



Penjor Bali and its Development

Putu Raka Setya Putra, Abbay D. Subarna

Desain Department of Universitas Komputer Indonesia (UNIKOM)
Jl. Dago (Ir. H. Djuanda) No. 160-162 Bandung 40132
rakasetyaputra2@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Streets in the province of Bali are very distinctive with penjor, especially on Balinese Hindu holidays such as Galungan and Kuningan. Penjor as part of a religious ceremony is full of meaning and the manufacture must be following the standard. Nowadays, penjor is used for events outside of the Balinese Hindu religion. Penjor has also changed its function as a decoration that adds to the lively area of Bali. To find out the development of penjor in Balinese society, a study was conducted with literature studies. The results show that based on its usefulness, penjor consists of two types, namely sacred penjor and decorative penjor. Penjor is used for other religious ceremonies such as Christmas, used for events such as New Year's, and other social occasions. Penjor forms are very diverse, with a variety of materials. The material and shape of the sacred penjor must follow the standard while the shape of the decorative penjor is free with more diverse materials. However, the essence of the meaning of penjor both for sacred penjor and decorative penjor does not shift, namely as a thanksgiving to God.

Keywords: Bali, Galungan, Hinduism, Kuningan, The meaning of Penjor

INTRODUCTION

The streets of Bali, especially during the Galungan or Kuningan celebrations, will be filled with Penjor. Penjor has become one of the main decorations in Balinese Hindu religious rituals. Penjor is a high pole made of bamboo, which is installed in front of the house and on the roadside on Hindu holidays such as Galungan and Kuningan. The meaning of penjor in social and religious relations is as a form of real value as an offering or expression of gratitude to the earth for providing a place to live and human welfare (Pratama & Marbun, 2016). Penjor is also a symbol for peace and human welfare to achieve the victory of Dharma (good) against Adharma (evil) (Sumertini, 2017). Penjor nowadays is used not only for religious rituals and guest welcoming ceremonies, it is also used for other social events and by using materials that



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are not following the standard. In addition to the shift in meaning that has an impact on the shift in the function of the penjor, there is also a shift in the material for making penjor. If we look at the history of making penjor in the Sri Jaya Kesunu Sangat era, the materials used are simple materials from the surrounding environment that are easily available, and these materials have elements and meaning in a religious context. Penjor found today undergoes changes in function and material that are different from the sacred penjor. This is the impact of the progress of Balinese civilization that affects their way of life. The cultural values of the penjor need to be known both in tradition and in their development in the present as the purpose of this research. The method used in this research is descriptive, data collection is obtained through literature study. Sugiyono (2014) states that descriptive research is carried out to answer all problems or research questions through data analysis by presenting the data that have been obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Meaning and Function of Penjor in Balinese People

Balinese people who are known to be very religious, have a culture that is closely related to religion. In everyday life, both social life and religious life, Hindus in Bali often display cultural products which are also religious symbols that have certain values according to the perceptions of each adherent (R.M. Koentjaraningrat, 1991), one of the cultural products is penjor. There are two types of penjor, namely sacred penjor and decorative penjor (Kalender Bali, 2016). The type of penjor used for non-religious events such as those used in hotels or other institutions, Balinese art parties, and some public events outside of religious ceremonies, is profane penjor which is often called “pepenjoran”. While the sacred penjor is used in religious ceremonies or yajña by Hindus. One type of penjor that we know is Penjor Galungan (Atmadja & Atmadja, 2016). The word “penjor” has the same word as “penyor”, which has a general meaning, namely pengajum, or pengastawa, if the letter "ny" is omitted, it becomes a noun, namely “penyor” which means as a means to carry out pengastawa (Bali, 2016). Installing penjor aims and means to realize a sense of devotion and as an expression of our gratitude for the prosperity given by Ida Sang Hyang Widhi. The curved bamboo is a picture of the highest mountain as a sacred place, the Penjor decoration consisting of coconut, banana, sugar cane, snacks, and cloth is representative of all plants and food clothing, which is blessed by Hyang Widhi Wasa (Ni Putu Winanti, 2016). The meaning of Penjor can be seen from the function of the penjor itself. In addition to religious ritual events such as on Galungan and Kuningan holidays, penjor is also used at the ceremony Manusa Yadnya, in a ritual of pulling teeth or also called mepandes, mesangih or metatah in Balinese and also in marriage. In this ceremony, the penjor is not



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equipped with a rebuttal or various other equipment such as fruits. In this ritual, the penjor is used as a decoration (Pratama & Marbun, 2016). Although Penjor used as a decoration, still has religious meaning, such as at the ceremony Mepandes. Mepandes or metatah, mesanggih, has the intention of flattening the 6 upper canines for a ritual as a cleansing of the bad qualities that exist in humans (Rizal, 2017). Likewise, with marriage, it is very important to maintain a balance between husband and wife so that they can continue their offspring. The formation of a new happy family for humans should be celebrated. In the ceremony, the penjor is intended to welcome the joy of a new family, as an expression of happiness, and to welcome victory at the tooth-cutting ceremony (I Gst. Pt. Bagus Suka Arjawa & Jayantiari, 2020). Penjor is a Dragon Snake Symbol. So, in making and decorating it resembles a dragon, where the dragon's head is below, and the tail is above (Raka & Wisnumurti, 2020). This symbol can be seen in the following figure: (a) (b) Figure 1. Penjor Symbol of the Dragon Basuki (a) and Penjor on the Relief of Borobudur Temple (b). (Source: <https://gamabali.com/makna-dan-pesan-dalam-penjor-galungan/>, accessed on 02 September 2020 at 18.35 WIB) As seen in Figures 1 (a) and (b), it is a symbol of the dragon Basuki and the penjor on the reliefs of Borobudur Temple. Naga Basuki has the meaning of prosperity and welfare. In addition, for Hindus in Bali, the penjor is a symbol of a mountain that is considered sacred. In Hinduism, the dharma of art and religion seems inseparable because they give each other. Art gets thematic inspiration from religion, while religion uses art to articulate its understanding or teachings so that it is easily understood by the wider community and is fun. In addition, art activities are a manifestation of the devotion of Hindus to God as the creator of the universe. So, art in this case also contains ethics. Thus, every ritual activity in Hinduism cannot be separated from artistic activities, almost all arts are involved in large-scale rituals, which causes a lot of artistic artifacts in Hinduism. In some areas in Bali, penjor is also used in the tradition of ngerebeg (traditional ceremonies), an expression of excitement for teenagers before religious ceremonies which are carried out by wrapping a branch of a salak or palm tree at the end of the penjor (Karma, 2017). The penjor is installed right on the day of the galungan ceremony, after 12 noon (Kalender Bali, 2016). This means that when we celebrate Galungan, we as humans fight against dirty thoughts, fight against negative traits and ego traits. After successfully winning the war against these thoughts and traits, as a sign of victory, a penjor is installed as a symbol of "victory" (Channel, 2020).



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The Development of the Shape and Function of Penjor

Penjor is made using a high curved bamboo pole about 10 meters high which is a picture of the highest mountain, which is decorated with various decorations of coconut leaves, accompanied by agricultural products, cakes, and white or yellow cloth, which are part of several elements which characterize the penjor for the needs of Hindu religious ceremonies in Bali (Selat, 2018). The shape of the penjor continues to develop from time to time, the penjor is made using tools or elements from the nature, such as bamboo stalks, types of leaves (plawa) coconut palm, cypress, ferns, and cordyline, for fruits and tubers that are classified as nutmeg (tubers), cassava tubers, hanging nutmeg, coconuts, bananas, cucumbers or guavas and nutmeg (seeds), corn and rice are also equipped with cakes, sugarcane and cash coins (Selat, 2018). The simplicity and the similarity or resemblance to the shape of the sacred penjor can still be seen thickly, for example, in the early 1920-1960s, as shown in the image below: Figure 2. Penjor on Galungan Day in 1920 (Source: <https://www.picuki.com/tag/Sejarahbadung>, accessed on 02 September 2020 at 16.20 WIB) Figure 3. Penjor on Galungan Day in 1936 (Source: <https://etnis.id/arti-dari-janur-kuning-pada-masyarakat-bali/>, accessed on 02 September 2020 at 16.40 WIB) From pictures 2 and 3, it can be seen that the Balinese people in maintaining the tradition and culture of the penjor are still very strong. It can be seen that the penjors are installed, made of simple materials that are available from the surrounding environment and are easy but do not change these materials, because the Hindu community at that time understood that these materials had elements and meanings that were closely related in a religious context. But along with the development of life, the forms of penjor are increasingly varied. Based on observations in several areas based on literature, such as those in the Kesiman area, the appearance is growing with different shapes and sizes, getting more lively and luxurious, as shown in the picture below: Figure 4. Galungan Penjor to be installed on Galungan Day in 2019 (Source: diakses dari <https://baliexpress.jawapos.com/read/2020/02/21/180314/>, accessed on 02 September 2020 at 15.55 WIB) Penjor has also been widely used as decoration in public events in Bali, such as class promotions and sporting events. In this celebration, the penjor is placed in a strategic position to be seen by the audience. Nowadays, upper class people also tend to make large penjors, where most of the decorations are ready to install and can be purchased. Here it can be seen that the change in penjor culture, which used to be simple but still has very strong sacred values, has turned into luxury, and seems profane (not sacred). This also happens to Christians in Bali, in contrast to Hinduism, Nurfadhilah (2016) states that Catholics in Tuka install penjors for Easter, Christmas, New Year celebrations. The installation of this penjor is the result of absorption from Balinese Hindu culture, and this starts from that of the Balinese Hindu community. Penjor installed by the Christian community is a symbol of victory and joy



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for Christmas and New Year. The penjor used has the same shape as the Balinese Hindu penjor but does not use the material commonly used for penjor for Hindu religious events. Even though it is made of bamboo with a curved peak at the end, equipped with bakang-bakang, sampian, and agricultural products on the body of the penjor, the Christian community makes the penjor by not using a sanggah to be planted next to the penjor. In addition to Christian religious events, they also install the penjor in front of the house and church. Penjor decorations along the road as well as several churches decorated with Balinese nuances such as using umbrellas (tedung Agung) in various colors add to the glory of the Christmas celebration (Nurfadhilah, 2016). One of the causes of the widespread development of the form and function of the penjor which in the past was made simple and made by the community, is now made in more diverse forms, and there are penjor sellers so that the penjor is no longer made in cooperation, namely due to technological and industrial advances that change people's lifestyles. In this case, Ngafifi (2014) states "Technological progress is something that cannot be avoided in this life because technological progress will run following scientific progress. Every innovation is created to provide positive benefits for human life. Technology also provides many conveniences, as well as a new way of carrying out human activities. Technology has influenced the mindset of humans themselves, and as a result indirectly technology also greatly affects human actions and patterns of life (Ngafifi, 2014). From the phenomena that occur, the development of the form and function of the penjor cannot be avoided, this change can be addressed with a positive attitude, on the creativity side, the shape of the penjor becomes more lively. However, the meaning of penjor for religious events both Hindu and Christian, does not change in meaning. The use of penjor on non-religious events also contains the essence of the meaning of penjor, namely gratitude. However, these developments and changes still require replanting the meaning of penjor in the lives of Hindus in Bali which can be carried out by religious institutions or Hindu religious organizations, so that people can still know and understand the meaning and function of penjor from the Hindu religious side. This needs to be done to preserve the penjor following the standard.

Making of Sacred Penjor

Nowadays, there are many ready-made penjors available for sale, as previously described, the shapes and styles of penjors are very diverse, with the use of new materials. Most of the penjor materials sold today are mostly made from palm leaves or coconut leaves from Sulawesi, even using cork or styrofoam materials and colorful mute decorations so that penjor which was once made from natural materials is now starting to mix with other materials from the factory. The



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sacred penjor structure for Hindu religious ceremonies is divided into three parts, namely the base, the middle, and the top (Juliawan, 2019). The sacred penjor is still made based on the existing standard. In making the sacred penjor, several points must be met so that the religious values, traditions, and culture that have existed for generations in the penjor remain intact. The steps for making the sacred penjor are as follows (Gama Bali, 2019). i) Penjor is made of bamboo with curved peaks, as the "Dragon Body", bamboo as a symbol of the invitation to life and also as a symbol of the power of Lord Maheswara. ii) The body of the bamboo is wrapped around the leaves (busung), ambu or kasa (the leaves of the jackfruit tree), wrapped from the bamboo body (1 to 2 meters) to the end of the bamboo. Winding as a belt (tie) of "Dragon skin"; iii) An inch from the head, bamboo decorated with palm leaves/young palm leaves, wrapped like "Dragon hair"; iv) At the base of the wrapped dragon hair leaves, the middle part of the penjor is filled with leaves (plawa, coconut leaves, Ambu, coconut), and at the end, it is filled with agricultural products, including Nutmeg Bungkah (Tubers), Hanging Nutmeg (Coconuts, Bananas), Pala Wija (Sugar Cane, Corn, and Rice), decorated with bakang-bakang from young palm leaves (Ambu) or janur as "dragon belly". v) At the end of the bamboo, on the curved bamboo peaks, white-yellow corks are attached, Gina's snacks and Uli's snacks are hung, then "Sampyan Penjor" which contains the canang sari and its porosity is hung as "the dragon tail". vi) At the bottom, "Dragon head" is filled with "Sanggah Ardha Candra". Sanggah Penjor "Dragon mouth" uses bamboo, with a rectangular base shape and a semi circular curved roof, resembling a crescent moon. This Sanggah is filled with decorations from the end of the palm leaves that are not trimmed so that it resembles a "Dragon Beard" and white-yellow cloth as Wastra. Sanggah is decorated as beautifully as possible, filled with flowers on the right and left sides like filling the ears with flowers and filled with hangers and lamak. The shape of the penjor which is designed to be curved and high is a representation of Mount Agung. The existence of Mount Agung for the Balinese people is so important, it is considered the abode of the Gods. Each of these raw materials is a symbol of the divine palace according to Hindu theology (Ni Putu Winanti, 2016). The various materials used in making penjor are symbols of the power of gods. Therefore, the manufacture of penjor should not be arbitrary and must follow the rules or regulations applied.

CONCLUSION

Based on the phenomena found in Balinese community obtained from literature, the main points obtained are, the use of penjor in Balinese community shifts, so that apart from being used in Hindu religious ceremonies such as Galungan and Kuningan, penjor is also used in Christmas events, and other social events. Therefore, there are two types of penjor, namely the sacred



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penjor for Hindu religious ceremonies and the decorative penjor for use outside of the Hindu religion. The use of materials on the penjor has also changed, the sacred penjor uses materials found in nature, the decorative penjor uses natural and synthetic materials. Penjor is no longer made in cooperation, penjor can be purchased. The sacred penjor has elements and meanings that are closely related to the Hindu religious context, symbolizing sacred symbols from the teachings of the Vedic scriptures, which are closely related to the values and ethics of Hinduism, so that in its manufacture, it cannot be separated from religious rules. Based on Hindu religious rules, the making of the sacred penjor consists of three parts and six stages of manufacture, with materials found from nature. Meanwhile, for the manufacture of the decorative penjor, it is permissible not to use Hindu religious rules. The meaning of penjor in religious traditions, both Hindu and other religious events and general social events, essentially has not changed, namely an expression of gratitude for the gift of God Almighty.

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