

Maritime Activities in Ancient Bali

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Abstract

Archaeological discoveries at Sembiran and Pacung in Northeastern Bali indicate that contacts between Bali and India, China, as well as Mainland Southeast Asia have already occurred at the late second century BC. At the same time, maritime activities and exchanges of goods might have also existed between these areas.

Inscriptional data from the late 9th up to the 12th century describe the regulations concerning the stranded ship. The use of woods of the stranded ship, the treatment of foreign traders who died in the port sites in Bali, as well as the utilization of their inheritances are also mentioned in these inscriptions. In addition, the Balinese inscriptions dated from the 12th century also describe the types of watercraft such as ships (Chinese jong) and boats (bahitra) which encored at Manasa in the northern coast of Bali. The situation of port sites and social disturbances due to pirates are also described in the Balinese inscriptions. Bali seems to be located in the inter-regional trade routes connecting India, Mainland Southeast Asia, and China in ancient times, therefore maritime activities must be very busy in the northern coast of Bali.

Key words: Bali, ships, inscriptions

Introduction

Archaeological discoveries in northern coast of Bali indicate that the island has been involved in maritime activities for nearly 2150 years. The sites of Sembiran and Pacung which was part of ancient port of Julah produced archaeological artefacts mainly potteries of India, mainland of Southeast Asia, and China. In addition, glass, stone beads as well as Han's bronze mirrors were also discovered at Pangkung Paruk in the northwestern coast of Bali. Two fragments of molds for casting bronze drum and

socketed bronze axe were discovered respectively at Sembiran (Ardika, 1991; Ardika and Bellwood, 1991; Calo *et.al*, 2015). The discovery of fragments of molds indicate that Sembiran was also an important centre of local craftsmanship. The appearance of those artefacts suggests that long distance or international exchange or trade might have already occurred at the beginning of our century.

Inscriptional data from Julah and Sembiran suggest that maritime activities and trade might have continuously occurred in the northeastern coast of Bali at least from the late second century BC until the 12th century AD. The inscription of Sembiran AI dated AD 922 mentions a market (*pasar*) and a market officer (*ser pasar*) at Julah. A regulation concerning stranded ships and their cargos (*taban karang*) was also stated in the inscription (Goris, 1954; Ardika, 1991). It records that people who lived at a fortified settlement (*kuta*) at Julah were attacked by their enemies (*tarahan*) and some of them fled to other villages. On the basis of the inscriptional data, this paper will describe several pieces of information related to maritime activities in ancient Bali from the early 10th up to 12th century AD. Relevance data from later period are also utilised in this paper.

Regulation Concerning Stranded ship (Taban/Tawan Karang)

Balinese inscriptions from the early 10th century AD stated the regulations (*taban karang*) concerning stranded ships or watercrafts in northern Bali. The inscription of Sembiran AI states that if there were stranded ships, boats, or canoes within Julah territory, which are known to the villagers, the cargos had to be donated to the temple for welfare. The captives must be reported to *Sang Ratu* or King Ugrasena who reigned Bali at that time.

In order to maintain and enforce this regulation, worship was to be offered to Bhatara Punta Hyang (Agastya?)(Ardika, 1991: 227).

As far as *Taban* or *Tawan Karang* is concerned, this regulation was still utilised until the colonial period in the 19th and the 20th century. The Dutch government and the Balinese kings ratified the regulation, however, they did not implement it properly. The case of *Tawan karang* at Sangsit port in north Bali was the trigger of Buleleng and Jagaraga wars in the 1846 and 1849, between the Buleleng's king and the Dutch government. The Jagaraga war can be said as the end of the Buleleng sovereignty, and the beginning of colonialization of the Dutch government in north Bali (Wirawan, 2017).

Similar phenomena also occurred at Karangasem and Klungkung kingdoms in east and south Bali. Conflict on *Tawan karang* regulation caused the Dutch government to send a military expedition to Karangasem and Kusamba, Klungkung. The Karangasem palace was occupied by the Dutch on 20 May 1849. Gusti Gede Ngurah Karangasem, the king, and his family members fought against it, causing them to be killed. Klungkung and Kusamba could be occupied by the Dutch troop at 3 pm on 24 May 1849 (Agung, 1989: 327). General Michiels and his troop rested at Kusamba Palace used as the headquarters of the General Commander Michiels.

At midnight on 24 May or at dawn on 25 May 1849, Dewa Agung Istri Kanya, A.A. Ketut Agung and A.A. Made Sangging planned to attack the Dutch troop. At 3 am on 25 May 1849 the Klungkung soldiers reached the target. When the light bullet was fired, all the camps, which had been dark, became bright. General Michiels could be clearly seen standing in front of the palace.

A gun was fired by the Klungkung troops and the general's right leg got shot, causing him to be upended. The bone of his right leg turned out to be completely wrecked (Agung, 1949: 328). The health officer suggested that it should be amputated; however, he disagreed. He demanded that he be carried to the command ship where he could be treated. His physical condition was getting worse and finally he died at 11 pm on 25 May 1849. On 26 May 1849 the corpse was carried by the warship "Etna" to Batavia (Agung, 1989, 328).

The conflict between the King of Badung and the Dutch East Indies government was triggered by the incident in which the Dutch-flagged ship "Sri Kumala" stranded at Sanur beach controlled by the Badung Kingdom on 27 May 1904. The Dutch East Indies government demanded that the compensation amounting to 7,500 guildens to be charged to the Badung King. The local people did not pay for the compensation as they swore that they had not robbed what the ship had carried including *uang kepeng* (coin with square hole in center). The Badung King's refusal caused the Badung waters to be blockaded on 6 January 1905 (Agung, 1989: 5). On 20 September 1906 the final war or *Puputan Badung* occurred and the kingdom of Badung was conquered by the Dutch.

The practice of the *tawan karang* traditional law was getting weaker when the Bali and Lombok kings were getting familiar with the foreign governments especially the Dutch government (Wirawan, 2017: 2). Different perceptions of the *tawan karang* tradition led to the blood conflicts and wars involving the Dutch colonial government in Bali and Lombok from the middle of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century.

Since the 19th century, the *tawan karang* tradition has also been referred to as a legal institution of the traditional countries which could not only be found in Bali and Lombok. According to van Vollenhoven, the *tawan karang* institution could also be found in the Tanimbar archipelago and Central Kalimantan (Utrecht, 1962: 122). The practice of *tawan karang* showed the royal waters (*kliprecht*). *Tawan karang* was the right of a king and his people who controlled a coastal area. They had the right to detain and own any foreign ship. They also had the right to employ its passengers as the slaves that could be traded or killed. It used to be considered the law of god of the seas (Lord Baruna) who was believed to control the coastal area and sea (Utrecht, 1962: 122). However, it was then flexibly defined and applied.

The Regulation for Foreign Trader

The inscription of Bebetin dated 896 AD describes the regulations concerning the properties of *banyaga* (seafaring merchants who died at *Banwa Bharu* (Goris, 1954: 54). The properties had to be divided into two parts, although it is not mentioned what the two divisions were used for. It is also mentioned that timber from the wrecked ships of the *banyaga* were used for fences or palisades around the fortified settlement (*kuta*) at *Banwa Bharu*. It thus seems that the fortified settlements at Julah and *Banwa Bharu* were both surrounded by wood or bamboo fences (Ardika, 1991: 141). This was also the characteristic of city in Southeast Asia between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries AD (Reid 1980: 242).

It should be noted that the terms *kuta* and *ser pasar* (market officer) are also mentioned in the inscription of Bebetin AI dated AD 896 (Goris, 1954: 54). *Banwa Bharu* could have been another port site in north Bali, possibly

located near the modern village of Sangsit, about 15 km west of Julah, where the small port still exists.

Based on the inscriptions of Bebetin AI dated AD 896 and Sembiran AI dated AD 922, it is impossible to find wrecked ship in the northern coast of Bali. It is due to the regulation that the timbers of the wrecked ship was used for fences or palisade of fortified settlement at Julah and Banwa Bharu.

The Type of Watercrafts

The Balinese inscriptions mentioned several types of watercrafts including *perahu*, *bahitra*, *jong*, *lancang*, etc. For instance, the inscription of Sembiran AI dated AD 922 mentions: IIIb.3 ... *yanada taban karang ditu, parahu, lancang jukung, talaka* ... (Ardika, 1991: 227; Goris, 1954). It means if there were ship, boat, canoe and canoe (?) captured based on *taban karang* regulation at Julah. Based on Sembiran AI inscription at least there were four types of watercrafts at that time. The inscription also indicates the Balinese can make canoe or ship. There are several terms of watercrafts mentioned in Old Balinese inscriptions. These terms are in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Several terms of watercrafts mentioned in Old Balinese inscriptions

No	Balinese inscriptions	Terms of watercrafts
1	Bebetin AI dated AD 896	<i>Lancang, parahu</i>
2	Sembiran AI dated AD 922	<i>Parahu, lancang, jukung, talaka</i>
3	Sembiran AIV dated AD 1065	<i>Jong, bahitra, parahu</i>
4	Sembiran C dated AD 1181	<i>Parawu, jong, banawa</i>

The term of *parahu* or *parawu* has been mentioned in the four inscriptions namely Bebetin AI (AD 896), Sembiran AI (AD 922), Sembiran AIV (AD 1065), and Sembiran C (AD 1181). The term *parahu* or *parawu* literary means boat (Zoetmulder, 1982: 1280). *Parahu* seems to be the oldest watercraft mentioned in Balinese inscriptions. *Lancang* was mentioned in the inscriptions of Bebetin AI (AD 896) and Sembiran AI (AD 922). *Lancang* literary means small boat (Zoetmulder, 1982).

The term of *Jukung* was mentioned in the inscription of Sembiran AI (AD 922). *Jukung* means small vesel or dug out canoe (Zoetmulder, 1982: 752). Even today, *jukung* is still made and used in modern Balinese. Similar to *Jukung*, the term *talaka* was only used mentioned in the inscription of Sembiran AI (AD 922). *Talaka* literary means canoe. The term *Jong* was mentioned in the inscriptions of Sembiran AIV (AD 1065) and Sembiran C (AD 1181). *Jong* is sea going ship.(Zoetmulder, 1982: 748). It is also associated with the Chinese ship. The term *bahitra* was only mentioned in the inscription of Sembiran AIV (dated AD 1065). This term literary means boat or vessel (Zoetmulder, 1982:188). The term *banawa* was mentioned the inscription Sembiran C (AD 1181) which literary means boat or any kind of ship (Ardika, 1991: 262). On the basis of these inscriptions, Julah seems to be one of the most important ports or harbours in the northern coast of Bali. Chinese *jong* and big ship might have anchored at Julah in the 11th and 12th century AD. During the Song dynasty, China also took part in trade out of China.

Piracy in Ancient Bali

The *kuta* or fortified settlement and *pasar* or market at Julah were attacked by enemy or pirate many times. The attacks caused social disturbance in Julah and the adjacent area. This situation was first mentioned in the

inscription of Sembiran AI dated to AD 922. The inscription states: lb. 3. ...*lagi tawan bunin*...they are continuously captured by enemies... (Ardika, 1991: 221). The villagers of fortified settlement at Julah were captured by enemies, and some of them might have fled to other villages. Therefore the king Ugrasena asked them who fled to other villages to return to Julah.

The inscription of Sembiran AII dated to AD 975 mentions that king Sri Janasadhu Warmadewa gave a grant of copper plates inscription to the market officer at Julah namely Ida Kumpi Dyah Damai, who gathered together the villagers of Julah and those who lived around the fort, being many of those who returned during the reign of *Sang Ratu* (king) who was buried at Bwah Rangga (Ardika, 1991:228-233). The inscription mentions the regulation concerning the rights and responsibilities of the villagers of Julah, and those who lived around the fort.

It is worth to noticing that the inscription of Sembiran AIII dated to AD 1016 indicates that the village officers of Julah pay respect to *Sang Ratu* (Queen) Sri Sang Ājñadewi. The villagers told the Queen that the number of families who lived at Julah formerly was 300, but now only 50 remained. Therefore, the villagers asked taxes to be reduced (Ardika, 1991: 334). On the basis of those inscriptions it seems that the fortified settlement and a market at Julah was attacked and the villagers were killed or captured by enemies or pirates? This attack caused the villagers of Julah to flee to other villages. The Queen or central authorities called them to return to Julah. The Queen renewed the regulation and also reduced taxes for those who lived at Julah.

The inscription of Sembiran AIV dated to AD 1065 indicates that the village officers of Julah they consulted and paid respects to *Paduka haji*

or King Anak Wungsu. The village officers of Julah asked for a grant in order to write down their inscription on copper plates, which was a grant of the previous king. Because they did not think that what was described in the palm leaves would be preserved for the future. It should be noticed that the villagers were allowed to destroy coconut trees which blocked and caused it to be seen by a plundering ship which came to Julah at night (Ardika, 1991: 247). This statement suggests that central authority or King Anak Wungsu protected the villagers of Julah from the attack of plunderers or pirates.

As far as plunderers or piracy is concerned, it is clear that their activities caused social disturbances as well as economic instabilities. The inscriptions of Sembiran AI, Sembiran AII, Sembiran AIII, and Sembiran AIV suggest that the villagers of Julah were killed and captured by plunderers, and some of them also fled to other villages. This social disturbance at Julah was handled by Queen or King of Bali, Regulations concerning those people who lived at Julah were described at royal edits. From an economic point of view, plunderers or pirates at Julah might search for goods and valuable things. As already noted, there was a market place at the fortified settlement at Julah. The plunderers or pirates at Julah not only killed and captured people, but also robbed goods and materials at the market. Similar stories were mentioned in the inscription of Sawan AI or Bila I dated to AD 1023. The villagers of Bila were reduced from 50 to 10 families who could not pay the full tribute, so they had to ask the king (*raja*) for a reduction (Goris, 1954: 101-103). Why the villagers of Bila decreased in number was not mentioned in the inscription.

Piracy might have already existed in ancient Bali around the 9th up to 11th century AD. The pirate might attack the anchored ships and market at of

Julah. They killed and captured the villagers and possibly robbed the cargos as well as the goods at the ports site of Julah. The coastal villages in the northeastern coast of Bali might have been plundered by pirates. This attack caused the villagers to flee to other villages, and this automatically brought about the decreasing number of the people in the village.

Conclusion

Bali has been involved in maritime activities since prehistoric times. The Balinese inscriptions from the late Ninth and early Tenth century indicate the regulations concerning stranded ship (*taban/tawan karang*) and an inheritance of foreign traders (*banyaga*) who died at *kuta* or fortified settlement in the northern coast of Bali. These regulations suggest that the central authority or king/queen has managed to control the coastal areas of Bali at least in the late Ninth and early Tenth century AD. The regulation of *taban/tawan karang* was still utilized until the 20th century and throughout the colonial period. In other words, the regulation of *taban/tawan karang* has been used for more than 1000 years. The *taban/tawan karang* regulation also triggered conflict and war between the Balinese kings and the Dutch Government in the 19th and 20th century

Several types of watercraft were mentioned in the Balinese inscriptions such as: *parahu*, *lancang*, *jukung*, *talaka*, *jong*, *bahitra*, and *banawa*. These terms might have been related to the sizes and measurements of watercrafts.

Piracy might have already existed in Bali or in Indonesia in general in the early 10th century AD. The fortified settlement or *kuta* and *pasar* or market at Julah were attacked by plunderers or pirates. The villagers were killed

and captured by plunderers, and some of them fled to other villages. The villagers who lived at Julah could not to pay the full taxes and they asked for reductions to the king/queen. Therefore, the king/queen asked them to return to Julah.

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