

## Cultural Inheritance System of the Tua Luh Mask Dance Created by I Made Djimat

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### Abstract

This study examines the cultural inheritance pattern of the *Topeng Tua Luh* dance created by the Balinese dance maestro I Made Djimat. The research aims to analyze how this contemporary mask dance is transmitted and sustained within its socio-cultural context. A qualitative method with an ethnographic approach was employed. Data were collected through field observations, in-depth interviews, documentation analysis, and literature review. The findings indicate that *Topeng Tua Luh*, first performed at the 2019 Bali Arts Festival, represents a new creative development within the Balinese *petopengan* tradition. Functionally, it can be classified as *bebali* and *balih-balihan* dance. The dance demonstrates distinctive aesthetic characteristics, particularly in its female elderly mask design, costume elements, and choreographic interpretation derived from the traditional *Topeng Tua* repertoire. Although the dance experienced fluctuations in popularity following its premiere, revitalization efforts have emerged through familial transmission, community-based learning, and non-formal institutional education. The inheritance system reflects a mixed transmission model integrating family, social, and institutional mechanisms. This research contributes to the academic documentation of contemporary Balinese mask dance and provides a reference framework for sustaining artistic heritage in the modern era.

**Keywords: Cultural Inheritance; Old Luh Mask Dance; I Made Djimat**

### Introduction

Balinese dance constitutes an integral and organic component of Balinese society, reflecting its social structure, religious values, and aesthetic worldview. As a stylized transformation of daily bodily movements, Balinese dance embodies the lived experiences of the community while elevating them into artistic expression. In its creative process, Balinese dance is guided by the philosophical principles of *Satyam*, *Siwam*, and *Sundaram*, truth, sanctity, and beauty (Subagiasta, 2006). *Satyam* refers to the essential truth and social value embodied in the artwork; *Siwam* (sanctity) denotes the sacred and noble dimension of artistic performance; and *Sundaram* (beauty) signifies harmony and aesthetic refinement that evoke admiration from the audience.

Aesthetically, Balinese dance performance is grounded in the unity of *wiraga*, *wirama*, and *wirasa*. *Wiraga* refers to the dancer's technical mastery in articulating the body to produce structured and refined movements. *Wirama* denotes rhythmic sensitivity and the ability to synchronize movement with tempo and musical dynamics. *Wirasa* represents expressive depth, enabling the dancer to internalize and animate the character portrayed. The integration of these three elements generates a performance that is both technically accomplished and spiritually meaningful. From a historical perspective, Balinese dance developed through three major socio-cultural periods Djayus (1980): (1) the primitive period (2000 BC-400 BC), characterized by nature-oriented ritual expressions; (2) the feudal period (400 AD-1945), marked by strong Hindu court patronage; and (3) the modern period (1945-present), emerging after Indonesian

independence. During the primitive period, dance forms were closely associated with animistic beliefs and natural forces, as exemplified by the sacred *Barong Brutuk* dance of Trunyan Village, Bangli.

In the feudal era, royal patronage significantly shaped the development of dance and gamelan traditions centered in palace environments (*puri*), giving rise to refined court repertoires such as mask dance (*Topeng*), *Legong Keraton*, and *Pendet*. Performers were often recruited from village communities but performed under royal artistic direction, a system commonly referred to as *pragina puri* (Geertz, 1980). In the modern period, following the decline of royal patronage after 1945, artistic authority shifted to community-based structures. Society assumed greater responsibility for preserving and developing its artistic traditions (Dibia, 1999; Vickers, 2013).

This transition stimulated the emergence of innovative forms such as *Kebyar* dance, *Janger*, and *Joged*, reflecting adaptive creativity within changing socio-political contexts. Since the modern era, the existence of art that lived in feudal and primitive times has slowly begun to fade, so there is a need for community strategies to revive (*nangiang*), preserve and pass on what was left behind by their ancestors so that all the arts in Bali can live and be vibrant again. Cultural inheritance is one way to pass on what has become the qibla of an artist to his successors, whether from his children or grandchildren, so that there is a pattern of artistic inheritance from generation to generation or continuously and this really needs to be done not only by artistic enthusiasts but all Balinese people (Kariasa and Putra, 2021).

One of the prominent *pragina puri* figures whose artistic legacy continues to be recognized today is I Made Djimat, a distinguished maestro from Batuan Village, Gianyar Regency. He is widely acknowledged for his mastery of male Balinese dance genres, particularly *Topeng* (mask dance), *Gambuh*, and *Baris*. His artistic career reflects both technical excellence and deep spiritual commitment to Balinese performing arts. I Made Djimat is known for his openness in transmitting knowledge and preserving traditional dance forms. He upholds the principle that art is a form of devotion (*ngayah*), positioning artistic practice not merely as performance but as spiritual service.

This philosophical orientation has contributed significantly to his recognition both nationally and internationally. His artistic development cannot be separated from the influence of his family background. His mother, Ni Ketut Cenik, was a renowned *Joged Pingitan* dancer in Bali. Her guidance and artistic environment played a crucial role in shaping I Made Djimat's sensitivity, discipline, and dedication to dance. This intergenerational transmission of artistic values has ensured the continuity and sustainability of his artistic contributions to Balinese culture.

One of I Made Djimat's works which was popular several years ago is the *Topeng Tua Luh* dance/Old woman's Mask Dance which is a type of new *Balih-balihan* dance as a companion to the men's Old Mask dance with a gentle character like an old woman with characteristic movements. itself which is full of movement patterns based on the masking tradition which I Made Djimat really mastered. Now the *Tua Luh* Mask Dance created by I Made Djimat needs to be examined again because this dance experienced a decline in popularity a year after its first performance in 2019. Apart from that, this is also due to a lack of socialization and a lack of publication or dissemination of information and also good documentation of this work. in the form of videos, photos, and articles. As well as the lack of a sustainable inheritance pattern for this work, this has impacted the existence of this extraordinary work by the Maestro.

Therefore, this research is a strategy for socializing through scientific work which can be used as a source of information about the *Topeng Tua Luh* dance created by I Made Djimat, as well as a form of documentary contribution in the form of scientific work to

the entire community to find out the track record of I Made's artistry. Djimat currently needs to carry out cultural inheritance for some of his works as well as his artistic mecca. So this article can be useful as a reference source, reading source, information source and knowledge source for the reading public.

## Method

This study employs a qualitative research design using an ethnographic approach to examine the cultural inheritance system of the *Topeng Tua Luh* dance created by I Made Djimat. Ethnography, as a qualitative method, seeks to provide a holistic and contextual understanding of cultural practices by examining both material aspects, such as costumes, masks, and performance settings and immaterial dimensions, including values, beliefs, and artistic philosophies. Fieldwork was conducted in Batuan Village, Gianyar Regency, which serves as the artistic base of I Made Djimat. Data were collected through participant observation of training sessions and performances, in-depth interviews with the maestro and selected students, documentation analysis of performance recordings and digital media archives, and a review of relevant scholarly literature. The data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns related to aesthetic structure, creative process, and modes of cultural transmission, enabling an interpretative understanding of how the dance is sustained within its socio-cultural context.

## Results and Discussion

### 1. Aesthetics and Forms of Luh Old Mask Dance

Dance forms in Bali are generally divided into 3 types, including:

- a. *Wali* Dance is a dance that is still considered holy/sacred and is closely related to animist beliefs, totemism and is closely related to worship or religion. What can be classified into the Wali dance group are all types of dance performed in temples and other places that are related to religious ceremonies (Hindu religion), as the implementation of religious ceremonies and ceremonies which are generally not performed in plays. The types of Balinese dance that are classified as Wali Dance are the Rejang dance, the Sangyang dance, the Baris dance, the Pendet dance. This dance can only be performed in its function as a performance of religious ceremonies and rituals.
- b. *Bebali* dance or often called profane dance is dance that is directly related to society. Included in profane dances are entertainment dances (social, or fun dances and performance or spectacle dances). To make it easier to distinguish it from sacred dance, entertainment dance has a background of joy and pleasure. *Bebali* Dance is a Balinese dance group that functions as an accompaniment to religious ceremonies and ceremonies both in temples and outside temples which generally have a performance. What can be classified into this dance are puppet art, mask dance drama, and gambuh.
- c. *Balih-balihan* Dance All types of Balinese dance which have the elements and basis of noble dance arts which are not classified as wali dances and bebali dances can be classified into this group. This dance can be performed at any time, either in connection with traditional and religious ceremonies or not at all. Several types of Balinese dances that are classified as *Balih-balihan* are Arja Dramatari, Calonarang Dramatari, Prembon, Kebyar dances, Joged, Janger and so on.

Masks in Balinese dance are dance performances that tell dialogue and songs. All dancers are required to wear realist tapels with a special costume that can be used to dance a variety of different roles. The word "tapel" has a similar meaning to "mask" in Javanese, which is a face covering used for dancing. In general, in Bali, if a mask dancer plays many roles, there is no need to change costumes, but only change the mask and headdress that

will be used. Judging from its function, the Tua Luh Mask Dance can be classified into the Bebali dance, which is a semi-sacred dance that generally uses plays and is still within the scope of religious ceremonies in Bali such as Arja, Topeng, Gambuh.

The Tua Luh Mask Dance can also be classified as one part of the Pajegan Mask. Pajegan Mask is a dance performance that involves playing or moving various masks based on their role, and is known as the guardian mask because it is used as part of a religious ceremony which is divided into four structures in the performance, namely *pengebar*, *petangkilan*, *bebondresan*, *pesiat* or often directly to the performer. In the structure of the page, like a film, there is an introduction to the characters at the beginning of the film. This character introduces the characters in the play/story presented in the Balinese mask dance performance, such as there are dances that show hard characters (Topeng Keras), funny (Topeng Monyer), sweet (Topeng Monyer Manis), and old people (Topeng Tua) (Puasa, 2020).

One of the attractions of I Made Djimat is the Old Mask dance. The Old Mask Dance generally uses masks with white hair and old faces on the masks, but it is more directed towards old male characters and it is very rare to find old masks with the faces of old women. I Made Djimat once got the idea to create the Tua Luh Mask Dance from the principle that men cannot live without women, and inspired I Made Djimat to innovate to create the Tua Luh Mask dance. So in general, the Tua Luh Mask Dance can also be classified as the Pajegan Mask dance because the Tua Mask Dance is generally performed in the *pengembelbar* (prelude) section along with the Tua Muani Mask.

During the performance, the choreography of the Luh Tua Mask Dance is not much different from the Tua Mask Dance in general, namely walking around the stage and dancing with slow movements by swinging both hands. Occasionally, the dancer takes a deep breath and makes a playful movement to wipe the sweat from his mask. The choreography performed by the dancers depicts an old woman reminiscing about her youth. The costumes used in the Tua Luh Mask Dance are the same as the mask dance in general, namely using a kerchief style. However, the difference lies in his headdress which uses a white hair bun which looks almost the same as the bun on Kang Cing Wie's *barong landung* and contains a pair of small *bancangan* flowers placed on either side of the bun. This coil was made by Mr. I Made Redha from Batuan, Gianyar, who is a good friend of I Made Djimat. The difference also lies in the shape of the mask, namely using an old woman's mask containing earrings on either side and white hair carved and shaped like an old woman. This mask was made for the first time in collaboration with I Ketut Kodi, who is a good friend of I Made Djimat and is one of the puppetry lecturers at the Denpasar Indonesian Art Institute campus. The Tua Luh mask was made with reference to the mask style of Mr. I Dewa Gede Madera.



Figure 1. Old Luh Mask Dance Costume  
(Source: Youtube, Bali Gamelan Sound)

The *Topeng Tua Luh* dance movement includes:

- a. *Mungkah Lawang*. Movement *open door* the *Luh Tua Mask* performance art is very smooth and feel Starting with sitting, right and left hands straight forward and slowly opened. It's different with the Mask *Inside Kedaton* Old Mask *Luh's* age was lower and he was panting like an old man who had just woken up.
- b. Act Old Mask *Luh*. Act The Old *Luh Mask* is generally the same as the Old Mask but lower, the right and left hands are almost parallel (lower than the Old Mask Inside *Kedaton*) accompanied by a gong after act make a move *clouds*.
- c. Clouds Clouds. Clouds is a meaningful gesture of soft hands waving in front of the face like the eyes of an old man who wants to see something far away. In *Topeng Tua Luh*, accompanied by a gong, dancers perform movements *clouds* by moving *tape* looking sideways and up, and ending with movement *nyegut*.
- d. *Ningying Saput*. Accompanied by a gong slowly the right hand takes the cloth, the left hand wear, and accompanied by the movement of miles. Accompanied by a gong holding a kerchief, And say
- e. Arrogant. *Angkih-Angkih* is a movement imitating an elderly parent who is tired and out of breath. This movement begins with movement with *seh* then hold your chest while breathing hard.
- f. *Mudra*. Movement *Mudra*, with the dancer in a sitting position and rubbing the palms of the right and left hands. To the accompaniment of a gong, Masked *Tua Luh* dancers perform movements *mudra* then proceed with the taking movement *was* as in the picture.
- g. Wearing Movement *Was*. The movement to use the *bija* begins with the dancer remaining seated and placing the *bija* in the middle, on the right and left temples of the head. The dancer not only shows the beauty of the sitting position and the placement of the *bija* on the temple of the head, but also brings the meaning to life showing kindness through gentle and expressive hand movements. Accompanied by a gong, the dancer performs this movement.
- h. Walk Unsteady. Accompanied by two gongs, the *Topeng Tua Luh* dancer performs a waddling movement, slightly bent over while holding his head, panting for breath, which depicts the figure of an elderly parent and the gong is combined with the movement *nayog*.
- i. *Nayog*. Accompanied by two gongs, the *Topeng Tua Luh* dancer performs walking movements *Nayog*. In contrast to the *Dalem Kedaton Mask*, the *Tua Luh Mask's* movements are smoother, hunched over, combined with panting breaths, unsteady hands and shaking legs, thus adding a lively impression to the old character's character.
- j. *Bummer*. Movement *gasped* this is a slipping movement imitating an old man who walks hastily, then *gasped* because his body balance was unstable, it shocked the audience, because the dancer thought he had fallen. This movement is characteristic when dancing old figures. Movement *gasped* begins with the accompaniment of a live gong by the way, Then *gasped* ends with haughty.
- k. *Mategan*. Accompanied by a gong after a slip, the *Topeng Tua Luh* dancer performs a movement arrogant- arrogant, in mats while wiping sweat with clothes and make moves whisper, like an old man who is hot and exhausted.
- l. Wave Loudly. Accompanied by five gongs, the *Topeng Tua Luh* dancers perform their movements wave loudly left and right, then hunched unsteadily around the stage, and ending with a slipping movement as a change in the dynamics of the dance which returns to a slow pace.
- m. Scratching Your Head While Looking For Lice. Accompanied by a gong, the *Topeng Tua Luh* dancer performs the movement of looking for lice, with a full role, the dancer

fumbles with his hair as if he were looking for lice, and occasionally scratches an itchy head, depicting authentically how an old man cleans himself.

- n. *Peek* (Peep). This movement, *I Made Djimat*, is a movement that focuses on looking at a distant object by imitating the habits of parents whose eyesight is no longer good or subtle. Accompanied by a gong, this movement is combined with movement pointed and called the audience.
- o. Observer. Accompanied by a gong, Mask Tua Luh dancers perform movements *Challenge* (various hand positions that underline conversational dialogue). Accompanied by two gongs to the right corner, two gongs to the left corner, and two gongs back to the middle. *Tetanganan* what the dancer does is not only a medium to emphasize the words, but also a form of art that combines the beauty of movement and musical rhythm.
- p. *Hold On Clothes And Walked To It's gone*. Accompanied by a gong, make movements abundant to the left while check blankets and turned to the audience as he walked towards long. Accompanied by two gongs, he walked towards the langse, and in front of the langse, he performed the movement of an old man stumbling, gasping for breath, turning his body and finishing the performance.

The structure of the Old Luh Mask Dance includes:

- a. 1 gong (open long)
- b. 1 gong (left corner wink, *ulap-ulap*)
- c. 2 gong (with *seh*, arrogant)
- d. 1 gong (right corner flash, clouds)
- e. 3 gong (with *seh*, *mudra*, use was)
- f. 2 gongs (walking unsteadily)
- g. 1 gong (by the way, and did a stumbling motion)
- h. 1 gong (*angkih-angkih*, wiping sweat with a kerchief)
- i. 1gong (with *seh*)
- j. 5 gong (wave loudly, and immediately walked unsteadily around the stage, and immediately made stumbling movements, calming himself by holding his chest, accompanied by gasping for breath)
- k. 1 gong (scratching head while looking for lice)
- l. 1 gong (clouds while peeking at a child and calling him)
- m. gong (mercy)
- n. 1 gong (with *seh*)
- o. 2 gongs (walk wavering, Head towards the backstage to take long while stumbling, and ending the show).

In terms of musical accompaniment, the *Topeng Tua Luh* dance is primarily performed with the *barungan* Gong Kebyar gamelan ensemble. However, in contemporary practice it may also be accompanied by other ensembles such as *Semara Pagulingan* or *Semarandana*, provided that the original *gending* structure and *patet* framework remain consistent with the Gong Kebyar version to preserve the authenticity of its musical identity. Musically, *Topeng Tua Luh* belongs to a dancer-dominant performance type, in which the control of accentuation (*angsel*) is determined by the dancer.

The dancer provides performative cues that guide the ensemble, particularly in transitional passages and at the conclusion of the performance, requiring high responsiveness from the musicians. The principal accompaniment refers to the drumming pattern known as *Werda Lumaku* (literally “the journey of an elderly person”), similar to that used in the traditional *Topeng Tua* repertoire and categorized within the *tabuh telu pegongan* structure. This musical form is characterized by a slow and measured tempo,



Apart from that, it was also adapted to the references he obtained so that this dance was given the concept of *kiwa nengen* and the concept of *purusa pradana*, so that the Old Luh Mask Dance was performed together with the Old Men's Mask. Improvisation is the stage of trying to express several movement patterns without using accompaniment, but can also be accompanied by singing the gamelan or by counting. In the improvisation process, all the reflections on the concept of I Made Djimat created a movement depicting the character of an old woman, which in this case was identical to the delicate princess dance movements with the patterns of the *bencihan* movements. The difference with the Old Men's Mask Dance can be seen from the characteristic movements which are dominant to the left because it is associated with the concept of *kiwa nengen*, such as in the movement of *ngupak* loudly only to the left, *nyeleog* left, and what most characterizes the Old Luh Mask Dance is that there is a *metayungan* movement, this is appropriate. with what I Made Djimat observed about the character of an old woman.

The method used in teaching the first dancer (Mr. Djimat's third son) was more aimed at demonstrating movements balanced with the method of imitation or exact copying of I Made Djimat's movements during teaching. In this dance there is no special story but rather a depiction of the character of an old woman. Forming is a process of forming by assembling all the various existing movements into a coherent and orderly manner, along with accompanying music (Hapsari et al., 2021). In this process, I Made Djimat, together with his dancers, carried out a process called *ngadungin* (combining dance with gamelan together with the players) and this lasted for approximately 3 months along with a process called *ngalusin* (harmonizing and adding flavor to the dance).

This *ngadungin* process was carried out in Singapadu because at that time one of the Sekaa Gongs from Singapadu had the opportunity to accompany the Tua Luh Mask Dance for the first time at the 2019 Bali Arts Festival representing Gianyar Regency, and the accompanying instrument for the Tua Luh Mask Dance at that time was the *kebyar gong* which was currently It was built directly by Mr. I Wayan Darya. It should be noted that a mask dancer is not only expected to master the movements and dance the mask just like that, but also to balance it with *tetuek* (bringing the character of the mask to life through the feeling of the dance movements).

A good mask dancer is a mask dancer who can sing *tapel Anggraini* and *Hasnawati*, (2016) so that it can bring out the *Taksu* in a mask dancer so that it can become a meaningful performance in the eyes of the audience. The presentation (performance) of the *Topeng Tua Luh* dance is not easy for a beginner dancer to do. People who already have experience doing men's dance cannot guarantee that they will master *Topeng Tua* well. They had to learn more about how to explore the refined son dance techniques.

### **3. Luh Old Mask Dance Inheritance System**

After its first performance at the Bali Arts Festival in 2019, this dance began to be taught by I Made Djimat to people who came and were interested in learning this dance. Most of the people who learn this dance with I Made Djimat use it for *ngayah* activities, this has had a positive impact on reviving the existence of the *Topeng Tua Luh* dance by promoting it in religious activities after this dance has been in hiatus due to the pandemic. I Made Djimat's children and grandchildren do not want to be left behind in learning about the assets of their own father and grandfather's work.

Apart from that, the existence of a platform in the form of the Tri Pusaka Sakti Arts Foundation, which was founded by I Made Djimat and his children, also supports the development of the *Topeng Tua Luh* dance. The foundation has invited many of I Made Djimat's students from abroad to come and learn Balinese dance, including the *Topeng Tua Luh* dance. One of I Made Djimat's students from abroad, Igor from Brazil,

also took part in learning the *Topeng Tua Luh* dance until a small performance was made by I Made Djimat in 2022 and it went viral on social media. This has succeeded in being the answer to the challenge of preserving this dance again because promotion in the form of artistic content can help contribute to the cultural inheritance system (Elvandari, 2020).



Figure 2. One of I Made Djimat's Students from Brazil  
At The Tri Pusaka Sakti Foundation  
(Source: Instagram, Tri Pusaka Cakti)

Based on the theory of cultural inheritance systems, the inheritance pattern in the Old Luh Mask Dance tends to lead to a mixed inheritance pattern, namely a family inheritance system, a social inheritance system with peer tutoring between friends who have studied with I Made Djimat, and an inheritance system through non-formal education (Catra, 1997). With students studying at the Tri Pusaka Sakti Foundation, they must also learn this dance.

## Conclusion

The *Topeng Tua Luh* dance represents a significant contemporary contribution to the Balinese mask dance tradition developed by I Made Djimat. As an innovative reinterpretation of the *Topeng Tua* repertoire, this dance expands the aesthetic and performative dimensions of Balinese *petopengan* through the embodiment of an elderly female character while maintaining structural and musical continuity with established traditions. The findings indicate that the sustainability of *Topeng Tua Luh* depends on a mixed cultural inheritance system. This system consists of (1) familial transmission within the maestro's lineage, (2) social transmission through peer learning and community-based *ngayah* practices, and (3) non-formal institutional transmission through the Tri Pusaka Sakti Arts Foundation, where students are systematically introduced to the repertoire. To ensure long-term preservation, strategic documentation efforts are necessary, particularly through high-quality audiovisual recordings and digital dissemination via social media platforms. Such initiatives not only function as archival preservation but also serve as innovative modes of cultural promotion within contemporary Balinese mask performance, including its potential integration into *Topeng Pajegan* performances frequently presented in religious ceremonies in Bali. Furthermore, the openness of this repertoire to performance by both male and female dancers suggests the possibility of expanded interpretative perspectives while maintaining its core aesthetic identity.

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