

FROM SRADDHA TO *NYEKAR*: Continuity and Change in the Practice and Meaning of Sraddha in Contemporary Society

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Abstract: Borrowing the concept of the Sraddha ritual, grave pilgrimage, *nyekar* or similar terms that carry important values about our attachment to our ancestors as a form of respect, many negative stereotypes are pinned on those who still perform rituals which are then only seen as a mystical, futile and ancient act without knowing the true meaning of the ritual in the concept of constructive interpretation. Dworkin emphasizes that a difference of opinion usually arises because of the different interpretation bases. This study will be carried out using the interpretation theory proposed by Ronald Dworkin as an analytical tool for the grave pilgrimage ritual or Sraddha. Based on the explanation of the Sraddha concept, it will be seen the philosophical aspects underlying the existence of similar rituals that are still carried out by some people in the eyes of the Mysticism and Logic concept proposed by Bertrand Russell. The four aspects that are understood as the characteristics of a society that adheres to mysticism can be a logical explanation for the combination of traditional values and culture of Sraddha which is not only still practiced by believers but also society in general. Through the presentation of the concepts in this study, it is hoped that this can be a way to straighten out negative misconceptions or stereotypes about spiritual practitioners that have been developing a lot in society.

Keywords: Indigenous religion; local wisdom; mysticism theory; *nyadran*; *nyekar*; Sraddha, theory of interpretation.

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Introduction

Culture is one of the markers of the existence of bonds in a society. Over time, the living and inherent culture can change or disappear. To be able to conduct an assessment of the culture that lives in a society, it is necessary to draw a line that can apply generally. Likewise, in carrying out the process of interpreting the Sraddha ceremony or what is now widely known by the public as *nyadran* or *nyekar*.¹ As one of the rituals that are still often found in the world that has entered the era of globalization, Sraddha is a form of ritual that has undergone a metamorphosis for centuries. Even if traced from a historical perspective, the ritual has been running since the pre-historic era.

Evidence of the existence of Sraddha as a cultural practice in the past is a sign that there has been a social entity formed, settled and developed as expressed by Christopher Dawson. For him, culture is a binder and identity of a group of people who have lived together as a society and not just a crowd or group of people.² Furthermore, culture is a result of social construction which is inseparable from the religiosity that is believed in the community group. As a form of social bonding, research conducted on the similarity of religious values and primitive culture can show a picture of people who lived in the past, in addition to conducting research on other archaeological evidence.³

Sraddha as a culture that continues to develop from time to time always undergoes adjustments to some of the religious values brought by the leaders in every era. Excavation of acculturated

¹ KKN-PPM, "Mengenal Tradisi Nyadran Loano-Maron, Kec. Loano Purworejo," (Yogyakarta: Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2020). <https://desaloano.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Buku-Saku-Mengenal-Tradisi-Nyadran-di-Loano-Maron.pdf> (accessed October 10, 2021)

² James Hitchcock, "Christopher Dawson," *The American Scholar*, 62/1, (Winter 1993): 111-118.

³ Christopher Dawson, "Religion and Primitive Culture," *The Sociological Review* 17, no. 2 (April 1925): 105–119. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.1925.tb01521.x>.

cultural values such as the Sraddha ritual requires sensitivity to the social, economic, governmental and even geographical contexts that apply at certain times. This is intended so that the process of ‘framing and forming’ the interpretation of a running culture can be carried out in its entirety.⁴ As has been conveyed by Edward Burnett Tylor, culture encompasses the complexity of aspects that are not only limited to customs, arts, habits and behavior, but are also closely related to knowledge, beliefs, morals and laws that unite humans in a society.⁵

The study carried out with this theoretical approach provides an overview of the ritual practice of Sraddha as a form of respect for ancestors. As was done by the kings narrated in *Kakawin Banawa Sekar Tanakung* (KBS), there are local wisdom values that have been carried on through the implementation of the Sraddha ceremony since the end of the Majapahit Kingdom until Indonesia was established.⁶ Sraddha in the script is told as a form of ritual giving offerings in the form of a flower boat. This ritual is carried out as a form of gratitude for natural wealth and also respect for the spirit of the predecessors. As a ritual made by a king for his predecessor kings, it can be said that this ritual was carried out by someone to pay respect for the spirits of his ancestors.

Similar rituals are also found in the trust of local communities with the same ontological values. In general, Sraddha, which was initially reflected as a form of religious rituals in the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom, now has a correlation with the *nyadran* ritual which was introduced since the period of spread of Islam by Walisongo. The identification of Sraddha as a form of part of the religious culture that is rooted in society is then seen to experience a shift with the change in the form of the ruling government and a more modern civilization.

Armed with the theory of constructive interpretation presented by Ronald Dworkin, this study provides a deeper understanding of the meaning of Sraddha as a form of culture that is acculturated to

⁴ Ronald Dworkin, *Law's Empire* (London: Harvard University Press, 1986).

⁵ Timothy Larsen, “E.B. Tylor, Religion and Anthropology,” *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 46/3, (September 2013): 467–85. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007087412000039>.

⁶ Manu, “Kakawin Banawa Sekar Tanakung (Studi Mengenai Upacara Sraddha Pada Akhir Majapahit)” (Yogyakarta: Fakultas Sastra Universitas Gajah Mada, 1987).

religion.⁷ This process will be carried out by reflecting on the characteristics of mysticism proposed by Bertrand Russell as the basis for ensuring that *Sraddha* and *nyekar* which are still practiced by most people today are forms of cultural preservation.⁸ Moreover, the constructive interpretation made of *Sraddha* is the basic justification for the practice of venerating ancestral rituals that are still carried out by spiritual practitioners who believe in beliefs. This presentation is intended so that the philosophical values of *Sraddha* which have been transformed into various forms of religious rituals are not misinterpreted when carried out by devotees and at the same time can straighten out the negative stereotypes that are usually attached to those who still perform these rituals.

Nyadran and *nyekar* rituals that have been done by using property in the form of flowers and incense will be dissected on an ontologically by using the two theories. By using qualitative research and a literature study approach, this study will discuss ontological form of *nyadran* rituals and *nyekar* which are still often used by the general public so far. This study shows the relationship between *nyadran* and *nyekar* which is still done with the philosophy of the *Sraddha* ritual on KBS. As explained in KBS, *Sraddha* is carried out to pay respect for the ancestors and contain moral values that grow gratitude to our natural surroundings. This exposure will also provide an emphasis on the philosophical ritual of *Sraddha* and release its derivative rituals from religious doctrines and government interests. Unlike the study of “Hindu Dharma Indonesia as a New Religious Movement” who saw that there was adjusting religious doctrine, especially Hinduism to be part of religion in Indonesia,⁹ this research will see the *Sraddha* of the values of spirituality and essential so that it can be separated from religious claims.

The Theory of Interpretation and Mysticism

Mysticism as part of a science that is studied in the broad framework of metaphysics is often associated with things that are

⁷ David Couzens Hoy, “Dworkin’s Constructive Optimism V. Deconstructive Legal Nihilism,” *Law and Philosophy*, 6/3, (1987): 321-356.

⁸ Bertrand Russell, *Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays* (New York: The Floating Press, 2010).

⁹ June McDaniel, “Agama Hindu Dharma Indonesia as a New Religious Movement: Hinduism Recreated in the Image of Islam,” *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 14, no. 1 (August 2010): 93–111.

outside of basic human logic. Not without reason if it becomes the basis of understanding for ordinary people. Mysticism within the framework of culture is still very rarely studied as part of an academic understanding.¹⁰ Referring to the meaning of metaphysics as a science that tries to understand the basic nature of a 'state', as well as the concept of mysticism put forward by Bertrand Russell. Metaphysics that overshadows his thinking tries to provide a complete understanding of the formation of a world. It is undeniable that a dichotomy has been created that tells about the origin of human life. Each sees through a scientific as well as mystical perspective, where religion and belief are part of a mystical view.¹¹

Quoting from what Heraclitus said, the change in the universe is a state that will occur continuously.¹² This is nothing but a consequence of the revolving time. Time can destroy everything but time can also build a civilization. Various branches of science then try to study social conditions in the past even though they have to struggle with empirical evidence so that it can be said to be logical research. Where things that are empirical are a prerequisite for the application of scientific logic. While the changes that occur in the world as a result of the passage of time sometimes have removed the physical evidence of a civilization that has existed for a long time.

Everything that can be captured by the human senses, both through sight and hearing is evidence that it can be learned logically. But for Plato, there is a knowledge that is more than just what humans can learn through their senses. For him, a belief in knowledge and reality is a more real thing. These factors are things that are studied in the branch of mysticism. In line with this understanding, Russell gives a statement that reality is everything that exists in nature as a whole. Humans will be able to understand this by obtaining it from personal experience or through knowledge obtained from other people and physical objects.

In particular, to be able to learn about mysticism, Russell emphasized that there are common views that exist in mystical philosophy throughout the world. The development of mysticism

¹⁰ Leigh Eric Schmidt, "The Making of Modern 'Mysticism,'" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 71, no. 2 (2003): 173-302.

¹¹ C.E. Ayres, "Mysticism and Logic, and Other Essays by Bertrand Russell," *The International Journal of Ethics* 29, no. 2 (January 1919): 243-44. <https://doi.org/10.1086/intejethi.29.2.2377684>.

¹² Bertrand Russell, *Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays*.

adopted by the community will not be separated from the beliefs that apply within the social group and are given in the form of doctrines they know well. Thus, it can be said that the mysticism adopted by the community has formed the basis of their view of life to live life. Furthermore, by adhering to mysticism, humans are considered to have learned a much deeper condition and can see things that have been seen as 'hidden wisdom'.

There are at least four characteristics of a society that adheres to mysticism according to Russell.¹³ First, people who hold to the understanding of mysticism will have faith in what their minds see. They have deep judgment and don't just believe what the senses perceive. The learned state of mind is a manifestation of understanding the wise way of life, chance, possession or compulsion. Experiences that are not caught by the human senses become a reality to get higher wisdom as the basis for understanding the wider world. This condition is what the perpetrators of mysticism try to understand, namely revealing 'hidden wisdom' as a certainty or often referred to as a 'revelation'.

The next characteristic is that the mystics believe in a unity. In this case, it is explained that there is no difference between good and bad. Both are very dependent on the perspective of the person looking at it. Of course, this is inseparable from the first characteristic which views that everyone has a deep view and learns about a wise inner attitude. If it is associated with the concept of utilitarianism expressed by Mill, that someone who holds fast to the nobility of character and always guides the ethics he adopts as moral values, he will achieve his life goals. In this case, mysticism leads its adherents to always open their minds so that they can have broader insights so that they are able to open the veils of wisdom that have been hidden.

Rituals as an institution that must be obeyed by people who carry out religious and cultural ceremonies have become applicable laws in society. In this case, Ronald Dworkin emphasized that the rules must be interpreted clearly so that the subjects of the rules can follow what is recommended and do not violate what has been prohibited.¹⁴ The rules that have been made have a standard of moral

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ George C. Christie, "Dworkin's 'Empire,'" *Duke Law Journal*, vol. 1987, no. 1 (February 1987): 157-189.

values which then become a reference in carrying out their functions and roles in accordance with the purpose of making these rules.¹⁵

Along with the development of interpretations of the rules that apply in society, modifications to the practice of applying the rule of law are increasingly widespread. The understanding that the development of the times brings changes to habits then becomes the reason for the adjustment to the implementation of a customary law.¹⁶ This modification is intended to preserve the moral values brought by the rule of law by aligning practices that are adapted to the development of social trends in society. This makes the stigma that exists in society will also become more fluid. The understanding of interpretation has brought newness to the justification of a rule or institution.

These changes allow implementation deviations to certain limits. In addition, with the implementation process of an institution, it is possible to revise the institution in the future. Changes permitted in this context have clear boundaries and must be guided by the results of the interpretation of the applicable basic institutions. The emergence of an interpretation procedure for an institution opens up opportunities and possibilities for modifications that allow a change in the expected form of compliance as long as the change remains in accordance with the values that were the original purpose of its creation. Furthermore, Dworkin asserts that interpretation theory is a form of interpretation of the practice of using high-level interpretation concepts used to interpret social practices and social structures that exist in society.¹⁷

Unfortunately, even a preliminary account will be controversial, for if a community uses interpretative concepts at all, the concept of interpretation itself will be one of them; a theory of interpretation is an interpretation of the higher-order practice of using interpretative concepts. (So any adequate account must hold true of itself).

From this concept, it can be seen that there is a possibility for differences in the concept of interpretation held between individuals as a result of differences in the context used. To be able to carry out the interpretation process, Dworkin stated that there are at least three

¹⁵ Immanuel Kant, Mary J. Gregor, and Jens Timmermann, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals. Revised edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

¹⁶ Ronald Dworkin, *Law's Empire*.

¹⁷ Ibid.

types of interpretation models, namely: conversational interpretation, creative or constructive interpretation, and scientific interpretation.¹⁸ In order to understand the *Sraddha* described in *Kakawin Banawa Sekar Tanakung* and other similar rituals, the concept of creative or constructive interpretation can be used. In this conception, Dworkin emphasizes the importance of a characteristic that can be used as a basis for mutual understanding so that there is no theoretical illusion of meaning.

Furthermore, this constructive interpretation process will lead researchers to see the object of study more deeply and in accordance with the motivation of the maker. The application of the process of constructive interpretation in social practice will offer the value it brings and describe several relevant schemes of interests, goals or principles that can be used to express these values. The most important thing is to achieve the goal of the object, in accordance with the intentions that are in the process of formation

Constructive Interpretation of the Maxim *Sraddha* within the Framework of Mysticism Theory

The *Sraddha* ceremony reviewed by Manu as part of the research conducted on *Kakawin Banawa Sekar Tanakung* (KBS) has provided an overview of the existence of an acculturation of culture and religion during the Majapahit Kingdom.¹⁹ *Sraddha* as a ritual of respect that serves to help families who have died is interesting to study in more depth because it can be considered still valid today. To be able to truly understand whether the practice of *Sraddha* as a culture does still exist and continues to this day, it can be seen through a process of constructive interpretation as presented by Ronald Dworkin. In general, the interpretation theory proposed by Dworkin has divided the interpretation model into three types, namely conversational interpretation, creative or constructive interpretation and scientific interpretation.

Referring to the postulate of Kroeber and Kluckhohn which states that culture is a result of social construction that comes from

¹⁸ David Plunkett and Timothy Sundell, "Dworkin's Interpretivism and The Pragmatics of Legal Disputes," *Legal Theory*, 19, no. 3 (September 2013): 242–81. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1352325213000165>.

¹⁹ Manu, "Kakawin Banawa Sekar Tanakung: Studi Mengenai Upacara *Sraddha* Pada Akhir Majapahit" (Yogyakarta: Universitas Gadjah Mada, 1987).

the alignment of human beings with nature.²⁰ Manifestations of this culture can take various forms and take the form of institutions, mindsets and material objects. Thus, this understanding can describe Sraddha as a social institution so that the meaning of Sraddha is carried out using a constructive interpretation model. This is closely related to the meaning of Sraddha as a form of ritual that ‘must’ be performed by those who are still alive for their deceased ancestors.

In carrying out constructive interpretation, Dworkin explains that there is an interaction between the goal and the object to be interpreted. Furthermore, it is necessary to see whether Sraddha as an institution is a rule that has new values or does it actually have traditional values that have been applied. In this context, according to Manu’s explanation who studied the practice of Sraddha in KBS, it was stated that Sraddha had existed since pre-historic times. With the values of respect for the ancestors he brought, Sraddha became a form of cultural ritual which was later adopted by Dyah Adisuraprabhawa at the end of the Majapahit reign as a form of respect for the great king who had returned to Somyalaya. This practice was also carried out by King Jiwana of Kahuripan and was followed by other kings.

If viewed through the purpose of Dworkin’s theory of constructive interpretation, the meaning of Sraddha needs to be seen by considering similar rituals that were also performed by other kings in order to obtain a complete picture. If a king held a ceremony honoring another king, it could be said that they paid homage to their predecessors. This is also seen in the Sraddha practice that Hayam Wuruk performed for his mother in Kakawin Nagarakrtagama and Pararaton.²¹ So then it can be said that the essence of the values brought in the Sraddha ceremony is not merely a ritual performed by the king for the king, but more than that. In depth it can be said that the Sraddha ceremony is carried out as a form of respect from someone who is still alive to ancestors who have died.²²

Then, as part of the study of the objects in the Sraddha ceremony, it is also stated in the KBS that offerings are given in the form of offerings of food, drinks, abilities, performances and the

²⁰ Triyanto, “Pendekatan Kebudayaan Dalam Penelitian Pendidikan Seni.” *Jurnal Imajinasi* XII, no. 1 (2018): 65-76.

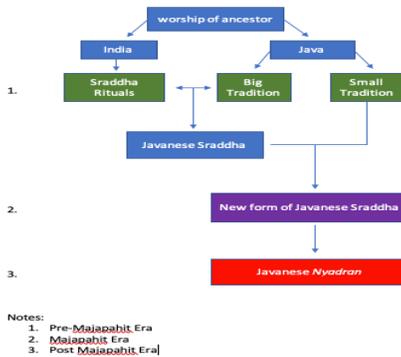
²¹ Manu, “Kakawin Banawa”.

²² Ibid.

main thing is a replica of a ship formed from various types of flowers. The shape of the ship replica used as an object of offering is interpreted by Manu as an adoption result of an acknowledgment of the mythology that has developed from generation to generation in the Polynesian region whose maritime life is very dependent on a ship. In addition, it is also believed that the boat is a tool that serves to carry spirits in various myths and beliefs.²³

While flowers are used as a form of offering is a manifestation of mixing with the Sraddha culture originating from India. It was also explained by Manu that Lord Kama in the Sakala realm transformed into a flower and played the role of Lord Agni who connected humans with the gods in his divine realm. Lord Kama will give blessings in return for performing the Sraddha ceremony. This tradition, which was originally believed to have originated in India, then developed rapidly in the Kraton and Kota areas, resulting in a great tradition in the form of Sraddha with local wisdom. This explanation certainly has a close correlation with the concept of mystical philosophy introduced by Russell, where there are certain beliefs that are illustrated through known doctrines.²⁴

Picture 1. 'shraddha' acculturation from time to time.²⁵



²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Bertrand Russell, *Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays*.

²⁵ Manu, "Kakawin Banawa Sekar Tanjung."

The chart contained in picture 1 describes the changes in the Sraddha ceremony from time to time. In his explanation, Manu stated that: "In many religions or religions, the ceremonial or ritual system can be said to be fixed, however, the background, beliefs and intentions and doctrines change."²⁶ So then, there needs to be a standard of constructive interpretation that can be used as a foundation to ensure that the Sraddha ceremony that changes its name and pattern continues to carry the essence of the ritual. This becomes an important point for the interpretation process contained in Dworkin's theory. Because, Dworkin emphasizes that debate usually occurs as a form of a theoretical illusion that arises when there is no main character that can be a limitation for meaning that meets the standard of general truth.

So then, in this study, the characteristics of mysticism theory are used as a standard for classifying people who still practice Sraddha as a form of ritual respect for their ancestors even though the background, beliefs, intentions, goals and doctrines used have shifted as a result of the process. modernization. It can be said that according to the characteristics of the first mysticism, people who still practice Sraddha in the form of *nyadran* and *nyekar* are those who have deep belief in something that cannot be explained by the senses.²⁷ There is a reality that is the result of a higher wisdom and an undefined form of reflection on experience. The spiritual experience felt by meditators and in this context is that of believers cannot be fully explained in a way that can be captured by the human senses. Moreover, when it comes to one's spirituality, there is knowledge gained through personal experience, as Russell describes. The inner vision and wisdom gained as a result of meditation become a reality which can also be called 'revelation' or the hidden wisdom.

Then, related to the existence of a unitary character who views that good and bad are an illusion, this is also felt by spiritual practitioners. As a result of their meditation and inner experiences, the access to the hidden wisdom that they get becomes a means to determine good actions according to the prevailing moral view. In addition, the Sraddha ritual as a form of respect for their ancestors which they still carry out is also the fruit of the hidden wisdom

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Cecep Maulana, "Ritual 'Nyekar', Cultural Capital dan Mobilitas Politik di Indramayu," *Jurnal Agama dan Hak Asasi Manusia* 4, no. 2 (Mei 2015): 435-456.

obtained by the ancestors in the past. By continuing to carry out the ritual, it can be said that there is an element of goodness that is carried out consistently. The third character, the illusion caused by the division of time is a form of awareness gained by believers through the practice of Sraddha as a ritual that has transcended the boundaries of space and time. The values in Sraddha are timeless and remain incarnated into other religious rituals which have now become a new reality in society, especially for believers.

Finally, the illusion that appears as a form of manifestation of evil does not apply to society, especially the believers who believe that Sraddha is a good ritual. By doing meditation and samadhi, negative emotions that can lead to evil actions can be controlled. Sraddha as a form of respect for the ancestors by bringing objects of beauty and divinity, has taken care that the implementation of these rituals can be the fruit of high spirituality and open the veil of the hidden wisdom. Thus, it can be seen that Sraddha is interpreted as a cultural form that is an inseparable part of mysticism.

Sraddha and its Development until Now

The study carried out on the implementation process of Sraddha has provided an overview of the mystical values it carries. The implementation of Sraddha as a ritual for the spirits of the ancestors is nothing new. This tradition has existed since prehistoric times and continues to develop along with changing times and civilizations. As explained by Manu, religious rituals or ceremonies will continue to exist, even though the backgrounds, beliefs and doctrines used are different. In this sense, it can be said that Sraddha which is still alive as a form of cultural ritual has experienced a fusion with religious values from time to time. The acculturation process that occurs is an inseparable part of its journey as an identity that exists in Polynesian society.

Not only in Indonesia, but also in various parts of the world, a lot of research has been carried out to dissect the traditions and mythologies that have developed so far to shape the identity of the community.²⁸ Open access to information is one of the means for cross-sectoral and multicultural research so that later there is an open

²⁸ Allen M. Siever, "The Mystical World of Indonesia: Culture and Economic Development in Conflict," *Journal of Economic Issues* 10, no. 3 (September 1976): 652-662.

understanding of traditions that meet certain mystical philosophy criteria standards based on beliefs that are illustrated through known doctrines. This trend at the same time opens the veils that have been considered to be a supernatural event.

One trend that has penetrated the world of scientific research is a series of meditation activities carried out by monks in Tibet.²⁹ The knowledge gained through his personal inner experience when doing meditation, is now starting to become an object of scientific research. Procedures to realize things that have not been able to be captured by the human senses become a means of proving the fruit of their belief in certain rituals.³⁰ It is undeniable that the process of revealing the results of a monk's spiritual practice then takes science one step further in understanding things that have been considered to be beyond the logic of human reason.³¹

Not much different from that kind of rituals, an examination of what so far has only been known as the activities of cleaning tombs, sacred places and sowing flowers carried out by some people, will provide a complete picture of the cultural values that are actually still carried by them. Sraddha who lived since prehistoric times carried a moral principle based on respect for the ancestors. Understanding the full interpretation of Sraddha will lead to an appreciation of the culture that is still developing today. This is very important, considering that there is a considerable time gap between the values when Sraddha first appeared and today.

As explained by Manu, although the ritual still exists in society, it does not mean that there is no shift.³² Even in Picture 1 it has also been described that in every era of government, a new transformation of Sraddha will appear. This is a manifestation of an acculturation that modifies doctrines, backgrounds and beliefs that have been adapted to developing religions and the social and geographical conditions of

²⁹ Chung-pui Tai, "Tibetan Buddhism Practice of Inner Fire Meditation as Recorded in Tangut Fragments with Tibetan Phonetic Glosses," *Journal of Chinese Writing Systems*, 2, no. 3 (September 2018): 163–84. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2513850218781514>.

³⁰ Marco Schlosser (et al.), "Unpleasant Meditation-Related Experiences in Regular Meditators: Prevalence, Predictors, and Conceptual Considerations," *PLOS ONE*, 14, no. 5 (May, 2019): e0216643. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0216643>.

³¹ Tapas Kumar Aich, "Buddha Philosophy and Western Psychology," *Indian Journal of Psychiatry* 55, no. 2 (January 2013): 165-170.

³² Manu, "Kakawin Banawa Sekar Tanakung (Studi Mengenai Upacara Sraddha Pada Akhir Majapahit)."

the people. In general, it can be said that the influence of the Islamic Kingdom on the shift of Sraddha rituals into *nyadran* and *nyekar* is a concrete form of this theory. Until then Indonesia as a country has been established, the concept of respect for deceased ancestors is still something that is maintained. In general, drawing wider boundaries will provide an opportunity for research into similar ceremonies performed in other areas (within the Polynesian sphere) of similar value. Although the rituals carried out and the names used are different, if examined using a constructive interpretation theory, it will be seen that the values carried are the same. In the context of the geography and politics of Indonesia today, it is possible that there are various forms of innovation from the Sraddha ritual which are then applied in society.

The chart described by Manu as a form of post-Majapahit Sraddha ritual shift is only limited to the emergence of the concept of *nyadran*. Of course this is very closely related to the government that existed at that time. The control exercised by the Islamic kingdom is one of the keys to the popularity of the concept of the *nyadran* and *nyekar* traditions. Moreover, when the acculturation of culture became one of the entrances for religious doctrine in areas that previously had a predominantly Hindu-Buddhist pattern. As stated by Clark Wissler, of the 8 universal culture patterns, at least in religious practice there are forms of life cycle rituals, healing the sick and caring for corpses that bind a society.³³ And this was emphasized by C.C Berg that knowledge about religion was a realm held by the rulers who became the political axis of government at that time.³⁴

With this understanding, then it becomes a natural thing if the Sraddha concept is found in various forms of post-Indonesian development. Apart from being of diverse ethnic origins, there are other recognized religions apart from those who still adhere to local beliefs or in this context are categorized as adherents of beliefs. One example is the ritual to guide the spirits of the ancestors to reach Wano Marapu which is carried out by people who are adherents of the original Sumba religion (Marapu).³⁵

³³ Tony Bennett, "Cultural Studies and the Culture Concept," *Cultural Studies*, 29/4 (July 4, 2015): 546–68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2014.1000605>.

³⁴ F.D.K. Bosch, "C.C. Berg and Ancient Javanese History," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde*, 112, no. 1 (1956): 1-24.

³⁵ Herman Punda Panda, "Perjalanan Jiwa Ke 'Kampung Leluhur' Konsep Kematian Menurut Kepercayaan Asli Masyarakat Sumba (Marapu) Dan

The values that the ritual brings to the spirits of the ancestors after the burial procession also tries to pay homage to their souls. This becomes an obligation for his surviving descendants and will bring disaster if ignored. By understanding the purpose of the ritual, it can be said that the ceremony performed by Marapu followers is not much different from the Sraddha concept. Although until now still held by Marapu believers, a shift in doctrine has occurred with the influence of Christianity and Catholicism. The concept of Marapu culture then underwent acculturation with the inclusion of values in accordance with religious doctrine.

Returning to the conception of *nyadran* and *nyekar* which are imagined as a religious ritual which is narrowly interpreted as a blend of Javanese culture and Islamic teachings, it is different with traditions that involve villagers.³⁶ When a village clean ceremony is carried out using the *nyadran* and *nyekar* rituals, religious barriers can be dissolved and the community implements it as a form of spiritual practice.³⁷ This condition is explained by Manu as a function of the existence of the ritual itself. Apart from being a tool that is closely related to the context of spirituality, rituals have a function of solidarity between groups and individuals. The bond arises on the basis of shared moral feelings or beliefs that are strengthened by shared emotional experiences.

In this context, *nyadran* and *nyekar* processions that are not affiliated with religion and carry ritual values of respect for ancestors can still be found in the Boyolali area.³⁸ The village clean ritual carried out by residents is part of a series of interfaith traditional ceremonies. No matter what religion they believe in, residents together clean the graves, *nyadran* and *nyekar* of the ancestors. The ritual is not only intended for their ancestors who are related by blood, but more

Perjumpaannya Dengan Ajaran Katolik,” *Lumen Veritatis: Jurnal Filsafat dan Teologi* 10, no. 2 (2020): 197–220. <https://doi.org/10.30822/lumenveritatis.v10i2.478>.

³⁶ Kastolani and Abdullah Yusof, “Relasi Islam dan Budaya Lokal (Studi Tentang Tradisi Nyadran di Desa Sumogawe Kecamatan Getasan Kabupaten Semarang),” *Kontemplasi* 4, no. 1 (Agustus, 2016): 51-74.

³⁷ Emy Wuryani and Wahyu Purwiyastuti, “Potensi Sosial Budaya Masyarakat Dusun Cetho Sebagai Embrio Ekowisata Rakyat di Kabupaten Karanganyar,” *Satya Widya* 28, no. 1 (June 2012): 13-24.

³⁸ Agus Riyadi, “Kearifan Lokal Tradisi Nyadran Lintas Agama di Desa Kayen-Juwangi Kabupaten Boyolali,” *Jurnal Studi Masyarakat, Religi dan Tradisi* 3, no. 2 (Desember 2017): 139-154.

broadly, it is interpreted by paying respect to the ancestors who are the first inhabitants of the village. This procession is still maintained until now and continues to be maintained so that the younger generation does not forget its history.

Reflecting on this understanding, then it is appropriate if the values contained in the Sraddha ritual are still alive in various other rituals which are still ongoing. At least, this nation will not lose its identity when the younger generation still has knowledge of who their ancestors were and what moral values they hold. Firmness of identity is important in the midst of globalization which is rapidly eroding the values of local wisdom and replacing them with contemporary cultures.

An understanding of the full meaning of Sraddha then also becomes a tool that can be used to provide education about the noble values brought by the ancestors as a binder of society. So it is not wrong if then the meaning of Sraddha becomes the logical basis for spiritual practitioners and believers who still carry out Sraddha traditions and their modifications.

Conclusion

The practice of *nyadran* and *nyekar*, which has begun to lose its meaning in society, turns out to have a noble philosophical value. As a form of modification of Sraddha as a ritual of respect for the spirits of the ancestors, both *nyekar* and *nyadran* are forms of spiritual practice based on the beliefs held by the perpetrators. The process of constructive interpretation carried out on the form of the Sraddha ritual based on the characteristics of the theory of mysticism has given an illustration that the ritual originating from prehistoric times is still alive in the community. The times and changes in the form of government have made Sraddha a cultural ritual that is adapted to religious values such as *nyadran* and *nyekar*. Understanding the spirit of the implementation of modern Sraddha as one of the markers of identity that makes a group of people into a society has a need to be preserved. This understanding will be a way to eliminate the negative stereotypes that are attached to the adherents of the belief as people who still struggle a lot with rituals that are considered as something supernatural and meaningless.

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