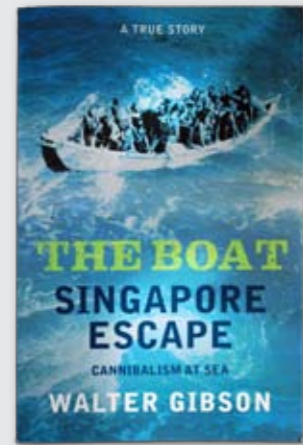




**Tuttle Concise Indonesian Dictionary**

(A. L. N. Kramer, Willie Koen, Katherine Davidsen)

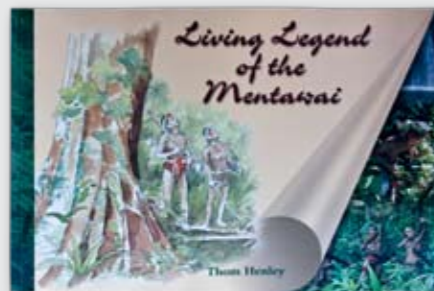
Tuttle's latest re-edited two-way Indonesian dictionary is small and compact enough to be very usable, without the over-simplification of definitions that can be problematic in smaller dictionaries. The very readable entries offer the possibility of dipping in to find new expressions at random, while the soft vinyl cover simply makes it quite pleasurable to hold.



**The Boat (Walter Gibson)**

World War II survivor Walter Gibson's true story of his 26-day ordeal on an over-full lifeboat after his ship was torpedoed in the Indian Ocean while on its way to safety is an intense page-turning read that leaves the reader breathless from the first page. A frank, unsparing account of both depravity and heroism, *The Boat* is also interesting for its accounts of Singapore, Menatawai and Padang during that dramatic period. (*Monsoon Books, 2007*)

**Living Legend of the Mentawai (Thom Henley)**



Through narrative photographs, illustrations, stories and descriptions, the way of life of the Mentawai tribespeople of Sibreut island is portrayed in an accessible and engaging format.

Thom Henley is an environmentalist, human rights advocate, and educator, who has been adopted by indigenous tribes in different parts of the world. This book is a rare insight into one of the world's last Neolithic societies in the westernmost reaches of Indonesia. (*Baan Thom Publishing*)

# Into The Mystic

Astrologer and psychic Odyle Knight has experienced a side of Bali revealed to few foreigners. In her two books on the subject, *Bali Moon* and *Bali Magic*, she recounts personal experiences that extend from marriage to a Balinese playboy-turned-priest, to a mysterious encounter with the legendary mask of Gajah Mada that held echoes of a past life during the days of the Majapahit empire.



"There is that elusive 'something' about Indonesia," says Odyle softly. We are discussing the almost mystical hold that the country has over its 'accidental expats'; the visitors who come here at first for a week or a month, but end up staying a lifetime. "But you have to have the full story," she continues. "You can't just sugarcoat it."

There was no sense of sugarcoating the story when it came to writing her first best-seller, *Bali Moon*, an autobiographical account of her discovery of the lighter and darker sides of Bali life, although the sharp Aussie humour that runs throughout is a sweetener in a tale that sees her brushed by disturbing forces of darkness and magic. From her first taste of Kuta, in the rowdy milieu of oversexed young Aussies, the sometimes sultry prose captures the spirit of 1980s Bali – what Odyle terms "the ratbaggy period" – a time that was "carefree, innocent, and silly...but with a deeper undercurrent."

It seems fitting that we meet at Hardy's in Sanur, right next to the former site of the nightclub where the real action of Odyle's story begins. This is where she met the charismatic, roguish barman with the "gregarious laugh", living it up before he would be obliged to take on his duties as a Hindu priest. Sanur was traditionally an area of magic, with a rich history of priests and shamans, and Odyle soon discovered that there was more to life there than met the typical visitor's eye. "It's like a shadow puppet play; what you see on the surface is not always what's going on behind."

The self-published first edition of *Bali Moon* sold out, and, on the Amazon website, second-hand copies were selling for hundreds of dollars at one point, an astronomical amount for a slim paperback volume such as this. Odyle explains that the book was not distributed in the US, but that the word-of-mouth enthusiasm was such that many were determined to get their hands on it.

The book particularly touched women, many of whom had loved and lost in Bali, experiencing forces for which they were not prepared and had no defences. She still gets messages from people who have been deeply impacted by the story. One woman recently wrote: "Thank you Odyle, for giving me back my life." Not everyone responds to the same elements of the book. "They fixate on a sentence that resonated, always a different one."

Now, with the release of *Bali Magic*, a somewhat darker and deeper follow-up to her first success, the former school counsellor is conscious of the impact her writing can have upon the lives of others, a gift which she believes is divinely inspired. But, as a Libran, she is acutely aware of the need to maintain a balance: "It's important to have a sense of the ridiculous." Perhaps this philosophy is the key to her survival through the series of extraordinary events that have suffused her decades in Bali. \* (JR)