IJ HC
International Jurnal on Hindu Culture
ISSN : 3124-5625 Vol 4, No 2

THE BAYUH OTON RITUAL IN BALINESE HINDUISM: A CASE STUDY OF RITUAL PRACTICE AND TEXTUAL TRADITION IN KINTAMANI, BALI

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Received: 29-06-2026 **Revised:** 04-10-2026 **Accepted:** 08-10-2026

Abstract
In Balinese Hinduism, the Otonan ceremony, held on the 210th day of a child's life according to the Balinese Uku calendar, is considered a fundamental rite of protection against evil spirits. When this rite is not performed at the appropriate time, families may instead conduct the Bayuh Oton, a substitute ceremony that can be held at any point from childhood through adulthood. Although both rites serve comparable protective functions, the Bayuh Oton has received limited scholarly documentation compared with the Otonan. This article addresses that gap through a qualitative case study based on direct observation of a Bayuh Oton ceremony held in Kintamani, Bali, for an adult who had not undergone the Otonan as a child. Using participant observation supplemented by photographic documentation and comparison with written ritual manuals, this study reconstructs the full ceremonial sequence and examines how the officiating priest's practice aligned with, departed from, or supplemented these texts. The findings highlight both the shared ritual structure and the individual variation inherent in its performance, contributing empirical grounding for future comparative studies of textual prescription and lived religious practice in Bali.

Keywords: Balinese Hinduism; *Bayuh Oton*; *Otonan*; ritual practice; Kintamani.

INTRODUCTION

Balinese Hinduism is distinguished among the various regional expressions of Hinduism in Indonesia by its dense repertoire of life-cycle rites (rites de passage) and annual ceremonies, through which individuals are ritually protected, purified, and integrated into their kin group and cosmological order. Among these rites of passage, the *Otonan* – a ceremony celebrating the completion of a child's first 210-day Balinese Uku calendar year – occupies a central place, functioning to ward off evil spirits and to welcome the child's soul, believed to reside in the heavenly realm, back to the earthly world (Eiseman, 2009). However, not every individual undergoes the *Otonan* at the prescribed time due to various familial, economic, or circumstantial constraints. In such cases, Balinese Hindu communities perform a substitute ceremony known as *Bayuh Oton*, which may be conducted at any point in a person's life – from early childhood through adulthood – according to individual or family initiative. Despite serving a comparable protective function to the *Otonan*, the *Bayuh Oton* ritual has received considerably less scholarly

attention, and its performance, sequence, and underlying textual references remain only partially documented in the existing literature.

Previous scholarship on Balinese Hindu ritual has tended to focus either on textual philology or on general ethnographic description, with relatively little work bridging the two. Textual studies such as Lévi's (1933) compilation of Sanskrit manuscripts from Bali and Pudja's (2007) critical edition and Indonesian translation of the *Wedaparikrama* have made important ritual texts accessible, yet these works remain primarily philological in orientation and do not examine how such texts are actually enacted – or reinterpreted – by officiating priests in contemporary practice. Ethnographic accounts, meanwhile, such as Eiseman's (1990) broad survey of Balinese religion and Suhardana's (2008) description of daily worship practices, offer valuable contextual grounding but do not provide a fine-grained, sequential record of a specific *Bayuh Oton* ceremony as it unfolds in real time. Even within the author's own prior research on Balinese life-cycle rites – including the study of the *Tulung Lanin* ritual performed for three-month-old infants (Yamaguchi, 2015) and the analysis of the Shiva-Buddha concept manifested in Balinese Hindu temples (Yamaguchi, 2019) – the *Bayuh Oton* ritual itself has not yet been examined in comparable ethnographic depth. This gap is significant because the *Bayuh Oton*, unlike the more fixed and age-specific *Otonan*, is characterized by considerable temporal flexibility and by variation in how officiating priests draw upon written ritual manuals versus orally transmitted teachings from their own gurus, making it a particularly rich site for investigating the relationship between textual prescription and lived religious practice.

Building on this identified gap, the present article aims to provide a detailed, sequential documentation and analysis of a *Bayuh Oton* ceremony observed by the author on November 21, 2017, in Lateng Village, Kintamani District, Bangli Regency, Bali. The ceremony is of particular interest because the person for whom it was performed had not undergone the *Otonan* ritual in childhood and elected to undergo the *Bayuh Oton* as an adult for his own spiritual protection – a circumstance that foregrounds the ritual's function as a corrective or compensatory rite rather than a routine developmental milestone. Specifically, this article seeks to (1) reconstruct the full sequence of preparatory, central, and closing ritual acts performed during the ceremony; (2) examine the extent to which the priest's performance corresponded to, deviated from, or supplemented the prescriptions found in written ritual manuals such as the *Wedaparikrama* and the *Bayuh Oton Ring Kamulan*; and (3) identify the distinctive features of this particular enactment that may reflect individual, familial, or regional variation within the broader tradition.

The academic contribution of this study lies in its provision of primary ethnographic data that connects textual ritual studies with lived religious practice, thereby offering a methodological model for future comparative research on the relationship between prescriptive ritual texts and their actual performance in Southeast Asian Hindu traditions. By documenting precisely where the observed ritual sequence followed, omitted, reordered, or supplemented the *Wedaparikrama*, this article contributes empirical evidence to ongoing scholarly discussions regarding the transmission, standardization, and

individual adaptation of Tantric-influenced ritual knowledge in Bali. This work forms part of a larger research project on "The Reception and Transformation of Indian Religions in Balinese Hinduism, Indonesia," and thus also contributes to a broader comparative understanding of how Indian religious elements have been received, localized, and transformed within Balinese religious life.

Beyond its academic significance, this study carries practical value for the preservation of Balinese Hindu ritual knowledge. Because ritual practice in Bali is transmitted largely through oral instruction from *guru* to disciple and is subject to considerable individual variation, detailed documentation of specific ceremonies – such as the one presented here – serves as a valuable record for Balinese Hindu communities, priests-in-training, and cultural heritage institutions seeking to understand and safeguard the diversity of existing ritual practice. The novelty of this article, therefore, rests not in claiming to describe a singular "standard" form of the *Bayuh Oton* ritual, but in offering a carefully documented case study that illuminates both the shared structural logic of the ceremony and the individual variation inherent in its performance – an emphasis that has been largely absent from prior research on this specific rite.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative case study approach grounded in direct ethnographic observation of a single *Bayuh Oton* ceremony held on November 21, 2017, in Lateng Village, Kintamani District, Bangli Regency, Bali. The author observed the ceremony from preparation through conclusion, documenting the sequence of ritual acts, mantras, mudras, ritual implements, and offerings, supplemented by photographic documentation and informal interviews with the officiating priest, Ida Pandita Mpu Parama Dharma (Venerable Paramadharma), a priest of the Shiva tradition (*Ajaran Siwa*) within Balinese Hinduism, at Griya Giri Gosrama, his family temple. The observed ritual sequence was cross-checked against the Wedaparikrama and Bayuh Oton Ring Kamulan, two ritual manuals consulted by the priest, with Pudja's (2007) critical edition and Indonesian translation of the *Wedaparikrama* serving as the principal textual reference, supplemented by Lévi's (1933) compilation and Gonda and Hooykaas's (1971) collection of Balinese Hindu hymns. This comparative procedure enabled the identification of correspondences and variations between the prescribed textual sequence and the priest's performance, including the omission, reordering, or supplementation of mantras and ritual acts transmitted orally through the priest's guru.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Transformation of Ritual Practices in Contemporary Context

The *Bayuh* Oton ceremony discussed in this article was held on November 21, 2017, in Lateng Village, Kintamani District, Bangli Regency, Bali, and consisted of the following sequence of events. Prior to the ceremony, the chief priest (then 47 years old) stopped at his family home in Baturiti District, Tabanan Regency, where he received a bottle filled with water from a nearby river that had been prepared in advance by his family members. The

priest then offered the water from this bottle at the central shrine (B. *kumelan*) – a raised-platform shrine with a thatched roof and three doors, commonly found in household temples and dedicated to the three major Hindu deities Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu (Eiseman, 1990, p. 273) – located within his family temple (B. *merajan*), paying homage to the deities enshrined there (Photo 1). This act is considered both a form of homage to the priest's own family temple and a means of purifying the water obtained from the river.



Photo 1. The priest offers a jar filled with water at the shrine in his family's home temple and worships the three deities – Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu.

Afterward, the priest proceeded to Griya Giri Gosrama, a religious facility in Lateng Village, where he had been requested to perform the Bayuh Oton ritual that day. This facility functions both as a religious center (B. *asrama*) for the faithful and as the residence of the officiating priest, Ida Pandita Mpu Parama Dharma. The title "Ida Pandita Mpu," or "Ida Mpu," denotes a spiritual teacher and refers to a priest who, although not of Brahmin caste as is the case with the Pedanda priest (B. pedanda), has undergone specialized training under a guru and performs rituals using a greater number of mantras and mudras than other non-Brahmin priests, such as the *Pemangku* (B. *pemangku*). Balinese Hindu priests are generally categorized into three traditions – the Shiva tradition (*Ajaran Siwa*), the Buddha tradition (*Ajaran Buda*), and the Vishnu tradition (*Ajaran Wisnu*). Notably, the term "Buddha" here refers to the widely recognized Balinese Hindu concept of "Shiva-Buddha," which identifies Lord Shiva with the Buddha; this concept is acknowledged within Hinduism itself and is distinct from Buddhism, one of Indonesia's officially recognized religions (Yamaguchi, 2019). Ida Pandita Mpu Parama Dharma belongs to the Shiva tradition. The *Bayuh Oton* ritual examined in this article was performed at the temple within this complex – which also serves as the priest's family temple – beginning at 12:58 a.m. and lasting approximately one hour.

Throughout the ceremony, the priest drew on two principal ritual texts. During the preparatory rituals held in the first half of the ceremony, he referred to the *Wedaparikrama*, a text composed in a mixture of Sanskrit and Balinese; during the central rituals held in the second half, he referred to the *Bayuh Oton Ring Kamulan*, composed

similarly in a mixture of Old Javanese and Sanskrit. In addition to these texts, the priest performed mantras and mudras he had learned directly from his own teacher, elements not recorded in either manuscript.

Although the *Wedaparikrama* describes ritual procedures in Balinese while rendering its mantras in Sanskrit, the text has been made accessible through two principal publications: it is included in Sanskrit Texts from Bāli (Gaekwad's Oriental Series No. 62), published by the Gaekwad Oriental Institute in Baroda (Lévi, 1933), and it was subsequently published together with an Indonesian translation and commentary by the Indonesian scholar G. Pudja (Pudja, 2007). A further textual source consulted in this study is a manuscript written in Balinese script and held in the personal possession of Venerable *Paramadharma*, the officiant of the ritual described here. The following subsection presents the observed sequence of the *Bayuh Oton* ritual performed on November 21.

Structure of the Bayuh Oton Ritual

The Bayuh Oton ritual performed on November 21, 2017, followed a threefold structure consisting of preparatory rituals, a central ritual, and a closing ritual, as outlined below.

1. Preparatory Rituals
    a. Preparation of Holy Water (B. *tirta*) (B. *Argha Patra*) – although the term *arghapātra* exists in Sanskrit, it refers, according to Monier-Williams's Sanskrit-English Dictionary, to a vessel containing water offered upon a guest's arrival (Monier-Williams, 1899) – and the purification of offerings, ritual utensils, and the priest's body through mantras
    b. Purification with holy water (B. *Ngelisin*)
    c. Inviting the deities to the ritual site and offering gifts to them (B. *Ngayabang Banten*)
    d. Offering to evil spirits (B. *Ngayabang Segehan*)
2. Central Ritual
    a. *Natab* for the *byakala* offerings
    b. *Natab* for *Bayuh* Oton
    c. Purification with holy water (B. *Melukat*)
    d. Wearing of ceremonial bracelets (B. *Mejajaya*)
    e. *Natab* for all offerings
    f. Worship (B. *Sembahyang*)
    g. Requesting holy water (B. *Nunas Tirta*)
3. Closing Ritual; including *natab* for offerings (B. *Natab Banten Peras*)

Record of the *Bayuh Oton* Ritual

Preparatory Rituals

1. Preparation of Holy Water and Purification of Offerings, Utensils, and the Priest's Body

    The *Bayuh Oton* ritual on this day was held in a building called the *pawedaan*, located at the very front of the temple within the complex (Photo 2). Within the temple grounds, there was an offering platform called the *pangungan*, separate from the *pawedaan*, where many offerings were also placed (Photo 3). Meanwhile, the *pawedaan* was lined with offerings such as flowers, fruits, sweets,

fried chicken, eggs, and arrangements made from leaves and grains; the priest began the ritual facing these offerings.

The priest first performed the ritual of preparing holy water. He began by donning ceremonial robes and a sash (B. *santog*). As he did so, he recited, in order: "*oṃ taṃ mahādevāya namaḥ*" (while putting on the robes), "*oṃ aṃ śivasthitikāya namaḥ*" (when wearing a thin, long tunic), and "*oṃ maṃ īśvaraparamaśivāya namaḥ*" (when wearing the santog) (Pudja, 2007, pp. 61–63; Lévi, 1933, p. 7) (Photo 4). In this article, Sanskrit mantras are transcribed following standard Sanskrit romanization as far as possible; thus, although in Balinese pronunciation Śiva is often written "Siwa" and Viṣṇu as "Wisnu," and "va" is pronounced as "wa", the letter "va" has here been retained as is. Afterward, the priest sat with his back to the offerings and purified himself with water.

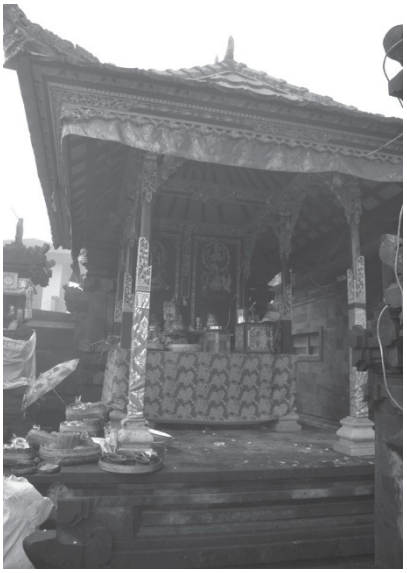


Photo 2. The building (*pawedaan*) where the *Bayuh Oton* ritual was held. This photo was taken while preparations were still underway; the tray of offerings on the floor of the building was later placed on another offering table.

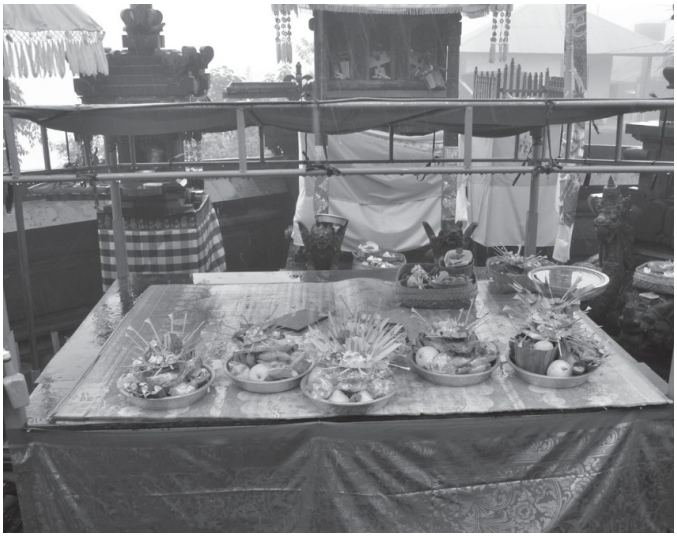


Photo 3. The place where offerings are placed, called a "*pangungan*."

There, he first chanted "*oṃ khaḥ olkāya īśvarāya namaḥ svāhā*" to purify his feet, "*oṃ hraḥ astrāya namaḥ*" to purify his hands, and "*baṃ uṃ hraḥ phat astrāya namaḥ*" to purify his mouth by pouring water from a vessel held in his hand (Pudja, 2007, pp. 65–67). He then formed the *Astra Mudra* (*astramudrā*) and chanted a series of mantras instructing, "Purify yourself". This portion is not found in the *Wedaparikrama*, and the priest reportedly learned it, together with the accompanying mudra, from his own teacher. Afterward, the priest chanted the mantra "*oṃ uṃ raḥ phat astrāya namaḥ*" and so on (Pudja, 2007, p. 85; Lévi, 1933, p. 8), raising both hands in front of his chest and forming a mudra by touching the tips of his middle fingers together. According to Venerable Ida Mpu Paramadharma, who presided over the day's ritual, this act signifies the purification of internal impurities such as anger and desire (Photo 5).

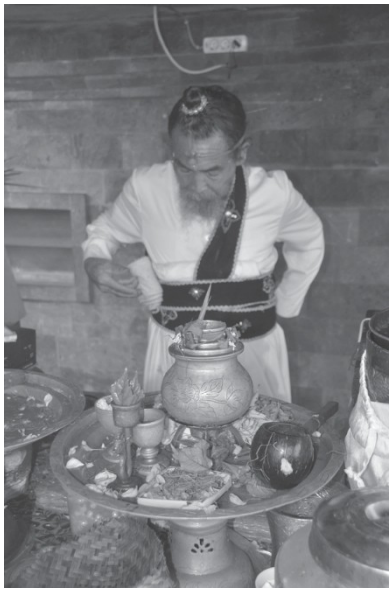


Photo 4. A monk chants mantras while putting on the ceremonial sash.

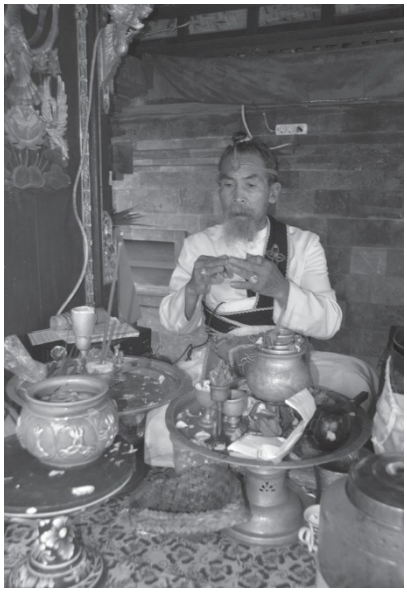


Photo 5. A monk forming mudras to purify his inner self.

Next, the priest repositioned himself to face the offerings and formed a mudra while chanting a mantra in worship of Lord Shiva, a mudra he refers to as the "Mudra of Shiva's Dance" (B. *tarian siwa*). The ritual implements were then purified: holding an incense stick, the priest chanted "*oṃ aṃ dhūpadīpa astrāya namaḥ*", followed by the "*Astra Mantra*", "*oṃ uṃ raḥ phat astrāya namaḥ, oṃ ātmā tattvātmā śuddha māṃ svāhā*" and so on, before using a brush-like tool made of grass to sprinkle holy water from the vessel before him (B. *swanba*) onto the offerings to purify them.

After purifying the offerings, the priest chanted a mantra while sprinkling holy water onto his own body and head with the brush. He then inserted an incense stick into the hollow of the vajra bell held in his left hand and chanted a mantra while placing a flower on the bell; the corresponding mantra for this act does not appear in the *Wedaparikrama* (Pudja, 2007). While the priest chanted, his wife scooped holy water from another vessel with a ladle, transferred it into a small glass container, and placed the container among the offerings.

The priest then rang the vajra bell while chanting a mantra and sprinkled holy water onto the fingers of both hands to purify them: "*oṃ iṃ namaḥ, oṃ taṃ namaḥ, oṃ aṃ namaḥ*", and so on, purifying the right hand in the order of thumb, index finger, middle finger, ring finger, and little finger; and "*oṃ haṃ hṝdayāya namaḥ, oṃ riṃ kāyasirase namaḥ, oṃ bhūr bhuvaḥ*", and so on, purifying the five fingers of the left hand in the same order. A further series of mantras was then chanted, including the *pañcākṣaramantra* and the *gāyatrī mantra*, which originated in India and is considered the most important and fundamental mantra in modern Balinese Hinduism.

After chanting this series of mantras, the priest chanted "*oṃ bhūr bhuvaḥ svaḥ svāhā, mahāgaṅgāyai tīrtha pavitrāni svāhā*" – rendered by Pudja (2007, p. 180) as "*mahāgaṅgāyao*", though this article follows the reading given by Lévi (1933, p. 21) – and stirred the holy water in the vessel with a grass brush. This act is known as Argha Patra, the ritual of preparing holy water, and is considered its central moment: according to the teachings of Guru Paramadharma, it is in this act that the water in the vessel is believed to be transformed from ordinary water into holy water. Immediately afterward, the priest applied raw rice (B. *bija*) dipped in the holy water to his forehead, chest, and other parts of his body to purify himself externally, and then drank some of the holy water from his right hand to purify himself internally.

This water had, in fact, already been used earlier in the ceremony – for the purification of the offerings, for example – yet it remained water that the priest had prepared in advance specifically as holy water. A further series of mantras was recited here, through which the holy water is believed to gradually increase in sanctity. The priest then cut a thin sheet of gold with scissors; together with this gold sheet, fragments of silver, brass, and iron were placed into the holy water, finally completing its preparation. Once the holy water was complete, the priest, wearing a rosary (*mālā*) around his neck, chanted the mantra "*oṃ hraṃ ma japa gṝhaisvaḥ satprayojanaṃ dehi*" and so on (Pudja, 2007, p. 218), performing the rite known as *Japa Gaṇitri* – a ritual in which the prayer beads used in the ceremony are likewise purified through the recitation of mantras.

Afterward, the priest chanted a mantra invoking the removal of sin and the establishment of purity (Pudja, 2007, p. 74), sprinkled holy water onto the ceremonial crown (B. *bhawa*), touched it with incense smoke, and placed it upon his head (Photo 6). After donning the crown, the priest chanted a mantra paying homage to Lord Shiva in his fourteen forms, including *Prasādakālaśiva* and *Sthitikālaśiva* (Pudja, 2007, pp. 75-76). This act concluded the process described in this section, encompassing the preparation of holy water and the purification of the offerings, ritual implements, and the priest's body.



Photo 6. After the holy water is prepared, the monk puts on a crown in preparation for the next act.

2. Purification with Holy Water (B. *Ngelisin*)

With the holy water prepared as described above, the priest, ringing the vajra bell with his left hand, held a small red flower (B. *kalpika*) tied to a leaf in his right hand and chanted mantras such as "*oṃ saṃ namaḥ, oṃ baṃ namaḥ*". Here, the "Ten Seeds" (*daśākṣara*) were recited toward the ten directions – the four cardinal directions, the four intermediate directions, the zenith, and the center.

A mantra was then chanted a total of ten times to purify the ritual site, recited twice toward the center. Next, the priest chanted the mantras "*Durmangala*" and "*Prayascita*" in quick succession over an offering called a *byakala*; these particular mantras are not included in the *Wedaparikrama* consulted for this study (Pudja, 2007). Meanwhile, the priest's wife held up a broom-like implement called a *lis* (B. *lis*) before the priest. While chanting mantras, the priest sprinkled holy water from a vessel onto the *lis* with a brush-like implement to purify it, and handed a *kalpika* flower to his wife, who placed it inside the *lis*. During this act, the priest chanted hymns in praise of Paśupati (Shiva).

Afterward, the priest's wife – holding the *durmangala* offering in her left hand and a squirrel in her right, both taken from within the *pawedaan* – stepped out onto the eaves of the building to face the temple shrines lined up within the complex. While the priest chanted the mantra, she held the *durmangala* offering in

her left hand and spun the squirrel in her right, thereby purifying all the temple shrines with holy water (Photo 7). Meanwhile, the priest spread both hands before his chest, forming a mudra by touching the tips of his left and right middle fingers, and continued chanting "*oṃ oṃ paramaśivāya namaḥ, oṃ oṃ sadāśivāya namaḥ*", and so on, while performing a gesture of inserting a lamp into the hollow of the vajra bell – an act known as *dīpaprakāśana* (Pudja, 2007, p. 104). The priest then continued reciting the mantra while scattering flowers held in his right hand over the offerings before him and sprinkling holy water to purify them. In this way, the purification of the offerings and the shrines was repeated many times in preparation for inviting the deities into the ritual space.



Photo 7. The monk's wife sprinkles holy water while spinning a risu.

3. Inviting the Deities to the Ceremonial Site; Offering Sacrifices to the Deities (B. *Ngayabang Banten*)
4. Offering to Evil Spirits (B. *Ngayabang Segehan*)

Here, the priest chanted mantras to invite the deities to the ritual site. The deities invited included male deities such as Shiva and Surya, along with the goddesses Sarasvati, Prithvi, and Śrī, the ancestral spirits (B. *Batara Kawitan*), and a group of male deities known as the *nawasanga*, who guard the eight cardinal directions and the center. Guru Paramadharma referred to these deities collectively as *istadewata* (for further discussion of the *nawasanga*, see Yamaguchi, 2003, p. 54). The *Wedaparikrama* also lists eight goddesses to be invoked at this stage: the Seven Mother Goddesses – Brāhmī, Maheśvarī, Kaumārī, and others – together with an eighth, Gāmendrī (Pudja, 2007, p. 111). Although the Eight Mother Goddesses are also venerated in Nepal, the goddess Gāmendrī does not appear there; instead, Mahālakṣmī is listed as the eighth.

After inviting the deities and ancestral spirits, the priest chanted phrases such as "*oṃ puṣ padantāya namaḥ*" and offered the offerings (B. *banten*) placed before him to the deities. Meanwhile, his wife stood at the eaves of the building and, performing the *natab* – a gesture of waving her right hand – likewise offered the offerings to the deities inside the temple (Photo 8). "*Natab*" means "to touch"

in Balinese and is frequently performed in Balinese Hindu ritual; it does not, however, involve actually touching the offerings, but rather consists of slowly waving both hands toward the object. It is also used to transmit the deities' spiritual energy to children or, as in this case, to present gifts to the deities, and is believed to signify the sending or receiving of spiritual energy between worshipper and deity.

After offering the gifts to the gods, the priest offered a small lump of offerings – made by mixing cooked rice (called *segehan*), salt, and red onions – to the evil spirit (B. *Bhutakala*). In Balinese Hindu ritual, offerings made to the gods are invariably followed by offerings to the evil spirits. At this time, the priest chanted a mantra while ringing the vajra bell with his left hand and finally performed the gesture of inserting a lamp into its hollow. With this offering of *segehan* to the evil spirit, the preparatory ritual described in this section concluded, and the central ritual began.



Photo 8. The monk's wife performs the natab ritual to offer sacrifices to the deities.

Central Rituals

1. *Natab* for the *Byakala* Offerings

In the preparatory rites described in the previous section, the focus lay on the priest's preparation of holy water, during which the ritual master – the individual who had requested the *Bayuh Oton* be performed – took almost no active part. In the central ritual, however, the ritual master became actively involved. At its outset, he joined his palms in prayer while seated in a chair. The priest's wife then carried the *byakala* offerings, purified earlier, and placed them on a tray before the chief priest, from which she took a replica of an ancient Chinese coin, an item frequently used in Balinese Hindu ritual. She placed the coin together with the leaves between the middle and index fingers of the ritual master's hand and placed a leaf atop his head (Photo 9); the priest performed no specific actions and chanted no mantras during this act. Afterward, the wife used the leaves to brush the ritual master's chest, both shoulders, and head, and the ritual master himself finally raised both hands behind his back to brush away the remaining leaves.

Next, the priest chanted a mantra called *Durmangala*, during which his wife dipped a spoon into holy water contained within a coconut and sprinkled it onto the principal participant's head. The priest then chanted a mantra called *Prayascita* to atone for the participant's past transgressions; although a *Prayascita* mantra also appears in the *Wedaparikrama* (Lévi, 1933, p. 27), the mantra recited on this occasion differed from that version. Meanwhile, the wife held the byakala offering in her left hand and sprinkled holy water from the coconut onto the ritual master's head, who performed the *natab* by waving both hands while seated. These acts are understood as preparation for the *natab* performed in the following stage, *Bayuh Oton*.



Photo 9. The monk's wife places a leaf on the chief priest's crown.

2. The *Natab* of *Bayuh Oton*

Next, the priest stated the name of the ritual master and other identifying details, then chanted a mantra dedicated to Śivagamana, the Lord of the World (*jagatpati*) and remover of obstacles. For this portion, the priest referred to a handwritten text in Balinese script in his own possession, whose is wording closely resembles the Sadāśivastava recorded by Goudriaan and Hooykaas (1971, p. 454). At this moment, the priest swayed his hands in a *natab* gesture (Photo 10), an act believed to allow the priest to receive the spiritual energy of Lord Śiva.

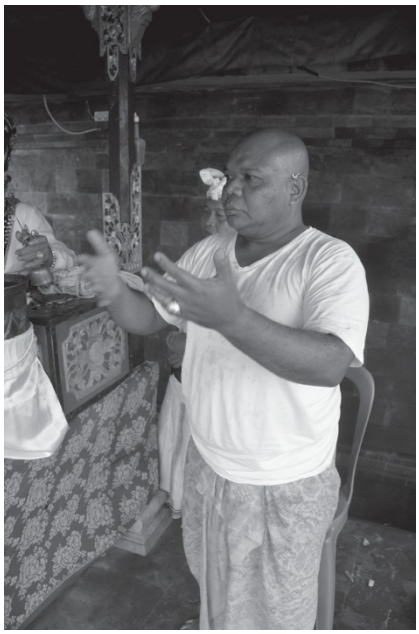


Photo 10. The priest performs natab to receive the power of Lord Shiva.

3. Purification with Holy Water (B. *Melukat*)

Next followed the ritual purification of the priest with holy water. Balinese Hinduism is also known as the "religion of holy water" (B. *agama tirta*), and the reception of holy water is considered the ritual's most essential element. On this day, the priest had brought to the ritual site water collected by his family from a river near his parents' home; this water, obtained from a nearby river, had earlier been placed and ritually sanctified at a shrine within the temple where the ceremony was held.

First, the priest repeatedly chanted the Śivagamana mantra described in the previous section. His wife then brought a jar containing the water previously presented by the ritual master – now transformed into holy water – from the shrine within the temple to the ritual site (the *pawedaan*), and together with the priest poured it repeatedly over the ritual master's head (Photo 11).



Photo 11. The monk's wife repeatedly pours holy water over the chief worshipper.

4. Wearing of the Ritual Bracelet (B. *Mejajaya*)

   Having been purified through this repeated dousing with holy water, the chief priest moved to another location within the complex to change his clothes before returning to the ceremonial site for the next phase. The priest wrapped a ceremonial bracelet (B. *karawista*) – made by twisting together white, red, and blue threads – around the principal participant's right wrist (Photo 12), while the participant joined his palms in prayer. According to Venerable *Paramadharma*, this act signifies the eradication of the burdens the participant has carried throughout his life. The priest then chanted a mantra over the holy water, poured it onto the participant's right palm three times, and the participant drank it to purify himself internally. Afterward, the priest wrapped a band (B. *sirawista*) made of kusa grass around the participant's forehead. Kusa grass (*Poa cynosuroides*) is a plant also used in Indian ritual practice; the specific source of the grass used in this particular ceremony, however, remains unknown and is noted here as a topic for future clarification. Holding a lamp in his right hand and a vajra bell in his left, the priest then recited the mantra "*oṃ oṃ paramaśivāya namaḥ, oṃ oṃ sadāśivāya namaḥ, oṃ oṃ sadārudrāya namaḥ*", and so on (Pudja, 2007, p. 104), while performing the *natab* by waving both hands. According to the priest, the act of wrapping this band around the participant's forehead serves to purify the head.
5. *Natab* for All Offerings
6. Worship (B. *Sembahyang*)

   After the principal participant's head had been purified, the priest and his wife performed *natab* upon all the offerings placed within the temple, dedicating them to the male and female deities beginning with Lord Shiva, who had earlier been invited to the ceremony. Worship (*sembahyang*) followed. This form of worship is not unique to Bali; it is understood to encompass the general "Five Prostrations" (B. *Pancasembah*) performed by Hindus at temples and elsewhere, typically consisting of: (1) prostration with empty hands, purifying the worshipper; (2) prostration to *Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa*, the supreme deity of Balinese Hinduism; (3) prostration to one's own guardian deity (B. *istadewata*); (4) worship of *Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa* as the manifestation of one's guardian deity, so as to receive divine blessing; and (5) a concluding prayer (Suhardana, 2008, pp. 17-18).

   In this particular ritual, the priest first handed the ritual master several lit incense sticks, which he held while joining his palms in prayer. The priest then chanted "*oṃ ātmā tattvātmā śuddha māṃ svāhā*" and "*oṃ puṣ padantāya namaḥ*", and so on, while the ritual master raised both hands to forehead level in homage (Photo 13). On this occasion, the priest recited not only these five homage mantras but also words of reverence directed to the goddess Sarasvati, the goddess Prithvi, and other deities.



Photo 12. A monk wraps a ceremonial bracelet around the chief priest's right hand.



Photo 13. The principal participant raises both hands in prayer and performs the "Five Prostrations." Meanwhile, the priest chants the words of worship to the deities.

7. Requesting Holy Water (B. *Nunas* Tirta)

The offering of holy water, the final stage of the central ritual, then began. The priest poured holy water prepared on his own side into the vessel containing holy water that the chief priest had brought and had had sanctified during the ceremony. The priest's wife then used a brush-like tool to sprinkle holy water from that vessel toward the deities enshrined within the temple. The chief priest then received holy water from her with his right hand and drank it three times (Photo 14), after which she sprinkled holy water onto his head. Finally, the chief priest received raw rice (B. *bija*) soaked in holy water from his wife and touched it to his forehead and to the area behind both ears. With this act, the central ritual concluded.

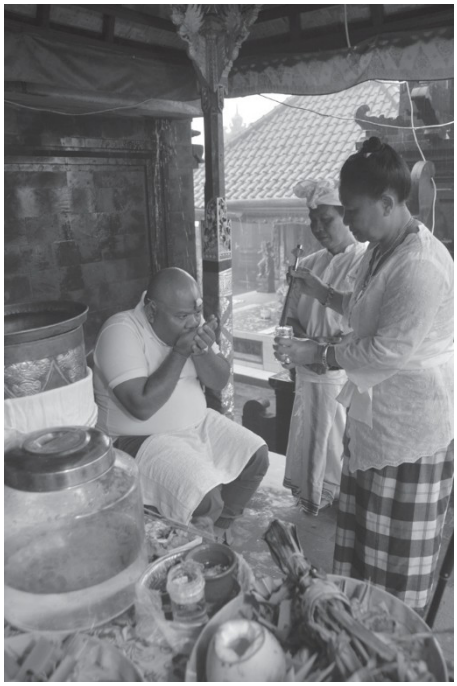


Photo 14. The priest receives holy water from the monk's wife with his right hand and drinks it.

Closing Rituals: Natab for the Additional Offerings (B. Natab Banten Peras)

After the conclusion of the central ritual, the *natab* for the additional offerings (B. *banten peras*) was performed as the closing ceremony. The priest's wife went to the platform where the offerings were placed within the temple grounds and took chicken meat, raw eggs, rice, and other items from the offering containers into small vessels, bringing them back to the ritual site; the offerings contained in these small vessels are referred to as "plus offerings". As the priest chanted a mantra, his wife held the plus offerings in her left hand and, holding a flower petal between the index and middle fingers of her right hand, swayed it to perform the *natab*, while the priest likewise swayed both hands to perform *natab* on the plus offerings (Photo 15). In Balinese, *peras* can refer to "money for the adoption of a child", "something offered to make amends", or "something offered in redemption"; here, however, it is presumed to represent an act of performing *natab* on the plus offerings in order to receive the power of the gods. It should also be noted that such offerings have traditionally been prepared by the women of the household several days in advance of the ceremony, although in recent years it has become increasingly common to commission them from specialized vendors; the offerings used in this particular *Bayuh Oton* ceremony were likewise obtained in this manner. With this final *natab* on the plus offerings, the *Bayuh Oton* ritual for the day came to its close.

CONCLUSION

This article has presented a detailed, sequential documentation of the *Bayuh Oton* ceremony performed on November 21, 2017, in Lateng Village, Kintamani District, Bangli Regency, Bali. The entire ritual took approximately one hour to complete; however, the preparation of holy water (*Argha Patra*), together with the purification of the offerings, ritual implements, and the priest's body through mantras, took more than thirteen

minutes, or roughly one-quarter of the total duration, underscoring the critical importance accorded to the preparation of holy water within the ritual as a whole. By contrast, comparatively little time was devoted to the act of inviting the deities and presenting offerings, the ritual instead centering on the practice of offering a large quantity of pre-prepared items through *natab* – a pattern that stands in contrast to Indian Hindu practice, in which, for example, the "Sixteen-Fold Offering" (*śoḍaśopacārapūjā*) presents each offering individually while mantras are recited in turn. In the central ritual, the ritual master – who had performed no active role during the preparatory rites – became directly involved, with the priest's wife functioning as a crucial intermediary between the priest and the ritual master, and between the deities and the ritual master alike. Because the *Bayuh Oton* ritual is fundamentally intended for those who have not undergone the *Otonan* ritual in their first year of life, particular significance is attached to the use of water obtained from the principal participant's "birth home", and the repeated sprinkling of holy water upon the participant is understood to enact a symbolic process of "rebirth", followed by the donning of ritual bracelets and a headband as the priest once again presents the full array of offerings in supplication for the participant's protection.

With respect to the textual foundations of the ceremony, the two primary sources consulted by the priest were the *Wedaparikrama* and the *Bayuh Oton Ring Kamulan*, with the majority of mantras recited during the preparation of holy water drawn specifically from the former; nevertheless, the ritual observed on this occasion did not adhere strictly to the text's prescribed order, with numerous instances in which mantras and their corresponding actions were performed out of sequence, certain elements omitted, and others – drawn from different textual or oral sources – inserted in their place. These findings suggest that, within contemporary Balinese Hinduism, ritual practice is shaped not only by regional variation but also by considerable individual variation among officiating priests, who not infrequently supplement the teachings received from their own guru with mantras or actions subsequently acquired through their own study or experience. For this reason, the *Bayuh Oton* ceremony documented in this article cannot be taken to represent a singular, standardized form of Balinese Hindu *Bayuh Oton* ritual, but should instead be understood as one carefully observed instantiation of a broader and internally diverse ritual tradition; future research should undertake systematic comparison of this ritual with other documented instances of the *Bayuh Oton* ceremony, and should further examine the textual lineage of the *Wedaparikrama* as a presumed Shaivite text together with the Tantric elements embedded within it.

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