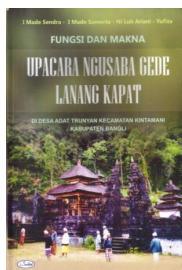


RESENSI



Fuction and Meaning of Ngusaba Gede Lanang Kapat Rituals in Trunyan Village

I Made Sendra, I Made Sumerta, Ni Luh Ariani, and Yufiza. 2013. *Fungsi dan Makna Upacara Ngusaba Gede Lanang Kapat-di Desa Adat Trunyan-Kecamatan Kintamani-Kabupaten Bangli*. Yogyakarta: Ombak Press, 200 pages

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INTRODUCTION

This book is the result of a historical, sociological and cultural study on the *Ngusaba Gede Lanang Kapat* ritual promoted by the Preservation Office of Balinese Cultural Values. In his forwards, the chairman states that this book is an effort to save the endangered cultural work and to load the local content in the areas where this work culture is alive and thriving (p. xi). Conducted in *Trunyan*, a village in which the daily life of the people governed by customary law, the result of the study presented in this book, as noted in the authors' remarks (p. xii), provides a comprehensive understanding of *Trunyan* local genius as expressed in their customary rules, arts, rituals, and folklores.

Further, the authors also remark (p. xiii) that the thesis of this book is that the *Ngusaba Gede Lanang Kapat* ritual is a unique traditions which reflect the cosmology of *Bali Aga* (Balinese indigenous people in *Trunyan*) as the ritual symbol of a religious and magical passage rite. In terms of the religious sphere, this ritual reflects the gods' passage of the *Trunyan* ancestor, and in term of the magical sphere, it is associated with the meaning of fertility and the process of creation. The rite of passage reflected in this ritual holds a meaning of a three dimensional relationship (*triniti*) which includes birth (*utpatti*), life (*sthithi*),

and death (*pralina*). The issue of the book is that the earthly life of the *Trunyan* people as a vivid reflection of their spiritual life is based on the understanding that beliefs which are central points to the *Ngusaba Gede Lanang Kapat* ritual directs many aspects of the *Trunyan* social life.

SUMMARY OF CONTENT

The issues discussed in the book include four aspects: first, the background of *Ngusaba Gede Lanang Kapat* ritual in *Trunyan* tradition; second, the correlation between ethnographical background and the conduct of the ritual; third, process and stages of the ritual; fourth, the function and meaning of the ritual (p. 6). The concepts applied as frame of reference to discuss the issues include the concept of tradition, ceremony and ritual, meaning and symbol in ritual, and the function of religion (p. 6-13). A general description of *Trunyan* village such as the geographical position, the history of *Trunyan* which is traced back from their legends, familial system, arts, and system of belief are provided to get a closer look at the *Trunyan* society (in chapter 2).

A data triangulation method is applied to reconstruct the origin of the name *Trunyan* and the people. Therefore, the data validity and realibility is done by comparing the data taken from their

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folklores, such as myths and legends with archeological and written data, such as *Trunyan* inscriptions, the character of *Barong Brutuk* in their sacred art performance, and a chronicle of *Pasek Kayu Selem* (p. 60). The name 'Trunyan' is from the word 'taru' meaning tree and 'menyan' meaning benzoin (p. 28). This tree is not a kind of trees which grow in the Bali mountains. Thus, the name 'Trunyan' is only found in their folklores to legitimate *Trunyan* culture which includes a belief system, philosophy, norms, and tradition (p. 67). Based on one of the *Trunyan* myths, the origin of the *Trunyan* people is believed to be from the descendents of a goddess who came to the earth to find a source of fragrance (a tree of benzoin). Supported by the archeological artifacts (chopper tools, proto hand ax, high backed chopper, and flat iron chopper) found at the edge of Batur Lake, it is known that the ancestors of *Trunyan* were nomads (p. 62). Besides the paleolithic and neolithic artifacts, megalithic artifacts were also found. These include great stone statues of *Trunyan* ancestors, rulers, and their god and goddess, named 'Ratu Sakti Pancering Jagat' and 'Ratu Ayu Pingit Dalem Dasar' (p. 95). *Ratu Sakti Pancering Jagat* was believed to be a descendent of *Dalem Solo* (Javanese King) who came to *Trunyan*, married *Ratu Ayu Pingit Dalem Dasar* from *Trunyan*, and their descendents were called Bali Aga or the original descendents of the *Trunyan* ruler (p. 64).

To honor and worship 'Ratu Sakti Pancering Jagat', *Trunyan* people perform the *Ngusaba Gede Lanang Kapat* ritual. Based on the etymology, *Ngusaba Gede Lanang Kapat* is a ritual of *ngusaba* (meeting) held in the fourth month of the Balinese calendar, with a sacred buffalo sacrificed and offered to the great ancestor of the *Trunyan* people, *Ratu Sakti Pancering Jagat* (p. 144). A *Barong Brutuk* dance which is part of the ritual and act as a reflection of the *Trunyan* people's spirituality describes the first time *Ratu Sakti Pancering Jagat* and *Ratu Ayu Pingit Dalem Dasar* met, the structure of authority, and the relationship between a king and his people

through the characterization, plot, and setting (p. 81). This dance is offered by *Ratu Ayu Pingit Dalem Dasar* to her husband *Ratu Sakti Pancering Jagat*. This dance contains constructive, cognitive, and expressive symbols related to the *Trunyan* worshipped ancestors, *Ratu Sakti Pancering Jagat* and *Ratu Ayu Pingit Dalem Dasar* (p. 171). The *Ngusaba Gede Lanang Kapat* ritual uses many kinds of offerings before and after the conduct (p. 56). The Legend and the dance are aimed to strengthen the belief system of the *Trunyan* people. The legend provides a philosophical base, the dance serves as entertainment, and the offerings are the reflections of attitudes and religious behavior (p. 106).

The *Ngusaba Gede Lanang Kapat* ritual possesses several functions: first, the historical function is to reveal the origin of name of the *Trunyan* indigenous people (*Bali Aga*). Second, the religious function is to express religious emotion, therefore everything relating to the ritual conduct becomes sacred (p. 95). Third, the ritual also marks the social function to enhance the system of cultural values and togetherness. The values within the ritual reflect a socio-religious-ecological relationship which can be seen from the preparation of ritual artifacts to the ritual conduct (p. 107). Fourth, the ritual also reflects the social structure of the *Trunyan* people which can be seen from the division of responsibility to take care of the temples (p.128). The *Ngusaba Gede Lanang Kapat* ritual also has symbolic and philosophical meaning. The religious philosophy can be seen from the use of symbols with life meanings (p. 156). The ritual has a socio-philosophical meaning of the human's birth to the "virtual" world. This can be seen from the service and loyalty of conducting the *Ngusaba Gede Lanang Kapat* ritual (p. 162).

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The book is readable and well-organized for the authors to present the explanation of the issues vividly and systematically. For some

points, the authors have some repetition in their explanation, such as in the burial ritual, the origin of the name "Trunyan", and the people which refer to *Trunyan* folklores. However, overall, it is organized effectively. The interesting thing about the book is that the whole issues discussed reveals the uniqueness of the *Trunyan* people and traditions. It is like a circle in which one aspect is correlated to another. Thus, the book creates a wholeness; all are constructed to create one complete understanding about the *Trunyan* people and the *Ngusaba Gede Lanang Kapat* ritual. The authors' claim refers to the existence of the *Ngusaba Gede Lanang Kapat* ritual to promulgate *Trunyan* people as the oldest community (*Bali Mula/Bali Aga*) in Bali, and to place animism as the central point of *Trunyan* religion and social life.

The book provides adequate support and evidence which prove the authors' points. It emphasizes the historical facts and place the facts in the perspective of present societal reality. The authors' claims are proven as something logical after reconstructing the process of the ritual. This kind of effort involves times, space, and people, and exercises the interpretation (Denzin, 2006). This reconstruction method makes it possible for the authors to trace the *Trunyan* myth within the *Ngusaba Gede Lanang Kapat* ritual under the light of archeological artifacts. Thus, through such efforts, a more detailed and balanced picture of the situation is achieved (Althrichter, et al, 2002). The reconstruction of the ritual process applied is to uncover the meaning which attach to it.

The overview of the *Trunyan* community and the *Ngusaba Trunyan Gede Lanang Kapat* ritual presented in this book provides an understanding of how encounters between local wisdom and Hinduism influences can produce a certain religious rituals. This can be seen from the configuration of *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kona* in *Trunyan* cosmology of creation. However, the authors seem to exclude the influence of

Hinduism in that cosmology. *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kona* are two concepts in Hinduism. *Tri Hita Karana* is one teaching in Hinduism which teaches the essence of balance between man and God, man with other humans, and humans and their environment. This teaching has been an important matter either as a doctrine or a concept in Balinese Society (Astuti et al, 2011). *Tri kona* are the three passages of life: *Utpati* which means birth, *Stiti* which means life, and *Pralina* which means death; respectively, these passages of life refer to the *Tri Murti*, the Gods in Hinduism: *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, and *Shiva*. The worship of God as *Tri Murti* in every village in Bali is performed as a sacred medium to apply the concept of the spiritual life. Strengthening spiritual life by strengthening the system of worship is carried out to guide the people living in this dynamic worlds (Ardana, 2000).

It seems the issue of Hinduism's influence on *Trunyan* cosmology of creation is excluded in the explanation in the book in order to emphasize the authenticity of the cosmology with its central point on the *Trunyan Ngusaba Gede Lanang Kapat* ritual. The ritual is a distinctive ritual in Bali because it is a worship to *Trunyan*'s ancestors. However, this leads to a reduction in the meaning of the cosmology itself. It is stated in the book that the chronicle of *Pasek Kayu Selem* notes that since the second coming of Hindu people from Java to *Trunyan* which spread the teaching of *Trimurti* (p. 69), the influence of Hinduism should not be excluded in the efforts to relate the *Trunyan Ngusaba Gede Lanang Kapat* ritual with their cosmology of creation. In this way, a fuller understanding of the relation between the *Trunyan* ritual and their concept of creation can be achieved. Following this exclusion is a critical question about the time that *Trunyan Ngusaba Gede Lanang Kapat* ritual was first formed and performed. However, the concepts of *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kona* within the *Ngusaba Gede Lanang Kapat* ritual may lead to a plausible

hypothesis that this ritual appeared after the influence of Hinduism in *Trunyan*.

CONCLUSION

This book is not only an informative piece of writing which reveals the “hidden treasures” -function and meaning-within *Trunyan Ngusaba Gede Lanang Kapat*, but is also a “one of a kind” book in which its “hidden treasures” are relevant to be applied in this globalized era where people tend to ignore the values of religion, morality, ethics, and manners. It is a book full of values which counters not only individualism, and secularism, but also pragmatism. How to understand the origin of particular communities, their identities, and how their intrinsic and extrinsic aspects form their identities are inspiring matters that are implicitly offered in the book.

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