

Balinese Ritual Song *Kidung*: An Analysis of its Singing Style

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On the island of Bali, there exists a unique culture often called the Bali Hindu which is a harmonious synthesis of its own animistic roots and influences from outside. Cultural beliefs are reflected in daily speech and activities as well as being symbolized in living surroundings, while elaborate manifestations take place Ñü most often in different forms of artistic expression Ñü at the many ritualistic events. Ritual song *kidung* is one example of such artistic expression characterized by its unique singing style.

Ethnomusicologist and composer Edward Herbst has indicated that the Balinese concept of beauty in ritual is deeply related related to its efficacy, meaning that in a way, they are one and the same. He proposes the existence of intrinsic aesthetics within the Balinese culture based on the integration and the balancing of one's *idep* (thought) - *sabda* (vocalization, expression) - *bayu* (energy, activity). Hence, forms of expression that we perceive in rituals can be attributed as reflections of such aesthetics, which are then recognized by the people as forms of beauty, at the same time bringing efficacy to the ritual.

In order to grasp the structural essence of the singing style of *kidung*, I have first referred to the concept of beauty proposed by Herbst of which I have mentioned above as a way of understanding what the meaning or the function of the singing of *kidung* is in ritual. I have intended to make clear of the elements that constitute this singing style and how they are integrated. Finally, by examining the characteristics of this integration, I have tried to show exactly where the expression of this singing style lies.