



INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR
PROCEEDING



**“Sanatana Dharma as the Eternal Truth
and Spread in the Different Forms”**



INSTITUT HINDU DHARMA NEGERI DENPASAR

2017

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FOREWORD

Prof. Bansi Pandit (2009) described that Hindu religion is the oldest surviving religion in the world. Inspired by divine revelations (by the breath of God), the ancient rishis (sages and seers) sang the divine songs in the forests and on the river banks of India, thousands of years before Moses, Buddha or Christ. Over many centuries, these divine songs continued to be recited by the sages which combined wisdom eventually gave birth to the Hindu religion popularly known as Hinduism today. The original name of Hindu religion is *Sanatana Dharma* (Eternal of Universal Righteousness).

Moreover, Swami Shivananda described that Hinduism is the religion of the Hindus, a name given to the Universal Religion which hailed supreme in India. It is the oldest of all living religions. This is not founded by any prophet. Buddhism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism which owe their origin to the prophets. Their dates are fixed. But no such date can be fixed for Hinduism. Hinduism is not born from the teachings of particular prophets. It is not based on a set of dogmas preached by a particular set of teachers. It is free from religious fanaticism. Hinduism is also known by the names of *Sanatana-Dharma* and *Vaidika-Dharma*. *Sanatana-Dharma* means eternal religion. Hinduism is as old as the world itself. Hinduism is the mother of all religions. **Hindu scriptures are the oldest in the world**, *Sanatana-Dharma* is so called, not only because it is eternal, but also because it is protected by God and because it can make us eternal. (<http://www.dlshq.org/download/hinduismbk.htm>, access Tanggal 8-7-2017).

Donder (2013) wrote that misunderstanding or misconception of non-Hindus about Hinduism is mainly caused by their ignorance about the implementation of the Hindu rituals. They think the ritual implementation using various means are intended to feed demons or other spirits. The accusation against Hindus as the worshipper of a satanic cult is widely addressed to Hindus in Bali because they still practice animal sacrifices until today. Non-Hindu parties forget that all the ritual means of paraphernalia which are symbols used to reveal the abstract or the transcendental. The sacrifice of animal blood is the most ancient sacrificial symbol made by all the religions. However, the offering of animal blood is still in practice but some others have abandoned it. Blood sacrifice regarded as a means of stimulating or a symbol of harmony can be traced back to the book entitled *The Power of Symbols*.

The Hindu's teaching can be applied to the religious life by everyone who declared himself as a Hindu at every place, although his performance of ritual and custom are different, it is not a problem. Hindu teaching is like a flower in the garden, which is very beautiful with uncounted kinds of color. It is not beautiful if the flower in the garden is consisting of single color flower only. Similarly, the Hindu consisted of some colors and forms of religious activities, which are different at each place. So, although the Hindu in Bali has different

forms of its practice compared with Hindu in India, but, the essence is just the same. The colored fact of Hindu has definite by the Balinese language as the concept of *desa*, *kala*, and *patra*, it means that the Hindu teaching depends on the place, time, and condition. That caused, although the teaching is same, however, it can be shown by the different form according to the place, time, and condition. It is called the universal religion.

Denpasar, July 12th 2017

The Chairman of Doctoral Program of Religious Studies

Denpasar State Hindu Dharma Institute

Drs. I Ketut Donder, M.Ag., Ph.D.

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UNIVERSALITY OF THE *SANATANA DHARMA* TEACHING BECOME THE SOURCE OF ALL RELIGIONS AND ITS PRACTICE

I Ketut Donder

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ABSTRACT

Prof. Bansi Pandit (2009:21) described that Hindu religion is the oldest surviving religion in the world. Inspired by divine revelations (“by the breath of God”), the ancient *rishis* (sages and seers) sang divine songs in the forests and on the river banks of India, many thousands of years before Moses, Buddha or Christ. Over many centuries these divine songs continued to be recited by the sages whose combined wisdom eventually gave birth to the Hindu religion popularly known as Hinduism today. The original name of Hindu religion is *Sanatana Dharma* (Eternal of Universal Righteousness).

Though the genesis of the term Hindu is somewhat controversial, the consensus among scholars is that as early as 500 BCE, the ancient Persians called the Indian people living on the bank of the river Indus (known as *Sindhu* in Sanskrit) as *Sindhus*. In the Persian language, the word *Sindhu* became Hindu and the people living in India came to be known as Hindus.

Unlike other religions of the world, Hindu religion neither originated from a single founder or a single scripture, nor did it begin at a particular point in time. It is impossible to define the exact place and time of its origin. The date of approximately 1500 BCE, usually stated to be the origin of Hindu religion in the standard text books, is based upon the old Aryan Invasion Theory that has now lost its credibility. According to this theory, the Vedic Aryans came from Central Asia, invaded India around 1500 BCE, destroyed the more advanced indigenous Harappan civilization, and established the Vedic culture in India. Based upon the current archaeological and literary evidence, modern scholars have concluded that there never was an Aryan invasion and that the Rigvedic people, who called themselves Aryans (the word *Arya* in Sanskrit means wise), were indigenous to India and were present as one of the original ethnic groups since 6500 BCE or earlier.

Key word: *universality, Sanatana Dharma, teaching, source, all religion, practice*

I. INTRODUCTION

Prof. Bansi Pandit (2009:22) also described that *Sanatana Dharma* flourished from the pre-historic times in India in the form of a monotheistic Hindu pantheon (i.e. the worship of one Supreme Lord in various way and forms). Meanwhile a number of social vices rituals, animal sacrifices, rigid operation of the caste system, and self-declared Brahmin superiority over other castes. In period marked by rebellion, Buddhism and Jainism emerged in India. Buddhism dominated for a period of approximately 1000 years (200 BCE – 800 AD). However, its influence in India gradually eroded due to internal strife in its organization and the resistance put up by *Sanatanists* (the followers of *Sanatana Dharma*). The rise of Buddhism, however, opened the eyes of *Sanatanists*. They accepted much of Buddha’s message and included him as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Buddha’s message of deep friendship (*mahamaitri*) and unlimited compassion (*mahakaruna*) toward fellow beings was incorporated into *Sanatana Dharma* as *Bhakti*

(devotion) *Yoga*. The worship of Lord Shiva, Divine Mother, Sri Rama and Sri Krishna through *Bhakti Yoga* became very popular among Hindus. In about 700 AD, Adi Shankara *acharya* (a famous saint, philosopher, and scholar) played a leading role in opposing Buddhism and upholding the cause of *Sanatana Dharma* in India. He also brought the teaching of the Bhagavad-Gita to the forefront.

II. DISCUSSION

2.1 Hindu as the Oldest Religion in the World

Discuss about the Hindu religion is not easy, because we must study deeply and need more time and more knowledge. Some people who is less the knowledge of Hindu will be confuse to understand related to the age of the Hindu history that wrote by the very different time by each historian. It should be research carefully. According to the history of Hindu's age, no one single scholar can give the exactly approximate time. As Prof. Bansi Pandit described, that should be recognized that authorities differ on the dates prior to approximately 500 BCE to which some events are signed. The dates are, however, considered lower estimates by many modern scholars. And then, according to knowledge of the Hindu history, it is very influenced by the scholars' perspective.

And very strong influence is the Hindu history composed by the Asiatic Society or the Organization of Orientalism. The study of orientalism today is not popular because later known this study as a special Western hegemony to the Eastern. The typical of study special for marginalized of the Hindu was very clear described by Swami Prakashnand Saraswati in his book entitle *The True History and the Religion of India* which it was published and print by the Oxford publisher. So, whose one to learn about the Hindu history or the teaching of the Hindu, need extra careful to search and chose of the sources by who are the books were written. Through read this book will know how Dr. Sir William Jones who is President of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, gave his tenth anniversary discourse on February 28, 1793. The topic was, "Asiatic history, Civil and Natural" and it was published in the fourth volume of the Asiatic Researches, first printed in 1807, reprint 1979. This was his third attempt to destroy the culture and the history of Bharatavasha or India by mutilating the historic dates. Later, the world known that the Asiatic Society whatever gift benefit to the existence of Hindu knowledge, but, the other side Asiatic Society which is the formal institution of the Brithis Government in India, effort by the strong power to broke of Indian history.

Very important to mention in this discussion, is the description by R. Paryana Suryadipura about the age or the existence of the Hindu. Suryadipura (1958) who is the Indonesian Muslim scholar wrote a book by the title *Manusia dengan Atoomnja dalam Keadaan Sehat dan Sakit (Anthropobioloie Berdasarkan Atoomphysica)*, through read this book will know his respected to the Hindu teaching. Despite most of the Muslim very fanatic and do not like to accept the other religion teaching, but, Suryadipura who is very different among the Muslim. Suryadipura, wrote that Hindu is the oldest religion in the world. Suryadiputra (1958:9-10)

stated that India is the ancestor of all civilizations and all cultures in the world. So, by this reason, Suryadipura when he wrote the chapter of Creation, he starts the Vedic verses.

And then, still to discuss of the Hindu age, very important to mention some scholars; namely Swami Śivananda states that Hindu Dharma is the mother of all religions, because the Hindu scriptures are the oldest on earth (Śivananda, 2003:2). In another way, Swami Rama states that Vedic religion is the oldest and universal religion (Rāma, 2002: 267). Hinduism is the oldest living organized religion in the world (with its roots pre-dating history). It has primarily evolved from the Vedic religion of the Aryans which is often referred to as '*Vaidika Dharma*' (Religion of the Vedas) or '*Sanatana Dharma*' (Ancient and Eternal religion). The concepts of Dharma, Karma and Brahman (the Supreme Being), from the three pillars of this '*Sanatana Dharma*' (Rao, 2012:1). And then, Ashok Tyagi (2015:18) wrote that all philosophies based out of Indian thoughts, similarly, owe the origin to the Vedas. The Veda, are probably the earliest documents of the human mind and is indeed difficult to say when the earliest portions of the Vedas came into existence. Swami Mukhyananda (2000:18) wrote that Hinduism or Hindu Dharma is traditionally designated by several names such as *Sanatana Dharma*, *Vedantinism*, Hindu Dharma with its very long history of over 8000 years. And, there are many authors described, that is true that the Hindu religion is the oldest religion over the world. Although the Hindu is the oldest religion, but it exists till today. As the oldest religion, that is why the Hindu teaching consist of all isms from the primitive's isms, until the super-modern isms. Related to Swami Mukhyananda's statement, Kishore (2006:3) also wrote that the roots of Hinduism reach deep into pre-historic hoary past. It has evolved over these millennia, and still this process continues. Dynamism, tolerance, catholicity, assimilation, inclusiveness, optimism and unity in diversity have always been its hallmarks.

Deshpande (2005:11) wrote that for centuries the Western world looked upon India as a land of mystery, wealth and excitement. India's recorder civilization is one of the oldest and longest in the course of world history. From the dim past it has been the cradle of human civilization. The ancient dates of India history are the Vedas, but which period they were composed in, has been a matter of controversy and speculation. The Vedas themselves speak of the 'forefather' who had achieved great spiritual conquests. Some historians have felt that the forefathers of Vedic sages must have lived around 10,000 BC., or even earlier. Deshpande's statement same with the Dogra's statement who states that Vedas have recognized as the primary source of Dharma, traditions and practices of the Hindus. Sen (2005:4) wrote that the definition of Hinduism presents another difficulty. Hinduism is more like a tree that has grown gradually than like a building that has been erected by some great architect at some definite point in time. It contains within it, as we shall see, the influences of many cultures, and the body of Hindu thought thus offers as much variety as the Indian nation itself.

Finally, related with all discussion above, Donder (2006) in *Brahmavidya – the Theology of Universal Affection*, stated, that the Hindu as an umbrella of all isms, from the super- primitive animism till super modern of monotheism. So, all types of the ism or faith will be found in the Hindu, that cause the Hindu teaching is not like to reject for all isms in all religions. It is the natural typical of the Hinduism it may called as the mother of all religions. Jay Hindu!

2.2 Hindu as the Oldest Religion and its Special Character

Most of the historians known that Hindu is the oldest religion over the world. But, because the date of Hindu born cannot be approximate exactly, although Hindu is the oldest, finally, some of historian deny the fact, because they need a proof, like manuscripts, artifact, etc., and then they approximate by their perspective. That is why we found various information about the Hindu age, which each contrary to the others. Swami Sivananda described with confidently that:

Hinduism is the religion of the Hindus, a name given to the Universal Religion which hailed supreme in India. It is the oldest of all living religions. This is not founded by any prophet. Buddhism, Christianity and Mohammedanism owe their origin to the prophets. Their dates are fixed. But no such date can be fixed for Hinduism. Hinduism is not born of the teachings of particular prophets. It is not based on a set of dogmas preached by a particular set of teachers. It is free from religious fanaticism.

Hinduism is also known by the names *Sanatana-Dharma* and *Vaidika-Dharma*. *Sanatana-Dharma* means eternal religion. Hinduism is as old as the world itself. Hinduism is the mother of all religions. Hindu scriptures are the oldest in the world, *Sanatana-Dharma* is so called, not only because it is eternal, but also because it is protected by God and because it can make us eternal.

Vaidika-Dharma means the religion of the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* are the foundational scriptures of Hinduism. The ancient Rishis and sages of India have expressed their intuitive spiritual experiences (*Aparoksha-Anubhuti*) in the Upanishads. These experiences are direct and infallible. Hinduism regards the spiritual experiences of the Rishis of yore as its authority. The priceless truths that have been discovered by the Hindu Rishis and sages through millennia constitute the glory of Hinduism. Therefore, Hinduism is a revealed religion (<http://www.dlshq.org/download/hinduismbk.htm>, access on 8-7-2017).

Hinduism is the oldest religion on earth. Even, it is said that Hinduism is the mother of all the religions. However, the eldership does not automatically make the Hinduism easily understood and respected by the religions born later. Frequently the religions, which had born later, insult Hinduism. It becomes the source of disharmony of Hinduism with the other faiths. Then, such disharmony can lead to disintegration of

humanity. On that account, to realize the harmony of mankind in the world, all the adherents of religions should not insult one another. Indeed, such reciprocal insulting arises because of the lack of understanding. On that account, mutual understanding among all the devotees is very important (Donder, 2013).

Misunderstanding or misconception of non-Hindus about Hinduism is mainly caused by their ignorance about the implementation of the Hindu rituals. They think the ritual implementation using various means are intended to feed demons or other spirits. Accusation against Hindus as worshipper of satanic cult is widely addressed to Hindus in Bali because they still practice animal sacrifices until today. Non-Hindu parties forget that all the ritual means of paraphernalia are symbols used to reveal the abstract or the transcendental. The sacrifice of animal blood is the most ancient sacrificial symbol made by all the religions. However, the offering of animal blood is still in practice but some others have abandoned it. Blood sacrifice regarded as a means of stimulating or a symbol of harmony can be traced back through the book entitled *The Power of Symbols*.

2.1 Emanation Theory and Flexibility of the Hindu Teaching

The nature of Hindu is like water of river which is flow along till the ocean area. Along line of the river it will be bring some materials right side and left side which are there on the river. That cause along flow of water in the river colored depended with the material beside of river. By flowing the water, it will be get its purify. It is the essence of Emanation Theory. The Hindu teaching is similar with the river's nature, that cause the Hindu teaching can analysis by the Emanation Theory. If one has not understood to the character nature of the Hindu flexible's teaching, the he will be confused and will many questions rose within.

Discussion about flexibility in the Hindu religion cannot be separated with the essence of the '*Sanātana Dharma*', because, in very ancient name of the Hinduism is actually the '*Sanātana Dharma*' that means 'the Eternal Truth'. It is the flexibility of Hinduism or *Sanātana Dharma* that makes it able to stand against the ravages of time and this religion has survived since ancient times till the present. Hinduism is the oldest religion in the world; and the other religions are younger if compared to the age of the Hindu religion. Entering in the '*Sanātana Dharma*', we enter deeply into the '*Vedānta*', because *Vedānta* is the crowning glory of the '*Sanātana Dharma*'. Under the *Vedānta* all the sects can grow and develop. Although each sect can grow and develop; but they must accept the '*Upaniṣad*' as the authority. Growth and development of many sects are causing growth and development of many kinds of rituals. We must know the reasons for which these sects are developing influenced by the '*Vedānta*'. To understand these reasons, we must enter deeply into the *Vedānta* as taught by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and other Swamis. So, many sects are the cause of the existence of many kinds of rituals as logical consequences; if we accept the existence of many sects, then we must also accept many kinds of rituals. So, this brief discussion

proves that Hinduism is the eternal truth. Hinduism has always been able to maintain itself as the Eternal Truth because the teachings of Hinduism are flexible. Flexibility in Hinduism means "adaptability". So the very cause of the existence of Hinduism is this flexibility or elasticity. Therefore, whenever and wherever the Hindus live, their rituals are to be applied softly, not rigidly. Therefore, discussion on the Hindu rituals must be viewed from the perspective of '*Sanātana Dharma*'.

Discussion of the flexibility in Hinduism must start from the context of Hinduism in India, because, as stated earlier, the origin of Hinduism is India. Besides, it is a fact that the Hindus in India have implemented Hinduism in flexible ways according to the demands of the times. And obviously this flexibility has made India the largest democracy in the world.

2.3 The Correct and Complete Definition Who Is a Hindu

As described above, that Hindu is the mother of all religions, as a mother, Hindu love all of her children, whatever of their condition. Like a mother, Hindu no give the single definition about who is a Hindu. Shivananda (in <http://www.dlshq.org/download/hinduismbk.htm>, accessed 8/7/2017), described that in a meeting of the *Sanatana Dharma Sabha*, Lokamanya Tilak said: (1) "A Hindu is he who believes that the *Vedas* contain self-evident and axiomatic truths." The Hindu *Maha Sabha* has given another definition: (2) "A Hindu is one who believes in a religion which has originated in India." (3) "Those who burn the dead are Hindus." This is another definition given by some. (4) "He who protects the cows and the *Brahmins* is a Hindu." This is another definition given by some. Some define: (5) "A Hindu is one who regards India as his motherland and the most sacred spot on earth." Some others define: (6) "He who calls and considers himself a Hindu is a Hindu." Some define: (7) "He who accepts the *Vedas*, the *Smritis*, the *Puranas* and the *Tantras* as the basis of religion and of the rule of conduct, and believes in one Supreme God (*Brahman*), in the Law of *Karma* or retributive justice, and in reincarnation (*Punarjanma*), is a Hindu." (8) "He who follows the *Vedic* or *Sanatana-Dharma* is a Hindu." This is the definition by some. (9) "He who is a follower of the *Vedanta* is a Hindu." This is another definition given by some others. (10) "He who has perfect faith in the Law of *Karma*, the law of reincarnation *Avatara*, ancestor worship, *Varnashrama Dharma*, *Vedas* and existence of God, (11) he who practises the instructions given in the *Vedas* with faith and earnestness, (12) he who does *Sandhya*, *Sraaddha*, *Pitri-Tarpana* and the *Pancha-Maha-Yajnas*, (13) he who follows the *Varnashrama Dharmas*, (14) he who worships the *Avataras* and studies the *Vedas*, is a Hindu." This is the definition given by some highly cultured men. This is the only correct and complete definition.

Related with some definitions above, it can be applied to the religious life that everyone at every place who declared himself as a Hindu, although his performance of ritual and custom are different, is no problem. Hindu teaching is like a flower garden, which is very beautiful with uncounted kinds of color of flower. Is not beautiful if flower garden is

consisting of single color flower only. Similarly, the Hindu consisted of some colors and forms of religious activities, which are different at each place. So, although the Hindu in Bali maybe different form of its practice if compare with Hindu India, but, the essence is same. The colored fact of Hindu has definite by the Balinese language as the concept of *desa*, *kala* and *patra*, is mean that the Hindu teaching depend with the place, time and condition. That caused, although the teaching is same, but, it can be show by the different form according to the place, time and condition.

III. CONCLUSION

Hindu religion is the oldest surviving religion in the world. Inspired by divine revelations (“by the breath of God”), the ancient rishis (sages and seers) sang divine songs in the forests and on the river banks of India, many thousands of years before Moses, Buddha or Christ. Over many centuries these divine songs continued to be recited by the sages whose combined wisdom eventually gave birth to the Hindu religion popularly known as Hinduism today. The original name of Hindu religion is *Sanatana Dharma* (Eternal of Universal Righteousness).

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