



1

SONGKET HISTORY IN BALI

Historically, songket weaving in Bali has been connected throughout the centuries with the highest castes.

The noble ladies and daughters of the courts, and the women of Brahmanic houses. Therefore, weaving area in Bali located on where the old kingdom was, such as in Sidemen, Gelgel, Buleleng, Negara.

Nowadays, with the economic changes of the last five decades, anyone has acquired some sort of position in Balinese society today, and can afford to buy them, is now authorized to display his or her status at religious and social functions through the use of Songket.

2

PROCESS OF MAKING BALINESE SONGKET

- The process of making Balinese Songket consist of four steps
- 1. Mangelos
- 2. Nganyinin
- 3. Nyuntik
- 4. Menenun

3

I. MENGELOS

The plain or striped warp is prepared, either by the weaver herself or by a specialist. It takes about fifteen hours of work to prepare a warp.



4

2. NGANYININ

The warping device consists of a long horizontal beam with three vertical wooden pegs. The warp threads are wound to and fro round the pegs from a revolving bobbin. As with any simple weaving device, the songket loom basically requires the arrangement of a lease, keeping even and odd warp threads in good order.



5

3. NYUNTIK

Setting up the additional heddle rods for pattern programming (nyuntik) is by far the most exacting process in the whole production. The most important part of the loom for weaving the supplementary weft pattern is at the rear in the warp. Setting it up is the job of the programmer. Referring to an old cloth, a woven sample (tulad), the programmer counts the warp threads for the first pattern weft by hand with the aid of a small bamboo slat.



6

4. MENENUN

Typologically, the Balinese cagcag belongs to a category of backstrap looms found also in Sumatera and Java. This loom can produce only cloths of a limited width; for this reason, large cloths necessarily consists of two widths sewn together.



7

PROGRAMMING PATTERN

- The Songket production process is complicated and time-consuming. The demands on the woman's dexterity, patience, and eyesight are so great that only a few specialists perform this task.
- The best programmers are said to be certain Brahman women and gifted weavers from the Puri. However, at this moment, only certain people can perform programming for Songket patterns and young people in communities may find the required, sometimes-lengthy apprenticeships too demanding.
- In addition to that, *tulad* is created from material that easy to break.
- This knowledge may disappear if family members are not interested in learning them. More importantly, some traditional craftsmanship knowledge has been transmitted from generation to generation through an oral tradition, and as a result, it is not well-documented, adding another potential form of loss.

8

PRESERVATION

The preservation of cultural creation has been accomplished through the creation of digital formats, defined according to the Guidelines for the Preservation of Digital Heritage as “text, databases, still and moving images, audio, graphics, software, and web pages, among a wide and growing range of formats” (National Library of Australia, 2003, p.13)

To sustain and preserve the transmission process for the future generation of local communities, a digital format of their cultural creations can be used to entice the younger generations to both understand and perpetuate their own cultures.

The process of transforming an oral tradition into a digital form involves careful decoding to avoid misinterpretation by (1) learning the Songket technique from the artisans on site, (2) translating the technique into a cultural shape grammar, (3) modeling the grammar into an interactive media study application.

9

(1) LEARNING THE SONGKET TECHNIQUE FROM THE ARTISANS ON SITE

- Every 5 cm consists of 80 strands of yarn
- The cagcag can only produce limited width of cloth, around 50 – 55 cm. Hence, in 55 cm, there are 880 strands of yarn
- in creating a pattern, especially Songket from Gelgel, the programmer uses five threads up and down
- the amount of guun for Gelgel Songket is around 30 to 150 (guun holds information of pattern)



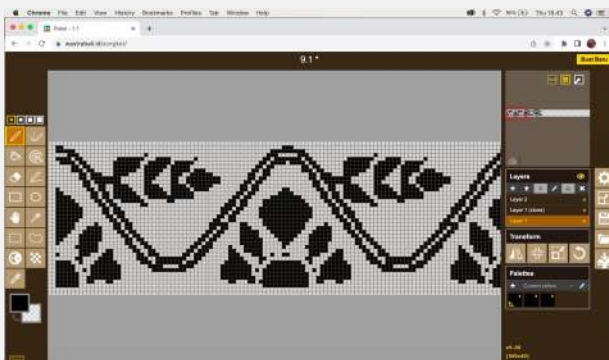
10

(2) TRANSLATING THE TECHNIQUE INTO A CULTURAL SHAPE GRAMMAR



11

(2) TRANSLATING THE TECHNIQUE INTO A CULTURAL SHAPE GRAMMAR

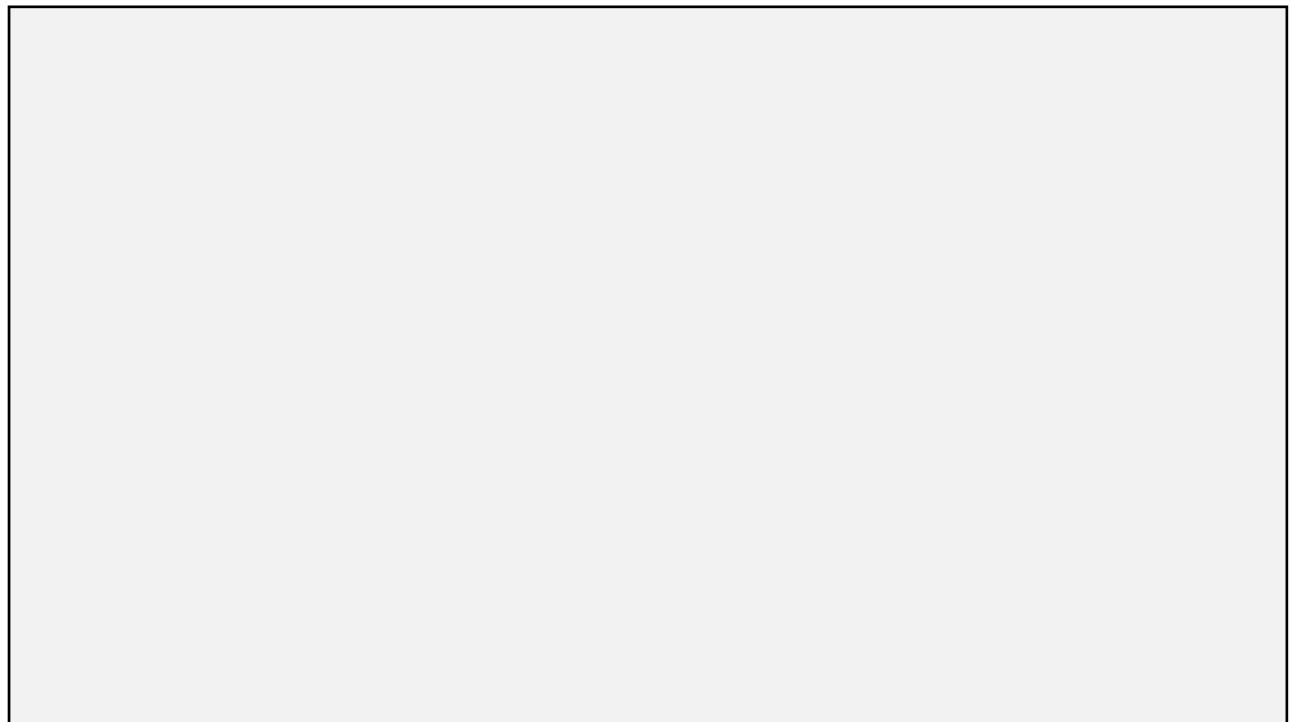


12

(3) MODELING THE GRAMMAR INTO AN INTERACTIVE MEDIA STUDY APPLICATION.



13



14