sacred objects are kept. As Ida Pedanda Gede Oka Timbul said, "the *gedong* is a place of storage, both of things and of life." A *gedong* has an important further connotation as womb, particularly in the name of the ritual, *magedong-gedongan*, to enhance the safe development of a baby still in the mother's womb. Just as the centre of the motif is protected by the encompassing square, so life itself is protected in the womb.

Another, related interpretation is that this motif represents a lake or pond, *telaga*, on top of the mountain, which sustains the constant flow of water that fertilizes the earth. As I Gusti Agung Mas Putra (pers. com. 19-9-1985) said: "The *ibu* is like a pond or lake, a reservoir of water; Ibu is life, just like water. Water and earth together are the sources of life."

Representing the actual earth or land, Ibu Pertiwi is worshipped during many rituals which include the opening of the earth, like the preparation of the rice fields before planting, or the burial (also called "planting") of a deceased person (cf. Fischer 1929:16). Equally important is her role at the first touching of the earth by a child of three Balinese months, or the consecration of a new building, when the objects and substances which give life to houses and temples are buried in the earth.

### 3.3.2.3 *Gunung* (mountain)

The *gunung*, mountain (fig. 3.22), is usually a triangular-shaped motif, consisting of rows of little triangles on top of one another. It is widely used as the main motif on a small *lamak*. Sometimes the mountain has a rather treelike shape, but it is still called *gunung*. Another name for the same motif is *bebukitan*, or *bukit*, meaning hill.

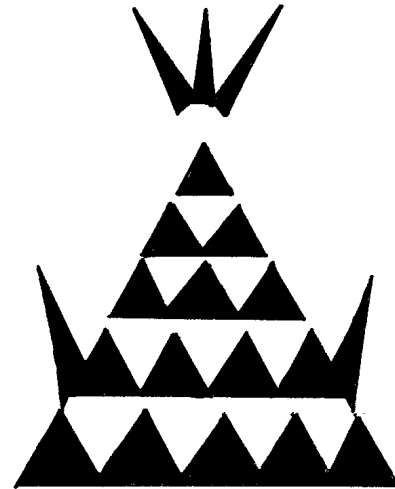


Figure 3.22: *Gunung*.

Because it is from the mountains that the water that fertilizes the rice fields flows down over the earth, the mountain should be one of the upper motifs on a *lamak*, according to informants. The mountain provides the plants and forests that are sources of human life; without the mountain life in Bali would not be possible. For example Ratu Mas, an offering specialist (*tukang banten*) from Puri Karangasem (pers. com. 3/6/2015), said that the mountain is so often the main motif on a *lamak*, because "the mountain is most important for life".

Especially on the *lamak* for Galungan, the *gunung* or mountain motif is regarded as the Gunung Agung, Bali's highest and sacred mountain, dwelling place of deities and ancestors. The offerings on the shrine at the *penjor*, from which the *lamak* hangs, are presented to the deities of the Gunung Agung, since the *penjor* itself is sometimes said to represent the Gunung Agung. Pedanda Istri Ketut Jelantik, from Gria Dauh in Budakeling, said (pers. com. 10/25/2013) that the mountain is the most important motif on a *lamak*, which as a whole is a symbol of the world, because "the Gods dwell there".

The Gunung Agung, the Great Mountain, is the representation in Bali of Mount Mahameru, the sacred mountain of Hindu mythology. Mahameru is the cosmic mountain, the central axis linking underworld, middle world and upperworld, and symbol of cosmic totality. The mythic text *Usana Bali* mentions that at the time of the origin of Hinduism in Bali the summit of Mahameru was



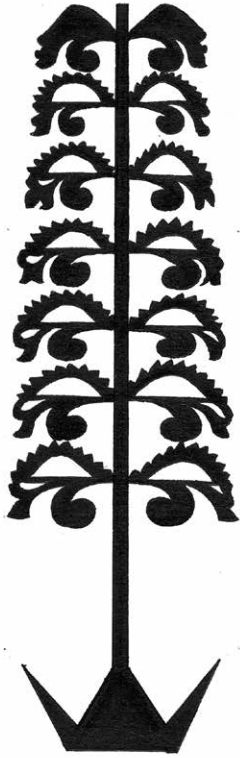


Figure 3.23: *Kekayonan*.

brought to Bali to become the Gunung Agung. The fourth section of the prose version of the Usana Bali, as summarized by Hinzler, tells about the arrival of new gods. “The god Pasupati, a manifestation of Siwa, enthroned on Mt. Mahameru in Java hears Kulputih’s prayer on the descent of the gods. Pasupati decides that his son Putrajaya (also called Mahadewa) and his wife Dewi Danuh have to be sent to Bali. [...] Putrajaya and Dewi Danuh [...] propose to be venerated from now on by means of particular offerings. The god Pasupati splits the top of Mahameru and sends both pieces to Bali. The piece in his right hand becomes Gunung Agung and will become Putrajaya’s seat, and the other



Figure 3.24: *Kekayonan*.

part, held in his left hand, becomes Gunung Batur, Dewi Danuh’s seat” (Hinzler 1986:142-143).<sup>17</sup>

#### 3.3.2.4 *Kekayonan* (tree)

*Kayu*, the root of the word ***kekayonan***, means wood or tree, and this design is always a trunk of a tree, placed on a little hill. Branches and leaves, and sometimes flowers and fruits, are added on either side (fig. 3.23). Especially in Padangtegal, but also in other villages in the Gianyar area, this motif sometimes resembles the leaf-shaped *kekayonan* which is the central and most powerful figure

17 In the Usana Bali text translated by Warna and Murdha (1986:68), one important passage reads as follows: “And then when my child has been in Besakih for a long time, your Father will come and hand over the summit of Mount Mahameru, which is the pre-eminent symbol of the island of Bali, as your place of residence”. (*Selanjutnya bila Anakda sudah lama di Besakih, Ayahda akan datang menyerahkan puncak Gunung Mahameru, yang merupakan simbul utama pulau Bali, sebagai tempat tinggal Anakda*).

in the wayang theatre (fig. 3.24). Sometimes the *kekayonan* is called ***punyan bingin***, banyan tree (*Ficus bengalensis* L).

In Balinese cosmology, like the holy mountain, the tree functions both as cosmic axis, and also as a symbol of the unity and totality of all existing phenomena. In some respects the significance of the mountain as the source of life is equivalent to the forests that grow on it, where vegetation and wild life flourish. In symbolism, the tree of life which unites all living creatures and the cosmic mountain can replace one another. Just as the mountain is regarded as essential for human life, so the tree or *kekayonan* on the mountain is the source of human life as well. Although it has the shape of a tree, in a sense it contains the whole world: the mountain, trees, plants, animals, water, air. It is depicted on top of a little hill, or rocks, because it has its roots in the earth, or has the earth as base.

For the Balinese, the tree is man's "closest friend", "tree and human being are related as siblings". They work together, "they look after each other". All parts of a tree are useful and important, whether it is the wood of its trunk, or its leaves, flowers or fruits. "Many trees means riches". According to many informants, the tree is connected with water, another prerequisite of life.

According to I Gusti Agung Mas Putra, since the existence of the world starts from vegetational life, the tree has to be depicted in the centre of the *lamak*, under the *cili*. Most of my Balinese informants, however, place the *cili* underneath the *kekayonan*, because the tree protects mankind. *Tukang lamak* Ni Made Paji from Junjungan said for example that a *kekayonan* acts as a kind of fan to wave air or wind; for in wayang the *kekayonan* gives wind, and wind is life. So the *kekayonan* waves life towards the *cili* or towards the newly-wed couple (*cili nganten*), so that new life, offspring, will soon arise.

The *kekayonan* on a *lamak* is often associated with the *kekayonan* as central figure of the wayang theatre, its movements being associated with the creation of the world. Wayan Wija, *dalang* from Sukawati (pers. com. 23/5/89), explained the meaning of the *kekayonan* as follows: "through the *kekayonan* everything can be represented: light, clouds, rain, fire, stones or mountain, house, the whole world's contents. A *kekayonan* acts as judgement (*pengadilan*) between left and right, good and

not good. A *kekayonan* is also the symbol of the Panca Mahabhuta, the five elements: earth, water, fire, air, and ether (*pertiwi, apah, teja, bayu, akasa*). A *kekayonan* already existed before anything was created." According to Wayan Wija, what someone sees in the *kekayonan* depends on the person's understanding. "Because the word *kekayonan* can also be derived from *kayun*, meaning thoughts, concepts, depicted on a *lamak nganten* the *kekayonan* can be interpreted at one level as meaning all thoughts about the future, and on the *lamak nganten* especially about new life arising from marriage, in the sense of making a family, descendants, children."

In her article on the *kekayonan*, Angela Hobart writes: "Its two main components (mountain and tree) link the three zones of underworld, earth, and heaven. Figuratively, the mountain rises from the abyss into the sky. So too the roots of the tree descend into the earth while its branches penetrate the heavens" (Hobart 1983:13).<sup>18</sup>

In the same way as the mountain motif is reflected on earth by the holy Gunung Agung, so the tree has its earthly manifestation in the banyan (*bingin*) tree in the centre of many Balinese villages or in sacred places like temples. This holy tree appears in numerous ways in offerings and ritual instruments. In the *lamak* catalogue by Seraya and Widia this motif is called a symbol of the Tree of Life (1973:9). As Jyoti (2010:13) explains, "the banyan tree has a very important meaning in Hindu mythology, where it represents the tree of heaven called Taru Wreksa, which can fulfill all wishes and which is called Kalpataru."<sup>19</sup>

According to Nyoman Miarta Putra (Putra 2009:52-55), the banyan tree "is often said to be the tree of heaven. [...] The importance of the banyan tree to Hindu worshippers [in Bali] is that its leaves are often used as a ritual requirement (*sa-*

18 From different points of view, much has been written about the comparable symbolism and representations of the tree of life, tree of heaven, cosmic tree or wishing tree in various other cultures within Indonesia. See for example Van der Hoop 1949:274-281, Rassers 1982:168-186 and Maxwell 1991.

19 *Pohon beringin memiliki arti yang sangat penting dalam mitologi Hindu, dimana pohon beringin adalah merupakan gambaran pohon sorga yang disebut Taru Wreksa, yang dapat memenuhi keinginan yang juga disebut dengan Kalpataru.*

*rana*). In mythology, the banyan is one of the trees which received a special divine gift. [...] The banyan tree is said to be the tree of the gods, especially Siwa... the place where Siwa and Dewi Durga play together, accompanied by celestial beings including deified ancestors.”<sup>20</sup>

### 3.3.2.5 *Gebogan* (offering)

Especially in the village of Padangtegal (Gianyar) the motif **gebogan** or *banten* (offering) *gebogan* (fig. 3.25) is often depicted on a *lamak*. It is a conical-shaped offering consisting of an assemblage of fruits and cookies (*jaja*), usually composed on a wooden tray (*dulang*).

In relation to the *lamak*, it is often said that the offering is for Ibu Pertiwi, because she is most often represented on a *lamak*, in the form of the motif of the *ibu* or *gedong*. It should be placed above the head of the *cili*, for the *cili* carries the *gebogan* just as someone carries an offering to the temple on his or her head. The conical shape of offerings or parts of offerings (such as *tumpeng*, rice cones) is often said to correspond to that of the sacred mountain, dwelling place of deities and deified ancestors.

### 3.3.2.6 *Cili* or *deling* (human being)

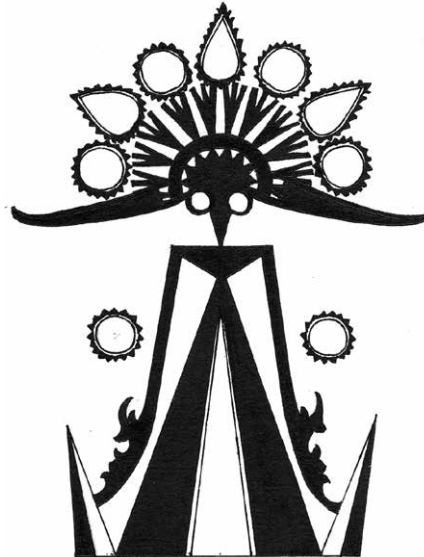
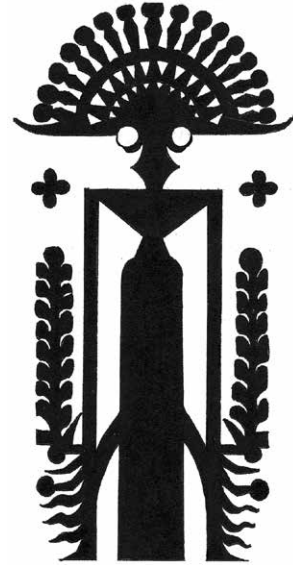
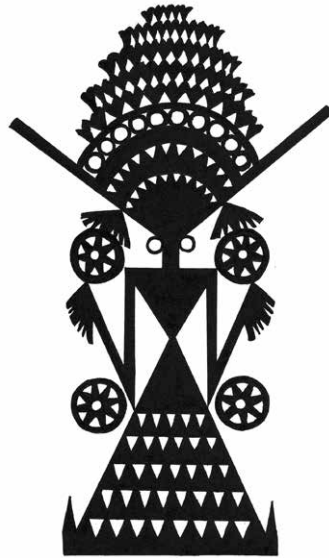
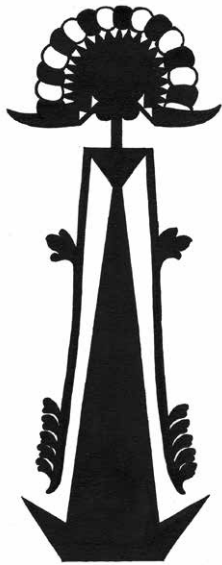
A **cili** motif is a very slender female figure with an elongated triangular body, long arms, a fanshaped headdress and big cylindrical ear ornaments (figs. 3.26-3.30). According to the dictionary by Van der Tuuk (1897-1912:I 633), *cili*, *cecilian* or *cilicilian*, is translated as “a doll, made of *lontar* leaves, a figure with a headdress extending on either side, sold at the market for five Balinese coins; also form of address to somebody who is younger (compare Javanese *cilik*).”

20 *Pohon beringin sering dikatakan sebagai tumbuhan sorga. [...] Pentingnya pohon beringin bagi Umat Hindu karena daunnya sering digunakan sebagai sarana upacara. [...] Secara mitologi, pohon beringin merupakan salah satu pohon yang telah mendapatkan penugrahan. [...] pohon beringin dikatakan sebagai pohonnya para dewa, khususnya Dewa Siwa. [...] pohon beringin adalah tempat Dewa Siwa dan Dewi Durga beranjang sana ditemani para widyadara-widyadari termasuk di dalamnya para pitara.*



Figure 3.25: *Gebogan*.

In some parts of Bali (for example in Pujung and Jasan, in Gianyar, and in Budakeling and other villages in Karangasem), this motif is also often called **deling**, meaning “a female figure, or children’s toy from *lontar* leaf” (Van der Tuuk 1897-1912:II 495). In some villages, informants give less common names for this motif. Among them are **condong**, meaning “female servant”; a *condong* is a major figure in the *legong* dance. In Tegallalang, besides *cili*, the **janger** is sometimes used; a *janger* is a dancer, and the only difference between both designs is a minor variation in headdress. In Kerambitan (Tabanan), this motif is called **jlema**, which means human being. In Penatahan (Tabanan), a small *cili* is called **wong-wongan**, like a small human figure.



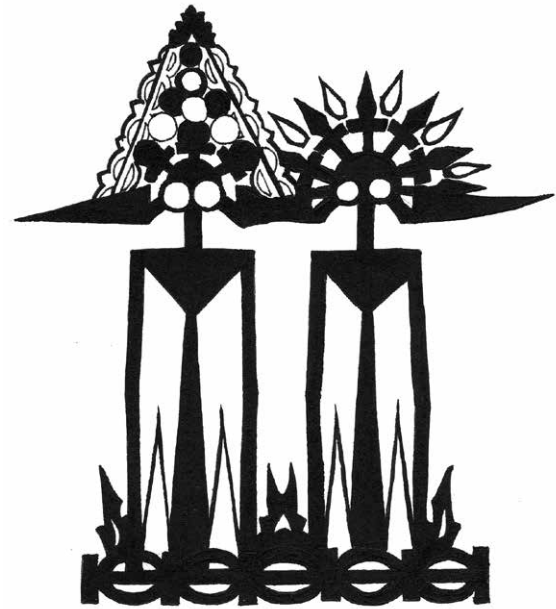
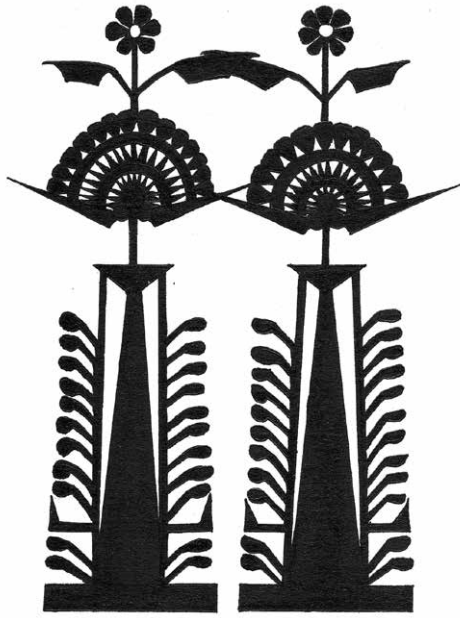
Figures 3.26-3.30: *Cili* or *deling*.

The main motif on a *lamak nganten* is called *cili nganten* or *cili kembar*: wedding *cili* or twin *cili*, referring to the newly-wed couple. This consists of two little *cili*, next to one another, usually in the style of the *cili* that is common in the village or area concerned (fig. 3.31). Almost always these two *cili* have a similar shape, but sometimes the headdresses indicate a difference between male and female, groom and bride (fig. 3.32). In the Tabanan area especially, a double female figure motif is often

used on a *lamak*, but not in relation to a *lamak nganten*, since that tradition does not exist there.

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, Anak Agung Gede Raka Sandi in Tampaksiring explained to me his symbolic interpretation of the *cili*: “Life is represented, not their (human) form! Life is the same for male and female”. Almost all Balinese informants were of the same opinion that the *cili* on a *lamak* is a representation of humankind, both women and men. That is the reason the *cili* is





Figures 3.31-3.32: *Cili nganten*.

usually placed in the centre of the *lamak*, in the centre of the world, as it were. Mangku Gede, *bendesa adat* of Lodtunduh (pers. com. 26/3/1988), related that when a family has recently buried a dead relative they may not use a *cili* on a *lamak*. In this state of impurity (*cuntaka*) after a death and during the death rituals, they use only a smaller *penjor*, with a simple *sampian penjor* that does not depict a *cili*. The reason could be that the *cili* is associated with life.

Although the *cili* has definitely a female form, the *cili* is not restricted to women only, but rather stands for the whole of humankind. The *cili nganten*, representing the newly-wed bride and groom, usually both have an identical 'feminine' form, although the left one represents the woman, and the right one the man. As Anak Agung Gede Raka Sandi explained, because it is the essence of life that is depicted, it does not really matter whether the form is male or female. Man and woman form one whole or totality, just as the two halves of a *candi bentar* or split gate of a temple or palace belong together, as some informants phrased it. The *cili nganten* sometimes have an umbrella above their heads as a sign of honour and as adornment. Often they have flowers on their heads, as a symbol of peacefulness: the new life in marriage brings calm and quiet. Another opinion is that a *cili* seeks shelter under a tree, or that the life of the *cili* itself

is related to living plants and trees. Human life is dependent on vegetational life.

However, some Balinese are of the opinion that the *cili* represents the goddess of fertility, Dewi Sri, the well-known goddess of rice, fertility, and prosperity. Depicted on the *lamak*, she is said to be a witness of the ritual. For example I Gusti Putu Nonderan (pers. com. 27/2/1987) said (as related earlier in this chapter) that the *cili* on the *lamak* hanging from the shrine of the *penjor* is a representation of Dewi Sri and the love of Bawi Serenggi for her, a story I heard nowhere else. And according to Mangku Gede (pers. com. 26/3/1988), the *cili* is a symbol of Ida Betari Ratih, the goddess of the moon. At temple ceremonies in Selat, rows of *cili* figures, there called *deling*, painted on thin sheaths of rice dough were called Ida Betari Saraswati (the spouse of god Brahma).

But others, for example Wayan Wira, were of the opinion that since Dewi Sri is the spouse of god Wisnu, she dwells in Wisnu's heaven (Wisnuloka) and not on earth or the middle world (Madyapada), so then she should not be depicted in the central part of the *lamak* as the *cili* almost always is. Also according to I Gusti Agung Mas Putra (pers. com. 21/9/1985) it is not possible that a *cili* is the image of Dewi Sri, since Dewi Sri is one of the many aspects ("rays") of God, which cannot really be

depicted. She said that since the mountain with its associated vegetation and water gives life to human beings, represented by the *cili*, the mountain motif has to be placed above the *cili*. Ida Bagus Dalem, Gria Kutri (pers. com. 15/2/1989) agreed with this: “*Cili* means beautiful, *cantik*. A beautiful girl is called a *cili*, just as a handsome boy is called Arjuna. A *cili* is not specifically a goddess, but rather the human being.”

According to Wayan Pugeg (pers. com. 22/5/1989), a sculptor from Singapadu, who often makes large offerings (*sarad*) which include rice dough *cili*, a *cili* is a heavenly nymph (*widadari*), and is associated with the gods (Ida Betara). Dewi Sri, or Dewi Ratih, they can all be depicted by the *cili*, all of them are the Holy Goddess who are beautiful and always feminine. However, in Gria Puseh, Sanur, where I often observed these same offerings being made, a *cili lanang* (male) and a *cili istri* (female) were definitely human figures. Interestingly, Ni Made Darmi, a silversmith in Budakeling (pers. com. 10/2/2012), said that the pair of statues with golden faces, made out of Chinese coins, that receives daily offerings on a wall shrine in her workshop (fig. 4.80), represent the gods Rambut Sedana or Sri Sedana, but their form is that of a pair of *deling* (or *cili*), a man and a woman. Similar pairs of deity figures made of *lontar* leaves are visible everywhere, placed on wall shrines in shops and markets in the area of Karangasem, to serve as temporary residence for deities who bring success and good luck.

Of all *lamak* motifs, the *cili* receives most attention in Balinese publications. Like I Gusti Agung Mas Putra (1975:8; 1981:8), Made Titib calls the *cili* a symbol of mankind (1976:14). Also Seraya and Widia, in their catalogue of an exhibition of *lamak* from the village of Batur, call a *kepet* (fan shape) a *cili*, symbol of femaleness (1973:9).

However, in their publication *Cili sebagai lambing dewi kesuburan di Bali*, Widia, Budiastira and Wirata (1989/1990) acknowledge that “for Hindu adherents in Bali the *cili* is a symbol of beauty”, but their conclusion is that “for Balinese Hindus the *cili* is a symbol of the form of Dewi Sri, Ibu (Mother), Fertility.” They continue, “The form of the *cili* is a symbol derived from the female form, which nowadays is known as Dewi Sri.” After pointing out that the face of a *cili* resembles the masks on the famous

bronze age drum kept in Pura Penataran Sasih in Pejeng (which in fact is not really the case) and after declaring that “the oldest *cili* in the collection of the Museum Bali, made of fired earthenware, found at the Pura Belanjong, Sanur, is of a form similar to that of terracotta sculptures of Majapahit style,” the writers state that the form of the *cili* resembles the shape of the rice goddess, known by all Indonesian people before they received Hindu influence. They give many examples of the use of the *cili* motif: hand-formed rice dough figures (*cacalan*) in the *pulagembal* offering; terracotta *cili* as decoration on top of the roof of a building; guardian figures (*dwarapala*) at the entrance to a temple; palm leaf artefacts (*jejaitan*) such as *sampian* which hangs from the tip of a *penjor* or sits on top of the *gebogan* offering; also from wood as the *gebogan* mask (*tapel gebogan*). But according to them, “the most perfect form is the *cili* on a *lamak [ng]anten*, where the *cili* resembles a female.” They state that the *cili* as the manifestation of Dewi Sri plays a big role in Balinese rituals, and that “in relation to these rituals Dewi Sri is better known as *cili*” (1989/1990:3-15).<sup>21</sup>

These viewpoints have served as inspiration for other Balinese publications about the *cili* (Pameran 2010 and Soekartiningsih 2000). And although I Dewa Kompiang Gede (1996:143) also repeats the general statement that the *cili* is a symbol of Dewi Sri, he mentions also that “the influence of ancestor worship had a strong influence on Indonesian people in the past” and that the significance of the *cili* “perhaps can be seen from the viewpoint of

21 *Pada masyarakat Hindu di Bali Cili adalah merupakan symbol kecantikan (p. 3)... Cili bagi umat Hindu di Bali merupakan lambang dari perwujudan Dewi Sri, Ibu, Kesuburan (p. 13) ... Bentuk cili ini merupakan simbol dari bentuk perempuan, yang sekarang dikenal sebagai Dewi Sri (p. 15) ... cili tertua koleksi Museum Bali, dibuat dari tanah liat dibakar, didapat dari pura Belanjong, Sanur, bentuk ini menyerupai bentuk arca terracotta type Majapahit ... Bentuk yang sempurna adalah bentuk cili pada sebuah lamak anten yang cilinya menyerupai seorang perempuan (p. 11)...tetapi dalam kaitan upacara ini dewi sri lebih kenal dengan sebutan cili (p. 11).*

popular belief, worship of Dewi Sri (goddess of fertility) and spirits of the ancestors.”<sup>22</sup>

As I have argued elsewhere,<sup>23</sup> in the ethnographical literature on Bali, the *cili* is almost always called a symbol of Dewi Sri, the Hindu name of the old deity of rice, agriculture, fertility and prosperity. Scholars supporting this interpretation include Ramseyer,<sup>24</sup> Hooykaas-van Leeuwen Boomkamp,<sup>25</sup> Langewis,<sup>26</sup> Pelras<sup>27</sup> and Eiseman.<sup>28</sup>

In my first article in which the *cili* plays a role (Brinkgreve 1987a),<sup>29</sup> I had a similar opinion, which I had based mainly on Ramseyer’s work, but I do not agree with this anymore.

Covarrubias, who, like Walter Spies, was fascinated by this beautiful figure, was probably the first to compare the shape of the *cili* to that of the rice mother, *nini pantun*, a sheaf of rice dressed up

into the shape of the *cili*.<sup>30</sup> But he admits that not all his informants made this connection but rather that they “insisted that they were purely ornamental forms appropriate for offerings because they were beautiful” (Covarrubias 1937:171).<sup>31</sup>

In his extensive study of rice rituals, Wirz (1927) also never mentions the *cili* as a symbol of Dewi Sri. The *lontar* effigies, mistakenly called “harvest offering (*tjili*, *tjau*)”<sup>32</sup> by Goris and Dronkers (1952:38), “dedicated to Dewi Sri and placed in the fields during harvest time” are often called Sri (Wirz 1927:89) and sometimes *cili* (Covarrubias 1937:172). These figurines, as a temporary residence for Dewi Sri are in shape probably similar to Van der Tuuk’s “doll, made of *lontar* leaves, a figure with a headdress extending on either side”, which he called “*tjili* or *tjetjilian*”.<sup>33</sup> Not only in Balinese but also in Old Javanese (Zoetmulder 1982:327) *cili* means “small, little”.

As Covarrubias already describes, and Widia, Budiastra and Wirata (1989/1990) and Soekartiningsih (2000) show in their catalogues of *cili* figures in the Bali Museum, the *cili* appears on all sorts of objects, made from all kinds of materials. Often there is some connection with protection (e.g. the *cili* on clay tiles that crown the roof of a house), or with life (e.g. the *cili* as container

22 ...pengaruh kepercayaan kepada arwah leluhur amat mempengaruhi bangsa Indonesia di masa lalu.... mungkin dapat dilihat dari segi kepercayaan masyarakat, pemujaan Dewi Sri (Dewi kesuburan) dan arwah leluhur.

23 Brinkgreve 1992, 1994, 2010.

24 “The so-called *cili* or *deling* motif belongs to a totally different conceptual complex and is dependent on the pre-Hinduistic rice cult. It was dedicated to the Rice Mother and later to the rice goddess Sri and was the symbol of wealth, fertility and luck in the shape of a more or less abstract female head with a large, fan-like head-dress” (Ramseyer 1977:35).

25 “The *lamak* is invariably embellished with a *tjili* design, the symbol of the Rice Goddess and often with patterns based on a mountain motif” (Hooykaas-Van Leeuwen Boomkamp 1961:11) and: “A *chili*, little girl, is a human figure made out of palmleaf. It represents a young goddess with large earrings” (J. Hooykaas 1961:272).

26 “a *tjili*, the mythical figure connected with Dewi Sri, the goddess of rice and agriculture” (Langewis 1956:40).

27 “Quant au Batur: Dewi Sri = Dewi Danuh, la déesse du Lac; le *tjili* est le symbole. La signification du *lamak* nous apparait donc maintenant plus clairement: il est le symbole non seulement de Dewi Sri, déesse du riz, don le *tjili* est plus spécialement l’emblème, mais aussi de la divinité féminine en général et de tout ce qu’elle représente” (Pelras 1967:267, 270).

28 “*cili* = small pretty statue; image of Dewi Sri, the rice goddess, made in the form of an hour glass, representing stalks of rice tied together near the top” (Eiseman 2005:184).

29 “The *cili*, which as a form probably dates from pre-Hindu times, is generally associated with Dewi Sri, the rice goddess” (Brinkgreve 1987a:135).

30 See Kam (1993:84-87) for a comparison between *nini pantun* and *cili*.

31 “This would indicate that the mysterious figure was connected with, or derived from, the deities of rice and fertility, either Dewi Sri or Melanting, also goddesses of beauty and seed respectively [...] The figure of the *tjili* seems to have a strong hold on the imagination of the Balinese, perhaps because it is the shape of the Rice Mother (*nini pantun*), a sheaf of rice dressed into the shape of a *tjili*. [...] I became intensely intrigued by the persistence of this shape in so many of the ritual objects and was determined to find in it some religious significance; I asked all sorts of people about *tjili*’s, from high priests to old women offering-makers, but they all insisted that they were purely ornamental forms appropriate for offerings because they were beautiful. The word *tjili* means “small and nice” rather in the sense in which we use the term “cute”. Whatever its origin, the *tjili* is today nothing more than a beautiful abstract feminine motif” (Covarrubias 1937:171).

32 A *cau* is indeed an offering, but not in the human form of a *cili* (see also Van der Tuuk 1897-1912:I 562).

33 They are part of many museum collections of Balinese ritual art (Brinkgreve, in Reichle 2010:142-144).

for the soul of the dead), or with offerings (e.g. when the fan-shaped palm leaf head of a *cili* or the wooden mask of a pretty lady crowns an offering, transforming this into a human body). For example in their book “Balinese Character” Bateson and Mead included photographs of “Anthropomorphic offerings. Offering *tjanang rebong*: the only recognizable anthropomorphism is the fan-shaped head-dress (*tjili*) which is characteristic of representations of gods and souls of the dead” (1942:63) and “Representations (*tjili ampilan*) of the soul at the final “sending off” ceremony (*ngirim*). [...] They have faces and fan-shaped headdresses of palm leaf, and the female figures have earrings” (1942:251).

Being such a lovely figure, the *cili* has inspired many artists, western, Indonesian and Balinese. It has indeed become one of the iconic images of Bali. From the above discussion of the various interpretations and different contexts of its use it becomes clear that there is no single, unequivocal meaning of this beautiful female image of the *cili*. In any case, the concept *cili*, a little, usually female figurine, is related more to the form than to the meaning of the figure. It is possible that the origin of the motif might be found in the depiction of ancestors, who, as in so many Indonesian societies, have a protective and life-giving function. In some cases the form of *cili* motifs on *lamak* are comparable to the human or ancestor figures on textiles of other parts of Indonesia and then they often appear in pairs. The development into a female form might be related to the fact that female fertility is the prerequisite for the continuity of human life.

In the case of an effigy or statue, the figure is called *cili* because of its beautiful female form, but it is not an actual representation of a woman. Neither is it a deity itself, but it acts as a temporary receptacle, vessel, for a deity, for example Dewi Sri. Since the fertility of plants, especially rice, is often equated with that of women, in certain contexts the *cili* is then a suitable image for the goddess of rice. But Dewi Sri can be represented in many other forms besides the *cili*, such as in the figures made of the first ears of rice at harvest time, *nini pantun*.



Figure 3.33: *Mangong*.

But in the case of the *lamak*, the *cili* is not “a symbol of the goddess of rice”; it is rather a representation of human life.<sup>34</sup>

### 3.3.2.7 *Mangong*

The *mangong* is an intriguing figure, since nobody could explain the meaning of the name, nor is it found in any dictionary. This design which is never used on *lamak nganten* but only on small *lamak*, is a combination of a little *cili* and a small tree, combining some features of both: a kind of head on a trunk with some side branches (fig. 3.33).

<sup>34</sup> An interesting comparison with the *cili* is a particular kind of pattern that women in Tobelo, North Halmahera, plait in mats and basketry. This pattern is called *o nyawa-nyawa*, and is said to represent two women and two men, denoting the persons as well as that part of the person which renders him ‘alive’. The plaited objects display other motifs as well, which refer to living species which are living in the sea, the garden, and the forest, and belong to domains beyond that of the village society. By bringing them together in a plaited object, “relations between these beings are signified that identify them all as manifestations of *gikiri*, as forms of “life”.” (Platenkamp 1995:29-30). See also Chapter 6 for further comparisons between the Balinese *lamak* and Tobelo mats.



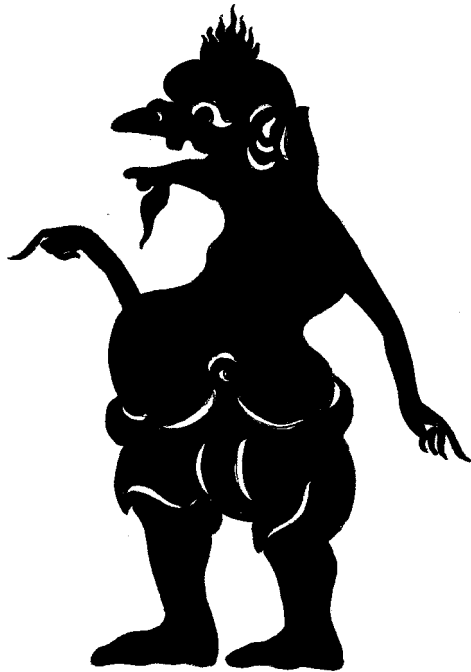


Figure 3.34: Sangut.

A *kekayonan* sometimes has little figures like the *mangong* underneath its branches. They are called *kumangmang*, meaning “a kind of spirit that wanders around cremation sites at night” (Van der Tuuk 1897-1912:II 360). Although nobody was sure about the meaning of the word *mangong*, several interpretations about the meaning of the motif do exist. One opinion is that the *mangong* is, like the *cili*, a symbol of mankind, but whereas the *cili* is young, the *mangong* is old. Or it is regarded as similar to a little *cili* which is found under the tree of the *lamak nganten* in Singakerta, or by itself on a small *lamak*. In Padangtegal it is never used in combination with a *cili*, and its use is restricted to small *lamak*, said *tukang lamak* Pak Tantri.

Also *tukang lamak* I Made Sadra did not know precisely what the *mangong* represents: “It has the form of a *cili* but on a different base. Or the form of a tree, for it stands on a hill. It is not clear. In any case a *mangong* is never used on a *lamak nganten*.”

But another *tukang lamak* from Padangtegal, I Gusti Putu Nonderan said (pers. com. 23/5/89) that the word *mangong* is derived from *anggo*, *ngo*, *angan*, used, worn, fastened on. “There is no story attached to it. It is only a filling ornament so that not only *bebatikan* patterns are used. *Mang* means empty (*kosong*). *Ong* means content (*isinya*).

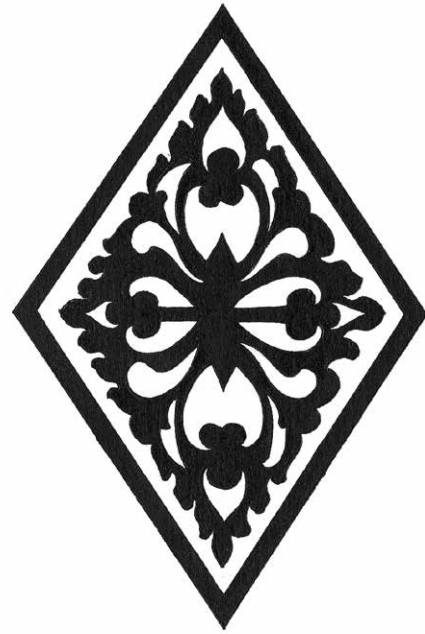


Figure 3.35: Mas-masan.

*Mangong* does not have a specific meaning. Is it a *cili*? Or an animal? Or just a decoration? There is no certainty, the name is just made up by people”.<sup>35</sup> According to him there is no relationship with *kumangmang* which can be seen at the Pura Dalem, the so-called death temple.

However some other *tukang lamak*, for example in Singapadu, do associate the *mangong* with *kumangmang*, spirits that dwell on cremation sites, but are usually harmless to mankind. Another view is that this figure is a plant, a little tree or *kekayonan*, that grows on the mountain. Or it is regarded as a combination of both: a head with a body like a plant.

### 3.3.2.8 Other *raka* motifs

Occasionally I saw a *lamak* with a completely different motif, perhaps an individual design invented by the *lamak* maker.

Sometimes one or more of the characters who play a role in the *wayang kulit* shadow theatre are depicted on *lamak*, especially from the area of Peliatan (Gianyar), but also on the embroidered

35 *Apakah ada cili? Atau binatang? Perhiasan saja. Belum sah, namanya, orang bikin nama saja.*



Figure 3.36: Bunga.

*lamak* of Jembrana.<sup>36</sup> While on these embroidered *lamak* it is mainly various deities and heroes from the Ramayana or Mahabharata who are portrayed, on palm leaf *lamak* I have only ever seen the serv-

36 Embroidered *lamak* will be discussed in Chapter 4 and Appendix 1.

ants of the main figures: Twalen, Merdah, Sangut (fig. 3.34), who in *wayang* theatre play an important role as mediator and interpreter.

A lozenge-shaped design called *mas-masan*, the leaves of the croton plant, is usually one of the geometrical motifs on a *lamak*, as will be discussed in the next section (fig. 3.49). However, sometimes one of the representational motifs, shaped as one big lozenge, filled with little ornaments like the *kekayonan*, is according to *tukang lamak* I Made Sadra in Padangtegal also called *mas-masan* (fig. 3.35), and then the motif means “golden jewellery, used in a palace (*puri*)”, because *mas* means ‘gold’. But I have never seen a *mas-masan* as the sole representational motif on a *lamak*.

Flowers (*bunga*) are either part of freestyle arrangements, a kind of meandering stalk with flowers on either side (fig. 3.36), or they are planted in a pot, or grow from the soil or small hills (fig. 3.19). In Karangasem nowadays sometimes only flowers are represented on small *lamak*. Flowers are very popular in the Tabanan and Jembrana area, also on modern embroidered *lamak*. Sometimes only one flower, with eight petals around a centre is depicted. Then it represents a *padma*, lotus flower (fig. 3.39). The motif in the form of a big flower which in Lodtunduh was called *bulan tunjuk*, was also called *bunga tunjung*, a kind of waterlilly, like the *padma* a “symbol of life”, as it was interpreted. A *padma* is also the centre of the *nawa sanga* system of horizontal cosmological ordering, in which Hindu deities rule or guard the cardinal directions; the centre is occupied by Betara Siwa.

Sometimes I recognized ornaments or symbols which are important in Hindu-Balinese religion, such as different kinds of shrines (like the multiple-roofed *meru*, fig. 3.37), the **Ongkara** (the OM syllable) (fig. 3.38) and the **swastika**. Ongkara, the Balinese version of the OM syllable, is the sacred syllable symbolizing Ida Sang Hyang Widhi. It consists of the letter ‘O’ with the three-part nasalization sign, called *ulucandra*, above it (Kamus 2005:76).

The swastika, an ancient Indian symbol of the rotation of the sun and the cycle of life, also a symbol of ‘happiness, prosperity and tranquility’, has become a major symbol of Balinese

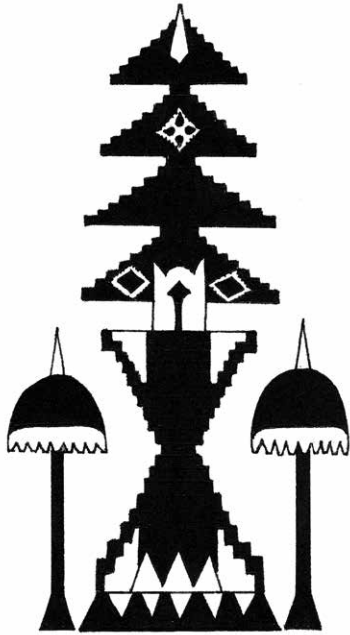


Figure 3.37: Meru.



Figure 3.38: Lamak with ongkara.  
Linggasana (Bebandem), 23/10/2013.



Figure 3.39: Lamak with padma and swastika.  
Banjar Tengen, Menanga, 5/3/89.

Hinduism (Ginarsa 1984:39; Musna 1991:61; Titib 2003:375-376).<sup>37</sup>

Although, as will be discussed in the next section, the animal world is represented in the abstract, geometric motifs of many *lamak*, single animals are never depicted on a palm leaf *lamak* as a representational motif. In fact, only once, in 1994, I noticed a *lamak* with two *naga*, crowned serpents with upward tail, as one of the four *lamak* on a four-sided *pengubengan* shrine in front of a temple in Sanur. The *lamak* with the *naga* hung on the *kelod* side (the direction towards the sea), opposite a *lamak* with a *meru* shrine in the *kaja* (towards the mountain) direction. However, on embroidered *lamak* from Jembrana, especially long ones, a *naga* is sometimes represented towards the bottom of these *lamak*. As has been discussed in Chapter 2, there is also a connection between *naga* and *penjor*.

### 3.3.2.9 Segara-Gunung (sea-mountain)

When one structure or shrine requires more than one *lamak*, these (three or four) *lamak* might have partly different motifs. Examples are the *lamak* hanging from the *sanggar tawang*, a tall temporary shrine with three compartments, and the *lamak* hanging from the four sides of the *bale kulkul* (tower for the wooden signal drum) or the temporary *panggung* or *pengubengan*, a four-sided bamboo shrine in front of a temple.

For very elaborate rituals, a special temporary *sanggar tawang* shrine is constructed. This tall shrine, which can only be reached via a ladder, has three or four compartments, intended for the offerings presented to the highest gods, Brahma, Wisnu and Siwa (or Siwa in his manifestation as Iswara and Mahadewa).<sup>38</sup> Within the so-called *nawa sanga* system of cosmological ordering, these deities rule or guard the cardinal directions. Wisnu, who is associated with the colour black, resides in the North; Iswara, whose colour is white in the East; Brahma with red in the South; and Mahadewa with yellow in the West. Since the compartments of a *sanggar*

37 Nowadays one see the swastika more often, but the motif was already mentioned in 1973 by Seraya & Widia (1973:9). However, the Ongkara I have never seen in the past, and recently only once or twice.

38 See Swellengrebel 1947 (especially the appendix) for a description of the complexity of these offerings, at the inauguration of the ruler in Gianyar, 1903.

*tawang* shrine form a straight line, they cannot be oriented towards the cardinal directions. Usually the left compartment is dedicated to Wisnu, the (two) middle one(s) to Iswara and Mahadewa, and the compartment to the right to Brahma. The *sanggar tawang* shrines are always decorated with the longest and most elaborate *lamak* in the temple courtyard. In Gianyar and Badung the central *lamak* is often longer and contains more motifs than the ones to either side. Especially in the regions of Karangasem and Klungkung, sometimes these different *lamak* on a *sanggar tawang* contain special motifs which are not known in other areas of Bali. These *lamak* are called *lamak catur* (*catur* means four), referring both to the number of *lamak* (and compartments of the shrine), and to the offerings, *banten catur*, on the shrine. Many of the main ingredients/elements of these very complicated offerings have the four colours associated with the four deities these offerings are presented to. The compartments of the shrine are decorated with plain cloths, usually also in these four different colours.

In combination, the motifs on these *lamak catur* are called *segara-gunung*, which means 'ocean-mountain'. The *lamak* on the left has the image of a mountain (fig. 3.41), the ones in the centre have motifs of sun and moon (fig. 3.42), and the *lamak* on the right is decorated with a representation of the sea (fig. 3.43).<sup>39</sup> I Wayan Sudarma, Banjar Telugtug, Sibetan, was the maker of the *lamak catur* for an elaborate ritual, Karya Agung Petabuh Gentuh in the Pura Bale Agung of Sibetan (Karangasem) that took place on 22 February 1989 (fig. 3.40). He explained (pers. com. 24/6/89) the *segara-gunung* motifs as follows: "On the left *lamak* we see clouds (*awon-awon*), Gunung Agung at the time of its eruption, with a forest of *cemara* trees. And animals in the forest, such as mouse-deer (*kancil*), monkey (*kera*) and wild pig (*babi hutan*). Thereunder the boundary of the forest. The lower two motif panels on this long *lamak* form the content, the flower above it is a decoration, with the aim of achieving the required length. On the left of the two central *lamak* is the sun rising in the east, behind Gunung Rinjani on Lombok, which is

visible from Bali. And a pigeon or dove, a bird of the daytime. At the bottom is a flower pattern. On the right of the two central *lamak*: moon and stars, bats and birds of the night. On the right *lamak*, the south coast, visible from Sibetan, and Nusa Penida (a small island off the southeast coast of Bali). With a helicopter and a boat (*jukung*), anything that one finds on Bali. The creatures of the sea are crab, prawn, crocodile and octopus." "Everything that exists in Bali must be represented, always in relation to the directions: *kaja* means *gunung* (mountain); *kangin-kauh* is *bulan-matahari* (sun and moon), *kelod* means *pasir* (sea, beach)."

The directions Wayan Sudarma was referring to are the two pairs of antipodes of cosmic orientation: *kaja*, the direction towards the (tops of the) mountains, and *kelod*, towards the sea; and the directions of the sunrise and sunset, *kangin* and *kauh*. Whereas *kangin* and *kauh* represent East and West in all of Bali, *kaja* is roughly North only in South Bali, but roughly South in North Bali, since the range of mountains in Bali runs approximately east-west. I will refer to this cosmic ordering later in this chapter in more detail.

Although I was told in Budakeling (by I Made Kuduk, pers. com. 5/27/2015) that formerly there all long *lamak*, for example on the *bale kulkul*, contained the *segara-gunung* motifs, that is at present no longer the case.

Jero Istri Ketut, from the Puri (palace) of Klungkung, told me that for elaborate rituals in Klungkung these four *lamak* with their *segara-gunung* motifs were also used on the *sanggar tawang*. The compartment with black cloths had a *lamak* ornamented with a mountain, a tree and a monkey; the one with white and yellow cloth with moon and sun; and the red one with a boat and fish, representing the ocean. All of them also had a *deling* (human) figure, underneath the main motif.

Such special *lamak* are also described by I Gusti Ngurah Bagus (1971) in his analysis of the motifs on *lamak* for the very elaborate Tawur Agung Ekadasa Rudra in Pura Besakih, 1963. These *lamak* were made in Klungkung. He points out that in the central temple Pura Penataran Agung and ten other temples temporary shrines were erected, from bam-

39 These illustrations are of the *lamak catur* in Pura Dalem Sibetan, at a major temple consecration ritual (*ngenteg linggih*), on 15 April 2014.



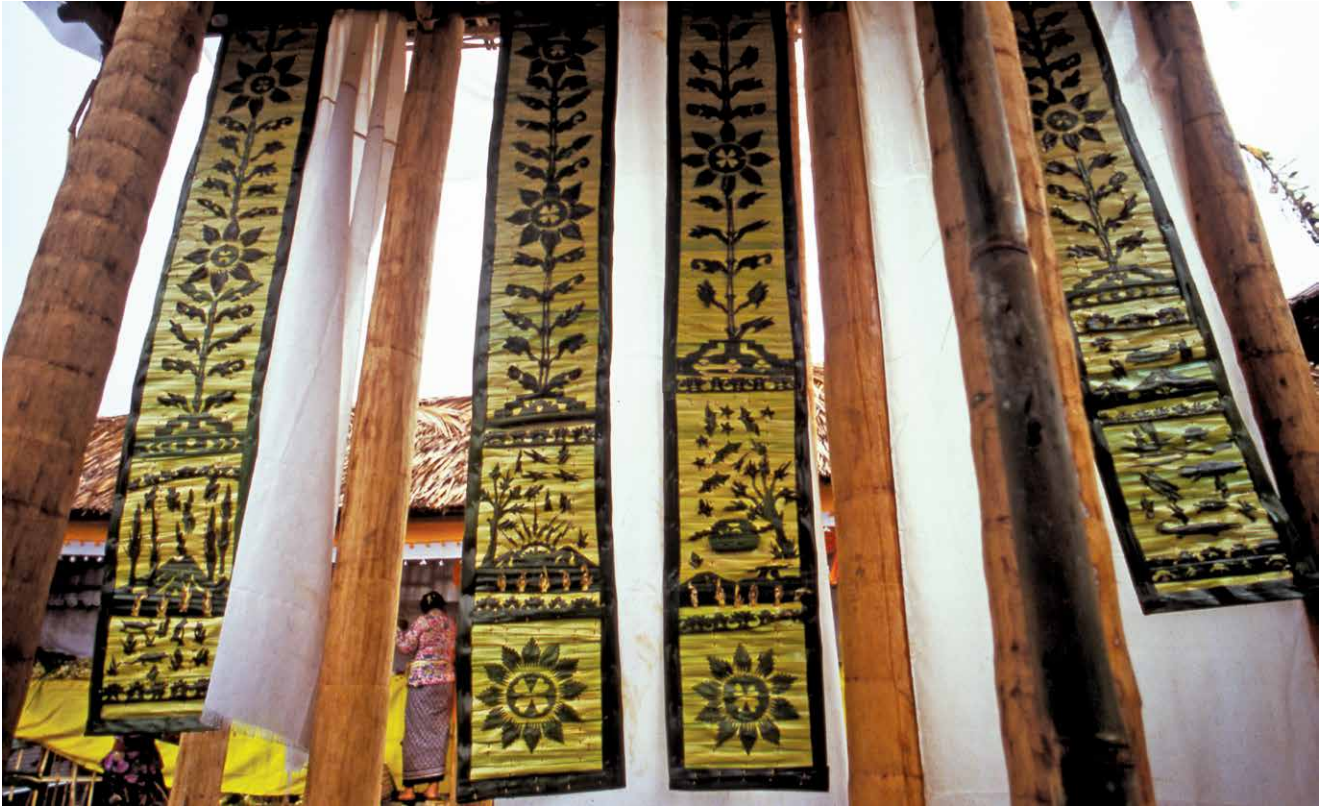


Figure 3.40: Lamak catur. Sibetan, Pura Bale Agung, 20/2/1989.



Figure 3.41: Gunung motif with animals of the forest on lamak catur. Pura Dalem, Sibetan, 15/4/2014.



Figure 3.42: Bulan (front) and matanai (partly hidden) motifs on lamak catur. Pura Dalem, Sibetan, 15/4/2014.



Figure 3.43: Segara motif and sea creatures on lamak catur. Pura Dalem, Sibetan, 15/4/2014.

boo, with three spaces.<sup>40</sup> All were hung with *lamak*. According to him, of the three compartments, east is for Wisnu, centre for Siwa and west for Brahma. East is also uranic, equivalent to *kaja*, to the mountain, whereas west is chthonic and *kelod*, to the sea. The motifs on the *lamak* reflect this classification: west has a little boat with a fisherman; east a tree with a monkey, symbol of the mountain; and the centre shows the sun and moon and Cintia (symbol of the One and Only God). So together the motifs on the three *lamak* represent or symbolize the whole cosmos (Bagus 1971:41-49).

### 3.3.3 Geometrical or abstract patterns, *ringgitan*

On *lamak* with more than one motif, geometrical or abstract patterns serve as divider between the representational (*raka*) designs and on the sides and bottom of a *lamak*. In the next chapter I will describe how these patterns are structured and how they are all composed from a number of basic units. Because the forms consist of a repetition of elements, both horizontal and vertical, the patterns can be called geometrical. But because some of these ornaments have or have been given a specific meaning, and can be regarded as a stylized representation of an object, a category or a concept, they could also be called abstract patterns. In any case, these motifs are in general called *ringgitan* (something that is cut out). They occur in an endless variety, depending, as Balinese informants themselves said, on the person making them, and according to 'place, time and situation' (*desa, kala, patra*).

More often than not Balinese informants could not give these patterns specific names.<sup>41</sup> Almost always they referred to them only by generic terms, or by their position on the *lamak*, for example *baluan*, 'first, front, top', or *pangawak*, 'body', or

they referred to them as "only decorative". For example, Sagung Putu Alit (Kerambitan, pers. com. 26/9/1985) called the geometric motifs "just intersecting lines" (*silang saja*). "There are many kinds of *ringgitan*, but I only know the names *bungan juuk* (the flower of a kind of citrus tree) and *kodok ngerem* (frog submerged), because these are the names I have often heard," she said.

However, of the numerous motifs I had photographed, mainly during Galungan festival periods, approximately 50 *ringgitan* motifs were identified and given an individual name by my informants, mostly the makers of the *lamak* themselves.

As can be seen from the drawings, (which, like the those of the *raka* patterns, are all made by I Gusti Putu Taman on the basis of my photographs), the designs often do not resemble the objects whose name they have been given. For example the lozenge pattern of figure 3.44 does not really resemble a cactus. On the other hand, the oval-shaped seeds of a cucumber can be recognized in both patterns of figures 3.57 and 3.58.

It appears also that sometimes different designs have been given the same name, as can be seen in the three versions of *comfang banggul*, bamboo staircase, in figures 3.71, 3.75 and 3.76. Sometimes one pattern has different names according to different informants, or one informant mentions more than one name for the same motif. For example figure 3.71 is called *poleng* and *comfang banggul*; or figure 3.46 is a representation of both a *kapu-kapu* or a *camplung* flower; or figure 3.53, according to *lamak* maker I Made Sadra, can be called both *kapu-kapu* and *kembang semanggi*. The pattern of figure 3.49 is called *mas-masan*, which according to I Made Sadra means "gold jewellery, used in a palace (*puri*)", but in fact it is also the name of a plant (the croton) which is often used in rituals, whereas another informant said this pattern was a *bunga tuung* (aubergine) or *kembang kopi* (flower of the coffee plant) when used by a non-noble family.

In some cases a pattern is a combination of two different designs, for example figure 3.52 shows a combination of the *kapu-kapu* flower (see also figs. 3.46 and 3.53) and *bunbung jangkrik*, cage of a cricket (see also fig. 3.12). Also the *timpasan* (knife) pattern is in the centre often combined with another motif, for example with the flower *candigara merpat* (fig. 3.74, see also fig. 3.55).

40 The author calls these shrines *panggungan*, but they must have been *sanggar tawang*.

41 I am aware of the fact that even if these motifs would all have names, these would not necessarily refer to the meaning of the patterns. Anthony Forge notes that when informants are asked about the 'meaning' of designs or patterns on objects, often "all the identifications are in terms of names". However, these are just referential labels, and give no information about 'meaning' (Forge 1979:279).

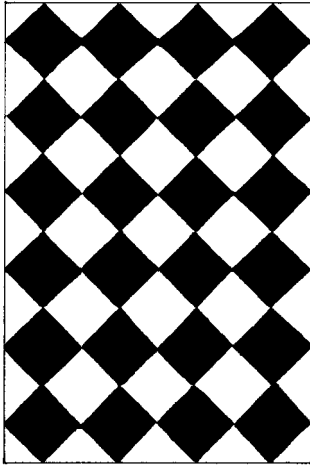


Figure 3.44: Beblatangan.

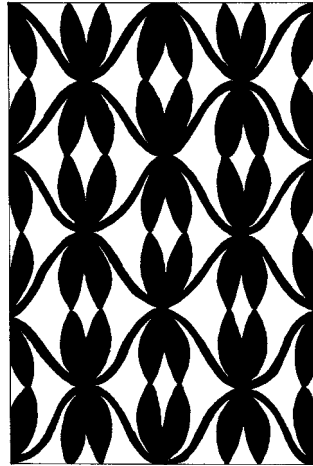


Figure 3.45: Pipis-pipisan.

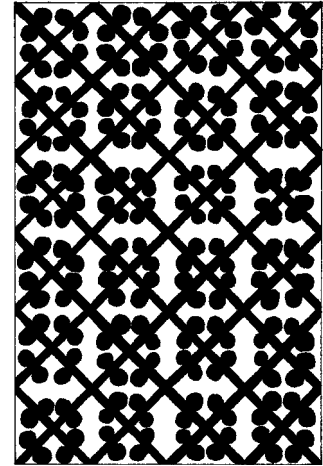


Figure 3.46: Bunga camplung  
or kapu-kapu kambing.

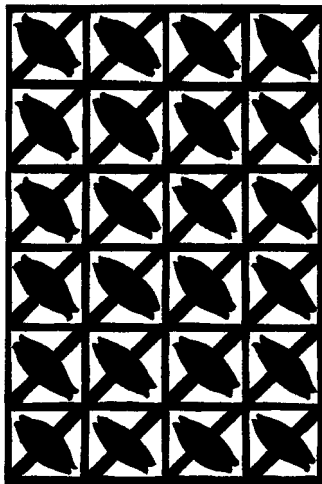


Figure 3.47: Batu nangka.

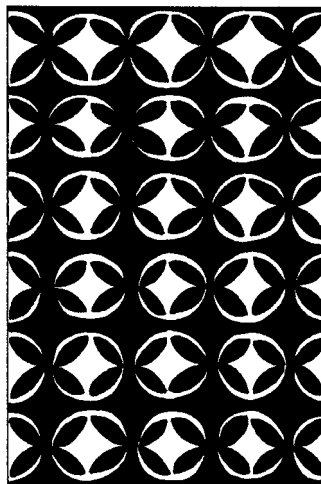


Figure 3.48: Batu nangka.



Figure 3.49: Kembang kopi,  
mas-masan or bunga tuung.

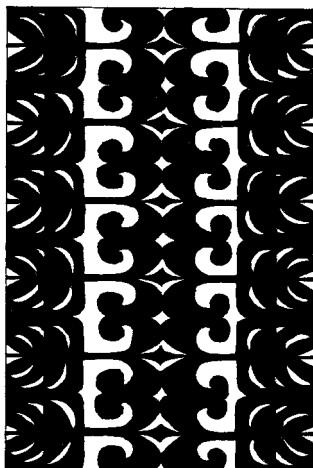


Figure 3.50: Don kayu sugih.

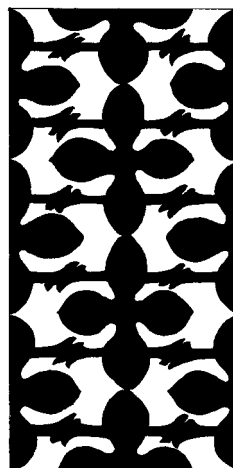


Figure 3.51: Kapu-kapu  
kambang.

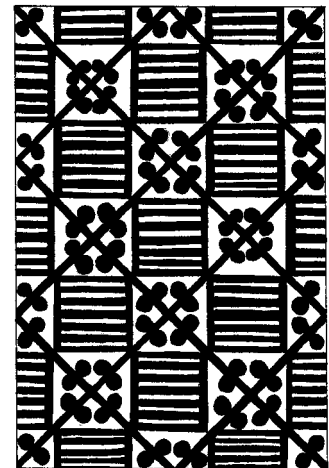


Figure 3.52: Kapu-kapu kambing  
or bungbung jangkrik.

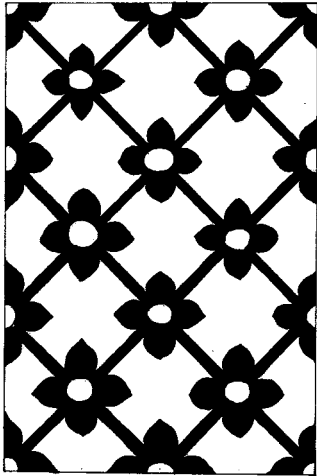


Figure 3.53: Kapu-kapu kembang or kembang semanggi.

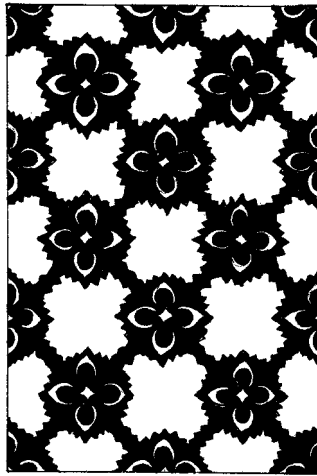


Figure 3.54: Candigara bunder.

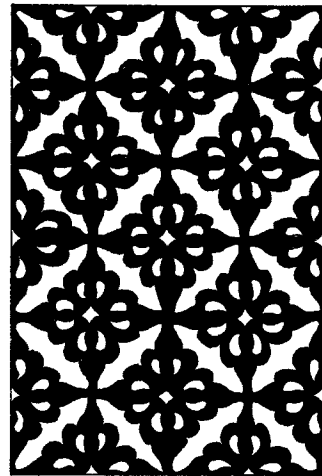


Figure 3.55: Candigara merpat.

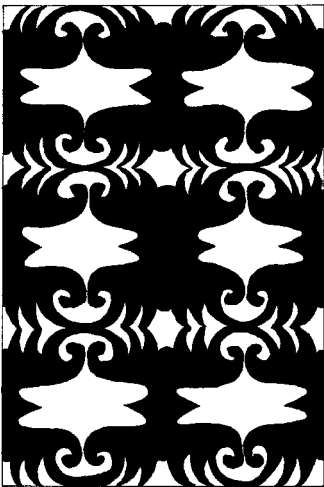


Figure 3.56: Kembang api.

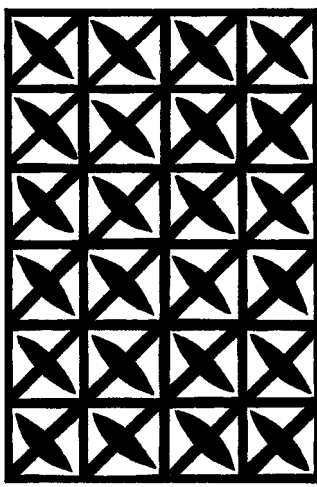


Figure 3.57: Batu ketimun.

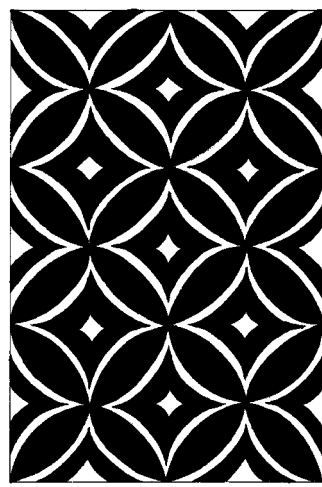


Figure 3.58: Batu ketimun.

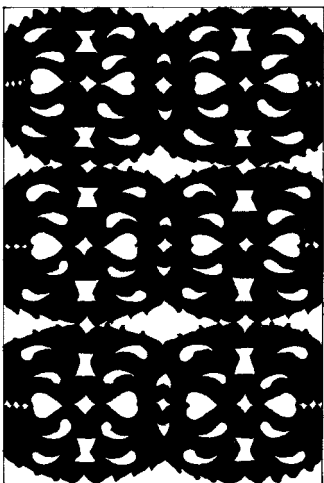


Figure 3.59: Batu poh.

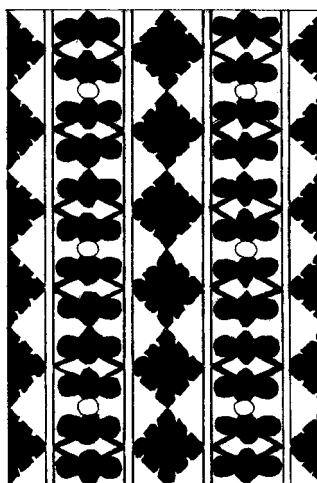


Figure 3.60: Kecita.

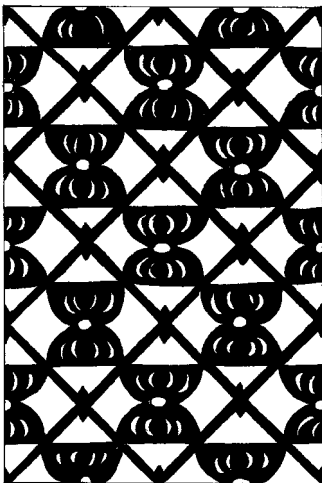


Figure 3.61: Bunga tuung.



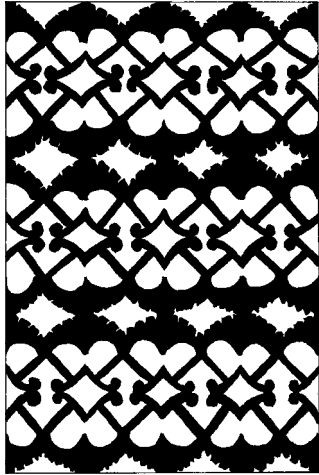


Figure 3.62: Kestetan don.

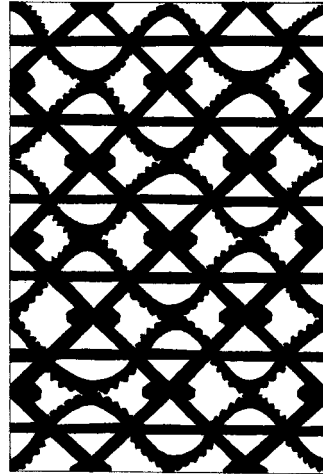


Figure 3.63: Don makurung.

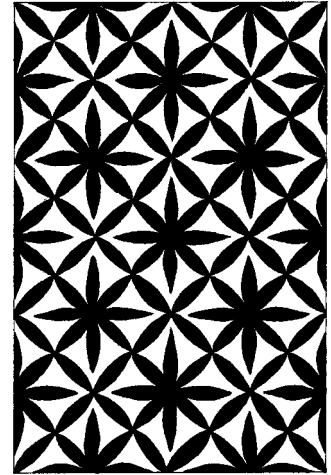


Figure 3.64: Enjekan siap.

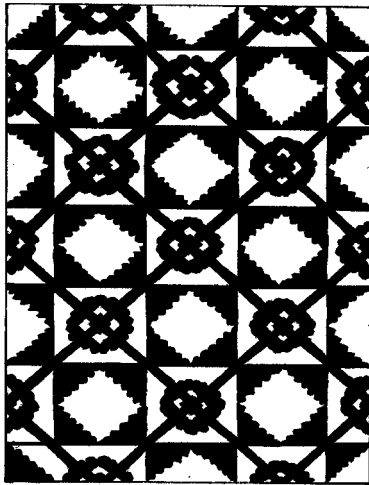


Figure 3.65: Enjekan cicing.



Figure 3.66: Kampid lawah.

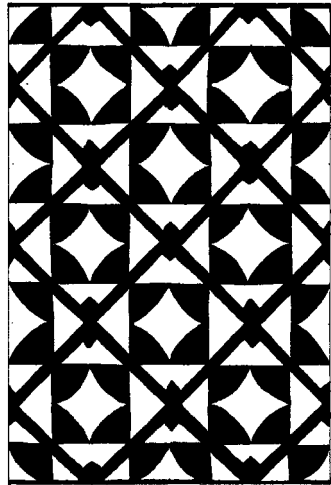


Figure 3.67: Dongkang.

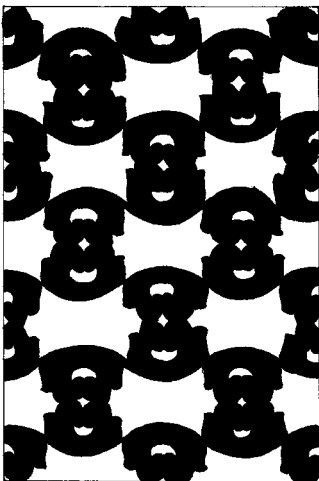


Figure 3.68: Taluh kakul.

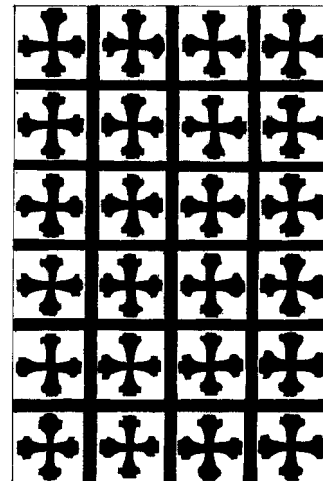


Figure 3.69: Songketan.

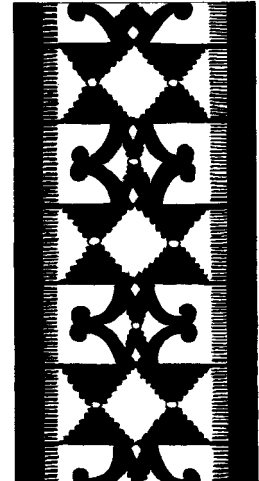


Figure 3.70: Corak.

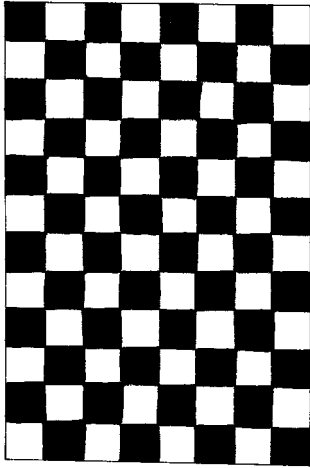


Figure 3.71: Poleng or compang banggul.

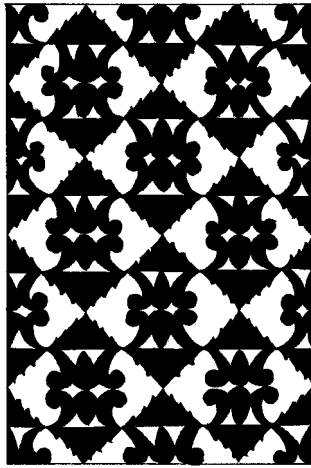


Figure 3.72: Coblong.

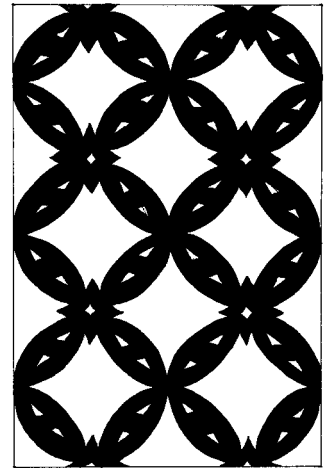


Figure 3.73: Coblong.



Figure 3.74: Timpasan.

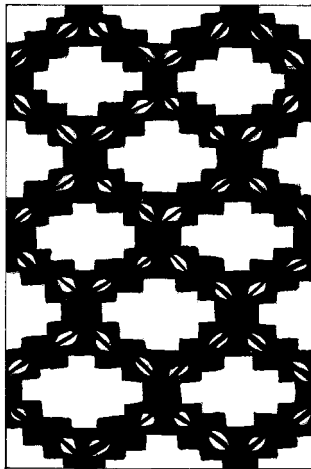


Figure 3.75: Compang banggul.

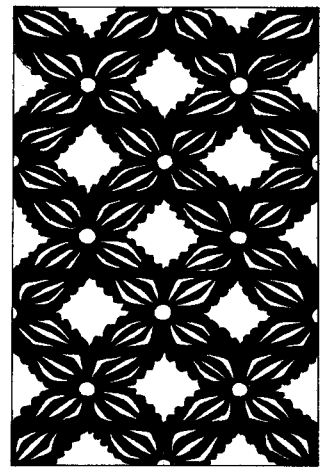


Figure 3.76: Compang banggul or lelegodan.

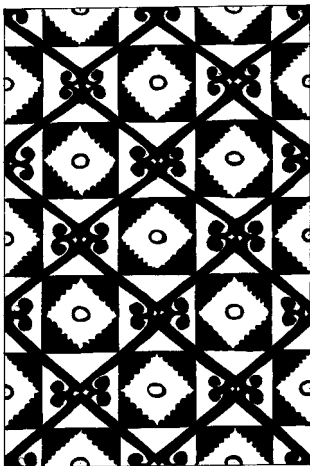


Figure 3.77: Jembung pongek, undag-undag or ponggang.

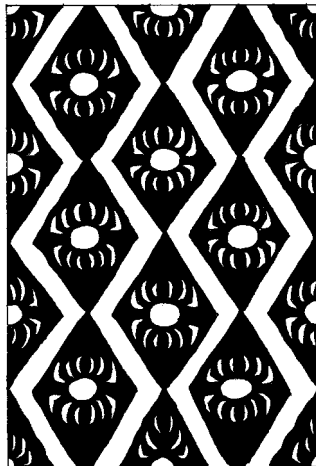


Figure 3.78: Cakup gula.

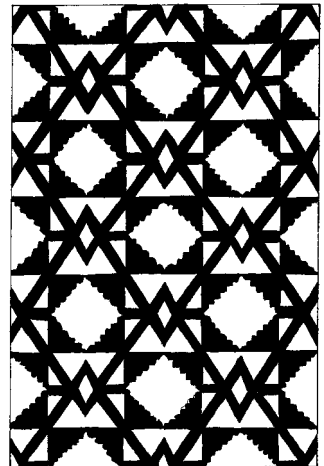


Figure 3.79: Kotak-kotak.

### 3.3.3.1 Categories of *ringgitan*

Balinese informants did not classify the *ringgitan* patterns, nor their names, into separate categories, as far as I could determine. But for reasons of convenience, in the list that follows, I present these *lamak* patterns by dividing them into five categories.<sup>42</sup>

#### 1. Plants and/or their fruits, seeds, flowers, leaves

**beblatungan:** cactus (fig. 3.44)

**pipis-pipisan:** plant with little round leaves (from *pipis*, coin) (fig. 3.45)

**bunga camplung:** flowers of the Borneo mahogany tree (or many other designations), *Calophyllum Inophyllum* (fig. 3.46)

**batu nangka:** seed of the jackfruit (figs. 3.47, 3.48)

**kembang kopi:** flower of the coffee plant (fig. 3.49)

**don kayu sugih:** leaf of a plant which is used as a green dye for rice sweets; also one of the most common sacred *plawa*<sup>43</sup> plants (fig. 3.50)

**kapu-kapu kembang:** water lettuce, an aquatic plant whose leaves float on the surface of the water, for example in wet rice fields (*Pistia stratiotes*) (figs. 3.46, 3.51-3.53)

**candigara** or **kanigara:** a kind of tree with yellow flowers, called by many names, including bayur tree (*Pterospermum acerifolium*). They exist in two versions: **candigara bunder**, with round flowers (fig. 3.54) and **candigara merpat**, with lozenge-shaped flowers (fig. 3.55)

**kembang semanggi:** flower of the *semanggi* plant, lawn marshpennywort (*Hydrocotyle sibthorpioides*) (fig. 3.53)

**kembang api:** flower of the *api* plant (*Tetracera scandens*) (fig. 3.56)

**batu ketimun:** seed of the cucumber (fig. 3.57, 3.58)

**batu pob:** seed of the mango (fig. 3.59)

**batu-batu:** seeds (fig. 3.12)

**ganggong:** a kind of seaweed, or a plant growing on riversides (fig. 3.14)

**padang:** kind of grass (fig. 3.11)

**kecita** (1): a climbing plant, found in the forests (fig. 3.60)

**bunga tuung:** flower of the aubergine plant (fig. 3.61)

**kesetan don:** leaf that is torn up (fig. 3.62)

**don makurung:** leaf that is enclosed (fig. 3.63)

**mas-masan** (1): croton, often used as sacred leaves (*plawa*), (*Codiaeum variegatum* Bl.) (fig. 3.49)

**akar-akaran:** roots (fig. 3.11).

#### 2. Patterns related to (parts of or characteristics of) animals

**enjekan siap:** footprint of a chicken (fig. 3.64)

**enjekan cicing:** footprint of a dog (fig. 3.65)

**kampid lawah:** wing of a bat (fig. 3.66)

**dongkang:** toad (fig. 3.67)

<sup>42</sup> In Balinese literature on decorative patterns (*ragam hias*) in general, or patterns on textiles in particular, these patterns are often grouped into geometric patterns associated with or representing plants (*tumbuh-tumbuhan*) in the form of flowers, leaves and fruits; animals (*binatang*); human beings (*manusia*) and geometric, repeating forms (*bangun berulang*) (e.g. Soedjatmoko & Damais 1993:19-21).

<sup>43</sup> See Chapter 2 for the use and significance of sacred leaves (*plawa*).

**taluh kakul:** egg of a snail (figs. 3.14, 3.68)  
**batis katak:** foot of a frog (fig. 3.13)  
**tingkang katak:** frog sitting with legs apart (fig. 3.10)  
**gigin barong:** teeth of a protective, mythical animal (fig. 3.13).

### 3. Textile terms

**kecita** (2) (possibly *kecit*): *cita* cloth, or cotton printed with flowers, chintz (fig. 3.60)  
**songketan:** brocade, cloth decorated with supplementary weft technique (fig. 3.69)  
**corak:** design, pattern; colour (of a cloth) (fig. 3.70)  
**poleng:** 'protective' woven cloth with black, grey and white squares (fig. 3.71).

### 4. Objects

**coblong:** little earthenware bowl (figs. 3.72, 3.73)  
**jembung pongek:** little bowl with serated edge (fig. 3.77)  
**timpasan:** kind of knife or ax, curved on one side (fig. 3.74)  
**kancing-kancing:** knot or button (fig. 3.9)  
**compang banggul:** notched bamboo ladder (figs. 3.12, 3.71, 3.75, 3.76)  
**undag-undag:** steps, staircase (fig. 3.77)  
**bunbung jangkrik:** cricket cage of bamboo (figs. 3.12, 3.52)  
**ringring:** curtain of palmleaves (fig. 3.12)  
**cakup gula:** two half balls of palm sugar, forming one whole together (fig. 3.78)  
**mas-masan** (2): gold jewellery, used in a palace (*puri*) (fig. 3.49).

### 5. Descriptions of the form of the pattern, or the way it is made

**cracap:** with a sharp point (fig. 3.11)  
**lelegodan:** with curves, meander (fig. 3.76)  
**ponggang:** with a split, or with many teeth (fig. 3.77)  
**kotak-kotak:** consisting of squares (fig. 3.79).

As noted at the beginning of this section, almost none of the *ringgitan* motifs listed above have their own specific meaning, symbolic or otherwise, other than the name attached to them. These names are just 'referential labels', as Anthony Forge (1979:279) formulated it. However my informants did attach meaning to the motifs in a more generic sense.

Combined with the representational motifs, as a totality the geometric motifs were said to be symbolic of everything that exists in the world. More specifically, they were said to represent vegetation (*tumbuh-tumbuhan*), especially plants that grow in water, the prerequisite for life. The association between water and life is further strengthened by the fact that most varieties of rice (the main food crop) in Bali grow in wet fields (*sawah*). Indeed the majority of identified motifs are related to plants, though only two actually have the name of a water plant, *kapu-kapu* and *ganggong*. But also flowers and seeds, representing fruits, are symbolic of the fruitfulness of the earth. And the leaves of the croton plant (*mas-masan*) are often used as sacred leaves (*plawa*).

Other than the association with plants, the connection between *lamak* patterns and textiles is the next most common interpretation. The *ringgitan* are either in general called *bebatikan* or *kain batik* (batik cloth, which is produced in Java but widely used in Bali as well), or only the bottom (usually longer) pattern is called *bebatikan*, or *kamben* (hip cloth, a long unsewn cloth, worn as a wrap-around cloth). Sometimes motifs are said to be “borrowed” from batik.

One pattern, called *poleng* (fig. 3.71), refers directly to the “protective” *poleng* cloth with black, grey and white squares, often used to wrap around statues in front of the gateway to a temple. Also, at times of ritual, certain shrines in a temple, for example the *pelinggih* for Ida Betara Ngurah, are decorated with *kain poleng*, and the *lamak* should then also contain a *poleng* pattern.<sup>44</sup> The bottom geometric motif of a *lamak* as a whole is sometimes called *pangawak* or ‘body’, referring to the main part of a textile which is called *badan* or body as well. The *umpal* at the top is also associated with textiles, since this term is also used for a “long piece of cloth, used to tie a hip cloth (*kamben*) around the body”. The *pangawak* cloth motif was then said to belong either specifically to the *cili* or informants indicated the relation between the cloth pattern on the *lamak* and the ritual function of a *lamak* as the clothing (*busana*) of a shrine.<sup>45</sup>

The *lamak* as a whole is surrounded by protective borders. The ‘motif with sharp points’ (*cracap*), protecting the content of the *lamak* at the very bottom, is called the ‘closing’ design (*penutup*), while the *umpal*, at the very top, is called the opening. The *bungbung jangkrik* pattern along the sides of a *lamak*, serving as a kind of frame or as a border around the centre, is also associated with closing, since a *bungbung* is a kind of cage. The *timpasan* or knife design has to be towards the bottom of the *lamak*, because of the protective qualities of a sharp knife. Also the sharp-pointed *gigin barong* pattern along the sides of the *lamak* are protective, since they refer to the teeth of a protective, mythical animal.

44 See also Chapter 4, section 4.4.1.6.

45 See also Chapter 4, section 4.4.3.

In relation to one purpose of a *lamak*, which, as explained in Chapter 2, is to show the deities the way to the offerings in the shrine, the motifs of ‘bamboo ladder’ (*compang banggul*, figs. 3.12, 3.71, 3.75, 3.76) and ‘staircase’ (*undag-undag*, fig. 3.77) are of special interest.<sup>46</sup>

One informant said that the *compang banggul* should always be placed at the bottom of the *lamak*. She did not know why this was the case, but since the *lamak* as a whole is by knowledgeable informants regarded as a medium between the upperworld and the world of human beings, maybe this motif and the *undag-undag* can be seen in this light as well. The *ceniga jan banggul* which in Karangasem acts as a ladder for the deified ancestors to leave the world of human beings at Kuningan, also has the connotation of climbing upwards (to heaven). However, as explained in Chapter 2, a *lamak* in Bali is not meant to act as an actual little ladder for spirits to climb downwards towards offerings which are placed on the ground, as Domenig (2014:222-226) suggests.

A few of these *ringgitan* patterns are also found in other forms of Balinese arts and crafts, such as textiles, architectural sculpture, carvings on temple walls, or gold- and silverwork.<sup>47</sup> Appearing most often in the literature on decorative patterns is the *mas-masan* (croton leaves) design, in a similar repeating lozenge shape as on the *lamak* (except for the singular triangular form called *mas-masan* in Ramseyer 1977:69). Sika (1983:77 and 160) presents examples of different varieties of *mas-masan*: *mas-masan daun* (leaf), *mas-masan telinga babi* (pig’s ear), *mas-masan kuping* (ear) (see also Gelebet 1985:349; Nik n.d.:7; Pameran 1991:13). Also *batu(n) ketimun* (cucumber seeds) is found frequently (Gelebet 1985:335; Soedjatmoko and Damais 1993:20; Pameran 1991:28; Nik n.d.:6); this motif is very similar to the *kawung* motif (fruit

46 Van der Tuuk 1897-1912:IV 1083: *banggul*, a bamboo pole with notches carved into it, used as a ladder [to climb] into the sugar palm tree (fig. 3.12, 3.71, 3.75, 3.76); Van der Tuuk 1897-1912:I 666: *compang*, notched.

47 Also representational motifs are found in, for example, architectural sculpture. Examples are the mountain (*gegunungan*) and tree (*kekayonan*) motifs (Gelebet 1985:389).



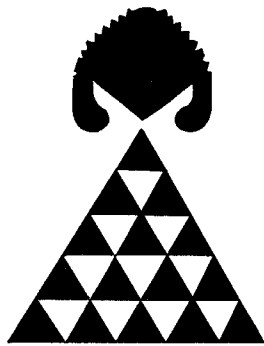


Figure 3.80: Combination of gunung and cili.

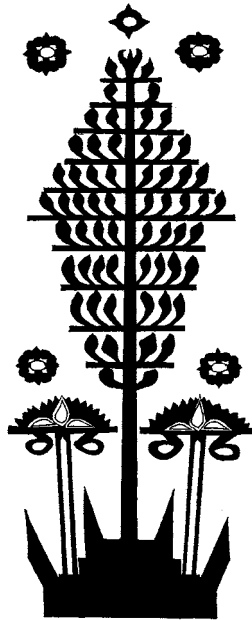


Figure 3.81: Mangong under tree.

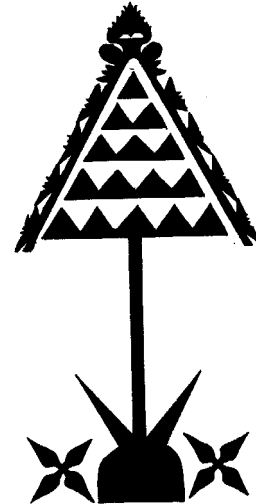


Figure 3.82: Combination of gunung and tree.



Figure 3.83: Mangong.

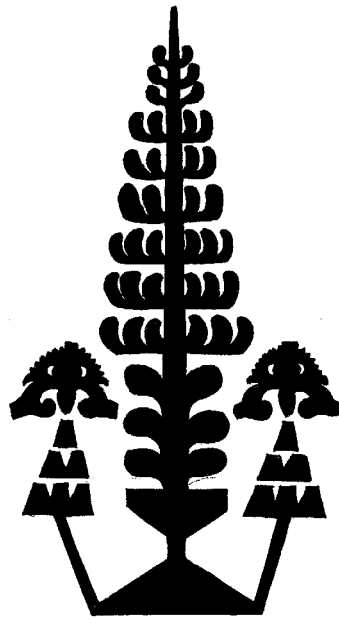


Figure 3.84: Combination of cili or mangong and tree.

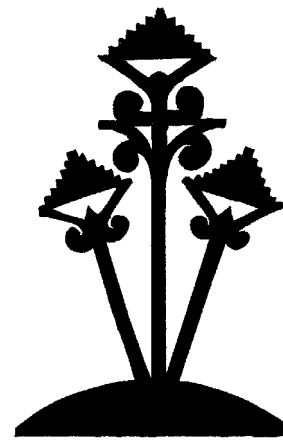


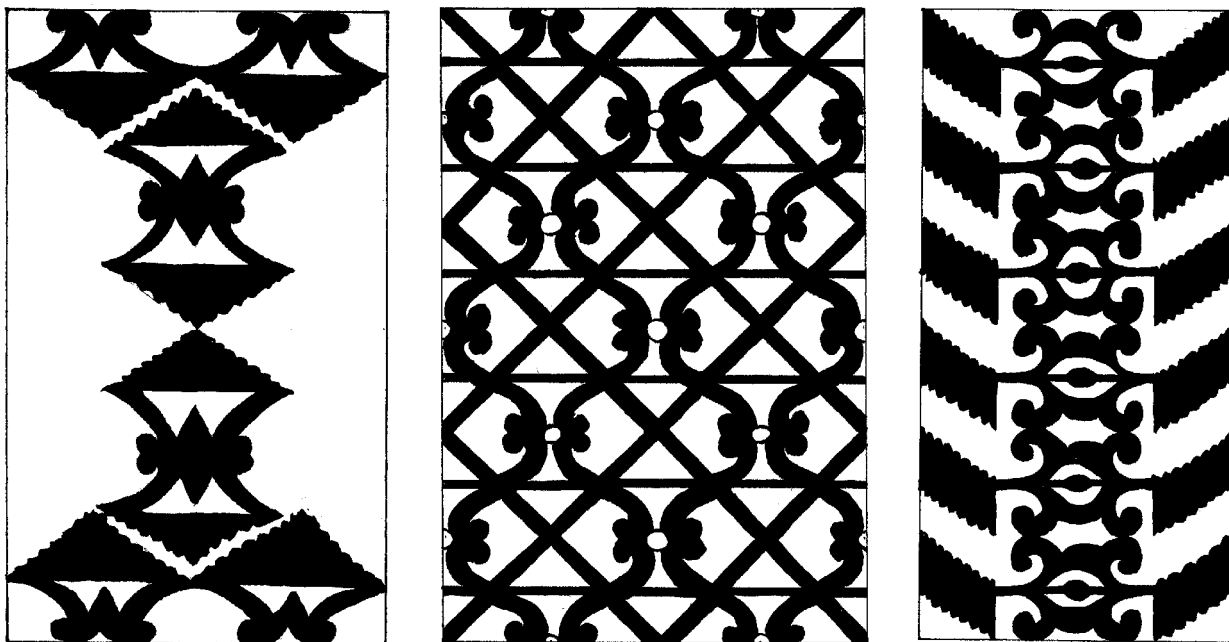
Figure 3.85: Cili and tree.

of the sugar palm) often used in Javanese batik patterns (Van der Hoop 1949:79). The form of the (*taluh*) *kakul* or *kakul-kakulan* ((eggs of) snail) pattern resembles more closely an actual snail's shell than the design on a *lamak* (Gelebet 1985:348; Nik n.d.:3; Sika 1983:79 and 139). Common also are the *gigin barong* (Pameran 1991:11; Soedjatmoko & Damais 1993:19; Sika 1983:160) and the *cracap* (Nik n.d.:6; Pameran 1991:11).

### 3.4 Relations within and among motifs

#### 3.4.1 Transformations and combinations within motifs

As discussed in this chapter, most Balinese informants consider the totality of the motifs on a *lamak* as a symbol of the world or cosmos, and most of the representational and geometric motifs as relat-



Figures 3.86-3.88: *Ringgitan*, composed of heads of *cili* or *mangong*.

ed to concepts of renewal or regeneration of life on earth. The mutual relationships among the various forms of life is central not only in their interpretations but can also be seen in the way the various patterns are constructed.<sup>48</sup>

The basic components of most of the representational motifs on a *lamak* are the square, circle and triangle. In the motifs of Mother Earth (*ibu*), sun or moon and mountain, these components are shown in their basic forms: *ibu* is a square consisting of four triangles, the sun and moon are circles, and the mountain is a triangle, often consisting of numerous smaller ones. The other two most common representational motifs, the *cili* and the tree, contain these basic components as well, although augmented with additional decoration.

The triangle, circle and square are in Bali sometimes related to the Sang Hyang Tiga Wisesa or Trimurti, the gods Brahma, Wisnu and Siwa, who respectively create, maintain and destroy the universe and are responsible for the continuous rotation of the cycles of life. According to Mershon, who in the 1930s received many insights into Balinese cosmology and cosmogony from Ida

Pedanda Made Sidemen (Sanur), in the beginning of time, Father Sky was married to Mother Earth (*Ibu Pertiwi*). Her form is a square, and the form of her husband is a circle enclosing a square. The form of Wisnu (lord of water) is a circle and of Brahma (lord of fire) a triangle (Mershon 1971:33).

Not only can the representational motifs be seen as transformations of forms associated with the deities of life, they are also often combinations of one another, as is shown in the figures. The following combinations are most common.

*Ibu* and *cili*: the *cili*'s body is an *ibu*, the bottom triangle developing into her skirt, whereas the upper arms form the sides of the square (fig. 3.27).

*Sun* and *moon* and *cili*: the head of the *cili* has a shape similar to a half moon or half sun (fig. 3.28).

*Mountain* and *cili*: the body of the *cili*, especially her long skirt, has the form of the mountain (fig. 3.27); the *cili* has a mountain-shaped head-dress (fig. 3.27), or she bears a mountain-shaped offering on her head. Sometimes the mountain motif has a top piece in the form of the head of a *cili* (fig. 3.80), or the way the erupting volcano is visualized reminds one of the fanshaped headdress and earrings of a *cili* (fig. 3.22).

*Ibu* and *mountain*: the *ibu* consists of triangles within a square (fig. 3.20).

48 In Chapter 4 various forms of symmetry in the structure of the patterns will be discussed in more detail.

*Moon and mountain:* the half moon or *bulan sibak* motif often is combined with two mountains (fig. 3.18).

*Moon and tree:* in the *bulan tunjuk* motif the moon is combined with a tree or plant (a large sunflower with branches and leaves) (fig. 3.19).

*Mountain and tree:* the tree is either depicted on top of a little mountain (figs. 3.81, 3.24, 3.25) or the mountain has a trunk and branches like a tree (fig. 3.82).

*Cili and tree:* The combinations of *cili* and *tree* occur most often. The *cili* is very often visualized with flowers or little trees on her head (figs. 3.29, 3.31) or with leaves or flowers sprouting from her arms (fig. 3.28). Her body, wrapped in a textile with floral patterns, is rooted firmly in the earth, and it usually has two sidesprouts like a tree (figs. 3.29, 3.30). In the *mangong* both forms are combined (figs. 3.33, 3.83) and these figures are found also underneath a tree (figs. 3.81, 3.84), as branches of a tree (figs. 3.84, 3.85), or on top of a tree or mountain, like a kind of head (figs. 3.85, 3.82).

The head of the *mangong* is also one of the most frequently used elements in the geometric motifs (figs. 3.86, 3.87 and 3.88; see also figs. 3.61-3.63).

All these combinations and transformations of the main motifs support the interpretation attached to them by the Balinese themselves, that the *ibu* (representing the land), the mountain, and the sun and moon form the preconditions for life on earth; together they bring forth the life cycles of human beings and vegetation which are closely related and mutually dependent.

### 3.4.2 Vertical ordering as representation of the Three Worlds

Not only do many Balinese interpret the different motifs on a *lamak* as symbols of life, or as the different elements of the Creation, but they also interpret the relative positions of the motifs within one *lamak* in relation to one another.

Most informants agreed that the *cili*, representing human life, belongs in the centre of a (larger) *lamak*, in the middle world, between the sun and vegetation motifs. As Ida Pedanda Gede Oka Timbul said, "In a *lamak* is represented the natural environment (*lingkungan hidup*). There is always a *cili*, that is the human being; a tree, this is life, and then the moon

and the stars. In fact, all five elements are represented, not simply one by one, but in relation to one another. For example a human being lives by means of air, a tree grows from water and earth, Pertiwi" (pers. com. 26/4/1987). He also related the main motifs of a *lamak* to the three worlds (*trimandala*): the mountains (*gunung*), human world (*bumi*) and the sea (*laut*) (pers. com. 13/4/2014).

Also Ida Pedanda Wayan Jelantik Singharsa (Budakeling, pers. com. 12/6/2015) said that the motifs on a *lamak* represent the three worlds, Akasa, Madyapada and Pertiwi: Sky, Middle world and Earth. According to him, also the different *lamak catur* on the *sanggar tawang* shrine represent this structure, whereby the left compartment, dedicated to Wisnu in the North and decorated with a black cloth has a *lamak* with a mountain motif. The right compartment with a red cloth and a *lamak* with a sea motif is for Brahma in the South. The relation between mountain and sea is similar to that between Sky and Earth, and North and South.

I Made Windia (Sanur) (pers. com. 30/11/1987) gave a similar kind of interpretation for the combination of three or four *lamak* on one structure, like the *panggungan* or *pangubengan* shrines, each with different details of the motifs. He said that the *lamak* in the east should contain the image of the sun, since this is the direction of sunrise, and the beginning of life, associated with fire and the upperworld; in the opposite direction, the west, is the location of water, the mouth of a river, connected to a mythical serpent, *naga* (similar to the symbolism of the *penjor*, as was explained in Chapter 2) and associated with the underworld, so this is the place for the tree motif. And the *cili*, being a human being (*manusia*) should be placed in the middle world, between east and west, or between upper and underworld.

Like the other informants, Ida Wayan Jelantik, *klian adat* of Budakeling (Karangasem) (pers. com. 25/4/2014), explained that "all motifs on a *lamak* are a symbol of the world, the creation of God, that is fertility and happiness (*syukuran*). Just as all fruits are born from the earth, the *lamak* itself is made from the earth. All flower motifs represent plants, growing out from the water." According to him, the mountain motif itself represents three worlds because "there are three kinds of mountains: the islands in the sea, the hills in the villages, and the mountains outside and above the world where humans live".

Dayu Putri, Gria Karang, Budakeling (pers. com. 30/4/2014), who is a *tukang banten* (offering specialist) and teacher at a primary school, mentioned that a *lamak* always represents three parts of the natural environment: at the top end the mountain with stars next to the summit, the *ringgitan* or *batikan* in the middle are the plants (*tumbuhan*), and the pointed motif at the bottom she called *akar-akaran*, roots. Moreover, according to her, as base of offerings the *lamak* itself is part of the so-called *Bhur – Bhuah – Suah* tripartite structure of Balinese cosmology: the top (or *Suah*, heaven) part of a *lamak* acts as base (*bhur*) for an offering whose fruits (*buah*) belong to the *Bhuah*, *Madya* or middle world, and whose *sampian*, the crowning top piece of palm leaf, belongs to the *Suah loka*, the world of the deities. In principle any *lamak*, also the ones with one decorative pattern only, has a threefold structure. The top is the empty space on top of which an offering is placed, the largest, middle section has the main motif, and the bottom is always formed by a separate pointed *cracap* motif.

But it is not only specialists in religious matters who discuss the *lamak* as representing a cosmological, vertical structure. The interpretations of the motifs by *lamak* makers themselves (of which examples have been given at the beginning of this chapter) time and again reflected the idea of life flowing downwards from the abode of the gods in the sky or on top of the mountain. I Made Kuduk (pers. com. 29/3/2016) from Budakeling, who as a silversmith does not make *lamak* but is generally interested in the meaning of motifs, pointed out that the motifs on a *lamak* are structured from top to bottom, because a *lamak* always hangs down. The protective sharp points at the bottom (figs. 3.11, 3.38) he interpreted as sharp pieces of coral in the sea, which protect the shores of the island of Bali. Women learning the skill of making *lamak* also learn about this vertical structure as being basic.<sup>49</sup> However, although as narrow hanging object any *lamak* has a vertical structure, nowadays a strict three-part division is not always maintained. Sometimes the bottom part in the form of the geometrical *ringgitan* patterns or the

motif of the sharp points are lacking, as I noticed on some recent examples of *lamak* in use or sold in Karangasem (figs. 4.87, 5.8, 5.9).

According to I Gusti Ketut Kaler (1983:92), in Balinese cosmology *hulu* means the direction considered to have high or eminent value, whereas *teben* is the direction with low value. *Hulu* is related to *kaja* and *teben* to *kelod*. In the topographical classification system, upstream or the direction towards the mountains (*kaja*) is more sacred, more closely related to the upper world than the direction towards the sea, downstream (*kelod*) which is more earthly and profane. These structures are also related to the *triangga* that constitutes the structure of the body, which also reflects the value system of high to low. Not only does the human body have this tripartite structure, whereby the head has a higher value than body and feet, but also for example a *lamak* “reflects the *triangga*, in having sections representing head, body and legs” (Kaler 1983:90). The human body, as *buana alit* (microcosm), not only is composed of the same five basic elements, Panca Maha Bhuta, but has basically the same structure as the *buana agung* (macrocosm). Both *buana alit* and *buana agung* have a vertical structure. In the *buana agung* the ‘feet’ are *Bhur loka*: the lower world (*nista*), the material world, vegetation, and lower forms of animal life; the ‘body’ is *Bhuah loka* (*madya*): the world of human beings; and *Swah loka* (*utama*) is the world of the Gods (Kaler 1983:91).<sup>50</sup>

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Arya Utara Wungsu (alias I Gusti Ketut Kaler) explained that for a temple festival (*odalan*), *lamak* are suspended from each shrine in such a way that the *lamak* hangs down from the opening of the shrine.

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as child of transmigrant parents. She thought that the motifs would probably contain plants and mountain and an “upper part”. And her husband agreed, it is always “*dari hulu ke teben*”, he said. Another informant said that her grandmother taught her that when making *lamak* one had to start with the uppermost motif, which she called the ‘head’, *kepala*, and then the geometric *ringgitan* underneath the *kepala*, and the *penutup* or closing motif at the bottom.

50 In many places in Indonesia one encounters a three-layered cosmos, consisting of a middle realm where human beings live and an upper world and underworld, the domains of spirits, ancestors and deities (see for example Schefold 2013:25-26).

49 For example Ni Wayan Santi, the young wife of I Ketut Teja Astawa, an artist from Sanur, had to learn how to make a *lamak* because she had always lived in Palembang,

And precisely this space is the temporary residence of the gods. It forms as it were within our world a 'pocket' of the upper world, *Suah loka*, the world of the gods. During a temple festival, the gods are asked to come down from their world and instil their gift of energy, power and life into our world, the middle world, *Bhuah loka*, with all its contents; and also into the lower world, *Bhur loka*, with all its life and objects. And he continued, by means of a question: if this is the symbolism and the meaning of the *lamak*, how does this relate to the form of the *lamak*, especially the larger ones? His answer is that "it has a form which represents a symbol of a *lamak* as an intermediary or as steps connecting the three worlds: Tri loka/Bhur-Bhuah-Swah.[...] The ordering and motifs on a *lamak* reflect the ordering and the contents of the three worlds" (Wungsu 1979).

### 3.5 Conclusion

As has been discussed in Chapter 2, a *lamak* is regarded as a bridge, path or staircase between the worlds of deities and humans, between heaven and earth.

As a base for offerings and decoration of shrines, a *lamak* is according to the Balinese an invitation, a sign of welcome for deities, ancestors, spirits and other invisible beings. The *lamak* shows the way to the shrines, where the offerings are. The intended effect is that the offerings are accepted by the deities and that in return their heavenly gifts or blessings, prosperity and protection, will "flow down" to the earth via the *lamak*. Since the purpose of a *lamak* is to attract invisible beings, and to let their blessings come down from heaven to earth via the *lamak*, what then is the connection with the many different motifs applied on a *lamak*?

The blessings consist of everything necessary for the continuous renewal of life on earth, and the regeneration of nature: the rays of the sun, water, fertile soil, in order for vegetation to grow, that can be used and consumed by human beings. Similarly, the base of a *lamak* is said to be the empty earth on

which the creation is depicted (re-created) in the form of the various motifs.

The main content (*raka*) motifs carried by the *lamak* are called Sun and Moon, Mother Earth, Mountain, Tree and Human being. The main geometric *ringgitan* are related to plants and vegetative life. As many informants explained: "all are symbols of life" (*semua lambang kehidupan*), or "all are the contents of the world" (*semua lambang alam semesta*).

In the particular case of the *lamak nganten*, suspended at Galungan in front of a house where in the previous year a wedding has taken place, the blessings are directed to new life generated by the bridal couple, who are depicted in the motif of the *cili nganten*. The figure of the *cili* itself represents human life and fertility, in relation to past and future generations.

The interrelationships between the different forms of life are expressed through the relative position of the different motifs on one *lamak* or on the various *lamak* belonging to one shrine, like the *lamak catur*. Also in the composition of the motifs, and in the combinations of (parts of) various motifs, these interrelationships of all forms of life are made visible. Their ordering or relative position on a *lamak*, from the *umpal*, the 'opening' at the top, to the *cracap*, the protective sharp points at the bottom, reflects the vertical structure of the universe in which everything within the world is structured from top to bottom, from upper world to lower world, heaven to earth, head to feet, mountain to sea. So within the vertical structure of the *lamak*, the motifs are explained as part of a cosmic totality in which life and fertility are seen as flowing downwards from above. *Lamak* motifs give an image of the world as it is perceived by the Balinese, and which, through divine blessings from above, they hope will continue to sustain them.

Not only does the *lamak* itself, as ritual object, mediate between human and divine worlds but also its motifs strengthen its purpose of exchange between these worlds.





Figs. 3.89-3.90: Two lamak illustrate the vertical ordering of motifs: from top to bottom, representational raka, respectively cili and tree, then geometrical ringgitan patterns and the protective cracap at the bottom. Banjar Sigaran, Jegu, 30/81989; Banjar Tebesaya, Peliatan, 8/12/1987.





Figure 4.1: I Made Sadra fastens (*masang*) a *kekayonan* motif onto the base layer of his *lamak nganten*. Banjar Padangtegal Kaja, Ubud, 3/5/1983.



Figure 4.2: I Made Sadra fastens *lamak nganten* sections to one another (*magabung*). Banjar Padangtegal Kaja, Ubud, 4/5/1983.