

## RELIGIOUS VALUES IN BALINESE HINDUISM DEATH RITUALS: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

This paper highlighted the religious values of Balinese Hinduism death rituals in the framework of Anthropology. This research utilized Typological and Content analysis methods to describe the classification of the different burial ceremonies of Balinese Hindus and then analyze its message properties within the literature. *Perse*, it is apparent that the religious values of Balinese Hinduism death rituals consisted of *Pitra Yadnya* as its very essence, following the guidance of the Almighty God, *Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa*. This research concluded that following an Anthropological approach, the Myth of Balinese Hinduism plays a decisive role in constructing the community's belief system, which is associated with the emergence of diverse forms of rituals. As implementing the rituals focuses on adhering to the Sacred in its relation to the surrounding profane world, it is also clear that Balinese Hinduism death rituals occupy a holistic and cultural relativism position, which is vital in the Anthropological approach.

**Keywords:** *Anthropology, Balinese Hinduism, Beya Tanem, Death Rituals, Mepasah, Ngaben, Pitra Yadnya, Religious Values,*

### 1. Introduction

The creation of man in Hinduism includes both physical and spiritual elements. It consists of three layers, and those are: *Stula Sarira*, *Sukma Sarira*, and *Antahkarana Sarira*. *Stula Sarira* refers to the rough body born out of the lust of its father and mother, while *Sukma Sarira* is the astral body consisting of innate thoughts, feelings, desires, and passions, known as *Citta*, *Manah*, *Indriya*, and *Ahamkara*. *Antahkarana Sarira*, the last but not least, is the cause of life or *Sang Hyang Atma* (Aryanatha, 2014, p. 20; Astini & Putra, 2019; Wibowo, 2022). Those ideas regarding human creation lead to the discussion of death, as from the perspective of Hinduism,

death is identical to someone replacing old worn-out clothes with new ones. Throwing away old clothes means death, and taking new clothes means birth (Eka, 2019; Poniman, 2019). Hinduism teachings explain that death must be at each birth, and vice versa refers to reincarnation. (Ramadhan, 2019; Wikarman, 2002)

Balinese-Hindus community is widely known as a very ritual society because almost every day, the life of Balinese-Hindus cannot be separated from ritual activities, as is the case in *Yadnya*, which is divided into five obligatory rituals or *Panca Yadnya* for Hindus. Those rituals are *Dewa Yadnya*, *Rsi Yadnya*, *Pitra Yadnya*, *Manusa Yadnya*, and *Bhuta Yadnya*. *Dewa Yadnya* is the sacred

sacrifice reserved for The One Almighty God, *Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa*. *Rsi Yadnya* is a ritual reserved for the *Rsis*, while *Pitra Yadnya* is reserved for the ancestors. *Manusa Yadnya* is a ritual reserved for fellow human beings, and last but not least, *Bhuta Yadnya* is a ritual reserved for *Bhuta Kala* or creatures that, according to human views, are below the level of human life. (Arsana, Lono L. Simatupang, Soedarsono, & Dibia, 2015; Artiningsih, 2020; Renawati, 2019)

Hinduism's death ritual classified *Pitra Yadnya* as a sacred offering to ancestors. The ancestors here mean the mother, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and the other upper line of the descendants (Wikarman, 2002, p. 15). *Pitra Yadnya* ritual must be done for the funeral service, thus *Ngaben*, *Beya Tanem*, and *Mepasah*, *Ngaben* are parts of *Pitra Yadnya* ritual (Kantriani, 2021; Stephen, 2010). In this context, the Balinese Hinduism death ritual encompasses several religious values distinguished from other religions. For instance, Dowd et al. (1998) concluded that the Hinduism burial ceremony emphasized some conceptions embedded within the rituals, including the transmission of existence, a demand for prayers and chantings, determination of Karma, and many others. Those customs, accordingly, conform to the possible application of a transcultural nursing evaluation paradigm in the death education and grief counseling process (Dowd, Poole, Davidhizar, & Giger, 1998). Agoramorthy and Hsu (2017), on the other hand, justified the scriptural narration of Hinduism to expand the significance of the sacred Ganges for the completion of the human life cycle. River water represents the soul's release from the cycle of birth and death (Agoramorthy & Hsu, 2017). Apart from the distinctness between Indian and Balinese Hinduism, both parties agreed on emphasizing the sacred values of death rituals; those values and connotations, as Yudiantini and Kastawan accentuated, are currently challenged by modernity (Yudiantini & Kastawan, 2018b).

Death rituals in the doctrine of Balinese Hinduism are attractive and have drawn immense attention from various scholars. In addition to previous works mentioned, we can also find an appropriate reference of discussion related to Hinduism death ritual

through the perspective of *Yama Purwana Tattwa* scripture; as Subawa (2019) concluded; those death rituals intended to hasten the union process of *JiwAtman* -the human soul- with the Almighty God *Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa* (Subawa, 2019). Wartayasa (2018) similarly founded the theological basis of *Yadnya* in the death ritual of Balinese Hindus, corresponding to the significance of the ritual as an offering to God (Wartayasa, 2018). Moreover, the ritual also encompasses the element of arts during the process; it is clear that from the very beginning of the ritual, *Gamelan* or traditional music is mandatory to accompany the soul to set its trip to the next stage of life (Arsana, 2015; Udiyana, Darmawiguna, & Sunarya, 2015).

This article will discuss the religious values of Balinese Hinduism death rituals based on the Anthropological approach. This article, finally, will attempt to answer the following research questions: "*What are the religious values of Balinese Hinduism death rituals according to an anthropological perspective?*"

## 2. Method

This research is qualitative literature research; it implies that data analysis steps will be carried out dynamically, weaving together awareness of developing themes, identifying significant concepts or units of meaning, and information gleaned from the literature. In this case, intensive data analysis will begin after all data has been collected and prepared. Each transcript will then be read thoroughly to use the data to think with, and one will look for any interesting patterns (Mohajan, 2018, p. 16).

Accordingly, this research will use the 'Typological Analysis' and 'Content Analysis' methods. Typological analysis is a descriptive qualitative (or quantitative) data analysis method that aims to create a collection of related but different categories within a phenomenon that discriminates across reality. Categorization, rather than a hierarchical organization distinguishes

typologies; connected rather than secondary (Ayres & Knafl, 2008, p. 900).

Typological analysis in qualitative research entails four processes. First, the researcher establishes an organizational framework for typology creation before beginning data collecting. The framework might be a continuum, with ends like doing well or performing poorly. Following that, the investigator finds the significant sources of commonality and variety in the data set once the data is in hand. Third, the investigator searches for patterns of resemblance and difference within the sources of commonality and variety. Finally, the similarity and difference patterns are reassembled into ideal kinds or model cases (Ayres & Knafl, 2008, pp. 900–901). This research, accordingly, will come deeper into such categorization based on several considerations discerning Balinese Hinduism death rituals.

On the other hand, the ‘Content Analysis’ method was primarily designed to describe and explain the properties of messages encoded in mass-mediated and public texts. The content analysis method is a non-intrusive technique for quantifying phenomena that examine pre-existing literature rather than commissioning new ones. Thus, the researcher’s bias may be minimized while enabling the study’s participants to work under realistic conditions. Furthermore, content analysis enables researchers to organize and summarize vast amounts of relatively unstructured data more readily than other approaches (Woods & Nelson, 2011, p. 110). In this research, works of literature related to Balinese Hinduism death rituals will be analyzed and summarized for the research objective.

The content analysis may track detailed data to detect and understand the direction or changes in certain phenomena over time. It can also identify trends or similarities within a specific genre and differences by comparing comparable data in two different systems or situations. Furthermore, Content Analysis may examine the image of certain groups in society by comparing specific phenomena against some standard to categorize the phenomena, judge them, or determine how close they come to fulfilling a given norm or

expectation. Finally, this approach helps link certain message qualities to other variables (Woods & Nelson, 2011, pp. 110–111). In recent publications, it is also apparently possible to observe that Content Analysis fits in a particular context of religious-cultural studies (Gozum, Capulong, Gopez, & Galang, 2021; Kalemci & Kalemci Tuzun, 2019; Schellekens, Dillen, Dewitte, & Dezutter, 2021; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2005), especially in the context of anthropological studies (Agustina, 2017; Krippendorff, 2004; Rice, 2020; Zaidman-Zait, 2014, pp. 12, 154, 136).

Overall, it is readily apparent that Content Analysis is suitable for explaining Balinese Hinduism death rituals as the socio-religious phenomena accompanying Typological Analysis. Through a combination of both methods, this research is expected to find something new related to the religious values of Balinese Hinduism death rituals in the framework of Anthropology of Religion.

This study will follow three anthropological guidelines: First, the mythical foundation of Balinese Hinduism theology would be expected to play a critical part in developing the community’s belief system, which is also related to forming various ceremonies, including death rituals. Second, such rituals will invariably try to bind the Sacred, from The Almighty God *Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa* to the specific symbols in the ritual procedure. Third, the holistic environment of Balinese Hinduism society will strengthen the anthropological values of this research, particularly the dynamics of the community’s culture and its relationship to the religious system. This research will include numerous anthropological works by Eliade (1963), Elletr (2007), Geertz (2000), and any other publications related to the topics to address these variables in expect to find the novelty of the research.

### 3. Result and Discussion

#### Typologies of Balinese Hinduism Death Rituals: *Ngaben*, *Beya Tanem*, Crematorium, and *Mepasah*

It is necessary to categorize Balinese Hinduism death rituals due to the typologies of the ceremony being a set of related but distinct categories within a phenomenon that discriminates between realities. Following the guideline of typological analysis, this investigation will uncover substantial sources of commonality and variation in the data set. Furthermore, it looks for patterns of similarity and difference among the sources of commonality and variation, which are subsequently reconstructed into ideal sorts of model instances (Ayres & Knafl, 2008, pp. 900–901).

Death rituals of Balinese Hindus are classified into some forms: *Ngaben*, *Beya Tanem*, Cremation in the crematorium, and *Mepasah*. Each type occupies particular construction and practices with similar theological basis and purposes. *Ngaben* also considers some additional categorizations, such as the number of people gathered during the ritual and the corpse's presence.

#### 1) *Ngaben*

*Ngaben* or *aben* is derived from *beya*, which means cost or provision. In its active form, the word becomes *meyani* also *ngabeyani*, then becomes *Ngaben* (Wikarman, 2002, p. 8). *Ngaben* is commonly understood as the death ritual of Balinese Hindus while cremating the corpses, as it is the first phase of purifying the spirit and melting the corpse back to *Panca Maha Butha*. In terms of classification, it belongs to *Yadnya*, namely *Pitra Yadnya*. In this ritual, the separation between *Purusa* and *Prakerti* occurs. Then it becomes the object of *Ngaben* and returns to its source (Bakan, 2011; Sudarsana, 2018, p. 6).

*Ngaben Ngelanus*, the technical exercise of *Ngaben* to make it more efficient, is divided into two kinds. The first, *Tandang Mantri*, is a *Pitra Yadnya* ritual done because it is carried out within one day, from *atiwa-atiwa* to the inauguration. This form is called "*Pamargi ngeluwer*" in religious literature

*Lontar Karamaning Aben* and is destined for "*Sadhaka*" (*sulinggih*). The second, *Tumandang Mantri*, is a brief completion from *atiwa-atiwa* to the inauguration, which takes between one and two days to carry out and is intended for "*Waleka*" (Sudarsana, 2018, p. 9).

*Ngaben* must be done by *Setanta* i.e. the descendants of the deceased, as a tribute to their parents because *Ngaben* ritual is an attempt to pay debts to ancestors to release *Atma* from the bond of *Stula Sarira*. *Ngaben* ritual is not a waste. This ritual is *Yadnya* which is based on sincerity (Sudarsana, 2018, pp. 9–10)

*Ngaben* is divided into three kinds: *Ngaben Nangun* is the *Ngaben* carried out without a corpse, replaced with sandalwood drawn as a human as a symbol of the deceased body (Putra (Nyo.), 1985, p. 87; Wijana, Mulyadiharja, & Riawan, 2020) *Ngaben Ngawatang*, on the other hand, is *Ngaben* with corpse presented. While *Ngaben Ngerit*, finally, is *Ngaben* which is done en masse (Mulyadi & Adi, 2016; Purwiati, 2008, pp. 1–2; Segara, 2020). *Ngaben* is called *Tri Pramana* (*Nista*, *Madya*, *Utama*) based on the quantity. This division is regarding quantity only, as they are of the same quality (Agusintadewi, 2016; Suastika, 2019; Wijana, Rahmawati, Nyoman Setiawan, & Mulyadiharja, 2019).

*Ngaben* ritual also consists of several levels, ranging from the simple ones called *Mitra Yadnya*, *Pranawa*, and *Swasta* to *Sawa Prateka*, *Sawa Wedhana*, and *Asti Wedhana*, which belong to the group of *Ngaben Sarat* (large). Here is the explanation of *Ngaben*, from the simple ones to *Ngaben Sarat* (Puspa, 2019; Suardeyasa, 2018; Wikarman, 2002, p. 9):

#### a. *Ngaben*:

##### *Mitra Yadnya*

This *Ngaben* ritual comes from *Pitra* and *Yadnya*, which means ancestors and holy sacrifices. This term is mentioned in *Lontar Yama Punvana Tattwa* to refer to *Ngaben* ritual because an exact name does not mention it (Wikarman, 2002, p. 9).

### **Pranawa**

This particular *Ngaben* uses *Om Kara* script to symbolize *Sawa* or corpse in the ritual. It is called so because *Pranawa* is one type of *Ngaben* with holy letters as the *Sawa* symbol (Wikarman, 2002, p. 9). Regarding *Ngaben Pranawa* as individual *Ngaben*, it has been researched that 80% of the Hindu community perform this kind of *Upakara Ngaben*, because the level of this ritual is middle class (*Madya*). This ritual is often chosen by Denpasar citizens (Mulyadi & Adi, 2016; Purnamawati, 2019; Puspa, 2019).

*Upakara Ngaben Pranawa* is divided into three parts based on the state of *Sawa* as the main object of *Ngaben* (Kiriana, 2017; Tristaningrat, 2019; Wirata, 2022; Yani, Sugiarta, & Sudibya, 2022):

1. *Sawa Wedana*: this kind of *Ngaben* involves the availability of a complete corpse. This kind of *Ngaben* is most often found in the community.
2. *Asti Wedana*: in this kind of *Ngaben*, the corpse is buried in *Setra* -the place of disposal or burial of corpses- at the very beginning. While the body started to rot, the bones remained, then it would be the actual object of *Ngaben*. *Asti Wedana* may occur when a village's condition does not allow its people to do *Yadnya* - commonly due to the economic situation-; Thus, the corpse is buried first instead of left at home for a long time.
3. *Swasta*: in this *Ngaben*, the corpse which is supposed to be the object of *Ngaben* cannot be found or known according to the Balinese terms, *Pejah Ring Sunantara* (Wiana, 1998, pp. 35, 50). *Ngaben Swasta* is mainly due to some tragedies that happened to the deceased, crushing their body without anything remains, such as war, plane crash, or drowning, so the corpse cannot be found.

### **Swasta**

*Swasta* means being vanished or lost, as it is a *Ngaben* carried out without the presence of *Sawa* or the corpse. This particular *Ngaben* is divided into two types: the simple *Ngaben* done by Hindus due to the

high cost, and *Ngaben* with the absence of the corpse (I Ketut Sudarsana, 2018, p. 15). Accordingly, *Ngaben Swasta* may be defined as *Ngaben* in its lowest level to a particular stage of *Ngaben*.

### **b. Ngaben Sarat (Large Ngaben):**

#### **Sawa Prateka**

This *Ngaben* type is intended for the newly deceased whose *Sawa* has not been an object of burial ritual (I Nyoman Singgin Wikarman, n.d., p. 9) *Ngaben Sawa Prateka* is carried out at home. The *Sawa* whose *Atma* has just left is bathed or watered or *Tirtha Pemanah*. It is served at *Saji Terpana* with its *Atma* ordered to be back to the corpse first. This home-based *Sawa* ritual is called *Sawa Prateka*. (Puspa, 2019; Wikarman, 1998, p. 14)

#### **Sawa Wedhana**

*Sawa Wedhana* is the type of *Ngaben* in which *Sawa*, buried underground, is an object of burial ritual (Paraswati, Merthawan, & Yasini, 2021; Wikarman, 2002, p. 9). In this *Ngaben*, the buried *Sawa*, also called *Tawulan* is replaced with a dummy made of sandalwood or *Majegau* with a length of one cubit drawn as a human called *Sawa Karsian*. Apart from its standard practice in the public, *Sawa Wedhana* is also possible to hold at home, known as *Sawarsi*. The ritual can also be done in *Setra* (Paraswati et al., 2021; Wikarman, 1998, p. 15).

#### **Asti Wedhana**

*Asti Wedhana* is a kind of *Ngaben* with bones as the main object because *Sawa* has been burned (Wikarman, 2002, p. 9).

### **2) Beya Tanem (Burial)**

There are two significant death rituals in Balinese Hinduism: *Ngutang Mayat* and *Ngaben*. Both rituals are performed depending on the position and the cause of the death of the people. It is said that both rituals can be carried out for married people who have died naturally. However, unmarried people who have died naturally can only be objects of *Ngutang Mayat* ritual because they are still considered pure. For

someone who has died unnaturally, such as due to disfiguring disease or has committed suicide, both *Ngutang Mayat* and *Ngaben* rituals can be held.

*Ngutang Mayat* ritual is a procession of actual funeral rituals held in the funeral home. The corpse is then taken to the burial site or *Sema Wayah* for the married deceased who has died naturally. While for the unmarried, the corpse is brought to *Sema Nguda* with *Mepasah* funeral or unraveling. Lastly, those who have died unnaturally are taken to *Sema Bantas* to be buried (Aryanatha, 2014, p. 5, 2019)

Referring to the teachings of Hinduism, namely *Desa, Kala, Patra*, the *Ngaben Beya Tanem* ritual in Wongaya Gede village can be very simple because *Pandita* -a religious leader- does not lead this ritual. Instead, *Ngaben Beya Tanem* is led by the stakeholder or *Balian* of the village. Although this ritual is classified as not-so-complicated, its level of *Ngaben* is *Ngaben Utama* without disposing of ash to the river; another stage of *Ngaben* is known as *Nganyud*. (Aryanatha, 2014, p. 9).

In Bali, *Ngaben Beya Tanem* is a series of activities carried out by the community in Wongaya Gede village. It is a religious activity and a tradition exercised by the Wongaya Gede community. It uses the means and infrastructure of the ritual (such as container or *Bade, Petulangan, and Banten* forms). The tradition of Wongaya Gede village forbids *Ngaben* ritual from Saturday Kaliwon (*Wuku Wariga*) to *Tumpek lut* Saturday Kaliwon (*Wuku Klurut*), which approaches the *Galungan* holiday. So, if a person dies during that time (two months), the corpse is buried and is not an object of *Ngaben*. After two months, the corpse can be an object of *Ngaben* if the deceased's family can exercise it. But recently, the people of Wongaya Gede participated in an en masse *Ngaben* ritual without burning *Sawa*. This was the idea and agreement of the local community due to various aspects, such as funds and time (Aryanatha, 2014, p. 11).

*Ngaben Beya Tanem* consists of three words: *Ngaben, Beya, and Tanem*. *Ngaben* refers to the purification of the spirit. *Beya*, the next, means cost, the budget either as money or materials to fulfill the requirements of the

ritual process or as *Upakara* or *Banten* offered to *Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa*. *Beya* in the *Ngaben* ritual tends to show the size of the ritual and the form of *Upakara*, which can describe the level of *Ngaben; Nista, Madya, Utama*). *Tanem*, is the last term with multi synonyms such as *Celekang, Pendem, Tajuk, Tandur, and Kubur*, referring to something covered with soil. *Ngaben Beya Tanem* involves a planted or buried state of the corpse in *Sema* and not burned in contrast with the common *Ngaben* (Aryanatha, 2014, pp. 15–16).

This ritual is based on the community's belief in processing the deceased's corpse to return to *Panca Maha Butha*. Each level of *Nista, Madya, and Utama* in this ritual differs in the equipment and *Banten* (offerings); although the differences are only in terms of quantity and not the quality. Moreover, the practice of *Ngaben* in Bali are not generally similar because each region has its own culture; in some remote and mountainous areas, such as Wongaya Gede (Tabanan), Kintamani (Bangli), and Sembiran (Buleleng), *Ngaben* ritual is performed by burying the body, while the other areas are cremated (Aryanatha, 2014, p. 13).

*Ngaben Beya Tanem* is also found in Banyuseri Village, Banjar Sub-District, Buleleng Regency, where the community called it *Ngaben Mekelin*. It is also carried out by doing *Mependem* or burying the corpse, then giving provisions to spirits by performing rituals due to Banyuseri villagers being the adherents of the *Waisnawa* (Vaisnava) sect. This village is one of the Bali Aga villages and used to be called Tirta religion which states that water or *tirtha* occupies the most sacred and essential position, so the corpses are not burned (Suastini, 2020, p. 49). *Mekelin* itself is a term for *Ngaben Beya Tanem* for the inhabitants of *Bali Aga* or Balinese people who live in the mountains; it was directed initially to 'equip' in the ritual of returning the body to *Panca Maha Butha* (Dharmawan, 2018, p. 3)

*Ngaben Beya Tanem* has been passed down because the local area is between mountains

and *Kahyangan Jagat* temples. If *Ngaben* were held by burning, the mountain and temples would be exposed to the smoke. *Ngaben Beya Tanem*, in other words, was mainly intended to avoid smoke exposure to citizens (Dharmawan, 2018, p. 1).

### 3) Cremation at the Crematorium

As time goes by with increasing modernity, some *Ngaben* rituals are carried out at the crematorium. This ritual began when a deceased in Denpasar, Bali, was burned with a gas stove in Badung cemetery. This gas-stove burning was inspired by the burning of red bricks in the regencies of Gianyar and Klungkung. Thus, the gas-stove burning has been growing since many Balinese Hindus sell *Ngaben* equipment in the market. The successful sale of *Ngaben* equipment has extended to *Griya*, the place of priests who lead rituals in Bali for the *Brahmin* caste (Ariani, 2021; Hanggara, Atmadja, & Sinarwati, 2017; Lindayanti, Purnamawati, & Aristia, 2020; Murniti, 2017).

Three factors allow the entry of the ritual-facility industry into *Griya*; *First*, is the alignment of the facilities with the priest's belief as the ritual leader. *Second*, the ritual-facility industry's economic factor generates significant income. *Third*, the employment due to the involvement of many laborers in the ritual exercise. With modernization and some difficulties in exercising the ritual, *Ngaben* can be done at a crematorium (Arjawa, 2016, pp. 109–111)

The practice of *Ngaben* at the crematorium is generally the same as ordinary *Ngaben*. What distinguishes between the two is only the means of cremation. The other ritual facilities remain the same as the conventional *Ngaben* of the Balinese-Hindu community. The purpose of crematorium-*Ngaben* is the same as ordinary *Ngaben* to be returning the elements of *Panca Maha Butha* in the body to its origin, namely the universe. The first crematorium-*Ngaben* was done in 1970, and it took place at a crematorium established by Buddhists in Mumbul village (Arjawa, 2016, pp. 114–115).

Crematorium-*Ngaben* has an advantage that Balinese Hindus choose as a way to immediately carry out *Ngaben* ritual for

families of the deceased when *Ngaben* ritual is not allowed to be performed in the local village, also to reduce the cost for low-economy people who are unable to carry out traditional *Ngaben* ritual due to its high cost. Balinese Hindu community who implement *Ngaben* ritual at the crematorium are Pasek villagers, while one organization that shelters and builds facilities for crematorium-*Ngaben* is *Maha Gotra Pasek Sanak Sapta Rsi* (MGPSSR), which has built the Crematorium of Santhayana (Pitana, 2020).

The facility of crematorium-*Ngaben* in Pasek village is not the only one there is. This facility is also found in the Singaraja area, in Buleleng Regency, where cremation facilities are provided under a foundation, namely *Yayasan Pengayom Umat Hindu (YPUH)*, and there are several cremation packages to be chosen by the community. The existence of crematorium-*Ngaben* is to facilitate Hindus to exercise *Ngaben* and minimize cost expenditures. However, the cost is not the only reason. There are other reasons for building such crematoriums, such as socio-cultural problems, social structure, energy, and time (Hanggara et al., 2017). The crematorium-*Ngaben* means to perform *Ngaben* more simply because every organization that houses the cremation site has provided everything needed in the ritual process.

### 4) *Mepasah* in Trunyan

Trunyan, Kintamani, and Bangli are old villages in Bali known as *Bali Aga*. Trunyan village is famous for its tourism, such as Pura Ratu Gede Pancering Jagat, Brutuk Dance performance held every two years, and the most famous is Trunyan cemetery; The funeral service in Trunyan village is different from the others. Balinese Hindus exercise *Ngaben* to unite the body with *Panca Maha Butha*, but this is not true in Trunyan village. After the corpse has been the object of a ritual, the Trunyan villagers take it to the old tomb called *Sema Wayah* and then place it under a frankincense tree with fragrance and absorb the smell of the corpse underneath. Generally, Trunyan villagers refer to this tradition as *Taru Menyan*. Thus, the words *Taru* and *Menyan*

are the origin of the name Trunyan (Umiarti & Sukana, 2016, pp. 4–5).

Trunyan village community, descendants of *Bali Aga*, exercise a different funeral service tradition called *Mepasah*. The corpses are placed on the ground under frankincense trees without being buried or burned, left to rot on the concave-long-formed ground. For generations, this unique burial practice has happened from time immemorial to the present (Mahardika & Darmawan, 2016; Putri et al., 2021). The adult cemetery called *Sema Wayah* is far from Trunyan village's settlement, on the edge of Lake Batur. People must travel across the lake by boat to arrive at *Sema Wayah*. The *Mepasah* funeral is only exercised in Trunyan village, precisely at *Sema Wayah*, which is not too wide and only has 11 columns of burial sites with a triangular bamboo fence called *Ancak Saji* on each burial column. When there are newly deceased, the old and bone-shaped corpses are moved to the altar on-site (Yudantini & Kastawan, 2018a, p. 45).

There are some provisions for the corpse to be served with the *Mepasah* funeral; the deceased died naturally, was not physically disabled, and had been married. After the corpse has been covered with a white cloth, it is put in *Sema Wayah* employing *Mepasah*. On the other hand, for those who died unnaturally, had a physical disability, died of an accident, or committed suicide, their corpses are buried in *Sema Brantas*. As for infants, children, or unmarried citizens, their corpses are buried in *Sema Muda*. That is how *Sema* in Trunyan village is divided into three groups. (Aridiantari, Lasmawan, & Suastika, 2020; Artawan & Surawati, 2020; Swarsi, Purwita, & Geriya, 1985, p. 273).

Residents carry out the exercise of *Mepasah* in Trunyan village, except that women are not allowed to follow the process of laying the corpse in *Sema Wayah* because it is believed that if women join that process, there will be a disaster afterward punished upon the citizens. Prajuru Adat of Trunyan Village leads this ritual addressed to *Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa* as a form of gratitude, devotion, and love of Trunyan villagers towards their ancestors who have bequeathed various cultures (Bagus, 2020; Yasa, 2019).

It was a very well-heard myth regarding the origin of *Mepasah*. It goes back to when the fragrance, estimated to come from the Trunyan village, spread to a kingdom and attracted four noble children. Then they looked for the source of the fragrance, and it turned out that it came from Bali. When they got closer to the Karangasem area, Buleleng, the fragrance was more concentrated and thicker when they reached the Batur area. The princes consisted of the three oldest princes and one princess, the youngest of them. Arriving at the foot of Mount Batur, the youngest settled there so that she got the title of *Ratu Ayu Mas Maketeg* and became a queen. On the way, the three princes heard the sound of birds from the west of the lake, and then the place was named *Kedisa (kedis)*, which means bird in Balinese. One of the princes shouted, and the two eldest princes did not like it and left him. Then the two princes continued on their way.

During the journey, one of the princes greeted two women looking for fleas, as this was unpleasant to the eldest prince, and he forbade his brother from following him further. His brothers refused, and there was a fight between them in which the eldest brother punted his brother, so he fell facedown and left him. The prince who lost in the fight became the head of that area. The eldest prince continued his journey until he met a goddess who attracted his heart. The goddess was under the tree *Taru Menyan* from which the fragrance came. Having been incited by the full beauty of the goddess, the eldest prince could not resist his lust and ended up making love to her, and then he met the brother of the goddess to propose to her (Danandjaja, 1993, pp. 1–5; OTTINO, 1994; Reuter, 2002, p. 176).

The proposal of the eldest prince was accepted with the condition that he became *Pancer Jagat* or the leader of Trunyan village. He accepted that then they held a wedding. Since then, he was given the title *Ratu Sakti Pancering Jagat*, his wife was given the title *Ratu Ayu Pingit Dalem Dasar*, and their firstborn was named *Ratu Gede Dalem Dasar*. They were the rulers of Lake Batur. As time passed, Ratu Sakti worried



that their kingdom would be invaded by people fascinated by the fragrance of the *Taru Menyana* tree. Thus, he thought about eliminating the fragrance by placing corpses under the *Taru Menyana* tree. Since then, the village does not emit the fragrance anymore but extinguishes the corpse's smell; they were left to rot without being buried. This is the origin of the *Mepasah* tradition (Danandjaja, 1993, p. 5).

### **Balinese Hinduism Death Rituals under the Framework of Anthropology: Disclosing Religious Values**

The anthropological perspective often focuses on a humanistic relevance within its scientific structure, highlighting society's cultural production. The anthropological approach proceeds through the comparative or cross-cultural description; It starts with diversity and tries to embrace the breadth of variety in whatever it is investigating. It seeks to explain and examine each culture in depth (Eller, 2007, p. 3). Moreover, an anthropological approach also takes a holistic view of civilization, embracing economics, kinship, politics, and religion. These significant cultural areas are interconnected, reflected, and influenced by language and gender issues, and environmental factors (Eller, 2007, p. 4). Each contributes uniquely to society, yet they are all 'integrated'.

Last but not least, Anthropology upholds the principle that each culture has its own 'standards' of understanding and judging. The same behavior may be expected in one society; However, abnormal or criminal in another. Of course, this cultural relativism does not imply that we must approve, endorse, or even enjoy what other cultures do; instead, we must comprehend them on their terms or not understand them (Eller, 2007, p. 4). Religion, as such, is a system of symbols that functions to produce strong, widespread, and long-lasting sentiments and motivations in persons by constructing conceptions of a general order of reality and clothing these ideas with such an aura of factuality that the moods and impulses seem to be remarkably realistic (Geertz, 2000, p. 90).

Following the initial inquiry of anthropology, Myths are regarded as crucial in expanding the discussion of the religious values of

Balinese Hinduism death rituals. Myths, which are collections of tales and supernatural stories that form a large part of religious history, then demonstrate the holiness of a religious system. In this sense, Myth portrays several dramatic transitions from the Sacred to the Profane world; since Myth is always seen as part of the Sacred tale, Myth is a natural history because it is always tied to reality. In other words, the presence of the Profane world serves only to demonstrate the veracity of the Myth of Human History (Eliade, 1963, p. 6).

As a part yet distinct school of Hinduism, Balinese Hinduism embraces some myths -as researchers have comprehended in the preceding paragraphs- regarding the union of elements *Panca Maha Butha*. Regarding its position within the universe (*Bhuana Agung*), death rituals are necessary to maintain the balance of humankind's position as the microcosm (*Bhuana Alit*), as, through the exercise of the ceremony, the deceased can be returned to its very origin (Bhalla, 2010, p. 410; Wikarman, 2002, p. 8). *Ngaben*, by nature, burned the dead body to accelerate the process of decomposition, implying the continuity of the life cycle under the supervision of *Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa*. Due to the ritual, the soul (*Atma*) will be finally released (Bakan, 2011; Sudarsana, 2018, p. 6).

Moreover, it is understandable that through the death rituals enlisted, Balinese Hinduism theological source plays an essential role in facilitating its believer to practice *Pitra Yadnya* in honoring their late elders (Kantriani, 2021; Stephen, 2010). Accordingly, the different forms of death rituals do not limit Balinese Hindus' engagement with the Sacred. *Ngaben*, in the first part, is originally practiced through combustion; However, considering some parts of Balinese societies face difficulties in carrying it out, the 'conventional' *Ngaben* can be done in a crematorium (Arjawa, 2016, pp. 109–111). In fact, several organizations support crematoriums, such as *Maha Gotra Pasek Sanak Sapta Rsi* (MGPPSR) and *Yayasan Pengayom Umat*

*Hindu (YPUH)* (Hanggara et al., 2017; Pitana, 2020).

In the case of *Beya Tanem*, the death ritual seems to pay detailed attention to environmental issues. Due to a highly remote area of society, burning corpses harm its surrounding villages and the sacred temple *Kahyangan Jagat* (Dharmawan, 2018). It is possible to bury the corpse below the ground, unlike the conventional *Ngaben*. Following the rule of 'cultural relativism' closely in the anthropological framework, the contrasting methods of death rituals are yet considered to reach the same and united goal of *Pitra Yadnya*; praising the ancestors and returning their *Atma* to the essence of *Panca Maha Butha*.

A more transparent comprehension of the significance of traditional Bali Myth in its relation to death rituals is also apparent in the history of *Trunyan*; As we have observed earlier, the lore of *Ratu Sakti Pancering Jagat* is necessarily crucial in the background of *Pemasah* (Danandjaja, 1993, p. 5; OTTINO, 1994; Reuter, 2002, p. 176). It is clear that according to the anthropological approach, several dramatic changes from the Sacred to the Profane world are shown in Myth; As Myth is always considered an integral part of the Sacred storyline, Myth is a true history since it is always related to reality (Eliade, 1963, p. 6). In this sense, the story of *Ratu Sakti Pancering Jagat* is not solely a fiction, but a historical reality of Balinese society, affirming the religious tradition practiced today as shown in the practice of *Mepasah*.

Although Balinese Hinduism death rituals vary, all ceremonies have a similar goal of returning to *Panca Maha Bhuta*; carried out as *Pitra Yadnya*, pleasuring the beloved families who have passed away following the guidance of The Almighty God *Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa*. A holistic concern is coherent regarding the position of Balinese Hinduism death rituals within the anthropological concern; they are interrelated and associated with one another, contributing to the united ritual system (Eller, 2007, p. 4).

#### 4. Conclusion

To conclude, it is comprehensible that the religious values of Balinese Hinduism death

rituals mainly consist of *Pitra Yadnya* as its very essence, following the guidance of the Almighty God, *Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa*. Considering humankind is an inevitable part of the macrocosm or *Bhuana Agung* as a microcosm or *Bhuana Alit*, the ritual aims to return the deceased body to *Panca Maha Butha*. Interestingly, rather than carrying out a single form of ritual, there are several ceremonies in respect to death in the doctrine of Balinese Hinduism which are possible to be performed by the society; those rituals are *Ngaben*, *Beya Tanem*, cremation in the crematorium, and *Mepasah*. Those different ritual practices address a single objective as *Pitra Yadnya* as aforementioned.

In the framework of Anthropology, the Myth of Balinese Hinduism plays a decisive role in constructing the community's belief system, which is also associated with the emergence of diverse forms of rituals. Apart from those disparities, the implementation of the rituals necessarily focuses on adhering to the Sacred, from The Almighty God *Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa* to the particular symbols such as *Banten*. In this sense, the secular world serves no purpose besides disclosing the religious meaning of the rituals. It means that Balinese Hinduism death rituals fit the schema of Sacred-Profane relationships.

Furthermore, it also regards the relativity of society's culture holistically, precisely following the order of the Anthropological approach. Again, the practice of the rituals may vary; however, those various ceremonies are interconnected, reflected in, and influenced by several factors that inevitably exist in human society.

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