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Review Article

Philosophy of Cremation in Bali

*Relin D.E.

Senior Lecturer at Brahma Widya Faculty, Denpasar State Hindu Dharma Institute, Jl. Ratna, no. 51, Tatanan Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia.

*Corresponding Author : ihndndenpasar@kemenang.go.id

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Abstract

Philosophy of cremation is returning the five elements of nature called *panca maha bhuta* to its origin. The human body consists of five elements namely *pertiwi*, *apah*, *teja*, *bayu* and *akasa*. Those fifth element coupled by the *atman*, the mind and *ahamkara* for human body. People die means it is returned to their home in order to blend with the original element. The element of fire back to the fire, the element of water back into the water, the element of space back into the space, the wind element back into the wind and solid elements/ *pertiwi* back to the *pertiwi*. Virtually all elements of nature (*panca maha bhuta*) are back to God, that everything comes from the immortal.

I. Introduction

Cremation according to Hindu in Bali aims to return of five elements of the human body (*panca maha bhuta*: water, fire, wind, heat and space) to its origin. For Hindus in Bali, the system is known as cremation ceremony (*ngaben*). According to Putra (tt: 29) that "*ngaben*" is derived from the word "*ngabain*" in Balinese means equip or provide. These provisions can be any material that can be realized in *upakara* (offering) and other material objects, and the provision in immaterial form ie. *mantra puja* of *sulinggih* (prayers of the holy) and prayers of relatives.

Therefore, the system to maintenance the bodies after death for Balinese is by *ngaben* (cremation ceremony), and it is believed that the process can accelerate of *panca maha bhuta* to its origin. In addition, it is also believed that if within a period long time the bodies are not cremated, the body will be germs called *bhuta cuil* and the Atman will fall to hell. Thus, if a family member dies, the treatment for the body carried out by the implementing of cremation ceremony. Background of cremation ceremony published in Lontar Tattwa Loka Kerti as follows

"*Kunang ikang sawayan tan inupakara atmanya mmandadi neraka, mungguwing tegal penangsaran, mangebeki wadhuri ragas, katiksnan panesning surya, manangis angisek-isek, sumanbe anak putunya, sang kari mahurip, lingnya : duh anakku bapa, tan hana matra welas ring kawitanta, maweh*

bubur mwang we atahap, akeh mami madruwe, tan hana wawanku mati, kita juga mawisesa, angen den abecik-becik, tan eling sira ring rama rena, kawitanta, weh tirtha pangentas, jah tasmata kita santananku, wastu kita amangguhhalphyusa, mangkana temahning atma papa ring santana" (Tattwa Loka Kreti, Lamp : 11).

"If the dead body (*Sawa*) are not cremated, the *Atma* will be in hell, housed in a very hot field, filled with Madhuri Reges trees, burned by the sun, sobbing, calling their descendants that are still alive, and said: O my son, not the least pity to the ancestors giving porridge, water, I have nothing to carry, you also enjoy of what I have before, do not remember the same mother and father, *tirtha pengentas* is my *pemastu*, hope you will be a short life span, so it is my curse".

In addition, this papyrus also mention about the result if the body is not cremated in a fairly long period of time, namely: "*yan wwang mati mapendhem ring prathiwi salawasnya tan kinenan widhi-widhana, byakta matemahan rogga ning bhuana, haro-haro gering mrana ring rat, atemahan gagag...*" (Lontar Tattwa Loka Kreti, Lamp : 5a)

"If the dead bodies are buried on the ground forever and do not made cremation ceremony, will actually be a disease of the earth, chaotic, ill languish in the world, becoming a crow ...".

Rationales contained in Lontar Tattwa Loka Kreti is then used as a basis in the implementation of cremation ceremony in Bali.

View of the Balinese about the natural elements of the universe (*buwana agung*) and the human body (*buwana alit*) is the same, namely *pertiwi* (earth) *apah* (water), *teja* (fire), *bayu* (air) and *akasa* (ether). The five elements accelerates the process through cremation ceremony, because the existence of the cosmos leads man to the request of reality.

Singgih Wikarman (1999) in his work entitle *Ngaben Sederhana* reveals how the Hindus can perform cremation ceremony with efficient pattern. This book is focus on study among religious groups in order to urge the implementation of cremation ceremony that can be held at a relatively small cost but does not reduce the function and meaning contained. He also dismissed the assumption that the cremation ceremony can only be performed by people who have a lot of money. Inside there is a series of cremation. Cremation is burning to ashes in the funeral (Sugono, 2008: 7400). *Ngaben* is *ngabeyanin* which means *Beya* or supplies for those who died. The significant of cremation ceremony (*ngaben*) is described in Lontar Wraspati Tattwa: Atman that has been separated from the bond of *Panca Maha Butha* still shackled by *suksma sarira* (astral body). *Suksma sarira* composed of *citta* (*budhi*, *manas* and *ahamkara*), senses or five senses, *triguna*, *panca tan matra* and *karma wasana*. In the second stages of *Pitra Yajna* (cremation) is called *Atma Wedana*, release Atma from the bond of *suksma sarira*. (Wikarman, 1993: 2).

II. Cremation Ceremony in Bali

Pitra yadnya ceremony aims to honor and revere ancestors. The word '*Pitra*' is synonymous with the father or in a broader sense, namely parents. The function of the father according to *Kakawin Nitisastra* are five, called *Pancawida* namely:

- a. *Matulung urip rikalaning baya*, meaning: helping when facing danger.
- b. *Sang maweh binojana*, meaning that people who provide meals.
- c. *Sang mengupadyaya*, meaning those who provide education and science.
- d. *Sang menyangaskara*, meaning that those who purify themselves with the ceremony.
- e. *Sang ametuwaken*, meaning that the person causing birth.

In Sarasamuccaya there are three functions of father, namely:

- a. *Annadatha* that is, those who feed.
- b. *Pranadatha*, the person who gives life or soul.
- c. *Sarira krta* means the people who build and form the physical body.

Of the *slokas* implies how noble parenthood in the Hindu view. That is why every human being according to Hindu must respect their parents. One of the Balinese devotion toward parents or ancestors is done in the form of a ceremony after their death. A tribute to the parents or ancestors is highlighted in the form of *yajna* ceremony called *Pitra Yajna* (Balinese cremation ceremony). *Pitra Yajna* or cremation ceremony or *atiwa-tiwa* (in Borneo called *Tiwah* ceremony) is a ceremony that aims to release *Sanghyang Atma* of parent from the bond of *Panca Maha Butha*. Therefore it is also called *sawa wedana* ceremony.

Cremation is usually done in the grave/ *sema*. Cremation in Bali is a religious magical event because it contains a very high philosophy because it relates to the return of man after death. Meaning of "*sema*" is equal to '*setra*' or *tegal tongos ngutang bangke* or grave yard (Simpem, 1985: 202). In the Lontar Dewa tattwa (sheet 18a) is elaborated on how create *Sema/* grave yard as follows:

Nyan tingkahing akarya Sema, pamanglahan, genaning wwang mati mebasmi mawang mapendem, apa ta lwire, saking niti Bhatara Yama, katama de Bhatara Kundayoni, yanya tuwi Bhataraning Basundari, sira pinaka ibu ri manusa loka, sira wineh angempu sawa, ring sang mati ring semasana, mawang setata sareng ring sang asedahan kawah, mangke prasida wenang angaturang pelinggih, mawala, mas, selaka, tembaga wesi, winadahan jembung putih, saha podi mirah, artanya 30, kawangi 5, bantanya peras penyeng, sesantun 1, genep sahupakaraning sesantun, artanya, 900 den agenep, sesayut pengambyan, suci asoroh, sajadma, ngaturang papranian ring sema, nunas toya ring Dalem mawang ring sang Brahmana, yan sampun mangkana doh ikang gering mwah sang pitara, ne maprateka amanggih suka rahayu, mawang sang mati matanem tan kapanesan pitranya, ingempu de sang Bhasundari, innawehana mretta, tan amanggih amirogani jagat.

This is how to make *Setra* as the place of the dead buried. It is according to the rules of Lord Yama, forwarded by Bhatara Kundayoni, as well as by Bhatari Basundari. They are like the mother of the people in the world, who maintains the *Sawa* (died body in *Setra*), and always with the *Sedahan Kawah*, now duly made *pelinggih*, wearing a gold base, *Selaka*, copper, iron, placed on a white plate, with ruby, money 30, *kewangin* 5, the offering is *peras penyeng*, *sesantun* 1, *genep sahupakaraning sesantun*, *artanya*, 900 den *agenep*, *sesayut pengambyan*, *suci asoroh*, *sajadma*, *ngaturang papranian ring sema*, begging holy water in the temple and the saints (Brahmans). If it is so then away all diseases, and the atma is happy relentlessly, while the dead were buried not get heat from grave yard, because it saved by Bhatara basundari, who gives Amrita, did not find the destruction of the world (Wikraman, 1998: 17).

The function of *setra* is very visible in the ceremony of *sawa prateka*. Cremation like this is for *Sawa* already buried in the grave. In *Lontar Yama Purana Tatwa*, 1.3.

Kunang ikang sawa pinendem ring smasana, ingaran makingsan, tinuntunaken ring Sang Hyang Ibu Pertiwi, ikang atma rinaksa den nira Bhatari Nini Durga Dewi, penguluning setra agung, mangkana katattwaning sarwa pinendem, ri tekaning mapreteka sawa, ingaraning sawa Wedana. Ring ucap tigang dinayang ring dinane atiwa-tiwa, hana pangupakarane, pangulapin, ngaran (upakara patihurip.

While *Sawa* has been buried in *Setra* name *makingsan*, *atma* is ruled by the goddess *Durga*. At the time of the ceremony it is called *sawa wedhana*. Three days before the cremation there is a ceremony called *Ngulapin*.

Because it is buried in the ground and the *atma* is under control of goddess *Durga* then it is need to conduct *ngulapin* or requesting to goddess *Durga* at *Pura Dalem* before the cremation ceremony is held. Equipment for ceremony is brought to *Setra*. Among other equipment such as grilles / *Jemek* with their *prerai*, *Sawa karsian*, *ganjaran*, *pepecut*, box, *tetompong*, etc. The ceremony is conducted starting 3 days before the ceremony of *ngaben*. in the morning at the *ngaben* ceremony being held, firstly performed at *Setra*, a ceremony to wake the dead body symbolically.. The bones removed and cleaned and wrapped in white cloth. The hole is replaced by entering *banten suci hitam* and black chicken and leaves of *telunjungan*. Subsequently incorporated into *Petulangan* and then burned along with the *sawa karsian* (Wikraman, 1998: 66).



Photo 1. Cremation with Stove
Doc. Relin D.E, January 2015

III. The Way of Cremation in Bali

Cremate bodies in cremation ceremony has its own way. This is done by two processes, namely the process of returning the body / *stula sarira* to its origin, and the process of returning spirit (*atma sarira*) to its origin (*parama atman*).

1. *Sawa Wedana*, cremation is conducted directly with all the ceremony without burial.
2. *Asti Wedana* is cremation is conducted after the bodies removed from the grave (*ngangkid*) with all the ceremony.
3. *Swasta Wedana* is *atiwa-tiwa* ceremony in which the corpse is not likely to be found, so that the bodies be realized with the symbol / scene (other bodies) in the form of weeds, water, and so on.
4. Cremation process in *sawa wedana* justified according to the literature, namely *Yama Purwana Tattwa* and *Purwa Purba Sesana*. Procedure is called *mapendem ring Gni* and held in *petulangan*,

while the procedure described here is after arriving at *Setra*, *Sawa* is carried around the *bale* of *pebasmian* three times in the direction of clockwise. Then *sawa* unloaded and put in place of *pengesengan*, rope is severed with a knife has been provided (knife is filled with *bakang-bakang* and *kayu pamuhun*) clothes of *pengerubung sawa* on his head opened and spread cloth on it as a means to filter the *tirta* (sacred water). Then proceed with the spark the *tirta penembak*, *pengelukatan*, *pebersihan*, *pengentas*, *tirta* of *sesuhunan*, *tirta kahyangan tiga* and *tirta purwa*.

Burning/ ngeseng

Before the corpse is cremated there are several offering placed on their chest like *pirata* porridge white and yellow 2 *tanding*, *canang 7 tanding*, rice *catur warna* each 1 flat (white, red, yellow, black), followed by *ngeseng using Saang* / wood as fuel. After that cremation is started.



Cremation process in Setra
Doc. Relin D.E, January 2015



MPAG crematorium in Mumbul established in 2007
Doc. Relin D.E January 2015

Penyeeb

After *sawa* is becoming ashes than it is covered above it with two *papah* of betel leaf, then pour some water and *penyeeb*.

Ngereka

If cremation is considered sufficient then proceed with picking up a bit of ash and place on a brand-new Payuk poured with water and *kumkuman*. Bone ash is blended using a cane and coconut included in ivory that has been *dikasturi* and realized in the form of *puspa asti*. The ashes that is still on the ground is to be collected and shaped like the human body and then placed *kewangen* in every part of the body as follows:

1 piece of the crown, 1 fruit in the forehead, 1 fruit in the esophagus, 1 piece at midriff, 1 piece at the navel, 1 piece between navel to the pubic, 1 piece between the pubic to the buttocks, 2 pieces in the eyes, two in the ear, in the nose 2 pieces, 1 piece at the shoulder, 2 pieces in the legs, 2 pieces in hand, 1 fruit in the stomach, 1 piece at genital, 1 fruit in the ass.

Then prepared *daksina pejati* for *Mrajapati*, *pengulun Setra*. *Pirata* porridge, rice *angkeb*, *arepan* offerings, *ketupat panjang*, *dyus kamaligi*, flower, *rantasan* for *rerekayan*. The offerings are aimed presented to *Sanghyang Surya*,

Mrajapati, *Sedahan Setra*, *Kahyangan Tiga*, and *Sesuhunan*. Then *rerekayan* is packaged, promoted and then dumped in a river or the sea. This is accompanied by *upakara pengayutan* that is *daksina*, *pras pengayutan* and *wangi-wangi* (Putra, 1995: 182).

IV. Some Aspect Relating to Cremation Ceremony in Bali

Uma created this world with a very active work. Unwittingly her form has changed, too scary that becomes Durga. Finally, all the creation is horrible like *daitya*, gigantic, and so on. Seeing Uma becomes Durga then *Pretanjala* descend into the world engage into *Mahakala*. While in Lontar Sastra Yama Purana Tattwa said that goddess Durga is depicted as *Yamadipati*, good and bad rulers from the spirit world. Described as follows:

Sedek Bhatari Durga ring gaganantara, ngaksina atma sangsara ring kawah gni, malingod bhawana Bhatari, marupa Sanghyang yamadipati, angamel hala ayuning atma.

When the goddess Durga looks *sangsara* spirit in the sky, in the fire, changing his form of tangible *Yamadipati*, holds the good and bad of Atma.

Cremation has a philosophical meaning as a tradition to restore the five elements of nature (*panca mahabhuta*) to its origin. According to Williams, the word '*bhuta*' comes from '*bhu*' which means to be there, creatures and beings. The word '*bhuta*' is a past participle form of '*bhu*' meaning has been made or has held, has been there. The word '*kala*' means 'energy' and also means 'time'. According to Radhakrishnan in the Indian Philosophical, '*bhutamala*' means the energy that arises. But philosophically '*bhuta*' means energy arising from unstable natural forces between the macrocosm and the microcosm. Disharmony is envisioned with a terrible form. Could such a creature, fire, water, wind and so on. Those power of nature is arise and disrupt the harmony of man.

Bhuta in Lontar Tattwajñana is defined as the substance of the universe consisting *pertiwi*, *apah*, *teja*, *bayu*, and *akasa* (earth, water, heat, air, and space), the fifth is called *Panca maha bhuta*. All the elements were created by Sanghyang Shiva. While Kala described as the son of Lord Shiva that serves as the fuser and said as Mahakala (a great deal of energy). In the Lontar of Kalatattwa declared: if bhuta and kala give an offering, it will not interfere human life, even otherwise assist human life. Because *Bhutamala* is not only being negative but also positive. So *Bhuta* highly correlated with *Bhuta yadnya* because the goal is to perform the ceremony for the balance of *Bhuta*.

Lontar Usadha in Bali said that in the human body consists of five color liquid substances as mention in the Lontar Kusuma Dewa 9 namely:

- a. White blood is a liquid that is white.
- b. Red blood is red colored liquid
- c. Enzymes or gland is a yellow liquid
- d. Bile is a liquid that is black.
- e. Semen is clear colorless liquid.

Fifth liquids in the human body has a very important function that is called with *Pancamrtha* for *stula sarira*. When compared with *Pancamrtha* on earth, then there will be similarities such as:

- a. *Empehan* or milk is the liquid that comes out of the body is white as a symbol of Lord Iswara.
- b. *Berem* is a liquid derived from fruits or seeds that are red as a symbol of the god Brahma.
- c. Wine is a liquid derived from the steam is yellow as a symbol of Lord Mahadeva.
- d. Honey is liquid derived from the nectar of flowers - black color as a symbol of the god Vishnu.
- e. Plain water is the liquid that came from the earth Sanghyang translucent color as the symbol of Shiva.

Associated with the cremation in Atharva Veda described:
Om vayur anilam amrtam athedam bhaskaram sariram,
Om krto smara, klibe smara, krtam Ssmara.

O Lord the ruler of life, at the moment of death, may he remember *wijaksana om*, may he remember You almighty an remember also the state of karma, may he know that the *atma* is eternal and the agency eventually disintegrate into ashes.

Cremation is the return of all five elements that exist in the human body to ashes while the latter towards the atman nature of God in accordance with his karma. Elements of the human body according to *Bhagavad-gita* are eight. *Panca maha Bhuta* as five material elements and 3 elements as immaterial. Described in Chapter VII. 4 called *asta prakerti*:

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind and understanding and self sense this is the eightfold division of My nature (Mantra, 2007: 115).

Elements of nature that is described in *Bhagavad-gita* in the cremation ceremony in Bali returned immediately via cremation. *Bhagavad-gita* in Chapter VII. 6 mentions:

Know that all beings have Reviews their birth in this. I am the origin of all this world and its dissolution as well. *Bhagavad-gita* in Chapter VII. 7 very clearly outlined that all elements of nature bound to God that came from God and God created all the natural elements that will eventually come back to God without being able to be resisted if future finally has arrived.

There is nothing whatever that is higher than I, O Winner of wealth (Arjuna). All that is here is strung on me as rows of gems on a string.

All the elements of nature in Bali is believed to be a symbol of God because God is present in all the elements and God is everywhere. It is described in *Bhagavad-gita* Chapter VII 8 and 9.

I am the taste in the waters, O Son of Kunti (Arjuna), I am the light in the moon and the sun. I am the syllable AUM (*pranava*) in all the Vedas; I am the sound in ether and manhood in men.

I am the pure fragrance in earth and brightness in fire. I am the life in all existences and the austerity in ascetics.

All elements derived from the *maha bhuta* including the five elements, the elements *asta prakerti* in humans comes from God. Since God is the seed of all creation as described in *Bhagavad-gita* chapter VII. 10 and 12 as follows:

Know Me. O Partha (Arjuna), to be the eternal seed of all existences. I am the intelligence of the intelligent; I am the splendor of the splendid.

And whatever states of being there may be, be they harmonious (*sattwika*), passionate (*rajasa*), slothful (*Tamasa*) - thou know that they are all from Me alone. I am not in them, they are in Me (Mantra, 2007: 119).

In the philosophy, the natural elements that are not eternal is no longer useful after death. In Bali mentioned purify elements is with the cremation process in order to quickly unite and return to the God Almighty / Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa.

V. Conclusion

Cremation is related to the problems after death. Cremation ceremony in essence is family obligations to restore the five elements of nature to its origin. This is done by relatives and sympathetic companion. In Philosophical meaning cremation implies return of the five elements of nature (*panca maha bhuta*) that make up the human body after his death returned immediately to its origin are earth to the earth, from water to water, fire to the fire, the wind into the wind, space to space. All the natural elements are eventually returned to the Brahman / God as the origin of all creation.

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