



The Lilitan Work Ceremony as a Sacred Ritual in the Structure of Chess Life in Dalem Tamblingan Traditional Village

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Abstract

The Karya Lilitan Ceremony is a sacred ritual that plays a central role in the spiritual, social, and ecological life of the Catur community of Dalem Tamblingan Traditional Village, Bali. This ritual is not merely a religious practice, but also functions as a cultural mechanism for preserving local values, strengthening social cohesion, and maintaining cosmic balance between humans, nature, and ancestral spirits, as reflected in the philosophy of Tri Hita Karana. This study aims to describe the meaning, stages, and socio-ecological functions of the Karya Lilitan Ceremony within the customary institutional structure of the community, with particular attention to the role of the Gama Tirta Charter, which venerates water as a source of life and a sacred spiritual medium. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach through literature review, participatory observation, and semi-structured interviews with traditional leaders, temple custodians, and customary institution representatives. The findings indicate that the Karya Lilitan Ceremony serves as an effective cultural mechanism for maintaining collective identity, strengthening intergenerational social solidarity, and enhancing ecological awareness among indigenous communities. The active involvement of all community members throughout the extended ritual process demonstrates a strong integration of spirituality, customary governance, and environmental conservation based on local wisdom. Thus, the Karya Lilitan Ceremony represents not only a form of religious heritage but also a sustainable socio-ecological model rooted in indigenous cultural traditions.

Keywords: Karya Lilitan Ceremony, Catur of Dalem Tamblingan Traditional Village, Sacred Rituals, Gama Tirta Charter, Cosmic Balance

1. INTRODUCTION

Bali is known as an island with very rich religious traditions and rituals. One form of ritual that is still sustainable to this day is the Karya Lilitan Ceremony. Lilitan's work is not only a religious practice, but also an important element in maintaining social and cultural harmony in traditional villages. The Tamblingan Traditional Village Chess consisting of Gobleg, Munduk, Gesing, and Umejero is the main institutional structure that organizes the implementation of this ritual collectively, reflecting the values of mutual cooperation and community solidarity (Primayanti et al., 2017). The indigenous peoples of this region carry out the Karya Lilitan Ceremony as part of their collective yadnya, which serves to purify both nature and humans and maintain cosmic balance. This ritual is a means of social and spiritual consolidation, and symbolically reflects a harmonious relationship between human ancestors, in line with the philosophy of Tri Hita Karana (Sudarma, 2020).

The implementation of the Karya Lilitan lasts for three months and involves various stages of rituals, ranging from the purification of the mother earth (earth), sapta petala (the bottom of the earth), to melasting into the sea to clean all spiritual impurities (Ardana, 2025). These stages show how this ritual manages natural resources as a sacred element in the sustainability of local ecosystems. The value of the Gama Tirta Charter is the theological and ecological foundation of this ritual, where water is worshipped as a spiritual medium as well as a symbol of life

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(Yuliani, 2021). This ceremony emphasizes the role of water as a link between society and ancestors and nature, making the environment not only a place to live, but an object of respect and preservation. According to Lasmawan (2023), "local rites such as Karya Lilitan are the preservation of values, spirituality, and the environment in one breath," which emphasizes the function of this ritual as a cultural mechanism that unites community identity with ecological sustainability.

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with literature study and participatory observation at the location of the Karya Lilitan Ceremony. This method allows researchers to reveal the meaning of rituals, stages of procession, as well as sociocultural and ecological impacts in depth in the institutional structure of Catur of Dalem Tamblingan Traditional Village. The results of the study show that the Karya Lilitan Ceremony functions as a cultural mechanism that maintains traditional identity, strengthens social cohesion, and increases the ecological awareness of the community. This finding is in line with Primayanti et al. (2017), who in their research confirmed that the Karya wrap is carried out periodically to realize the Tri Hita Karana and strengthen the accountability of customary institutions through joint management and preservation of traditional values. This method was chosen because it is able to explain cultural phenomena holistically and contextually. Qualitative research not only describes what happens, but also explores how and why a customary practice is carried out and the meaning inherent in it (Creswell, 2016).

2. METHOD

Data collection was carried out through two main channels, namely literature study and participatory observation. The literature study includes searching for various secondary sources, such as scientific journal articles, seminar proceedings, Balinese cultural reference books, local news, as well as documentation in the form of photos and videos of the Karya Lilitan procession available in community archives and customary media. These secondary data enrich the researcher's understanding of the historical and symbolic context of the ceremony.

In addition, this study also utilizes participatory observation at the location of the ritual, especially during the procession. Researchers were also present in several important stages of Karya Lilitan, starting from preparation, implementation, to post-wedding. This active participation allows researchers to capture symbolic, emotional, and social dimensions that are not always depicted in written texts or documentation. To complete the field data, direct interviews were conducted with traditional leaders, temple holders, and representatives of Catur Village customary institutions. Interviews are conducted in a semi-structured manner so that the interviewees can convey their views in a narrative and in-depth manner.

The oral reports of these traditional leaders are a very important primary source in interpreting local meanings, especially those related to the Gama Tirta Charter, the value of Tri Hita Karana, and the institutional structure of customs. All data were analyzed using an interpretive approach with data reduction techniques, thematic categorization, and source triangulation. This approach allows researchers to understand ceremonies not only as ritual practices, but also as value systems and sociocultural mechanisms that live in Adnyana society (2022). The results of the analysis not only reveal the function of religion, but also the role of ritual in maintaining social cohesion, communal identity, and ecological sustainability of the Dalem Tamblingan indigenous people.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study describes that the Karya Lilitan Ceremony is a sacred ritual rooted in the spiritual and philosophical values of the Catur community of Dalem Tamblingan Traditional Village. This ceremony represents the concept of balance between humans, nature, and ancestral spirits, as formulated in the teachings of Tri Hita Karana. Through the implementation of layered and long-term processions, this ritual not only functions as a spiritual *purification ceremony*, but also becomes an instrument of collective ecological awareness. The emphasis on the Gama Tirta Charter emphasizes the importance of water as a symbol of purity and the source of life, as well as as the theological and ecological basis of the entire series of ceremonies. Therefore, this ritual illustrates the close connection between religious aspects and the conservation of the customarily managed environment.

Apart from being a spiritual practice, this research also highlights the social and institutional functions of the Karya Lilitan Ceremony. This ritual is a mechanism to strengthen social cohesion and indigenous education between generations through the involvement of the entire community in a long and sacred ritual process. The role of customary institutions, especially Pangrajeg Adat, is very important in ensuring the continuity of ceremonies, natural resource management, and strengthening custom-based collective norms. Active cross-village involvement in all stages of the procession strengthens solidarity and collective identity, while transmitting local values in the form of daily life practices. Thus, this ceremony not only strengthens spirituality and nature conservation, but also becomes a model of character education based on local wisdom that shapes ecological ethics and social responsibility of indigenous peoples.

Discussion

Karya Lilitan Ceremony as a Sacred Ritual of Chess Traditional Village Dalem Tamblingan

Ritual Ritual is a symbolic practice that contains deep meaning and plays an important function in the social and spiritual life of the community. As stated by Geertz (1973 in Santoso, 2018), ritual is not only a form of religious expression, but also a channel of communication between humans and the spiritual world. In addition, rituals also act as a mechanism for regulating social relations because they involve collective involvement in customary governance. In the context of traditional societies, rituals are an integral part of the social and spiritual structure that supports cultural order and sustainability.

In Bali, the practice of traditional rituals occupies a central position in maintaining the harmony of the relationship between humans, nature, and ancestors. Suardana (2017) emphasized that the implementation of traditional rituals functions as a guardian of the cosmic balance, as well as a form of conservation of the environment. This understanding is in line with the holistic view of the Balinese people who believe that survival depends on the harmony of three main elements: humans, nature, and ancestral spirits, which came to be known in the Tri Hita Karana philosophy. Thus, rituals are not only spiritual, but also ecological and philosophical.

The Karya Lilitan ceremony is a concrete example of Balinese traditional rituals that are sustainable and carried out for generations by the Catur community of Dalem Tamblingan Traditional Village. This ceremony is not only carried out as a spiritual obligation, but also as a manifestation of the symbolic values and collective traditions that are inherited. The

continuous implementation of the ceremony shows how rituals can strengthen cultural identity and become a space for the community to strengthen social and spiritual solidarity. This makes Karya Lilitan an important medium in maintaining the continuity of tradition and the integrity of indigenous communities.

One of the important elements of Karya Lilitan is the application of the teachings of the Gama Tirta Charter, which is a system of customary values that places water as a sacred element and the center of life. According to Patrisya (2025), the Gama Tirta Charter is not only the theological basis for ceremonies, but also serves as an ecological foothold that encourages environmental conservation practices. The reverence for water in every ritual procession indirectly fosters a collective awareness to manage water resources wisely. These findings are in line with Santha (2020) who stated that rituals based on local culture have proven to be effective in strengthening community-based conservation practices.

The sustainability of the Karya Lilitan Ceremony cannot be separated from the role of customary institutions, especially Pangrajeg Adat, which acts as the main regulator in the implementation of rituals and natural resource management. Brasti.org (2025) noted that this structure routinely coordinates religious and customary activities through a collective and systematic mechanism. Adnyana's research (2022) shows that customary institutions in Bali are effective in ensuring the continuity of rites while supporting ecological governance based on local values. Thus, customary institutions have a dual function: as guardians of spiritual values and the main facilitators in environmental management.

The implementation of Karya Lilitan consists of important stages such as Pujawali Karya Dalu, Bongkol Karya, and Melasti as the peak of symbolic purification. This procession reflects the interconnectedness between spiritual, social, and ecological aspects because it involves all levels of society in the management and preservation of the surrounding environment (Jembrana Express, 2025; BRWA, 2025). Ardana (2025) emphasized that Lilitan Karya is also a form of respect for Bhatar Penghulu, the spiritual manifestation of water in the local belief system. Therefore, as emphasized by Adnyana (2022), traditional rites in Bali not only strengthen ecological awareness, but also strengthen community solidarity in one intact and sustainable value system.

The Implementation of the Ribbon Ceremony

The Karya Lilitan Ceremony is a sacred ritual that has an important position in the spiritual life of the Catur people of Dalem Tamblingan Traditional Village. The four villages that are members of the Catur Desa, namely Gobleg, Munduk, Gesing, and Umejero Villages, have a collective responsibility in maintaining the implementation of this rite so that it remains sustainable. The existence of this ceremony not only shows obedience to ancestral teachings, but also becomes a symbol of the sustainability of traditional values inherited from generation to generation.

The implementation of the Karya Lilitan Ceremony is periodic and has a unique schedule, because it is only held once every two years, precisely in odd numbered years. This time determination is not arbitrary, but is adjusted to the traditional Balinese calendar system known as *sasih*. This shows how closely the Balinese spiritual traditions are related to the local cosmological system that guides the ritual time. The duration of this ceremony is relatively long, which is about five months, which starts in July. Throughout this period, various holy processions were held in stages in a number of temples and sacred areas in the Catur Village area. This long span of time shows how complex and profound the structure of the Karya Lilitan

rite is, which requires not only physical preparation, but also spiritual readiness from all levels of indigenous peoples.

The initial procession in the Karya Lilitan series begins in July, which in the Balinese calendar is called Sasih Kasa. This opening stage was marked by worship for three days at the Pemulungan Agung Temple. The procession serves as an introduction to the next sacred sequence, and is the initial momentum for the community to unite their spiritual intentions and energy in a grand ceremony that will be carried out collectively. After the initial stage, the ceremony continued with the Melasti procession to the Cangkup River known as Karya Dalu. Its execution is carried out especially at the time of tilem or the dead moon, which is spiritually believed to be the holiest time for purification of self and nature. The purpose of the Dalu Work is to purify the universe and humans, so that all the macro and micro elements of the cosmos are in harmony before continuing their yad together. The meaning of purification contained in Karya Dalu shows how strong the relationship between indigenous peoples and the rhythm of the universe is. As explained by Suardana (2017), the lunar cycle-based rites in Balinese tradition reflect an effort to harmonize between the cosmos (the universe) and the microcosm (the human self). In this context, Karya Dalu is not only part of the spiritual tradition, but also a concrete manifestation of the philosophy of universal harmony that is a core part of the life of the Balinese people.

The second stage in the series of Karya Lilitan Ceremonies is held on the next full moon, generally coinciding with August in the Christian calendar or Sasih Karo in the Balinese calendar. At this stage, the community again worships at Pemulungan Agung Temple as the spiritual center of activities. This procession was then continued with the Melasti ritual to the Mendaum River, known traditionally as Bongkol Karya. This implementation reflects the continuity of the community's spirituality with nature, especially through respect for water as a sacred purification medium.

After the Bongkol Karya procession is over, the indigenous people enter a pause period. This pause aims to readjust the ritual time to the next full moon cycle, following a cosmic rhythm that is believed to be able to align the human microcosm with the universe macrocosm. During this period, the community did not remain silent, but carried out spiritual activities internally through family worship. This activity takes place in the pretends of each family's derivatives, and reflects the form of maintaining spiritual relationships personally and communally (Yuliani, 2021).

The next procession is the Plantation Ceremony, which is an important point in the series of Karya Lilitan. This ritual is carried out for three days in the sacred area which includes the forest and lake of Tamblingan, with the main center at Gubug Temple. This implementation usually takes place in October or Sasih Kapat. The main goal of the Colonizers was to strengthen the spiritual and ecological bond between humans and two important elements in Balinese cosmology, namely the alas (forest) and the lake. These two elements are at the core of the Gama Tirta Charter value system, which places nature, especially water and vegetation, as the center of life and spirituality (Patrisya, 2025). After the procession of the Pilgrims, the next stage is the Madianing Karya, which begins with the worship again at the Pemulungan Agung Temple. This ritual was continued with sacred activities carried out towards the sea, precisely in the coastal area of Labuhan Aji. For three days, the community carried out the Madiang Karya procession, which was held during the dead moon in the same month, namely Sasih Kapat. The spiritual journey from the forest and lake to the sea shows the continuity of man's relationship with all the cosmic elements, from the highlands to the oceans, as a form of a cycle of total purification of nature and the human soul.

This long series then reaches its peak in a stage called Puncaking Karya. This procession usually takes place in November or the Fifth Sasih, beginning with intensive worship for five consecutive days at Pemulungan Agung Temple. After that, the last Melasti procession was carried out to the Mendaum River, which became the closing symbol of the purification ceremony. This stage is not only a spiritual closing rite, but also a momentum for the unification of spiritual energy from all previous series, as well as a collective reflection on man's relationship with nature and ancestors. Overall, the series of Karya Lilitan Ceremonies is not only ritualistic and spiritual, but also contains a deep socio-ecological dimension. As expressed by Adnyana (2022), this rite is a form of preserving human relationships with nature and ancestors that takes place in a sustainable manner. The values of Tri Hita Karana, namely harmony between humans, nature, and God, are implemented concretely in every stage. Through the active involvement of the community for approximately five full months, this ceremony became a model of traditional ceremonies that integrate environmental conservation, spiritual education, and social cohesion in a living customary system.

The implementation of the Karya Lilitan Ceremony involved all levels of the Catur indigenous people of Dalem Tamblingan Village. The four villages that are members, namely Gobleg, Munduk, Gesing, and Umejero, are united in a long process of ceremonies that last for three to five months. This participation is not purely symbolic, but is manifested through active involvement in every stage of the ritual, from preparation, implementation, to closing. In its implementation, the Traditional Pangrajeg as a traditional traditional leader plays a central role, accompanied by religious leaders, temple leaders, and other traditional officials. This collaboration shows the existence of a well-organized social system in supporting the implementation of the ceremony as a whole. The involvement of these various elements reflects social cohesion which is a strong foundation for the sustainability of these traditional rites (Multatuli, 2024). The active participation of all citizens is a tangible form of collective commitment to maintaining and preserving ancestral heritage values. Not only as a manifestation of spiritual beliefs, this ceremony is also a means of strengthening communal bonds that are cross-generational. This is what makes Karya Lilitan not only a religious ceremony, but also a social institution that strengthens the unity of indigenous peoples.

In each stage, indigenous communities move synergistically. Coordination between banjars, traditional groups, and families is the main key to the success of the ritual implementation. This shows that the Karya Lilitan Ceremony is not only a religious practice, but also a social mechanism that functions to strengthen the solidarity and collective identity of the Tamblingan indigenous people. The social strengthening function inherent in this ceremony is reflected in the cooperation between banjars and customary institutions in maintaining the order of life and natural resources. Gotong Royong activities, traditional deliberations, and participation in worship show the tangible form of culture-based social cohesion that lives in the community. One of the tangible forms of sacred values implemented is the prohibition of the use of poisons in fishing, disciplined subak management, and restrictions on the use of customary forests. These practices are not only normative, but have become part of the ecological ethics of society inherited through ritual systems (BRWA, 2025).

This ceremony forms a collective norm that comes from the customary value system. These norms are binding and obeyed by all citizens, creating social order that supports nature conservation. This value system also encourages the formation of a lifestyle that is in line with the principles of sustainability of living together, both in social and ecological aspects. Furthermore, this ritual is also a vehicle for traditional education that takes place for generations. The younger generation is not only taught through stories or oral teaching, but is directly involved in the ritual process, so that the values of local wisdom are embedded through

concrete experiences in daily life. According to Adnyana (2022), the process of inheriting traditional values in this ritual is a very effective form of character education. This education does not take place in formal classrooms, but in living spaces such as temples, forests, fields, and rivers. Thus, indigenous education is part of the process of internalizing values that continues to run naturally and continuously.

The traditional institutional structure led by the Traditional Pangrajeg plays a vital role in the sustainability of the Karya Lilitan Ceremony. This institution is in charge of coordinating all stages of the ceremony, ensuring that every element of society carries out its duties, and maintaining the sacredness of the procession. Without the role of the Traditional Pangrajeg the implementation of this ritual would not run harmoniously. Customary institutions are also tasked with regulating ecological relations, especially the management of ritual routes from the upstream area (Alas Mertajati – forests and lakes) to downstream (Segara Labuhan Aji – the sea). This path has a symbolic meaning as a manifestation of the balance between spiritual and ecological elements in the philosophy of indigenous peoples. The route also reflects a holistic understanding of the ecosystem and is firmly rooted in local belief systems. The entire system reflects a strong model of socio-ecological integration, in which indigenous peoples not only preserve spiritual rites, but are also responsible for environmental governance. Multatuli (2024) stated that this kind of practice shows the dual function of customary institutions: as a guardian of values and as an environmental institution. This view is reinforced by Adnyana (2022), who states that customary institutions in Bali not only preserve cultural heritage, but also regulate the distribution of resources and internalize ecological ethics in community life

4. CONCLUSION

From The Karya Lilitan Ceremony is a sacred ritual that has a central role in the spiritual, social, and ecological life of the Catur community of Dalem Tamblingan Traditional Village. This ritual is not only a religious expression, but also a means to purify nature and humans, especially in the context of the breeding of water as a source of life. In the Tamblingan indigenous people, water is not only seen as a physical need, but also as a spiritual element that must be respected and maintained in purity through sacred ceremonies. Therefore, this ritual is an important means of internalizing spiritual awareness of nature collectively.

Furthermore, Karya Lilitan functions as a mechanism to strengthen social values and traditional education that is inherited from generation to generation. Through various stages of ceremonies that are carried out together, this ritual becomes a forum for togetherness that brings together residents across generations in one common goal: to maintain and carry out ancestral values. The presence of children and parents in each stage of the ritual reflects the process of traditional education that occurs naturally in the spaces of daily life. In this context, Karya Lilitan is not only a spiritual rite, but also a space for character education and the cultivation of communal ethics. This ritual also plays an important role in maintaining the cosmic balance, which is the harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and ancestral spirits. The values of Tri Hita Karana which are the basis of the Balinese people's philosophy of life are strongly reflected in the practice of Karya Lilitan. The mutual relationship between humans and their environment is manifested through respect for nature, the purification of sacred places, and the preservation of water as a source of life. In this case, the teachings of the Gama Tirta Charter have a great contribution in strengthening the ecological awareness of the community, where water is placed as a spiritual entity that must be preserved wisely and wisely. The sustainability of the Karya Lilitan Ceremony is highly dependent on the existence of a strong and collective customary institutional structure.

Traditional Pangrajeg as a traditional leader, along with other traditional figures, plays an important role not only in the technical aspects of ritual implementation, but also as a guardian of spiritual values, a facilitator of cultural education, and a manager of the ecological relationship of the community with its environment. This institution ensures that all stages of the ceremony are carried out in accordance with customary rules and integrate spiritual values with environmental conservation practices. Thus, Karya Lilitan is not only a mirror of the spirituality of indigenous peoples, but also a symbol of cultural resilience and sustainability of life based on local wisdom.

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