

From *Agama Hindu Bali* to *Agama Hindu*: Two styles of argumentation

Michel Picard

In this paper, I attempt to compare two different styles of argumentation, composed by Balinese at pivotal turning points of their religious identity: the first one in the 1920s, when Balinese intellectuals were starting to explicitly assess the foundations of their identity; the second in the 1960s, after the Balinese leaders had succeeded in having their religion officially recognized by the Indonesian Ministry of Religions, under the condition that it would no longer be exclusively theirs.

***Bali Adnjana* (1924-1930) and *Surya Kanta* (1925-1927)**

The incorporation of Bali into the Dutch East Indies prompted the formation of a Balinese intelligentsia, since the colonial administration needed Dutch-educated natives to mediate between the local population and their foreign masters. The upheaval caused by the colonial occupation of their island compelled these educated Balinese to engage in a process of self-identification.

It was in the cosmopolitan town of Singaraja, the administrative centre of the Residency of Bali and Lombok, that the first generation of Balinese educated in colonial schools (*kaum terpelajar*) founded Western-style organizations and started publishing periodicals which were innovative in both content and form. Devoted chiefly to issues pertaining to socio-religious issues, these publications were written not in Balinese but in Malay, the language of modernity and learning. Thus, the same process which compelled the Balinese to question their identity dispossessed them of their own words, by inducing them to think about themselves in a language that was not their own. Such a linguistic substitution marked a reflexive distancing from the Balinese universe of reference, which was decontextualized, relativized, and homogenized in the process.

The first of these modern organisations, *Setiti Bali*, was founded in 1917 by I Goesti Bagoes Tjakra Tanaja, the *punggawa* of Sukasada, to counter the Javanese Islamic association *Sarekat Islam*, which had recently opened a branch in Singaraja. It lasted until 1920 and was succeeded the following year by a short-lived association called *Soeita Gama Tirta*, founded by I Ktoet Nasa, the principal of the primary school in Bubunan, and presided by I Goesti Poetoe Djlantik, a descendant of the *raja* of Buleleng. In 1923, members of a cooperative society founded the *Santi* association under the leadership of Poetoe Djlantik, Tjakra Tanaja and Ktoet Nasa. In January 1924, they started a publication called *Santi Adnjana*.

All these organisations had been opened to *triwangsa* and *jaba* alike, but tension appears to have been rife between the two groups, the *jaba* objecting to various privileges claimed by the *triwangsa*. A conflict soon opposed the leaders of each faction, Tjakra Tanaja and Ktoet Nasa, and sometime in 1924 the publication of *Santi Adnjana* was taken over by Tjakra Tanaja, who changed its title to *Bali Adnjana*. The conflict escalated until a split between *jaba* and *triwangsa* grew inevitable. This happened through an argument over the Balinese religion during a meeting of the members of *Santi* in May 1925. In October 1925, Ktoet Nasa started publishing his own periodical, *Surya Kanta*, and the following month he established an eponymous association whose membership was restricted to the *jaba*. Meanwhile, the membership of *Santi* was dwindling, as most of the *jaba* were joining *Surya Kanta*. In July 1926, *Santi* held its last meeting and it appeared to cease its activities by the end of the year. The situation became even more confused after May 1926, with the

foundation in Klungkung of an organisation named *Tjatoer Wangsa Derja Gama Hindoe Bali* (shortened in *Tjwadega Hindoe Bali*). Professing to reconcile the interests of all “four castes” (*catur wangsa*), this new association was in fact controlled by *triwangsa* and used *Bali Adnjana* as its mouthpiece.

In both *Bali Adnjana* and *Surya Kanta*, the Balinese authors construed their identity – which they called *Kebalian* – as being based on *agama* and on *adat*¹. But whereas the *triwangsa* were determined to strengthen both tradition and religion, the *jaba* wanted to reform *agama* while ridding *adat* of all the customs they deemed obsolete. In effect, for the former, Balinese religion was based on the customary social order, within which *agama* was inseparable from *adat*. Whereas for the latter, religion could and should be dissociated from a traditional order seen not only as unfair but also as an obstacle to progress. Yet, they proved unable to differentiate between that which belongs to *agama* and that which pertains to *adat*.

This inability to dissociate *agama* from *adat* did not stem solely from the polysemy of these terms, whose respective semantic fields overlap², but also from the fact that up to that point the Balinese had yet to single out and distinguish a system of beliefs and practices that could be demarcated from other aspects of their life and labelled “religion”. Hence the confusion of the Balinese faced with having to name their religion, once they had adopted the word *agama* for that purpose. At first, it appears that they referred to their religion simply as *agama Bali*. Afterward, Balinese started using a variety of names for their religion, such as *Siwa*, *Buda*, *Siwa-Buda*, and *Tirta*.

In May 1925, a dispute erupted between commoners and the nobility over the name of the Balinese religion. The *triwangsa* proposed to call their religion *Agama Hindu Bali*, stressing the fact that the Balinese people had appropriated and reinterpreted *Agama Hindu*³ to such an extent that it had become indigenous to their island. In this way, they were clearly trying to preserve the established socio-religious order, by endorsing the religion actually practised by the Balinese. Whereas in defending the name *Agama Bali Hindu*, the *jaba* claimed that the Balinese were truly Hindus, even if their religious practices were corrupt, owing to their ignorance of the true nature of their religion. Consequently, in order to become the true Hindus they were supposed to be, the Balinese should discard all indigenous accretions that contaminated their religious practices. Hence the *triwangsa* accused the *jaba* of attempting to promote a form of Hinduism similar to that found in India. This, they claimed, amounted to inventing a new religion, which was alien to the Balinese, because their religion originated not in India but in Majapahit Java.

This issue was to remain pending until Indonesia’s independence.

It was not only in their views regarding the Balinese religion that *jaba* and *triwangsa* diverged but also in the ways they argue their respective points. Whereas the positions expressed in *Surya Kanta* are quite straightforward, those in *Bali Adnjana* tend to be couched in rather allusive and elusive terms. Indeed, the general tenor of each publication is fairly contrasted and the *jaba*’s use of Malay reminds one of the roughness of lower Balinese, while the *triwangsa*’s evokes the literary verbosity of high Balinese. Such a contrast is particularly noticeable in Tjakra Tanaja’s use of pseudo-dialogues as rhetorical devices.

The sentence opening the first issue of *Surya Kanta* makes clear Ktoet Nasa’s purpose: “*Bahwa maksud kami mengeluarkan surat kabar ini, ialah hendak memimpin bangsa Bali*

¹ See the paper I presented last year for a brief outline of the genealogy of these categories.

² Indeed, in Balinese-Indonesian dictionaries, *agama* is translated as (1) *agama*, (2) *hukum*, and (3) *adat*.

³ Admittedly, we don’t know when Balinese actually chose to label their own *agama* as *Hindu*. But we do know that long before they began defining themselves as *Hindu*, the Balinese had already been “Hinduized” by Orientalists, at a time when they had yet to learn the word “Hindu”.

yang terbilang 'gelap' budinya dan jauh kebelakang tentang kemajuan hidup didunia ini” (Surya Kanta 1925, n°1: 1). The Balinese people are still in the dark (*kegelapan*) and the reforms advocated by *Surya Kanta* will bring them enlightenment and guide them toward a brighter future, characterized by knowledge (*pengetahuan*) and progress (*kemajuan*) – a subliminal message already conveyed by the title of the magazine. The significance of progress for Ktoet Nasa is explained in the article immediately following his statement of intention: “Adapun ‘Kemajuan’ artinya bertambah-tambah sempurna, dan suatu bangsa dikatakan ‘berkemajuan’, apabila bangsa itu bertambah-tambah sempurna dalam segala sifat kemanusiaan, yaitu segala sifat yang membedakan manusia dari pada hewan” (Surya Kanta 1925, n°1: 1).

The reforms stipulated in order for the Balinese people to see the light of progress are spelled out in a concise manner in the statutes of that organization, published in the second issue of *Surya Kanta*: a) to foster reason and character (*mengutamakan budi*); b) to improve the economy (*memperbaiki ekonomie*); c) to improve and protect the fate of the commoners (*memperbaiki dan melindungi nasib kaum Jaba*); d) to change the customs that are contrary to the progress of the times (*mengubah adat yang berlawanan dengan kemajuan jaman*) (Surya Kanta 1925, n°2: 16).

The means to these ends is Western-style education (*pendidikan cara Barat*), which is deemed to be the foundation of progress (*pangkal kemajuan*). The Balinese are summoned to move forward and advance themselves (*memajukan diri*), failing which they will be left behind (*ketinggalan zaman*). Once properly educated, the Balinese will be in a better position to improve their economic situation, which has been deteriorating lately.

Education is expected to enlighten the Balinese people, by supplying them with both “intelligence” (*kepandaian*) and “reason” (*budi*). Thanks to these qualities, the Balinese will then know how to discriminate among their customs between those which they should conserve or invigorate and those which they should reform or abandon, in accordance with the “progress of the world” (*kemajuan dunia*). For whoever keeps defending the customs which are no longer suitable for the present time is guilty of hampering the progress of one’s people: “Barang siapa yang masih membela adat yang tiada dikehendaki lagi oleh zaman, maka orang yang demikian adalah sebagai mengurung jiwa bangsanya didalam peti besi atau menghalangi kemajuan bangsanya” (Surya Kanta 1926, n°2: 24).

In Bali, the main obstacle to progress is “caste” (*kasta*) prejudice and the privileges which the *triwangsa* enjoy in such areas as language, etiquette, marriage, corvee labour, and so on. This is no longer acceptable for the *jaba*, who demand for themselves the same station in life and society as the *triwangsa* – “solidarity and equality” (*sama rata sama rasa*)⁴. In effect, by pursuing education, the *jaba* will raise their social status and in consequence they will be paid due respect by the *triwangsa*: “Haruslah kaum JABA itu BERKEPANDAIAAN dan BERBUDHI, sebab [...] kalau ada seorang JABA yang berkepandaian atau berpangkat agak tinggi ia berbudi serta mengerti pada kemajuan dan tahu ‘TATALOKACARA’ menurut zaman, maka dapatlah orang JABA berkehormatan dari kaum TRIWANGSA, artinya: tidaklah direndahkan lagi” (Surya Kanta 1926, n°1: 9-10).

This is to say that status in Balinese society should no longer be ascribed but achieved: it should stem from merit and not from birth. This, claimed *Surya Kanta*, concurs with the teachings found in Balinese *lontar* (such as the *Sarasamuscaya*) as well as in the sacred books of India (particularly the *Bhagawadgita*), which state that a true *Brahmana* is not someone who is born into a *Brahmana* family (*Brahmana-turunan*), but someone who lives up to

⁴ This slogan was coined in 1917 by the Javanese journalist Mas Marco Kartodikromo, publisher of *Doenia Bergerak*, and later popularized by both Sukarno and the communists (Shiraishi 1990: 88-90).

Brahmana ideals (Brahmana-budi): “Meskipun Brahmana (turunan) sekalipun, kalau ia tiada menepati sesana (darma), tiadalah patut dihormati, dan walaupun Sudra (turunan) kalau ia menjalankan darmanya, tertib sopan santun, puji dan hormatilah ia, kata Sanghyang Aji [...] Perjalanan atau sesana Brahmana itu dapat sempurna dilakukan oleh segala orang yang sanggup melakukannya, misalnya oleh orang yang berkependaian dan budiman (bangsawan-fikiran) karena itulah sesana yang terutama [...] dari kaum Jaba pun tidak ada halangannya medwijati, asal beliau sanggup melakukan kewajibannya kelak” (Surya Kanta 1925, n°1: 5).

Now, let's consider the way Tjakra Tanaja reacted to such a frontal attack on the *triwangsa's* prerogatives. He made his views known in the issue of *Bali Adnjana* published immediately after the launching of *Surya Kanta* in October 1925. Without ever mentioning *Surya Kanta*, he imparted his forceful opinion regarding status within Balinese society by driving home that being a *Brahmana* or a *Sudra* has nothing to do with *budi* but everything with *asal usul turunannya*: “*Pada bangsa BALI HINDU adalah pada LAHIRNYA PERTINGKATAN kebangsaan atau KAWONGAN (ingat Tuan! bukan BUDI lo’), yang diteguhkan atau ditetapkan oleh asal usul turunannya [...] Menjadi BRAHMANA, SATRYA, WESYA dan SUDRA itu adalah nama KAWONGANNYA dan sekali kali bukan BUDINYA, artinya IDA BAGUS KANGIN belum tentu lebih BUDINYA dari pada KTUT KELOD tetapi KAWONGANNYA nyatalah sudah KELEBIHANNYA*” (Bali Adnjana 1925, n°29: 2).

Upon which, he declared his intentions (*tujuan*) as (1) reconciling the Balinese people (*perdamaian*), (2) strengthening the religion (*keteguhan berlakunya Agama*), (3) changing its outdated customs (*perubahan adat yang sudah kurang baik pada jaman ini*), and (4) eliminating the oppression of insolent people (*menghapuskan tinasannya si angkara murka*) (Bali Adnjana 1925, n°29: 2). So far, so good, in the sense that whenever he wants to, Tjakra Tanaja proves able to argue his point quite explicitly. But then, rather curiously, he concluded his plea by stating: “*Bukti bukti maksud saya sebagai berikut:*”, followed by “*Percakapan A dan B*”, a recurrent rhetorical device of his, where we encounter the very first mention of *Surya Kanta*.

In this pseudo-conversation between Tjakra Tanaja (A) and his imaginary interlocutor (B), A explains to B that he recently met a friend of his from Lombok, who asked him: “*Hai, A, bagaimanakah kabarnya perkumpulan SURYA KANTA di Buleleng, apa sudah banyakkah ledennya?*”. In response to which he pretended to know nothing about it⁵: “*Mendengar pertanyaan itu, akupun terkejut hingga tercengang sebab di Buleleng aku belum sekali pernah mendengar perkataan SURYA KANTA, dan akupun lantas menjawab dengan sebenarnya mengatakan bahasa di Buleleng belum ada terdengar perkumpulan semacam itu*”. His disclaimer was met with disbelief by his friend: “*Ach, A, kamu jangan sembunyi akan hal itu sebab tahu sama tahu. Pendeknya sekarang aku kasih tahu padamu yang disini sekarang sudah berdiri cabang perkumpulan SURYA KANTA [...] Mustahil sekali kalau kamu bilang tidak tahu dan sedikit hari lagi akan mengeluarkan Maanblad (surat kabar bulanan) dan namanyapun SURYA KANTA*”.

At this point, B asked A whether he inquired about the aims of this new association. To which A replied with scathing sarcasm: “*Aku ya tanya, tetapi rupanya sobat ku tidak mau menerangkan sama sekali, cuma katanya akan mengembangkan pengajaran mencapai kesempurnaan budi supaya lantas bisa mempunyai perasaan sama rata sama rasa pada sekalian manusia yang juga sama saja keadannya sebelum berbudi. Apabila dikemudian hari jika sudah berbudi disitulah akan ditentukan derajatnya artinya jikalau orang bisa*

⁵ This form of denial, for implausible it may appear, happens to be still a common manoeuvre among Balinese politicians, witness the attitude of the Governor of Bali, Made Mangku Pastika who, when asked in July 2013 by a Balinese legislator about the proposed reclamation project in Benoa Bay, initially claimed no knowledge of the matter, even though he had signed a letter of recommendation on December 2012 in support of that very project.

melakukan dharma nya atau Sesana Brahmana haruslah mendapat pujian dan kehormatan sebagai Brahmana walaupun itu orang berasal bangsa Sudra sekalipun. Sebaliknya meskipun bangsa Brahmana sekalipun jikalau tidak berbudi, sama saja dengan Sudra". To which B added in connivance: "*Wah kalau begitu jadinya umpama ada orang nama Pan Dama dan lantas bisa melakukan dharma nya atau Sesananya Brahmana lantas saja musti diberi kehormatan dan pujian secara seorang Ida Bagus Kaler yang juga sudah melakukan dharma nya yaitu menjadi Ida Padanda Dama. Apa memang begitulah tujuannya?*". That a *jaba* could pretend to become a *padanda* was plainly inadmissible for a *triwangsa*. Hence A's reply: "*Waaah B, kalau aku ingat ingat itu kabar lantas bulu kalongku berdiri, sebab bagaimanakah akan perasaannya kaum Triwangsa apabila benar begitu tujuannya itu perkumpulan?*".

In the ensuing issue of *Bali Adnjana*, Tjakra Tanaja inserted a brief – but considerate – acknowledgement of *Surya Kanta*, even going so far as wishing its leaders every success for their initiative, which he claimed to support: "*SURYA KANTA. Begitulah nama SURAT KABAR BULANAN yang mengunjungi kantor Redactie Bali Adnjana. Terlebih dahulu saya mengucapkan beribu banyak terima kasih tentang kedermawaannya pengurus SURYA KANTA melontarkan surat bulanannya kepada saudaranya BALI ADNJANA. Menilik PENDAHULUAN dalam SURYA KANTA itu, maka saya bersetuju sekali dengan haluannya Tuan N [Ktoet Nasa] dan mudah mudahan tercapailah maksudnya yaitu MEMIMPIN bangsa Bali yang terbilang 'gelap' budinya enz. Dengan pendiriannya SURYA KANTA ini mudah mudahanlah kemajuan tanah BALI dan LOMBOK tentang HIDUP di DUNIA dan KEALUSAN BUDI bisa lekas tercapai. Sedangkan saya sebagai pengurus BALI ADNJANA sanggup juga sedapat dapat menyokong maksud itu, yang mana berlaku dengan cara DAMAI. Lanjutlah usianya SURYA KANTA dan KEKALLAH persaudaraannya dengan surat kabar MINGGUAN BALI ADNJANA. Hormat saya Redacteur B.A. I.G.TJAKRATANAJA*" (*Bali Adnjana* 1925, n°30: 5).

This acknowledgement is followed immediately by another *Percakapan A dan B*. After having welcomed the publication of *Surya Kanta* ("*Nah B. Ini lo lihat bagus nya surat kabar bulanan SURYA KANTA*"), A enjoins B to read it himself so that they could share their opinion regarding its purpose: "*Marilah bersama sama membaca dan mengertikan supaya sedapat dapat jangan keliru penerimaan atau paham*". B appears unsure of *Surya Kanta*'s purpose, claiming that it is still too early to form an opinion: "*Aku belum bisa mengatakan apa apa tentang hal tujuannya SURYA KANTA, sebab baru sekali terbit dan disitu belum ada pertimbangannya Redacteur terhadap pada karangannya PENGARANG*". But then, proceeding by insinuation, he warns the editor of *Surya Kanta* about the risks incurred by the flame he has just ignited, as if it is not carefully handled it will not bring forth enlightenment to the Balinese but on the contrary set their nationhood alight: "*Cuma sekarang aku baru lihat ada api kecil sekali didalam SURYA KANTA yang dinyatakan oleh karangan yang berkepala Pemandangan dan NGABEN. Aku rasa api itu akan berbahaya apabila Tuan Redacteur nya tidak lekas menguruskan itu api supaya bisa menjadi lampu penerangan dan jangan lantas menjadi api PEMBAKAR KEBANGSAAN*" (*Bali Adnjana* 1925, n°30: 5).

After this somewhat conciliatory – or rather sarcastic – start, the exchanges between Ktoet Nasa and Tjakra Tanaja grew more aggressive, while the latter kept on accusing *Surya Kanta*'s leaders of being motivated by greed and envy in their foolish pursuit to abolish caste hierarchy⁶. He warned them that, by challenging the *triwangsa*, they were dividing the

⁶ Tjakra Tanaja went occasionally further in his attack against *Surya Kanta*, which he accused of being a "lair of communists" (*S.[arang] K.[ominis]*), an accusation which, especially after the communist uprisings of 1926-27 in Java and Sumatra and their ensuing repression, was a not too subtle way of arousing the colonial government's vigilance.

Balinese people, with the risk of weakening their resilience and of sowing dissension in their ranks. Not only did the Balinese inherit the hierarchical order from their ancestors but, furthermore, it is based on religious teachings found in *lontar*, which stipulate that one's current status is the fruit of one's *karma*: “Siapakah Bali itu? Pada rasa penulis ialah sang CATURJADMA (*Brahmana Satrya Wesya dan Sudra*). Barang siapa merasa atau mengaku BALI, tetapi jikalau tidak menganggap adanya CATURJADMA tersebut diatas, tentulah kebalikannya itu hanya PULASAN saja atau sudah RUSAK karena menuruti hawa nafsu yang melupakan ADNYANA (*fikir*) [...] Dari sebab sekarang nyatanya kaum JABA sudah memisahkan diri pada sang Triwangsa, maka merasalah penulis bahasa keadaan kedua pihak itu kurang sempurna dan berarti juga cerai. Apabila perceraian itu terus menerus, tentulah berbahaya untuk nama BALI yang penulis terangkan diatas [...] Janganlah orang iri melihat atau mendengar orang SUDRA hormat kepada orang Triwangsa, walaupun yang tidak terpelajar sekalipun, sebab itulah memang sudah mesti menerima karmanya masing masing. Jikalau memang kepingin supaya juga bisa mendapat kehormatan Triwangsa, seharusnya supaya melakukan perbuatan yang utama supaya kemudian bisa mendapat karma yang lebih baik dari sekarang” (Bali Adnjana 1926, n°2: 1-2).

Accordingly, it is very dangerous to challenge the caste system (*sistem kasta*) in Bali, as this would undermine the religious foundations of Balinese society – if only inasmuch as access to the status of *padanda* is the exclusive prerogative of *Brahmana*: “Dengan lenyapnya Triwangsa, adalah berarti kelenyapannya peradaban dan Agama serta Adat yang bersifat Hindu Bali, sebab kaum Triwangsalah yang harus meneguhkan hal itu” (Bali Adnjana 1926, n°17: 1).

Upadeśa (1967)

Once their island had become part of the Republic of Indonesia, the Balinese leaders were informed that the Ministry of Religions would not recognize their religion as a proper *agama*. Consequently, in order to make it eligible for the status of *agama*, they had to rationalize their religion and redefine it in monotheistic terms, so as to make it look like a religion of the Book.

The first question to be settled was for the Balinese to agree on the name of their religion. After protracted debates, they resolved in 1952 to name their religion *Agama Hindu Bali* – the name advocated by the *triwangsa* back in the 1920s. Yet, if they had finally managed to reach an agreement among themselves, the Balinese still had to convince the Ministry of Religions of the legitimacy of the *Agama Hindu Bali*. While some religious leaders were looking for the seeds of regeneration in their own indigenous traditions, young Balinese who were studying in India urged their co-religionists to return to the fold of Hinduism, which they presented as the source of their rites. Stressing the theological import as well as the ethical purport of religion, they attempted to restrain the Balinese ritualistic leanings, while construing their Hindu heritage in accordance with Islam and Christianity.

In 1958, after years of lobbying, a *Hindu Bali* section was finally established within the Ministry of Religions. The next step was to decide who should be in charge of the *Agama Hindu Bali*, now that the kings of yore, who had previously been the patrons of the religious ceremonies on the island, had been replaced by the Republican government. For that purpose, a council was set up in 1959 to coordinate the religious activities of the Hindu Balinese – the *Parisada Dharma Hindu Bali*⁷.

⁷ We notice that instead of the word *agama*, rejected on account of its Islamic connotation, it is the word *dharma* – used in India by Hindu reformers and their orthodox opponents alike to convey the normative notion of “religion” – which was chosen by former Balinese students from Indian universities.

During the 1960s, the growing presence of Balinese communities outside their own island enabled the Parisada to extend its influence across the Archipelago. Cut off from their temple networks as well as their deified ancestors, these Balinese migrants needed a delocalized and scriptural religion which they could carry with them. In these circumstances, the Parisada's leaders who had studied in India advocated giving up the exclusive name *Agama Hindu Bali* in favour of the more inclusive one *Agama Hindu*, in order to strengthen the position of their religion vis-à-vis Islam and Christianity. As a result, at the time of its first congress, in 1964, the Parisada Dharma Hindu Bali changed its name to Parisada Hindu Dharma, forsaking any reference to its Balinese origins. From then on, the name *Hindu Dharma*⁸ would become interchangeable with *Agama Hindu* – construed as “*agama universal*” (Dana 2005).

With the backing and subsidies of the provincial government, the Parisada undertook to translate Indian sacred scriptures, compile a theological canon, publish a Hindu catechism, standardize religious rites, formalize the priesthood, and provide religious instruction to the population – all of this amounting to a “scripturalization” of Balinese religion, a shift in focus from ritual to text. Whereas hitherto ritual practices were followed inasmuch as they had been handed down from generation to generation, from then on they were held to be motivated on the basis of prior belief. Thus, unlike the kings and the priests, who merely interceded on behalf of their subjects and clients, the Parisada was now instructing the Balinese on what to believe and how to practise their religion accordingly.

During the Parisada's 1964 congress, its founder and general secretary Ida Bagus Mantra drew up the theological canon of *Agama Hindu*, composed of five articles of faith – the *Panca Çraddha* – conceived on the model of the five pillars of Islam: belief in the one and only God (Sang Hyang Widhi), in the eternal essence of life (*atman*), in the retribution of all actions (*karmaphala*), in reincarnation (*samsara*), and in the final liberation (*moksa*) (Punyatmadja 1970)⁹.

Once the dogmatic contents of the *Agama Hindu* had been fully delineated, Ida Bagus Mantra set about composing a Hindu catechism, the *Upadeśa Tentang Ajaran-Ajaran Agama Hindu* (PHD 1967)¹⁰. This catechism has been constantly republished since then.

A catechism is a doctrinal manual for the instruction of catechumens, most often in the form of questions followed by answers to be memorised. This question and answer format establishes a dialog between an instructor and his pupils. The very idea of catechism is Protestant in origin, as Protestants had to reflect on what was truly the Christian religious doctrine, as opposed to its alleged corruption by the Roman Catholic Church. Martin Luther published his first catechisms in 1529 – one for children and another one for adults.

I have been able to trace two precedents for this Balinese catechism, both originating in the Theosophical Society – Colonel Henry Steel Olcott's *A Buddhist Catechism* (1881), and Annie Besant's *Sanātana Dharma Catechism* (1902).

Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, the co-founder and first president of the Theosophical Society (1875), is credited with initiating the revival of Buddhism in Ceylon (Prothero 1995) – a revival characterized as “Buddhist Modernism” by Heinz Bechert (1966; see McMahan

⁸ On the other hand, some of the Parisada's leaders disagreed with the name *Hindu Dharma* and proposed to replace it with *Sanātana Dharma* – the “eternal and universal religion” – a label endorsed by both Hindu reformers and traditionalists, as a manifestation of self-assertion against Christianity (Halbfass 1988: 343-346).

⁹ While such a dogmatic formulation was a novelty, its theological framework had in fact already been laid out by Narendra Dev. Pandit Shastri (1955), an Indian reformer, follower of the Arya Samaj, who had come to Bali in 1949 and would prove instrumental in obtaining the official recognition of the Balinese religion.

¹⁰ The Sanskrit term *upadeśa* has the meaning of “teaching, instruction”, in the sense of the spiritual guidance provided by a *guru* to his disciple.

2008) and as “Protestant Buddhism” by Gananath Obeyesekere (1970; see Gombrich & Obeyesekere 1988). In effect, Olcott introduced into modern Sinhalese consciousness the notion of Buddhism as a system of beliefs through the publication of his *Buddhist Catechism* (Olcott 1881), modelled upon Protestant catechisms, which has gone through numerous editions and been translated into many languages, and which is still in use in Sri Lankan schools.

Olcott’s *A Buddhist Catechism, According to the Canon of the Southern Church* opens in the following manner (Olcott 1881: 1):

1. Q. Of what religion are you?

A. The Buddhist.

2. Q. What is a Buddhist?

A. One who professes to be a follower of our Lord Buddha and accepts his doctrine.

Now, it is interesting that Annie Besant, who would later succeed Olcott as president of the Theosophical Society, composed a Hindu catechism entitled *Sanâtana Dharma Catechism. A Catechism for Boys and Girls in Hindu Religion and Morals*, published in 1902 by the Central Hindu College, which she had founded with a group of Indian theosophical colleagues in 1898 at Banaras (Besant 1902). The *Catechism* was followed by a more extensive manual entitled *Sanâtana Dharma: An Elementary Textbook of Hindu Religion and Ethics*, published in 1903 by the Central Hindu College (Besant et al. 1903a). This is the first textbook produced in English for classroom use on the part of Hindus themselves. And it was itself followed the same year by an even more extensive manual entitled *Sanâtana Dharma: An Advanced Textbook of Hindu Religion and Ethics* (Besant et al. 1903b; see Hawley 2009).

At the time, Hindus were more or less in the same position as early Protestants had found themselves, inasmuch as Hinduism was no longer taken for granted, being threatened by both Christian missionaries and Hindu reformers. Therefore, they were in need of knowing what their religion was really about and inclined to look into its sacred texts in order to establish a theological canon – which is the very idea of *sanâtana dharma*.

Besant’s *Sanâtana Dharma Catechism* opened in the following manner (Besant 1902: 3):

BASIC PRINCIPLES of HINDUISM.

Question 1. What is the meaning of the words Sanâtana Dharma?

Answer. Sanâtana means *eternal*; Dharma means *religion*,

Q. 2. To what religion is this name given?

A. It is given to the Hindu religion, which is the oldest of the religions now in the world.

Q. 3. Is this the only reason for giving to it the name eternal?

A. No. It is also given because the great truths taught in it are eternal.

Q. 4. What is its foundation?

A. The Four Vedas, namely, the *Rigveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sâmaveda*, the *Atharvaveda*. These were spoken by the Rishis, holy men taught by Brahmâ, and teach us how to worship and what to believe.

Q. 5. Are there any other books given by Rishis?

A. Yes. There are the *Laws of Manu*, the great *Purânas*, and the two histories, the *Râmâyana* and the *Mahâbhârata*. These are the chief books from which we learn the Sanâtana Dharma.

Coming back to the Balinese *Upadeśa*, we infer from the foreword how Ida Bagus Mantra initiated the project. Following the Parisada’s congress, he assembled a team of seven contributors: Ida Pedanda Gde Wayan Sidemen (Ketua Umum Parisada Hindu Dharma), Ida Bagus Gede Dosther (Sekjen Parisada Hindu Dharma), Ida Bagus Oka Punia Atmaja (Dosen Fakultas Sastra Universitas Udayana), Tjokorda Rai Sudharta (Kepala Kantor Agama

Propinsi Bali), Ida Bagus Alit (Kepala Bagian Peradilan Kantor Agama Propinsi Bali), and I Nyoman Mereta (staf Bagian Pendidikan Kantor Agama Propinsi Bali). The story goes that all the contributors were confined during two weeks at the home office of Ida Bagus Mantra in Denpasar until they achieved the composition of the catechism, which was then edited by Tjokorda Rai Sudharta to be finally published in 1967.

The 86 pages long *Upadeśa* is the first publication devoted to exposing the teachings of *Agama Hindu*. It is programmatic and seeks to encapsulate in a systematic fashion a coherent doctrine of what *Agama Hindu* is about. This doctrine is presented in the form of an imaginary dialogue between the *guru* Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti (“Dharma’s Glory”) and his *śiṣya* Sang Suyaśa (“He Who Is Renowned”) – *Percakapan Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti dengan Sang Suyaśa* – a rhetorical device which brings to mind the characteristic composition of the *Upaniṣad*. Yet, even if this dialogue is structured along questions and answers, like a catechism, the *guru*’s answers are not designed to be learnt by heart by his *śiṣya*, as they are rather elaborate and not always straightforward.

A preamble from the Kepala Kantor Daerah Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Dasar Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Propinsi Bali informs the readers that the catechism is to be used for the courses in *Agama Hindu* in primary and secondary schools. A second preamble, by the Direktur Jenderal Bimbingan Masyarakat Beragama Hindu dan Budha Departemen Agama R.I., calls for the composition of other manuals for the instruction of *Agama Hindu* in colleges¹¹.

The *Upadeśa* first introduces Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti, whose knowledge of the *Weda* is reputed. He is visited in his *āśrama Jagadhita* by Sang Suyaśa, who is in search of sacred knowledge (*pengetahuan suci*). Sang Suyaśa respectfully salutes (*pangañjali*) Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti with the greeting “Om Swastyastu”, to which the *guru* replies with “Om Śānti, Śānti, Śānti”. Then Sang Suyaśa explains in flowery language the reason for his visit: “*Oh, Guru suci, yang hamba muliakan, maafkanlah keberanian hamba yang datang ke hadapan Guru untuk memohon pengajaran-pengajaran suci dan berguna yang dapat memberikan sinar dan tuntunan pada jiwa hamba yang dalam kegelapan ini*”. He has heard that, in the past, the *ṛṣi* were able to achieve eternal peace (*kedamaian abadi*) and everlasting bliss (*kebahagiaan yang kekal*). If this happens to be true, how could one achieve such a state? To which Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti replies that this is indeed true and that this state can be achieved by anyone who follows the guidance of religion according to the teachings of the sacred *Weda* with a pure heart and single mindedness (*jika telah mengalami tuntunan agama sesuai dengan ajaran-ajaran pustaka suci Weda dengan suci hati dan tulus ikhlas*).

After this introduction, the *Upadeśa* proper is divided into 15 chapters. In the first one, Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti explains the meaning of *Om Swastyastu* (*Semoga ada dalam keadaan baik atas karunia Hyang Widhi*) and *Om Śānti, Śānti, Śānti* (*Semoga damai atas karunia Hyang Widhi*), as well as of the *swastika*, which is the sacred symbol of *Agama Hindu* (*yang merupakan dasar kekuatan dan kesejahteraan bhuwana agung dan bhuwana alit*).

¹¹ Formal religious education was still a relative novelty in Bali in the 1960s. It had started on a very limited scale in the colonial times, prompted by the new modern organizations that were being set up in the 1920s and 1930s, and then again after the end of the Japanese occupation, with the foundation of the *Perguruan Rakjat Saraswati* and the *Jajasan Dwidjendra*. The *Perguruan Rakjat Saraswati* was opened in Denpasar by I Gusti Made Tamba in 1946, with a curriculum inspired by the *Taman Siswa* and the educational ideas of Rabindranath Tagore. The *Jajasan Dwidjendra* was established in Denpasar by I Wajan Reta and Ida Bagus Wajan Gede in 1953, and soon after it opened a religious high school, the *Sekolah Menengah Hindu Bali “Dwidjendra”*. It is worth noting that Narendra Dev. Pandit Shastri was actively involved in both these institutions. On Hindu education in Bali, see Nala (2004).

Chapter 2 is titled *Agama Hindu (Hindu Dharma)*. Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti provides the etymology of the word *agama*: the preposition /a-/ is privative and /gam/ means “to go”. From which he infers that *agama* signifies “that which does not change, which is eternal” (*langgeng*). Needless to say, this etymology is faulty, as in Sanskrit the preposition /ā-/ of *āgama* is long and means “toward”. Therefore *āgama* signifies “that which has come down to the present”, and it refers to “anything handed down as fixed by tradition” (Gonda 1973: 499). This faulty etymology notwithstanding, Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti defines *agama* as “*dharma dan kebenaran abadi yang mencakup seluruh jalan kehidupan manusia*”. He explains that the *Agama Hindu* has been revealed by Sang Hyang Widhi and has originated in the region of the river Sindhu (*diwahyukan oleh Sang Hyang Widhi yang diturunkan ke dunia, dan pertama kalinya berkembang di sekitar sungai suci Sindhu*).

Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti elaborates further that *Agama Hindu* is the religion of the people who follow the teachings of the *Weda* sacred scriptures, which have been revealed by Sang Hyang Widhi. In the *Weda*, it is said (*tersebut*): “*mokṣārtham jagadhitāya ca iti dharma*”, which means that *dharma* (or *agama*) is what enables one to reach liberation (*mukti*) and well-being (*bhukti*). The fundamental framework (*kerangka dasar*) of *Agama Hindu* comprises three inseparable aspects – *tattwa (filsafat)*, *susila (ethica)*, and *upacara (ritual)*¹² – which are the equivalent of the head, the heart and the limbs for human beings.

Then Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti enunciates the five absolute beliefs (*kepercayaan mutlak*) professed by *Agama Hindu*, the *Pañca Śraddhā*, whose articles are expounded in the ensuing chapters: *Percaya adanya Sang Hyang Widhi, Ātma, Hukum Karma Phala, Samsāra, dan Mokṣa*.

Chapter 3 pertains to *Widhi Tattwa (filsafat tentang Sang Hyang Widhi)*. Prompted by a question from Sang Suyaśa (*siapa Sang Hyang Widhi itu?*), Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti explains that Sang Hyang Widhi is God the Almighty as Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer (*Yang Maha Kuasa sebagai Pencipta, Pemelihara, Pemralina*). Sang Hyang Widhi is the One and Only God, as it is said in the sacred *Weda*: “*ekam ewa adwiṭīyam brahman*”¹³. He pursues by explaining that, according to the functions He performs, Sang Hyang Widhi is named Brahmā as Creator (*utpatti*), Wiṣṇu as Preserver (*sthiti*), and Śiwa as Destroyer (*pralina*), who together compose the *Tri Śakti*.

Sang Suyaśa then asks whether Sang Hyang Widhi is identical to *Dewa* or *Bhaṭṭāra*. To which Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti replies “No my son” (*Tidak anakku*), *Dewa* and *Bhaṭṭāra*, which in Sanskrit signify both “divinity”, are but emanations (*sinar*) of Sang Hyang Widhi¹⁴. Sang

¹² This framework had already been suggested by Roelof Goris in 1953, when he came to the rescue of the Balinese religious leaders who were struggling to have their religion recognized by the Ministry of Religions. In an article published by the magazine *Bhakti*, he stated that the *Agama Hindu Bali* – as a legitimate branch of Hinduism – was a proper religion and not an incoherent mixture of archaic traditions and mere superstitions. Among other erudite considerations, he asserted that every religion worthy of the name comprised three components: a creed (*syahadat*), a code of ethics (*kesusilaan*), and a liturgy (*ibadat*) (Goris 1953). This would not be lost on the Balinese reformers, who would soon emphasize the dogmatic contents and the ethical principles of the *Agama Hindu Bali*, in order to depreciate the ritualistic inclination of their co-religionists. In effect, we remark that both the catechism and the textbooks published by Annie Besant were divided into the same three parts – theology (“Basic Hindu Religious Ideas”), rites (“General Hindu Religious Customs and Rites”), and ethics (“Ethical Teachings”) – just like British Protestants catechisms at that time.

¹³ This is the wellknown *mahāvākya* from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* – “God is one, without a second”. This profession of faith is somewhat reminiscent of the Islamic *syahadat* – “There is no god but God” – to which the Balinese had to conform in accordance with the instructions prescribed by the Ministry of Religions. In effect, this *mahāvākya* had already been put forward in 1952, when the Balinese were compelled to come up with their own profession of faith, which was then labelled “*syahadat*”.

¹⁴ In my understanding, in Bali the name *Bhatara* is reserved for the higher divinities of the Hindu pantheon, such as Siwa for example, whereas *Dewa* is a generic term referring to protective divinities.

Suyaśa asks further how can one be convinced (*meyakinkan*) of Sang Hyang Widhi's existence. Rṣi Dharmakīrti explains that, according to *Agama Hindu*, there are three means of knowledge (*tripramāṇa*), that is, *Pratyakṣa-pramāṇa* (perception), *Anumāṇa-pramāṇa* (inference), and *Āgama-pramāṇa* (authoritative scripture). Each of these *pramāṇa* are means to acknowledge the existence of Sang Hyang Widhi.

Sang Suyāśa then asks if certain “pure beings” (*orang suci*) are actually able to see Sang Hyang Widhi. Rṣi Dharmakīrti begins by explaining that with their limited (*terbatas*) capacities human beings cannot see Sang Hyang Widhi, Who is unlimited. But the fact we cannot see Him does not mean that He does not exist. In effect, whoever lives a pure life, in accordance with the instructions of religion (*petunjuk agama*) and the teachings of sacred scriptures (*ajaran dalam pustaka suci*), would be able indeed to see Sang Hyang Widhi.

Thereupon ensue diverse considerations on the creation of the universe as well as of humanity, based on the authority of the *Weda*, the *Upaniṣad*, and the *Bhagawadgītā*, even though the references appear to be mostly taken from *Sāṅkhya* cosmology (which is not mentioned) – *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, *triḡuṇa*, *pañca-buddhi-indriya* and *pañca-karma-indriya*, *pañca mahā bhūta*, *brahmāṇḍa*, *sapta loka*, *sāḍrasa*, *tri-śarīra*, *bhuwāna agung* and *bhuwāna alit*, etc¹⁵.

Chapter 4 deals with *Ātma-Tattwa*. Rṣi Dharmakīrti explains that *ātma* is constituted of small sparks (*percikan kecil*) of *Parama-Ātma*, that is, Sang Hyang Widhi, that are present in all living creatures. The *ātman* of human beings is called *jīwātman*, which is what animates human beings. The *ātman* and the body are like a driver and its carriage. When a human being dies, his/her *jīwātman*, which is eternal, goes either to paradise (*surga*) or to hell (*neraka*), according to whether that person's life has been good or bad (*śubha aśubha karma*). After some time, the *jīwātman* will reincarnate (*punarbhāwa*) in a new being in accordance with its *karmaphala*. This will occur over and over until the *jīwātman* breaks away from its earthly bonds (*mokṣa*) to achieve eternal bliss and peace (*kebahagiaan dan kedamaian abadi*).

Chapter 5 deals with *Hukum Karma Phala* and starts with a question from Sang Suyāśa, who has difficulty following his *guru*'s explanations. Rṣi Dharmakīrti expounds how “action” (*karma*) brings about “fruits” (*phala*), that is, good actions (*śubhakarma*) bring good results, whereas bad actions (*aśubhakarma*) bring bad results. But Sang Suyāśa appears unconvinced, as in actual fact there are people who suffer even though their behaviour is exemplary. On the other hand, there are people who have an enjoyable life even though they behave badly. Acknowledging Sang Suyāśa's doubts, Rṣi Dharmakīrti pursues by stating that there are in fact three kinds of “fruits of action” (*phala karma*): *sañcita* (the fruits of a former existence which have not been entirely consumed), *prārabdha* (the fruits of the present existence which have been entirely consumed), and *kriyamāṇa* (the fruits of the present existence which will be consumed in a subsequent existence). This explains that, sooner or later, in the present existence or in a subsequent one, one has to bear all the fruits of one's actions, as this is the law of *karma*¹⁶.

Chapter 6 deals with *Punarbhāwa*, which is glossed by Rṣi Dharmakīrti as “*kelahiran yang berulang-ulang*” and which is also called *penitisan* or *samsāra*. The endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth brings forth both happiness and suffering (*suka duka*). But even

¹⁵ In fact, it seems to me that the theology expounded in the *Upadeśa* tends to combine the monism of *Vedānta* with the dualism of *Sāṅkhya*, without detracting from the monotheism imposed by the Ministry of Religions. I find particularly striking the absence of any reference to Tantric Shaivism, however prevalent it is in Balinese erudite traditions.

¹⁶ We are here reminded of Tjakra Tanaja, who referred to the law of *karma* in order to warrant the *triwangsa*'s prerogatives, even though the Parisada endorses a conception of *warna* similar to that advocated by *Surya Kanta* (see note 24).

though the ultimate aim of human beings is to put an end to the cycle of rebirths by reaching liberation (*mokṣa*)¹⁷, our birth in this world as human beings is an opportunity for us to increase our enlightenment (*kesempurnaan*) in order to overcome our woes (*kesengsaraan*).

Thus chapter 7 broaches the subject of *Mokṣa*, the deliverance from *karma phala* and from *samsāra*. *Mokṣa* can be attained by human beings in this world, when they are freed from earthly bonds (*ikatan keduniawian*), a state called *jīwanmukti*. It is possible to achieve this state by steadfastly performing the *Catur Yoga*, the four ways (*marga*) of uniting oneself (*menyatukan diri*) with Sang Hyang Widhi: the way of knowledge (*jñāna*), the way of devotion (*bhakti*), the way of action (*karma*), and the “royal” way (*rāja*), that consists in doing *brata*, *tapa*, *yoga* until one reaches *samādhi*. These ways are equivalent and should be chosen according to one’s personality, character and ability. Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti gives as an example the instructions imparted by Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna in the *Bhagawadgītā* (II, 47), according to which one ought to act in accordance with one’s duty without attachment to the results of one’s actions.

Then, Sang Suyaśa asks what happens to the *ātman* when one has reached *mokṣa*: it becomes united with Sang Hyang Widhi and experiences eternal truth, awareness and happiness, that is, “*sat cit ānanda*” in Sanskrit. Only the *ātman* that is free from the *triguṇa* (*sattwa*, *rajas*, *tamas*) is able to unite with Sang Hyang Widhi and can declare: “I am God” (*Aku adalah Tuhan*).

After having explained the *Pañca Śraddhā*, Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti deals with the *Awatāra* in chapter 8. They are the embodiment of Sang Hyang Widhi, Who comes down to the world in order to help human beings to free themselves from suffering (*kesengsaraan*) and ignorance (*awidyā*). In the *Bhagawadgītā* (II, 7), it is said: “Whenever the *dharma* starts collapsing and *adharma* prevails, I incarnate in the world in order to uphold the *dharma*”. The *Purāṇa* mention ten *awatāra* from Wiṣṇu: Matsya, Kūrma, Warāhā, Nārasimha, Wāmana, Parasurāma, Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, and Kalki. Then Sang Suyaśa asks the difference between the *awatāra* and the *ṛṣi*: while *awatāra* are embodiments of Sang Hyang Widhi in the world, *ṛṣi* are human beings who have attained *mokṣa*. Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti proceeds with an account of the Indian and Javanese *ṛṣi* who brought *Agama Hindu* to Bali: Wyāsa, Mārkaṇḍeya, Agastya, Tantula, Bharadah, Asthāpaka, Kuturan, and Dwijendra.

Chapter 9 deals with sacred scriptures, *Pustaka Śuci* or *Śāstra Dharma*. Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti states that the holy book of *Agama Hindu* is the *Weda*, that is, the perfect and eternal knowledge regarding Sang Hyang Widhi and His instructions to human beings. This knowledge has been heard by the *mahaṛṣi* and is thus called *Śruti*, and it is divided into four parts, called *Catur Weda*: *Rg Weda*, *Yajur Weda*, *Sāma Weda*, and *Atharwa Weda*. The *Śruti* includes further the *Upaniṣad*, the *Bhagawadgītā*, the *Weda Parikrama*, and the *Kāmahayanikan*. Given the complexity of the teachings embraced by the *Weda*, it has been necessary to design specific formulations for those who would not be able to understand them. This is why the teachings of the *Weda* have been conveyed by means of other literary channels such as the *Smṛti* (which include the *sūtra*, the *Manu Smṛti* and the *Sārasamuccaya*), the *Purāna*, and the *Itihāsa* (*Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*)¹⁸. The *Bhagawadgītā*, which is part of the *Mahābhārata*, is dubbed the fifth *Weda*, because in it Sang Hyang Widhi teaches

¹⁷ This statement is at odds with the situation prevailing in Bali, as the ultimate aim of Balinese death rituals is not to liberate a transcendent *atman* from its earthly bonds but rather to bring about a reincarnation into the family line (see Hornbacher 2014).

¹⁸ Actually, according to Brahmanical orthodoxy, *Śruti* is composed of the *Weda Samitā*, with their respective *Brāhmaṇa*, *Āraṇyaka*, and *Upaniṣad*, while *Smṛti* includes the *Smṛta Sūtra* and *Vedāṅga*, the *Itihāsa*, the *Purāna*, the *Dharmaśāstra*, and the *Nītiśāstra*.

the sacred knowledge of the *Weda* anew, at a time when the world is suffering from *adharma*¹⁹.

At this point of the dialogue, Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti asks whether Sang Suyaśa does not tire of his explanations. To which his pupil replies by saying that he is the one who worries that *Gurunda* might be tired of providing all this precious instruction.

Chapter 10 deals with the holy days (*Hari Suci*) of the *Agama Hindu*: *Nyepi* and *Śiwarātri*, determined by the *Śāka* calendar (*Isākawarśa*); *Saraswatī*, *Pagerwesi*, *Galungan*, and *Kuningan*, according to the *pawukon*.

Chapter 11 deals with holy places (*Tempat Suci*), called *pura* in the *Agama Hindu*, which are of four different kinds: (1) The *pura* dedicated to the worship of Sang Hyang Widhi and his manifestations, called *Pura Kahyangan*; (2) The *pura* established by spiritual masters and dedicated to their commemoration, called *Pura Dang Kahyangan*; (3) The functional *pura*, such as the ones set up on the shoreline (*Pura Segara*), in the ricefields (*Pura Subak*), or on the marketplaces (*Pura Melanting*); (4) The *pura* dedicated to the worship of those ancestors who have attained the status of *Dewa* or of *Bhaṭṭāra*, called *Pura Dadya*, *Pura Kawitan*, or *Pura Padharman*.

Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti goes on to explain that there are two kinds of *Pura Kahyangan*. The *Pura/Kahyangan Tiga* are dedicated to the worship of Sang Hyang Widhi in His manifestations as *Triwiśesa*: the *Pura Desa/Bale Agung* is dedicated to Brahmā as Creator, the *Pura Puseh* to Wiṣṇu as Preserver, and the *Pura Dalem* to *Bhaṭṭāri Durgā* (*sakti Śiwa*) as Destroyer²⁰. As for the *Pura/Kahyangan Jagat*, located at the eight points of the compass as well as in the center of Bali, they protect the island against dangerous forces by keeping them at bay. This is followed by several lists of Balinese temples, organized in a more or less orderly fashion²¹.

Thereupon, Sang Suyaśa asks his *guru* about the *Pura Agung Jagannāta* in Denpasar, which possesses only a *Padmāsana*. This, explains Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti is a symbol (*lambang*) of Sang Hyang Widhi's omnipotence in the form of the Mount Mahāmeru from which human beings obtain the *amṛta*, the water of life (*air suci kehidupan*).

After this exposition of the theological contents (*tattwa*) of the *Agama Hindu*, the catechism loses its well-ordered presentation and the following chapters appear as something of a catch-all.

Chapter 12 deals with ethics (*Suśīla*) and is prompted by a question from Sang Suyaśa asking the meaning of the words “*Tat twam asi*”. Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti explains that they mean “He is you” (*ia adalah kamu*) and that they are the basis of Hindu ethics²². *Suśīla* is defined further as a behaviour which conforms to the stipulations of *dharma* and of *yajña*, glossed as “holy sacrifice” (*korban suci*).

¹⁹ One should remember that it is only in the 1930s that the *Bhagawadgītā* has become accessible to the Balinese, after it had been translated into Malay by the Muslim poet Amir Hamzah in the literary magazine *Poedjangga Baroe* (Hamzah 1933-1935). Ida Bagus Mantra has produced a new translation, along with commentaries and the original Sanskrit text in 1967 (Mantra 1967).

²⁰ I suspect that this interpretation is recent, as evidenced by the fact that one observes some confusion regarding both the *pura desa* and the *pura puseh*, which happen to be occasionally associated with Wisnu and Brahma respectively.

²¹ In this chapter, it is clear that the Balinese authors attempt – with doubtful success – to adjust the specific characteristic features of their own island to the normative framework of reform Hinduism.

²² This notwithstanding that such a formula, drawn from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, is unknown in Balinese textual traditions (see Fox 2011 for a witty treatment of such a modern borrowing).

It is said that Sang Hyang Widhi created the universe by sacrificing Himself. Hence, we human beings are indebted (*ṛṇa*) to Sang Hyang Widhi, to Whom we have to pay our debt in return by performing *yajña*. There are three sorts of debts for a Hindu (*tri ṛṇa*): to the *Dewa*, the *Pitra*, and the *Ṛṣi*. This results in five (?) sacrifices (*pañca yajña*): the *Dewa-yajña*, the *Pitra-yajña*, the *Manusa-yajña*, the *Ṛṣi-yajña*, and the *Bhūta-yajña* (which are dealt with in the following chapter). These sacrifices must be performed by everyone, according to one's stage of life (*āśrama*) and one's social class (*warna*). Accordingly, *Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti* expounds the *Catur Āśrama* (*Brahmacāri*, *Gṛhastha*, *Wānaprastha*, and *Bhikṣuka*), as well as the *Catur Warna* (*Brāhmana*, *Kṣatriya*, *Waiśya*, and *Śūdra*)²³.

Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti pursues the matter by expounding a series of classificatory schemes, such as *Triwarga* (*Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma*), *Triguṇa* (*Sattwa*, *Rajah*, *Tamah*) (sic.), *Saḍ-ripu*, *Sad-ātātāyi*, *Sapta-timira*, *Trikāya pariśudha* (*Kāyika*, *Wācīta*, *Mānacika*), *Pañca-yama brata*, *Pañca-niyama brata*, *Daśa-yama brata*, *Daśa-niyama brata*, and *Catur guru* (*guru pengajian*, *guru rupaka*, *guru wiśeṣa*, *guru sejati*).

Chapter 13 deals with rituals (*Upacāra*), which are meant to achieve a relationship by means of *yajña* between the *ātman* and *parama-ātman*, between human beings and Sang Hyang Widhi. Hindu rituals make use of implements (*upakara*) that help human beings to relate to Sang Hyang Widhi, such as the *pratimā*, which are not to be confused with Sang Hyang Widhi but are only representations of His manifestations in the form that we imagine them to be. From there follows a description of the *pañca yajña*: the *Dewa-yajña*, the *Pitra-yajña*, the *Manusa-yajña*, the *Ṛṣi-yajña*, and the *Bhūta-yajña*²⁴.

Chapter 14 deals with worship (*Cara Sembahyang*). *Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti* describes the different ways of worship (*muṣpa*), collective as well as individual, with their various implements: holy water (*tīrtha*), incense, flowers, and *kewangen*.

The last chapter is titled *Trisaṅdhyā*, even though its contents is in fact rather heterogeneous. *Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti* expounds the *trisaṅdhyā* as a prayer to Sang Hyang Widhi performed during the “junctions” (*saṅdhyā*) of the day: at dawn, at noon, and at dusk. It consists of a compilation of Sankrit *mantra*, the first of which is the well known *Gāyatri*, excerpted from the *Ṛg Weda*²⁵.

As *Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti* had indicated that after having recited the *trisaṅdhyā* one should make use of *tīrtha*, Sang Suyaśa asks how it is procured. He is told that only the *pandita* or *sulinggih*, those who have been initiated (*didīkṣā*) and are thus “twice-born” (*didwijātikan*) have the right to produce *tīrtha*. They are the only priests allowed to guide the congregation

²³ One notices that the definition of the *warna* put forward by *Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti* corresponds to the version propounded by reform Hinduism and not to Balinese socio-historical reality. Indeed, according to the Parisada, one's *warna* is determined not by birth but by talent and function, a position already advocated by *Surya Kanta* in the 1920s. This perspective doesn't actually make sense in Bali, where the *warna* framework serves as a model for classifying kinship groups according to a contested hierarchy.

²⁴ Like a number of recent formalizations, this categorization of Balinese rituals had been propounded by *Narendra Dev. Pandit Shastri*, who had put forward in 1951 a presentation close to the Vedic *pañcamahāyajña*, the five “great sacrifices” that a householder has to perform daily: *devayajña* (oblation to the fire), *pitṛyajña* (offering of food and water), *bhūtayajña* (offering of a rice ball or flowers), *narayajña* (offering of food to brahmins), and *brahmāyajña* (recitation of Vedic *mantra*) (*Shastri* 1951). We notice further that the rites supposed to venerate Sang Hyang Widhi are called *Dewa-yajña* and not *Widhi-yajña*, which indicates that the recipients of this veneration are the *dewa* and not Sang Hyang Widhi, who was not the recipient of any *yadnya* before becoming the supreme God of *Agama Hindu* in Bali.

²⁵ Again, like so many other Hindu innovations, the *trisaṅdhyā* has been formulated by *Narendra Dev. Pandit Shastri* (1951). But whereas, according to tradition, the *Gāyatri* could only be recited by *Brāhmana* priests, the *Puja Tri Sandya* was promoted as the official prayer of *Agama Hindu*, in the manner of the Muslim *salat* (see *Lanus* 2014).

(*umat*) and to supervise the rites (*loka pālaśraya*). The other priests, the *pinandita*, who have only been purified (*diwinten*), have to “ask” (*nunas*) for the *tīrtha*. Then Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti explains (in a very confuse manner) what the *padiksan* and the *pawintenan* consist of²⁶.

Thereupon Sang Suyāsa expresses his gratitude and pays his respects to Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti with a *pangañjali*.

Concluding remarks

From the 1920s to the 1960s, the prevailing view of the Balinese religion has undergone sweeping changes, in both content and form, as testified by the contrast between Tjakra Tanaja’s *Percakapan A dan B* and the Parisada’s *Percakapan Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti dengan Sang Suyāsa*.

We remark that none of the questions most hotly debated between *Surya Kanta* and *Bali Adnjana* appear in the *Upadeśa*. For one thing, the competition between *jaba* and *triwangsa* is now considered close (even if we know that this is far from being the case), inasmuch as they are all fellow Hindus nowadays. Moreover, the differentiation between functions (*warna*) has been allegedly substituted for the hierarchical distinction between titled groups (*wangsa*), in line with the interpretation pioneered by *Surya Kanta*. Then, the relationship between *agama* and *adat* on the one hand, and between Balinese religion and Hinduism on the other, is ostensibly no longer at stake. On the one hand, the reference to *adat* has all but disappeared in the discourse of Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti, and on the other, the *Agama Hindu* is now deemed “universal” and no longer peculiar to a specific ethnic group. Indeed, the debate on the proper name of the Balinese religion has been settled by depriving the Balinese of its exclusive ownership. Accordingly, the mention of Majapahit Java is no longer relevant and has been replaced by India as the source of the Balinese religion – the Indian sacred scriptures have superseded the Balinese *lontar*.

Besides, in the days of the polemics between *Surya Kanta* and *Bali Adnjana*, Balinese authors were still very much immersed in an oral and manuscript culture, whereas at the time of the composition of the *Upadeśa*, print culture had been pretty much appropriated. Hence we can expect different formulaic features from one culture to the other. In effect, we notice a shift away from the formulaic, parataxis, and codified copiousness toward the abstract, the analytical, and subordination (Sweeny 1987). More to the point, while Tjakra Tanaja’s pseudo-dialog was elusive and allusive, full of innuendos and insinuations, the discourse of Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti is didactic, explicit, normative, and, above all, authoritative.

Yet, while the authority claimed by the *Upadeśa* is clearly buttressed by references originating in reform Hinduism, one gets the feeling that most of these references are just added on rather than articulated in a coherent fashion. Indeed, the taxonomic organisation of its topics appears more Indian than Balinese²⁷ and this alien makeup plainly fails to account for the actual local practices. Hence an inescapable amount of confusion that grows messier as Ṛṣi Dharmakīrti’s narrative proceeds, not to mention some flagrant distortions that present-day Balinese religious leaders are still busy striving to suture.

²⁶ But he omits to mention that the initiation is monopolised by the *Brahmana* priests, the *padanda*, a privilege that was already contested, as we have seen, by *Surya Kanta*, and still is, not only by Balinese but also by the followers of *Agama Hindu* as a whole, notwithstanding that during its second congress, in 1968, the Parisada Hindu Dharma conceded the right for non-*Brahmana* to gain access to the status of *padanda*.

²⁷ One notices that the authors tend to systematically substitute the vernacular Balinese terminology with a Sanskrit one, scrupulously transcribed with the proper diacritics.

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