

THE PEACEFUL MEANS OF TRI HITA KARANA IN BALINESE CULTURE

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Abstract

Bali Hindu culture consists of many philosophical branches that originated from teachings on peace. One set of teachings that undisputedly fits this criterion is *Tri Hita Karana* (*tri* three, *hita* happiness, *karana* causes) as it refers to three causes of happiness in life which involves *parahyangan* relations between humans and God, *pawongan* between fellow human beings, and *palemahan* between humans and nature. These three kinds of relations reflect the cosmology of Bali Hinduism which underlines the relations between the micro-cosmos with the macro-cosmos. In sum, human beings must seek balance between these three relations in their daily life to bring about peace in their lives. This article will try to capture the influence of the *Tri Hita Karana* philosophy of peace in Balinese culture by analyzing it based on concepts from peace studies and a cultural approach. In particular, concepts from peace studies developed by Johan Galtung aim to portray the fundamental causes of peace in human society such as the structural and cultural forms of violence in addition to the more traditional approach of direct or physical violence. A peace studies approach seeks to present a bigger picture in analyzing conflict by finding the root causes of conflict in a society from the values and beliefs practiced in people's daily lives. Conflict, thus, can be seen as a consequence of a disruption in people's values and beliefs. So, any disruption to *Tri Hita Karana* can be understood as an alarm for preventing conflicts in Bali.

Key words: *Tri Hita Karana*, peace, harmony, Balinese culture, conflict

A. Introduction

Tri Hita Karana is arguably one of the most influential Hindu philosophical branches that very fundamental for Balinese people. It underlies many aspects in the life of Balinese, from the daily lives, rituals, architectural, and even education in Bali. The practice of *Tri Hita Karana* is one of the main factors that shaping the uniqueness in Balinese culture, especially in creating the balance between human, God, and the nature.

The popularity of this concept is very high. Dik Roth and Gede Sedana's research show that, as per September 2014, they found 131.000 entries in Google that talking about it (Sedana, 2015, p. 158). Now, as per 23 February 2018 or about four years later, I already found 180.000 entries about *Tri Hita Karana*. On the other hand, Roth and Sedana also underline the popularity of this concept in the tourism sector with the awarding of *Tri Hita Karana Awards and Accreditation*. This award goes to spas, hotels, resorts, or other tourism services that considered meeting the criteria of sustainable tourism. *Tri Hita Karana Awards* have been awarded for 17 consecutive years with last year's participants reached 150 in which 116 of them were hotels that already practicing *Tri Hita Karana*.

Tri Hita Karana is one of the basic philosophical backgrounds behind Ajeg Bali program in Bali. Ajeg Bali is a terms that popularized by Bali Post Media Group in Bali especially after the calamity of Bali Bombing 2002. It is believed that the suffering of Bali Bombing 2002 happened because “the Balinese had forgotten themselves and had abandoned their true nature, due to the physical and spiritual exploitation caused by tourism. This exploitation in turn was identified as the main cause of the economic crisis that Bali was facing, particularly after the bombings” (Palermo, 2005, p. 243).

Facing with the calamity and desperation of Bali Bombing 2002, Balinese people sought to bring back the peaceful condition of their land. The solution lies on the teachings of Hindu as a majority religion in Bali which crystallized in the terms of “Ajeg Bali”. “Ajeg Bali” sought to bring back the balance in Balinese people’s life that destroyed by bomb and also the negative effect of tourism. In the search of “balance”, Balinese people—promoted by the government and the media especially Bali Post group—found that Tri Hita Karana would be the best solution for their problems. In sum, the “Ajeg Bali” campaign is the one who brought the significance and needs for Tri Hita Karana concept as a spiritual guidance to bring back peace in Bali.

The history of Tri Hita Karana itself originated before the terms “Ajeg Bali” coined. It is first introduced in Konferensi Daerah I Badan Perjuangan Umat Hindu Bali that been held in Perguruan Dwijendra Denpasar. This event took place on 11 November 1966. Roth and Sedana argued that Tri Hita Karana is originated from the philosophy of an organization called Prajaniti Hindu Indonesia back in 1960s (Sedana, 2015, p. 164).

This paper will try to look at the philosophy of Tri Hita Karana in influencing Balinese people’s life. Tri Hita Karana urges Balinese people to live peacefully and creating a harmony with their neighborhood. This paper will approach the philosophy of Tri Hita Karana with peace studies perspective. The peace theory will seek a bigger picture in analyzing conflict by finding the root causes of conflict in the society from the value and beliefs which they practiced in daily life.

B. The Philosophy of Tri Hita Karana.

“Tri Hita Karana” consisting of 3 words = “Tri” (three), “Hita” (happiness/welfare), and “Karana” (causes) hence it means “three causes of happiness”. This teaching believe that human can pursue their happiness through three harmonious ways: harmony with God (Parahyangan), harmony with fellow human (Pawongan) and harmony with nature (Palemahan). The key to seek happiness through Tri Hita Karana is a balanced relation within these three spheres.

The concept of Tri Hita Karana originated from Bhagavadgita III.10 (Mantra, 1981, p. 42):

“In the past, when Prajapati created human with Yadnya and said; with Yadnya, you will rise and will be the Kamadhuk [Dewa Indra’s holy cow that can fulfill any desires] of your desire”

From this Sloka, we can find two main elements of Tri Hita Karana: Prajapati (God) and Praja (human). The core of the Tri Hita Karana lies in three aspects: anthropocentrism ethics (human-based), ecosentrism ethics (nature-based), and teopocentrism ethics. The ethics thus leads human being to one word: self-restraint. Balinese people always told not to become a greed man (Lobha) because it will automatically trigger many conflict. If someone acting greed within its community, they tend to overtake what is not his/her rights and undoubtedly inviting negative respons from those whose rights being taken. Same goes in human relations with God and nature. If someone acting greed and exploiting nature beyond the limits, it will result in disaster. On the other hand, human must realize their vertical relation with God, as human

is a “lesser” entity below the Parahyangan.

Tri Hita Karana underlines the “balance” in lives of the Human. The main question is: how will people place themselves in between the “World” (macrocosm – mother natures, the neighbourhood and God itself) and “world” (microcosm/his and her existence as human). The balance between these factors will lead human into the condition of moksartham jagadhita ya caiti dharma or the holistical happiness both from spiritual and material side of the human beings.

The relation with God creates the Parahyangan or spiritual relations between Creators and creation. The Parahyangan (Hyang = God) contains a horizontal relation in which humans must show their “Bhakti” (willingness to obey) to the God. Parahyangan also become the foundation of Hindu’s rituals which function as a symbol of their obedience towards Creators.

Pawongan (Wong = human) originated from the philosophy of Tat Twam Asi which literally means “I Am You”. This teaching taught that all human beings were equally same so that men must treat others like how they want to be treated or. In sum, Tat Twam Asi means “humanizing human”. The relation with neighborhood creates Pawongan or social relations between fellow human beings. The Pawongan later can be practiced by conducting Tri Kaya Parisudha or “three good habit” which consist of Manacika (thinking good), Wacika (talking good), and Kayika (acting good).

Lastly, the relation between human and environment creates Palemahan (Lemah = soil) or ecological relations between men and natures. Balinese people often describing the relations between human and nature with the saying of “sekadi manik ring cecupu” (like baby in the womb of mother). Hindu teachings describe nature as “Mother” who gives birth to life (Sukadi, Februari 2007). On the other hand, Nature also supporting human with their daily needs to survive in this world, just like a mother raised her child.

Tri Hita Karana underlines the importance of respect between human and Creators, nature, and fellow human beings. Human cannot live without the role of these three relations as a life-supporting system. These three parts cannot be taken for granted, as human survival will be decided from it. The late Ida Pedanda Made Gunung—one of the most prominent Hindu priest in Bali—elaborated that Tri Hita Karana will result in three ideal relations: relation with God creates bhakti (respect); relations with human create tresna (love); relations with nature create asih (compassion). All of them should be considered as integral and must be fulfilled as one.

Tri Hita Karana also related with the concept of “Cakra Yadnya” from the Bhagavadgita III. 16:

“Those who are not join spinning the Wheels [Cakra] of Yadnya, in reciprocal, is considered evil in their nature, satisfy with just his sense [Indria], and, O Arjuna, will live in vain” (Mantra, 1981, p. 44)

This quotes emphasize that Nature has already sacrificed itself for the human. In sum, it creates ‘debt’ between human and Nature/God itself that only can be paid with “Yadnya” (unconditional sacrifice). Those who do not pay their debts can be described as sinful.

The concept of Tri Hita Karana later crystallized in several practices in Balinese people life. For example, the rituals and offerings in Balinese holiday is a practice of Parahyangan. Balinese people show their bhakti to Ida Sang Hyang Widhi and Gods through upacara, banten, and piodalan. When they prepare the rituals, Balinese people take it as a community works through ngayah and gotong-royong as a reflection of Pawongan philosophy. The conducts of

Parahyangan thus strengthen the social bond in Pawongan.

The Pawongan practice lies when Balinese people becoming member of desa pekraman in their neighborhood. Desa pekraman is not just a legal-formal body, but also a cultural and spiritual entity. Pawongan based on a custom law called awig-awig which functioned as a protector (pamikukuh) of traditional and moral values in desa adat. Awig-awig is a foundation of not just social relations, but also spiritual relations with God and ecological relations with nature. In the context of Pawongan, the social relations in desa pekraman can be seen in the practices of suka-duka and concept of Menyama Braya (all men are brothers).

Lastly, we can find the concept of Palemahan in Subak or Balinese traditional irrigation system. Subak system seeks to balance between the human needs to maximizing the soil and water to support the farming system, and the sustainability of both. Farming sector is a basic for economic sector in Bali (beside the tourism). Moreover, Palemahan also reflected in the practice of Tumpek Uduh—a Balinese holiday to respect the plant—and Tumpek Kandang—a Balinese holiday to respect the animals.

Tri Hita Karana reflecting the commitment of Balinese people to create the harmony between all existences that surrounds them. I Wayan Sukarma then concluded that (Sukarma, 2016, p.86):

If the welfare becomes a society ideal, therefore, every an individual obligates to attempt it. The first effort is to create harmony by order realizing, regulation, harmony, and social balance. Therefore, when the tri hita karana describes a harmony to the fellow human beings, nature, and God is really the force, command, and moral exhortation. Remembering the social harmony cannot be created without certain rules and moral firmness of control mechanisms. The rules and moral control are what guarantees an individual freedom in the societies. a freedom is given the opportunity to participate to the more creative, productive, and responsible for the welfare and happiness. In this context, Tri Hita Karana is unlike the basic and moral Hinduism doctrine become an important and relevant discussion to the Hindus needs, either now or later.

C. Tri Hita Karana and Peace Concepts

In this section, I will try to elaborate the concept of Tri Hita Karana in terms of its peaceful means. I will use the peace studies approach to seek the correlation between Tri Hita Karana—as part of traditional values—with peace studies approach that represent the Western values. I will not try to compare which concept is better. Rather, I will show that both concepts can complete each other since the complexity of peace problems requires the holistic approach.

C.1 The "Cultural" Side of Peace and Conflict in Bali

The first approach in peace studies stemmed from liberal perspective or known as "Liberal Peace". The Liberal Peace which 'assumes the threefold transformation to peace, democracy and market economy is a self-strengthening process leading to sustainable development' (Kurtenbach 2007: 6) and presumes that 'democratisation and market liberalisation are themselves sources of peace' (Sriram 2007: 579). The liberal peace approach has its own critics: it is too depends on material side of human. Liberal peace thinkers are too relying on the fulfillment of economic needs, political rights, law-based justice, and democratic procedures

as precondition to peace. On the other hand, they are heavily misconceived the influence of culture and values in creating the situation of peace. Birgit Brauchler concluded that :

Both liberal peace and the reconciliation toolkit usually go together with Western notions of concepts such as justice, truth, democracy, or peace that may fundamentally differ from cultural values and worldviews in other regions.

In the region who still regards cultural influence highly like Indonesia, especially Bali, it will be a great mistake if we are not admitting the role of culture and traditional values in maintaining peace. In her research about Balinese reconciliation after Bali Bombing 2002, Birgit Brauchler underlines the importance to broaden the definition of reconciliation from the human-based and material/tangible realms of conflict, but also giving an understanding about cosmological and religious beliefs that prevalent in the area that shaping the perceptions of people about conflict, peace, and reconciliation. He added that :

In the Balinese context, it was not an allegedly global ethos, but rather local (religious) perceptions of conflict and peace that contributed to the re-establishment of harmony and thus fostered 'reconciliation'.

Brauchler emphasized that Balinese traditional values and Hinduism had a great contribution for maintained peaceful condition in Bali after the Bali Bombing 2002. When Balinese people confronted with the misery and calamity of Bali Bombing 2002, they were not trapped in violent circle through blaming the Moslem minority for the bomb. Balinese people chose to perceive that the Bali Bombing 2002 was a warning from God because the balance in Bali's spiritual cosmology had disturbed. The disturbance came from the negative aspect of tourism that brought greed to Balinese people.

Balinese people interpreted the Bali Bombing 2002 not as a war between "Good" versus "Evil" (such as the discourse of "war on terror" that brought by US President George W. Bush) but it is a path for Balinese cosmology to bring back its balance. On the other hand, Balinese people admitted that they were not just the "victim" and the Moslem bombers were the "perpetrator", rather they perceived that they also responsible for the bomb itself, especially in the spiritual/transcendental dimension. In sum, Annette Hornbacher concluded that :

This interpretation of human conflict, not solely in moral terms but in the context of a cosmic power play, has far reaching consequences for the Balinese idea of individual responsibility; from this follows that for the restoration of balance, not only the perpetrator but also the victim has to take responsibility, because he is also perceived as an active part of a disturbed balance and can prove his agency only by strengthening his constructive power and so by overcoming his role as a victim.

C.2 Tri Hita Karana and the Needs of Self-Restraint

From the case above, we can conclude that Balinese belief about peace and Western perspectives have a difference. Western perspective tends to divide peace into two levels: individual means ("inner peace") and societal means ("social/structural peace). Moreover, Balinese perspective adds one more dimension: the cosmological level or also known as Niskala. Niskala is a transcendental evel which completed the individual and societal means that belonged to the material world or Sekala. However, the balances between the Sekala and Niskala can be found in the philosophy of Tri Hita Karana. Tri Hita Karana includes both the individual and societal (Pawongan) meanwhile also admits the cosmological dimensions

(Palemahan and Parahyangan).

Aside from the differences of Balinese and Western perspectives towards peace, both of it shares a common belief: peace and conflict is not antagonistic. Balinese and Western perspectives shares the same thought that conflict cannot totally disappear from human life. The Balinese view of conflict has already been described in the section above. However, the Western philosophy of peace also reach same conclusion. Conflict is a natural side that inherent in the life of human beings. Related to that thought, Charles Webel concluded that (Galtung C. W., 2007, p. 8):

The antithesis of peace is not conflict. Conflicts appear historically inevitable and may be socially desirable if they result in personal and/or political progress. Conflicts may, perhaps paradoxically, promote and increase peace and diminish violence if the conflicting parties negotiate in good faith to reach solutions to problems that are achievable and tolerable, if not ideal.

From the explanation above, we can conclude that conflict has its own functioned. It may be bitter to have conflict, but it can open the grievances that one's hold beforehand. Conflict can trigger the latent interest that usually cannot be traced. However, clearly, conflict must be resolved. Once the conflict is resolved, peace may be prevails but another conflict may be arises even the same conflicts may be occurring again. Conflict and peace are part of circular continuum in human's life. In sum, we can say that peace is dialectical: something that is not static but dynamic.

The question then: what is peace? Does peace similar to happiness? Charles Webel argued that peace may identical with happiness in a sense of something that every human and community seeks but also seems far to be reached. He continued that (Galtung C. W., 2007, p. 5-6):

Perhaps 'peace' is like 'happiness', 'justice', 'health' and other human ideals, something every

Person and culture claims to desire and venerate, but which few if any achieve, at least on an enduring basis. Why are peace, justice and happiness so desirable, but also so intangible and elusive? But perhaps peace is different from happiness, since it seems to require social harmony and political enfranchisement, whereas happiness appears, at least in Western culture, to be largely an individual matter.

Peace also can be seen as precondition for the emotional condition. Moreover, this emotional condition tends to challenge by cognitive disruptions or aggressive eruptions. Peace may resemble happiness in our terms. It will be implicit in our psychological sense and also intermittently prevailed in the social behavior and cultural norms of men. Webel argued that (Galtung C. W., 2007, p. 6):

Eros and aggression, love and hate, are intermingled from birth to burial. Understanding and pacifying our conflicted inner worlds – our need for and flight from love of ourselves and others – is an intellectual and political project of the highest and most urgent order. This undertaking must run in tandem with the necessity of comprehending and transforming the conflicts rampant in our interpersonal and political realms of interaction and division.

The attitude towards conflict is the main factor behind peace condition. Moreover, the attitude towards conflict resides within two layers: the "inner peace" and "outer peace". The psychological backgrounds of a man—the "inner peace"—differs from each of person. It depends on the psychological factors, characters, and habit. On the other hand, the "outer peace" related to

the norms and values that influencing the human itself. The norms and values itself would internalized into human then shaped their psychological backgrounds.

The “inner peace” and “outer peace” will connect each other. Even the most stable people will find difficulties in keeping him/herself psychologically stable because it will depend on the environment. The environment—especially social environment—can be pathogenic. The social relations of human could suppress the existence of men for the sake of maintaining obedience and order. The outer peace then eroded the inner peace. On the other hand, if human perceived the inner peace with following their ego, it can also erode the outer peace.

Tri Hita Karana seeks to deal with the problem above. Human ego—the sources of conflict and violence—must be suppressed via “self-restraint”. We can learn the importance of “self-restraint” in facing our ego from one of the most famous quote from Mahatma Gandhi: “Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s needs, but not every man’s greed.” Human must realize that ego can have a negative impact to their belonging and to their surroundings. However, other people and other Earth’s inhabitants also have the same rights for peace. If human realize that their greed may ‘consume’ other’s rights to live in peace, and then they must suppress it. Harmony is the key to the peaceful condition, and “self-restraint” is the keyhole for entering the peaceful condition.

D. Tri Hita Karana in Practice

The peaceful means of Tri Hita Karana cannot be fulfilled by just emphasizing the spiritual aspects through philosophical approach. It must be practiced concretely in the forms of rule and social norms. The harmony of social life cannot prevail without something that functioned as a control mechanism. Thus, a society needs rules and moral-based social control that can ensure individual freedom. Moral firmness should be the solution for this problem as a “gate” to invite the creativity, productivity, and responsibility from members of society to contribute their role for the sake of welfare and happiness of the society itself.

To fulfill the aims that mentioned above, Balinese people made the system of awig-awig and desa pekraman. Both of these rules shall be the protector (pamikukuh) and also “motivator” for the Tri Hita Karana. Desa Pekraman also functioned as the source of happiness and welfare (kasukertan) in the Balinese society. Wayan Sukarma underlined that (Sukarma, 2016, p. 86):

Its influence, in fact, is a real that illustrated on desa pakraman as a norms and values system that are shared to behavior guidance. Instead, the tri hita karana is a torso of awig-awig desa pakraman, rules and/or customary law binding religious social behavior in order to realize sukerta tata parhyangan, pawongan, and palemahan. Desa pakraman is a village for Hindus, i.e. the place for obtaining kasukertan (welfare).

Desa pekraman, awig-awig, and pararem (Balinese traditional regulation) mostly centered in the Pawongan since it arranges the relations between fellow members of the village or banjar. However, those three rules also contain the Parahyangan and Palemahan as a unity of Tri Hita Karana. The human sphere (Pawongan) always needs a support from the external sphere especially transcendental sphere (Parahyangan) and environmental sphere (Palemahan) to create the harmonious relations. The harmonious relations thus can be the source of welfare and happiness.

Desa Pekraman and awig-awig biggest role is creating the life-networking among the members

of society. The Balinese culture perceived human more of a social being than individual ones. It means that Balinese people are never alone, lonely, or secluded from the society, except if they breaking the custom law or criminal law. The rule binds Balinese people through obedience of a nature law/Palemahan, morality law/Pawongan, and the holiness of divine law/Parahyangan. Sukarma concluded that "...Through the three law types, the humans are forced to admit those laws and encouraged states freedom to determine the quality for their responsibilities. In order to achieve a freedom and responsibility, it is a core for all moral restraint".

The relations between human and Tri Hita Karana later be defined in the concept of dharma and karma. Dharma can be defined by "good conduct" and the definition of karma can be perceived as "the fruit of your deeds". If humans conduct good deeds, they will meet a good result. On the other hand, if they behave bad then the worst deeds will prevail. The concept of Dharma in Tri Hita Karana brings three dimensions: dharma palemahan, dharma pawongan, and dharma parahyangan.

Dharma palemahan means that human must follow the natural law. The Natural law is very strict and cannot be avoided since nature is coercive and have a bigger presence than human. This is what Hinduism call by Hukum Rta. The natural law consists of life, death, aging, to water movement, volcano eruption, and so on. Human cannot do anything to avoid it, so human must realizing their position and adapt with it (mawas diri). However, human can also exploited the nature with their greed. This condition thus resulted in disaster that endangered the human itself. It is not like the Nature is "anger" or "evil" that can seek revenge to human, but Nature has its own balance. If the intrusion of human's greed disturb this balance, then Nature will restore its balance through her way. Human thus can get the negative impact of this "re-balances" of Nature. To deal with this situation, human need to develop their "self-restraint" to stop their destructive greed.

Dharma pawongan based on the ideal behavior towards other human. It is called the moral imperative between the human relationships which dharma will be the obligation of good virtue. Dharma pawongan based on Tri Kaya Parisudha which involved right thinking (Manacika), right talking (Wacika) and good action (Kayika). Tri Kaya Parisudha also underlines the importance of "self-restraint" that includes (Sukarma, 2016, p.92):

First, the act of the mind, included (1) do not action, (2) not angry to all beings, and (3) believing in karmaphala law. Second, the act of speech included (1) not speak rudely, (2) not say a bad thing, (3) not say defamation, and (4) not tell a lie. Third, the body acts, included (1) not to kill, (2) not to steal, and (3) no indulgence a lust sex of fornicate.

Lastly, Dharma Parahyangan covers the transcendental side of human's life, especially the sincerity of God. If human have a sincere love towards God, they will surrender themselves to God's willing and act as their nature of God's creation. Parahyangan is a concretization of moral Hindu doctrine that arranges a human behavior in relation to the God of rituals and other religious ceremonies. The centre of Dharma Parahyangan lies on the concept of Bhakti :

Bhakti is central of moral doctrine, namely self-control that is needed to regulate a moral behavior. A behavior based on bhakti too far from selfish desires and violating moral commands and prohibitions. For instance, do not violate the God prohibits, i.e. "may not steal" or "may not do a violence" means has been done based on the bhakti principles

E. Conclusion

Tri Hita Karana covers a comprehensive and holistic approach in dealing with peace problems in Bali. It tackles not only the material or ideational side of peace, but also the transcendental and cosmological one. Tri Hita Karana seeks to portray Balinese people fully, not just from the perspective of individual and social, but also ecological and cosmological. Peaceful condition of human is not only depends on material, social, or psychological, but also the spiritual one. In sum, Tri Hita Karana seeks to “humanizing human” by putting them as a part of something bigger entity: the universe itself.

By humanizing human, we can avoid one of the main causes of conflict and violence: dehumanizing other. If human were being dehumanized or stripped from their rights-dignity-respect, they will fight back. Tri Hita Karana perspective can be solution to deal with this problem. On the other hand, Tri Hita Karana also can be guidelines in dealing with conflict in Bali, or even in the world. We can trace the roots of conflict within the Tri Hita Karana. The rise of conflict can be traced back as the disruption in the balance of Tri Hita Karana. In sum, Tri Hita Karana can complete the Western peace approach through its holistic view.

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