

In the stories that have grown up around Blanjong, the histories and, above all, the sequence of events re-enacted in the ritual were 'compressed' – i.e., events, which on a linear conception of time probably lay far apart, were telescoped and bundled into a single dense sequence.

Several facets of the past of South Bali point to various aspects which we will come back to later in connection with the history of social groups, from Kesiman, Kepaon, and Sakenan. Overall, however, they manifest the significance of this strip of beach which apparently was an important entry point for connections from across the sea. The 'landing places' of the ancestors and gods, where during the ritual of Blanjong offerings are made, no doubt also contain a core of truth from this world. The locations described are today – even though only in a modest way – landing places for outrigger boats. For example, in the Bay of Mertasari boats from far-away parts of Indonesia still anchor. According to the oral traditions, the survivors of the legendary ships were washed ashore in the region of Blanjong. Their memory is kept alive in and through the ritual.

As mentioned above, Lansing spoke about the revival of a former kingdom taking place in the setting of a temple festival. These are probably not fictitious kingdoms created for the sake of the rituals. There is evidence that the ritual keeps alive the memory of past social conditions. This does not, however, refer to the ritual as such, disconnected from all spatial elements. It is more the interplay of locality: places of commemoration and worship, like temples, and of ritual which form the cornerstones of this 'memory'. But the congregation of the faithful is needed: year after year, generation after generation, they continue the ritual at the given location, make the past present, and thereby take away the temporal distance. Indeed, the ritual and its performers do not 'feel' the past or the historicity of the ritual performed. It is experienced as the reality of the other world invading this world. It also exists parallel to this world, but only on set days, and it becomes visible and manifest solely during the annual temple festival. Thus it is less the past which catches up with the present, even though this concept is clearly there – above all, since we deal with deified ancestors. Rather, it is a simultaneity of two different levels of reality, the visible and the invisible realms of life – called by the Balinese *sekala* and *niskala* – which is expressed in it.

But yet another dimension resonates in these rituals: the king who, during the ritual, transforms himself and becomes a god.²⁵ The question remains how else the process from the former real kingdom and its downfall to its reinstalment and elaboration in the temple ritual could have evolved. Because in no way does every fallen kingdom

²⁵ One of the most famous examples of such a transformation from king to god in Polynesia are the rituals in Hawaii (Valeri 1985:200-233). Following Grader, Geertz mentions the leading role of the Balinese king in "realm-purifying rituals" (1980:248).