

EKADASA RUDRA CEREMONY IN 1963 AND 1979: POWER RELATION ISSUE IN BALI

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the enactment of Ekadasa Rudra ceremony in 1963 and 1979 in Pura Agung Besakih, Karangasem, Bali. As the greatest Balinese Hindu ceremony held once in a century, the events were substantial and nationally widespread. The noted events in Indonesian history were in 1963 and 1979, it means that the spatial period was less than twenty years. That problem is an interesting topic to discuss. The discussion uses theory of power relation by Foucault and principle in historical research by Kuntowijoyo, these are determining topic, heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The analysis conducts from explaining each moment of Ekadasa Rudra in both years, then the analysis goes on into the discussion of applying theory of power relation to answer the research question.

Keywords: *Ekadasa Rudra, ceremony, Bali, power relation*

INTRODUCTION

The religious ceremony is a substantial element carried out every day by the Balinese Hindu people. Enlightenment in Balinese Hinduism can be obtained by three ways: teaching religious philosophy, teaching ethics, and holding ceremony. Ceremony helps and makes humans easily connect to Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa. ¹Basically, humans have *Tri Rna* (three debts) since they are born, and the religious ceremony is used to pay those debts. *Tri Rna* consists of *Dewa Rna*, *Pitra Rna*, and *Rsi Rna*. *Ekadasa Rudra* is one of the ceremonies carried out in Bali. It is included in *Dewa Rna*.² *Ekadasa Rudra*, whose meaning comes from the term *Ekadashi* or one hundred, is carried out once in one hundred years. This spectacular ritual must be held on the slope of Mount Agung in Karangasem Regency, right at the greatest Balinese Hindu temple, Pura Agung Besakih.

¹ Sukarsa, Made. *Biaya Upacara Manusia Bali*. (Denpasar: Arti Foundation, 2009) pp. 16.

² Nova, Ketut Agus. “Upacara Pecaruan Dalam Eksistensi Agama Hindu (Bentuk, Fungsi, Makna)”, in *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Hindu*, (2020).

Ekadasa Rudra ceremonies which had been noted in Indonesian history were in 1963 and 1979. The ceremony in 1963 was carried out after its absence for about four hundred years. Surely, the ritual must be based on the accurate Balinese calendar system. It was decided that March 1963 was the right time to start the ritual. Many governmental stakeholders were involved since this is a very important ceremony for Balinese Hindus. It was considered as a national moment, and it had impacts on tourism too as in the 1960's Bali was developed to be the potential tourism sector.³ The developing tourism sector was marked by the establishment of Bali Beach Hotel and an international airport in Tuban, Kuta.

Before carrying out *Ekadasa Rudra*, there was a *Panca Wali Krama* ceremony. *Panca Wali Krama* means purification and the final purification is on *Ekadasa Rudra*. The moment leading to *Panca Wali Krama* held in 1960 was about the false attitude toward Pura Agung Besakih. There was an issue of so-called *tumbal* planted in padmasana in Pura Penataran Agung (a part of Pura Agung Besakih). The small purification then was held; however, it was considered insufficient because the *tumbal* was something dangerous in Balinese Hindu belief. Moreover, the *tumbal* had been put in the holiest place of Balinese Hindus, that is Pura Agung Besakih. Therefore, a bigger purification was needed, and that was *Panca Wali Krama*.⁴

Panca Wali Krama in 1960 was followed by *Ekadasa Rudra* in March 1963. At that time, Mount Agung started to erupt. Despite the eruption, the great *Ekadasa Rudra* was still carried out. It consisted of a series of rituals, starting from March 8th, 1963, to March 17th, 1963. Therefore, the series of ceremonies were executed under the shower of ashes and small-scale earthquakes. Since Pura Agung Besakih is close to Mount Agung, the effects of the eruption could impact the ceremonies. Despite those conditions, *Ekadasa Rudra* was still attended by thousands of people, and it was nationally widespread. There were important guests from the provincial government and Jakarta. Actually, the former Indonesian President, Sukarno, was invited too. However, he was represented by General Ahmad Yani.⁵

On March 21st, 1963, the eruption came to its final moment, right on *Galungan* Day. It was considered as a bad sign for Balinese Hindu belief. Furthermore, in the following years,

³ Vickers, Adrian. *Bali: A Paradise Created*. (Turtle Publishing, 2012). pp. 247.

⁴ Stuart-Fox, David J. *Pura Besakih: A Study of Balinese Religion and Society* (Australian National University, 1987). pp. 380-381.

⁵ David J. Stuart-Fox, 1987. p. 386.

1965-1966, the tragedy of assassination by the Indonesian Communist Party happened, and Bali got huge effects as hundred people were killed. The purification event which hoped to cleanse the bad vibes during pre, and post-Indonesian independence was considered failed due to the wrong estimation of D-day. In short, *Ekadasa Rudra* 1963 did not bring peace and prosperity to Bali.

The decision to the following *Ekadasa Rudra* 1979 was based on the Balinese Hindu leaders in Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia. There was a new finding that the right time for *Ekadasa Rudra* was actually in 1979. The turning one hundred years in the Saka calendar system (Balinese calendar system) was in 1900 Saka or 1979 AD. Therefore, *Ekadasa Rudra* 1963 was more strongly considered false in calculating the best day for its execution.

The interesting topic to discuss in this research is the moment time of *Ekadasa Rudra* itself. The ritual is once in one hundred years. However, it was carried out twice in a period of less than twenty years. *Ekadasa Rudra* 1963 was held after four hundred years of absence. The estimation and consideration of picking the right day were blurry, due to too long absence. On the other hand, the estimation and all preparation involved various stakeholders; those were religious leaders, and the government from the lowest to the highest position. As the greatest Balinese Hindu ceremony, surely it became a national issue. However, finally, it was considered failed in its estimation. The new finding was that 1979 was the right time for *Ekadasa Rudra*.

The discussion will be analyzed using the theory of power by Michael Foucault. According to Foucault, the proposition of power consists of:

1. Power does not belong to things that can be obtained, achieved, used, or something that can be grasped or shared. Power cannot be inherited, nor can it become extinct; it must be practiced in everyday life and its nature is always changing.
2. Power is not a hierarchical structural relationship. Power is not based on groups that control and those who are controlled. Power is everywhere and comes from everywhere.
3. Power comes from below. In power, there is no longer the distinction of binary opposition because power includes both.
4. Power relations are intentional and non-subjective.
5. Where there is power, there is anti-power (resistance).⁶

⁶ Siregar, Mangihut. *Kritik Terhadap Teori Kekuasaan-Pengetahuan Foucault* (JUISPOL: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Politik, Universitas Wijaya Kusuma Surabaya, 2021).

In implementing power, discourse plays a role in it. Discourse, according to Foucault, is an explanation, definition, classification, and thought about people, moreover, it is a knowledge related to power relation.⁷ Power can be stimulated by discourse. Every discourse has relations connected to each other for discourse can connect to knowledge and power relation behind the discourse. Each discourse relates to the power behind and cannot be separated from the power relation behind which is the product of power practice.⁸ (Wijaya, 2016). All discourse has resulted from power, but discourse is not below power. Discourse can be used to either run the power smoothly or resist the power. The issue of power relations can be used to analyze the moment of *Ekadasa Rudra* which was held twice in less than twenty years. That great ritual certainly involved power from stakeholders in all positions and interests.

There are several previous research that inspires the researcher to make an analysis. The first research comes from an article by Nyoman Wijaya. He discusses the credibility of foreign researchers in describing Balinese political identities. In his research, he explains the event *Ekadasa Rudra* 1963 through some theories. He also explains some foreigners' research findings which he thinks are inaccurate. Therefore, he presents the new finding about the factor regarding *Ekadasa Rudra*'s 1963 enactment.

The next inspiring research is by David J. Stuart Fox analyzing Balinese religion and society through the Pura Besakih point of view. He explains in detail Balinese Hindu roles, the temple's functions, Balinese traditional customs, and the biggest temple Pura Agung Besakih. From all that research, surely this study has differences. This study analyzes the *Ekadasa Rudra* ceremony in 1963 and 1979 by one theory, that is power relation theory by Michel Foucault. Therefore, the research is presented differently and so is its result.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is historical research based on Kuntowijoyo's concepts, which are: 1) Determining the topic, 2) Selecting Source/ heuristics, 3) Verifying the sources, 4) Interpreting,

⁷ Mangihut Siregar, 2021.

⁸ Wijaya, Nyoman. *Questioning the Credibility of Foreign Researchers' Findings in Respect of Identity Politics of Balinese People*. (International Research Journal of Management, IT and Social Sciences, 2016).

and 5) Historiography.⁹ The object of this research is Ekadasa Rudra Ceremony in 1963 and 1979. The data used in this research are of two types, primary and secondary data. The primary data are the supporting documents reporting the moment of the *Ekadasa Rudra* Ceremony. While the secondary data are articles and other supporting data related to the theory used. The collected data are selected based on criticizing their credibility and chronology. The next step is interpreting based on analysis and synthesis. Analysis means applying theory and combining it with various data from other sources related. This research will analyze why *Ekadasa Rudra* Ceremony was held in 1963 and 1979 using the theory of power relations by Foucault. The last step is writing the research report based on chronological and diachronic aspects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ekadasa Rudra is a Balinese Hindu ceremony held once in one hundred years. Based on the concept of *Tri Rna*, *Ekadasa Rudra* includes *Dewa Rna*. *Dewa Rna* means paying debts to Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa, *Dewa* (Gods), and *Butha* (demons) by holding *Dewa Yadnya* and *Butha Yadnya* ceremonies. *Butha Yadnya* ceremony is divided into three levels: *Masegeh*, *Mecaru*, and *Metawur*. As *Ekadasa Rudra* is purifying the whole of nature, it is included in *Mecaru/ Pecaruan* which means healing ceremony to return into harmonization in *sekala* (something visible) and *niskala* (something invisible). *Pecaruan* ritual is divided into two types: *Pecaruan Palemahan* and *Pecaruan Sasih*. *Ekadasa Rudra* is in *Pecaruan Sasih*. *Pecaruan Sasih* is the ritual based on *sasih* (Balinese lunar system). In *Pecaruan Sasih*, there are three ceremonies: *Tawur Sasih Kesanga*, *Tawur Panca Wali Krama*, and *Tawur Ekadasa Rudra*.¹⁰ *Ekadasa Rudra* is performed in Pura Agung Besakih, the central Balinese Hindu temple. *Ekadasa Rudra* derives from the Sanskrit expression for eleven, *eka dasa*. The ceremony intends to pacify evil represented as Rudra, the stormy side of Siwa. Rudra, translated as “howler,” is a god who represents wildness. The ceremony is often represented as an exorcism, in which evil, incarnate as Rudra, is driven to the 11 (*eka dasa*) directions of space- the four cardinal points of the compass, the four intercardinal points, up, down, and center.” In essence,

⁹ Kuntowijoyo. *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2013)

¹⁰ Ketut Agus Nova, 2020.

Ekadasa Rudra attempts to strike a balance between the positive and negative energies of Siwa.¹¹ The purification ritual aims to balance all nature aspects.

As the greatest ceremony in Balinese Hindu, the discussion cannot be separated from where *Ekadasa Rudra* took place, that is Bali. During 1920's and 1930's, the image of Bali as the island of paradise really reached its peak, as the Dutch government began promoting Bali as a tourist destination. In the 1950s, the image of Bali as paradise became more fixed. The former President of Indonesia, Sukarno, was half-Balinese. Therefore, he paid much attention to Balinese culture. President Sukarno promoted Bali to his colleagues from overseas.

Ekadasa Rudra in 1963

There was more than one version of why *Ekadasa Rudra* was enacted in 1963. *Ekadasa Rudra* was initiated by a king from Klungkung, Dewa Agung.¹² It was probably set up for political motion which ensured his position as the figure of traditional Bali. Nevertheless, there was a version becoming the primary reason for this research. It comes from two figures, David J. Stuart-Fox and Nyoman Wijaya. David J. Stuart-Fox is an anthropologist from Australian National University who did research in Bali in 1987. He focused on researching Pura Agung Besakih. In his research, he explained that before *Ekadasa Rudra*, there was *Panca Wali Krama*, in order to cleanse bad vibes because of the *tumbal* set in the area of Pura Agung Besakih. The *tumbal* came from Eyang Gusti Aji, a Javanese Hindu figure who had the mission of spreading Hinduism on Java Island. The *tumbal* (a magical/metaphysics object) was buried behind *padmasana*, at Pura Penataran Agung (a smaller part of Pura Agung Besakih). That incident triggered a reaction from governments and the House of Representatives. Therefore, the *tumbal* had been successfully removed and returned to its owner on November 1st, 1959. The unhealthy atmosphere due to strange magical things put in led to a cleansing ritual, that was *Panca Wali Krama*, initiated by the head of the Office of Religious Affairs, Ida Bagus Gede (later he became Pedanda Gede Manuaba from Griya Sedawa, Gianyar). As a result, *Panca Wali Krama* was enacted on April 11th, 1960. The idea of holding *Ekadasa Rudra* was also from Ida Bagus Gede's mind. He stated that *Panca Wali Krama* had to be followed by

¹¹ DeMuth, Lorin Foster. *Balance and Imbalance: The Necessity of Natural Disasters in Balinese Hinduism*. (Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection, 2018)

¹² Adrian Vickers, 2012. p.225

Ekadasa Rudra. Therefore, in 1961 the Paruman Para Sulinggih (meeting of high priests) discussed the following ceremony, which was *Ekadasa Rudra*. The idea of holding *Ekadasa Rudra* was also from a police officer named Soetarto. He was Javanese but influential in Bali. According to his mystical view, Bali needed purification. As a powerful military officer, the idea was fully supported by the strongest political party in Bali, Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI) or Indonesian National Party, and Anak Agung Bagus Sutedja (governor of Bali). As a sympathizer of President Sukarno, Sutedja supported the *Ekadasa Rudra* enactment by forming the committee for preparing *Ekadasa Rudra*. The command was also strengthened by *lontar* (the old Balinese document made from dried palm leaves) stating that the reasons for enacting *Ekadasa Rudra* were as follow:

1. Replacement of four centuries' absence of *Ekadasa Rudra*
2. In the two last centuries, Bali was suffering from some tragedies, these were the war against the Dutch and Japan, eruption of Mount Batur in 1926, the great earthquake in 1917, and so on.

Balinese Hindu people overall had to involve in a long series of rituals before the main ceremony. Holy water from Pura Penataran Agung in the opening ceremony (*Paneduhan* and *Ngaturang pejati*) in October 1962 was distributed all throughout the island. On the main day of the ceremony, all temples and houses erected *penjor* (sacred decorative bamboo poles). A similar argument about the reason for enacting *Ekadasa Rudra* came from Nyoman Wijaya, a researcher from Udayana University. However, his arguments were strengthened by the letters sent among the stakeholders.

On February 19th, 1963, Mount Agung started to show its volcanic activity. It was considered a good welcome from the Lord of Mountain toward that grandest Balinese Hindu ritual. Despite the eruption, the preparation kept running. There was no indication of postponing the ceremony. The government and committee announced that the condition was so far so good because *Ida Hyang Parama Kawi* (The Highest God in Balinese Hindu) would protect them all. On March 8th, 1963, the main ceremony was carried out as planned. About ten thousand people attended Pura Agung Besakih. General Ahmad Yani (the national army commander) came to represent President Sukarno. The main ritual kept going on in spite of the

shower of ashes. The volcanic activity was steady but not violent. However, the greatest eruption and strong earthquake happened a month after the main ritual of *Ekadasa Rudra*.¹³

Ekadasa Rudra 1963 event was very remarkable, as this was the grandest event ever in Bali and considered a national-level moment. Moreover, the ceremony was enacted during volcanic activity. From the Balinese traditional point of view, it was no longer a sign of good welcome from God, but it was a misfortune, caused by the wrong time of enactment. The eruption was not easily taken as natural phenomena. The accusation of misfortune and wrong day time of enactment grew more in the following years since in 1965-1966 there was a terrible tragedy of massacre in Bali. In conclusion, there would be a re-enactment of *Ekadasa Rudra* if necessary.

Ekadasa Rudra in 1979

Ekadasa Rudra 1963 was considered not successful since some tragedies occurred in Bali, moreover, the Mount Agung eruption during the ritual was slightly taken as misfortune. However, no one could blame that great exorcism ritual, although there were some reasons to do the ceremony again. The doubt about the timing of *Ekadasa Rudra* 1963 was based on the new finding in the *Saka* calendar. *Saka* is Balinese calendar system. It has twelve months (*sasih*), and the first month is in *sasih Kesanga*, or March in the Gregorian system.¹⁴ Parisada Hindu Dharma discussed and decided that the *Saka* year 1890 was in 1969 AD, so the end of the *Saka* year should be in 1979 AD. The turning of a century in *Saka* year was the right timing for *Ekadasa Rudra*. Besides the religious and cultural reason, the disaster such as jet plane crashing in Gerokgak and the strong earthquake led the re-enactment of *Ekadasa Rudra*. *Ekadasa Rudra* 1979 was a decision from Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia, and still supported by government circles. The committee consisted of Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia, as the head of Governments, and Department of Religion. The decision was that *Panca Wali Krama* would be held in 1978 and followed by *Ekadasa Rudra* in 1979.

Information about the ceremony was widely spread throughout the island by mass media. On the opening ritual on February 27th, 1979, holy water from gods for asking

¹³ David J. Stuart Fox, 1987. pp. 386-387

¹⁴ Pendit, Nyoman. S., *Nyepi: Hari Kebangkitan dan Toleransi*. (Yayasan Merta Sari, 1984) pp. 26

forgiveness was distributed to the village's representatives to distribute. On the main day of the ceremony (March 28th, 1979) about half a million people attended Pura Agung Besakih, including President Suharto accompanied by other ministries and high dignitaries. The event had a greater impact than *Ekadasa Rudra* 1963, as the national and international mass media reported *Ekadasa Rudra* 1979. For Hindus, the event attended by President, and supported by local and national government meant that Hindus took a significant part in Indonesia.

Power Relation in Ekadasa Rudra 1963 and 1979

Since Indonesia had been under the Dutch government, Bali was famous for Europeans. For them, Bali was an enchanting island along with its natural beauty and unique culture. In the 1950s, central government planning of tourism was established, and the shape of the industry was identified in terms of the 'objects' and the goal of 'service'. President Sukarno's enthusiasm for Bali confirmed this and invited the Balinese to control over the image-making process. In 1963 tourist development was supposed to come to a climax with a conference (organized by Nyoman S. Pendit). The major officeholders went to Bali as the showcase of Indonesia's tourism.¹⁵ Sukarno's master stroke for helping the tourist industry of Bali was to hold an international conference of travel agents in Bali in 1963 to coincide with the spectacular exorcistic *Ekadasa Rudra* ceremony at Besakih. The plan went complicated when Mount Agung erupted. It caused major embarrassment for Sukarno and none-too-pleasant results for the Balinese. Nevertheless, many of the tourist representatives had already arrived in Bali. They sampled some of its cultural wealth, so they hopefully could return to promote the island.¹⁶

After 1966, the new Indonesian regime continued Sukarno's proud promotion of Bali as a representation of Indonesian culture. However, then the private enterprises, both foreign and domestic were welcomed well. It was also an overpopulated agrarian island with a serious and growing problem of landlessness. For Bali, tourism appeared to be a heaven-sent solution to inadequate employment and income. Its development was to receive strong support from the Indonesian government and international aid donors.¹⁷ The country's mission slowly moved

¹⁵ Vickers, Adrian. "Bali Rebuilds Its Tourist Industry". in *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, Vol. 167, No. 4, 2011.

¹⁶ Adrian Vickers, 2012. pp. 224

¹⁷ Pringle, Robert. *A Short History of Bali: Indonesia's Hindu Realm* (Australia: Allen&Unwin, 2004) pp. 186

into capitalism in tourism. It was marked by massive tourism development, such as the Nusa Dua resort in 1971 which was established by companies from overseas.¹⁸ *Ekadasa Rudra* as a national event was attended by thousands of people along with those who were of high dignity. Since the plan and execution were reported by national and some international mass media, the event attracted tourists both domestic and foreign. Surely the event could make a great impact for Indonesia, and Bali for specific. The mission of developing tourism was a project for the country which had just earned its independence. Therefore, *Ekadasa Rudra* was a chance for attracting people to come to Bali and creating Bali as an enchanting tourist destination.

In power relation theory, power can be controlled by discourse. The former triggering factor firstly was the issue of *tumbal* buried in an area of Pura Agung Besakih in 1958. *Tumbal* issue was a symbolic domination used by the head of Religious Affairs. Still, he could not decide on the enactment of *Ekadasa Rudra*. The next decision had to be from the provincial government in level 1 which was the governor of Bali. The power for the final decision was based on discourse. The popular discourse at that time was tourism. The governor of Bali had a discourse to send to President. The President much supported the *Ekadasa Rudra* 1963 enactment as he developed tourism in Bali in the 1960s by building the high stories Bali Beach Hotel at Sanur and Ngurah Rai international airport. Therefore, despite the volcanic activity since the opening of the ceremony, the series of *Ekadasa Rudra* 1963 kept going on, because there would be a humiliation if the event were postponed.¹⁹

Similar things happened in *Ekadasa Rudra* in 1979. Although it was initiated by Indonesia's national Hindu organization, the governments took part and were involved. The symbolic domination was from the calculation of the day or revision of the turning century of Saka year. The local government used this symbol for the reason of enacting *Ekadasa Rudra* 1979. The final decision again came from the central government. They used a discourse, to be the strong reason for holding an event. *Ekadasa Rudra* 1979 had a greater and better impact than *Ekadasa Rudra* 1963, moreover, there was no natural disaster occurred. President Suharto put in an appearance to show how important Balinese ritual, religion and culture were to the

¹⁸ Sutarya, I Gede. *Bali dalam Dilema Pariwisata dan Budaya*. (Jurnal Pariwisata Budaya, Universitas Hindu Negeri I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa Denpasar, 2017).

¹⁹ Wijaya, Nyoman. "Relasi-Relasi Kekuasaan di Balik Pengelolaan Industri Pariwisata Bali", in *Humaniora* vol. 24, 2012.

Indonesian state ideal of “unity in diversity.” In conclusion, the events of *Ekadasa Rudra* 1963 and 1979 had each symbolic domination, but they had the same discourse to make them true.

CONCLUSION

Ekadasa Rudra is the greatest Balinese Hindu ceremony held once in a century and must be at Pura Agung Besakih. Recorded in Indonesian history, there were two events of *Ekadasa Rudra*, in 1963 and 1979. The events could be enacted in less than twenty years, meanwhile, the period of it is once in one hundred years. Actually, each two *Ekadasa Rudra* had their factors due to symbolic domination, then continued and controlled by power relations, and centered in one discourse. *Ekadasa Rudra* 1963 had its symbolic domination, which was *tumbal* issue. *Ekadasa Rudra* 1979 had its own, which was a miscalculation of the Saka calendar. Nevertheless, both events had the same discourse, that was tourism.

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