

Balinese Lontar-Philosophical Background and Ritual Performance-article-suamba

by Ida Bagu Putu Suamba

Submission date: 10-Mar-2022 10:19AM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 1780751824

File name: losophical_Background_and_Ritual_Performance-article-suamba.docx (706.12K)

Word count: 3111

Character count: 16532

BALI-PRAJNA

International Journal of Indology and Culture

Volume 2

Number 1

2013

ISSN 2301-2709



**BALI SANSKRIT INSTITUTE & UNIVERSITY OF MAHENDRADATTA
DENPASAR, BALI, INDONESIA**

M I = **BALI-PRAJNA** tri mam

4r0 -

International Journal of Indology and Culture
Volume 2 Number 1 2013 ISSN 2301-2709

TOSHIHIRO WADA and SU-BASH C. DASH An Introduction to the Nailvadakarika of Udayana.....	
SUBASH C. DASH A Quest For Spiritual Science	7
SADANANDA DAS Prastastikta of The Atharvaveda (Xi. 4): A Cosmological Approach	16
ANIRBAN DASH Bhatrhari on Apabhramia	3 □
SHOUN HINO. Inquiry into the Brahman - To Establish the Impersonal Principle, the Brahman	36
CHHOM KUNTHEA Interaction between Sanskrit and Khmer Double-Language inscriptions from Ancient Cambodia with special reference to K. 235	47
SUDIP CHA.KRAVORTTI Vidyasdgara's Role in Making Sanskrit Grammar Easier	58
IDA BAGUS PUTU SUAMBA Balinese Lontar: Its Philosophical Background and its Ritual Performance	65
DIPANKAR LAMA Guru Pacimasambhava Path Maker of Buddhism In Sikkim	72
RAVINDRA KUMAR Gandhian Non-Violence in Current Perspectives	75
SAN SARIN Samudramanhana: Calculation Ascertained	88
BANAMALI BISWAL The Concept of Word, Meaning and Their Relationship in Sanskrit Grammar	98
IDA AYU TARY PUSPA Sakti in Purina : A Study of Gender	117
I KETUT DONDER Tri Hita Karana: A Communication form of Universal Brotherhood (Perspective of Balinese Tradition and Concept of Hindu Religion)	136
SHANTIPRIYA DEVI Treatment of Values in Yoga PhilosOphy	151
TIWI ETIKA A Brief Sketch of The Historical Development of The Sariikhya Philosophy ...	158
ABOUT SENDING THE RESEARCH PAPER	168
ABOUT THE BOARD OF EDITORS	169



Printed & Published by : PARAMITA PUBLISHING
Email: penerbitparamita@gmail.com <http://www.penerbitparamita.com>
Menanggal Street III Number 32 Surabaya 60234, INDONESIA
Ph. (031) 8295555, 8295500 Fax : (031) 8295555

ISSN 2301-2709



BALI
बालि

R, t

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INDOLOGY AND CULTURE

BALI SANSKRIT INSTITUTE AND UNIVERSITY OF LAMENDRADATT

Jalan Ken Arok 14 - 12, Denpasar, Indonesia - 80115, Phone : +62 361 434827

E-mail : info@mahendradatta.org

Foreword : I Gusti Ngurah Arya Wedakarna Mahendradatta Wedastraputra
Suyasa III

Advisor : I Made Titib (Indonesia)

Chief Editor : Subash Chandra Dash (India)

Board of Editors : I Gusti Made Sutjaja (Indonesia)

Ravindra Kumar (India)

Ketut Donder (Indonesia)

Toshihiro Wada (Japan)

San Sarin (France)

Shopana Sri Champa (Thailand)

Dongsung Huh (South Korea)

I Gede Suwantana (Indonesia)

Chief Editor

Dr. Subash Chandra Dash

Chair Professor

• ICCR, University of Mahendradatta

Ken Arok No. 10 — 12 Denpasar

Telp/fax : +62 361 434 827

Director

Bali Sanskrit Institute

31, Beliton, No 4, Denpasar 80115

Website.: www.balisanskritinstitute.com

Email. stibashchandradashgyahoo.co.in

balisanskritinstitute@gmail.com

CO Bali Sanskrit Institute, University of Mahendradatta Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia

LIST OF CONTENTS

TOSHIHIRO NADA and SUBASH C. DASH

An Introduction to the Nafivadakarika of Udayana.....

SUBASH C. DASH

A Quest For Spiritual Science 7

SADANANDA DAS

Pranasukta of The Atharvaveda (Xi. 4): A Cosmological **Approach**..... 16

NIRBAN DASH

Bhatrhari on Apabhrai*a 30

E I Q · T R P O F E W C O A N R T E N T S v i i i . v i

SHOUN HIND.

Inquiry into the Brahman

To Establish the Impersonal Principle, the **Brahman** - 36

0. CHHOM KUNTHEA

Interaction between Sanskrit and Khmer Double-Language inscriptions
from Ancient Cambodia with special reference to K. 235 47

•

DIP CHAKRAVORTTI

,dyas`agara's Role in Making Sanskrit Grammar Easier 58

IDA BAGUS PUTU SUAMBA

Balinese Lontar: Its Philosophical Background and its Ritual Performance 65

iiPANKAR LAMA

Guru Padmasambhava Path Maker of Buddhism In Sikkim 72

RAVINDRA KUMAR

Gandhi Non-Violence in Current Perspectives 75

SAN SARIN	
Samudramanathana: Calculation Ascertained	88
BANAMALI BISWAL	
The Concept of Word, Meaning and Their Relationship in Sanskrit Grammar	98
IDA AYU TARY PUSPA	
Sakti in Purana A Study of Gender	117
I KETUT DONDER	
Tri Hita Karana: A Communication form of Universal Brotherhood (Perspective of Balinese Tradition and Concept of Hindu Religion).....	136
SHANTIPRIYA DEVI	
Treatment of Values in Yoga Philosophy	151
TIWI ETIKA	
A Brief Sketch of The Historical Development of The Satinkhya Philosophy	158
ABOUT SENDING THE RESEARCH PAPER	168
ABOUT THE BOARD OF EDITORS.....	169



BALINESE LONTAR: ITS PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND AND ITS RITUAL PERFORMANCE'

Ida Bagus Putu Suanitha

I. INTRODUCTION

The existence of *lontar* (palm leaf manuscript) in Balinese culture testifies that Balinese people were fond of learning since 15th century A.D. when writing practices had used palm leaf as medium. Prior to it, writing practices used mediums like stone, metal, silver, gold, etc. as found in inscriptions. The appearance of *lontars* as medium of writing activities in the archipelago enhanced more branches of learning and more genres of text were produced despite the fact they had undergone decay or even damage due to some reasons, like climate, temperature and bad maintenance etc.

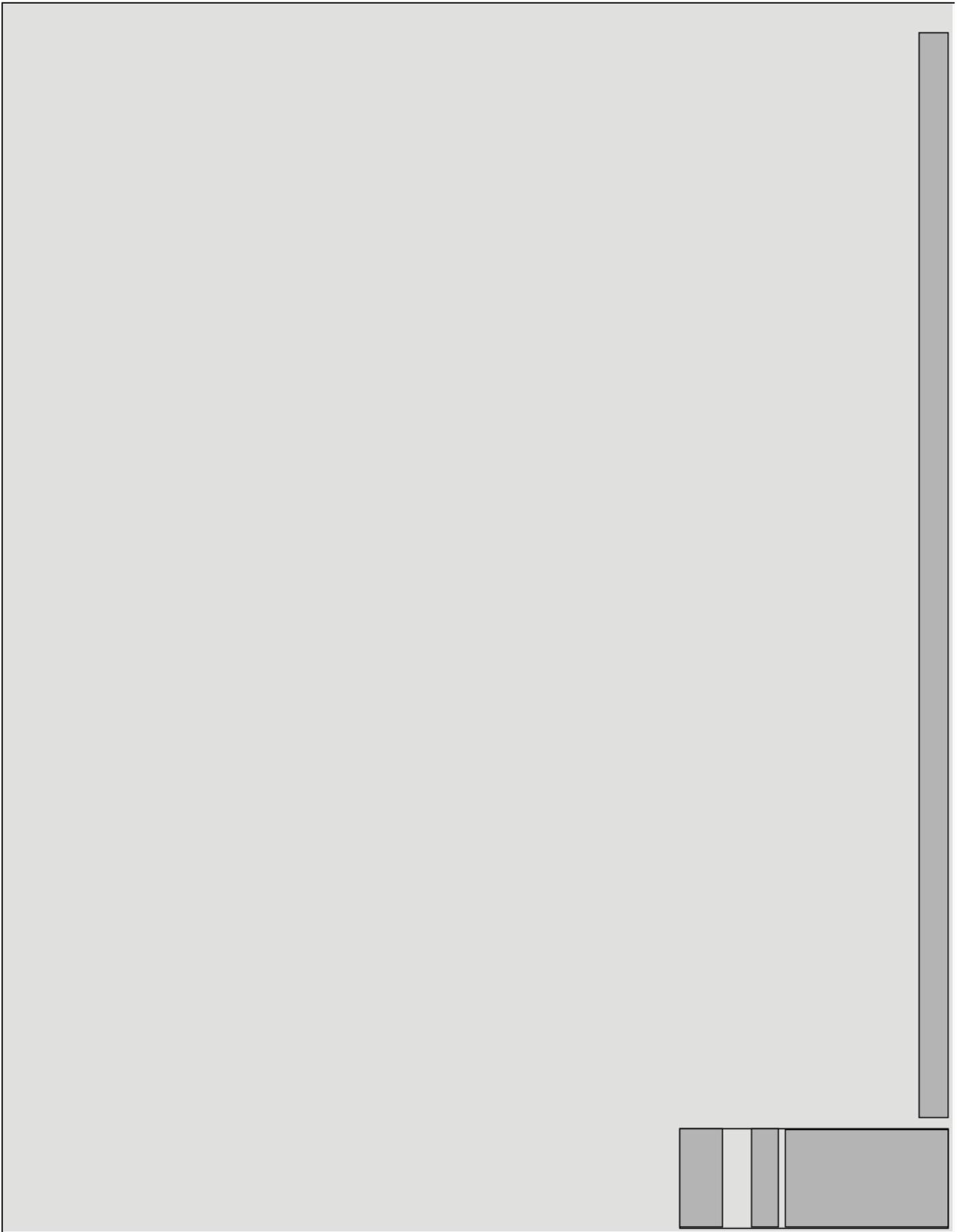
There has been a learning and teaching tradition of various branches of knowledge of which the role of a spiritual master (*guru*) is important. *Lontars* of various genres contain records of Balinese mind in pursuing Ultimate Truth, which is believed fundamental in life. Arts, culture, science, religion, spirituality, etc. are reflected on *lontars*. With this fact, knowledge has been acknowledged to have an important role in Balinese culture. Balinese culture has been developed in so far based on learning tradition.

Lontar is basically ritually embedded scripture especially on the genre of *Kalpa-s'astra*. Even in *tutur* genre, which is viewed as the core basis of ritual practices, still we can find some portions which discuss ritual. *Aksara*, *mantra*, or instruments for such ritual are often mentioned in *tutur* texts. It is not exaggerated when sacred letters (*akyaras*) have been taken as an integral part of ritual practices. There is no *yajfia* (ritual) accomplished without the application of *akyara*, *mantra*, *_yantra*, *mamlala* and *yoga* since they build up an integral part of it. It deals with ritual or action of both sacred and profane. In difference from western tradition in which texts are viewed as merely a form of expression of human thoughts or ideas or feeling, they are not directly related to something divine; whereas *lontar* as per Balinese tradition is viewed as sacred and respected by Balinese. It is true that not *alliontars* as related to religious matters, but they are considered expressions of human divinity as long as there is no clear demarcation of sacred and profane. Knowledge either of spiritual or empirical in nature is always associated with purity, which is attained only in the state of purity.

This paper attempts to throw some light on some aspects of *lontar*, which is supposed to reveal its philosophical background and its ritual performance. It is often found in some traditions that ritual performance with its intricateness and complexities are just performed for fulfilling a quest of spiritual longing. It is difficult to see its interrelation between performative

1 A Revised paper presented in workshop on "Holy Scriptures" in the Heidelberg University, Germany, 26th November 2011.





aspect of it and the possibility of having philosophical background on which a certain ritual is performed. Of this interconnectedness, we will see *lontar* as ancient text as preserved in Bali (Indonesia). Prior to having discussion on these two important points, however, general information about *lontar* as material culture is required. It is so since it is ancient text which is less people are interested in reading it. Further, reading a *lontar* is basically having a dialogue to its writer /composer whose ideas and thoughts are reflected on it. When people are struggling for better life in global world, universal values of ideas/thoughts preserved in *lontar* are worth to study.

H. DISCUSSION

2.1 Definition of *Lontar*

At the outset, a little information about *lontar* is useful for us to understand the existence and role it has as preserved well in Bali. *Lontar* or *tat* (in Balinese language) is actually a name of palm leaf (Latin: *Borassus flabellifer* and another type is *Coripha Ittan*), which is used as the medium on which script is inscribed using special knife (known in Balinese as *pengrupak* or *pengutik*). It is more or less like pen in modern stationary. Thus, *lontar* is ancient texts written on palm leaves'. This plant is easy to grow in tropical or sub-tropical countries, like Indonesia. However, in its development, *lontar* becomes name of ancient texts, which are expressed through the medium of palm leaves irrespective of its content and kind. The process of making a *lontar*, from flunking palm leaves to a *lontar* form, which is ready to be written, is quite delicate — which we cannot go into details in this juncture.

Amongst *lontar* traditions in the archipelago, Balinese *lontars* are written in Balinese scripts even though the language used can be Sanskrit, Old Javanese and Balinese languages or mix of them. Different scholars have attempted to classify this huge *lontar Akyara* (scripts) used can be divided into three groups, viz. (1) *Akyara-wreastra* — for writing Balinese *kapara*, e.g. *pipit*, *pangeling-eling*, etc; (2) *Akyara-swalelita* — is used to write Old Javanese and/or Sanskrit. e.g. *kidung*, *kakawin*, and *parwa*; and (3) *Akyara-modre* — for writing spiritual knowledge (known in Balinese as *kadhvatmikan* - esotericism) and also for writing *mantra* (hymn)³. For common people it is hard to understand the message of *aksvra* in the last classification; it is simply no meaning at all for them. One is required having purification for using it in spiritual ascendance. This group is usually used in the practice of divine power (*akti*).

2.2 *Lontar* and sacredness

Important questions can be raised in this context: Why *lontar* manuscript is regarded as sacred for Balinese? Or, what make *lontar* sacred even though the subject or content of it is not at all related to religion or spirituality? In modern times, why still people want to copy the *lontar* into *lontar* rather than to paper or any other material? These questions are important:

to be considered with reference to sacredness and effectiveness of *mantra or aksara* discussed in the text. In other words why sacrifices so powerful in human life either spiritual or profane when *aksaraimantra* are taken into account as an integral part of a *yajfia* ?

In Balinese culture, *lontar* is considered as sacred texts because it contains religious and spiritual knowledge. This kind of knowledge is often associated with divinity to which people always pay respects and looking for grace or protection. It also deals with secular one, e.g. health, astronomy, astrology and literatures etc. These sorts of knowledge are required for attaining *abhyudaya* (happy and prosperous life) and *molcsa* (freedom from bondage). In short, it can be stated that for Balinese they believe that happy life can only be attained through acquiring knowledge — both of spiritual and secular one. Accordingly, *lontars* which behaves as store house of various subject matters are highly respected and treated as sacred. And, as per Balinese tradition, for reading to unearth its divine message, one should undergo a process of purification, like *pewintenan*. This practice is not found in western tradition; the pursuit of knowledge is not connected to religious practices. The reason of the purification practice in Balinese tradition is that unless and until one is pure physically and spiritually, the one which is divine having purity of nature cannot be attained. Achievement in attaining knowledge, in turn, is aimed at having well being. The pursuit of knowledge should be based on purity and right or good intention for the benefit of all. This is done in order to avoid the misuse of knowledge for negative purposes.

On its sacredness, *lontars* are considered as abode of God of learning, i.e. *Sarasvatt* as she is sometimes addressed as the God of utterance (*yak*). What is printed on a *lontar* is basically a representation of words of divine in nature. Thus, worshipping her once in every six month — according to Javano-Balinese calendar — is performed through *lontars*. It is the medium through which she is worshipped and asked for *anugraha* (divine grace), which is required in life. It behaves as guiding manuals on various aspects of life, especially religion, spiritual and culture. Owing to its role and significance, it is preserved and read by religious leaders, like *pedancia(priesti*. of Brahmin class) in performing his duty (*svadhartna*) to serve the people. In ritual performance a *pedavelei* always consults related *lontar* Brahmin is always associated with religious matters and they have responsibility to keep this tradition alive from generation to generation despite the fact that not all Brahmins have profession as religious leaders/teachers.

At the outset, there is no religious performance devoid of message or ideas taken from a particular *lontar*. For rituals, a priest usually consults a class of literature belong to *kalpa-thstra*. It is a huge class of literature, which covers *parica-maha-yajfia* (five great sacrifices) according to Hinduism as practised in Bali. When modern system of printing has not yet been invented or has not reached the archipelago, *lontar* was the most widely used medium on which various thoughts were written on it. It seemed that the appearance of *lontar* writing in ancient

Bali came into existence around 14th century A.D when Bali had received intensive influence from Javanese culture. Prior to it, stone was used especially when inscription was issued by the ruler. Owing to its limited space and relatively hard to inscribe on stone, and also requires times in the processing *lontar* preparing ready to be written, *lontar* was replacing the role of stone as more or wider matters can be expressed through it. Irrespective of its lengthiness, *lontar* also has disadvantage due to its strength in facing time. When it was not well prepared in the process of making it, it is easy to decay. And, thus, the process of copying again and again becomes the only way to preserve it. This happened continuously, especially on *lontar* which has a great interest from readers, like *Kakawin Rcinu'ivaija*, *Parvas* and *Tutu's*, etc. However, the process of copying from different person in different generations may cause its correctness and originality are at risk. A *lontar* lover or collector will try to find the most original or oldest version of a certain title or topic.

An interesting phenomenon happens in Bali nowadays is that even though Balinese also adopt modern life style in global world, they still preserve *lontar* and some thoughts laboured on religion and culture are written in *lontar* using Balinese scripts. *Awig-awig* (the local law I of *Des'a-pakraman* (traditional village) is a good example to illustrate the above remarks. When everybody strives for the advancement of science and technology as one characteristic of modern life, it seems that there is a feeling of longing to go back to ancient time. One still inclines to past custom and tradition because one feels peaceful in his life. Keeping his thought in *lontar* form is an evidence of this longing and at the same time one preserves *lontar* writing and reading traditions. It is true that not all Balinese agree with this point, but *lontar* tradition cannot be said as a dead tradition; instead it still has its role and significance in modern Balinese life even though various new thoughts have reached in this land.

2.3 *Lontar*: textual and ritual traditions

Lontar tradition has been preserved through *nyastra* tradition, i.e. practice of reading, writing, discussing and implementing the ideas/principles/values found in *lontars*. According to the residence of a *guru* (spiritual master) becomes site of learning. It has been developed until the present day through a traditional lineage of teaching and learning (*parampard*) in which *guru* plays an important role. It is considered as the think-tank of Balinese culture. A person who likes *nyastra* activity is well familiar with the existence and message revealed in *lontar*. Brahmin and king in the past were used to have *nyastra* activity. It looked exclusive since only they have good access to *lontar* reading and writing activities. However, the stress seems to be put on religious and spiritual knowledge rather than on empirical one in which sense or they play their role.

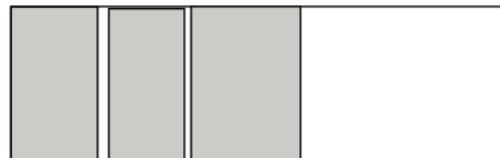


Further, there is interconnectedness between textual tradition and living Balinese tradition. It means that *lontar* is a living tradition: it is not only read, interpreted and copied in the course of history and culture but also new ones were created in the post-Majapahit period (15th. cen. A.D.). During the reign of king Waturenggong of Sweca-pura kingdom in Klungkung (16th cen. A.D.), Balinese literature grew and developed to its peak especially in the genre of *kidung*. A number of poet-sages created their works which we can read even today. This happens in the genre of *kakawin*, *kidung* (of poem) and *awig-awig de:ia pakranzan* (law of traditional village) (of prose). What is performed ritually or secularly is derived from *lontar*. Or, ritual is an expression of message found in *lontar*. There is no ritual performed which is devoid of *lontar* message, i.e. philosophical/theoretical foundation on which the building called "ritual" (*yajlia*) is erected. A person of *nvastric* in nature is the one who can read and interpret its message. In religious practices, common people follow what is said by religious leaders.

2.4 The relationship between philosophy and ritual performance

As per Balinese religion there is a triple principle to which everyone should look at when one acts either of religious or secular in nature. Understanding it will be helpful so that every act we attempted is efficient, effective and purposeful in life. And the most important is that when an act or ritual (*yajlia*) is performed based on metaphysical principle (*tattva*) as conveyed by *lontar*, it can be grouped into *sattvic vajlia*, otherwise it belongs to *rajasic* or *teimasic* ritual, which has less value or significance in life. When the last two rituals are performed the point is almost nothing because it is devoid of value and knowledge; it is just a ceremony which is spiritually baseless and meaningless. The greatness of a *vajna* (ritual) should not be viewed from its physical or empirical appearances, but from its purity and sincerity. Triple principles - as mentioned above - are metaphysics (*tattva*), ethics (*s'asanaliilaisuida*) and ritual (*vajila*). *Tattva* is the basis on which *s'asana* is observed and *yafria* is performed. When we accept that *lontar* as the store house of Balinese knowledge, we have to look from this angle. Consequently, we will be able to see the interconnectedness between metaphysics (*tattva*) which is contained in *lontar* and its counterpart in the form of observable ritual or actions.

An interesting point worth to mention in this juncture is philosophical foundation of *s'akti* (divine power) and its performative efficacy found in ritual. One practises rituals because one believes that one can acquire divine power (*iakti*) either directly or indirectly. As per Balinese tradition, when society is in trouble due to existence of some diseases, natural disaster and calamities etc, they will perform ritual either individually or in group. As ritual will cause; trigger power, all unhappiness, personal or social or natural problems, etc. in life both of human being and nature can be cured. It does not mean that modern way of life is excluded in Balinese life. Balinese adopt both ways, viz. spiritual and logical domains in life. It is better to incorporate both rather than demarcated and treated them individually.



Balinese Lontar-Philosophical Background and Ritual Performance-article-suamba

ORIGINALITY REPORT

0%

SIMILARITY INDEX

0%

INTERNET SOURCES

0%

PUBLICATIONS

0%

STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1

www.balisaja.com

Internet Source

<1%

Exclude quotes On

Exclude matches Off

Exclude bibliography On