



Scriptural Theology in the Shaivasogata Religion in Bali

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ABSTRACT: Script for the Balinese people is not just a symbol of sound, but is considered a symbol of the birth of knowledge which is commemorated as Saraswati day. Deeper than that, the script is a symbol of *Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa* and His manifestation. This study aims to reveal the theology of script in the Saiwasogata religion in Bali. The research data was collected through literature study, and analyzed by symbol theory. The result of this research is the script used to represent *Saiwasogata* theology in Bali. These scripts include the Pre-Nagari script and Pallawa script derivatives, namely Old Bali and New Balinese script. Currently, the New Balinese script is used more to represent *Saiwasogata* theology, classified into *Wréastra*, *Swalalita*, and *Modré* scripts. Based on the results of the analysis it can be stated that the script is used as a symbol to express the concept of divinity and the religious teachings of Shiwa and Buddha. In the *Kasogatan* religion in Bali, it is used to express the Tathāgata concept, using sacred scripts from éka scripts to Buddhist tenets and mantras that explain the Buddha as the true truth. The Buddha through his *dharma* advised that humans try to defeat māra and try to reach *nirwana*. In the Shiwaist religion, the script is also used as a symbol of God, including manifestations. This script is used as a medium to understand the essence of *Shiwa Tattva*. This concept is explained using sacred scripts from *ékaksara* to *sodasaksara* and mantras that explain *Shiwa Tattva*, is the philosophy of divinity and the universe. An understanding of *Shiwa Tattva* is needed so that *Atmika Tattva* tries to realize his own purity as a spark of God in order to achieve true happiness or *moksha*.

KEYWORDS: *Script; Theology; Tathāgata; Shiva; Moksha*

INTRODUCTION

To Balinese people, scripts play an essential role. This is evidenced by a tradition of respect for scripts and the coming down of science. This honor is held every six months on Saturday, *Umanis*, *Watugunung*, known as *Saraswati* Day. This is because the scripts in Bali are believed to be the abode and the form of Goddess *Saraswati*, so Hindus respect it. In the tradition of manual writing in Bali, both writings on paper and palm leaves, the scripts are always written appending, as a symbol that human life should believe that God created them and that human life in peace always depends on belief in God or *Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa*. According to Bagus, as quoted by Medera (2005) that in the local tradition, Balinese people call the scripts *tastra*, which is a damaged form of the word *sastra* (script) interpreted as *sastra* (script), *aksara* (script), or science. Scripts in Bali are classified into *wréastra*, *swalalita*, and *modre* (Agastia, 2005; Suwadnyana, et al., 2023).). These scripts are then used to write various fields in everyday life and holy and sacred things (Agastia, 2005).

If traced, there are various definitions of *aksara* (scripts). The word *akṣara*, comes from Sanskrit, which means 'eternal,' unchanging, syllables, sacred syllables, and vowels (Surada, 2007; Tim Penyusun, 1983; Wijaya, 2007; Zoetmulder, 2004). Oudjavaansch-Nederlandsche Woordenlijst explains that *akṣara* means 'letter' (Juynboll, 1923). In English, it refers to two terms, namely *script* and *letter*, which come from Latin, namely *sriptum*, which means writing (of hand), and *letter*, which means *letters* of the alphabet, which theoretically represent utterances. Etymologically, *aksara* is closer to *letters* because the term *kesusasteraan*, in addition to *literature*, is taken from the plural form of a *letter*, namely *letters* (Ratna, 2005; Nerawati & Sudarsana, 2020).

Scripts as language symbols are conventions that make it possible for humans to understand life; improve the ability to think and resolve problems; which make it possible to predate space and time, even oneself; symbols make it possible to imagine metaphysical realities, such as hell and heaven (Ratna, 2009). Humans do not deal directly with reality but instead cover themselves through script symbols, which need to be interpreted so that their meaning can be understood. Symbols are not objected representatives but tools for conceptual objects to understand and imagine (Ratna, 2009; Juliantari, et al., 2020; Sudarsana, et al.,



2023). This means that script as a convention and communication medium can be used as a medium to represent theology, the concept of a great, sacred figure, the highest reality, the idea of the existence of nature over the power of God and its implementation in the life of Balinese community (Bilad, 2018; Edward Caird, 2015; Suwindia, et al., 2023).

During the Old Balinese era, it was known there were Pre-Nagari scripts which were thought to have originated from the eighth century, and Old Balinese scripts from the ninth century. Based on observations of the quantity of the inscriptions found, the Old Balinese inscriptions are more numerous than the *Yé Té Mantra* inscriptions. This raises suspicions that the Pre-Nagari scripts were less frequently used during the Old Balinese period; perhaps they were used for writing matters of religion. On the contrary, the Old Balinese script was widely used to write official royal documents such as inscriptions, so it was more popular than the Pre-Nagari script. At present, these two scripts are rarely understood by Balinese people.

At present, we find Balinese script classified into *Wresastra*, *Swalalita*, and *Modre*, derived from the Old Balinese script, and the Old Balinese script was derived from Pallava. In ancient times, this Balinese script was used by Balinese people in writing about everyday life and sacred matters. At present, more Balinese people use Latin script as a medium of communication, so they rarely use Balinese script. This condition causes the Balinese to understand Latin script better than Balinese script. The Balinese script is likely to be increasingly marginalized. It will only become the script of religious scriptures, and its use is only in a small part of people's lives, such as writing office nameplates, letterheads, street names, and Balinese script textbooks compiled by particular people who specifically study Balinese scripts in depth.

The Balinese script is partially used to write scripts used for ritual paraphernalia which are only performed by religious leaders. In general, most people need help understanding Balinese script, so Balinese people will increasingly not understand this script if it is infrequently used. Above all, regarding sacred scripts, only some people understand them commonly used to write religious matters, especially theological concepts. This raises the assumption that we are weak in instilling our literacy knowledge to the next generation so that they do not understand the script, becoming their identity as Balinese people, which at the same time will bury the theological concepts of their ancestral heritage. This will cause the generator to become illiterate about the beliefs passed down from generation to generation by their ancestors, resulting in a misunderstanding in grasping their beliefs. This motivates me to conduct this research, and hopefully, there will be references to understanding the theological script of the *Shivasogata* religion developing in Bali.

METHOD

This research is qualitative research using a theological approach. The data for this research was sourced from the sacred scripts on the Old Balinese inscription, the *Yé Té Mantra* inscription, and various palm-leaf manuscripts on the *Shivasogata* religion in Bali. Research data were collected through observation, reading, and recording and supported by bibliographical studies in the form of document data, books, articles, and so on (Strauss and Corbin 2003). The data were analyzed using the theory of symbols to interpret and describe the meaning or conceptual aspects of the script in the *Shaivasogata* religion (Ratna 2009). The analysis activity is ended with the conclusion and is presented using narration.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The Meaning of the Script as Symbol of *Buddhism Tattva*

Descriptions on the visualization of figures and *dharma* teachings of Buddhism in Bali, one of which is described in mantras and sacred script as contained in the *Yé Té Mantra* inscription, at least in the eighth or ninth century (Astawa, 2006; Astra 1997; Budiastra & Widia 1981; Goris, 1948). In the *Yé Té Mantra* inscription is written the *OM-kara* (b.2, line 5) in Shaivism is called *pranawa* (Astawa, 2007). In the *Sang Hyang Kamahayanikan* manuscript, two scripts accompany the *OM-kara* script called *Mantranaya*, namely three sacred scripts with magical powers, *OM AH UNG*. In the mantras of Buddhist priests in Bali, the *OM* script is usually used at the beginning of pronouncing the mantra. Besides, the *Sang Hyang Kamahayanikan* text also relates to the *Tathāgata*, beginning with the two scripts *ANG AH*, *Sang Hyang Adwaya*, as the father by *Bhaṭāra Buddha*. As for the wise, calm, and unwavering mind, it is considered *Sang Hyang Adwaya Jñāna*. *Sang Hyang Adwaya Jñāna* is Goddess *Bharāli Prajñāpāramitā*, posing as the mother of *Bhaṭāra Hyang Buddha*. The encounter of *adwaya* and *adwaya jñāna* making *Diva-rūpa* a form of *Bhaṭāra Buddha*, also called Lord *Maha Tapa*, who has found the truth or *Tathāgata*, is the center of worship and representing *Mahayana* teachings (Sedyawati, 2009; Sugriwa, 2012; Zoetmulder & Robson, 2004).



Bhaṭāra Buddha in the form of *Diwa-rūpa*, with the symbol of the sacred script *HRIH-kara*, white in color, using *dhwaya-mudra*, with the title of *Bhaṭāra Śākyamuni*, is called the preceptor of the gods. From the right side of *Bhaṭāra Śrī Śākyamuni*'s body comes out a red *Bhaṭāra*, wearing *dhyāna-mudra*, with the symbol *KRIH-kara*, called *Bhaṭāra Lokéśwara*. A *Bhaṭāra* was also born from the left side of *Bhaṭāra Śrī Śākyamuni*'s body, with indigo or bluish color, wearing *bhūhsparśa-mudra*, with the symbol *BRIH-kara*, named *Śrī Bajrapani*. These three *Bhaṭāras* are called *Bhaṭāra Ratnatraya*, also called *Buddha*, *Dharma*, and *Sangha*. He is also the essence of the existence of energy, words, and thoughts, and he is also the one who gave birth to decency, which is called *asih* (compassion), *punia* (charity), and *bhakti* (devotion), which wishes to perfect the universe.

After that, the *Bhaṭāra Śrī Wairocana* was born with the symbol *AH-kāra* from the face of *Śrī Śākyamuni*. *Bhaṭāra Lokéśwara* split himself into two, giving birth to *Bhaṭāra Akṣobhya* with the symbol *UNG-kāra* and *Ratnasambhawa* with the symbol *TRANG-kāra*. Likewise, *Bhaṭāra Śrī Bajrapani* was divided into two, which bore *Bhaṭāra Amitabha* with the sign *HRIH-kāra* and *Amoghasiddhi* with the emblem of *AH-kāra*. The five *Bhaṭāras* then had the title of *Pañca-Tathāgata* with another name of *Bhaṭāra Sarwa-jñāna*. In essence, at first, the *Buddha* was only one or *Diwa-rūpa*; then, *Ratnatraya*, or three parts of *Bhaṭāra*, were born from this one. Furthermore, *Ratnatraya* was born the *Pañca-Tathāgata* (Sugriwa, 2012). The five sacred and magic syllables consisting of *AH*, *UNG*, *TRANG*, *HRING*, and *AH* are called *pañca-wijakṣara* or *pañca-buddha*. *Pañcakṣara-buddha* reads *NA*, *MA*, *BU*, *DA*, *YA*. If added together, they become *daśākṣara-buddha*: *AH*, *UNG*, *TRANG*, *HRIH*, *AH*, *NA*, *MA*, *BU*, *DA*, *YA* (Sugriwa, 2012).

Bhaṭāra Wairocana is *rūpa*, namely: skin, flesh, ligaments, bones, blood, fat, and marrow (Sugriwa, 2012). *Dhyani Buddha Wairocana*, with the symbolic hand gesture of *dharmacakramudrā*, occupies the middle position, with the *swéta* color, on the human body occupies the *ushnisha* position (on top of the head). This placement symbolizes control of the five cardinal directions in the universe and several places in the human body. *Wairocana* reflects pure awareness. *Bhaṭāra Ratnasambhawa* is *wédanā*, the feeling of experiencing joy and sorrow. *Dhyani Buddha Ratnasambhawa* with the *waramudrā* fitting hand gesture, the left hand in the *dhyana* gesture, occupies the south direction, with the *pita* color, on the human body, it occupies the *Gulu* or neck position. *Ratnasambhawa* reflects the transformation of feelings or feelings directed at the notion that all beings are the same. *Bhaṭāra Amitābha* is *sangjñā*, namely *nāma* (Sugriwa, 2012). With the *dhyanamudrā* hand gesture, *Dhyani Buddha Amitabha* occupies the west direction, with *padmaraga color*, on the human body occupies the fly or forehead position. *Amitabha* reflects a perfect perception of the relationship between cause and effect to the suffering of existence which fosters compassion for all beings (Redig & R, 2018; Sugriwa, 2012).

Bhaṭāra Amoghasiddhi is *sangskāra*, made into an instrument of cause and effect. (Sugriwa, 2012). *Dhyani Buddha Amoghasiddhi* with the *abhayamudrā* or fitting hand gesture and the *dhyanamudrā* left-hand motion occupies the north direction. On the human body, it is in the *murdhanīya* or head position. *Amoghasiddhi* reflects the determination to do good to all beings. *Bhaṭāra Akṣobhya* is *wijñāna* or *Samya-jñāna*, namely knowing in reality as well as in thought (Sugriwa, 2012). *Dhyani Buddha Akṣobhya* with the *bhumisparsamudrā* fitting hand gesture, the left hand in the *dhyana* gesture occupies the east direction, with *nila* (indigo) color, on the human body occupies the position of *hṛdaya* or epigastrium. *Akṣobhya* reflects the power that gives rise to all forms, or in other words, "it's connected with mirror-like knowledge," which can perfectly perceive the "form element" (Redig & R, 2018; Sugriwa, 2012).

It is further explained that from *Bhaṭāra Wairocana*'s mind, *Bhaṭāra* was born whose special duties were multi-tasking, namely *Bhaṭāra Íswara*, *Bhaṭāra Brāhma*, and *Bhaṭāra Viṣṇu*. They were given the task of perfecting the universe and everything in it by *Bhaṭāra Wairocana* to make the principal elements and places where *bhaṭāra* was worshiped at that time. In this way, plants and all creatures came into existence. Then, heaven was created, full of gods, and the world was full of all creatures, especially humans. Similarly, the *pātālas* were full of *nāgas* or dragons made by *Bhaṭāra Íswara*, *Bhaṭāra Brāhma*, and *Bhaṭāra Viṣṇu*. That's why he is called *Bhaṭāra*, who is in charge of working, there is no place that he does not occupy, but all of them were made from the inner strength of *Bhaṭāra Wairocana*, who is in charge of working. Then, those *bhaṭāras* were created in the world with the mind mediated with statues, *Pratima* (sanctified effigies), pictures, and buildings, and were accompanied by five birth ceremonies. In short, the Almighty *Sang Hyang Diwa-rupa* became *Ratnatraya*, then became *Bhaṭāra Pañca Tathāgata*. From *Pañca Tathāgata* he became *Pañca Íswara*. From *Pañca Íswara*, he became *Brāhmaṛṣi*, and *Brāhmaṛṣi* created humans (Sugriwa, 2012).



The use of the script in the *Kasogatan* religion in Bali is a form of the symbol of *Bhaṭāra Buddha* and His emanations which are in transcendental form (*Niskala*), in addition to the use of statues and images in the *Sakala* form. The use of this sacred script can also function as an effective magical formula in guiding the *Atmika* to reach his goal of realizing the existence of *Bhatara Buddha* with his *Dharma* guiding him to get off misery (*māra*), shadows (*māya*), conquer worldly pleasures, practice *samādhi* yoga and strive for the attainment of nirvana (Redig, 2010; Rema, 2010; Sedyawati, 2009; Sugriwa, 2012). The word *Buddha* signifies spiritual and inner meanings, and the internal concept contains the essence of Buddhahood (Redig, 2010). The word *Buddha* comes from the root “budh” which means to be aware, to understand, to observe, to awaken, to be fully aware, to be enlightened, to be fully enlightened and the one having found enlightenment described in the embodiment of the attainment of perfection known as the *tri-kaya*, *tri ratna* (Redig & R, 2018; Sedyawati, 2009).

Samādhi yoga is carried out by getting used to chanting the *mantranaya* according to the movement of the breath when carrying out *prāṇāyāma*. *Mantranaya* is three sacred scripts having supernatural powers, *OM AH UNG*. The scripts are called *tryakṣara*, which is the essence of the *tri kaya bajra*, namely the sacred sound of *Bayu* (ability to move), *śabda* (ability to speak), and *hidep* (ability to think), which helps calm down the unity of energy, words, and thoughts (Sugriwa, 2012; Sudarsana, et al., 2023). The *Prāṇāyāma* is carried out by practicing *Sang Hyang Adwaya*, namely inhaling *bayū* or breathing accompanied by saying *ANG* in the heart. The breath is placed in the throat, ignoring incoming and outgoing breath from the nose, which is placed in the throat. It spreads all over the body, posing a red sun called *smṛti Surya*. And make the *bāyu* or breath sound *AH* and put it in the throat, it will disappear in the body, will become a calm moon and pleasantly quiet, and it is called *śanta Candra* or *śanta smṛti*. This needs to be used daily to eliminate mental impurities (Sugriwa, 2012).

In the state of *smṛti Surya* and *śanta Candra*, *adwaya jñana* occurs; the encounter of *adwaya* and *adwaya jñana* becomes *diwa rūpa*, which is a feeling of being bright all the time, clear and not tarnished by anything, like the light of a jewel, very bright as if it was always day, smelling good, not stained, beautiful appearance without defects, felt delicious as much as possible (Sugriwa, 2012). The ethical aspects called *pāramitā*, *yoga*, and *bhāwanā* are parts of *Dharma* that are important in living life to be free from *māra*. There is also *catur ārya Satya* after mastering *yoga* and *bhaawanā* (Sugriwa, 2012).

2. The Meaning of Script as a Symbol of Shaivite Tattva

Wrēastra, *Swalalita*, and *Modré* are essential scripts in Bali's development of the Shaivasogata religion. The *Wrēastra* script in Bali has 18 syllables, namely: *HA, NA, CA, RA, KA, GA, TA, MA, NGA, BA, SA, WA, LA, PA, DA, JA, YA, ŃA* (Nala, 1991). These scripts can be assembled into a sentence *hana caraka gata mangaba sawala pada jayaña*. This means that “two experienced soldiers (servants) have the same braveness.” These eighteen scripts are called *Wrēastra*, which are visible and can be taught to anyone. The *Swalalita* script has more numbers and variations, in which some of these two script types are used as sacred scripts and even arranged into *Modré* scripts. The *Wrēastra* and *Swalalita* scripts become holy scripts, for example, from *Ēkakṣara* (single script) to *Sad Dasakṣara* (sixteen scripts). This script is equipped with a *penganggé sastra* (appended and attached scripts), namely the completeness of the script in the form of a crescent-shaped *Ardha-Candra*, *windu* representing the sun in the circular shape, and *nada* symbolizing a star which is painted as a triangle. These three *penganggé sastra* diacritics are often paired with vowels (*A, É, I, O, U*) so that they are read as *ANG, ÉNG, ING, ONG, UNG*. These syllables are called *ANG-kara, ÉNG-kara, ING-kara, ONG-kara* and *UNG-kara*. These forms are called the *Modré* script (Nala, 1991).

The completeness of the three *Swalalita* scripts is often associated with the power and symbol of a god, so the shape of *windu* as a symbol of *Agni* (fire) of Lord Brahma is the same as the *ANG* script. The *Ardha-Candra* shape symbolizes water, Lord Vishnu, the same as the *UNG* script. And the form of *nada* is the symbol of air, Lord Shiva, the same as the *MANG* script. If these three scripts are put together, they will become *ANG-UNG-MANG* or *A-U-M*, read as *AUM* or *OM*. In Bali, it is pronounced *ONG*. The *ONG-kara* script is the source of all scripts, so it is called *wijaksara*, the holiest script, the symbol of Tri Murti's God (Suastika, 2005).

The *Wrēastra* script for the Balinese people is a symbol of the life and freedom of the Balinese people. This happens because when the script is voiced by opening the mouth for the first time through the pronunciation of *HA*, it will end with the exhalation of breath with *HA* exhalation. In addition, these scripts also have their respective positions in the human body. *HA*: on the crown, *NA*: between the eyebrows, *CA*: inside the eyes, *RA*: on the ears, *KA*: inside the nose, *DA*: in the mouth, *TA*: inside the chest, *SA*: on the



right hand (arm), *WA*: on the left hand (arm), *LA*: on the nose, *MA*: on right chest, *GA*: inside the left chest, *BA*: at the navel, *NGA*: inside the genital, *PA*: inside the buttock (anus, discharge) *JA*: on both legs (feet), *YA*: on the spine, *ÑA*: on the coccyx (Nala, 1991).

Script completeness or appended forms also have a position or place in the human body (microcosm), namely *ulu* (*palatal--i*): on the head, *taling* (palato-guttural--e/é): on the nose, *surang* (attached letter--r): on the hair, *nania* (appended script--ia): on the arm (hand), *wisah* (attached consonant--h), on the ear, *pepet* (guttural--e/ê/ë) on skullcap (skull), *cecek* (attached scripts--ng) on the tongue, *guwung* (attached scripts--ra): on the skin, *suku* (labial--u): on the limbs (legs), *carik* (stop): in the joints as well as *pamada* (opening remarks): in the heart. Several *Wréastra* and *Swalalita* scripts have high value and play a crucial role in microcosm. These scripts merge into *rwa-bhineda* (non-dualism) scripts: *ANG-AH*, triple scripts: *A-U-M*, *panca tirta*: *NA-MA-SI-WA-YA*, *panca brahma*: *SA-BA-TA-A-I*. If the *panca tirta* is combined with the *panca brahma*, they will create the *dasa aksara* (ten scripts). If the scripts in *panca tirta* are paired with the *panca-brahma* scripts, they will make *sanghyang panca aksara* (Nala, 1991). According to *Kanda Pat* palm-leaf manuscript, if a human being can master the method of using *pengangge-sastra* or *sastra-busana*, then he is considered to have got the teachings of Durga and will have miracles (Nala, 1991).

If he can use *wisah* and *taling*, he can have magic knowledge. If he can use *wisah* and *cecek*, he can carry out *hanuju*, demonstrating his power to a precise target. At the same time, someone who can take advantage of *busana sastra* like *wisah*, *taling*, *cecek*, and *suku* can become a *leak* Balinese mystical being. He is a *leak*, a great spiritual expert. He can control all the negative or possessive forces existing in this world. Using this *Pengangge aksara*, a complex image and symbol, require perseverance and a strong will to learn it. If one knows it wrongly, the power of these scripts can harm the lives of those who understand it. But people who can learn it correctly can use the scripts' power for good purposes, so they become *Balian penengen* to heal sick people affected by *balian pangiwa* disease. Each script, especially after several scripts are combined, will produce *sad dasaksara* (16 scripts), *catur dasaksara* (14 scripts), *dasaksara* (10 scripts), *pancaksara* (5 scripts), *tri aksara* (3 scripts), *dwi aksara* (two scripts) and *eksarara* (single script), has their images and symbols with *bayu* or *vayu* powers that can be utilized for the goodness and welfare of humanity. However, some people learn these scripts intending to make other people sick, so they are called *balian pangiwa*. Indeed, this is not what humans want (Nala, 1991).

Balinese people are a religious society. They have a confident attitude toward the world, people, and life. The philosophy of life of the Balinese people is always centered on things fundamental to human life. Where are they from, and where will they go (*sangkan paran dumadi*)? The viewpoint of Balinese people on the universe having the processes of creation, maintenance, and dissolution (*tri murti*) has given rise to the basic concepts that build and underlie the structure of Balinese culture (Nala, 2006).

A viewpoint on the world and life forms an organic whole characterized by expressing thoughts in symbols. Humans cannot get closer to God directly because God is transcendental, while humans are creatures bound in their mundane world. Therefore, humans try to get to know their God as far as can be known through symbols. The script plays a vital role in expressing the form of these symbols. It cannot be denied how important life is in balancing material and spiritual aspects, worldly aspects, and true freedom. The concept of balance and harmony in Balinese society reflects the harmony between humans and their Creator (*Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa*), humans with each other, and humans with their natural environment (Medera, 2005). In reality, this concept is embodied by *parhyangan*, *pawongan*, and *Palemahan* (places of worship, residential areas, and the natural environment), and this concept in the script is symbolized by the *ONG-kara* script as the embodiment of the Creator and His creation, namely this universe (Medera, 2005).

According to its honors, these *ONG-kara* occupy the highest honors from the lowest to the highest: *arcana*, *mudra*, *mantra*, *kuta mantra*, and *pranawa*, namely religious ceremonies, hand gestures, mantras, main mantras, and sacred syllables. The sacred syllable OM, also called *ONG-kara*, is higher than mantras and rituals (Agastia 2005). *ONG-kara* is the form of the whole. Finally, the *ONG-kara* disappeared within the *ardhacandra*. *Ardhacandra* disappeared in the *windu*, and *windu* vanished in the *nada*. *Nada* vanished in *niskala* and that's *pranawa* (*bijaksara ONG-kara*). The extended description of the *pranawa mantra* in *Bhuana Kosa* also forms the basis of *Shiva Tattva*, Shaiva philosophical teachings, concerning the teachings of the creation of the universe up to the teachings of its dissolution (release). *ONG-kara* is also a Mother because she gave birth to all that exists. Therefore, *ONG-kara* is also associated with Sakti as the power of creation (Agastia, 2005). The understanding of *ONG-kara* and other scripts, including the *rajah kajang* in various palm-leaf manuscripts, should be understood with basic knowledge of earth philosophy as contained in the teachings of *Tantra* (*Shiva-Buddha-Tantra*) (Agastia, 2005).



Ekaksara is a *Wijaksara* widely known by the Balinese script user community. The sacred script plays a central role in Hindu Divinity philosophy. *ONG-kara* is the embodiment of the Creator and His creation, namely this universe, and *ONG-kara* is a symbol of the universe (macrocosm). Awareness and balance between the universe and its Creator must always be maintained so that it can bring happiness and prosperity to this world and others. In practice, this concept is translated into religious ceremonies such as *Deva Yajna*, *Bhuta Yajna*, *Manusha Yajna*, *Rishi Yajna*, and *Pitri Yajna*. To support the implementation of the ceremony or *yajna*, which in essence aims to maintain the balance of relations between the world and all its contents, the *ONG-kara* symbol above develops into *pangider-ider* (Medera 2005; Suastika, 2005; Sudiarta, 2005). As for the meaning of writing sacred scripts on religious ceremonial facilities, it functioned to present gods in that place so that the area becomes holy, or if it is associated with the human body, the body will immediately turn sacred in addition to getting protection from evil forces (Titib, 2003).

ONG-kara is a symbol of God, a sign of *bhuwana agung* (macrocosm) and *bhuwana alit* (microcosm), which are united, like the Javanese expression *manunggaling kawula gusti*. This illustrates the concept of balance and harmony in the life of Balinese people and reflects the harmonious relationship between humans and their Creator, fellow humans, and humans and their natural environment. The balance and harmony contained in the *ONG-kara* script are visualized in the *Pitra Yajna* ceremony by cremating the deceased's body. According to Hinduism, humans consist of two physical and spiritual elements. In addition, humans are also comprised of three layers, namely *raga sarira* (gross body), *sukma sarira* (subtle body), and *anthakarana sarira* (causal body) (Purwiati, 2005).

The elements of the layers on the human body are returned to their Creator through script symbols written on the *kajang* used in the *Pitra Yajna* ceremony. It happens because God is the origin of the creation of the universe and everything in it, including humans. He is also the final destination for the return of all creations. The same is true for the *Atman* in each human body. He who gives life to a human also gives life to all organs of the human body. *Atman* is a small fragment or drop of *Brahman*, which one day will return to its sacred origins when it comes. *Atman* needs to be sanctified, and a ceremony where one of the paraphernalia is *sastra kelepasan* or script of liberation is required. Another thing also causing the use of *sastra kelepasan* is the presence of hope from their descendants that the *Atman* of their ancestors will not suffer because of the influence of *samsara* (the cycle of death and rebirth). At least, it is equally born as a human, not born as an animal. The main hope is for the atonement of sins. The *Atman* is sanctified. Its attachment to the mundane world is cut off and must be united with its source (Wikarman, 2002).

In addition, to make human life in the mundane world harmonious with nature, *Bhuta Yajna*, a sacred sacrifice ceremony offered to the *bhutas* and *kala*, namely natural forces that arise as a result of an inharmonious relationship between macrocosm and microcosm, is held. This ceremony includes sacrifices to protect nature, plants, and animals. The use of sacred script in *rerajahan* serves to neutralize negative forces (Sudiarta, 2005).

Human life is very sacred and significant. At birth, a human is pure and holy, but as he grows up, he loses his human values because of his excessive desires and friendship with worldly connections. Nowadays, human values have become a rarity. Human should continue to be as pure as when he was born. Excessive desire is responsible for the loss of human values in humans. Born as a human, one must practice human values. The Vedic statement that God came down to earth in human form is frequently not believed. This is because people need to walk the path of truth. God will be pleased if humans find fulfillment by practicing human values. Human life is the most sacred and noblest, and it is the most sublime. God is in the human body, so it is said that the human body is the temple and the place where God abides. Understanding this truth is the goal of spiritual pursuits. Within this bodily temple, God is embedded in the form of *Atma*. The *Atma* is described as an immaculate, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, conscious, independent, and the embodiment of holiness. Divine consciousness exists in every human body. One who has realized that God is present in every being is a true devotee (Ra, 2008).

The body as a temple needs to be sanctified before it is filled with sacred things. This is done in the *pawintenan*, and *pediksan* ceremony, which is equipped with a white water lily inscribed with *Wijaksara* containing religious values. The water lily symbolizes knowledge or the embodiment of Goddess *Saraswati*. The *wijaksara* contained in the water lily functions as the abode of *Lord Dikpala* (*Dewata Nawa Sanga*) and functions to purify oneself so that the person concerned is not contaminated in learning and implementing spiritual teachings. The use of *Wijaksara* is also carried out in the implementation of the *Manusha Yajna* ceremony, which is a sacred sacrifice aiming to preserve life physically and mentally, starting from the materialization of the body in the womb until the end of human life. The *Wijaksara* script in this ceremony can be found on ceremonial paraphernalia such as the care of the placenta and the *nyambutin* or welcoming ceremony. In the care of the placenta, the *Wijaksara* script is in the form



of the *ONG-kara* and *AH-kara* scripts. The *ONG-kara* script is on the top of the coconut used in the ceremony of caring for the placenta, while the *AH-kara* script is on the bottom of the coconut. The *nyambutin* ceremony usually contains the *Wijaksara* script in the form of a water lily with the *dasaksara* script based on a winnower. After the painting is ritualized, the baby's legs are stepped on the painting as a sign that from then on, and the baby may step on the ground. This ceremony means to ask for the baby to be safe and live a long life (Sudiarta, 2005).

Script painting is made on the human body because God encompasses all life, where every deed, thought, and word is a step toward God. And God is not far away in Heaven. He is within us, with us, besides, behind, and in front of us. He sits in every cell as life. In every atom as activity, he is all. Every human being is equipped with intelligence capable of seeking, investigating, and experiencing the center of truth, namely God Himself. Since the intelligence of the mind, intellect, and reason is meant to take care of oneself, it will not be a burden. After that, one can help others. In the human body, sacred *ONG-kara* script or *ekaaksara* and the *sahasra chakra* (*sahasra*=thousand) reside as one of a series of kundalini chakras on the crown (*Shivadvara*). Sang Hyang Wenang, whose function is to control all the activities of the chakras in the human body, also resides in this place. *ONG-kara* is a symbol of *Ida Sang Hyang Widhi*. At the beginning of each mantra, it is always preceded by reciting *ONG* or *OM*, as the essence of the power of prayer that can move and vibrate the universe (macrocosm) and everything in it, asking *Hyang Widhi* so that all human activities are given blessing, grace and receive His approval. Spells of mantras are vibrations that propagate through waves traveling through the air to all the places around it. The stronger the vibration of a mantra, the broader and farther the range of the vibration wave propagation will be, which will seep into the deepest recesses of the human heart around it (Ra, 2008; Nyoman, et al., 2021).

Those who know or have studied impending death can use the *ONG-kara* script to regulate the breathing process. Prepare the self well to achieve release or *Moksha*. When breathing, it is not allowed while snoring. Breath sounds should be arranged so that they are not too loud. This situation is lived so that the *Atma* can unite with *Paramatma*. *Moksha* will be attained this way, so there will be no *punarbhawa* or reincarnation back to *mercapada* (mundane world). When regulating the breath, the sound of the *ONG-kara* or *OM-kara* script will descend into the heart. The position of the *ONG-kara* script is reversed, called *ONG-kara Sumungsang*, where the *nada* is the lower end. The sharp tip of the *nada* serves as the spearhead opening the way so that it can meet the *gulu* (base of the throat). Try to make the *ONG-kara* sound above and the *ONG-kara* sound in the heart spreading through *niradnyana*. This is *paramayoga*, the highest yoga, which aims to eliminate all *citta-wyapara*, dynamic behavior, or thoughts. If this yoga practice is wrong or deviates from what it should be, the result is *punarbhawa*, reborn into the world (Ra, 2008).

The sacred script is often identified with *kedyatmikan* (occult science), which is related to actions or thoughts based on supernatural powers that seek and want to know the reality behind natural phenomena (Bandana, 2005). The sacred script that has to do with *catur sanak* (*kanda pat* or four brothers) can be used for summoning and placed on the body, causing *sakti sidhi ngucap* (has supernatural power as uttered). Nonetheless, this view can only be realized by those who are obedient, have high talent and discipline, knows clear rules, and are chosen people who carry out God's task in the world of holiness. It will be troublesome if someone has supernatural power but does not know the rules of purity and self-control. That is why, before someone learns spiritual knowledge, he is hoped to learn morality first so that he can control himself well and become a ruler over himself. The opposite does not happen. Instead, he is influenced by his ambitions (Wastawa, et al., 2023).

A person who truly has supernatural power (*sakti*) according to religion, or divine teachings, is a person who is the ruler over himself and can control himself according to religious education, but for some circles, what is called *sakti* has magical power. This notion is refuted by the teachings of liberation or *kamoksan* (release), as taught in the *Kamoksan* palm-leaf manuscript. Magical power is a means to achieve deliverance. To that end, it was then created the essence of *sastra* through *Modré* to be able to see the magical realism and the reality of the causes and effects of the actions affecting birth and the afterlife world. If the magical powers attained are used to fulfill sensory and worldly pleasures, this will hinder his release and the freedom of the soul because of his attachment to the world. So having magical power is extraordinary, but it will be perfect if one has ideal self-control as well, towards the level of soul liberation. So supernatural power is the power that should be used to liberate the soul from attachment by discovering the view of the magical world, which is governed by natural law. Knowing the laws of nature, a person will discipline himself so that the gods, all *bhuta-kala* and *panca mahabutha*, will pity him. It's this condition that gives him the ability of *wak bajra sidhi ngucap*, meaning to have supernatural power due to the protection of the gods and pitied by the world.



Learning spiritual knowledge is expected to be able to discipline oneself, not to violate, to keep one's words. One who speaks carelessly and improperly talks to the incorrect person, not in the right place and in the right situation about this teaching, then such a person will get a curse from the Deity abiding in Dalem Temple. As a consequence, the cursed person will lose his transcendental powers, be attacked by disease outbreaks, and turn crazy, extravagant, blind as well as short in age. Studying spiritual knowledge is very difficult because it will harm one's self if he is not strong enough or unable to discipline himself.

The sacred script becomes the content of the spell (*mantra*) arrays. Each mantra begins with the pronunciation of *ONG* as well as other holy scripts, such as *ANG*, *AH* (*dwi aksara*), *ANG*, *UNG*, and *MANG* (*tri aksara*), which are called *wija mantra* (*bija mantra*). Specific scripts that have magical powers are used to compose a spell. Mantras pronounced repeatedly in various combinations and contexts can create a particular pattern of vibrations. With standardized methods and rules, mantras must be pronounced correctly and confidently, according to rhythm (*svara*) and voice type. Good vibrations will have a positive effect if this mantra is uttered with complete purity and sincerity and a calm and clear mind (Nala, 2006; Perni & Sudarsana, 2020).

The syllables or words in a *mantra* may mean nothing in everyday language, but they have vibrations that can lift the listeners' moods and minds. For example, mantras based on one syllable called *bija* or *wijamantra*, namely *OM*, *ANG*, *UNG*, *MANG*, *HRANG*, *HRIH*, *SAH*, and so on, have no meaning in everyday Balinese language. But as a *mantra*, this syllable can create an atmosphere of deep religious magic in the listeners. The importance of the words in a *mantra* is already contained in the *svarupa* or its embodiment of the word. Its embodiment is a symbol of omnipotence, power, or transcendental powers of *Hyang Widhi*, manifested in the form of a god, goddess, *bhatara*, *bhatari*, *Sang Hyang*, or the elements of the *panca mahabhuta* (Nala, 2006; Ratni, et al., 2019). According to *Usada Netra*, by learning the *dasa aksara*, *panca aksara*, *tri aksara*, *dwi aksara* and *eka aksara*, humans will be able to know themselves physically and mentally. Armed with the knowledge of the scripts, humans can treat themselves when sick and defend themselves from the threat of illness and disease that will attack them. By apprehending the scripts to infiltrating into all parts of the body accompanied by the words *SANG*, *BANG*, *TANG*, *ANG*, *ING*, *NANG*, *MANG*, *SING*, *WANG*, and *YANG*, all poisons and diseases that enter the body will be destroyed (Nala, 1991).

The *OM-kara* reading is done early in the morning and repeated 21 times. Reading *OM* for each of the twenty components described above will help its purification and clarity. Then, adding the twenty-first *OM* reading as a culmination will prepare the reader to unite with *Sang Hyang* (Great Consciousness). This *pranawa* recitation ends with the pronunciation of *Shanti* (peace) three times, as purification and cleansing of the body, mind, and soul. By reading this *OM-kara* or *pranawa*, we will be equipped with the strength and ability to calm down all the worries arising in our minds to speed up obtaining God's blessings or grace. Reading *OM-kara* is something that needs to be done because this reading will bring in benefits. These benefits include the ability to cleanse and purify the veil of *Maya*. It is like putting a light in the yard if spoken out loudly. It will light up around the house yard. *OM-kara*, spoken in a whisper, is like putting a light on the house door. It will light up the house a little and light up the yard. *OM-kara* recited in the heart is like putting a light in place, which will light up the home (Ra 2008).

CONCLUSION

Various scripts existed in Bali, such as the *Pre-Nagari*, Old Balinese, and New Balinese scripts. The scripts played an essential role in developing the *Shaivasogata* religion in Bali. The *Pre-Nagari* script was used to write Buddhist *Wijaksara* and *Yé Té Mantra* around the eighth to ninth centuries. The Old Balinese government used the Old Balinese script to write various royal regulations, including rules on the *Shaivasogata* religion, which was in effect from the ninth century to the mid-fourteenth century. The New Balinese script existing today, apart from being used to write about everyday life, is also used to write the theological concept of the *Shaivasogata* religion. Buddhism uses sacred scripts from *éka aksara* to Buddhist *dasa aksara*, as well as *mantras* that describe the Buddha as the actual truth. Buddha, through his *dharma*, advised that humans should try to defeat *māra* and reach *nirvana*. The concept of the Shaiva religion, written in the form of a sacred script from *éka aksara* to *sodasaksara* and *mantras* that explain Shaiva Tattva, is a philosophy of God and the universe and the efforts of *Atmika Tattva* to purify himself to achieve moksha.

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