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ENVIRONMENTALISM WITH A REFERENCE TO BALINESE ECOSOPHY

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For the last three decades a significant change in the direction of Deep environmentalism is being noticed: on to logical and spiritual issues (like, 'what there is' or 'how we perceive the Nature', 'Self-realization' etc.) are drawing much more attention.

At its initial during 1950's, environmental philosophy was satisfied with suggesting norms to guide our interaction with the Nature. Later, it is realised that the isolated ethical concerns about the environment will not yield desired result, unless and until supplemented by the underlying ontological concerns. Arne Naess, the proponent of Deep Ecology, finds it important 'to move from ethics to ontology and back'. As is well-known, deep ecology is the most popular environmental theory and movement of contemporary environmentalism. It goes beyond anthropocentrism and places equal intrinsic value on non-human species, ecosystems and processes in nature. Deep ecology claims that all living and non-living beings have the equal right (at least 'in principle') to live and flourish. Deep ecology seeks to develop ecological wisdom by focusing on deep experience, deep questioning and deep commitment to nature. Næss later calls it ecosophy, an evolving but consistent philosophy of being, thinking and acting.

Human species is important member of the Earth-community, and not the lord of it—is the central spiritual tenet of "Deep ecology". But a process of Self-realisation is necessary for an individual to reach at an ecocentric perspective. The notion is based on the idea that the more we expand the self to identify with others the more we realize ourselves. The advocates of Deep ecology strongly believe that the Earth does not 'belong to humans' or it exists as 'resource' to be freely exploited by humans. Anyhow, Deep ecologists formulate the following eight points to integrate contemporary eco-concerns.

1. The well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent value). These values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes.
2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves.
3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.
4. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of nonhuman life requires such a decrease.

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5. Present human interference with the nonhuman world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.
6. Policies must therefore be changed. These policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.
7. The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of inherent value) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.
8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary changes.

Balinese (Indonesian) Ecological views.

Indonesia rests in between the Asia and Australian continents and is the largest archipelago in the world with its land size of 2,027.087 square kilometers and total of about 14000 islands. The country is divided in to 33 provinces headed by Governors. The main Islands are Sumatra, Jawa, Sulawesi, and Irian jaya. Essentially a tropical country with two seasons "Wet" (November-May) and "Dry" (June-October) with temperature normally ranging from 20 C to 32 C. Among its Islands, Bali province is the only region with greater proportion of Hindu population and practices the basic concept of Hinduism on environmentalism, relationships among various living forms with religious bondages. Almost all rituals and religious recluses are similar to deep Hinduism philosophy and are fundamentally concerned with conservation of nature.

Bali province occupies 5633 square kms of which 70% is agricultural ground, 22% forest cover and nearly 8% lies the uncultivated land. For its natural and festive

wealth Bali province is one of the richest tourist spots and lately for more than a decade has offered huge monetary gains to the nation as a whole on tourism. The present study has been focused mainly on the composite assessments of losses and gains on account of tourism in relation to richness of natural wealth. A reference has also been made to the age old concept of deep seated traditions of environmental protection and care by inhabitants and the conflicts of modern environmentalism and related ecosophies.

II

Tri Hita Kārana is the Balinese theory of universal harmony. The name consists of three words: '*Tri*' means 'Three', '*Hita*' means 'welfare', and '*Kārana*' means 'causes'. So *Tri Hita Kārana* literally means the 'three causes of welfare'. But here it purports to mean the three guideposts for living a balanced life and existence. It signifies a harmonious relation with the creator, with our fellow beings and the environment as well.

In ancient times all the people of Indonesian archipelago, including Bali island, somehow live their lives according to the principle of *Tri Hita Kārana*, although the idea '*Tri Hita Kārana*' was not then properly formulated. It came to be formulated in theoretical terms much later, mainly through the first regional conference on 'Struggle Agency for Balinese Hindus' held in Bali on November 11, 1966 at Dwijendra University. As noted, *Tri Hita Kārana* represents three aspects of our harmonious relationship. These three aspects are, in Balinese language, i) *Parahyangan*, which stands for our relationship with the highest being God; ii) *Pawongan* for our relationship with fellow human beings; and iii) *Palemahan* for our relationship with the Nature and environment. Let us explain what these actually mean.

Parahyangan

'*Parahyangan*' is a compound of two terms, '*para*' meaning 'the highest' and '*Hyang*' meaning 'being' or 'state'. Thus it means the highest state of being or existence. This signifies general wellbeing through man's relations with that the highest being God. This relationship makes us realize God in one and all, viz., experiencing the omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence of God. Application of this *Parahyangan* in our daily life is manifested in our performance of *Deva Yajña* (sacrifice to God). For this, Balinese built one common temple called *Kahyangan Jagad* at regional levels. Such temples are located in the center of the town. Every region in Bali has such a temple where all the people at regional level use to come to worship God. At the village levels, they built three temples called *Kahyangan Tiga*, i.e.: '*Pura Puseh*', is temple dedicated for worshipping Vishnu; '*Pura Desa*', is temple dedicated for worshipping Brahma; and '*Pura Dalem*', is temple dedicated for worshipping Siva. At family levels too, Balinese built family temple called '*Merajan*'. Every house in Balinese tradition has *Merajan* for worshipping the ancestors together with Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva.

Pawongan

The word '*Pawongan*' derived from the root '*wong*' means 'people, fellow beings'. *Pawongan* signifies the relationship between man and man. This concept emphasizes on how to keep good relations with our fellow beings. Balinese people have simple ways in maintaining these prescriptions, that is, to accomplish these three things, to think 'good', to speak 'good' and to act 'good'. They are called *Tri Kaya Parisuddha* – a code of conduct of how they interact to each other. In ceremonial aspect,

Pawongan is reflected in *Manusa Yajña* (sacrifice to man), *Pitra Yajña* (sacrifice to ancestors) and *Rsi Yajña* (sacrifice and respect upon Gurus). It also signifies different things at different levels. At regional level, *Pawongan* includes all Hindu people in Bali. At village level, it includes all people of the village concerned, and at family level, it includes all the family members. Such a division is made on the basis of their responsibility towards the temple they built. *Kahyangan Jagad* temple is maintained by all Balinese Hindus, *Kahyangan Tiga* is maintained by all the people that reside in that village and at family level, all members are responsible for maintaining their family temple.

Palemahan

The term '*lemah*' means 'land', 'surrounding', or 'environment'. As such, *Palemahan* signifies our behaviour to, and relation with, the environment. Influenced by this idea, the Balinese people treat the environment in a harmonious way. They believe that only a good environment can give them a better life. Their respect to the environment is realized through the sacrifice called *Bhuta Yajña*. Observance of *Palemahan* is also made at three different levels – regional level, village level and family level. In regional level the whole land is included. At village level the land is governed by the villagers, and it is called '*asengken bale agung*'. At the family level they take utmost care for the compound and the housing complex.

III

The most important thing about this *Tri Hita Kārana* concept is this that three aspects of relationship are inseparable. If one remains unattended, the other two aspects become meaningless. These are like three folds, in which each gives power and support to the others. Ignoring one may lead to

destruction. Anyhow, let me now explain how the Balinese people observe *Tri Hita Kārana* into their daily activities. To say the truth, it covers all aspects of their way of life. No actions can remain apart. Their many-fold activity, like building a temple, preparation for an offering, social interactions, cultural activities and taking care of the nature, etc reflect their unitary culture and philosophy. For example, a Balinese temple is a compound of three parts. They call it *Tri Mandala*, meaning three stages or steps: *Utama Mandala*, *Madya Mandala* and *Nista Mandala*. *Utama Mandala* is a stage in which a building is dedicated to God. Only religious ceremonial activities are admitted inside such a complex. This step is similar to *Parahyangan*. *Madya Mandala* is the second step, in which such cultural and other related activities are performed. This place is dedicated to human interaction through cultural activities, and so it is similar to *Pawongan*. *Nista Mandala* is the last step in which no building is there, but a garden with variety of trees and flowers. This is a part of *Palemahan*.

General life

Beside their struggle for livelihood, the Balinese people use to perform religious activities. In every occasion, Balinese people express their gratitude through offerings. This offering, called '*Banten*', is various in kind, depending on purpose. They worship God and ancestors, as well as Nature and other human beings through *Banten*. There are four types of temples where Balinese worship them. There are:

1. *Kawitan* or clan temple, where ancestors are worshipped
2. *Tri Murti* temple, where people worship Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. These temples can be seen in every village.
3. *Svaguna* temple, where people of different professions worship. These professions include farmers, traders, doctors, crafts persons, etc. *Svaguna*

temple also includes the temple that situated in such places like:

- a. In forest, called *Alas* temple, where people worship the deity of plantation.
 - b. In lake, called *Ulun Danu* temple, where people worship the Deity of the water resources.
 - c. In market, called *Melanting* temple, where people worship the Deity of money.
 - d. In rice-field, called *Ulun Sui* temple, where people worship Devi Sri or Laksmi, Deity of prosperity.
 - e. In the beach, called *Segara* temple, for worship Varuna—Lord of ocean.
4. Public temple, called *Pura Jagat Nata*, where anyone can worship.

Through '*Desa Pakraman*', the social and religious organization (in every village), collectively carry out offerings (*Banten*) on auspicious days. Another aspect of *Tri Hita Kārana* can also be found in Balinese construction. Balinese traditional houses include shrines, '*Bale Sakutus*' (eight-pole house), '*Bale Dangin*' (small hall used for preparing offering), '*Bale Dauh*' (for family members), '*Jineng*' (granary rice) and '*Paon*' (kitchen). The traditional house of Bali is surrounded by fence, called '*Panyengker*' (believed as guard) and an entrance gate named '*angkul-angkul*'.

IV

Balinese codes of caring for the Nature.

Observance of *Tri Hita Kārana* in maintaining the Nature can be seen in '*Sad Krtih*'. '*Sad Krtih*' is a term that is used to explain a real action of people in preserving the Nature. This phrase is derived from two words: '*Sad*' and '*Krta*'. '*Sad*' means 'six' and '*Krta*' means rich, prosperous. So '*Sad Krtih*' is six wise paths to gain riches, prosperity and tranquility. This six-fold wisdom is as follows:

First, *Atma Krtih* : it is self purification. The Balinese believe that the basic problems that we face in daily life do not come from outside, but rather from our own self. The destruction of Nature is to be understood as the result of arrogant and wrong world-views, narrow mindedness or insensitive behaviour toward Nature. Through self purification, they hope, our level of understanding can be developed.

Second, *Samudra Krtih*: It is guarding and conserving the sea. The Balinese Hindu believe that sea is sacred. Sea is a meant of every ceremony and festival that people do celebrate in relation to religious purification and immersion, etc. People also believe that sea maintains weather, temperature and purity of air. To pollute the sea means to destroy the sacred and the regulation and balance of the climate.

Third, *Wana Krtih*: to preserve the forest. According to the Balinese, cutting a tree means cutting their live. It means that forest is as important as life itself. Forests also contribute in maintaining the balance of temperature. The Balinese people take all the forest area as sacred. To maintain the sacredness, they build a temple as state before.

Fourth, *Danu Krtih*: it is conserving water resources, lakes and rivers. It is the widest activity for people, as it is related to the agricultural activities. An elaborate irrigation system has been created to make maximum benefit of the water. This irrigation system has also made possible the coordination of cooperatives known as *subak*. *Subak* is a kind of democratic organization in which the farmer whose field are fed by the same water source, meet regularly to coordinate plantings, to control the distribution of irrigation water and to plan the construction and maintenance of canals, dams and lakes, as well as to organize ritual offerings.

Fifth, *Jagat Krtih*: it is to preserve the Earth, living and non-living being. The

Balinese people believe that the Earth produces enough for everybody's need, but never enough for anybody's greed. It means that preserving the Earth only can be realize if we take something from the Earth only to satisfy our vital needs.

Sixth, *Jana Krtih*: it is preserving social harmony and achieving perfect spiritual order. This can be realized through the regulations of the village. Every village in Bali has an association that is called *Banjar*. *Banjar* is the refecction of this harmony. It is an indigenous form of local government unique to Bali. These cooperative associations of neighbours govern daily life in great detail according to local laws. So the Balinese village is a tight network of social, religious and economic institutions, of which each person on the island is a part.

V

As we have stated at that contemporary environmentalists uphold that the progress of environmentalism will be assured, if we can demonstrate, simultaneously, that its basic principles can be derived from a variety of world-views and backgrounds. In this context, I threw some light on Balinese philosophy and culture, Balinese cosmology of *Tri Hita Kārana*, in particular. What I want to emphasize is that the fundamental Balinese principle of *Tri Hita Kārana* provides a comprehensive set of universal values and practices to achieve prosperity, peace and happiness through the harmonious interactions of people with their surrounding world, that is, with their fellow humans, with the environment, and finally, with spiritual companion God, called *pawongan*, *palemahan* and *parahyangan*, respectively. The promise of preserving the Nature can be explicitly read in the codes of *Palemahan*, in the prescriptions of *Sad Krtih*.

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