



The Existence of *Wuli* and Its Philosophical Meaning According to *Pata Dela* Text of the Ngadha People of Flores, Indonesia

Watu Yohanes Vianey¹ 

¹ Faculty of Philosophy, Widya Mandira Catholic University, Indonesia
sigawunga@gmail.com

Abstract. The object of this study is the existence of *wuli* artifacts and its philosophical meaning according to *Pata Dela* Text of the Ngadha ethnic tradition of Flores. The basic question is what is the philosophical meaning of *wuli* according to the philosophy of life of the Ngadha people, which is implied in the *Pata Dela* text. The research used a descriptive qualitative paradigm, based on the theory of oral tradition and the theory of cultural diffusion. The primary data were obtained through field research, with participant observation techniques, interviews and Focus Group Discussions in Guru Sina Village. The data analysis and synthesis used the hermeneutic method, both for local traditional texts about making *wuli* necklaces, taking into account of its quantity and colors, and their use as a ritual apparatus in the light of the resilience of local cultural practices. The findings confirm that *wuli* necklace is not only a ritual tool, but also express the cosmic spirit (*waka*) and legacy of leadership of the Ngadha people. In and through the use of *wuli* necklaces, the subject or the user becomes a leader who is believed to be able to 'bridge and bind' (*padha meze aze lewa*) the relationship between human-beings and the natural environment, with each other, and with the Sacred.

Keywords: *Wuli*, *Pata Dela*, cosmic jewelry, leadership necklace

1 Introduction

In the course of human history and civilization, many scholars have found communities that used cowrie shells as currency, jewelry and certain ritual equipment (Li, 2003; Trubitt, 2003). As jewelry and ritual equipment, it plays an important role in the construction, affirmation, and maintenance of human identity and personality in culture. The jewelry reflects the traditions, religious beliefs, social rank, and gender of the wearer in various corners of the continent. In Ngadha ethnic group, cowrie shells made into necklaces to be worn in the ritual activities are called "wuli" (Museum NTT, 2023).

© The Author(s) 2025

A. Arif et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the International Conference on Multidisciplinary Studies (ICoMSi 2024)*,
Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research 926,
https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-406-8_13

Cowrie is a marine mollusk with a shiny shell. It is one of the many tropical marine gastropods of the genus *Cypraea*. The biggest cowries live in various oceans, including those in the Savu Sea, which connects the islands of Flores, Sumba, and Timor in Eastern Indonesia. The island of Flores has been separated from mainland Asia and the rest of the current Indonesian archipelago by deep waters. Geographically it is located at latitude 8-9 degrees south of the equator. Its isolated location has provided a protective and unique environment for ancient species like the Komodo dragon and, until about 12,000 years ago, a hominid species dubbed 'The Hobbit' or *Homo Floresiensis* (Morwood, 2007).

What is the use and unique philosophical meaning of the wuli necklace in the local wisdom of the Ngadha ethnic group of Flores, Indonesia? At first, the Ngadha ethnic group were called Rokka people (1884 – 1916), in subsequent research works (1916-2008) they were also called Ngadha people (Arndt, 1929, 1954; Smedal, 2000; Yengoyan, 1974), and today they are also known as Bajawa people (Vianey, 2010, 2023). The Rokka/Ngadha/Bajawa ethnic group, in this physical anthropology research, consists of a mixture of several dominant races. Glinka (Glinka, 2024) emphasized that the Bajawa - Ngadha population consists of three racial types, namely the Negroid - Melanesian race (47%); the Mongoloid – Deutro Malay race (24.5%), and the Europoid – Caucasian race (28.5%).

Does wuli jewelry in and through it, as an artifact that functions as ritual equipment in the form of a necklace, really reflect the indigenization of the traces of cultural diffusion of the mixed races of the Ngadha people? What is the philosophical meaning of the wuli in Pata Dela text, based on their color, and the quantity of their beads as far as it is revealed in Ngadha text tradition (Djawanai, 1983) namely Pata Dela? (Vianey, 1986, 2010).

The urgency of this paper is to explore oral traditions about wuli which are based on collective memory with an emic approach, especially through Ngadha text tradition and ritual speech about wuli, as far as they are revealed in Pata Dela. Pata Dela appears in the form of the traditional speech of the Ngadha people which has literary characteristics containing ethno-spirituality and philosophical values and creative power (Dou, 2023), which is currently under threat of extinction due to the phenomenon of neglect of local languages among the younger generation (Batarius et al., 2021).

The formal object of this study is about how wuli jewelry is made and used in the local wisdom. The uniqueness and the novelty of this cultural study is the existential meaning of the wuli artifact as a cosmic jewelry heritage of the Ngadha people and which makes the wearer a contextual leader, who has the spiritual authority (*waka*) to 'bridge and bind' (*padha meze aze lewa*) the wisdom and strong relations, between humans and each other in the traditional community, the relationship between humans and the universe in the ecosystem community, and bridge and bind human relations with the Sacred, namely the ancestors (*Riwu Dewa*) and *Dewa Sengata da Saga Telu* ('One God Three Ways of Being). The analysis and synthesis of primary and secondary data are based on the hermeneutic approach of the Ngadha tradition (Baghi et al., 2023; Vianey, 2023).

2 Method

This research is a qualitative descriptive study of wuli artifacts. Primary data was obtained through field research in Guru Sina Village (October – December 2023). The key informants were Mosalaki Godefridus Neno (75 years old) and Yosef One (64 years old). Secondary data was obtained through literature study from previous research team, especially carried out by the NTT Provincial Museum (Museum NTT, 2023). This data analyzes and synthesis is based on the hermeneutic interpretation method (Baghi et al., 2023; Vianey, 2023) and using the cultural diffusion and oral tradition theory.

The theory of cultural diffusion used is a modification of the cultural theory of Frits Graebner and Wilhelm Schmidt, SVD (Vianey, 2019). This theory emphasizes the possibility of parallel cultural evolution of various ethnic communities in the world and the tendency of humans and their communities to borrow contextually practices and cultural products from other ethnic groups, with possibilities and limits to absorb good practices and accept superior products from other cultures. According to Pata Dela, it says that “tore da modhe, ala da bila, eki da molo”. This is done through a process of indigenization and inculturation. In this way, the distinctive cultural characteristics that exist in a “cultural area” are maintained and open to new development, as a result of encounters with cultural values from other cultural areas.

In the context of this research, the view of wuli from the Ngada tradition can be enriched heuristically with the concept of wu li in the Chinese tradition in general (Zukav, 1979). Reminiscent to Chinese wu li tradition, in Pata Dela text of Su'i Uwi ritual at the Reba Reti Siwa celebration in Ngada, there is a narrative about the ancestors of the Ngada people who came from Sina One ('inland China or Sino') (Arndt, 1954; Baghi et al., 2023; Djawanai, 1983; Dou, 2023).

It also needs to be realized that in the last few decades, attention to oral traditions based on 'memory' has experienced a “boom” phenomenon has become productive in most academic disciplines in the social sciences, humanities, as well as in the public sphere (Jones & Russell, 2012). Memory is a fundamentally social phenomenon. Each cultural community, develops memories that highlight its own past and unique identity. The social framework of collective memory mediates individual memory, and there is a strong “tradition speaker” segment within these social groups (Ishengoma, 2005; Scott, 2003). In the case of Ngada, the tradition speakers are more as the reciters of Pata Dela, who are recently the great leaders (*mosalaki*) and some academics who master it.

3 Findings and Discussion

3.1 The Existence of Wuli According to Pata Dela

Etymologically, Pata Dela (PD) derives from the word “pata”, which means word, utterance; woven sheets; and “dela”, which means ancestors, who are mature and wise. So, PD means the word of the ancestors, the word of mature and wise people. This implies that PD comes from ancestors, who are mature human beings, and contains

intrinsic wisdom; as a guide to daily life in individualizing and actively participating in society or in a harmonious society. Here PD is called *adha gua* ('customary rules') justified, and can be classified as a philosophy of life that underlies the cultural praxis of its people from ancient times until nowadays, in the form of simple and communicative oral poetry, as a spiritual and moral foundation towards the ideals of prosperous humanity in accordance with its beliefs. All these things, according to Alan R. Drengson can be classified at the level of philosophy, as implicit philosophy, systematic philosophy and critical philosophy (Vianey, 2010); so PD is included in the first level, even the intermediate level with notes that it is not systematic in an explicit form.

Indeed, since the beginning, philosophizing has meant that humans look attentively, feel surprised about something and encourage them to find out, to seek wisdom. The adage "*cognosce te ipsum*," which means know thyself, which was used by Socrates, is often a basic encouragement from childhood to philosophize. Later, philosophy meant that humans thought with reason, down to the deepest roots, about the phenomena that appeared systematically before him, within him and outside him (Western tradition), existentially (Eastern tradition), critically, heuristically, and communicated. Because every human experience contains a philosophical dimension and philosophizing is a human thing, it is certain that the ancestors of the Rokka/Ngadha/Bajawa ethnic group as *homo sapiens*, at least realized this, no matter how simple, in accordance with their reflective abilities, their existential, synthetic, aesthetic way of thinking, intuitive and symbolic, with its unique form of expression - as in Eastern traditions in general - which is oral for those with an oral tradition, and in the form of myth and primitive poetry (Nakamura, 1964).

PD is a philosophical and traditional text of the Ngadha people, a legacy of their ancestors, which, if classified at the level of philosophy according to Drengson (1982), is included in the first level, as an implicit philosophy. As an implicit philosophy, PD requires interpretation from the human audience, because of its own form, namely in the form of oral poetry. As oral poetry, PD undoubtedly has expressive, symbolic and philosophical elements because the language is connotative because it uses linguistic styles to create an effect of poetic beauty which is the essence of poetry that has universal quality and shows one of the essences of humans as symbolic creatures.

PD is clearly spoken poetry. This is very evident from the diction, language style, rhythm and poetry. As poetry, PD is also the result of reflection on the full appreciation of human life as reflected by its creator. He depicts humans and invites us to reflect on ourselves by creating pathos. Apart from giving rise to pathos, namely an inner attitude of feeling which the creator feels, poetry can also evoke ethos, namely a certain spirit and attitude to live, and enrich logos, namely providing enlightenment in the form of meaningful words to capture and reveal the mystery of truth (Vianey, 1986, 2010).

Indeed, the efforts of poetry and philosophy are the same, that is to use the language as a communication tool to search for *aletheia* ('truth'). Philosophy invites us and leads us to the secret of truth; poetry gives the name of the secret, which the philosopher Heidegger believed to be more suitable for stating the secret of existence or truth than philosophy itself. According to Alfred North Whitehead in Cormier et al., (1970) that the

two are 'twin brothers' in humanizing humans, beautifying the universe, and glorifying God.

What is the role of PD? According to the key informants Godefridus Neno (75) and Yosef One (74), the role of PD is in line with its type and function. First, PD Po Pera ('sublime speech of practical advice'), which consists of *pata-pata* ('texts') and its role or function to provide important guidelines as advice and guidance for everyday civilized life. This is closely related to why *wuli* has become a local ritual equipment in the form of cosmic and leadership necklaces, especially in certain ritual activities.

Second PD Niuazi ('noble story of longing'). This PD functions or plays a role in answering human psychological needs that require touch. It is a means to express feelings of love which are still in dream and not yet realized, feelings of sadness and loneliness due to wounded heart that have not been healed, fatigue in pursuing dreams and the heavy burden of carrying a vision that is too high. Usually this PD is said to reminisce or actualize the inevitable 'boundary point' of human beings.

Third, PD Sake ('ancestral words swearing the truth'). It plays a role or functions as an official formula for maintaining the truth between fellow human-beings and the Divine. If a human being is not guilty of committing immoral acts, for example; then he has the right to say the PD out loud at the risk of losing his life if he lies about the truth. This type of PD is also recited in the Nulu rite, which responds to unnatural death or bad death, called *mata golo* (Schröter, 1998; Smedal, 2000). Through the recitation of the PD Sake, the Ngadha people expect that the bad death does not happen again and the evil accomplices who caused the previous bad death, would be judged by cosmic justice according to cosmic rules in general, so that the evil returns to the evil, the good returns to the good, or returns to 'its master' (*wado mori gazi*).

Fourth, PD *Tau Buku* (informing the ancestors of ritual ceremony). This type of PD has a more important function or role as an opening ceremony for the inauguration of certain rituals in local belief. There are 5 (five) traditional figures who wear *Wuli* in the following ritual celebrations. (1) *Tere Lengi Nua* Ritual. This is a rite to initiate the opening of a new village. (2) *Godho Kabu Keri* or *Ka Nua* ritual. This ritual is marked by the destruction of weed roots and several household items, as a symbol of human self-renewal, along with the official opening of a new village. (3) *Raju Ngadhu* or *Ka Ngdhu* ritual. This is a celebration of the inauguration of the Ngadhu sacrificial pole, an icon of the presence of the ancestors of the son of the founder of the Woe Unity. (4) *Ka Sa'o Ngaza* Ritual. The inauguration ritual of the 'Named Traditional House' (Vianey, 2008a, 2016). In these rituals there are usually individuals appointed to wear *Wuli* jewelry, through divination subrituals. There are three types of divination, namely *Tau Tibo*, *Mau Tua*, and *Kili Nio* divination. (5) *Reba Reti Siwa* ritual speech. Especially in the Reba Nage and Reba Deru areas, when doing *Soka Uwi*, *Sedo Uwi*, and *Woko Uwi*. The traditional leaders who perform *Soka Uwi*, *Sedo Uwi*, and *Woko Uwi* wear *wuli* necklaces.

Here are the traditional elders from *Woe Ago Ka'e*, who wear *Wuli* at the opening of the *Ka Sa'o Ngaza* ritual in Guru Sina Village, on October 23, 2023.

Fig. 1. Photo of several traditional elders wearing *wuli* necklaces in the main room of a traditional house, Sa'o Manu Milo, in Guru Sina Village



(Document: Vianey, 2023).

Thus, in general the function of PD is as a tool for cultural communication and traditional ritual speech, which not only explains the cultural products, practices and values of its heirs, but can civilize them through appreciation and practice of its values. It becomes a kind of documentation of the thoughts, feelings and desires of the ancestors of the Ngadha people with a set of cherished values, for subsequent generations. It can also play a role in increasing the social ties of community members with each other, with the universe and ancestors in the unseen world who have direct contact with The Sacred One, who in the dyadic formulation is called Ine Ema, Dewa Zeta Nitu Zale, Susu Keri Asa Kae, or in the triadic formulation it is called Dewa Saga Telu/Dewa Riga Telu ('One God of Three Branches') in the name of Dewa Wawo – Dewa Sa'o – Dewa Ja'o (Dou, 2023; Vianey, 2008, 2010, 2016).

Table 1. Pata *Dela* about *Wuli* and its translation

Ngadha	English
<i>Wula da dara</i>	The Moon is shining

<i>Nagu Leza</i>	Not the Sun
<i>Butu d Beta</i>	Beads break loose
<i>Bodha Pili Tei</i>	You have to search until you find it
<i>Wuli da bhara</i>	<i>Wuli</i> is white
<i>Pu'u lau bata lema</i>	From the deep ocean
<i>Ua da sese</i>	Yellow rattan
<i>Pu'u zeke kala meze</i>	From the great dense northern forest
<i>Tei butu muzi</i>	Made to look like new beads
<i>Sebulu Se Esa</i>	The total is Ten plus One
<i>Penu Mosa Meku Laki Tora</i>	Become a necklace of the <i>Mosa Meku Laki Tora</i>
<i>Sare Mosa Lina Laki Pina</i>	Become a jewel of the <i>Mosa Lina Dhapi Pina</i>
<i>Dia Kisa Nata Ota Ola</i>	In the center of the cosmos
<i>Wi Tau</i>	Becoming
<i>Padha Meze Aze Lewa</i>	Wide Bridge Long Rope Binding Relationships
<i>Tako Masa</i>	Reaching All
<i>Wawo Tana</i>	Beyond the World

Fig. 2. 11 Cowrie seeds on a *wuli* necklace.



(Document: Vianey, 2023).

From the perspective of number hermeneutics, the number ten plus one (one month) or the number eleven has the following cosmic meaning. The number 11 in Eastern culture, namely from Chinese culture, is believed to be a lucky number, a powerful spiritual sign of awakening and awareness of harmony with the initial and ultimate purpose of life. This number produces intuitive sharpness, enlightenment experiences, and spiritual strength. In this traditional numerology, the number 11 points to new beginnings and creates strong energy, to reach human transcendental potential in realizing reality and existence. Furthermore, in Western culture, this number evokes the human DNA code as a generator of genetic memory and the gateway to spiritual journey. Therefore, in numerology this number 11, represents idealism and a new vision of the future, refinement of character, intuition, revelation, and intelligence, genius, avant-garde, androgyny, and complete achievement, when working with a suitable and practical partner (Utari, 2011).

According to George M. Bernard, in his book entitled "The Search of 11:11 in Utari (2011) the meaning of the number 11 is a call to the existence of a person who contains the authentic identity of half angel and half human, in the cycle of time creating and recreating, by following the blueprint that is already in the DNA. In the perspective of Catholic theology, this is believed to be in accordance with the Divine plan of salvation (*providentia Dei*) as preached by St. Paul at the Aeropagus (Acts 17:28). In and through it, the chosen human becomes a transhuman person, who experiences transfiguration as a human with an angelic heart. And from the perspective of sacred geometry and the golden ratio of creation in the world, this number marks the end of physical reality at number 10 (Ngadha: *sebulu*) and entry into metaphysical reality at number 1 (*esa*) in

the embrace of the power of the King of the Universe. In and through it, humans who wear the 11 *wuli* jewelry are connected to the cosmic world or universe in its three-dimensional structuration, namely the human world, the world of ecosystems (minerals, plants and animals); and the supernatural world (ancestral spirits, *nitu noa* spirits, up to the Spirit of the Most High).

The hermeneutics of this number and quantity confirms the meaning of *wuli* based on the theory of cultural diffusion that occurred in the Ngada region. This can be explained as follows. **First**, *wuli* which is made from white shellfish, which is obtained from the seabed, shows the influence of the spread of Melanesian culture (Museum NTT, 2023); **Second**, the 11 white *wuli* are joined together with *aze maghi* ('rope from palm leaf stalks'), reminding researchers of the meaning of the word "*maghi*" in the distribution of Sanskrit in the Vedic Hindu tradition in this region (Arndt, 1958) which is also connected to a name of the one "month" in its calendar system.

The first stanza of *Pata Dela* above alludes to the "*wuli*" necklace which is connected to the mystery of "*Wula da Dara/Nagu Leza/Butu da Beta/Pili Tei*." Furthermore, *wuli*, which is like the moon, is also connected and reminiscent to the spread of Austronesian culture from Sina One ('inland Sino') with the meaning of the number 11 as in the Chinese philosophical tradition above. This confirms that the quality of a person who is chosen to wear *wuli*, consciously or not, will be the light of the world, but like the light of the moon, not like the light of the sun (first verse, *Wula da dara/Nagu leza*). In other words, the ritual apparatus that wears *wuli* carries out gentle cosmic leadership in overcoming the darkness of religious social life, emitting an aura from a unified beam of moonlight, which glows white (*bhara*) which illuminates the 'dark night' (*kobe giu*). Because of this, the apparatus that uses a new necklace (*butu muzi*) is called "*mosa meku laki tora/mosa lina laki pina*". *Mosa Meku* is a humble and gentle leader. *Laki Tora* is a leader who provides enlightenment. *Mosa Lina* is a leader who clarifies matters. *Laki Pina* is a leader who can crystallize decisions that are practical in nature and therefore effective in the success of ritual celebrations and their implications for the world of life in the present and future.

In the last verse, *Pata Dela* emphasizes the leadership role of the person chosen to wear the *wuli*. He exists and becomes *padha meze aze lewa* ('big bridge connecting and binding relationship') with all elements of the cosmos (*tako masa*) and beyond the world (*wawo tana*). This means that the wearer of the *wuli* is chosen to be a leader in a certain ritual context, and it is expected and believed that he acts as a wise and creative bridge connecting and binding between humans and their fellow humans, humans and the ecosystem, and humans and the Sacred. The Sacred in local tradition has the following hierarchy. The Highest Being is *Dewa Sengata da Saga Telu* (One God Three Ways of Being) and *Riwu Dewa* (Who has been in communion with the Gods), namely the positive spirits of nature and good ancestors (Vianey, 2024).

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 The Existence of *Wuli* As a Ritual Necklace

Ritual is religion in action. *Wuli* is one of the ritual accessories in the religious actions of the Ngadha people. *Wuli* is a necklace to decorate people selected as one of

the officers who lead certain rites, through a local religious divination process. There are three types of divination processes based on the equipment, namely "*Tau Tibo*" (using bamboo as a medium); "*Kili Nio*" (using coconut as a medium); and "*Mau Tua*" (using palm wine as a medium with sliced palm leaves).

The leader who is elected at that time, using one of the divination techniques above, must act as a user of *wuli* and with it channel cosmic leadership, namely leadership that is in accordance with cosmic order and harmonious cosmic justice from the three worlds, namely the human world, the universe, and the world of spirits. In *Pata Dela*'s speech above, the three world structures are called: *ota ola*.

Based on the theory of cultural diffusion, the word "*wuli*" may derive from the root words "Wu" and "li" which were absorbed from Chinese culture or Sino traditions in general (Zukav, 1979). This confirms the word *wuli* which was absorbed by the Ngadha people from the Sina One (Inland Sino or China) tradition as spoken by this community in the celebration of the *Reba Reti Siva* rite at the beginning of each year in the *Wula Reba* calendar, in each cultural area in Ngadha (Baghi et al., 2023).

For example, in the case of the "*Ka Sa'o Ngaza*" celebration on October 2023 at Guru Sina Village (Vianey, 2008, 2016). At this celebration, the man chosen to wear *wuli* is the person who will carry out the actions of "*pebhe telo manu*" ('throwing chicken eggs that have been prayed and blessed to tame the sacrificial animal'), "*noze kaba*" ('slaughtering the sacrificial buffalo'), and guarding sacrificial buffalo meat (*kebha sui*). The egg was thrown at the head of the main buffalo, then with the *sau ga'e* heirloom sword that he was holding, he carried out the "*noze*" action, namely making a slaughter marker on the neck of the sacrificial animal. Furthermore, after the sacrificial buffalo meat is cooked, he becomes the guardian so that the meat remains sacred to be eaten at the banquet. Likewise in the case of celebrating the *Mata Golo* rite as a bad and unnatural death (Schröter, 2005; Smedal, 2000).

3.2.2 Existence of Wuli As a Cosmic Leadership Necklace

Wuli is called cosmic jewelry and also as the leadership necklace of the three worlds, because it is related to the noumena of the cosmic term itself. The adjective 'cosmic' (German '*kosmisch*', French '*cosmique*') was originally given the meaning 'worldly' and related to 'world' (Pope Benedict XVI, 2007, 2009, 2011). In subsequent developments it was also given a universal meaning relating to the cosmos or universe in its orderly totality. This order is closely related to the dimensions of the moral order and the order of the world of life in general in accordance with natural law. This matter is clearly connected if interpreted in the light of the theory of cultural distribution, especially the distribution of culture based on the Roman Catholic religion.

Today 98% of the Ngadha people from the Ngadha ethnic group are followers of the Roman Catholic religion. Catholic missionaries had entered this area since 1911, and in 1920 there were already several parishes, such as the Holy Spirit Parish in Mataloko, St. Mater Boni Concilli in Bajawa City, and St. Paul in Jerebu'u. In the light of Catholic Christian leadership, the cosmos is the world of life that is now present and will continue along with the complete realization of the mystery of the Kingdom of God led by Jesus Christ in His title as Christ the King of the Universe (Phil. 2:11 -12; Col. 1:15-17). In this context, the leadership relationship of *wuli* users who are Catholic Christians certainly takes part in the leadership of Christ himself which goes beyond things that

are merely natural, but also has cultural and meta-cultural characteristics. Because the moral order and regularity of a community of society presupposes the existence of cultural products and practices that embody the values of the kingdom of God led by the King of the Universe, centered on the spirituality of the One God and the Triune God in the spirit and basic law of love (Mk 12:29- 31; Luke 10:26-27; 1 John 4:7-8).

Teilhard de Cardin (1 May 1881-15 March 1955) was a leading commentator on the mysteries of cosmos, especially those related to leadership in the cosmic world, which is called the Cosmic Christ. For Teilhard the cosmos is developing from the *Alpha* point (the Beginning - *Pu'u*) towards its full realization at the *Omega* point (*The End Lobo*), in accordance with the laws of botanic nature. This development process is called cosmogenesis, as represented in the universal nomenclature of the traditional house of the Ngadha people (Vianey, 2016, 2024). Furthermore, because the mystery of *Alpha* and *Omega* exists and is fully realized in Christ (Rev. 1: 8), this cosmogenesis is transformed into '*christogenesis*'. Between the two there is what is called '*anthropogenesis*' and '*noogenesis*'. The cosmos is directed towards its goal primarily through the capacity of '*ratio et intellectus* (reflexive-contemplative *nous/logos*) through the process of cultural evolution. So in *noogenesis*, humans appear as having the consciousness/intelligence (*nous/logos*) of Christ, who plans their future towards the goal of a perfect life towards the *Omega* point. In general, the reality of the cosmos is described as a process of ascent, from simple beginnings to a peak that is complex and has a synthetic character. This complex diversity is dissolved into a synthesis that increasingly develop towards perfection. By referring to the letters of Paul to the Ephesians and Colossians, de Chardin views Christ as an energy that strives towards the noosphere, and finally combines everything into its fullness (Pope Benedict XVI, 2007, 2009, 2011).

In other words, the selected individual who wears *wuli* is endowed with *pars Christi* consciousness, in the process of service, as an apparatus for existing rites. So, the wearer of *wuli* jewelry becomes a sign and means of the presence of a ritual leader with a cosmic and metaphysical character, who in local belief is a person called an ancestor who has allied himself with the Most High (*Dewa Zeta Wawo Lena*), and therefore these ancestors are believed to be *Riwu Dewa* ('thousands of emanations of the gods'), because their spirits, through the power of the gods, have re-united with the God or have allied themselves with the God (Skt Div-Deva = The Most Bright/Latin *Divus*, English: Divine).

In the *analogia entis* of the Ngadha tradition, the human leader, mystically and metaphysically unites with the Sacred as *Kopa Dewa* - the covering of the divine seed, like the shell of a snail, and also like the *kopa pau*/seed wrapper/*li'e pau* - the mango seed, in layers outside of *li'e pau*. This illustrates the mystery of the communion of the mystical body of the chosen human being with the Sacred One, whose spirit resides within him (cf. Rom 5:5; Gal 2:20; 1 Cor 3:16). In the Roman Catholic tradition, the Spirit that resides in humans through baptism is the Holy Spirit as God Who within My heart (*Dewa One Ate Ja'o.*) His mystical communion was not characterized by pantheism but *panentheism*. Not merging with God as in pantheistic beliefs in the Hindu tradition in general but uniting with God at the outermost level like the shell covering the seed, which has the character of *panentheism*, as in the Roman Catholic tradition (Vianey, 2016, 2024).

1 activities in local belief. The quantity and the number ten plus one or eleven of *wuli* beads refers to the meaning of the beauty of cosmic leadership which brings 'enlightenment' in the light of cosmic order and cosmic justice. In other words, the meaning of *wuli* can also be explained in the theory of cultural diffusion (*kulturkreis*) from the Chinese philosophical tradition, namely: "Wu Li".

Thus, in and through the Cowry necklace, named *wuli*, there is a pulse of cosmic order and justice that is connected to the metaphorical mystery of the beam of moonlight in the celestial cycle of space. The character of an elected leader who wears *wuli* must be like a beam of moonlight, not like a beam of sunlight (*Wula da dara/Nagu leza*). Moonlight is soft and beautiful to illuminate the dark night. The ritual apparatus is present with the art of leadership that radiates light from the "Light", namely 'Father Sun' (*Ame Leza da keso uli tanga dala* - 'Father Sun who regulates the discipline of astrology in Space') in the world of life in general and especially in certain ritual practices,

As the moon channels the light of the sun - so does a ritual leader - he is present as a channel of revelation and blessing from the Most High (*Dewa Zeta Wawo*), and from the positive energy of the universe, from the depths of the southern seas where brilliant white shells reside to the dense northern forests with thickest of yellow rattan, tightly woven together with ropes of *lontar*, to initiate the beauty of religious social life which is integrated with the rope of the covenant of *woe* fellowship (continuous inner bond) to unite and purify the three social *gatra* (cultural, political, economic) in the middle of the human universe, which is connected harmoniously with the ecosystem and sacred nature in the world of the gods.

As a cosmic piece of jewelry, *wuli* can be utilized in a financial scope, as a beautiful and powerful reward and respect for men who were officers with heroic characters, having role and functions as ritual leaders. They can also channel the divine blessings to the universe, with their life style who are humble, generous and gentle, like moonlight. This divine role and power of those ritual leaders in their mission in local religion can implicitly be grasped from the following *Pata Dela*.

Bahasa Ngadha	English
<i>Dewa Reta Riga Telu</i> <i>Raga jawa au tana</i> <i>Melo-melo go kita-ata</i> <i>Molo go papa jawa</i> <i>Tutu toto nama ngaza</i> <i>Ge kisa nata ota ola</i>	Most High God the Triune Revealing peace on earth The joys of Human beings The peace and the truth Applied to all names In the center of every space of the universe

The ritual leaders who wear *wuli* become the channelers of blessings from the Most High, namely *Dewa Riga Telu*, as a kind of "*padha meze aze lewa*" ('wide bridge and long rope') to serve the harmony of *ad intra* and *ad extra* relations of the human beings with others in worldly community, with the universe, and with the ancestral spirits. On top of all these relations, is their relationship with the Most High, namely *Dewa Riga Telu* ('One God The Triune') in the name of *Dewa Wawo* (God beyond us); *Dewa Sa'o* (God Who is with us), and *Dewa Ja'o* (God Who resides in us). The *wuli* wearers is prayed to become cosmic leaders and ritual leaders, who bring peace (*papa jawa*) and joys to all people (*melo -melo go kita-ata*), and to all names of creations (*tutu toto nama ngaza*) that exist in the sea, on land and in the sky, both physical and metaphysical, visible and invisible.

4 Conclusions and Suggestions

4.1 Conclusion

The existence of *wuli* is an artifact in the form of a shell necklace that has a philosophical meaning as a leadership necklace and cosmic jewelry from the Ngadha ethnic group. In the context of local religious celebrations, *wuli* is worn by men who are elected as ritual leaders. The research used a descriptive qualitative paradigm, based on the theory of oral tradition and the theory of cultural diffusion. Hermeneutically the number eleven (*se bulu se esa*) of the white *wuli* grains, refers to the meaning of the beauty and integrity of leadership that has cosmic spirit (*waka*). Therefore, the wearers of *wuli* are believed to be able to establish harmonious relations between humans and others, humans and the natural environment, humans and the Sacred. They function like wide bridges and long ropes (*padha mese aze lewa*) in building cosmic relations to bring true justice and truth, peace and joy.

Therefore, the elected leaders who wear *wuli* can channel the light into their social, religious and ecological communities. They are like a beam of moonlight (*wula da dara*), and not like a beam of sunlight (*nagu leza*). Moonlight is soft and illuminate the dark night. Just as the moon channels the light of the sun - so does the ritual leaders. They can present, channel and reveal the blessings from the Most High the Triune (*Dewa Riga Telu*), and from the positive energy of the universe, from the depth of the southern sea where the white *wuli* collected, united and

linked with groves of yellow rattan, and tightly woven with ropes of palm leaves from the dense northern forest.

The findings confirm that *wuli* necklace is not only a ritual tool, but also express the cosmic spirit (*waka*) and legacy of leadership of the Ngadha people. In and through the use of *wuli* necklaces, the subject or the user becomes a leader who is believed to be able to 'bridge and bind' (*padha meze aze lewa*) the relationship between human-beings and the natural environment, with each other, and with the Sacred.

4.2 Suggestions

Based on this research and findings, I propose the following four suggestions. *First*, as a cultural heritage of the Ngadha people, *wuli* deserves to be exhibited in museums throughout the archipelago with its unique existential meaning literacy. *Second*, as a ritual necklace and cosmic leadership necklace, it must be strictly kept in the ritual houses, and worn in the context of the ritual and its existential meaning. However, the duplicate *wuli* necklaces can be used as artificial decoration in the artistic performances.

Third, the Ngadha people are suggested immediately to take care of their cultural patent right (*hak paten budaya*) of *wuli* as the local genius and cultural heritage product. *Fourth*, this topic of research is remained open to be studied and conserved from various disciplines with high respect of its code of ethics. For example, we have to be aware that the production of duplicate *wuli* necklace to meet the need of touristic and artistic industries, can sometimes destroy the environment and cosmic order and justice of our daily life.

References

1. Arndt, P. (1929). *Die Religion der N'ada*", (part 1 & part 2) *Anthropos*. Studia Instituti Anthropos.
2. Arndt, P. (1954). *Gesellschaftliche Verhältnisse der Ngadha*. Verlag der Missionsdruckerei St. Gabriel.
3. Arndt, P. (1958). Hinduismus der Ngadha. *Folklore Studies*, 17(1958), 99–136. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1177379>
4. Baghi, F., Kleden, P. B., Muda, H., Doredae, A., Dou, J. S., Vianey,

- W. Y., Lina, P., Tule, P., Lede, J. A. C. U., Ule, S., Conterius, W. D., Jebadu, A., Prajaka, M. A., Wuli, R. N., Djawa, L., & Pare, D. (2023). *Hermeneutika Tradisi Ngada Mitos-Logos-Anthropos*. Ledalero.
5. Batarius, P., Vianey, W. Y., & Samane, I. P. A. N. (2021). Teknologi Informasi Dalam Mendokumentasikan Tutar Bahasa Ngadha Yang Mengajarkan Kode Etik Teks Lokal. *Jurnal Ilmiah Matrik*, 23(1), 84–93. <https://doi.org/10.33557/jurnalmatrik.v23i1.1218>
 6. Cormier, R., Chinn, E., & Lineback, R. H. (1970). Encounter; an introduction to philosophy. In *Foresman and Company*. Scott, Foresman. <https://doi.org/LK> - <https://worldcat.org/title/65340>
 7. Djawanai, S. (1983). *Ngadha Text Tradition: The Collective Mind of the Ngadha People, Flores*. Australia Nasional University.
 8. Dou, J. S. (2023). *Di Atas Bumi Seperti di dalam Langit, Mempertimbangkan Astronomi Budaya Ngada*. Ledalero.
 9. Drengson, A. R. (1982). Four Philosophies of Technology. *Philosophy Today*, 26(2), 103–117. <https://doi.org/10.5840/philtoday198226218>
 10. Glinka, J. (2024). Review of Ethnic Groups of Insular Southeast Asia. Vol. 1: Indonesia, Andaman Islands, and Madagascar. *Anthropos*, 70(5/6), 985–987. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40458874>
 11. Ishengoma, J. M. (2005). African Oral Traditions: Riddles Among The Haya of Northwestern Tanzania. *International Review of Education*, 51(2), 139–153. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-005-1841-9>
 12. Jones, S., & Russell, L. (2012). Archaeology, Memory and Oral Tradition: An Introduction. *International Journal of Historical*

- Archaeology*, 16. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10761-012-0177-y>
13. Li, Y. (2003). On the Function of Cowries in Shang and Western Zhou China. *Journal of East Asian Archaeology*, 5, 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156852303776172999>
 14. Museum NTT. (2023). Sosialisasi Perhiasan Wuli Kabupaten Ngada. In *Facebook*. [web.facebook.com. https://web.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=269687272770425](https://web.facebook.com/web.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=269687272770425)
 15. Nakamura, H. (1964). Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples: India, China, Tibet, Japan (Revised English Translation). In P. P. Wiener (Ed.), *University of Hawaii Press*. University of Hawaii Press. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1515/9780824845025>
 16. Pope Benedict XVI. (2007). *The Holy: See MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE WORLD DAY OF PEACE*. Vatica.Va. https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20101208_xliv-world-day-peace.html
 17. Pope Benedict XVI. (2009). *The Holy See: Caritas in Veritate: Encyclical on integral human development in charity and truth*. Vatica.Va. https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html
 18. Pope Benedict XVI. (2011). *The Holy See: MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE WORLD DAY OF PEACE*. Vatican.VA. https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20101208_xliv-world-day-peace.html
 19. Schröter, S. (1998). Death Rituals of the Ngada in Central Flores,

- Indonesia. *Anthropos*, 93(4/6), 417–435.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40464841>
20. Schröter, S. (2005). Highlands Gendered Symbolism , Kinship and Social Practice in The Ngada Highlands. *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde*, 161(2), 318–349.
 21. Scott, D. (2003). Oral Tradition and Archaeology: Conflict and Concordance Examples from Two Indian War Sites. *Historical Archaeology*, 37, 55–65. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03376611>
 22. Smedal, O. H. (2000a). Sociality on Display: The Aesthetics of Ngadha Houses. *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 37(circa 1900), 106–126.
 23. Smedal, O. H. (2000b). Sociality on Display: The Aesthetics of Ngadha Houses. *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 37(circa 1900), 106–126. <https://doi.org/10.1086/resv37n1ms20167496>
 24. Trubitt, M. (2003). The Production and Exchange of Marine Shell Prestige Goods. *Journal of Archaeological Research*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1025028814962>
 25. Utari, R. (2011, November 11). Angka 11, Pembangkit Memori Genetik. *Beritasatu.Com*.
<https://www.beritasatu.com/news/16888/angka-11-pembangkit-memori-genetik>
 26. Vianey, W. Y. (1986). *Manusia Dalam Filsafat Pata Dela*. STFK Ledalero.
 27. Vianey, W. Y. (2008a). *Representasi Citraan Ilahi dan Insani dalam Entitas Ritus Sa'o Ngaza di Guru Sina, Kabupaten Ngada, Flores*, NTT. Universitas Udayana.
 28. Vianey, W. Y. (2008b). *Representasi Citraan Ilahi dan Insani dalam Entitas Ritus Sa'o Ngazadi Kampung Guru Sina, Kabupaten Ngada, Flores*. Disertasi, Program Pascasarjana Kajian Budaya

Universitas Udayana.

29. Vianey, W. Y. (2010). *Pata Dela dan Representasi Citraan Manusia Dari Etnik Ngada, Perspektif Kajian Budaya*. Gita Kasih.
30. Vianey, W. Y. (2016). *Tuhan, Manusia, dan Sa'o Ngaza, Kajian Filsafat Budaya Rumah Tradisional Orang Ngada-Flores*. Kanisius.
31. Vianey, W. Y. (2019). *Pandangan Ketiga Tentang Yesus*. Unwira Press.
32. Vianey, W. Y. (2023). The Art of Teke and Woman Ideology in the Ngada Heritage, East Nusa Tenggara. *Jurnal Heritage of Nusantara*, 12(2).
33. Vianey, W. Y. (2024). The Naming System of Ngadha Houses and the Mysteries of the Trinity in. *Heritage of Nusantara: International Journal of Religious Literature and Heritage*, 13(1), 1–29. <https://doi.org/10.31291/hn.v13i1.743>
34. Yengoyan, A. A. (1974). *Ethnic Groups of Insular Southeast Asia*. Volume 1: Indonesia, Andaman Islands and Madagascar. Edited And Compiled By Frank M. LeBar. New Haven: HRAF Press, 1973. viii, 236 pp. Illustrations, Index, Bibliography. \$15.00. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 33(3), 500–501. <https://doi.org/DOI:10.2307/2052972>
35. Zukav, G. (1979). *Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics*. Bantam Books.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

