

Aspects of the Transformation of Hinduism in Bali

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ABSTRACT

The long Hindu civilization in Bali has sparked several thinkers at home and abroad to formulate how the Hindu religion that exists today in Bali became what it is today. What are the underlying aspects or cultural forces that are inherent in the Balinese people in forming their culture and religion which are inseparable? Through critical reading and interpretation methods in reading Balinese Hindu religious texts, it is hoped that we will be able to provide valid data in formulating Hinduism in Bali. The historical context of cultural cross-breeding gave birth to a transformative attitude that encouraged the socio-political-economic power in Bali to be full of dynamic energy, the philosophical-technological ideas that developed in Bali gave a strong impetus to move to where it is today. The aspect of transformation that is continuously held by the Balinese people means that Hinduism is not rigidly immersed in textual dogmatism. Synthesisism-transformative is a bulwark for the preservation of religion, culture, nation and state which was born from a long historical process, political constellation and socio-economic journey. Synthesis refers to the creative-accommodative power of accepting external influences as an attitude of openness but processing them to suit local values.

KEYWORDS: Balinese Hinduism, Transformation, Historical Process

1. INTRODUCTION

The differences between Hinduism in India and Bali have been resolved by religious experts, historians and Balinese culture by emphasizing the strength of local aspects that have survived as a magnetic force and benchmark for the Hindu religion that came later. French historians such as Lombard (2018) in *Nusa Java Silang Budaya* stated that the theological aspect diluted Hinduism which came later and merged with local religions which were deeply rooted. That the physical and spiritual aspects of the human universe are explained in parallel and structured so that each concept must follow that pattern. Lombard (2018) further stated that there are aspects that have been neglected in explaining the development of Hinduism in Indonesia, especially in Bali which has equal power (Equality Theology) with external influences. This aspect is local modality, namely culture that is embedded and established in society. Bali, since prehistoric times, as explained by Sutaba (2014), Balinese people have had quite high knowledge and understanding about the existence of an external world outside their own world which is believed to have an influence on their lives.

The next question of course is how to define Hinduism in Bali. It is not easy to understand, let alone formulate, Hinduism as applied in Indonesia. For example, Bali, as the locus of Hindu defense in the modern era after the collapse of the great Majapahit empire, has a rich culture and various ceremonies that differ between regions. Researchers such as Hildred Geertz have difficulties when they want to formulate Hinduism in Bali from a socio-anthropological perspective.

It doesn't stop with the figure of Hildred Geertz. Other researchers use India as a benchmark or reference in viewing activities social, philosophical and religious rituals experience similar difficulties. For example, in understanding the holy book Veda, C. Hooykas when writing the article *Weda and Sisywa, Rsi Bhujangga* in Present-day Bali, at the beginning of his article stated "For a quarter of a century we have known that the Veda in Bali is something very different from the Veda in India". So using Indian parameters to look at Hinduism in Bali as a whole does not provide a definite answer.

Stut Terheim (in Dharmayuda, 1999:61) provides a framework for understanding the existence of Hinduism in Bali in particular and in Indonesia in general. The encounter of pre-historic traditions, agricultural traditions and Hindu religious traditions that came later gave its own color to Hinduism in Bali. These three traditions melt into one, filling and giving energy. Again, repeating Stutterheim, understanding Hinduism starts from opening your mind to these three traditions.

Furthermore, explanatory exploration in understanding Hinduism in Bali as an identity must be seen from socio-political and economic movements. Michel Picard (2020) explains that political constellations, social movements, and national and transnational relations contribute to the formation of the identity of contemporary Hindu society in Bali.

Apart from progressive and dynamic external influences, Indonesian society in general has been culturally intelligent in responding to every socio-political-economic and religious upheaval in forming its identity. Understanding from one side cannot provide sufficient information in order to dissect Indonesian Hinduism. It is interesting to describe the dynamics of Indonesian (Hindu) society and the noble values behind Hindu society melting into the nation's society, or Indonesian society. So that Hindu society is not only fragmented to become exclusive but can become an inclusive society, as a stronghold of national culture and religion.

2. DISCUSSION

a) Socio-Political-economic Power

Bellwood (2019:335) believes that the Austronesian peoples who reached Southeast Asia already had sufficient knowledge to navigate the open seas. The wave of Taiwanese society with its solid agricultural and iron culture sailed across the open seas, reaching the Philippines, Vietnam and Kalimantan, and finally to Java and Sumatra. The Indonesian people, or more narrowly, the Indonesian people, are familiar with interactions with other nations. Through shipping routes using outrigger boats, which are original works of the Indonesian people, around the coastal areas of the Pacific Ocean, they met the Chinese, Persians, Arabs and Indians. Bowring (2019) in his book entitled *Empire of Wind: The Global Role of Asia's Great Archipelago* states that long before the AD the ancestors of the Indonesian people were able to sail the Pacific and Indian Oceans, in contrast to Europeans who initially sailed the closed Mediterranean Sea so that their cruising range limited. Archipelago sailors, finding open straits, stimulated them to sail the open seas.

The period of the archipelago's maritime glory was politically manifested in the presence of the Srivijaya kingdom which was centered in Sumatra in the 7th to 13th centuries AD, which was then continued by the Majapahit kingdom in East Java in the 13th to 15th centuries AD. The encounter of Indonesian sailors with other civilizations such as China, Arab Persia, India and Europe gave rise to trade between continents. Through meetings, foreign trade got to know the archipelago region which is rich in spices and agricultural products with fertile soil. Spices are a very important international market commodity, and make the Indonesian archipelago a very busy trade traffic area.

The exchange of goods and services, increasingly intimate, becomes an exchange of language and culture, politics and social. Van Soest noted that there are three main tribes in the archipelago which are the driving force of the economy. The Malays were active traders and tough settlers, the Bugis represented heroism and skilled sailors, and the Javanese were very fond of agriculture and arable land.

In relation to the Hindu and Indonesian or Balinese context, it is interesting to take the ideas of Khondaker (2021) in an article entitled "Mapping Bengal's Factor and Indianization of South East Asia" which was published in the journal *Jurnal of Arts and Humanities*. According to Khindaker (2021:28), Bengal's position at the northern tip of India allows trade to parts of Southeast Asia. It is proven that the Port of Bengal has sent many horses to Indonesia and even Bali since the early century AD. The port of Bengal connects not only various product items from India but also culture and ideas.

b) Philosophical-Technological Power

Meetings between nations are not limited to the exchange of goods and services, but also the exchange of knowledge. Through meetings between nations through trade, there was an influx of cultural and religious values from China, Arabia, Persia, India and Europe. Introduction to the concept of Royal governance, more complex Administration, knowledge in the fields of architecture, Literature, art, Religion and Astrology. Amsary (2023) in *The Invention of Yesterday* concludes that in tracing history, every event is actually like a spider's web that is tied to one another for a long time and influences one another, one idea will spread, take root and experience innovation in other areas. Amsary (2023) further states how the collapse of the Moorish tribes in Spain sparked a revival of intellectualism and criticism in parts of Europe that were confined by religiously based tyranny. Gunpowder discovered in China influenced the war and colonialism that began in Europe, also leading Japan to become the first colonial country in Asia in the early 20th century. One idea is intertwined with another idea.

Referring to the Balinese context, Sumardjo (2014) stated that the cultural ethos of the archipelago (especially Java-Bali) is adaptive, gradualistic, aesthetic and tolerant. Adaptation to everything becomes absolute as a resistance to development, so that life continues. On the other hand, blindly rejecting all forms of change is not the soul of the archipelago. The later acceptance of Hinduism to enrich local religions that have developed through filters is clear evidence of an adaptive-selective process. According to Picard (2018), the concept of *dienst* (service) and customs work quite harmoniously, although there are several dynamics recorded, but these two administrative arrangements are still running. Modern administrative governance at the beginning of the 20th century was accepted as colonial governance and was absorbed by the State along with regional, religious and tradition-based local governance.

The archipelago ethos is very close to art-religiosity and is open to foreign cultures and new societies. Various types of sculpture, for example *pepatra* (leaf sculpture) are also known as Chinese, French and even Dutch *patra* (Sunaryo, 2017:39). New perspectives according to new knowledge do not necessarily have to be rejected or at least can still be accommodated as long as they are not endangering the survival of local civilization and culture. Local modalities Balinese people show an active role in cultural meetings. The arrival of elements from outside Balinese culture, absorbed and then forged to suit the people's way of life. Nord holt (2006:7) calls it "Localization" which is an active process of adopting and giving new meaning to Indian concepts. Evidence that shows the culture and belief system of the Balinese people reached a fairly high level when the localization process occurred, including, 1) Belief in Mountains and Seas as spiritual realms, 2) Belief in the existence of other life and rebirth, 3) Belief in organs Certain body organs, especially the penis and vagina, have magical powers to repel evil, 4) There is a belief in ancestral spirits who can be asked for help (Utama, 2014: 8).

The orientation of sacredness pivots on the Mountain and the Sea to foster community etiquette related to the practice of sacred space and time, which can be found in the cognitive and spiritual realms of Balinese-Hindu society. Belief in rebirth finds literal justification in books such as (1) Ian Stevenson's research on rebirth, (2) Raymond A. Moody Jr's book "Life After Life", (3) James Van Praagh's book "Talk to Heaven" (4) Dr. L. Weiss entitled "Many Live Many Masters". These four studies provide conclusions about the human subconscious about past lives and their influence on present life.

The belief in certain organs that have magical powers is an ideal place for the translation of tantric teachings. Tantra teachings also position the worship of aspects of femininity which are identified as having a "mystical" spirit. Various forms of worship of God are rooted in the worship of feminine figures as symbols of fertility. Belief in ancestral spirits also did not disappear even though Hinduism came gradually. In fact, the shamanistic tradition which is still strong in Bali provides an authentic characteristic for Hindu-Balinese religion, the spirits of ancestors in shamanism are considered to be able to provide assistance in various impasses experienced by humans.

These four local modalities eventually permeated all religious life in Bali. In the field of art, namely the Barong-Rangda dance depicts traces of Tantrayana, in the field of literature it depicts mountains and belief in ancestors, in the field of philosophy, mountains and ancestor worship occupy the concept of worship in Bali. In line with that, Coedes (2017: 65) stated that local culture was not erased by Hindu-Buddhism, but was grafted and softened into a framework within which their own society could develop.

c) Synthetic Genius Character: Cultural and Religious Fortress

Association between nations has a positive impact in the form of additional diversity of knowledge, art and religion. The wealth of the archipelago also led European nations to exploit various existing resources and try to politically control their people. Political independence means growing throughin all ways, internally the association with European democratization which grew from Greek philosophy, and the rise of Asia and several European nations from war became beneficial and supporting factors for the independence of the Indonesian nation.

In the context of Bali, post-independence the search for identity becomes more intensive. When the Ministry of Religion was formed in 1950, followed by the decision to enter Balinese religion as a religious sect, the search for identity became increasingly prominent. The characters' awareness of their identity is dominant, especially regarding the religion they have adhered to so far. The existence of the State provides a protective home as well as discipline and administration. Fulfillment of the requirements that a religion recognized by the State must have a name, contain the One God, have a Prophet, a Holy Book, Believers, and a holy place is absolute.

Finally, religious and cultural figures in the 1950s agreed to turn to India, which has close ties to the religion adhered to by the Balinese people. Hindu became the name chosen after a long debate between the Tirtha religion and Hindu Dharma, the Vedas as the holy book, the sapta rsi being the Prophet who received God's Revelation, and the temple as a holy place. Even though Hinduism in Indonesia has turned administratively to India, in practice the nuances of locality, both ritual and philosophical, are very strong and dense. Religious practices as a continuation of existing traditions combined with local and Hindu philosophies that emerged then created material and non-material wealth for Hindu society.

The structure of Balinese society is embedded in the ability to synthesize or what is also called genius-synthesis, namely intelligence in processing influences that come from outside until it has a certain identity and characteristics. Influences from India and China as a result of interactions made by the ancestors of the Indonesian people are not immediately accepted and made into property, but are processed to enrich one's own culture into its own unique form without losing the characteristics of its locality. This modifying ability must be in accordance with the value system adopted so as to form a cultural mentality.

The formation of Balinese Hindu identity components does not only occur objectively, namely by influence from outside, namely foreign culture, nor does it take place in a monologue-subjective manner, namely the will of the Balinese themselves, but rather through an intersubjective process. The formation of a Balinese Hindu cultural identity occurs through intense dialogue and interaction between and intra cultures with an intelligent processing process that produces good output.

The processing process will not occur without a supportive philosophical perspective on life. Referring to Holt (2000) perspective on life which is a more conscious formulation of views on a universal order. For example, the Balinese view of harmony, sustainable living, kesesuitability, appropriateness is a stepping stone in cultural processing. This synthetic genius character will become a strong fortress for culture and religion which is born from a process of intense dialogue and interaction.

d) Transformative Character: Fortress of Country, Nation, Culture

Borrowing the ideas of Ricklef (2000), the difference between the growth of nationalism that occurs in European countries and Indonesia is in their style, European and American countries have a secularism pattern, while Indonesia is a combination of the growth of nationalism and religiosity. The attitude of being one nation emerged first through the development of print media, political policies and electronic communication tools.

Meanwhile, the religious style emerged through the important role of religious figures during the ter resistance facing the invaders, as well as the nation's philosophy in uniting differences, namely the motto "Unity in Diversity" which is taken from the Sutasoma Book which has Hindu-Buddhist characteristics. "Bhinneka" which means two understandings, is transformed to fill the inner recesses of the Indonesian nation into a variety of differences that Indonesia has. Tribal wealth, religion and belief, language, way of life, skin color do not make them others, but are single, namely the Indonesian nation. That "Bhinneka" is local wisdom as well as national wealth whose existence must be maintained. The Garuda bird, which is also taken from Hindu mythology, provides a unifying symbol to be able to imagine ourselves and our compatriots as one society, namely Indonesia. The transformative character looks more at a much more universal order, namely unity.

When the synthetic character presents cultural flexibility and unlimited openness to everything that is absorbed into the local cultural value system. The transformative character makes the synthesized values a shared perspective or reference in order to achieve a more universal order, namely the unity of the nation and state. So that "Bhinneka" becomes a stronghold, culture, nation and state.

3. CLOSING

A. Conclusion

Synthesis-transformative is a stronghold for the defense of Religion, Culture, Nation and State which was born from a long historical process, political constellation and socio-economic journey. Synthesis refers to the creative-accommodative power of accepting external influences as an attitude of openness but processing them to suit local values. The power of synthesis ensures the continuity of culture and religion in the current times.

The transformative character allows the results of synthesis to become a solid stepping stone in a nation's journey. A philosophical perspective with reference to a higher and holy order, namely national unity.

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