

The theological doctrine of metaphysical anthropology through the view of 'the dream society' for the Balinese Ngaben death ritual

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Abstract: What Christian perspective can support the preservation of Balinese traditional practices related to honoring the deceased? This paper integrates the metaphysical anthropology of the sleeping soul with Rolf Jensen's view of 'the dream society' to examine the traditional ritual of *Ngaben*. The study revealed that the narratives within the *Ngaben* ceremonial tradition are of utmost importance and should be safeguarded. The narratives, affective experiences, and emotional states discussed are integral components of the communal fabric within which the Balinese populace resides. Christianity, through the theological doctrine of metaphysical anthropology of the sleeping soul, can help accommodate these narratives.

Keywords: death, metaphysical anthropology, *ngaben*, Rolf Jensen, sleeping soul, the dream society

Introduction

We offer a fundamental proposition on the necessity of a Christian doctrine that can serve as the foundation for preserving established traditions in Indonesia, particularly concerning the ceremonial practices surrounding death processions in the country. The doctrine that has been formulated embraces and accommodates the diverse cultural traditions inherent in Indonesia, thereby reflecting the distinctive traits of the '*Nusantara*' (The term 'Indonesian Archipelago' refers to the collective moniker given to the vast expanse of islands located in the Southeast Asian region) region, renowned for its cultural heritage. We endeavor to construct a doctrine that emerges from Indonesia's culturally significant death rituals while minimizing syncretic elements. We introduce the doctrine of Christian anthropology of the sleeping soul as an anthropological doctrine derived from Indonesia's cultural heritage of death ritual traditions.

This research relates the doctrine of the sleeping soul to the Balinese tradition of death (the tradition of honoring the deceased). In this study, the practice commonly known as the death procession will be henceforth referred to as the tradition of honoring the deceased. In Bali, the tradition of honoring the deceased is called *Ngaben*, a Hindu procession. According to Pitana, humans utilize five natural components called *Panca Mahabutha*. These elements encompass

earth, water, fire, wind, and sky. After an individual's death, the elements that make up their body must be returned to the natural environment. The deceased whose elements have been returned to nature is believed to be able to reach Heaven. The easiest and fastest way to restore the elements is by burning.¹ This Balinese honoring-of-the-deceased procession is called *Ngaben*, a step to return the elements of life to nature.

The subsequent inquiry concerns Christians residing in Bali. Is performing the *Ngaben* custom deemed necessary? What is the rationale behind the practice of this custom among Christians? Doesn't this practice belong to a different religious tradition? We posit the idea of the sleeping soul as a potential framework for Indonesian Christians to uphold the traditional traditions of honoring the deceased while simultaneously acknowledging the presence of syncretism. This doctrine was previously developed and strengthened through the narrative exposition of Mark 5:35-42 and Daniel 12:1-3, as well as the collective memory of the Hebrews in performing the ritual of honoring the deceased. In this study, we try to strengthen the doctrine of the sleeping soul using the principles of business economics.

The theoretical framework employed in this study is based on Rolf Jensen's perspective on the concept of the dream society. This perspective posits that the emerging commercial landscape encompasses more than data and communication speed. What will follow the current era of the information society? According to Rolf Jensen, *the dream society* is one possibility. This society prioritizes businesses, communities, and individuals who are not only focused on the speed of data and information but are more interested in the story of a particular place or situation. People value stories so much that they want to step back and appreciate the stories hidden behind things amid rapid progress.² According to this perspective, individuals will revert to narrative consumption and have a heightened appreciation for conventional elements. Rolf Jensen's perspective supports exploring diverse narratives within the framework of theology, particularly in the present study focused on the doctrine of the sleeping soul. The doctrine seeks to acknowledge the narratives surrounding the indigenous ritual of honoring the deceased in Indonesia to incorporate these cultural practices into the foundations of Christianity.

Our prior study has shown that Christianity can uphold and develop theology from within. The conducted previous studies are on preserving Javanese *Bancaan* culture within the framework of Christian hospitality theology,³ the *Ma'longko* tradition of the Toraja people can be analysed through the lens of hospitality theory,⁴ the manifestation of the metaphysical anthropological idea pertaining to the sleeping soul in the death rituals of the Torajan⁵, and the doctrine of metaphysical anthropology of the sleeping soul in Javanese traditional death

¹ I. Gde Pitana, 'Cremation Ceremony, Returning Borrowed Elements to Nature', *ICH Courier* 38 (2019): 20–21.

² Rolf Jensen, *The Dream Society: How the Coming Shift from Information to Imagination Will Transform Your Business* (McGraw-Hill, 1999).

³ Daniel F. Panuntun and Yohanes K. Susanta, 'Christian Hospitality in Javanese *Bancaan* Tradition', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 77, no. 4 (2021): 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i4.6565>.

⁴ Daniel Fajar Panuntun, 'Nilai Hospitalitas Dalam Budaya Longko Torayan', in *Teologi Kontekstual Dan Kearifan Lokal Toraja*, ed. Binsar Jonathan Pakpahan (BPK Gunung Mulia, 2020).

⁵ Daniel F. Panuntun and Wandrio Salewa, 'Sleeping Soul : A Concept Representation of Metaphysical Anthropology of the Funeral Traditions of Torajan People', *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 78, no. 1 (2022): 1–6, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i1.7465>.

rituals in terms of collective memory.⁶ This research mainly centers on theological aspects that can be cultivated from within the community's cultural framework. This particular area of emphasis is called 'Theology from the inside.' Numerous studies on Theology from the inside aim to develop a comprehensive theological framework that emerges from Indonesia's diverse traditions and rituals. Theology in Indonesia will be diverse but characterized by the uniqueness of the universal 'Indonesian Nusantara.' Based on this proposition, we aim to compile a study of the doctrine (systematic theology) of the sleeping soul, which can serve as a basis for traditions of glorifying the dead in Indonesia. Building on previous research on Torajan and Javanese death traditions, we aim to continue this work to strengthen the doctrine of the Sleeping Soul.

The primary objective of this study is to consolidate the theory of the sleeping soul as a means of safeguarding the ceremonial practice of honoring the deceased in Bali. This study employs Rolf Jensen's conceptual framework of dream society to analyze the Balinese *Ngaben* ceremony. This study aims to consolidate the tenets of the sleeping soul within the context of the Balinese *Ngaben* ritual tradition, drawing on *the dream society* framework. This research argues that the theological doctrine of the metaphysical anthropology of the sleeping soul, from the perspective of the dream society, treats present life as cultural wealth and respects relationships with the ancestors. From the perspective of *the dream society*, this theological doctrine of the metaphysical anthropology of the sleeping soul becomes compatible with caring for Balinese tradition and the ritual honoring of the deceased, namely *Ngaben*. This paper adopts a constructive approach. We collected data by reviewing and analyzing the literature. To develop this argument, we first design the doctrine of the sleeping soul based on the view of the dream society. This first description begins with a metaphysical anthropological view of the sleeping soul, then reviews the view of the dream society, leading to an analysis of the form of the doctrine of the sleeping soul from the perspective of the dream society. Second, the view of metaphysical anthropology in the Balinese *Ngaben* tradition. Third, compiling the theological doctrine of the metaphysical anthropology of the sleeping soul from the perspective of the dream society, compatible with the Balinese *Ngaben* tradition.

Theological doctrine of metaphysical anthropology of the sleeping soul from the perspective of the 'dream society'

Theological doctrine of metaphysical anthropology of the sleeping soul

The question that often arises is, what is the state of humans after death? The theological doctrine of metaphysical anthropology of the sleeping soul offers an alternative: that their existence is not dead but not actively alive. This view tries to accommodate the traditional rituals of honoring the deceased in Indonesia. While some individuals hold opposing views on the soul's immortality, it is essential to note that the theological doctrine of metaphysical anthropology of the sleeping soul does not assert the soul's active immortality. Instead, it posits that the soul, while not deceased, cannot function actively. Therefore, the perspective above is commonly called the 'sleeping soul' viewpoint.

The concept of the sleeping soul was initially derived from interpretations of Mark 5:35-42 and Daniel 12:1-3, which suggest that the human spirit's metaphysical journey after death

⁶ Daniel F. Panuntun et al., "The Sleeping Soul Doctrine of Metaphysical Anthropology in the Javanese Death Tradition", *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 79, no. 2 (2023): 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i2.8370>.

includes a period akin to 'sleep.' This phase provides hope for life after death, even though it is not an active and autonomous form. We relate this exposition to the Toraja metaphysical view of death. Finally, the conclusion provides a recommendation that the metaphysical anthropology view according to the exposition of Mark 5: 35-42 and Daniel 12: 1-3 and the death of the Torajans have in common the appreciation of the experience after death, but through the exposition, a firm line can be drawn even though there is a metaphysical view after death (that there is something alive). Nevertheless, the metaphysical essence of a soul or spirit is not presently engaged in a state of activity that can exert influence upon or be influenced by the current realm or the realm inhabited by the living.⁷

Furthermore, comparing the collective memory of the Hebrews and the collective memory of the Javanese in viewing death reveals similarities, namely the practice of caring for or honoring the dead. The Hebrews use the phrase 'laid with his father' and have a tradition of giving food to the graves of the dead. The Javanese carry out the same practice of respecting the dead through a death ritual called *slametan*. Based on these commonalities, we posit a collective perception of death. We posit the concept of the sleeping soul, which underscores the presence of a metaphysical aspect of human beings that persists after death, albeit in a state of incapacitation. The human soul or spirit remains present and animate, although devoid of agency in its state following the occurrence of death, so it is commonly referred to as being in a sleep state. This doctrine aims to facilitate the observance of the Javanese cultural tradition known as the death ritual called *slametan*.⁸

The theological doctrine of metaphysical anthropology, specifically the concept of soul sleeping, can serve as a foundation for incorporating two distinct death rituals. However, if this doctrine emphasizes the afterlife, it may also have direct implications for one's current existence. Does commemorating the procession have a discernible influence that may be experienced in the current period while individuals are still alive? We further reinforce this perspective by drawing upon Rolf Jensen's analysis of the dream society.

The dream society view

Rolf Jensen has predicted that society will shape itself into a community called 'the dream society.' Rolf Jensen offers the antithesis that despite the speed of data and information today, people value the stories and feelings in the community. A simple example is that amidst the advancement of the egg-laying chicken industry that produces eggs quickly and cheaply, most people look for free-range eggs instead. They appreciate the story behind free-range chickens, which feel free and are not confined in a cage. People are even willing to pay high prices for free-range chicken eggs. Amid rapid change and development, people appreciate what is considered conventional. The underlying reason is that people want and appreciate every 'story' behind something.⁹

The Dream Society concept creates a society that values the stories, feelings, and emotions that live within a community. The stories will be unique and different from one another. Rolf Jensen states that in forming the dream society, several things are considered: first, the value of the story. This value is an intrinsic element behind a good or service. Second, in the

⁷ Panuntun and Salewa, "Sleeping Soul."

⁸ Panuntun et al., "The Sleeping Soul Doctrine."

⁹ Jensen, *The Dream Society*, 14–15.

transition from information to dreams, people do not necessarily have to keep up with the times but can live dreams from existing stories. Third is the role of emotions; although technology will take over many jobs, humans may maintain certain functions in society that follow their beliefs through emotions. Fourth, the story-based economy: the pinnacle of evolution is the shift from a material society to stories that make it economical.¹⁰

Rolf Jensen's theoretical work is intellectually stimulating because it opposes the ethos of the Industrial Revolution, which prioritizes rapid information processing, mechanization, and the progress of intellectual pursuits. Instead, Rolf Jensen tends to stop and step back to appreciate the value of stories, feelings, and emotions contained in society. Nevertheless, a critique exists regarding the potential formation of a new capitalist society through Rolf Jensen's lens. As a contrasting perspective to the prevailing capitalist system? This phenomenon stems from the emergence of the 'dream society,' a novel business model that offers a solution amid contemporary challenges.

According to Jensen's perspective, the concept of a dream society centered around dreams promotes establishing a sustainable economic system that challenges the prevailing trajectory of technological advancement. Jensen's analysis shows that despite the commercial nature of the dream society, humans tend to revert to a primitive state to coexist with other forms of life. This realization strives to have a harmonious relationship with the natural environment. The contemporary perception of nature has shifted from being a subject of human exploitation to a sustainability narrative.¹¹ Although criticism of capitalism is evident in Rolf Jensen's view, the willingness to be friendly and maintain the story needs to be maintained. The critique suggests that business is not the main goal; maintaining the story is, while economic gain is one expected impact. Through this critique, we prefer *the dream society* not as a business-based society as the primary goal, but as a society that values stories with various impacts, such as economic benefits, friendship with nature and other creations, and inner peace.

Integration of the concept of the dreams society for the theological doctrine of metaphysical anthropology of sleeping souls

In the contemporary era of rapid communication, narratives have become marketable goods. What are the potential consequences of the current acceleration of communication? According to Rolf Jensen, society would assign significance to narratives. He develops this perspective through his interpretation of the theory of the dream society. This perspective warrants further elaboration in light of technological advancements, which can detach narratives from rituals and traditions. What are the potential consequences of the extinction of rituals and customs within a given cultural context? This theory serves as the foundation for preserving cultures in Indonesia, positing that appreciating the narrative stories behind each culture is critical. This view reflects Indonesia's cultural wealth and society's wealth amid technological advances. People will hear and see the various stories that exist throughout Indonesia.

The notion of a dream society aligns with several studies conducted within the context of Christianity in Indonesia, including the concept of *ugahari* existence. The '*ugahari* life' concept serves as a fundamental pillar of Christian spirituality amid rapid technological advancements. Indeed, amid societal progress that promotes flexible, indulgent, and

¹⁰ Jensen.

¹¹ Jensen.

hedonistic lifestyles, Christianity presents a luminous form of spirituality.¹² In the context of technological advances, Christianity momentarily pauses to acknowledge and assimilate narratives around *ugahari* as a spiritual practice. It is seen as a valid and legitimate preference to derive pleasure from narratives perceived as antiquated or no longer in vogue.

We endeavor to incorporate the societal perspective on dreams within the framework of metaphysical anthropology, explicitly focusing on the sleeping soul. Interpreting metaphysical anthropology as an event after death becomes a value that stories, feelings, and emotions should uphold. The spirit is to revive stories and emotions that collectively live in society as a form of theo-praxis, part of the metaphysical anthropology theology of the sleeping soul. The story holds that there is an event after death: a soul or spirit that lives in a state of helplessness. This state of helplessness stops the tradition of worshipping and asking ancestors for blessings, but it can still relate to the memories of living individuals. Although the primary goal of *the dream society* is economic gain, it is not the primary goal; it is one effect of keeping alive and sustaining the stories, feelings, and emotions associated with the view of the afterlife. By integrating the concept of *the dream society* into the metaphysical study of the sleeping soul, the community can uphold the customary narrative of the posthumous existence by engaging in present-day celebrations with the anticipation of the hereafter.

Honoring the Deceased Ritual of Ngaben as a Cultural Heritage

The ritual of honoring the deceased of Ngaben from the viewpoint of metaphysical anthropology

Ngaben is a traditional Balinese ritual of honoring the deceased as a funeral burning ceremony. This ritual aims to return the bodily elements in the form of *Panca Mahabhuta* (constituents of the universe) in the form of *bayu* (air), *teja* (light), *akasa* (space), *apah* (liquid), *pertiwi* (solid) to their origin. This ritual also purifies the deceased's spirit; the *Ngaben* ceremony must be carried out by the deceased's *sentana* (direct descendants). The ceremony is a form of respect for parents. When people have died, these elements must be returned to nature immediately. Only after they are returned can the soul/spirit go to heaven. The quickest way to carry out the ritual is by being burned.¹³

The initial phase of the *Ngaben* ritual involves the cremation of the body, followed by the subsequent cremation of the soul. According to the Balinese perspective, during this subsequent phase, the eternal soul can go to heaven to receive reward or punishment before being reborn into the world.¹⁴ In Pitana's view, the events after death, according to the Balinese, can take place through the *Ngaben* ritual. This *Ngaben* ritual becomes a link between the physical and the metaphysical, between the living and the dead.

Ngaben consists of two stages. The first stage is the cremation of the body. The cremation begins with cleaning and wrapping the body in a white cloth called *kajang*. Next is the cremation ceremony on a tower called a *wadah* or *bade*. After the body is burned, the bones are collected and crushed into ash. The ashes are collected in young coconut shells and spread into the sea. The second stage is called *Nyekah*. *Nyekah* is the stage of releasing the soul from

¹² Endang Sri Budi Astuti, 'Spiritualitas Keugaharian: Sebagai Respons Terhadap Pola Hidup Hedonisme di Era Digital', *Jurnal Teologi Praktika* 3, no. 1 (2022): 24–35.

¹³ Pitana, "Cremation Ceremony."

¹⁴ Pitana.

its physical body.¹⁵ The *Nyekah* tradition illustrates the mystical nature and connection to the souls of dead ancestors. *Nyekah* is carried out by throwing the ashes of the funeral pyre into the sea and inviting the spirit to the family temple. On a good day, the spirit is invited to a banyan-leaf statue. The statue is then burned, and the ashes are collected in a young coconut shell and thrown into the sea. This procession symbolizes the washing of the spiritual body to purify the soul. After that, the invited spirits are invited back to the statue, which is prepared for a pilgrimage to several temples. After returning from the pilgrimage, the spirit enters the family temple and becomes light, an existence above humans.¹⁶

The Balinese believe the body is a temporary residence for the immortal soul. When a Balinese dies, the soul and its five elements must separate from the body to return to nature and the macrocosm. The soul will walk through heaven and hell as a form of reward and punishment to be resurrected in another body. In the *Ngaben* ritual, there is no lamentation because it is the most awaited time when the ancestors will release themselves from the mortal to unite with the *Sang Hyang Widi*.¹⁷

Ngaben as the Ritual and Cultural Heritage

Some parts of the *Ngaben* ritual make it expensive but exotic. One of them is the *Patulangan*. *Patulangan* is a coffin that is burned. The coffin's color varies depending on the deceased's clan. The various *Patulangan*s include white bull, black bull, red lion, and elephant-headed fish. The most prestigious *patulangan* is the dragon (*Nagabanda*). This property is so heavy that it requires many people to carry it from the house to the ceremony site. This exotic performance is one of Bali's tourist attractions.¹⁸

I Gde Pitana's research states that *Ngaben* can be performed in a crematorium. This phenomenon is unique because the *Ngaben* ceremony is one of the rituals of honoring the deceased procession, which is complicated, complex, and classified as very expensive. The *Ngaben* ceremony performed in the crematorium shows the transformation of traditional events, but it is carried out based on ancestral teachings.¹⁹ Building on I Gde Pitana's research, Balinese people can still maintain existing ancestral cultural heritage amid the progress of the times. This transformation helps Balinese people carry out rituals to honor the deceased. Rituals previously considered expensive and complicated can be carried out more efficiently while maintaining the richness of existing traditions.

The cultural heritage of Balinese tradition honoring the deceased, *Ngaben*, also has the opportunity to be a tourist attraction. Puspa and Saitya state that this traditional ceremony is carried out with facilities such as *Bade* as a place for the deceased and is sometimes complemented by the presence of *Banteng* and *Naga Banda* in the ritual of carrying the deceased to the procession place. The ceremony is performed in several temples in Ubud, Bali.²⁰ In line

¹⁵ I. Ketut Sudarsana, *Ngaben Warga Dadya Arya Kubontubuh Tirtha Sari Desa Ulakan Karangasem Perspektif Pendidikan Agama Hindu* (Jayapangus Press, 2018), 4.

¹⁶ Pitana, "Cremation Ceremony."

¹⁷ Wegig Murwonugroho et al., "Ngaben: Ketika Kematian Hanya Sementara," *Jurnal Dimensi Seni Rupa Dan Desain* 4, no. 1 (2006): 29–46.

¹⁸ Pitana, "Cremation Ceremony."

¹⁹ I. Gde Pitana, "Modernisasi Dan Transformasi Kembali Ke Tradisi: Fenomena Ngaben Di Krematorium Bagi Masyarakat Hindu Di Bali," *Jurnal Kajian Bali (Journal of Bali Studies)* 10, no. 2 (2020): 351–74.

²⁰ Ida Ayu Tary Puspa and Ida Bagus Subrahmaniam Saitya, "Ngaben Sebagai Daya Tarik Pariwisata," *Pariwisata Budaya: Jurnal Ilmiah Agama Dan Budaya* 4, no. 1 (2019): 37–45.

with this, the *Ngaben* ceremony requires sacred values to be maintained to this day. The rituals at the *Ngaben* ceremony can spur local attraction so that local and foreign tourists can enjoy it.²¹ In contrast, Martha states that *Ngaben* is not a procession intended for tourism but a sacred procession involving the Balinese life cycle and obligations. Nevertheless, the procession is a sacred religious procession that also has economic content. So, implementation must still prioritize sacredness, even though it has added economic value.²² Because the *Ngaben* ceremony, as a ceremony honoring the deceased in Bali, can be a tourist attraction, it can provide welfare for the Balinese people. The tradition of honoring the deceased is a sacred ceremony for the family left behind. Nevertheless, indirectly, it also provides livelihoods for living people through economic improvements perceived by residents in Bali. Preserving the Balinese honoring-the-deceased ritual is not only a matter of culture but also benefits the Balinese. Indeed, this culture needs to be preserved.

Theological doctrine of metaphysical anthropology: celebrating dreams in the present life of the Balinese *Ngaben* tradition

The Balinese honoring the deceased ritual that will be our focus is the *Ngaben* ritual. The *Ngaben* ritual is a textual, contextual obligation (*swadharma*) for Balinese people, rooted in the awareness that humans will experience death. The belief states that the dead who are buried will cause disease on Earth.²³ However, according to Picard, quoted by Martha, this culture is starting to shift due to the mixing and interaction of residents and foreign tourists.²⁴ Given this, it is necessary to preserve Balinese culture as the original owners of the culture, not least the Christians in Bali. We propose a preservation effort that Balinese Christians can carry out by compiling an anthropological theology of the sleeping soul from the perspective of the theory of dream society, so it can become the basis for preserving *Ngaben* culture without simply mixing two different cultures into one.

The view of the theological doctrine of metaphysical anthropology of the sleeping soul believes in the existence of a limited life (powerless - inactive) after the event of death. The same view is also found in the Balinese *Ngaben* ritual tradition. However, in the *Ngaben* belief, the spirit can be active because it can be invited back home, purified, and made to make pilgrimages. The spirit will also be resurrected to reincarnate into another life. These two parts are the point of difference between the theological doctrine of metaphysical anthropology of the sleeping soul, which holds that the spirit is in an inactive state but still alive, translated as sleeping. Through this equation, Christian theology can accommodate the *Ngaben* ritual as a culture that can be maintained.

The theological doctrine of metaphysical anthropology of the sleeping soul can serve as a basis for Christians in Bali to participate in or hold *Ngaben* rituals. However, what needs to be maintained is the relationship between the living and the dead, the present considering the past that is intertwined in a living relationship, with the fact that the spirit or spirits that are

²¹ Ni Wayan Murniti and I. Made Bagus Andi Purnomo, 'Upacara Ngaben: Kontestasi Masyarakat Dan Daya Tarik Wisata', *Maha Widya Duta: Jurnal Penerangan Agama, Pariwisata Budaya, Dan Ilmu Komunikasi* 1, no. 1 (2022): 70–74.

²² Wayan Martha, "Prosesi Upacara Ngaben Dalam Kaitannya Dengan Destinasi Pariwisata," *Vidya Wertta* 3, no. 2 (2020): 123–33.

²³ Martha.

²⁴ Martha.

in the world are not in an active state or affecting the present life. This restriction is intended to avoid excessive worship of ancestor spirits and reincarnation, and instead to foster a dynamic relationship of collective memory and feeling. Simply put, the *Nyekah* procession can still be performed to remember and commemorate feelings or emotional ties to the dead.

The *Ngaben* ritual tradition is a unique story that belongs to the Balinese. The ritual becomes a dream lived by the Balinese community. Mythical stories in the *Ngaben* tradition can also be maintained through the theological doctrine of metaphysical anthropology of the sleeping soul. This theological view ultimately sustains the ritual stories of the *Ngaben* tradition. Christianity does not alienate but becomes a subject that maintains the story. Although some versions that perpetuate excessive worship of ancestor spirits and the concept of reincarnation are rejected, other stories that align with the theological doctrine of the anthropology of the sleeping soul can be maintained. Balinese can celebrate dreams in their present life to remember those who have died. Balinese Christians also have the same obligation to live this dream so that Balinese can maintain the community of 'the dream society,' which has a distinctive tradition of honoring the dead and celebrating dreams in the present life to interpret life after death. Finally, it will remain a community known for its *Ngaben* stories that people worldwide will want to hear, witness, and experience.

From the *dream society view*, the theological doctrine of the anthropology of the sleeping soul does not make *Ngaben* a business meant to attract tourists. Nevertheless, the main focus is maintaining the story and uniqueness for generations. The story preserved and passed down across generations becomes a shared feeling that Balinese people live. Christianity also contributes to the dream community. Although some research has shown the *Ngaben* tradition's potential to attract tourists, the *dream society* has other goals. This potential is an additional impact of preserving stories about the *Ngaben* tradition. This focus is chosen because emerging stories become cultural wealth that is lived, not a commodity to be traded. Strictly speaking, despite using the conception of the dream society, the metaphysical anthropological theology of the sleeping soul rejects the capitalization of traditional forms of honoring the deceased.

Finally, the theological doctrine of metaphysical anthropology of the sleeping soul can answer the anxiety about the intentional or unintentional alienation carried out by Christianity against the ritual tradition of honoring the deceased. Theology preserves stories, feelings, and emotions in society. One of these stories is the *Ngaben* tradition of honoring the deceased.

Conclusion

Moving beyond the concern that Christianity alienates people from rituals of honoring the deceased, especially in the context of the Balinese *Ngaben* tradition, the theological doctrine of the metaphysical anthropology of the sleeping soul, integrated with the view of dream society, can accommodate the ritual. The theological doctrine of metaphysical anthropology of the sleeping soul maintains the stories, feelings, and emotions in the community related to the *Ngaben* tradition. Building on similar views of life after death, the theological doctrine of metaphysical anthropology of the sleeping soul can accept the *Ngaben* tradition. Nevertheless, there are restrictions, namely the rejection of worship of ancestor spirits and reincarnation. The *Ngaben* tradition becomes a story that Christians in Bali can maintain and implement.

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Credit authorship contribution

Daniel Fajar Panuntun directed and conducted the research as the concept owner. Sumiati Putri Natalia supported us by gathering materials and ensuring grammatical accuracy. Hengki Pindan Pute assisted with writing and proofreading.

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In developing this article, the author used generative AI to improve language. The tools used are Grammarly and Quillbot. On the other hand, the analytical, critical, and interpretive insights presented in this work are the result of the author's own thinking and are the author's sole responsibility. The author uses AI solely for assistive purposes, not for generative ones. For every review that involves AI-generated content, the author ensures its accuracy and relevance to the writing project.

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