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JURNAL STUDI AGAMA-AGAMA

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THE SPIRITUALITY OF *NGARUPUK* TRADITION IN JAVANESE AND BALINESE HINDU CULTURE IN WAY PANJI DISTRICT, SOUTH LAMPUNG

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Abstract

The Ngarupuk tradition is an important Hindu ritual performed before Nyepi Day as a means of purifying oneself and the environment from negative influences. The differences in the implementation of Ngarupuk in the Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities in Way Panji District, South Lampung, indicate variations in symbolism and spiritual meaning that are interesting to study. This study aims to analyze the spiritual meaning and symbolism of the Ngarupuk tradition in both communities. The study used a qualitative approach with data collection techniques such as observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The analysis is based on the theory of religious symbolism, which views rituals as a medium for conveying spiritual meaning through cultural and religious symbols. The results show that the Javanese Hindu community performs Ngarupuk simply by emphasizing a contemplative atmosphere, the use of torches, kentongan (a wooden drum), and minimalist symbols that represent the release of negative traits in humans. Meanwhile, the Balinese Hindu community performs Ngarupuk with a more complex procession through an ogoh-ogoh parade, offering rituals, and various traditional symbols that reflect the human struggle against negative forces. Despite differences in implementation, both communities share the same spiritual goals: self-purification, self-control, and strengthening one's relationship with God. The Ngarupuk tradition also plays a role in maintaining religious identity, strengthening social solidarity, and supporting harmonious multicultural life in Way Panji District.

Keywords: Ngarupuk, cultural dynamics, religious rituals

Abstrak

Tradisi Ngarupuk merupakan salah satu ritual penting dalam agama Hindu yang dilaksanakan menjelang Hari Raya Nyepi sebagai sarana penyucian diri dan lingkungan dari pengaruh negatif. Perbedaan bentuk pelaksanaan Ngarupuk pada komunitas Hindu Jawa dan Hindu Bali di Kecamatan Way Panji, Lampung Selatan, menunjukkan adanya variasi simbolisme dan pemaknaan spiritual yang menarik untuk dikaji. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis makna spiritual dan simbolisme tradisi Ngarupuk pada kedua komunitas tersebut. Penelitian

menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi. Analisis penelitian didasarkan pada teori simbolisme religius yang memandang ritual sebagai media penyampaian makna spiritual melalui simbol-simbol budaya dan keagamaan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa masyarakat Hindu Jawa melaksanakan *Ngarupuk* secara sederhana dengan menekankan suasana kontemplatif, penggunaan obor, kentongan, dan simbol-simbol minimalis yang merepresentasikan pelepasan sifat-sifat negatif dalam diri manusia. Sementara itu, masyarakat Hindu Bali melaksanakan *Ngarupuk* dengan prosesi yang lebih kompleks melalui pawai ogoh-ogoh, ritual persembahan, dan berbagai simbol adat yang mencerminkan perjuangan manusia melawan kekuatan negatif. Meskipun terdapat perbedaan dalam bentuk pelaksanaan, kedua komunitas memiliki tujuan spiritual yang sama, yaitu penyucian diri, pengendalian diri, serta penguatan hubungan manusia dengan Tuhan. Tradisi *Ngarupuk* juga berperan dalam menjaga identitas religius, mempererat solidaritas sosial, dan mendukung terciptanya keharmonisan kehidupan multikultural di Kecamatan Way Panji.

Kata kunci: *Ngarupuk*, dinamika budaya, ritual keagamaan

INTRODUCTION

The *Ngarupuk* ceremony is one of a series of important rituals in the Hindu religious tradition, performed before Nyepi Day as a means of purifying oneself and the environment from various negative influences. This ritual is realized through various processions, such as prayers, the use of ritual symbols, and the procession and burning of ogoh-ogoh (animals representing *bhuta kala* or negative energies). From a Hindu perspective, *Ngarupuk* is interpreted not only as a physical cleansing but also as a process of spiritual transformation to control *sadhripu* (six negative human traits) and prepare oneself for the asceticism of solitude. This meaning aligns with the concept of *Tri Hita Karana*, which emphasizes the importance of harmonious relationships between humans and God, fellow humans, and the universe.

Although rooted in the same Hindu teachings, the *Ngarupuk* practice has undergone different adaptations in the Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities. Balinese Hindus generally perform *Ngarupuk* with more complex processions featuring ogoh-ogoh parades, the use of gamelan instruments, and various ritual instruments rich in symbolism. In contrast, Javanese Hindus tend to display simpler rituals, emphasizing inner reflection, the use of torches, wooden gongs (*gongs*), and local symbols reflecting the values of togetherness and local cultural wisdom. These differences in expression demonstrate that religious rituals are influenced not only by the normative teachings of the religion but also by the social and cultural context of the communities that support them.¹

Previous studies have shown that Hindu rituals serve an important function as a medium for transmitting spiritual values, establishing religious identity, and strengthening social solidarity. Research on Balinese Hindu ceremonies confirms that ritual symbols

¹ I P Sugiarta, "Makna Dan Nilai-Nilai Agama Hindu Dalam Pelaksanaan Upacara Potong Gigi Bagi Masyarakat Bersuku Bali Di Desa Restu Rahayu," *Sang Acharya: Jurnal Profesi Guru* 5, no. 1 (2024): 113–20.

possess philosophical meanings related to cosmic balance and self-control.² Other studies have also found that communal traditions such as nguopin and various Hindu traditional rituals play a role in strengthening mutual cooperation, social cohesion, and preserving community culture.³ They also can be the medias of conflicts resolution.⁴ Moreover, modern social developments show that religious rituals are still able to survive through various forms of adaptation without losing their underlying spiritual meaning.⁵

Although the Ngarupuk tradition has been extensively researched, studies specifically comparing its spiritual meaning and symbolism among the Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities in Way Panji District are still very limited. Previous research has generally focused on ritual implementation and general religious values, without examining differences in interpretation between communities. However, differences in cultural background, transmigration history, belief systems, and acculturation processes have the potential to produce diverse spiritual interpretations. Therefore, this study is crucial to uncover the meaning of symbols, rituals, and spiritual values within the Ngarupuk tradition in both communities and to understand the dynamics of religiosity and the preservation of Hindu culture in the multicultural society of Way Panji.⁶

Research specifically comparing the spiritual meaning and symbolism of the Ngarupuk tradition between the Javanese Hindu and Balinese Hindu communities in Way Panji District, South Lampung, is still very limited, because most previous studies only focused on the implementation of rituals and social functions without reviewing the differences in meaning in both communities. Differences in cultural background, history of transmigration, and acculturation processes have the potential to produce diverse spiritual interpretations, as evidenced by research showing that Javanese Hindus understand the ceremony more simply according to their abilities while Balinese Hindus are more lively with high artistic creativity. This research is important to reveal how each community interprets the symbols and spiritual values in Ngarupuk, while also

² Sujaelanto, "Sesaji Kearifan Lokal Upacara Taur Di Candi Prambanan 2018," *Widya Aksara : Jurnal Agama Hindu* 23, no. 2 SE-Articles (August 1, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.54714/widyaaksara.v23i2.37>.

³ Eka Setya Lini, Ni Gusti Ayu Agung Nerawati, and Ni Wayan Arini, "Giat Nguopin Wanita Bali Di Desa Tegal Tugu Gianyar," *Metta: Jurnal Ilmu Multidisiplin* 3, no. 2 (2023): 145–55.

⁴ Roni Ismail, "Resolusi Konflik Keagamaan Integratif: Studi atas Resolusi Konflik Keagamaan Ambon", *Living Islam*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2020; 451-469; doi: <https://doi.org/10.14421/lijid.v3i2.2458>; Roni Ismail, Abidin Wakano, dan Genoveva Leasiwal, "Resolusi Konflik Keagamaan Berbasis Kearifan Lokal: Studi Pela Gandong di Ambon", *Living Islam*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Tahun 2022; 93-108. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14421/lijid.v5i1.3012>.

⁵ Yunitha Asry Diantary, "Etika Ritual Hindu Di Bali Menghadapi Masa Pandemi," *Satya Widya: Jurnal Studi Agama* 4, no. 1 (2021): 43–58.

⁶ Anak Agung Oka Puspa et al., "Tradisi Reboan Sebagai Upacara Pitra Puja Pada Masyarakat Hindu Jawa Di Lampung (Kajian Komunikasi Sosio-Religius)," n.d.

providing a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of religiosity and social harmony based on the teachings of Dharma, Karma, and Ahimsa in the multicultural society of Way Panji.⁷

Based on the description, this research is directed to answer several research questions, namely: (1) what is the spiritual meaning of the Ngarupuk tradition in the Javanese Hindu and Balinese Hindu communities in Way Panji District? (2) what is the symbolism used in the implementation of Ngarupuk in the two communities? and (3) what are the similarities and differences in the spiritual meaning and symbolism of Ngarupuk in the context of the local culture of each community?

EXPLANATION OF THE OBJECT OF STUDY

The Ngarupuk Ceremony tradition in Way Panji District, South Lampung Regency, is an important object of study because it not only functions as a series of religious rituals leading up to Nyepi Day, but also represents the dynamics of the social and cultural life of diverse Hindu communities, especially the Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities. This ritual is carried out as a form of purification of oneself and the environment from negative influences believed to disrupt the harmony of life, which is manifested through various symbols and ritual activities such as sounding gongs (gongs), carrying torches, carrying processions, and ogoh-ogoh parades as symbols of Bhuta Kala or negative energy that must be neutralized. The implementation of the Ngarupuk tradition in Way Panji shows the process of adaptation and acculturation of Hindu culture that develops according to the social conditions of the local community, resulting in a form of ritual practice that remains based on Hindu teachings but has distinctive local characteristics. In addition to being a spiritual means, this tradition also serves to strengthen social solidarity, strengthen relationships between residents, and become a medium for passing on cultural values to the younger generation. In the context of Lampung's multicultural society, the continuation of the Ngarupuk tradition reflects efforts to preserve local Hindu wisdom that are in harmony with the values of religious moderation, tolerance, and respect for diversity, so as to create a harmonious life amidst the differences in cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the community.⁸

The Ngarupuk ceremony is a form of ruwatan or murwakala that aims to cleanse the participants' physical and spiritual impurities (leteh) while also banishing Buta Kala or evil spirits before welcoming Nyepi Day. In Balinese Hindu tradition, Ngarupuk reflects the principle of Tri Hita Karana which prioritizes harmony between

⁷ Anggy paramitha Sari, "Nilai Filosofis Simbol Nini Dan Implikasinya Bagi Masyarakat Di Desa Pakraman Piling Kecamatan Penebel Kabupaten Tabanan," *Widya Katambung* 13, no. 2 (2022): 1–12.

⁸ Lini, Nerawati, and Arini, "Giat Nguopin Wanita Bali Di Desa Tegal Tugu Gianyar."

humans and God, humans and others, and humans and the environment, and serves as a time for self-reflection to reflect on behavior throughout the year. This tradition is reinforced by the practice of *ngayah*, namely voluntary mutual cooperation without compensation carried out by the Balinese community in preparing for the Nyepi ceremony, including activities such as *nguopin* (lending/helping) that involve neighbors and *krama banjar* (community members) helping each other. Communal participation in Ngarupuk strengthens social harmony through togetherness, as seen in the *ogoh-ogoh* parade that is paraded around the neighborhood and then burned to ward off negative energy.⁹

Academically, the study of Ngarupuk highlights the customary preservation strategies in regions like South Lampung, similar to the *nengah-nyappur* of the Marga Legun Paksi Bulok indigenous community, which maintains the functional meaning of local wisdom. This ritual also supports religious moderation, where Balinese Hindus adapt to their surroundings to create harmony among believers, as seen in the *nemui nyimah* found in Lampung wisdom. Further research is needed to document local variations, given the paucity of specific journals on Ngarupuk in Way Panji compared to general Balinese traditions.¹⁰

In Javanese Hindu communities, Ngarupuk is typically performed as a simpler ritual, focusing on symbols of spiritual cleansing such as burning torches and beating gongs (*gongs*). This ritual serves not only as a religious ceremony but also as a means of strengthening solidarity among residents and preserving ancestral values. Meanwhile, in Balinese Hindu communities, Ngarupuk is often performed as part of a series of large ceremonies leading up to Nyepi, marked by a parade of *ogoh-ogoh* (carved figures) as symbols of *Bhuta Kala*, or negative energy. This ritual involves various forms of prayer, traditional processions, and the use of typical Balinese ceremonial equipment, thus possessing strong aesthetic, social, and cultural value.¹¹

Way Panji District is an important space for the Hindu community, who interpret their religious traditions and practices as part of their daily spiritual journey. The diversity of community backgrounds does not diminish the core spiritual teachings they practice,

⁹ Hasni Hasan et al., “Tradisi ‘Ngayah’ Pada Masyarakat Bali: Nilai-Nilai Keberagaman Dan Keberlanjutan Budaya Di Kecamatan Landono Kabupaten Konawe Selatan Sulawesi Tenggara,” *Tambo: Journal of Manuscript and Oral Tradition* 3, no. 1 (2025): 65–77.

¹⁰ Damar Wibisono et al., “Strategi Pelestarian Makna Dan Fungsi Kearifan Lokal Nengah-Nyappur Pada Masyarakat Adat Marga Legun Paksi Bulok, Kalianda, Lampung Selatan,” *Sosiologi: Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Ilmu Sosial Dan Budaya* 23, no. 2 (2021): 226–43.

¹¹ Siti Makhmudah and Zainal Arifn, “Pendampingan Masyarakat Dusun Nglarangan Melalui Dialektika Potret Islam-Hindu Bali Dalam Rangka Membangun Komitmen Religius Masyarakat Petani Di Desa Bajulan, Kab. Nganjuk,” *Ngaliman: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 4, no. 1 (2025): 1–15.

but rather enriches their understanding of the values of purity, self-control, and harmony in every ritual, including *Ngarupuk*. In this context, religious traditions are seen as a means of drawing closer to the Creator, fostering moral awareness, and strengthening relationships between residents through collective activities that emphasize harmony and inner peace. Further research is needed to understand how the Hindu community in this area maintains these spiritual values as part of a religious identity that continues to evolve with the social dynamics of local life.¹²

This study uses a qualitative approach with the aim of deeply exploring the meaning, values, and symbolism contained within the *Ngarupuk* tradition in Way Panji District. Qualitative research is a method used to understand social and cultural phenomena holistically based on the perspectives, experiences, and meanings given by the research subjects to the realities they experience.¹³ This approach was chosen because it allows for a deep understanding of religious and cultural phenomena within their natural context. Through a qualitative approach, researchers not only observe rituals as a series of ceremonial activities, but also examine the spiritual, social, and cultural values underlying their continuity.

Although the *Ngarupuk* tradition has been widely discussed in Hindu religious studies, research specifically comparing the spiritual meaning and symbolism of this tradition among the Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities in Way Panji District, South Lampung, is still very limited. Most previous studies have focused on aspects of ritual implementation, preservation of cultural identity, and the adaptation process of Hindu communities in transmigration areas. Research on the Balinese Hindu community in Lampung shows that transmigrant Balinese communities tend to maintain their religious and cultural identity through various social institutions and ritual practices that strongly reflect Balinese traditions.¹⁴

Meanwhile, the life of the Hindu community in Lampung also shows a process of adaptation, acculturation, and cultural adjustment to a multicultural social environment, thus giving rise to variations in religious practices and cultural interpretations at the local level.¹⁵ Differences in cultural backgrounds, transmigration histories, belief systems,

¹² Ida Bagus Made Sadu Gunawan, I Gusti Agung Paramita, and I Gusti Ngurah Teguh Arya Saputra, "Jamali: Identitas Hindu Di Dusun Bongso Wetan Dan Kulon Desa Pengalangan Gresik Jawa Timur," *Dharmasmrti: Jurnal Ilmu Agama Dan Kebudayaan* 20, no. 1 (2020): 61–66.

¹³ I Made Laut Mertha Jaya, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Dan Kualitatif: Teori, Penerapan, Dan Riset Nyata* (Anak Hebat Indonesia, 2020).

¹⁴ Intan Fitri Meutia and Haruya Kagami, "Adaptation and Continuity: Banjar Organizations and the Preservation of Balinese Ethnic Identity among Transmigrant Communities in Lampung, Indonesia," *Jurnal Kajian Bali (Journal of Bali Studies)* 16, no. 1 (2026): 1–25.

¹⁵ Kami Bali-Lampung and Politik Identitas Etnik Bali Migran, "Dalam Masyarakat Multikultural Way Kanan, Lampung1 Zainal Arifin2 Abstraksi," *Jurnal Pemikiran Sosiologi*

and levels of tradition preservation have the potential to produce different spiritual and symbolic interpretations of the Ngarupuk tradition. Therefore, this study is important to uncover and compare how the Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities interpret the symbols, rituals, and spiritual values contained in the Ngarupuk tradition, while also providing a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of religiosity, cultural acculturation, and the preservation of Hindu traditions in the multicultural society of Way Panji District.¹⁶

Data collection in this study was conducted through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation techniques to obtain comprehensive data regarding the spiritual meaning and symbolism of the Ngarupuk tradition among the Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities in Way Panji District. In-depth interviews were used to explore the perceptions, understandings, beliefs, and spiritual experiences of informants consisting of religious leaders, traditional leaders, and community members directly involved in the ritual. According to qualitative research, in-depth interviews allow researchers to obtain rich and in-depth information regarding the subjective experiences of informants. In addition, observations were conducted to directly observe the stages of ritual implementation, social interactions between community members, and the use of religious symbols in a natural context so that the data obtained are more authentic and contextual.¹⁷

As Hasanah explained, observation is a crucial technique in qualitative research because it allows researchers to directly understand social behavior and phenomena in the field. Meanwhile, documentation is used as supporting data, including photos of activities, ritual records, archives of ceremony implementation, and various other relevant written sources. Documentation serves to strengthen the validity of interview and observation data and helps researchers triangulate data, thus making research findings more credible and scientifically accountable.¹⁸

Through a combination of interview, observation, and documentation techniques, this study seeks to deeply uncover the spiritual values, moral messages, and social functions contained in the Ngarupuk tradition in the Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities in Way Panji District. The analysis is conducted not only on the implementation and

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¹⁶ Aan Budianto, "Genealogi Moderasi Beragama Pada Masyarakat Transmigran Jawa Dan Bali Dengan Penduduk Asli Di Lampung Tengah Tahun 1950-1998," *Ulu-muddin: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 14, no. 2 (2024): 173–94.

¹⁷ Muhammad Rijal Fadli, "Memahami Desain Metode Penelitian Kualitatif," *Humanika: Kajian Ilmiah Mata Kuliah Umum* 21, no. 1 (2021): 33–54.

¹⁸ Hasyim Hasanah, "Teknik-Teknik Observasi (Sebuah Alternatif Metode Pengumpulan Data Kualitatif Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial)," *At-Taqaddum* 8, no. 1 (2017): 21–46.

stages of the ceremony, but also on the symbolic meanings attached to various ritual elements, such as *ogoh-ogoh* as a representation of *Bhuta Kala* or negative human traits that must be controlled, prayers as a form of spiritual communication with God, and collective processions that reflect the togetherness and social responsibility of the community. According to Ardana and Sudarsana, the symbols in Hindu religious rituals contain educational and spiritual values that function to shape religious awareness and ethical behavior of the congregation.¹⁹ Furthermore, religious rituals also serve as a means of transmitting cultural values and strengthening community identity. Traditional religious ceremonies serve as a medium for internalizing moral values, social solidarity, and harmonizing community life. Therefore, *Ngarupuk* is understood not merely as a series of rituals leading up to *Nyepi* Day, but as a medium for character building, strengthening social cohesion, preserving culture, and maintaining a balanced relationship between humans and others, humans and nature, and humans and God, known in Hindu teachings as the *Tri Hita Karana* concept.

The object of study in this research focuses on the interpretation of the *Ngarupuk* tradition by the Javanese Hindu and Balinese Hindu communities in Way Panji District, South Lampung Regency. This study is important because the two communities have different cultural backgrounds, potentially resulting in variations in understanding, interpreting, and practicing the same ritual. From a cultural anthropology perspective, religious practice is not only understood as the implementation of religious teachings alone, but also as the result of social and cultural constructions that develop in community life. Tim Winter explains that religion is a system of symbols that shape people's moods, motivations, and perspectives on the realities of life. Therefore, cultural differences between the Javanese Hindu and Balinese Hindu communities can influence the symbolic meaning attached to each stage of the *Ngarupuk* ritual.²⁰ In addition, the study of the sociology of religion emphasizes that religious practices are dynamic and always interact with the social context in which the tradition develops. Hindu religious rituals not only function as a means of worshiping God, but also as a medium for preserving cultural identity, strengthening social solidarity, and passing on spiritual values to the next generation.

Thus, this study seeks to understand how the similarities in Hindu teachings can be manifested in the form of diverse meanings and ritual practices according to the cultural context of each community, without losing the spiritual essence that is the main foundation of the *Ngarupuk* tradition. The results of this study are expected

¹⁹ I Nengah Suardana, "Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Agama Hindu Dalam Tradisi Gébug Endé," *ŚRUTI: Jurnal Agama Hindu* 3, no. 1 (2022): 40–50.

²⁰ Tim Winter, "Cultures of Interpretation," in *Heritage and Tourism* (Routledge, 2013), 172–86.

to provide a comprehensive picture of the spiritual and social role of the Ngarupuk tradition, while also contributing to efforts to preserve local culture. Furthermore, the findings of this study are expected to enrich the understanding of religious rituals in Indonesia's multicultural society, particularly in maintaining intercultural harmony and the sustainability of local wisdom values.

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING OF THE NGARUPUK TRADITION IN THE JAVANESE HINDU AND BALINESE HINDU COMMUNITIES IN WAY PANJI

The research results show that the Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities in Way Panji District interpret the Ngarupuk tradition as a ritual of self- and environmental purification before Nyepi Day. For both communities, Ngarupuk is a means of self-introspection to cleanse negative influences and control *sad ripu*, namely six bad human traits that can disrupt the balance of life. Through this ritual, the community prepares themselves physically and mentally before entering the *Catur Brata Penyepian*. In addition, Ngarupuk is also interpreted as an effort to maintain harmonious human relationships with God, fellow humans, and nature by neutralizing negative energies. Thus, this tradition not only has a religious function, but also plays a role in character formation, self-control, and strengthening spiritual values passed down from generation to generation.²¹

In the Javanese Hindu community of Sidoreno Village, the spiritual meaning of the Ngarupuk tradition is manifested through simple, contemplative rituals. The use of torches, wooden gongs (*gongs*), communal prayers, and simple offerings are interpreted as symbols of self-purification from various negative traits that can disrupt harmony in life. The torches symbolize spiritual enlightenment and awareness, while the gongs serve as a symbol of repelling negative influences and a reminder to increase inner vigilance. The ritual's simplicity reflects an emphasis on sincerity, self-control, and the appreciation of religious values. In addition to serving as a means of spiritual purification, Ngarupuk also serves to strengthen human relationships with God, others, and the environment, and serves as a medium for transmitting cultural and spiritual values to the younger generation through their involvement in each stage of the ritual.²²

Meanwhile, the Balinese Hindu community in Balinuraga Village interprets the Ngarupuk tradition as a process of self-purification manifested through the *ogoh-ogoh*

²¹ Mahdinatin Muamalah et al., "Tradisi Ogoh-Ogoh Untuk Mewujudkan Kerukunan Antarumat Hindu Dan Islam," *Journal of Education Research* 4, no. 1 (2023): 276–82.

²² Nali Eka, "Bentuk, Ideologi Dan Makna Manenga Lewu Sebagai Upacara Kematian Pasca Penguburan Bagi Penganut Hindu Kaharingan Di Desa Tarantang Kabupaten Kapuas," *Jurnal Penelitian Agama Hindu* 8, no. 1 (2024): 130–44.

parade, pecaruan ceremony, and the burning of bhuta kala symbols. Ogoh-ogoh are seen as representations of negative traits, destructive energy, and the influence of adharma that must be neutralized before entering Nyepi Day. The procession of the ogoh-ogoh parade and burning is interpreted as a symbol of the victory of dharma over adharma as well as the release of negative traits that can hinder spiritual development. This ritual also reflects the teachings of Tri Hita Karana which emphasizes the harmony of human relationships with God, fellow humans, and nature. In addition to being a means of spiritual purification, Ngarupuk serves to strengthen social solidarity and preserve Hindu cultural values. These findings indicate that although Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities express Ngarupuk through different forms and symbols, both have the same spiritual goal, namely achieving personal purity, controlling lust, and balance in life before Nyepi Day.

SYMBOLISM IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NGARUPUK TRADITION

Meanwhile, the Balinese Hindu community in Balinuraga Village interprets the Ngarupuk tradition as a process of self-purification manifested through ritual parades of ogoh-ogoh, pecaruan ceremonies, and the burning of bhuta kala symbols. Ogoh-ogoh are seen as representations of negative traits, destructive energies, and the influence of adharma, which must be neutralized before Nyepi Day. The procession of the ogoh-ogoh parade and burning is interpreted as a symbol of the victory of dharma over adharma, as well as a means of self-reflection and control of lust. This spiritual meaning is closely related to the teachings of Tri Hita Karana, which emphasizes the harmony of human relationships with God, others, and nature. In addition to being a means of spiritual purification, Ngarupuk also serves to strengthen social solidarity and preserve Hindu cultural values. Although expressed through different forms and symbols, the Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities share the same spiritual goal: achieving self-purity, self-control, and balance in life before Nyepi Day.²³

In contrast, Balinese Hindus consider ogoh-ogoh the primary symbol in the Ngarupuk tradition, representing the bhuta kala (spiritual and spiritual) and various negative traits (*sad ripu*) within humans, such as greed, anger, and arrogance. The procession of parading and burning ogoh-ogoh is interpreted as an effort to exorcise and destroy negative energies as a form of self-purification before Nyepi Day. Furthermore, the use of offerings, *banten* (*banten*), symbolic colors, and Balinese gamelan accompaniment further strengthen the ritual's spiritual meaning. All of these symbols represent the balance between the physical

²³ I Nyoman Kartika Yasa, "Tradisi Upacara Tiga Bulan Menurut Agama Hindu Di Bali: Three Months Ceremony Tradition According to Hindu Religion in Bali," *Nirwasita: Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah Dan Ilmu Sosial* 5, no. 1 (2024): 75–87.

and spiritual aspects and reflect the implementation of the Tri Hita Karana teachings. Therefore, Ngarupuk is understood as a means of spiritual transformation to achieve harmony between humans with God, others, and the universe.²⁴

From the perspective of religious symbolism, the symbols used in religious traditions serve as a medium connecting humans with sacred and transcendent values. Symbols not only serve as a complement to rituals but also contain spiritual meanings that represent the beliefs, teachings, and outlook of a community. In the Ngarupuk tradition, various ritual symbols serve as a means of religious communication, reminding us of the importance of self-purification, controlling our desires, and maintaining harmonious relationships with God, fellow humans, and nature. Furthermore, these symbols serve as a medium for transmitting moral, spiritual, and social values to the younger generation, thereby strengthening the community's cultural and religious identity and preserving the continuity of traditions from generation to generation.²⁵

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN THE SPIRITUAL MEANING OF THE NGARUPUK TRADITION IN JAVANESE HINDUISM AND BALINESE HINDUISM

The research results show that the Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities in Way Panji District share a common understanding of the Ngarupuk tradition as a means of purifying oneself physically and mentally, controlling sad ripu, rejecting negative influences, and drawing closer to God before Nyepi Day. This tradition is also understood as a moment of self-reflection to improve spiritual quality according to Hindu teachings. In addition to its spiritual significance, Ngarupuk serves as a medium for strengthening relationships between residents, fostering a spirit of mutual cooperation, and strengthening social solidarity. Through community involvement in every stage of the ritual, this tradition plays a role in maintaining Hindu religious and cultural identity and serves as a means of passing on spiritual and cultural values to the younger generation from generation to generation.²⁶

The differences in the meaning and spiritual expression of the Ngarupuk tradition between the Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities in Way Panji District are evident

²⁴ Ira Rahmawati and Edi Rohaedi, "Tradisi Ngubur Bali Di Desa Cikalong, Kecamatan Pajawan Kidul, Kabupaten Kuningan," *Jaladri: Jurnal Ilmiah Program Studi Bahasa Sunda* 11, no. 1 (2025): 43–47.

²⁵ Christiane Barth, "'In Illo Tempore, at the Center of the World': Mircea Eliade and Religious Studies' Concepts of Sacred Time and Space," *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung*, 2013, 59–75.

²⁶ Sifa Destry Fauzia, "Ekspresi Verbal Dan Nonverbal Dalam Tradisi Upacara Kematian Masyarakat Samin Di Desa Tapelan Kecamatan Ngraho Kabupaten Bojonegoro (Kajian Etnolinguistik)," 2018.

in the ritual forms and symbols used. The Javanese Hindu community performs *Ngarupuk* more simply, emphasizing inner reflection, self-purification, and the use of local symbols such as torches and wooden gongs (gongs) to ward off negative energy and strengthen community unity. In contrast, the Balinese Hindu community performs more complex and symbolic rituals through *ogoh-ogoh* parades, traditional offerings, and percussion instruments that represent Balinese Hindu cosmology. *Ogoh-ogoh* are interpreted as symbols of the evil spirits (*bhuta kala*) that must be neutralized before *Nyepi* Day. Despite differences in ritual form and expression, both communities share the same spiritual goals: self-purification, rejection of negative influences, and the realization of harmonious relationships between humans and God, others, and the universe.²⁷

Research findings indicate that the *Ngarupuk* tradition among the Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities in Way Panji District has undergone adaptations to suit the social and cultural contexts of each community. Differences are evident in the ritual's implementation and the use of religious symbols, but these differences do not alter the essence of the underlying teachings. For both communities, *Ngarupuk* remains a means of self-purification, control of negative traits, and spiritual preparation for *Nyepi* Day. This demonstrates that religious traditions are dynamic and capable of adapting to the socio-cultural environment without losing the spiritual meaning that is at the core of their teachings, while also playing a role in strengthening the religious identity and social harmony of the Hindu community in Way Panji District.²⁸

SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT

The *Ngarupuk* tradition practiced by the Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities in Way Panji District demonstrates a diversity of ritual forms influenced by the social and cultural contexts of each community, yet remains grounded in the same Hindu teachings. This finding reinforces the view that religious practices cannot be separated from the socio-cultural constructions of their supporting communities. From the perspective of Mircea Eliade's phenomenology of religion, the *Ngarupuk* ritual can be understood as a form of hierophany, namely the manifestation of sacred values presented through symbols, ritual actions, and cultural traditions. Through various symbols of purification and exorcism of negative energy, the community expresses religious beliefs while actualizing spiritual values in everyday life.²⁹

²⁷ Rahmawati and Rohaedi, "Tradisi Ngubur Bali Di Desa Cikalong, Kecamatan Pajawan Kidul, Kabupaten Kuningan."

²⁸ Barth, "'In Illo Tempore, at the Center of the World': Mircea Eliade and Religious Studies' Concepts of Sacred Time and Space."

²⁹ U P Hadion Wijoyo, "Peran Orang Tua Dalam Meningkatkan Minat Anak Terhadap Agama Buddha," n.d.

From Clifford Geertz's perspective, religion is understood as a cultural system manifested through symbols, meanings, and collective practices that shape how society interprets life. Research findings indicate that the Ngarupuk tradition in Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities reflects the close relationship between religion and local culture. In the Javanese Hindu community, Ngarupuk emphasizes simplicity, inner reflection, and spiritual appreciation, which aligns with Javanese cultural characteristics. Meanwhile, Balinese Hindu communities express religious values more symbolically and communally through the ogoh-ogoh parade as a representation of Bhuta Kala. These differences indicate that religious practices are contextual and influenced by the local social, historical, and cultural environment without losing the essence of Hindu teachings. These findings enrich the study of the Study of Religions regarding the process of religious inculturation in various cultural contexts.³⁰

From Émile Durkheim's perspective, religious rituals play a crucial role in strengthening social solidarity and community cohesion. Research findings indicate that the Ngarupuk tradition, in both Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities, serves not only as a means of worship but also as a medium for togetherness, mutual cooperation, and strengthening communal identity. The involvement of people from various age groups in each stage of the ritual demonstrates Ngarupuk's role as a means of transmitting cultural, spiritual, and moral values to the younger generation. In the multicultural context of Way Panji District, this tradition contributes to social integration, strengthening relationships between residents, and maintaining harmony in the lives of people from diverse cultural backgrounds.³¹

Theologically, the Ngarupuk tradition aligns with the concept of Bhuta Yadnya, a sacred offering ceremony dedicated to Bhuta Kala to maintain harmony between Bhuana Agung (macrocosm) and Bhuana Alit (microcosm) to achieve Bhuta Hita or the balance of natural energy. In Bali, this normative form is realized through the creation of ogoh-ogoh as a physical symbol of Bhuta Kala which is then negativeized in the burning procession, as explained that ogoh-ogoh is a symbolic aesthetic that represents negative forces before being neutralized. In Java, this normative form is transformed into a ruwatan ritual with simpler symbols such as dolls or human figures representing Sukerta (individuals affected by Bethara Kala), but still meaningful as a purification from disaster. This flexibility shows that a normative Hindu teaching can be interpreted differently according to the local cultural context, but still maintains its main theological

³⁰ Ie Lien R Junia, "Mengenal Hukum Adat Awig-Awig Di Dalam Desa Adat Bali," *Jurnal Hukum Dan HAM Wara Sains* 2, no. 09 (2023): 828–44.

³¹ Emile Durkheim, "The Elementary Forms of Religious Life," in *Social Theory Re-Wired* (Routledge, 2016), 52–67.

structure, namely the implementation of *yadnya* (sacred sacrifice) to neutralize the nature of evil (*Asuri Sampad*) and share negative forces.³²

From the perspective of the Study of Religions, the *Ngarupuk* tradition in Way Panji confirms the concept of living religion, or religion that is alive in everyday practice, where religion is not only understood as official doctrine but as a socio-cultural dynamic that continues to experience reinterpretation. As explained in the study of everyday religion, the religious practices of ordinary people display dynamics that are freer from political construction, with individual or collective agency capable of improvising without ignoring institutional structures. The *Ngarupuk* tradition shows that religious rituals can be carried out with a rich variety of expressions such as *ogoh-ogoh* parades and burnings while remaining grounded in the core Hindu values of purity and self-control.³³

This phenomenon strengthens the normative study of internal pluralism in religion, namely the diversity of forms of religious practice within one Hindu tradition without eliminating the underlying spiritual essence. In Hinduism, pluralism is understood through the verse of *Atharwa Veda XIII* which states: “Many in one, and one in many,” which emphasizes the recognition of diversity as part of life. The philosophical concept of *Rwa Bhineda* in Balinese Hinduism is a paradigm of this pluralism, where duality (light-dark, good-bad) is understood as the essence of cosmic balance that reflects the ethos of tolerance and harmony. The *Ngarupuk* tradition aims to neutralize the negative power of *Buta Kala* before *Nyepi* while reflecting the principle of *Tri Hita Karana*, namely the harmonious relationship between humans and God, humans and others, and humans and the environment.³⁴

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a phenomenological perspective to examine the *Ngarupuk* tradition within the framework of the Study of Religions. This approach was chosen to understand the religious experiences, symbolic meanings, and religious awareness of the communities involved in the ritual. Through the phenomenology of religion, the study seeks to uncover how Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities interpret the symbols, ritual processes, and spiritual values contained in the *Ngarupuk* tradition as manifestations of sacred reality in their religious lives.

This research was conducted in Way Panji District, South Lampung Regency, where both Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities thrive. The location was chosen purposively because both communities practice the *Ngarupuk* tradition from different

³² Muhammad Yusuf and Ali Mursyid Azisi, “Upacara Bhuta Yadnya Sebagai Ajang Pelestarian Alam,” *Religi: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama* 16, no. 1 (2020): 113–31.

³³ Karman Karman, “Everyday Religion: Tawaran Metode Penelitian Sosial Bagi Pengembangan Studi Islam,” *Jurnal Studi Islam* 10, no. 2 (2021): 181–208.

³⁴ Anis Malik Thoha, *Tren Pluralisme Agama: Tinjauan Kritis* (Gema Insani, 2005).

cultural backgrounds, despite being based on the same religious teachings. This diversity provides an opportunity to examine the differences and similarities in the meanings, symbols, and practices of the Ngarupuk ritual, thus gaining a deeper understanding of the dynamics of religious expression within different cultural contexts.

Informants in this study were determined using a purposive sampling technique, which involves deliberately selecting informants based on specific considerations relevant to the research objectives. The criteria used included their level of involvement in the Ngarupuk tradition, their understanding of the religious values contained within it, and their social roles within the community. Through this technique, researchers were able to obtain in-depth information from individuals deemed to have direct knowledge and experience related to the Ngarupuk tradition among the Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities in Way Panji District. The research informants came from two locations: Sidoreno Village and Balinuraga Village, with a total of three people.

In Balinuraga Village, there is one informant who is a Hindu religious figure and plays an important role in the implementation of the Ngarupuk ritual. Meanwhile, in Sidoreno Village, there are two informants consisting of one religious figure and one youth leader who are actively involved in community religious activities. The number of informants was determined based on the principle of data saturation, which is the condition when the information obtained has shown a recurring pattern and no new significant data is found. In addition, if data in-depth or clarification of certain information is needed, the researcher uses a snowball sampling technique, namely obtaining recommendations for additional informants from initial informants who are considered to have knowledge and experience relevant to the research focus.

Data collection techniques in this study included in-depth interviews, documentation studies, and analysis of cultural artifacts. In-depth interviews were used to gather comprehensive information regarding the community's perceptions, religious experiences, symbolic meanings, and theological perspectives on the Ngarupuk tradition. Through direct interaction with informants, researchers gained a deeper understanding of how the community interprets each stage of the ritual, the symbols used, and the spiritual values underlying its implementation.

In addition, a documentation study was conducted by collecting various supporting data in the form of photographs, videos, ritual notes, mantra texts, and local literature related to the Ngarupuk tradition. The documentation data served to strengthen and complement the interview results, thus obtaining a more complete picture of the ritual implementation. Meanwhile, the analysis of cultural artifacts focused on various symbols and ritual objects, such as *ogoh-ogoh*, offerings, torches, *kentongan* (wooden drum), and other ceremonial equipment. This analysis aimed to uncover the symbolic meaning

contained in each artifact as a representation of the religious, cultural, and spiritual values that exist within the Javanese Hindu and Balinese Hindu communities in Way Panji District.

The collected data was analyzed using the Miles and Huberman analysis model which includes data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions/verification.³⁵ In addition to qualitative descriptive analysis, this study uses symbolic analysis to understand the meaning contained in the *Ngarupuk* tradition. Mircea Eliade's theory of religious phenomenology is used to examine symbols and rituals as a form of hierophany or manifestation of sacred values. Clifford Geertz's symbolic anthropology approach helps interpret the meaning of symbols in the cultural context of Javanese and Balinese Hindu communities, while Émile Durkheim's concept of ritual sociology is used to explain the function of *Ngarupuk* in strengthening social solidarity, communal identity, and community integration. Thus, this study examines the *Ngarupuk* tradition from a comprehensive religious, cultural, and social perspective.

The validity of the data in this study was strengthened through source and technical triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from traditional leaders, religious leaders, and community participants. Meanwhile, technical triangulation was conducted through the use of various data collection methods, such as interviews, observation, and documentation. Furthermore, the researchers conducted member checks to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the findings with the experiences and perspectives of the informants.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the *Ngarupuk* tradition among the Javanese Hindu communities in Sidoreno Village and the Balinese Hindu communities in Balinuraga Village share the same spiritual significance as a means of self-purification, control of *sadhripu*, and spiritual preparation for *Nyepi* Day. For both communities, *Ngarupuk* is interpreted as a medium to cleanse negative influences that can disrupt the balance of human life. This spiritual meaning is also reflected in efforts to build harmonious relationships between humans and God, fellow humans, and nature. Thus, the *Ngarupuk* tradition functions not only as a religious ritual, but also as a means of developing spiritual awareness and strengthening the religious identity of the Hindu community in Way Panji District.

This study also found similarities and differences in the implementation and symbolism of *Ngarupuk* in both communities. The Javanese Hindu community in Sidoreno Village displays a simpler form of ritual with an emphasis on inner reflection,

³⁵ Matthew B Miles, A Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldana, "Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook," (No Title), 2014.

the use of torches, kentongan (a wooden gong), and communal prayer as a symbol of self-purification. In contrast, the Balinese Hindu community in Balinuraga Village expresses spiritual meaning through the more complex ogoh-ogoh procession, Bhuta Yajna, and the burning of the bhuta kala symbol. However, these differences in ritual form do not change the essence of the underlying teachings, namely self-control, harmony of life, and strengthening social solidarity. These findings indicate that the Ngarupuk tradition is a dynamic religious practice, able to adapt to local cultural contexts without losing the spiritual values that are at the heart of Hindu teachings.

This study still has limitations because it only focuses on two Hindu communities in Way Panji District, thus not comprehensively describing the variations in practices and meanings of Ngarupuk among Hindu communities in other areas. Furthermore, this study focuses more on the spiritual aspect and therefore does not examine in depth the influence of modernization, digital media, and social change on the transformation of this tradition. Therefore, further research is recommended to expand the research location, involve more Hindu communities with diverse cultural backgrounds, and examine the dynamics of preserving the Ngarupuk tradition in the modern era, including the role of the younger generation, digital media, and changing patterns of religiosity in maintaining the continuity of religious traditions in a multicultural society.

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