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HIERARCHY AND EQUALITY: VARIATIONS IN BALINESE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Introduction

Over the last decade a considerable portion of anthropological writing about Bali has concentrated on the island's history, in particular the development of its politico-religious structure (Geertz 1980; Guernonprez 1985; van der Kraan 1983; Schulte Nordholt 1986), but also changing western representations of Balinese culture and society (Boon 1977; Schulte Nordholt 1986). This has provided a much needed and very valuable counterbalance to the more a-historical and synchronic studies of Bali characteristic of the postwar period. One issue has, however, been somewhat neglected. This concerns broad variation in forms of social organization. This may seem a rather odd claim, since many of the writings of Dutch colonial officers focused on variation, and indeed Korn (1932) devoted his major work to a detailed description of differences in social organization. Geertz (1959), moreover, chose to address this issue in his first published paper on Bali; he argued that observed variation was a result of the different ways in which seven 'organisational themes' could be combined. However, he confined himself to description and example and offered no explanation as to why and how different permutations emerged; and he dismissed as irrelevant a group of mountain villages (*Bali Aga*) whose social organization is markedly different to that of the plains villages which he had himself studied.

What I wish to do in this essay is to suggest, speculatively and tentatively, that one way of explaining variation in social organization might be to consider it within a wider frame of reference, requiring the inclusion of both the *Bali Aga* and a historical perspective, and to conceive of it in terms of variation in forms of hierarchy. Simply, I shall argue that *Bali Aga* villages display egalitarian forms of social organization and rank systems based on age seniority, that southern plains villages approximate caste

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hierarchy, and that there is a zone of transition which evinces elements of both. The factors which have produced such differentiation are many, but the most important seem to be the degree of village incorporation into noble court circles, the type of economic system, and problems of communication, transportation and movement in the interior of the island. Mountain villages, working dry garden land which produces little or no surplus, were only marginally embraced by the high-caste court circles of the southern plains. With some exceptions, access to these villages was always difficult and the returns to the courts, in terms of ritual and military service, slaves, taxes, and agricultural produce, would have been too small to warrant prolonged attempts to bring these villages into the court sphere. Had incorporation taken place on a large scale, one would expect to find high-caste families more liberally dispersed in these mountain regions. The fact is that they are hardly to be seen anywhere above the line at which wet-rice cultivation is no longer possible. These areas, it would seem, display a social organization widespread in eastern Indonesia, of which Bali is culturally a part, and which is based on age seniority and an ideology of egalitarianism.

Hindu influence, and particularly the *varna* ideology, as promulgated, expounded and interpreted by *brahmana* priests and *satria* nobles, provided new forms for status rivalry which could be accommodated in the plains area partly because of the productive efficiency of the agrarian base and partly because indigenous forms of social organization could be assimilated into a hierarchical model with relative ease. Over time this turned into a dynamic structure that Schulte-Nordholt (1986) has recently described as 'shifting hierarchy'; but it is also a structure which bears comparison with Hindu caste.

Systematic variation

In previous eras Bali was heavily influenced by certain aspects of Shivite Hindu culture and religion. The *varna* system of *brahmana*, *satria*, *wesia* and *sudra* (Balinese spellings) is found in most parts of Bali. These four major categories are called *bangsa* or *wangsa*, and collectively *catur-wangsa*. Bali has no untouchables, no notion of *moksa* or renunciation outside of *brahmana* and other high-caste circles, and the doctrine of rebirth is generally quite different to that found in India.

What makes plains Bali look like India in some respects is the presence of the *varna*, the apparent sub-division of these into a multiplicity of caste-like social groups, the hierarchical ordering of these based partly on the distinction between the pure and the impure¹, and finally, a variety of rules and practices concerning the proper form of interaction between members of different groups.

¹ The distinction between *alus* (refined) and *kasar* (coarse) is also of great importance in structuring hierarchy in Bali.

The first three *varna* are usually grouped together as *triwangsa*. Following Geertz and Geertz (1975), these will be referred to as gentry. They constitute some 6 to 10 per cent of the population. *Sudra*, whom the Geertzes label commoners, account for the rest.

The *varna/bangsa* ideology establishes a hierarchical categorization of Balinese into four major classes. Related to this scheme are numerous title groups (*soroh*), the title being patrilineally inherited. Within the *brahmana bangsa* one finds five named groups all using the title *ida*. Amongst the *satria* such titles as *cokorda*, *déwa agung*, *anak agung*, *déwa gedé*, *déwa*, *pradéwa*, etc., are well known. Within the *wesia* category groups using the title *gusti* can be identified, but their differences to *satria* are difficult to specify (Boon 1977:165 passim). Title groups within the *sudra bangsa* are very numerous and regionally variable, but include *pandé*, *pasek*, *pulosari*, *dauh*, *kayu selem*, and so on.²

These groups are not linked to particular occupations, with the partial exceptions of *padanda* high priests (always *brahmana*) and metal smiths (often *pandé*). More importantly, these *soroh* are not necessarily groups. Balinese possessing the same title even in one village do not always form a solidary, corporate group. As often as not all they share is a notion that they are people of the same kind and an ideology of common descent (real or fictive), which is concretely symbolized by a network of houseyard temples in which deified ancestors are worshipped. Frequently a title aggregate may crystallize and become a corporate group (*dadia*, *pamaksan*). This is generally accomplished by the building of a temple on commonly held land, in which again the group's deified ancestors can be collectively worshipped (Geertz and Geertz 1975).

Interaction between members of different groups is structured in ways reminiscent of the Hindu caste system. Thus there are rules governing the exchanges of women, language, food, physical contact, etc. However, these rules govern interaction to different degrees at different levels of the hierarchy.

The rules of interaction are much more strictly observed and enforced between people of different *bangsa*, i.e., between *brahmana* and *satria*, between *satria* and *wesia*, between gentry and commoners; and more rigidly within a *bangsa* the higher up the system one is, i.e., between different title groups within the *satria bangsa* (I am unsure about rules of interaction between different *brahmana* groups). In general then the higher up the hierarchy the more intense will be the concern with the status implications of social interaction. In short, the attention given to ritual

² Generally only *triwangsa* use their titles as terms of address. *Sudra* are more often addressed by kinship terms, teknonyms, birth order terms, or occasionally even personal names. *Pandé* are the only *sudra* descent groups to be regularly addressed by their title. In the case of *sudra*, then, it might be better to speak of named descent groups; but I retain the use of 'title' group since it has become current in the literature.

status and the relative ranking of groups reaches its maximum when gentry are involved. So, for example, gentry groups are more concerned with relative rank, with marriage, ritual paraphernalia, language use, etc., than are *sudra* groups.

In south Bali, gentry groups are mostly found in the villages of the wide coastal plains, the so-called cradle of Hindu-Balinese culture, and are only rarely found in villages nearer the mountains. My own research was conducted in a village and area, in northern Gianyar, composed only of *sudra*. Just below this area one begins to find gentry and noble houses linked to important and powerful court centres. Closer to the interior, and so higher up the mountain ridges, high castes are rarely encountered, and even when found are usually poor and do not attempt to claim high status.

At the risk of being straightforward, I would hypothesize that in the southern plains, where the important court centres are located, one finds hierarchical forms of social organization which are caste-like, whilst in the mountains one meets more egalitarian systems and rank based only on age, with an intermediate or transitional zone in which elements of both co-exist (see map).

I was first alerted to the existence of this variation by some ethnography that puzzled me. Basically, in the area where I worked there was an ideology of equality alongside that of hierarchy. By 'equality' I do not simply mean that the members of a group consider themselves of equal status whilst the group as a whole is superior or inferior to other groups. I mean by equality something more radical. In the village in which I lived, and in surrounding villages, Balinese, in answer to questions about status differences, would argue that all villagers were the 'same' (*patuh*), of the same 'family', that it was not good to talk about titles, even though different title groups existed and on other occasions status differences were clearly evident. These and other remarks and various practices and legends convey a definite tendency to mute and dampen distinctions of ritual status that are supposed to exist between different named groups. There is, then, on the one hand, the acceptance of a religious status hierarchy, but on the other, a set of ideas and practices which imply that such hierarchy is problematic and ought in some degree to be suppressed. Though it is an ideology of equality, it does not necessarily embody a notion of individualism of the western kind, whereby people are judged and evaluated 'rationally' in terms of personal merits and attributes. This sort of individualism is beginning to emerge in more urbanized parts of Bali, where well-educated low-castes are tending more and more to ignore status distinctions and in some cases are becoming militantly anti-*triwangsa*. The equality I refer to is very old (as will become clear). Moreover, Guernonprez has recently argued that *Bali Aga* villagers do evince a definite anti-caste and egalitarian ideology (Guernonprez 1987: chap. 3). Such egalitarian ideologies, it may be inserted, are not and never have been absent from India, either (Béteille 1983: chap. 2; Holmstrom 1976:

141-2; Parry 1974; Singer 1972: chap. 6).

But whether caste can be said to exist at all in Bali is a very difficult question. Elsewhere (Howe 1987) I have argued that much depends on what perspective one takes, what level of abstraction one uses, what empirical material is adduced, and what geographical area of the island one is concerned with. In this paper I wish to explore further certain of these issues.

In what I am calling the transitional zone, the area is dominated by villages of *sudra* population. Here status ranking of title groups is present, but it tends to be confined to a small number of situations: a few inter-title marriages (disapproved by the family of higher status), types of ritual accessories at major life-crisis rites (tooth-filing, marriage, cremation), and the terms used to address and refer to other people of different title. According to Barth, what this seems to indicate is that these villages display a rank system rather than a caste system. 'Caste ... is characterized by the simplicity of its basic schema and its comprehensiveness', while 'systems of rank, though single in the scale which each defines, are generally restricted in their fields of relevance' (Barth 1960:113). If status considerations are confined to a rather narrow range of contexts, as seems to be the case in this area, then there is no need for elaborate rules to govern social interaction in other contexts.

Ranking can of course be based on various factors. Focusing still on this intermediate region of southern Bali, in regard to the ownership of agricultural land one finds that this is distributed much more evenly than in India, although in India there is indeed wide variation in the degree of concentration of land ownership (cf. Mayer 1960; Parry 1979). In relation to the division of labour, occupations similarly are not linked to ritual status. The majority of Balinese are (and were) peasant smallholders owning their own land and equipment. Most have other means of gaining a livelihood, but these too are all unrestricted as to title or caste. As far as the distribution of power and wealth is concerned, the general trend is that ritual rank, wealth and political power are only contingently related at best (for more information on these points, see Howe 1987).

The point of such data is to show that, whereas in India certain statuses and practices are combined and ordered in a particular way within a single institution, the *jajmani* system, in this area of Bali they are, to a very significant extent, independent of each other. The evidence seems to suggest that here statuses associated with title group membership are not closely correlated, nor do they cluster together in a manner reminiscent of Indian castes. In Barth's terms these statuses are freely combined, and according to him this combination results in what he calls a complex system, quite different from a caste system, in which 'each person is characterized by a cluster of statuses relevant in different sectors of life and frameworks of organization', and in which 'incumbency of one status necessarily implies incumbency of a series of other statuses forming the

cluster ...' (Barth 1960:144). In other words, in a caste system high-caste rank, wealth, land ownership, political patronage and prestigious occupation all tend to cluster together, as do low-caste rank, poverty, possession of little or no land, political clientship and despised occupation. In India, then, caste status is all-embracing and manifests itself in a wide variety of contexts, whilst in this region of Bali the influence of ritual rank is, generally speaking, confined to a relatively small number of contexts, and in particular does not appear to affect statuses determined by land ownership, wealth, occupation or political influence. One might add that in caste it is a matter of the hierarchy of groups, whereas in ranking it is more a matter of ordering smaller units (individuals, families) along particular scales of narrow relevance.³

In the plains area of south Bali, however, where gentry are much more frequently encountered and are of great cultural, economic and political importance, strong positive correlations between these rank orderings are commonly found, and thus this area appears to approximate caste (or attenuated caste, given there is no *jajmani* system) in the Barthian sense. This is more particularly the case when it is added that such orderings are encompassed by the hierarchical *varna/bangsa* scheme.

This last point requires elaboration. In a recent publication, Guermonprez has cogently argued that the term *soroh* is old Balinese and has the meanings 'group', 'section', 'division'. In Balinese, *soroh* signifies the most inclusive group of agnatic kin seen as similar by virtue of their link to a common origin point (*kawitan*, conceived as both ancestral temple and founding ancestor, i.e., kinship link and spatial location). In this sense *soroh* covers the same semantic field as *bangsa*, which by contrast is Sanskritic in origin. *Soroh* also, however, is the equivalent of the Indonesian term *jenis*, which designates the totality of individuals belonging to the same class or kind. One can apply *soroh* not only to groups of people conceived as similar but also to any other type of collectivity. Here, then, the emphasis is on the similarity of the members of the group in relation to those of another (Guermonprez 1987:54, 62). Guermonprez goes on to propose

³ In writing about caste in Bali, one of the problems is the choice of which model of Hindu caste to employ as a reference point. What I say in the text suggests that I reject Dumont's theory of caste, or at least that part of it in which he argues that there is, at the level of ideology, a radical distinction between status and power (between *brahman* and *kshatriya*). I am in fact advancing the view, following Barth, that in practice ritual status and political and economic power usually went together in 'traditional' India (Béteille 1969:4; Bailey 1957; Srinivas 1966:1-45). On the whole I accept those criticisms of Dumont's work which suggest he has over-emphasized both the importance of one particular set of values (hierarchy) and the fixed and static nature of the 'traditional' caste system. There is also the problem of the nature of kingship. For India evidence exists that the disjunction between *brahman* and *kshatriya* is not as clear-cut as Dumont supposes (Burghart 1978:524; Fuller 1983). Concerning Bali the question as to whether kings were secular or had magico-religious functions cannot be unambiguously decided (Boon 1977:148-9; Geertz 1980:126; Guermonprez 1985; Swellengrebel 1947).

that the following distinction can be made. On the one hand, the term *soroh*, which is Indonesian, indicating agnatic kinship groups each linked to an origin point, the members of each of which groups are conceived as people of the same kind, carries no implications of hierarchy in its use but simply a classification of differences. On the other hand, *bangsa*, which is Sanskritic, and carries connotations of noble birth, does not refer to concrete groups but to an ideal hierarchy of broad categories, and in Bali is used to distinguish *triwangsa* from *sudra*. Thus, in moving from *soroh* to *bangsa*, the horizontal plane of kinship groups gives way to a reclassification of them in a vertical, hierarchical order (Guermonprez 1987:62-3).

According to this author, because in Bali the pure/impure distinction is not the fundamental opposition (as Dumont considers it to be for the Hindu caste system, Dumont 1972:81) and there is no rigid division of labour, nor the Hindu obsession with the separation of castes, caste is, strictly speaking, not present; nevertheless, hierarchy is of especial importance (Guermonprez 1987:63). In other words, *soroh* (or *dadia*) are not analogues of Hindu *jat*, but the application of the theoretical *varna* model has introduced hierarchy where only difference once existed. 'From the notion of *soroh* to that of *bangsa*, it can be seen that the emphasis shifts from a perception of difference resulting from the singularity of diverse ancestral origins to a hierarchization of groups by differential valorization of *kawitan*' (Guermonprez 1987:65; my translation). However, it should be added, even within the *sudra* category *soroh* are sometimes ranked and there is some separation in terms of language, ritual prerequisites and marriage, and this is often intensified when local aggregates of agnatic kin become corporate *dadia* groups (Geertz and Geertz 1975; Howe 1980).

To be sure, such rules and practices, as already argued, are much more clearly applied amongst *triwangsa* and between *triwangsa* and *sudra* than amongst *sudra*. But there seems little doubt that powerful *triwangsa* imposed these rules on the larger population, so that the latter had to obey them on pain of various punishments (Baum 1973; Boon 1977:49; Geertz 1980:243-4). Such an ideology permeated, to one degree or another, most of southern Bali, and many *sudra* came to see these regulations as enshrining natural forms of social inequality and thus natural forms of social interaction, and they therefore organized their own interrelations on the basis of some of these rules and practices (Hobart 1978).

One of the important points Guermonprez tries to establish in relation to all of this is a further distinction, this time between the *triwangsa* of the plains and the *Bali Aga* of the mountains. Although spread out over south Bali, *triwangsa* groups are linked together by means of a network of more or less inclusive kinship temples (*dadia*) and origin points (*kawitan*). The principal focus for this network is Gelgel, the place at which, according to myth, the conquering Javanese nobles from the east Javanese empire of Majapahit first established their overlordship on Bali in 1343 (Schulte Nordholt 1986:11-13). According to legend, the court at Gelgel repro-

duced that of Majapahit. As groups moved away from this point they established new, but subordinate, noble houses and origin points in a process which Geertz and Geertz (1975:124-31) have described as 'sinking status'. In this way *triwangsa* established sets of networks linking kinship groups by way of ancestral origin points marked by temples. As the Geertzes argue, '*For the gentry ... the community was and still is, not the small local settlement but the entire, regionally-dispersed, gentry population*' (Geertz and Geertz 1975:119, their emphasis). All of this contrasts markedly with the closed and inward-looking world of the *Bali Aga* villages, which have *dadia* but do not recognize *bangsa*, and which do not appear to tie themselves together into trans-local temple networks:

'Temples do not link the members of their congregations to institutions that transcend the boundaries of the village. They are, instead, entirely inward looking. The village itself is a single, holistic institution, and village temples represent component parts of this institution' (Lansing 1983:114).

Going beyond this to make a more general distinction, Guermonprez has this to say:

'One can advance the hypothesis that the mass of *sudra* oscillate between a "*Bali-Aga* model" characterized in its ideal form by the coincidence of *kawitan*, *soroh* and village space, and a model associated with the notion of *bangsa*, characterized by an atomization of pan-Balinese title groups in localized *dadia* related via the titles with the whole of the social hierarchy culminating in the division in castes' (Guermonprez 1987:66, my translation).

In the table below I have attempted to summarize some of the main themes of the variation in forms of social organization that can be found in the literature.⁴

Most of the characteristics mentioned in the table receive more or less elaboration in the text. Let me draw attention, however, to several themes not explicitly addressed elsewhere in the essay. In lowland settlements, village, temple and irrigation affairs are administered by both elected and hereditary officials. These may well be older men (never women), but advanced age is not a necessary qualification. In *Bali Aga* villages, on the other hand, a gerontocratic administrative structure operates, which includes the entire married population. On meeting days this group, often

⁴ In compiling this table I have collated evidence from many sources, among which the following are the most important: *Bali* 1960, 1969, Boekian 1936, Geertz and Geertz 1975, Geertz 1980, Grader 1937a, 1937b, Guermonprez 1987, Hobart 1979, Howe 1980, 1983a, 1984, 1987, Korn 1932, 1933, Lansing 1983, Liefrinck 1927, Swellengrebel 1960.

Plains

1. Wet-rice agriculture; privately owned land
2. *Triwangsa* present
3. *Bangsa/soroh* recognized
4. Hierarchy of *bangsa/soroh*
5. Hierarchy based on religious status; no gerontocracy
6. Most *sudra* have titles
7. Large variety of *sudra* titles
8. Single membership of title groups (*dadia*); competitive
9. Networks of ancestral temples linking local groups in a supra-village organization
10. Single officials
11. Male officials
12. Burial and cremation
13. Use of high Balinese language
14. Extensive use of *padanda* priests

Transitional Zone

- Wet-rice agriculture; privately owned land
- Sudra* only
- Bangsa/soroh* recognized
- Hierarchy attenuated
- Religious hierarchy and rank systems
- Some do, many do not
- Few *sudra* titles
- Multiple membership of title groups; not competitive
- Same but limited extension of networks
- Single officials
- Male officials
- Burial and cremation
- Limited use of high Balinese
- Use of these priests is variable

Mountains

- Dry garden land; communally owned land in some villages
- Sudra* only
- Soroh* only
- Religious hierarchy of *bangsa* absent
- Ranking based on age seniority; gerontocracy
- Some do, many do not; in some villages none do
- Few *sudra* titles
- Where *dadia* exist, multiple membership of groups
- Inward looking village; no supra-village temple networks
- Paired officials (left and right; male and female; etc.)
- Male and female officials
- Burial only
- High levels mostly absent
- Such priests hardly ever used

A summary of some of the differences in social organization and hierarchy between plains villages, the intermediate zone and the mountain, *Bali Aga* region.

divided into two sections (male and female, right and left, or east and west), is seated in the assembly pavillion in two rows along a mountain (*kaja*) - sea (*kelod*) axis, with the eldest at the mountain end and the most recently married at the seaward end, and each position in the structure is allocated particular duties, obligations and rights. The eldest men are the village heads (often with the title of *kubayan*). As older people die, the younger move up, allowing new recruits to enter at the bottom. This provides a dual organization with paired officials of equal rank (sometimes each with jurisdiction over one half of the village; and sometimes with an equivalent structure for the women which thus complements that of the men). This seems to be an organization which is very old, as it is acknowledged in inscriptions going back at least seven centuries (Lansing 1983: chap. 6); and it is also a structure which is completely alien to plains villages.

Let me add finally that cremation, the symbolic *sine qua non* of the plains status hierarchy, is totally absent in *Bali Aga* villages, where corpses are buried or simply left in the open in a special area; that *brahmāna padanda*

priests are not called upon; and that high Balinese language, another major component of the status system, is rarely if ever used.

The transitional zone

Having described some of the variation, we can now look in more detail at the particular configuration of hierarchy and equality in the village of Pujung Kaja, where most of my research was conducted. The professed egalitarianism of the village is legitimated by appeal to several legends concerning the original founding of the settlement.⁵

In the mythical past most of Bali was uninhabited, people generally living around the slopes of Gunung Agung (Great Mountain, the location of Bali's main temple complex, Besakih). When this volcano erupted, it destroyed the homes of many and people began to move away. One group of 12 families arrived in a fertile region and called this Telepud ('they arrived'; today Telepud is one of the four sections of the *désa adat* of Pujung, and it is also the ritual name for the whole village; it is considered to be the oldest part of the village, and the most important temples are located on its northern edge).⁶ Different versions of this story give different accounts of who these people were. One version, given by the *kubayan*⁷ (the head of the *pasek gelgel* descent group), includes a listing of the titles of these families. The leader was Sri Dalem Jangkus, which is a very high *satria* title⁸, and the families were *kubayan*, *dangka*, *salayin*, *bendesa*, etc. (Today, in various parts of Bali such names are attached to *sudra* descent groups.) Another version does not mention status titles at all, and the assumption is that all were of equal status. A third account is much the same as the second, but has the name of the leader as I Nengah Bedil (a simple *sudra* name). These differences in status titles are, I think, significant in present-day circumstances as they provide justification for both an egalitarian and a hierarchical model of social relations.

One major feature of the story, however, is invariant. Notwithstanding the fact that the original families were possibly of different status, when they settled in Telepud it was decided that such distinctions would be suppressed. Today when villagers talk generally about questions of status, they often invoke bits of this and of other stories to support their clichéd

⁵ For further information, see Howe 1980.

⁶ The story goes on to relate how, later, families moved from Telepud and established settlements in the vicinity, which to this day retain ritual and marriage links with Pujung.

⁷ *Kubayan* is a title only found in the mountain regions. In Pujung the *kubayan*, unlike other *sudra* priests (*pamangku*), is not attached to a specific temple. Elsewhere amongst *Bali Aga* villages the *kubayan* is either a senior priest or a high-ranking official.

⁸ *Dalem* was the title held by the Gelgel kings of the sixteenth century. When the court moved from Gelgel to Klungkung, the successor to the seventh *Dalem* dropped a notch in status and became a *Déwa Agung* (Geertz 1980:17).

assertions that 'we are all one family in Pujung', 'we're all the same', 'we are all *pasek*'.

The families needed to build a temple in the village to represent Besakih, so that they could pray to their ancestors through this link (*panyawangan*).⁹ But this proved impossible as they had no metal smith (*pandé*). *Pandé* are generally considered to be the highest-status *sudra* group in Bali. The best indication of this is that they are entitled to have seven roofs to their cremation towers, which is the same number as that for *wesia* and some *satria* groups.¹⁰ As it happened, a *pandé* family from a village in Bangli decided to go wandering to find work. God directed the *pandé* to Telepud, where he was well received. The story goes that the village elders explained to the *pandé* that groups of people divided into castes (*bangsa*) were unknown in the village and that it was therefore unnecessary to use high Balinese (*basa alus*). The *pandé* agreed to this and also to the condition that the number of roofs on his cremation tower be reduced from seven to five as a sign of his good faith, i.e., a reduction in status to attenuate status rivalry. This story is related in this form even by the present *pandé* families living in the village.

These are not merely stories and legends. They are very much charters for the present. Villagers of all descriptions invoke them and appeal to them in a variety of contexts. Once every year at an important temple festival (*odalan*) another legend, again emphasizing equality of status, is enacted in a night-time spectacular by the village men in the inner precincts of the temple (Howe 1980:23-25). At one major post-cremation ceremony, *puspa* (highly stylized representations of the souls of the dead) are all burnt on the same five-roofed cremation tower irrespective of the title group (*pandé*, *pasek*, or *jaba*) to which the dead belong. Another important example of status suppression is that anyone in the village is eligible to join any of the *dadia* temple groups. Thus *pasek* and *jaba* are members of the *pandé dadia* temple congregation, and *pandé* are members of the *pasek dadia* temple congregation. In fact, just about 90 per cent of the village adults are members of both these supposedly kin-based temple groups. As already pointed out, this is rare for the plains and common for

⁹ This temple, the Pura Balé Bang, is rather interesting in that the villagers speak of it as having an 'abstract' or 'invisible' *padanda* priest (*padanda niskala*). This allows Pujung and its linked villages to dispense with the services of a flesh-and-blood *brahmana padanda*, because through this temple they can make holy water of the purest kind (cf. Howe 1980: chap. 1). I think this indicates another way in which Pujung is an 'intermediate' village between the plains areas, where a *padanda* is essential, and mountain villages, where he is an optional extra or never used at all.

¹⁰ In writing about *pandé* descent groups, Guérmonprez (1987) notes how they trace their own origins to *satria* status. This is true also for many *pasek* groups (Sugriwa 1976; see also Boon 1977:159-164).

the mountain villages. What this amounts to is a fairly coherent set of ideas and practices which betray an ideology of egalitarianism.

But of course status ranking is not completely subdued. Pujung has three *sudra* title groups: *pandé*, *pasek gelgel* and *pasek batuan* — but these account for only 24 of the 93 village compounds. Those who have no title are designated as *jaba* (outsiders).¹¹ Status ranking of these groups is not a frequent topic of conversation, but when it is, the consensus is that *pandé* are at the top, the two *pasek* groups (which can be collectively called *mekel*)¹² just below, and the *jaba* at the bottom. Within this title hierarchy, talked about in terms of 'big' and 'little' people, houses and *sangghah*, rather than in terms of purity and pollution, *pandé* and *mekel* have a preference for title group endogamy over village endogamy, which latter is the rule for *jaba*. Similarly, whereas *pandé* and *mekel* state a preference for first patrilateral cousins, *jaba* prefer second cousins through males. Moreover, within title groups there is a feeling of increasing status the closer the family is to the core of the descent line, and corresponding to this there is an increase in the emphasis on first cousin marriage over second cousin marriage. The point about this, as Boon (1977:ch.6) has remarked, is that the higher one's status, the greater the desire and mystical capacity to make and sustain such dangerous (*panas* — hot) marriages. Marriages between *mekel* women and *jaba* men are occasionally disapproved of by the family of the higher-status partner precisely because of the implications of equality entailed in such liaisons. Additionally, there are some status differences concerning language use between title groups and *jaba*. In practice, *jaba* use higher forms of the language to address and refer to *pandé* and *mekel*, whilst the latter use lower forms in relation to *jaba*. Other than this there are very few occasions on which status differences between villagers are expressed in language, although I should point out that many people in the village, including *pandé*, use high forms on an everyday basis to the *kubayan*, who is not only the head of the *pasek gelgel* group but is a priest of high achieved status (who, we shall see, is trying to convert this into

¹¹ In an island-wide sense the whole of the *sudra* category is designated as *jaba* in relation to *triwangsa*, who are *dalem* (insiders). The more restricted use of the term *jaba* in Pujung, as elsewhere in this region, to distinguish a group within the *sudra* category is in fact congruent with the major contrast between insiders and outsiders. Without *triwangsa* present, the titled *sudra* groups have become insiders (though called *mekel* rather than *dalem*), to separate themselves from the lower-status, non-titled groups now conceived as *jaba*.

Some *jaba* attest they have never had a title, some suggest they may have had one but it has now been forgotten, others assert they have one but will not divulge it because such boasting causes trouble.

¹² The term *mekel* probably derives from *bekel* (provisions, supplies), and from *perbekel*. The *perbekel* was an official of the 'state' linking individual villagers to an individual lord (cf. Geertz 1980:54-60 on the *perbekel* system). This linguistic evidence points to the fact that Pujung villagers were at times connected to the nobility through such links.

higher ascribed status). Finally, at cremations *pandé* enjoy separation from all others in that their cremation towers have five roofs, to the one for *mekel* and *jaba*, indicating that the souls of the *pandé* dead reach a higher level of heaven than other *sudra*. It is in these senses, then, that I speak of hierarchy.

It strikes me that a useful working idea is that the presence of large numbers of gentry will integrate this system and skew it, in the way Guernonprez argues, towards greater degrees of hierarchy, or greater comprehensiveness in the coverage of hierarchy. Certainly in the literature on southern Bali one tends to see described more systematic forms of hierarchy. Conversely, in the mountains and in one or two coastal villages in north and east Bali¹³ one finds very little in the way of caste-like social groups, no gentry, attenuated hierarchy and rank systems based on age. Thus Lansing has written recently that in villages such as these, 'seniority is the dominant principle of social organization from dance clubs to the village leadership' (Lansing 1983:115). Lansing also adduces data to argue that such social organization is very old, since it can be detected in inscriptions dating from the tenth century (Lansing 1983:28). Even Geertz remarks: 'There is a handful of the so-called *Bali-Aga* ("original Balinese") villages whose organization differs markedly from those of the overwhelming majority, having age groups, gerontocratic political structure, communal land tenure, etc.' However, he then goes on to argue: 'Though the significance of these villages from an ethnohistorical point of view is an interesting problem, their position within Balinese society generally is marginal in the extreme' (Geertz 1959:1012).

In my terms, these villages are not a marginal bunch of eccentrics, but one end of a continuum linking rank to hierarchy, *soroh* to *bangsa*, age to ritual status. My argument then is that there is variation in forms of village social organization, that this is linked to variations in forms of hierarchy, and that it is patterned along geographical lines. The low-lying plains villages with gentry and *bangsa* ideology exhibit a caste system, the mountain villages, without gentry, fewer title groups and a *soroh* ideology have Indonesian rank systems based largely on age seniority, and the area in between is something of a transitional zone evincing aspects of both.

Towards an explanation

According to Barth: 'Explanation is not achieved by a description of patterns of regularity, no matter how meticulous and adequate, nor by replacing this description by other abstractions congruent with it, but by

¹³ Not all villages exhibiting *Bali-Aga* traditions are to be found in the mountains. Two in particular, Bratan on the north coast and Tenganan in the south-east, however, seem to have remained substantially free of court influence (see Guernonprez 1987 for Bratan; and Korn 1933 for Tenganan).

describing what makes the pattern, i.e. certain processes' (Barth 1966:2). The question then is, what can account for the variation between plains villages and mountain villages?

In the Balinese language the inhabitants of the mountain villages are called *Bali Aga* or *Bali Mula*, both meaning 'original' Balinese, and in contemporary times this is often a derisory epithet. Most other Balinese call themselves *wong Majapahit* ('people of Majapahit'). Majapahit is the famous Javanese dynasty which reached its peak about the middle of the fourteenth century, when according to myth it is supposed to have invaded, subjugated and incorporated Bali into its empire. It is to this period and to the Javanese conquerors that nineteenth-century Balinese kings and other nobility traced their origin and their court civilization (the *varna*, divine kingship, *brahmana* priests, and so forth). From the original court centre at Samprangan, the dynasty moved first to Gelgel, a place of tremendous symbolic significance, for it was probably only during the Gelgel period that the whole of the southern part of the island was politically united, and then to Klungkung, which was in the nineteenth century the seat of the Déwa Agung, and so the highest-ranking *satria* court in Bali. Migration legends record how branches of noble families moved away from these early centres and established courts, of lesser status and with subordinate titles, at a variety of other places in Bali (Geertz and Geertz 1975; Geertz 1980).

In relation to the establishment of *kraton* society in Bali there have been two explanations for the existence (or persistence) of the *Bali Aga* villages, which are, generally speaking, remote from the courtly sphere. The first, advanced by several of the Dutch scholars (for example, Korn 1932), argued that the difference between the two types of village was due to the lack of penetration of courtly influence into the mountains. These villages therefore display a survival of age-old indigenous Balinese customs. Geertz (1959) contested this by arguing that, as the island is so small, it is scarcely credible that such isolation was possible. His own explanation is little more than a statement to the effect that these villages are random variants produced by different environmental circumstances. However, as Lansing has pointed out, 'Contrary to Geertz, it may be observed that widely separated *Bali Aga* villages share a distinct cluster of characteristics that are not easily explainable by reference to the mountain environment in which most of them are found' (Lansing 1983:114; cf. also Schaareman 1986:5).

The reason the Dutch explanation was rejected by Geertz is that it was often very crudely argued. It was also, often, tied to a rather naive theory about primitive dualism¹⁴, and villages as isolated autonomous republics (see Covarrubias 1937, for example), for both of which theories the evidence is exiguous. However, in the light of what has been argued so far

¹⁴ Derived from Rassers' (1922) conjectural history of the social organization of ancient Java.

it is not too difficult to make the Dutch explanation more respectable. It is not the case, for example, that there are just a few marginal *Bali Aga* villages which display a very different set of attributes to other Balinese settlements. The situation is rather that there is a graded change as one moves from the plains to the mountains. These changes are best summarized as a movement from caste hierarchy to egalitarian and age-rank systems.

There are also some historical, political, geographical and economic factors which add weight to the argument. As far as Pujung is concerned, there is little evidence about its relationships to the southern court centres. One myth tells how the Gianyar court bequeathed some land to Pujung because its leaders performed the service of slaying a serpent in the nearby forest which the court's representatives were too frightened to confront. An implication of the story is that Pujung was outside the influence of the Gianyar court, a state of affairs which one or two villagers endorsed by pointing to the etymology of the word Pujung (from *pa*, a prefix indicating location, and *ujung*, a root meaning 'edge', 'tip'). On the other hand there is little doubt (cf. note 12) that at some point Pujung was linked to the Gianyar court, for another story relates that several of Pujung's officials, including ancestors of the present *kubayan*, were gaoled in Gianyar. Additionally, some older inhabitants remember that their parents had occasionally to render corvée to Gianyar. Today, however, and for some considerable period back no villager in Pujung has been attached in this way to any court centre. Though I did not collect systematic data on such relationships, this pattern of interaction between village and court seems to characterize the villages which are adjacent to Pujung. That I have been unable to uncover material in the published sources relating to this particular area of northern Gianyar means that the question as to the extent of the ties between village and court must remain open. Nevertheless, the difficulty of unearthing data does indicate that, whatever the bonds were, they were probably tenuous and intermittent.

Three further points require a mention. First, it is said in Pujung that the village 'looks to the mountains'. Pujung obviously has many economic relations with villages and markets to the south, but socially and culturally it is linked with eight other villages to the west and north. Some of these are considered as offshoots of Pujung and others as ritual dependencies: representatives come to Pujung for holy water and ritual advice; they attend and send offerings to a variety of both public and house temples in Pujung; and it is mostly into these villages that Pujung people marry if they do not practise village endogamy. This linking of villages is true also for Sabtu (one mile east of Pujung), which is itself the centre of a network of villages to its north.

Second, villages in northern Gianyar are not readily accessible from the south except along the particular ridges on which they are located. East-west movement at this altitude is very difficult because of the steepness

and difficulty of the narrow paths traversing the deep ravines. However, even north-south movement is not easy, for the road is bad and often washed away. It is for this reason that the territories of Balinese kingdoms have tended to have natural limits. In short, villages in this area and to the north were always somewhat inaccessible and would have posed difficult problems to Gianyar nobles wishing to coerce not only independently minded noble subordinates but also recalcitrant villagers (on Balinese geopolitics cf. Geertz 1980:19-23).

Third, Pujung, at 1600 feet above sea level, is just below the top of the wet-rice zone. Indeed, the major dam providing water for the *subak* around Pujung is in the village of Apuh, some seven miles to the north, which is itself a dry-garden village. I would suggest that there would be very little crop surplus to attract the attention of the courts to villages at this altitude. At present it is quite clear that population growth, which in south Bali has been managed by increases in output of rice, has caused poverty in and migration from the dry-field zone.

While in some ways this situation recalls what Leach (1970) described for the *gumlao*, egalitarian political structure of highland Burma, the differences between Bali and this area of Burma seem to be quite large. The main lesson to be learnt, I think, is that hierarchical systems are as strong or as fragile as their economic bases. In the cases of both highland, swidden, Burma and drygarden, mountain, Bali the economic base is insufficient to support the kinds of hierarchical structures characteristic of their respective lowland wet-rice states. Unfortunately, as there is very little information available on the economic system of the mountainous region of Bali, I can only draw attention to the fact that in other parts of south-east Asia local peasant economies of this general kind display a rather narrow range of size of land holdings and are often egalitarian in outlook (Scott 1976). The point is this: in the plains villages all agricultural land is privately owned, either by institutions or by individuals. However, the inhabitants of *Bali Aga* villages often only have rights in communally owned land the plots of which are periodically redistributed (Lieffrinck 1934). This makes the two economic systems very different. When land is the scarce factor of production, as it usually was in Bali, tenure systems based on private ownership are more likely to increase stratification and to reinforce a status hierarchy in which high status and large land holding tend to go together. Conversely, land tenure systems based on communal ownership, especially if these are found in villages largely independent of external interference, are more likely to evince egalitarian forms of social relationships. As James Scott, speaking of south-east Asia in general, argues:

... it is in precisely those areas where the village is most autonomous and cohesive that subsistence guarantees are strongest. Given control over their local affairs, ... peasants choose to create an institution

that normally insures the weakest against ruin by making certain demands on better-off villagers' (Scott 1976:40-1).

By this line of reasoning there is more to the isolationist argument than Geertz is prepared to concede. But equally, it is not just a matter of the lack of penetration of a particular hierarchical ideology, which was the Dutch position. A variety of other factors have to be taken into account: a quite different type of economy and form of land tenure, the low productive strength of such an economic base and the egalitarian social arrangements such economic circumstances encourage. Thus it is not part of my thesis that these villages intentionally and continually tried to keep the court centres at arm's length, for on this score there is too little evidence to decide such a question one way or the other. All one can do is speculate that the possibility and desirability of relationships between mountain villages and court centres varied according to particular local and historical factors, but that for the most part strong ties could not easily be established and sustained because of the insufficiency of the economic base in the mountainous dry zone and its comparative inaccessibility.

I need now to say something about the mode of transmission of courtly culture to Bali in the period between the 13th and 15th centuries. I shall argue that it came to Bali in much the same way that Hinduism first arrived in Java.

Although this itself remains a controversial issue, to my mind the most acceptable theory concerning the coming of Hinduism to Indonesia revolves around the idea that it was indigenous rulers (local notables, 'big men') who saw the significance of the services of *brahmana* priests in legitimating their power and converting it into forms of 'traditional' authority. According to Bosch (1961) and van Leur (1967) it was Shivate priestly culture which was transmitted to Indonesia, and later mixed with Buddhist notions of divine kingship and tantrism. The *brahmana* priest would have been the ruler's advisor, court priest, chief justice, astrologer, authority on religious affairs, keeper of sacred tradition, etc. Local rulers would have been concerned to learn and use the secrets and power of brahmanic doctrines of immortality, holy water, magic, and so forth. We do not even have to argue that it was purely a movement of ideas from India to Indonesia, as evidence suggests that Indonesians, on their own initiative or by order of a king, went to India in search of these doctrines (Bosch 1961:13, 18). This theory therefore posits a movement of ideas (cf. Lansing 1983:29-30) and a top-down spread. What evidence exists indicates that similar processes occurred in Bali. According to Swellengrebel (1960) and other sources, low-land Balinese culture has been based on a wet-rice economy for at least a millennium. From the tenth century it would appear that Bali possessed water organizations (*subak*), large villages, rank systems based on age seniority, kinship groups focused on ancestor temples and the idea of origin points, and an Indonesian culture

of asymmetric opposition. It seems plausible that again local leaders would have been attracted by mystical doctrines that enabled them to consolidate their positions by converting unstable and shifting power networks into more permanent forms of legitimate authority, a process which over time has eventually led to the incorporation of the *soroh* ideology of differences into the hierarchical ideology of the *varna* (*bangsa*) and to the creation, therefore, of caste-like social groups. Incidentally, Max Weber argued that one of the ways the caste system spread in India was by the incorporation of tribes, and by *brahmana* priestly legitimation of tribal leaders' position (Weber 1958:30-35). The point then is that the Balinese social formation had the potential of being hierarchicized because of the concatenation of a set of facilitating institutions: endogamous kinship groups, ancestral temple system, asymmetrical conceptual opposition and ideas of age-based rank. This again describes a top-down process, and indeed this is the way the Dutch generally argued the case. But it is more likely that a two-way process was the rule, with peripheral leaders pledging allegiance to central rulers and on this basis claiming higher status.

The chronicles and legends of Balinese groups, as I have already argued, usually posit their origin as having begun by a movement away from already established centres, but it is probable that concentrations of power emerged in different local areas and then legitimized their authority and claims to higher status by retrospectively constructing links to these older courts. This would have necessitated a variety of forms of tribute (service, slaves, soldiers, crops, taxes, etc.) to the superior centres. The more peripheral the area, the less chance there would have been for courtly culture to take hold, either because a court centre could not extend its power sufficiently far, or because local leaders were too distant to get their claims taken seriously and ratified. In the 19th century the courts of Klungkung, Badung, Gianyar, and the others, could not make their hold complete over even relatively small areas, and those on the boundary between two regions might well play one court off against the other (van der Kraan 1983:321). What chance would these courts have had of controlling highland villages 30 to 40 miles away? Why would they have wanted to, given that they would have had little to gain from the effort?

Evidence is now available (Geertz and Geertz 1975; Schulte Nordholt 1986) that complex processes of this kind were going on prior to the 19th century and, despite the Dutch attempt to administratively fix and stabilize the hierarchy, which appeared chaotic and confusing to them, are still going on in this century (Boon 1977 on an upwardly mobile *sudra pasek* group; Guernonprez 1987 on *pandé* groups 'rediscovering' illustrious, high-status origins).

Geertz (1980), for example, has recognized that political processes in 19th-century Bali were not unidirectional. He argues that according to indigenous theories Balinese rulers spread out from Gelgel and Klungkung to other areas, where they set up their own courts (Badung, Sukawati,

Gianyar, Tabanan, etc.). These paid ideological tribute to Klungkung as *primus inter pares*, through the status ranking of titles, and sundry other ways of indicating relative privilege. From these local noble houses cadet lines emerged and these founded the noble houses in large villages such as Ubud, Payangan, Pejeng, Tegallalang, and so on. All these local princes, competing for status, performed massive rituals and cremations and perpetrated petty wars between themselves. For all this they needed, not slaves (though why not Geertz never quite explains; on slavery see van der Kraan 1983), but stagehands, performers, preparers, an audience. The role of the village *sudra* was to help and take part as bit player in these extravaganzas. Village commoners were rarely tenant farmers to their local lords, their corvée duties generally being restricted to a number of days now and then for ritual preparation and occasionally as foot soldier.

Quite how a *sudra* peasant (*kawula*) working his own land with his own equipment came to be 'controlled' by, and attached to, a local noble house and through this intermediary (*perbekel*) to a more central and higher-status lord, Geertz never manages to explain. What he does point out, however, is that the peasants often had a big say in who controlled them, and for many it was not so difficult to change allegiance. It was this tenuous relation between gentry and commoners, quite different to the more exploitative patronage relations characteristic of other parts of the world, which enables Geertz to argue that power was not imposed from the top, as Wittfogel would have it, but that it welled up from the bottom.¹⁵ (Incidentally, going by this argument, there is no reason why villages distant from a court should align themselves with any lord if they did not desire it and could get away with it.)

Such a view of the political process allows for the possibility that men of obscure origins can rise to power, and the Geertzes give a good description of how the court of Gianyar actually began in very unpromising circumstances (Geertz and Geertz 1975:120-122):

(The) chronicle of the rise of the Gianyar dynasty illustrates the manner and rapidity in which a small, possibly low-status gentry house could rise to prominence. Within seven generations it had grown from what was apparently an obscure isolated family, a mere houseyard cluster, into a large and extended, but tightly integrated, *dadia*. The rise to power was legitimised by a claim to superior social status, that is to say, to a higher title' (Geertz and Geertz 1975:122).

The Geertzes go on to describe that the founding ancestor of this dynasty, Déwa Manggis, 'started out virtually alone with no large kingroup to support him but whose charismatic leadership qualities (his body gave

¹⁵ Geertz' controversial, and more general thesis, that 'power serves pomp, not pomp power' (Geertz 1980:13) has been criticized by several reviewers (Howe 1983b; Schulte Nordholt 1981; Tambiah 1985).

off light in the dark) were soon recognized by the existing political powers' (Geertz and Geertz 1975:120). The Gianyar chronicle claims he was the legitimate son of the Raja of Klungkung and a Klungkung princess, whereas the versions of rival courts record that he was, in fact, the bastard son of this Raja from a liaison with a village woman.¹⁶

Processes of this kind demonstrate that Balinese historiography, the way the Balinese write and conceive of the past, supplies a cultural idiom within which local concentrations of power, emerging in the first place independently of established court centres, can be legitimated by reference to the latter by way of reconstituted genealogies, 'remembered' origins, and fabricated migration legends (for further information on this issue see Worsley 1972 for Bali and Ricklefs 1974 for Java). In relation to this, Boon makes the very important point that the vitality and dynamism of Balinese social life is dependent on the gap between 'pragmatically earned versus divinely endowed status' (Boon 1977:184). In other words, the central aspect of the status hierarchy is not that it unequivocally fixes everyone's position, but rather the opposite: simultaneously it provides both a framework within which the divergence between ritual status and political power can be understood, and also a set of cultural rules by which attempts can be made to reduce the incongruence.

Despite the fact that contemporary Bali, having passed through Dutch colonial rule, the traumas of Indonesian independence and the atrocities of the 1966 killings, is a rather different place to what it was a hundred years ago, such processes are still occurring. Let me conclude then by describing the outlines of what appears to be a status drive in the village of Pujung.

In Pujung in 1979 the core family of the small but tightly knit and well organized *pasek gelgel* descent group was headed by the *kubayan*, the village's foremost priest. Whichever way one looks at it, he was a man of considerable wealth, talent and influence. He owned a profitable rice threshing factory, two large lorries, substantial amounts of land, a large house in Den Pasar, Bali's capital, and the finest house in the village. Moreover, he was a high-ranking official in the Gianyar regional bureaucracy. Such resources enabled him to become a sizeable employer and a powerful patron. But he was more than merely wealthy. He was, in addi-

¹⁶ By 1867 the Gianyar royal house had become very powerful. According to the Geertzes (1975:121) the seventh Déwa Manggis was the first paramount lord in the region 'to be able to institute a direct tax on rice land, payable in kind at every harvest, a tax not mediated or shared by his stewards and underlings'. The rulers of Peliatan and Klungkung lured him into a trap and imprisoned him; he died five years later in 1891. After this, 'the royal houses in nearby areas began to move in on Déwa Manggis' former homes, lands and subjects, by force and by marriage'. This presents a view of the relation between status and power politics of the classical Balinese state which accords very well with the argument advanced in this paper, but one which is rather different to the account provided by Geertz in his 1980 monograph (see also Tambiah 1985).

tion, both an excellent dancer (the leader of a troupe which toured Europe in 1975) and an acknowledged expert in ritual and religious matters (priests and high castes from other villages occasionally consulted him on esoteric matters and he lavishly entertained them in one of the village's temples).

On the other hand, he was by no means universally liked. Many compared him unfavourably to his father, the previous *kubayan*, who was only moderately wealthy and who had been a modest and unpretentious village man, someone who could be spoken to in low Balinese, and who did not throw his weight about. The present *kubayan*, with his new-found riches (where did they come from, some asked), was said, in some quarters, to lead the village like a farmer led his cow. While it was grudgingly admitted that he was an exceptionally gifted man, he was also characterized as greedy and as acting in a way largely detrimental to the interests of the poorer villagers.

Kubayan's public intentions were widely known. What he wanted to do was improve the village, physically and economically, by renovating the village temples (the cost of which fell disproportionately on the poor, but the benefits mostly to the rich), making the market a vigorous one, encouraging businesses, welcoming tourists, etc. While many were pleased with the revenues this increasingly brought in, others were convinced that *kubayan's* motives, altruistically presented, were merely a cover for an underlying status drive to have himself recognized as an *anak agung*, a high *satria* title. As such they considered some of his actions reprehensible, because they entailed large village expenditure which the poorer folk could ill afford. In their view he was trying to elevate himself by climbing on the backs of his fellow-villagers. This kind of status drive was greatly feared by some people, who maintained that it would irrevocably undermine the age-old egalitarian ethos characteristic of the village. If *kubayan* began such a game, the argument went, then the *pandé* and the *pasek batuan* groups would probably follow, and soon there would be trouble over language, ritual offerings (*banten*), marriage and temples — in short, everything would become politics.

Kubayan himself was inconsistent in his attitude to some of these issues. At the same time that he condemned the practice of expending large resources on ritual, he performed the tooth-filing and marriage of his daughter on a gigantic scale. Not only did the whole village help in the preparations (as they would for a public temple festival), but many people from Pujung's linked villages also came to assist and attend. Several villagers, some cynically, others gleefully, remarked on how the whole thing was conducted in *anak agung* style. By arguing that one should ideally only celebrate such occasions at a level commensurate with one's resources, *kubayan* demonstrated both his high status and his enormous wealth. One image stands out clearly in my mind, though it occurred at a different event. It is of *kubayan* sitting in splendid isolation on his

beautifully ornate, raised *balé* surrounded by a crowd of milling villagers, many of them wondering whether anyone was brave enough to go and join him.

Moreover, while in conversation he endorsed the ideology of equality, he expected almost everyone to speak to him using critical items of high Balinese, whilst he replied in low Balinese. Another example of his ambition was the arranged marriage of his only child to a wealthy and highly educated Sebatu *pasek* who was also a member of the Gianyar regional parliament. This not only indicates a typical gentry practice of making supra-village alliances, but it also shows that *kubayan* was powerful enough to attract a prestigious husband to come and live in his house (such uxori-local marriages generally being scorned).

What had not happened when I left the field was the last link in the sequence, the actual claim to a higher status title. However, on more than one occasion when *kubayan* recounted, to me and others, the origin myth of Telepud, he placed especial emphasis on the title of the leader of the ancestral founders, Sri Dalem Jangkus, with the implication, for those who wanted to see it, that something in the present situation, as Boon (1977:184) neatly puts it, was culturally out of gear.

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