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# Theological Critics to Yoga Tourism in Bali

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## Abstract

Yoga tourism in Bali offers yoga for health, even though yoga is actually the stages of achieving samadhi. Originally definition of samadhi on the Yoga Sutra Patanjali is *svarupa sunyam* which means the annihilation of various forms of the self, in order those remain are God himself. The gap between the goals of yoga and its practices in yoga tourism raises research problems in this article, such are yoga practices and critics on yoga tourism. These problems are analyzed qualitatively, by using the method of collecting data through observation and interviews. The result is that the practice of yoga in Bali tourism is oriented towards physically health, so that it deviates from the essence of yoga which is a mental exercise. Therefore, tourism yoga is health tourism, not spiritual tourism that bring tourists to spiritual goals. In this case, there has been a process of commodification on yoga which has resulted on the selling of yoga commodities that are not in accordance with the original. This is a threat in Bali tourism, because tourists usually look for authenticity, but they get false thing.

Keywords: Tourism Yoga, Criticism of Theology, Authenticity

## Introduction

Yoga has been developing as a tourist attraction of Bali since the 1980s, but began to massively develop as a tourist destination since the 2000s. Promotion of Bali as a yoga tourism destination began through the Bali spirit festival, starting and promotion of the film *Eat Pray Love* in 2006. The promotion places Bali as a spiritual tourism destination, in which is yoga. This position fosters yoga facilities in Bali tourism destinations such as Ubud, Sanur, Sidemen and other places.

Yoga practices that develop in Bali tourism have some types. Sutarya (2018) notes various forms of yoga, such as classical yoga and creative yoga. Classical yoga is a variety of ancient asanas originating from ancient texts. Creative yoga is a type of asanas that are combined with the creativity of yoga teachers. In this yoga classification, Bali yoga developed by Guru Made Sumantra through the Yoga Markendya. Bali yoga is based on classical yoga with Balinese flavors, especially

rituals and meditation. Bali yoga in the form of Kundalini Tantra Yoga was also developed by Ketut Arsana with Munivara Ashram. Bali yoga is also originally based on tantra, especially Balinese rituals.

This progress of yoga become a part of the Bali tourism business. Some of them are professional training studios such as Yoga Barn, Radiantly Alive, and Body Work and Massage that sell yoga for 150-250 thousand Indonesia rupiah per person in 2018. The search for foreign tourists on yoga in Bali is mostly healing or health (Sutarya, 2016). The practice of business and the purpose of this yoga search are incompatible with the main purpose of yoga. Yogasutra Patanjali mentions the purpose of yoga is samadhi or transcendental awareness that can be achieved through Isvara Pranidhana, or surrender to God (Saraswati, 1979: 36), but in practice yoga is used for healing in the world of tourism. Isvara Pranidhana is a form of loss of orientation to the body called svarupa sunyam (Saraswati, 1979). This gap between objectives in the text and practice raises the problem examined in this article, namely the practice of yoga and its theological criticism of the practice of yoga.

### **Literature review**

Research on yoga in Bali, extensively reviews yoga texts and the development of yoga practices in the modern era. Aciri (2013) mentions about modern Hindu intellectual thought and the ancient text Shiva Yoga in Bali. In that article, it is explained about new ideas about yoga that emerged in Bali influenced by modern India, as appeared in the Aji Sankya text written by Ida Ketut Djelantik published in 1947 and Rsi Yadnya Sankya and Yoga written by Rsi Ananda Kusuma published in 1973. Stephen (2010) wrote about dying yoga in Bali, which is a link between the concept of yoga and the pitra yadnya ceremony in Bali.

Stephen and Aciri have discussed the development of yoga thinking in modern Bali, but have not reached on the practice in the world of tourism. Writing on research on yoga in tourism is in Sutarya's (2016) who study about various forms of yoga in Bali tourism that are used as spiritual healing. These yoga are an asanas and breathing forms that are used for healing. The writings are in the form of yoga exploration as a form of yoga practice. The writings on theological criticism of yoga in Bali tourism have never been studied. Therefore, this article has location novelty and research problems. The Samkya Yoga theory in the Bhagavad Gita and the critical theory of commodification are used to discuss the practice of yoga in Bali tourism.

### **Method**

The problems in this article are examined qualitatively, using quantitative and qualitative data. This article comes from the results of research on yoga in Bali tourism carried out continuously from 2016-2018. The results of this study were analyzed qualitatively. Data collected by observation and in-depth interviews. Further discussion through data confirmation is done to check various dubious data, so that the verification and falsification process can be carried out.

### **Discussion**

Yoga is an ancient discussion in Bali, the oldest yoga texts found in Bali in Old Javanese are thought to date from around the 15th century AD. The texts are Sanghyang

Kamayanikan, Tatvajnana, and Vrespatitvatva. These texts came to Bali after the influence of Java on Bali during the era of Gunaprya Dharmapatni-Udayana Warmadewa in the 10th century AD. The texts are estimated to coincide with the Dharma Patanjala text found at Merapi-Merbabu (Acri, 2013: 87).

The Patanjala Dharma text contains yoga teachings from yama, asanas to samadhi, while the texts found in Bali do not contain asanas, because the purpose of yoga is samadhi. The definition of samadhi consists of various kinds which in Bali are associated with pitra yadnya or after-death trips by Rsi Ananda Kusuma in his book *Yoga and Pitra Yadnya Ceremony* (Acri, 2013: 82). Therefore, yoga is actually related to goals after life.

In Bali tourism, yoga is compared to health (sutarya, 2017: 50), through spiritual as a way of health. Therefore, spiritual goals based on the 2017 survey ranked 73.7 percent of 37 foreign tourists. This spiritual goal is sought for teachers who have healing abilities such as Ratu Bagus who has the Ratu Bagus Ashram and I Ketut Arsana who have Munivara Ashram. The search for the teacher who has this healing ability shows the search for yoga is a spiritual quest for health.

This health goal led to the search for foreign tourists for yoga to Bali as asana movements. This asana movement is actually not popular in Bali. Yoga texts in Bali such as Vrespatitvatva and Jnanatatva do not feature asana movements. The texts focus on learning about yama-nyama, pranayama and the samadhi process, while the asanas are not taught (Sutarya, 2018: 29). Therefore, the search for yoga for health to Bali, which aims for physical health through the asana movement is actually a little deviant. Yoga teachers in Bali study these asanas through modern yoga teachers. Most of these yoga teachers find their yoga teacher when they become hotel employees as experienced by yoga teachers I Putu Wijaya (55 years) and I Nyoman Kembar Madrawan (47 years). Other yoga teachers have learned asanas from formal Hindu religious education born from modern Hindu movements such as those conducted by I Ketut Arsana (56 years) and I Ketut Bandiastra (53 years) who are alumni of Hinduism Education.

The purpose of yoga for health is different from the goal of yoga in the Patanjali Sutra which states that the purpose of yoga is samadhi. The Patanjali Sutra formulates samadhi as "tadeva-artha-matra-nirbhasam svarupa-sunyam-iva samadhih". The key words from the description are svarupa-sunyam, which means the attainment of samadhi is a thinker or contemplation that has been lost to himself (Saraswati, 1975: 240). This achievement which is referred to in the Bhagavad Gita as brahma-nirvanam rchati is interpreted as the kingdom of God by Srila Prabhupada (Prabhupada, 2006: 163), but the real meaning is nirvana which is mentioned in many Buddhist texts.

Nirvana in the Buddhist tradition means the disappearance of body (lust), dvesa (irihati), and moha (ignorance). This situation is also identified with anatta (selflessness) and sunyata (emptiness). That state will break the chain of samsara (rebirth). Therefore, nirvana is one's freedom from rebirth (Wikipedea, 2018). This form of yoga practice for the purpose of Nirvana in Tantra Buddhism is yogacara which

consists of cleansing the mind, so that the practice of yoga in Buddhism is a purification of mind practice (Wayman, 1996: 33).

The Buddhist tradition is in line with the Bhagavad Gita which mentions "raga dvesa vimuktas tu" or people who have been free from lust and envy. Only people who are free from raga dvesa will get prasadam, which is interpreted as God's gift (Prabhupada, 2006: 152). Therefore, yogacara in the Buddha who practices the mind is the same as the practice suggested in the Bhagavad Gita, which is the practice of freeing lust and envy, all of which are mind control exercises.

The main texts such as the Patanjali Yoga Sutra and the Bhagavad Gita clearly mean samadhi as a state of cessation of lust, envy and ignorance that causes a person to suffer. This condition is called svarupa-sunyam or the loss of various forms of the self which is developed by the mind. Because someone often lives based on self-created ideas. These ideas then cause misery because often these ideas differ from reality. If someone is free from various ideas about himself, the svarupa-sunyam will be obtained. That is what is called samadhi.

The ideas of self-interest which are called kama (desires) mentioned will produce disappointments that will keep the seeker away from the goal of liberation. It is mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita II.62-63 as a way for the destruction of the self (Prabhupada, 2006: 150-151). Therefore, the form of training must control that desire. Control of desire is a form of mind training.

In this context, based on these main texts, yoga activities that are in line with the goals of yoga must practice liberation from lust, envy and ignorance. These exercises are disciplinary exercises that are found in the parenting. Saraswati (1979: 45-46) mentions the parts of yama consisting of ahimsa (non-violence), satya (truth), asteya (not wanting other people's property), brahmacharya (abstinence from sexual pleasure), and aparigraha (abstinence from luxury). Saraswati (1979: 47-49) states that nyama consists of sauca (physical and spiritual cleansing), santosa (spiritual satisfaction), tapa (resistance to suffering), and svadhyaya (self-study).

Such exercises on yoga for Bali tourism are not visible. Existing exercises are asanas and diets as Arsana stated that diet is a form of food discipline (Sutarya, 2017: 45). The discipline of training asanas and new foods reflects one part of the yama, aparigraha, which means abstinence from luxury. Other disciplines such as non-violence, right behavior and others do not stand out. Reducing these exercises further confirms that the goal of yoga in Bali tourism is health.

Sutarya (2017: 45) reinforces this fact in his research on the Hindu pasraman in Bali tourism. In the study it was stated that the development of yoga on the Munivara Ashram and the Ratu Bagus Ashram is health-based so that the core product of the yoga ashram is healthy. Health is a form of concern for the body and mind which is a form of lust and envy. Therefore, the development of health-based yoga does not lead to free people from the body and dvesa.

Arsana stated, health is the first step to learning higher goals. He stated, he also studied yoga aimed at being healthy at first, but later in the lesson, he recognized higher goals so he then continued to practice yoga to get the highest goal of yoga. This is also given

to foreign tourists, so they find the highest goal in stages (Sutarya, 2017). Can foreign tourists understand this greater purpose?

Arsana and Ratu Bagus students who learn yoga after getting health, prefer to become yoga teachers. As teachers, they show off their success in nourishing themselves through yoga so that many people come to learn yoga. Therefore, the concentration is to attract people to come to practice (Sutarya, 2016: 183). It certainly is not free from body and dvesa which binds the mind to ideas about healthy humans so that it does not lead to svarupa-sunyam.

Based on the training and development material, yoga in Bali tourism is only to achieve health goals through asanas and food diets. Exercises for mentality such as exercising less are done. Diets for example are associated with abstinence from luxurious living, but a diet carried out in Bali tourism is not to abstain from luxurious living, but for the health of the body. Development after being healthy from yoga practitioners is also not for spiritual purposes, but to become a yoga teacher.

These facts confirm that yoga in Balinese tourism is not yoga in the real sense. Yoga is a part of yoga that is formed for short-term goals, namely health. Therefore, yoga tourism cannot be mentioned as spiritual tourism, but it is health tourism such as sports tourism and the like. But yoga tourism in Bali is health tourism that uses spiritual methods, namely yoga exercises that are not intact, so that it really cannot be called yoga.

Changes to the form as if it were called simulacrum, where the simulacrum is "an image without substance or qualities of the original", which means an image without substance and original quality (Wikipedia, 2018). In Hinduism, simulacrum is virtual which contains the meaning of material nature (Prabhupada, 2006: 462). Therefore, virtual can be interpreted as something materialistic or for the world and this body. The change in the form of yoga into practice for physical health is a process of materialization.

Changes to material goals are called pseudo-experience and inauthenticity in tourism criticisms (Pitana and Gayatri, 2005: 39). This change is also called commodification. Appadurai (2005) states that commodification is a change in something into a commodity. commodities at the most basic are things that can be exchanged or goods that have economic value. Commercialized people become goods when working by selling laborers in the labor market (Appadurai, 1986). Based on this concept, the transformation of yoga into training materials that are traded for health purposes is a form of commodification.

The commodification of yoga occurs by giving yoga practice that is not in accordance with the original, so that it can be referred to as "yoga-yogaan". Giving something that is not authentic is a threat in the world of tourism, because the expectations of tourists actually get something authentic. The gap between expectations and this reality will lead to disappointment, which leads to the cancellation of tourist visits. Therefore, giving false experiences to tourists is a short-term tourism development effort.

## Conclusion

The practice of yoga in Bali tourism is asanas and diet exercises to achieve physical health goals. Therefore, these exercises cannot be mentioned as whole yoga. These exercises only use the parts of yoga for the short-term benefit of health. This healthy state is not the same as the state of samadhi which is described as the cessation of lust, envy and ignorance. In the Patanjali Yoga Sutra language, it is mentioned as svarupa-sunyam or the disappearance of the images of the self. In these svarupa, there is a situation which is described as brahmanirvana, which means that the condition of God is free from body (lust), dvesa (envy), and moha (ignorance). This release from body, dvesa and moha is called liberation which is the goal of yoga.

Therefore, yoga practice is a mental exercise so that yoga tourism deviates from the essence of yoga practice because it emphasizes physical training. Thus, yoga tourism is actually health tourism that uses spiritual ways. These spiritual methods are not only yoga, but also other methods such as ceremonies. Therefore, the asana exercises should not be called yoga, but the practice of asanas for certain purposes.

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