

# A Historical Study of Gandrung Art in Tinggarsari Village, Buleleng, Bali

**Made Wahyu Arya Wisesa\***

*Institut Seni Indonesia Bali, Indonesia*

\*Corresponding Author: [aryawisesa577@gmail.com](mailto:aryawisesa577@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** The art of gandrung in Tinggarsari Village in Buleleng, Bali, is a sacred dance or wali unen-unen dance in Pura Penataran as a repellent and symbolizes fertility as a reference source of life for the community which is only staged during religious ceremonies in Tinggarsari Village. The purpose of this research is to identify the structure of the gending and analyze the direction of the tone from the melody of the jublag instrument. In this study, the author uses a qualitative research method during observation. The use of relevant theory with a focus on gendering using the CC (Contour Class) theory of the classification of four tones of ding-dong notation. This Gending has a distinctive structure, resembling the features of the embelgan and ensemble used, namely the kebyar pacek gong. Gending gandrung research in Tinggarsari Village makes an important contribution to the development of science, especially in the field of karawitan through the mapping of musical and historical structures more clearly. Practically, the results of this research can be used as learning material as well as a reference for preservation for the supporting community to understand the pakem gending gandrung properly. So the findings of this study are more intended to strengthen the local identity of gandrung art in Tinggarsari Village and encourage the community and the village government to increase efforts to preserve gandrung as a local cultural heritage.

**Keywords:** gandrung, sacred dance, pura, contour class

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## Introduction

The Gandrung dance in Tinggarsari Village, Busungbiu District, Buleleng Regency, Bali, is a sacred dance or the Unen-Unen dance performed at Penataran Temple to ward off evil and symbolize fertility, a source of life for the community. It is performed only during religious ceremonies in Tinggarsari Village. In an article written by Ida Ayu Trisnawati accessed on December 16, 2025, it is stated that Sanghyang Gandrung Dance is performed to ward off misfortune 'penangluk merana' and to protect the local people from bad spirits and any danger. The Sanghyang Gandrung Dance is performed to ward off misfortune 'penangluk merana' and to protect the local people from evil spirits and any danger (Trisnawati, 2018).

Gandrung in Tinggarsari Village is performed on Purnama Kedasa at Penataran Temple, Purnama Kedua Dalam and on Rahinan Pemacekan Agung Wuku Kuningan at Kendengan Temple. Gandrung art by its supporting community is used and believed to have a connection with community beliefs (Sukadana, 2023). In reality, on this holy day, people often flock to Penataran

Temple. Nunas Pakuluh prays for children, Nunas Asuhan Kecek prays for children who cannot yet speak, Nunas Asuhan Gong prays for safety, and Ngemaling Panggul Kendang (the ritual of stealing a panggul kendang, believed to grant male offspring) is performed at Penataran Temple in Tinggarsari Village.

The connection between the explanation of gandrung art in Tinggarsari Village and the general explanation of gandrung presented by several artists is highly relevant because they share a common core, yet there are several differences that characterize the art in each region. As explained by Bandem, gandrung is a social dance performed by men dressed as women. Generally, the word gandrung means love or longing. The word has an erotic connotation in the Balinese gandrung performance art (Bandem, 1983). Bandem (1996) also states that gandrung is usually performed at weddings. In ancient times, gandrung was usually danced in the palace at the request of the king, because it was believed that gandrung aroused passionate love between the king and his wife, so that the king could share his love equally with all his wives.

In "Gandrung Dance in Banjar Suwung Batan Kendal, Sesetan Village, Denpasar City" written by Ni Wayan Juli Artiningsih (2025), it states that: Gandrung originated from Banyuwangi (East Java) and developed to Lombok Island via Bali Island during the period when Bali Island and West Lombok Island were part of the cultural area of the Karangasem Kingdom. At that time, gandrung was one of the most popular performing arts among other performances. Gandrung was danced by men and was even very popular in Bali in ancient times. Gandrung originated from Banyuwangi and developed in Lombok via Bali, but the exact year is not mentioned, but it is believed to be between 1907 and 1910. Since then, various other types of arts have spread from northern Bali to Lombok, and northern Bali has become the dominant art at that time. Based on the explanation above, it is clear that the gandrung art form is currently developing in three regions: Banyuwangi, Bali, and Lombok. Although the gandrung dances from these three regions are similar, they have unique characteristics not found in other regions (Yaningsih, 1994: 13). This statement is also supported by an article written by Indahsari and Dewi, accessed on December 16, 2025, which states that Gandrung developed in three regions: Lombok, Banyuwangi, and Bali (Indahsari, 2025 and Dewi, 2020). Furthermore, today, Gandrung, as stated above, has developed as a sacred dance performed in certain areas of Bali, particularly in Tinggarsari Village.

Gandrung in Tinggarsari Village is believed to provide positive vibrations, which are believed by its supporters through a ritual process before the performance. (Kusuma, 2023) states that religious values align with the idea of religion as a manifestation of spiritual and divine nature derived from belief and faith. Gandrung, as a sacred dance, is performed by three underage males and two masked dancers, Jero Dangin and Jero Dauh (purusa pradana). The Gandrung dance is performed by a male dancer who has not yet reached adulthood or reached puberty (aged 10 to 11 years). He wears feminine makeup and clothing so that the character he portrays truly resembles a woman. (Artiningsih, 2017). The statement about the development of the gandrung art form above is also supported by Bandem's explanation, which states that, initially,

gandrung was only performed in the gandrungan dance (a type of improvisational dance accompanied by free music). However, today, with the rapid development of traditional arts and culture, gandrung follows the legong pattern and features themes such as Lasem and Kupu-kupu Tarum (Bandem & Fredrik, 2004).

This gandrung music is still performed in its entirety by Sekeha Gong Bhuana Amerta. However, due to a lack of attention from the Sekeha and the community (only a small number of people know the music), no one truly understands the structure of this gandrung music, nor what its parts are. Those who study gamelan within the Sekeha only know the ibing-ibingan section, as this section characterizes the gandrung that the general public is familiar with. Not many people know about this Gandrung music, only the general public knows about this music, the Balinese term is sube dapetang ade because many factors influence people not knowing about this music. The first factor is that in the past, not just anyone could play the gamelan in Tinggarsari Village, the Balinese term is tenget, the second factor is that there are no records of this gending, either in notation or recording, the third factor is from the community itself who are starting to be unaware of the richness of art and culture in Tinggarsari Village. From these factors, the impact is felt in the current periodization, the lack of interest of the community to encourage their children or the younger generation about the importance of the continuation of the ancestral tetamian art, from this, it aroused the author's heart to delve deeper and dig deeper into the history of this gandrung music, how the working methods of people in the past created this gending. By using a collaborative approach which means through art, anthropology and sociology, it is able to describe the root of the problem in this study.



[Source: Mangku Wayan Ruci, 2025]

Figure 1. Gandrung Dance

Gandrung art in Tinggarsari Village is a rich artistic heritage in the performing arts that requires vital attention, as not everyone understands how this art was formed, including the historical aspects of its music. It should be emphasized that this research aims to encompass these three aspects presented

in this paper to describe and analyze this gandrung art so that it can be used as a reference for readers and the general public familiar with gandrung art in Tinggarsari Village. In this research, there are at least three urgencies: 1) There has been no historical study of gandrung art in Tinggarsari Village, 2) The relevance of gandrung as part of religious activities in Tinggarsari Village, 3) Analysis of the structure of gending as a parameter to link the periodization of the development of gandrung art. These three points will be connected to each other, because examining rituals without historical studies will give rise to subjective perceptions, likewise examining the historical aspects without linking them to the reality of the gending will narrow the area of this study because each gending has its periodization, and one way to identify the historical aspects of a culture is by knowing how gending is constructed and functions in its society.

Although the art of gandrung has been reviewed by several authors, none have yet discussed it in detail, specifically the gending itself. Using a collaborative approach of field observation, several related studies can be synthesized to form a unified, integrated body of information. Furthermore, this paper aims to identify the history of gandrung in Tinggarsari Village by focusing on its musical aspects and striving to explore how specific gending cultures converge within a single analytical approach. This, unwittingly, will correlate with aspects of cultural history (particularly gending). Thus, identifying gandrung art with the aforementioned approach will allow the author to view it as a living and evolving subject, rather than viewing it as an object, let alone an inanimate object.

## Methodology

Based on the results of the data collected by the researcher in the field, the researcher used a collaborative approach reviewed using qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is a research method that focuses on the collection and analysis of non-numerical data to understand social, cultural, or psychological phenomena in depth and holistically. Moleong (2007) said that qualitative is a way to obtain information that aims to understand the phenomena experienced by the research material, and by describing it in the form of sentences and words, in a special scientific discussion and by utilizing various methods.



[Source: Wisesa, 2025]  
Figure 2. A Gandrung Dancer from the 1970s

This research is presented descriptively, explaining the research subject, presented through several relevant sources based on information obtained during field observations. This research is based on data obtained during field observations through interviews and documentation of everything supporting the Gandrung art form in Tinggarsari Village, Busungbiu, Buleleng. This study aims to answer and resolve the aforementioned problems by focusing on the structure of Gandrung music, reconstructed based on its periodization through analysis using ding-dong notation.

## Results and Discussion

The source interviewed by the author on September 23, 2024, was Mangku Dalem I Made Suryawan, a dancer from the 1960s. He was already dancing Gandrung in the third grade of elementary school. He is currently the oldest dancer in Tinggarsari Village. According to him, this gandrung is a sacred dance from the Penataran Duayu Mas Subandar and Ratu Ngurah Gede Penyarikan temples, closely related to the Kendengan temple which has Duayu Maniking Bulan as its palace. This statement is also supported by an article written by Arshiniwati, Gandrung dance is a dance that is believed by the local community to have sacred values (Arshiniwati, 2023). From her narrative, the Gandrung gending is completely like this from the past until now which is passed down by ancestors. Local wisdom is actually conveyed continuously from one generation to the next or through oral narratives. Knowledge of this local culture has been closely integrated with the system held by the ancestors through beliefs, traditions, norms, and mythical beliefs that have been maintained for quite a long time. (Cahyadi, 2019; Ulinnuha, 2025; Wahyudi: 2023; Sawaludin, 2022). In the past, the father of Mangku Dalem I Made Suryawan, named Kumpi Nyoman Nesa, was the first dancer who was estimated to have been born in the 1920s. During that time, Kumpi Nyoman Nesa had danced the gandrung dance since she was little, and Kumpi Nyoman Nesa was the one who maintained the gending and gandrung dance. She joined Sekeha Gong Bhuana Amerta Tinggarsari Village together with Kumpi Dana, she was at that time a gandrung drum maker who according to Mangku Dalem I Made Suryawan still used the Blelengan drum instead of the krumpungan drum but her drum playing used the krumpungan drum playing style. In the past, no one danced this gandrung because at that time there was still Japanese occupation of Indonesia in 1942. This gandrung was not danced for 21 years because of the Japanese occupation at that time. Then Kumpi Desak Kalot appeared who was the wife of Kumpi Dana, she taught this gandrung dance, after decades of not being danced.



[Source: Wisesa, 2025]

Figure 3. Mangku Dalem I Made Suryawan, a dancer from the 1960s

According to Mangku Wayan Ruci, a gamelan orchestrator in Tinggarsari Village, the author interviewed a key informant on January 5, 2025. He explained that the story begins with the birth of Queen Ngurah Gede Penyarikan, a descendant of Queen Ngurah Gede Penyarikan, who resided at Penataran Temple. He had a wife named Duayu Mas Subandar, a Javanese woman. Duayu Mas Subandar refused to return to Tinggarsari Village to meet Queen Ngurah Gede Penyarikan. To persuade his wife to return, Queen Ngurah Gede Penyarikan created a dance as an offering to her, thus creating the gandrung dance. This is an acculturation of Balinese and Javanese culture. The dance is also mandatory for men who are still immature (pure). Here lies the fusion of male and female purusa pradana as the source or root of life in Tinggarsari Village and the presence of the masks of jero dangin (male actors) and jero dauh (female actors) reinforces the beliefs of the Tinggarsari Village community. Maharani also said, Initially, Gandrung was danced by male dancers who dressed as women (Maharani, 2024; Santi, 2018). From the statement of the source, it is also supported by the statement of the book entitled *Prakempa Sebuah Lontar Gambelan Bali* written by I Made Bandem. The arrival of the Majapahit people to Bali in the early 16th century increased the relationship between Java and Bali in the field of art, especially literary and performing arts. Balinese art received a strong influence from Javanese art and these elements are visible in the gamelan tuning system, song composition, the use of costumes in dance, dance forms and Balinese art which originally functioned as sacred art, now become secular art and its performance prioritizes artistic offerings (Bandem, 1986).



[Source: Wisesa, 2025]  
Figure 4. Mangku Wayan Ruci, a gamelan orchestrator

A study of cultural history can present the overall cultural evolution of a region or country, but it can also focus specifically on one aspect of that cultural history. The elements within a culture are known as cultural components, which include belief systems, knowledge systems, economic systems, art systems, communication systems, social organizational systems, and others (Pramana, 2014). Historical studies are a research method used to analyze and understand past events, processes, and phenomena. This study also aims to develop an understanding of the past or periodization. In understanding this development, it involves identifying and analyzing patterns, causes, effects, changes, and continuity, as well as assessing the impact of past and present events on the gandrung art form in Tinggarsari Village.

According to Kuntowijoyo, history is something or an event that has occurred in the past that is reconstructed or rebuilds past events for the benefit of the present and future. History reconstructs from its inception and development until now. The concept of history is human events of the past, records of past events, or records of past actualities, and the process or technique of making records of human events in the past. History is a construction of the past, which has meaning in the present. Through a historical approach, identity can be recognized and stages of development have meaning as their context (Heriyawati, 2016). This article is very relevant to the historical study that the author presents in this discussion.

In "Study of the Form and Function of the Gandrung Giri Kusuma Dance in Ungasan Village, Badung" written by Ni Luh Diah Candra Dewi, it is stated that: The accompanying music of the performance has a very important role in creating a deep experience for the audience. Through the use of appropriate musical elements it will be able to help bring the performance to have a higher value (Ruastiti *et al.*, 2022). In the use of the art of gandrung gending in Tinggarsari Village using the Gong Kebyar Pacek Ensemble, it is focused on later analyzing and recording in the form of ding-dong notation with the recording method as a result of fieldwork carried out to then be transcribed using the notation described previously. With this method, the hierarchical structure of the gandrung gending

composition will be described classified based on the form identified based on the meter (size) of the melody in one gending palette. Contour Class (CC) is a group of four whole numbers in ding-dong notation. As stated by Michael Tenzer, In general, in relation to the musical analysis of this paper, the theory used by Tenzer is very useful, especially for analyzing the direction of the notes that are divided and identified based on the tone groups consisting of four notes. Thus, this analysis helps in providing a more objective view of how certain notes have similarities with others, how certain notes become more dominant than others, reviewed in the perspective of tonality. The organization of the tones in question is not only in the context of the layers of the penyacah, jublag and jegogan groups. In this paper, the analysis method used by Tenzer becomes the basis of the author's inspiration to adapt the method, using an analysis approach with ding-dong notation thus making it a vital reference used as a guideline for analyzing Gandrung music in Tinggarsari village. Gandrung music in Tinggarsari Village is traditional music using the Gong Kebyar Pacek ensemble.



[Source: Wisesa, 2025]  
Figure 5. Sutamba's Gandrung dance performance

An example of the four-note grouping in Gandrung music using ding-dong notation.

<i>t</i>	CC1	CC2	CC3	CC4
Penyacah	(7) 1 7 5	7 3 1 7	5 1 7 5	4 5 7 1

	CC1	CC2
Jublag	(7) . 7 . 7. 1	. 5 . 7 . 4 . 1

CC1
Jegogan

<i>r</i>	CC1	CC2	CC3	CC4
Penyacah	(7) 7 1 3	4 7 5 3	4 1 4 3	1 7 4 5

	CC1	CC2
Jublag	(7) . 1 . 4 . 5	. 4 . 4 . 1 . 4

CC1

Jegogan

7 . . . 4 . . . 4 . . . 1

The Gandrung music from Tinggarsari Village is a traditional musical instrument featuring the Gong Kebyar Pacek ensemble. Its composer is unknown, indicating its anonymity. The author believes that several parts of the Gandrung music resemble paleongan music. The Gandrung musical scale consists of two palets, each composed of eight calung (jublag) beats, using sixteen kajar beats.

The first palet of the Gandrung music is played in a high octave, with the first eight beats being "nyujuh kemong" and the second eight being "nyujuh gong," as in the following example:

+ (7)175 7 317 5 175 4 571

On the second palette of the Gandrung gending, it is played with a low octave scale with the first 8 beats being nyujuh kemong and the second 8 beats being nyujuh gong, as in the following example:

+ (7)713 4753 4 143 1745

Each palette, from the high to the low scales, uses the dung (7) tone as the starting and final tone of the Gandrung music. This indicates that Gandrung music in Tinggarsari Village is highly repetitive in each section.

## Conclusion

Gandrung music in Tinggarsari Village is a highly sacred art form, believed to provide significant religious benefits within a ritual context. Performances are held on specific days at temples in Tinggarsari Village, complete with ritual props to support this art form. Research on Gandrung music in Tinggarsari Village aims to identify the historical aspects of the music using the approaches discussed previously.

Research on the art of gandrung in Tinggarsari Village is crucial because there has been no detailed historical study of this art form, noting its relevance as part of religious activities and analyzing the structure of gandrung. Historical analysis aims to understand past events, processes, and phenomena, as well as their impact on contemporary society. The musical analysis was conducted using the ding-dong notation method, employing Michael Tenzer's theory, known as CC (Contour Class), which analyzes the direction of the notes, which are divided and identified based on four-note groups.

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