



## Analysis of Rejang Dance in Pedawa Village, Buleleng

Rizky Januar

### ABSTRACT

This study explores the cultural and symbolic dimensions of the *Rejang* dance as practiced in Pedawa Village, Banjar District, Buleleng Regency, Bali. Drawing on a qualitative descriptive methodology, the research focuses on the interrelation between dance, costume, ritual, and community identity within the Bali Aga tradition. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews and participant observation during ceremonial performances. The findings highlight the *Rejang* dance as a sacred ritual (*wali*) performed exclusively by unmarried adolescent girls known as *Daa*. These dancers wear elaborate, multilayered costumes made from rare woven fabrics, with each component—such as the *kain rembang*, *serpong* headdress, and floral adornments—imbued with symbolic meaning. The choreography's slow and deliberate movements are influenced by both the sacred nature of the ritual and the constraints of the ceremonial attire. The research reveals that participation in the dance is governed by a hereditary system rooted in lineage and ritual purity. The designation of *Daa* follows strict community rules, with each family allowed only one representative at a time. The performance of *Rejang* during ceremonies such as *Saba Malunin* is both a rite of passage and an expression of ancestral devotion. Additionally, the use of biodegradable ritual offerings reflects the community's ecological awareness. Overall, the *Rejang* dance in Pedawa functions as a medium of intergenerational knowledge transmission, reinforcing cultural values, spiritual beliefs, and social cohesion. It exemplifies how dance, costume, and ritual intersect to sustain a distinct cultural identity within a rapidly changing world.

**Keywords:** Rejang Dance, Pedawa Village, Bali, Culture.

**Cite This Article:** Januar, R. 2025. Analysis of Rejang Dance in Pedawa Village, Buleleng. *Bali Tourism Journal* 9(1): 16-19. DOI: 10.36675/btj.v9i1.125

\*Hotel Link solutions;  
rizky@hotellinkssolutions.id

Received: 2024-11-24  
Accepted: 2025-02-28  
Published: 2025-03-11

### INTRODUCTION

Culture, as understood within the discipline of Anthropology, can be seen as both abstract and concrete. Harsoyo suggests that culture in its abstract form consists of concepts and meanings that can be expressed or perceived through language. This fundamental tool reflects humanity's unique capacity for symbolism. Humans possess the ability to think symbolically, meaning they can use abstract concepts facilitated by language.<sup>1</sup> This symbolic capacity enables humans to communicate, innovate, and interact within their communities. Hayakawa expands on this by emphasizing the influence of symbolic processes on human perception and behavior.<sup>1</sup> He argues that the symbolic process pervades every level of human life, from the most primitive to the most civilized. It shapes how individuals perceive and react to their world, often guiding their actions, consciously or unconsciously.<sup>2</sup>

In the context of clothing, the more

elaborate or formal the attire, the more restricted one's physical freedom may become. This is evident in the movements of the Rejang dance in Pedawa Village, Banjar Subdistrict, Buleleng Regency, where the choreography is notably slower and more deliberate than that of the more widely known Rejang Dewa dance. The dancers move gradually, step by step, in a circular formation around the temple courtyard. It is plausible that the dancers' attire influences the character and tempo of their movements. According to local tradition, the dancers of Pedawa's Rejang performance wear rare and elaborate fabrics. Their costumes are not typical and often consist of multiple layers of cloth. Hayakawa's perspective on symbolic processes can help explain how such elaborate costuming may psychologically and physically influence the dancers' freedom of movement.

The Rejang dance in this village also exhibits unique features in terms of both the dancers and their attire. Only adolescent girls, referred to locally as

"Daa"—unmarried young women—are permitted to dance. The Rejang dance is a sacred performance traditionally presented during Balinese Hindu religious ceremonies. The standard Rejang Dewa costume consists of white and yellow satin fabrics, a colorful *prada*-cloth shawl, and a headdress made of *busung* (young coconut leaves) adorned with flowers. The dancers' makeup typically remains natural and straightforward. However, with the passage of time and changing aesthetic preferences, modern interpretations of the Rejang dancer's appearance have become more diverse and stylized.<sup>3,4</sup>

As for the specific characteristics of the Rejang dance costumes in Pedawa Village, they are distinguished by their richness in both material and symbolism. The dancers wear traditional woven fabrics that are considered rare and culturally valuable. These garments are layered and meticulously arranged, often requiring assistance to wear properly. Unlike the more commonly seen Rejang Dewa costumes, the attire in Pedawa

reflects a deep local heritage, showcasing fabrics with intricate motifs and color combinations that are unique to the village. This elaborate costume design serves not only as a visual expression of reverence during ritual performances but also as a tangible representation of the village's identity and ancestral legacy. The uniqueness of the costume further reinforces the ceremonial atmosphere of the dance, emphasizing the sacredness of the occasion and the honored role of the dancers within it.<sup>5</sup>

## METHOD

This study aims to provide a detailed description and analysis of the Rejang dance tradition as practiced in Pedawa Village, located in the Banjar District of Buleleng Regency. The research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach, which is suitable for exploring cultural practices in depth and within their specific social contexts. The primary methods of data collection employed in this study include in-depth interviews with key cultural informants—such as dancers (Daa), community leaders, and ritual specialists—as well as participant observation during ceremonial events where the Rejang dance is performed. These methods allow for a rich, contextual understanding of both the performative and symbolic dimensions of the dance.

The data analysis process is conducted in several systematic stages. First, all collected data are compiled to form a comprehensive dataset. Next, the data are cleaned to remove inconsistencies, redundancies, or irrelevant information. The cleaned data are then analyzed thematically, focusing on cultural symbolism, ritual function, and community structure. Finally, the findings are organized and presented in a descriptive narrative to accurately convey the cultural significance of the Rejang dance in Pedawa Village. This methodological framework ensures that the research remains grounded in empirical evidence while allowing for interpretative insights rooted in anthropological theory.

## DISCUSSION

The Rejang Dance in Pedawa Village, Banjar District, Buleleng Regency, is a

sacred (wali) ceremonial dance of the Bali Aga community, performed as part of religious rituals (yadnya). According to Mardika (2022), this dance accompanies traditional ceremonies that occur in intervals of approximately five years. Among the major ceremonies where this dance is performed are *Saba Malunin* and *Saba Ngelemekin*, which take place in several temples within Pedawa Village, including Pura Desa, Pura Bingin, Pura Pecetian, Pura Telaga, and Pura Munduk.<sup>6,7</sup>

In general, there are 24 known variations of the Rejang dance in Pedawa, though only seven are typically performed during the *saba* ceremonies. These include:

- *Rejang Tanding Klayon*
- *Rejang Lilit Penjalin*
- *Rejang Lilit Dawa*
- *Rejang Bawak*
- *Rejang Tanding Wasi*
- *Rejang Sirig Bantas*
- *Rejang Mbad-mbadan Penjalin*<sup>8</sup>

One of the notable performances is the Rejang dance presented during the *Saba Malunin* ceremony, which is held tri-monthly. This sacred dance is reserved exclusively for adolescent girls who have reached puberty and are referred to within the local community as Daa. The term *Daa* denotes an unmarried young woman and carries deep cultural and ceremonial significance in Pedawa. The performance of this dance is not merely artistic. However, it represents a continuation of ancestral traditions passed down through generations, thus symbolizing the intergenerational transmission of cultural values and ritual obligations.

The origins of the Rejang dance in Pedawa are closely tied to the village's history. Before it was known as Pedawa, the area was called Gunung Tangleg, a name derived from the word *Tangleg*, meaning naive or pure, reflecting the simplicity and sincerity of its early inhabitants.

The right to perform the Rejang dance is not universally granted. It is governed by a traditional system that determines who may participate. Only girls designated as *Daa* are permitted to dance, and this designation follows a specific lineage-based rule. A *Daa* is selected from among the daughters in a family, typically the eldest unmarried girl. Upon reaching this role, she receives a ceremonial offering

consisting of two betel leaves filled with lime, areca nut, and gambier, wrapped in banana leaves. This ritual marks her official entry into the community's cultural and spiritual responsibilities.<sup>9</sup>

Importantly, only one daughter per family may hold the title of *Daa* at any given time. When the designated *Daa* marries, her status is passed on to her younger, unmarried sister. This cycle continues through the generations.<sup>10</sup> Participation as a *Daa* includes several duties, most notably dancing the Rejang during the *saba* ceremonies. Should a *Daa* be unable to fulfill this obligation (for example, due to menstruation during the ceremony), she may face traditional sanctions.

The *Daa* status is strictly hereditary and is only available to female descendants within a family. If a family no longer has eligible unmarried daughters—due to marriage or a lack of female children—then the family may be considered *leteh* (ritually impure or ineligible) in the ceremonial context, which carries social and spiritual consequences within the community.

### Costume and Cultural Structure of the Rejang Dance in Pedawa Village

The primary attire of the Rejang dancers in Pedawa Village features a distinct use of traditional Balinese textiles and symbolic adornments. The core garment is the "*kain rembang*", a type of shawl that functions both as a chest covering and a decorative sash. Symbolically, this fabric is understood to represent "*lamak*", a ritual cloth that signifies spiritual grounding and guidance—an emblem of one's life path and moral foundation within the ceremonial context.

On the head, dancers wear a crown called "*seropong*", crafted from young coconut leaves (*janur*) and adorned with fresh flowers. The *seropong* is typically trapezoidal, emphasizing geometric simplicity blended with organic ornamentation. Additional decorative elements include "*sekar taji*", which are ornamental floral arrangements made from *pelendo* (a type of plant fiber), always arranged in odd numbers—five, seven, or nine—believed to hold spiritual significance. These are often

complemented by artificial gold flowers, enhancing the aesthetic and sacred value of the ensemble. At the front of the headpiece is a “belengker”, a gold-toned crown-like accessory featuring meticulously arranged floral clusters known as “bunga gempolan”. These arrangements commonly include frangipani (*jepun*), *kenanga*, and hibiscus flowers, which are revered for their purity and ceremonial importance.<sup>11,12</sup>

For the lower garment, dancers wear a *kamen*, a traditional sarong-like cloth. The choice of textile often varies depending on the dancer’s personal or familial resources and may include *bebali* fabrics such as *songket*, *tenun endek*, or *batik*. These handwoven or printed textiles carry their cultural heritage and are selected with reverence and care. The continued preservation of the Rejang dance tradition in Pedawa is intimately connected to the larger social and ritual systems within the village. One of the most important ceremonial contexts for this dance is the Saba ritual cycle. The performance of Rejang is considered obligatory during such ceremonies. It involves the collaboration of several community organizations, including the *desa adat* (customary village council), *karang taruna* youth organizations (locally called *Sekaa Truna Truni*), the Daa system (which governs the eligibility of female dancers), and the *Sekaa Baleganjur*, the village’s traditional music ensemble.<sup>13</sup>

These interconnected social institutions play a vital role in maintaining the continuity and integrity of the Rejang dance. They not only support the organization of the ritual events but also ensure the transmission of cultural values and responsibilities across generations. The dance is not merely a performance but a sacred obligation during Saba, a communal ritual of worship and homage to *Ida Sesuhunan*, the ancestral and spiritual protector of the village.<sup>14</sup>

One key ritual in this context is Saba Malunin, a form of *Dewa Yadnya* (sacred offering ceremony) performed at the village’s temple, *Pura Pedawa*. During this ceremony, worshippers use a special type of offering called *Banten Balun*, also referred to as *Banten Lungguh*. Unlike the typical *sokasi*-based offering platforms found in Balinese rituals, *Banten Balun* is uniquely

placed on biodegradable materials such as banana leaves, pandan leaves, and *kelatkat* (a type of woven leaf mat). This reflects both ecological awareness and the retention of ancient ritual practices distinctive to Pedawa.<sup>15</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The Rejang dance in Pedawa Village exemplifies a unique cultural phenomenon that blends ritual significance, symbolic expression, and community identity. As an embodiment of both abstract and concrete elements of culture, this dance highlights how language, symbols, and bodily movements converge to form meaningful traditions. The philosophical underpinnings of the dance, as discussed by Harsoyo and Hayakawa, affirm that symbolic processes profoundly shape human expression and perception, influencing how rituals like Rejang are performed and understood. Costumes, choreography, and the dancers’ conduct are all influenced by cultural values and symbolic meanings embedded in traditional practices. In Pedawa, the slow, deliberate movements of Rejang are a direct reflection of the sacred attire worn by the dancers, reinforcing the spiritual solemnity of the performance. These elements are not merely aesthetic choices, but manifestations of deep-seated beliefs about reverence, purity, and communal harmony. Thus, Rejang functions not only as a performative ritual but also as a medium for intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge and identity. The continued observance of these practices signals the resilience of symbolic traditions within contemporary Balinese society.

The structural framework of Rejang in Pedawa is deeply rooted in the village’s social and spiritual systems, notably the Daa tradition and the broader ceremonial cycle of Saba. The dance is performed by unmarried adolescent girls, who are assigned the ceremonial role of Daa, indicating their readiness to engage in sacred duties. The hereditary nature of the Daa status and its strict lineage-based transmission underscore the community’s emphasis on continuity and purity in ritual practice. This structured approach reflects the sacredness of the role, as failure to fulfill

the responsibility can result in social and ritual consequences. The cyclical transfer of this role within families also ensures that the community maintains an active link to its ancestral past. Rejang, in this context, becomes more than a dance—it serves as a rite of passage and a living archive of cultural ethics and responsibilities. The village’s understanding of purity, embodied in the Daa system, plays a crucial role in upholding the sacredness of the ceremonies. As a result, the Rejang dance not only reinforces gendered roles in cultural performance but also shapes the social fabric of the Pedawa community.

The costume of the Rejang dancers further deepens the symbolic layers of the tradition, with each garment and accessory conveying specific cultural meanings. The *kain rembang*, *seropong* headdress, and elaborate floral adornments are not merely decorative but serve as visual signifiers of spiritual alignment and ritual preparedness. These traditional costumes distinguish Pedawa’s Rejang from other regional variants, showcasing the village’s unique heritage and devotion. Materials used—such as *songket*, *tenun endek*, or *batik*—reflect not only aesthetic preferences but also socioeconomic conditions and personal family resources. The ritual offering of *Banten Balun* during Saba Malunin, using biodegradable materials like banana and pandan leaves, further illustrates the village’s commitment to ecological and cultural preservation. These practices affirm the community’s efforts to maintain a sustainable yet deeply rooted spiritual tradition. Through the integration of symbolic costume, sacred offerings, and structured participation, the Rejang dance becomes a holistic expression of Bali Aga identity. Ultimately, Pedawa’s Rejang tradition underscores the vital role of dance as both a cultural artifact and a sacred act of devotion, preserved through collective memory and active community involvement.

## REFERENCES

1. Marzuki, M. A. DEFINISI ILMU PENDIDIKAN. *DASAR DASAR ILMU PENDIDIKAN*, 1.
2. Utami, S., & Malini, I. G. A. (2019). Kajian Busana Tari Rejang Dewa di Desa Pedawa. *Jurnal Da Moda*, 1(1), 1-5.
3. Suweta, I. M. (2020). Kebudayaan Bali

- dalam Konteks Pengembangan Pariwisata Budaya. *Cultoure: Jurnal Ilmiah Pariwisata Budaya Hindu*, 1(1), 1-14.
4. Ardiyani, L. P. C., Pitriani, K., & Jero, N. W. J. (2025). Rejang Pedawa dance as a medium for ethnopedagogical-based adolescent learning. *Dharmakirti: International Journal of Religion, Mind and Science*, 2(2), 92-102.
  5. Widiastiti, N. L. P. A. (2021). *Karakteristik Busana Tari Rejang dan Tari Baris di Desa Bali Aga (Pedawa) Untuk Melestarikan Budaya Tradisional* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha).
  6. Made Nila Putri, D. (2024). *IDENTIFIKASI TATA RIAS TARI REJANG DI DESA PEDAWA KABUPATEN BULELENG ERA MODERNISASI* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha).
  7. Subawa, I. B., Gelgel, I. P., & Subrata, I. W. (2019). Existence of Bali Aga Community Religion: Pedawa Village in Buleleng. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3(1), 72-81.
  8. Express, K. B. (2021). *Penari Lalui Ritual Khusus, Ditarikan Para Daa*. Denpasar: PT. Bali Ekspres Intermedia.
  9. Sumantri, I. G. M. A. (2024). Unveiling Transcendental Symbols in the Rejang Ayunan Tradition of Pupuan, Tabanan. *Bali Tourism Journal*, 8(1), 5-9.
  10. Suratmaja, D. D. A. (2023). Rejang Ilud, the Sacred Dance of Empowerment and Symbolism. *Bali Tourism Journal*, 7(2), 39-42.
  11. Harsoyo. (1982). *Pengantar Antropologi*. Jakarta: Binacipta.
  12. Hayakawa. (1990). *Simbol-simbol Komunikasi Antarbudaya*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
  13. Mardika, I. P. (2022). *Pewarisan Budaya Bali Dalam Tradisi Nguja Benih di Desa Pedawa, Kecamatan Banjar, Kabupaten Buleleng*. Buleleng: STAH N Mpu Kuturan Singaraja.
  14. Widiastiti, N. L. (2021). *Karakteristik Busana Tari Rejang dan Tari Baris di Desa Pedawa (Bali Aga) Untuk Melestarikan Budaya Tradisional*. Buleleng: Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha Singaraja.
  15. Dani, P. M. U. (2023). *KONSTRUKSI BUDAYA PATRIARKI DALAM TRADISI SABA MALUNIN DI DESA PEDAWA BULELENG, BALI DAN POTENSINYA SEBAGAI SUPLEMEN MATA KULIAH SOSIOLOGI GENDER* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha).

