THE PHILOSOPHICAL MEANING OF NYEPI CELEBRATION IN BALI FROM THE CONTEXT OF MAINTAINING NATURAL SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIAL HARMONY

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ABSTRACT

Nyepi is holiday and festival of Hindus in Bali that are well-known in national and international level. Nyepi is well-known as the day of silence to celebrate the new year of Balinese saka calendar. Celebrations in wider perspective, the celebration of Nyepi which is one of real actions of the people of Bali for keeping the nature, cleaning air and controlling environmental pollution. The celebration include amati geni (do not light a fire), amati karya (not doing the activity), amati lelungan (not traveling), and amati lelanguan (not doing the entertainment). Hindus stop daily activities, with aims to provide opportunity for nature to do the rehabilitation. On that basis, the celebration of Nyepi is considered as one of the efforts to save nature and the environment, because it is a concept based on the Vedas who is very concerned about nature. Moreover, Nyepi is regarded as an effort to maintain social harmony.

Key words: Nyepi, philosophical meaning, natural sustainability, social harmony.


1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of Pakraman Village through the concept of parahyangan as personification in the function of "tri murti", consisting of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, which is now largely adopted in Balinese traditional villages, is an effort in accommodating the unification of local concept with Hindu concept. In doing so, Bali, which is predominantly Hindu with its famous tourism destination, having been widely recognized both nationally and internationally, of course, has placed the issue of security and order to become the main priority for Bali to be up until the future. According to Koentjaraningrat (2009), Bali that is famous for its culture can not be separated from the value system that has been applied and run by the chairman of custom (adat) in each region respectively, in the abstract cultural value system of custom
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owned, and live in the minds of most of the community. One of the most unique cultural customs in Bali is the celebration of the Nyepi holiday which is celebrated once a year coinciding with "tilem kesanga" and is a celebration of the Hindu New Year based on calendar dates, beginning in 78 AD.

Caka New Year's Celebration is not like the celebration of New Year's Eve, but the New Year of Caka in Bali begins with solitude, no activity as usual, and all activities are eliminated, including public services, such as the closure of the international airport, but not to hospitals. Bali during the Nyepi Day celebration is like a dead island, with its inhabitants living in the house, and unable to get out of the house from early morning until the next morning, in the mood of the night at night completely dark. Thus, the very special Nyepi Day celebrations in Bali, which never exist in any part of the world, because when associated with environmental laws, is its ability to provide tremendous benefits in electricity savings and prevention of air pollution even in just one day.

Such atmosphere has been carried out repeatedly every year by the people of Bali, especially Hindus and non-Hindus. For non-Hindu people, they are required to follow and obey "chatur bratha" as done by Hindus in Bali. Given the sacredness of Nyepi Day celebration, the spirit of tolerance and the spirit of mutual respect among fellow religions is needed (Pendit, 2001). Sociological problems can occur when non-Hindu people who live and / or happen to be in Bali do not understand the meaning of Hari Raya Nyepi such as turning on the lights at night, out of the house, causing noise at boarding place, causing problems both individually and in groups. On that basis, several things that need to be done so that the implementation still takes place with uphold the cultural values inherent in the Hindu community in Bali. This study intends to discuss two related consideration of the philosophical meaning of Nyepi from the view of natural preservation and maintaining social harmony.

2. THE NYEPI AND NATURAL PRESERVATION

Nyepi is a festival to celebrate the Hindu Balinese Caka New Year in Indonesia by silence activities. This is different with Hinduism in India that does not celebrate such festival (for another more detailed perspective, see Picard, 2017; Susilo & Syato, 2016). Thus, there is an assumption from other people that this is heresy or violation from the true doctrine, because it is different from Hindu teachings. However, such a view would be erroneous, as Hinduism develops as it is possible to develop in accordance with the desa, kala, patra (place, time, state) as long as it does not conflict with its main teachings.

Nyepi comes from the word sepi or sipeng which means lonely, quiet, silent, zero, empty, no crowd, no noise, no activity. Thus, it will be very different from other new year celebrations which are celebrated with great excitement in a vibrant atmosphere. Nyepi usually falls between March-April (for the year 1939 Caka, Nyepi falls on March 28, 2017).

Since 1983, Nyepi has been made a national holiday, and according to Caka calendar, Nyepi comes every year at the the first day of the tenth month of Caka (penanggal pisan sasih kedasa) or the day after tilem sasih kesanga (tilem or even month in the ninth month of Caka). In other word, tilem sasih kesanga is the end of the year Caka and the next day sasih kedasa is the beginning of the new year Caka.

According to Hindu Balinese religious mathematical calculations, the highest or the last number is nine, and ten is considered to be equal to zero. Thus, the closing of the Caka year falls on the moon or sasih kesanga, and Nyepi (silence) falls on sasih kedasa (zero). Thus,
Nyepi deals with the concept of silent-zero. Seen from the beginning of its development, Nyepi and Caka New Year are two different moments. Caka New Year was adopted from India, whereas Nyepi is a tradition originally developed in Bali.

Historically, Nyepi was firstly developed sporadically in several villages in Bali through the celebration of *Nyepi Desa* that is specially applied in some villages such as Nyepi in Banyuning, Desa Bukti (Buleleng), Tanah Ampo, Datah, and Manggis (Karangasem), and Buahan ( Gianyar). Moreover, there are other kinds of Nyepi, like Nyepi Subak that is not to do any activities related to agriculture in a Subak region, and Nyepi Segara that is not doing activities in the sea such as in Kusamba and Nusa Penida. The Nyepi concept aims to provide a pause from human activity for the betterment of the environment and nature and also to anticipate the effects of the changing seasons (Kamasan, 2003).

The celebration of the Nyepi festivities for Hindus in Indonesia, in particular in Bali, is used of the opportunity for *mulat sarira* (self-introspection), because on that day, Hindus are not allowed to do four things called *catur brata penyepian*, ie *amati geni* or not light the fire both physically and in inside (not obey the lust), *amati karya* or not allowed to do physical work but improves the activities of purifying spiritual, *amati lelungan* that is not traveling but do introspection, *amati lelanguan* that is not to wake the fun (turn on the TV, radio, etc.) but to concentrate the mind on spiritual purification (Narottama, 2016). Through the execution of such a lonely catur brata, Hindus can focus and concentrate well for *mulat sarira* (return to identity) through contemplation and meditation, even for those who can do better by doing *tapa, brata, yoga*, for example by fasting for 24 hours and also *monobrata* for not talking while always focusing the mind to God.

Such an atmosphere, used the opportunity to reflect, meditate and self-evaluation, because in an atmosphere of silence the peace and clarity of mind will be more easily achieved. In doing so, the Nyepi celebration make Bali as an island capable of resting a total of all activities in a full day, being able to rest the universe for free breathing of smoky fresh air and vehicle pollution, able to save most electricity usage by turning off lights and machine. The implementation of Nyepi which is supported by both the government and the international world through its recognition, is to cover all forms of transportation and communication starting from the airport or ports, as well as the cessation of radio and television broadcasts in Bali for 1 day 24 hours.

### 3. SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS HARMONY

The celebration of Nyepi in Bali which is held every year is never separated from splendor, especially in celebration of *pengrupukan* that is one day before Nyepi. It is always enlivened with *ogoh-ogoh* parade which has been prepared by the society almost a month before Nyepi arrived (Noszlopy, 2005). All *ogoh-ogoh* making activities are done in *Bale Banjar* owned by each village in Bali.

There are two types of *Bale Banjar* in Bali according to its function, namely *Banjar Dinas* and *Banjar Adat*. *Banjar Dinas* functions for government affairs, administrative subdivisions under village government headed by *Kelian Dinas* or Head of the neighborhood level. The *Banjar* uses names such as *Banjar Kerthabhuwana, Banjar Pagan, Banjar Kereneng* and many others. Whereas, *Banjar Adat* functions for customary affairs such as religious ceremonies at the temple in each village, marriage ceremony, death ceremony. *Banjar Adat* is headed by *Kelian Adat*, which the security is called *pecalang*. Pecalang is the task force of Balinese traditional security which the members come from the local community. The
function is of arranging the security affairs during religious ceremony, one of which is the celebration of Nyepi.

The position of pecalang in adat villages has been recognized through Pakraman Village which is regulated in Regional Regulation No.3 of 2003 About Pakraman Village and Customary Institutions (Desa Pakraman and Lembaga Adat) in Bali. Pecalang is also known as village security unit (Jagabaya Desa), which was chosen by the village pakraman prajuru, and got approval from the village parake pakraman. Then, a pecalang must obey the awig-awig owned by the village, including in thinking, saying and acting that may be contrary to the customary law that governs the law of Hinduism. Thus, in carrying out its duties, they must become a good role model to krama/citizen especially in area of security and order.

Pecalang in carrying out its duties having gained recognition from the village pekraman, consequently his activities are related to customs and religion, that can help the authority of other institutions such as the police (Made, 2015; Rawski, & MacDougall, 2004). Thus, the function of Binmas (community guidance) that has been owned by the police has little role in that matter. Nevertheless, pecalang must keep in synergy with the police in realizing the pattern of self-security, namely pecalang in the context of customary law, and the police in the context of the nation-state.

The role of pecalang in the celebrayion of Nyepi is so visible, and must be maintained, one of them by being firm in Tri Hita Karana dimensions (Kasa, 2011). Tri Hita Karana is the three causes of welfare that comes from harmony of relationship between parahyangan (human relationship with God), palemahan (human relationship with natural environment ), and pawongan (relationships among human beings) (Pitana, 2010; Agung, 2005; Roth & Sedana, 2015; Warta, 2012). The concept of Tri Hita Karana can preserve cultural and environmental diversity (Hakim, Kim, & Hong, 2009). The existence of pecalang is basically to secure activities related to religion, customs and culture in the neighborhood of Pekraman Village where the pecalang is located.

At the time of Nyepi, the pecalang must maintain the security of the village for two consequent days that are at the time of pengrupukan and Nyepi. On these days, the Hindus in Bali in particular, and the other people group are obliged to respect for catur bratha that are not allowed to work, not to light a fire, not to enjoy the fun and not to travel. Through such a quiet atmosphere in silence and darkness, the pecalang of each of the Pekraman villages with a total of nearly 30 people carrying out their duties by traveling around the village to secure the village from undesirable things.

Through the concept of ngayah, the pecalang in carrying out their duties do not receive any salary from the village. Pecalang performs the duties by overseeing the security and order of nature and the physical environment, the socio-cultural environment, including the behavior of villagers and other citizens from outside the village (krama tamiu). Since, the security affairs in Bali is very complex, thus in relation to the implementation of Nyepi, holistic action is needed for the pecalang in carrying out their duties. That means, if there is a problem that cannot be resolved in Pekraman Village, it is necessary to have cooperation with the police in realizing the security in order to keep the life of a peaceful and orderly society.

4. CONCLUSIONS
Indirectly, the implementation of Nyepi has contributed to energy saving, because it can suppress greenhouse gases and other pollutants. On that basis, Nyepi is a very grand concept in the effort to save the environment. In terms fo maintaining social harmony, efforts that can
be done for the celebration of Nyepi continue to run without causing disharmony between religions is to maintain the existence of pecalang in their duties and functions in each village Pekraman. Pecalang in maintaining order and security from the implementation of Nyepi is very bound by Hindu law in realizing Tri Hita Karana that are to harmonize the human relationship with God (parahyangan), human relationship with natural environment (palemahan) and relationship among human (pawongan). The existence of the pecalang through its role in support of activities related to customs and religions within the village of Pekraman in Bali, has a very strategic position in the effort to prepare the security of the region in each village. On that basis, pecalang should be able to be empowered substantively through the formation of special legislation in order to contribute in building the state defense system in the face of threats.

REFERENCES

[6] Pecalang in maintaining order and security from the implementation of Nyepi in each village, has a very strategic position in the effort to prepare the security of the region in each village. On that basis, pecalang should be able to be empowered substantively through the formation of special legislation in order to contribute in building the state defense system in the face of threats.

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