The fundamental difference between humans and machines lies in the heart. AI can make technical decisions based on statistics. However, only humans are capable of making decisions from the heart, taking into account moral values and ethical consequences. The heart is understood as an inner space where humans transcend the material universe and encounter God to determine their destiny.[40]

The integration of these two concepts is crucial for modern humans who have transformed into digital beings. In an era where existence is defined by digital activity, tending to the heart helps humans retain their individual agency so they are not entirely governed by external algorithms. Once again, tending to the heart serves as a bulwark to ensure that technology remains a tool that serves human dignity, rather than the other way around, where humans are enslaved by efficiency and data.[41]

Wisdom of the heart is needed to critically distinguish between hoaxes and disinformation rife with verbal brutality. Nurturing the heart requires space for solitude and inactivity.[42] Without moments of reflection, human actions will become nothing more than automatic reactions to digital stimuli. Guarding one's heart in the digital age is not merely an act of self-isolation, but a practice of intellectual and spiritual integrity. It is the path to ensuring that, amid the flood of data, humans remain capable of loving, empathizing, and seeking a truth that transcends machine logic.

Practices for Maintaining a Healthy Mindset in the Digital Age

Guarding one's heart in the digital age is an act of spiritual and intellectual self-discipline aimed at maintaining integrity amid the tide of technology. Guarding one's heart is not merely a passive act, but rather the control center of one's life that determines the quality of one's actions and words in cyberspace.[43] According to Proverbs 4:23, the heart is the source of life. In the digital age, guarding the heart means exercising strict oversight over one's thoughts, motivations, and will to ensure they remain in harmony with divine wisdom. Ultimately, people do not merely react impulsively to algorithms. The practice of guarding the heart involves rejecting digital

[40] Antiqua Et Nova, 107.

[41] Antiqua Et Nova, 54.

[42] Nilsson, "The Future Is Not Set. Democratic Education In The Age Of Homo Digitalis," 606.

[43] Rolin Ferdilianto Sandelgus Taneo, "Manusia Sebagai Homo Digitalis: Suatu Wacana Teologi Publik Gereja Atas Keterlemparan Manusia Di Ruang Digital," *Sophia: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristen* 5, No. 1 (2024): 60, Https://Doi.Org/10.34307/Sophia.V5i1.234.

reductionism.[44] This is where aspects of life that cannot be measured are considered irrelevant because they cannot be quantified by machines.

People need to develop the ability to distinguish between accurate information and hoaxes or disinformation that undermine social order. This practice requires users not to be passive consumers of information. Every piece of content consumed and shared must undergo critical reflection. Users must consider whether it builds up or, on the contrary, spreads hatred. What is in the heart is reflected through speech on social media. Guarding the heart means steering clear of a deceitful tongue and treacherous lips. [45] In today's world, being mindful means avoiding slander, cyberbullying, and hate speech. Users should treat others online just as they would like to be treated in person. This helps restore the human touch that is often lost in remote communication.

Amid the digital information storm, it is crucial to set aside time for solitude, silence, and contemplation. Getting into the habit of not always being connected or digitally available creates space for the heart to reconnect with itself. One can reflect and engage in honest inner dialogue without the distraction of external stimuli. Nurturing the heart also involves cultivating a personal relationship with God as the primary spiritual foundation. This relationship serves as a stable anchor so that individuals are not tossed about by digital trends or the search for external validation. Humans should not replace real interpersonal relationships with shallow virtual connections. Relationships involving physical encounters and genuine empathy remain fundamental human needs that cannot be replaced by technology. Thus, the practice of tending to the heart is a path of wisdom to ensure that humans remain autonomous moral agents in the face of technology. By tending to the heart, modern humans can use digital tools to advance collective well-being and spiritual growth without losing their human essence.

Digital Spirituality

The digital world is not merely a tool, but a cultural environment and anthropological space that shapes the way people think, communicate, and form relationships. Digital spirituality is understood as a systematic reflection on the transformative impact of the digital age on the life of faith and people's responses to

[44] Antiqua Et Nova, 112.

[45] Antiqua Et Nova, 114.

this new environment. At the heart of spirituality in the digital age is a genuine personal relationship with the living Christ.[46] The Church emphasizes that amid the constant flood of information and digital stimuli, a personal relationship with Christ serves as a spiritual anchor that provides stability and a deeper sense of meaning in life.

The digital world offers a new metaphor for understanding God's presence. The digital space, consisting of non-physical presences, provides a way to envision a spiritual presence that transcends the traditional boundaries of space and time.[47] The internet has made it easier to find spiritual meaning and resources that were previously hard to access, now enabling the growth of faith through various sources. Digital spirituality faces the risk of digital reductionism. The challenge lies in the pressure to maintain a perfect spiritual image in the virtual world, which can actually undermine the authenticity of one's spiritual identity. Digital noise can also disrupt the silence and tranquility necessary for contemplation and inner dialogue with God. The digital world also features massive virtual connections. These massive virtual connections are often not accompanied by emotional depth. Consequently, they can lead to social isolation and loneliness.[48]

For technology to serve the growth of faith, we must be able to distinguish accurate information from misinformation and harmful content, and assess how technology impacts our spiritual lives. Users must recognize that virtual interactions should not replace genuine in-person encounters. The deepest human connections remain those that unite spirit and matter.[49] Using digital spaces to build communities that authentically support and serve others, rather than merely seeking external validation such as likes, comments, and followers. Thus, digital spirituality is not about escaping into the virtual world, but rather about how humans can remain autonomous moral agents and stay connected to God amidst the reality of technology.

[46] Adrian Yanuar P And Young People, "Nilai-Nilai Christus Vivit Bagi Kaum Muda Di Era Digital," *Berkat : Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Dan Katolik* 2, No. 2 (2025): 39, Https://Doi.Org/10.61132/Berkat.V2i2.856.

[47] Anthony Le Duc, "Towards A Cybertheology: Theology In The Digital Milieu," *Ssrn Electronic Journal*, Ahead Of Print, 2023, 9, Https://Doi.Org/10.2139/Ssrn.4337184.

[48] Adrian Yanuar P And Young People, "Nilai-Nilai Christus Vivit Bagi Kaum Muda Di Era Digital," 2025, 42.

[49] Kowalczyk, "Humans And Ai", 148.

The success of this spirituality depends on the awareness to use technology as a tool to perfect creation, not as a substitute for God.

CONCLUSION

The digital age presents significant opportunities for human development. Human progress in the digital age does not lie solely in technological advancement itself, but rather in humanity's ability to manage and guide the use of such technology wisely. Digital culture, characterized by speed, an abundance of information, and the dominance of algorithms, has the potential to weaken the depth of reflection, reduce interpersonal relationships, and blur human moral orientation. In this situation, the most fundamental crisis is a crisis of the heart as the center of human life.

The heart, as the center of human life, determines the direction of our thoughts, words, and actions. The Book of Proverbs provides a strong theological foundation by identifying the heart as the source of all actions, words, and life decisions. The call to guard the heart is a universal principle that transcends time, including in navigating the complexities of today's digital world. A guarded heart enables humans to live in wisdom, the ability to distinguish between good and evil and to act in accordance with God's will. Guarding the heart is not merely an individual spiritual practice but the foundation for a wise and responsible life, including in the use of technology. When the heart is not guarded, humans easily fall into impulsivity, disinformation, and a loss of moral compass. Conversely, a well-guarded heart enables people to act reflectively, critically, and with compassion amidst the complexities of the digital world.

Antiqua et Nova further emphasizes that, amidst technological progress, human beings remain responsible moral agents. Human beings must not lose their identity as moral beings endowed with a conscience. Technology, including artificial intelligence, lacks a conscience and cannot replace human wisdom. Therefore, wisdom of the heart is key to ensuring that technology remains within the framework of serving human dignity and the common good. Wisdom of the heart is the key to integrating technological progress with spiritual depth. Thus, humans are not reduced to mere users or even objects of digital systems.

Thus, tending to the heart in the digital age is not merely an individual spiritual practice, but an existential stance that demands the integration of intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions. This practice presupposes the existence of space for reflection, silence, and authentic relationships with God and others. Without these, humans risk becoming reactive, losing their way, and getting trapped in an uncontrollable digital current. The wisdom of the heart becomes the path that enables

modern humans not only to survive but also to grow holistically in the midst of the digital world. By tending to the heart, humans are able to use technology responsibly, build meaningful relationships, and remain rooted in the values of truth, goodness, and love. In the light of faith, this affirms that technological progress should not distance humans from God, but rather serve as a means to increasingly realize their calling in life as the image of God in the world.

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Matawai Amahu pada Djara Hammu and the Philosophy of Lao Tzu: Harmony between Humans, Nature, and Community as the Path to Cultural Ethics in East Sumba

Adrianus Chandra Umbu Damu Paramba[a,1], Theodorus Trichinas Payong Lewar[b], Marselinus Kalang Lelaona[b], Christian Wildeciano Jogo[c]
[a,b,c] *Faculty of Theology, Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia*

[1] Corresponding Email: umbudamuparambacssr@gmail.com
DOI: https://doi.org/10.24071/tic.v3i1.942

Abstract

This article explores the local wisdom of ethnocentrism among the people of East Sumba, through their profound appreciation and respect for the land and a decent livelihood. The philosophy of Matawai Amahu Pada Djara Hammu underscores the significance of social, cultural, and geographical life as a distinctive reflection of the people of East Sumba. The philosophy of Matawai Amahu Pada Djara Hammu fosters positive ethical values for the people of East Sumba and strengthens local identity amidst the tide of globalization. Interestingly, the existence of the people of East Sumba reveals a strong philosophical resonance with classical Chinese philosophy, particularly the teachings of Lao Tzu. In his book, the Tao Te Ching, he reveals that a harmonious life is the highest form of appreciation and harmony between life and the surrounding environment. For Lao Tzu, true well-being is achieved only through harmony with the environment and the community, serving as a comparative framework for understanding the nobility of the East Sumba community. This research method employs a qualitative descriptive approach with an analytical focus, utilizing interviews and literature reviews to gather data, with an emphasis on the conceptual framework rather than methodological details. Through this comparison, this paper seeks to affirm that the highest form of ethnocentrism does not emerge in imaginary events, but rather manifests as local wisdom revealed in the harmony of living with the natural environment.

Keywords

Matawai Amahu pada Djara Hammu, Local Wisdom, Tao Te Ching, Harmony with Nature, Positive Ethnocentrism

INTRODUCTION

The fabric of human life is never truly isolated; it is the result of a complex yet beautiful web of relationships between individuals, communities, and the universe that encompasses them. Amid the currents of modernity, which often prioritize the

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logic of domination and exploitation, we frequently lose sight of what is most fundamental: harmony. This issue becomes increasingly critical when we observe how social structures—such as gender constructs and patterns of human interaction with the environment—tend to shift toward forms of lopsided domination.

Within the context of East Sumba society, awareness of the importance of this balance has long been deeply rooted through the philosophy of Matawai Amahu at Djara Hammu. This expression, which literally means "golden spring on a green horse," is not merely a regional motto, but a collective commitment to honoring the land that sustains life. Here, nature is not viewed as a passive object to be drained, but as a sacred realm where water is a blessing and every living being plays an equal role in preserving the breath of life. This local wisdom from eastern Indonesia resonates with classical Chinese thought, particularly the teachings of Lao Tzu in the Tao Te Ching. Through the concepts of Tao (the way of nature), Te (virtue), and Wu Wei (action without compulsion), Lao Tzu invites humanity to set aside its ego and return to the natural rhythm of the universe. The dialogue between Matawai Amahu in Djara Hammu and Taoism demonstrates that the highest form of cultural ethics is not domination, but harmony.

This situation presents its own set of challenges. The path toward true harmony often hits a wall of rigid social constructs, one of which is patriarchal culture, which places one party in a subordinate position. This is where feminism comes in—not as a competition or a threat to tradition, but as a "cultural scalpel" to deconstruct structures that hinder human potential. Appreciating feminism from a socio-cultural perspective means recognizing that true change must occur at the level of collective consciousness, where differences in roles are no longer viewed as biological barriers, but rather as assets for building mutually respectful relationships.

Through this study, the author seeks to explore how the noble values of East Sumba and the philosophy of Lao Tzu can come together productively in discussing cultural ethics and equality. This paper seeks to emphasize that local wisdom is not merely a legacy of the past, but a global ethical principle capable of addressing the challenges of environmental crises and social fragmentation in the modern era. By understanding cultural identity and inclusive spirituality, we are expected to be able to reshape a social order that is more just, empathetic, and in harmony with the universe.

DISCUSSION

The Philosophical Foundations of the *Matawai Amahu pada Djara Hammu*

Matawai Amahu Pada Djara Hammu is one of the philosophies depicted in the East Sumba Regency logo. This philosophy is deeply rooted in the community and serves as the foundation of life for the people of East Sumba. Matawai Amahu Pada Djara Hammu literally translates to "golden spring on a green horse (livestock)." According to this philosophy, the earth gives life to humanity. Water is the source of life for all creation; plants sustain human needs; and grass serves as food for livestock, which is then referred to as Djara Hammu.[1] This expression embodies a shared commitment to building a just, prosperous, and thriving East Sumba. Furthermore, Matawai Amahu Pada Djara Hammu serves to reinforce the social identity of the East Sumba community. It embodies a positive form of ethnocentrism that fosters a sense of pride, solidarity, and collective consciousness in the face of changing times. This philosophy also holds contemporary relevance: it teaches social ethical values such as integrity and honesty, fosters ecological awareness in the conservation of natural resources, and strengthens local identity amidst the tide of globalization.

The values of East Sumba's local philosophy affirm that harmony between humans, nature, and the community forms the foundation of ethics and spirituality within the Matawai Amahu concept of Djara Hammu. Matawai (water) symbolizes a divine gift that requires proper stewardship and forms part of Sumba's eco-sophy, where land and water are viewed as sacred gifts demanding ethical treatment of creation, and Djara (horse) as a source of strength and spirituality for the people of East Sumba.[2] Thus, this symbolism functions as an inclusive public space to foster social solidarity and collective identity, while also serving as a 'womb' that nurtures social recognition and pride in cultural identity amidst the influence of modernization.[3] *Matawai Amahu pada Djara Hammu* is a 'space' for the people of East Sumba to live in harmony with nature and to take part in maintaining, caring for, and creating harmony for the welfare and collective life of the people of East Sumba.

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[1] Adelvia Tamu Ina P. Djera, "*Matawai Amahu Pada Njara Hamu*: Awareness of the Harmonization of Creation in the Land of Marapu," *KRITIS: Journal of Interdisciplinary Development Studies* 2 (2016): 5.

[2] Emanuel Balla Nggiku, Izak Yohan Matriks Lattu, and Kata-Szilvia Bartalis, "Adat in the Discourse of 'Lived Religion': Local Wisdom as a Model for the Recognition of Indigenous Religions in Indonesia," *Religio: Journal of Religious Studies* 14, no. 2 (2024): 276–277.

[3] Nggiku, Lattu, dan Bartalis, "Adat in the Discourse of 'Lived Religion'," 266, 280.

The History of the Development of Laozi's Taoism

Lao Tzu lived around 550 BCE. His philosophy emerged during the Classical Period, roughly between 600 and 200 BCE. According to tradition, this period was marked by the existence of a hundred schools of philosophy, each with its own distinct teachings.[4] The concepts generally considered important are: "tao" ("the Way"), "te" ("virtue" or "the art of living"), "yen" ("humanity"), "i" ("justice"), "t'ien" ("heaven"), and "yin-yang" (the harmony of the two primary principles: the active-masculine principle and the passive-feminine principle).[5] During this period, one prominent school was Lao Tzu's philosophy of Taoism, which was used to counter Confucianism. Throughout his life, Lao Tzu developed the philosophy of Taoism based on the premise that the Tao is not the "human way," but rather "the way of nature" itself. The Tao is understood as the fundamental principle of objective reality—an eternal substance that is singular, absolute, and unnameable, serving as the source and order of all existence.[6]

Taoism developed as a philosophical school deeply rooted in Chinese culture. Its rapid growth established it as one of the dominant schools of thought during the Chinese dynasties, particularly the Han Dynasty (5th century BCE).[7] Taoism did not develop as the sole dominant schoo l of thought; other Chinese and Asian philosophies, such as Confucianism, Shintoism, and Buddhism, also flourished, though each retained distinct differences in their teachings. Taoism emphasizes that the lives of living beings must be lived in harmony with the universe, and that one must find strength within it.

In line with the early formation of China in 2000 BCE, the system of government and social order were not yet well-organized, leading to numerous conflicts. In this socio-political context, Taoism emerged out of concern for the state of society at that time.[8] This challenging situation established Taoism as a philosophy that emphasizes the importance of the nobility of values rooted in the depths of every human heart. Followers of Taoism, known as Taoists, realized that the rules governing social life,

[4] Sudarto, "A Comparison of Chinese and Indian Philosophy," *Artefak Journal* 3, no. 2 (2015): 134.

[5] Sudarto, "A Comparison of Chinese and Indian Philosophy," 134.

[6] Sudarto, "A Comparison of Chinese and Indian Philosophy," 134.

[7] Oktavianus Nefrindo and Yovendi Mali Koli, "The Philosophy of Taoism," *Divinitas: Journal of Contextual Philosophy and Theology* 1, No. 2 (2023): 192.

[8] Russell Kirkland, "The History of Taoism: A New Outline," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 30, No. 1 (2002): 177.

intellectual pursuits, and warfare had obscured the natural order of the universe (of which humanity is a part)—an order rooted in tranquility, harmony, and simplicity.[9] The awareness of the importance of human's natural qualities—purity, simplicity, and spontaneity—serves as the foundational orientation of Taoist philosophy. This fundamental concept of the search for one's true self provided a new stimulus for society at that time, helping people to recognize themselves and serving as a new direction for society—even becoming a new way of life—at a time when the dynastic government system was unable to guarantee the welfare of the people.

The development of Taoist teachings cannot be separated from the early ideas that underpin its evolution. It is generally accepted that Yang Chu laid the foundation for Taoist philosophy.[10] His teachings attracted the interest of many people, and were subsequently passed down and developed to a state of perfection by Lao Tzu. His sacrifices and significant influence subsequently established Lao Tzu as the central figure in teaching Taoist philosophy. The Tao Te Ching is his seminal work, which encompasses every fundamental aspect of Taoist philosophy. History records that Lao Tzu was deified during the Han Dynasty.[11] Lao Tzu, along with Yang Chu and the early pioneers of Taoism, became pivotal figures in the dissemination that shaped the development of Taoism.

The primary focus of Taoist teachings is the source of all things: the Tao. The Tao is understood as a subtle and fundamental principle that serves as the first cause of all existence. In an ontological framework, the Tao is the source of all being yet, in essence, is not a thing (non-being); it is the ground of reality without being a defined object within that reality itself.[12]

The essential characteristics of the Tao include non-objectification, desirelessness (or non-perception), absolute simplicity, formlessness, and effortlessness. It is self-sufficient and pre-exists all things.[13] The transcendental nature of the Tao renders it imperceptible to the senses and inadequately articulated by

[9] Lasiyo, The Philosophy of Lao Tzu, (Yogyakarta: UGM Faculty of Philosophy Foundation, 1994) 32

[10] Iriyanto Widisuseno, "The Natural Ethics of Taoism and Its Implementation," *Humanika* 23, No. 2 (2016): 50.

[11] Russell Kirkland, "The History Of Taoism: A New Outline," 178.

[12] Oktavianus Nefrindo and Yovendi Mali Koli, "The Philosophy of Taoism," *Divinitas: Journal of Contextual Philosophy and Theology* 1, No. 2 (2023): 192.

[13] Imam Wahyudi, "Epistemology in Intuitive Taoist Mysticism," *Journal of Philosophy* 16, No. 3 (2006): 26

human language, as it transcends the entire system of conventional linguistic signifiers and signifieds. This concept refers to the Nameless Name (wu ming), and the naming of the Tao is merely a linguistic convention intended to facilitate cognitive discourse about a reality that transcends the boundaries of language.[14]

From this monistic principle, the Tao radiates a Power or Virtue known as Te. It is this Te that manifests itself as the primordial duality of Yang and Yin.[15] The interaction and dynamics of these two bipolar forces then become the source of the existence and manifestation of the entire universe. The premise that everything originates from the Tao establishes the Tao as the inherent nature of the entire universe. In other words, the Tao is the immanent principle that underlies and shapes cosmic reality. Therefore, Taoist philosophy is categorized as a pantheistic system of thought, in which the fundamental reality of the Tao is identical to the universe.

Lao Tzu's Philosophical Perspective: The Path to Cosmic Harmony

One of the works authored by Laozi is the Tao Te Ching, the primary sacred text of Taoism. The Tao refers to a way of life that guides people to align their existence with the workings of the universe.[16] Te, as virtue, is understood as a moral force that grows within a person and guides their behavior. Meanwhile, the concept of wu wei asserts that various human problems and sufferings often arise from disharmony, excessive actions, and uncontrolled egoistic impulses.[17] Lao Tzu's philosophy is also contained in the Tao Te Ching (The Classic of the Way and Virtue), which frames the entirety of human life within the context of harmony—teaching a balance between the individual and the community, between emptiness and fullness, and between action and stillness. Thus, the harmony Lao Tzu speaks of is an integrative way of thinking and acting.

Lao Tzu's philosophy in the Tao Te Ching centers on the concept of the Tao, the cosmic way that is the source, pattern, and goal of all things. The Tao is not an entity that can be understood rationally or described in words; it is the highest reality that transcends all categories of language and thought. According to D.C. Lau, the Tao is

[14] Djoko Pitoyo, "The Wise Person According to Taoism," *Journal of Philosophy* 16, No. 3 (2006): 273.

[15] Lao Tzu, *The Way of Lao Tzu*, trans. Wing-Tsit Chan (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., The Library of Liberal Arts, 1963), 107.

[16] Heru Syahputra, Lulu Andriani Siregar, Kholidah Zul Maharani, "LAO TZE: A Spiritual Biography," Syntax Ide Journal 7, no. 8 (2025): 1010

[17] Heru Syahputra, Lulu Andriani Siregar, Kholidah Zul Maharani, "LAO TZE: A Spiritual Biography," 1101

"the unnameable origin of all things," a principle that operates spontaneously, governing nature without imposing human will.[18] In this view, the highest truth is not something to be mastered, but rather experienced through clear and humble awareness.

Amid the chaos of that time, Lao Tzu offered a path back to nature and simplicity through the Tao Te Ching, which discusses the Tao, Te, and wu wei—collectively known as the teachings of Taoism.[19] Everyone can embody and cultivate Te (virtue) by learning to align with the Tao. This is achieved through the principle of wu wei—that is, by acting without coercion, without excessive ambition, and allowing actions to arise naturally and in harmony with the cosmic order.

Living in harmony with the Tao means walking the natural path of life, following the rhythm and balance inherent in the world. Therefore, Lao Tzu taught the principle of Wu Wei, which literally means "without forced action." This principle is not a call for passivity, but a call to act with natural wisdom, without excessive ambition or the desire to dominate. Roger T. Ames explains that Wu Wei is "a dynamic responsiveness to the world's processes," that is, the human ability to act in accordance with the flow of nature, rather than against it.[20]

This philosophy rejects all forms of violence, greed, and exploitation, as such actions create cosmic disharmony. Lao Tzu asserts that simplicity and inner stillness are the path to true wisdom; when humans cease striving to conquer the world, they instead find true peace. According to Ellen Chen, simplicity is not a form of spiritual poverty, but "a return to the original clarity of being," a state in which humans live in balance with themselves, nature, and society.[21]

Philosophical Resonance: Harmony Among Humans, Nature, dan Community

Lao Tzu's thought was chosen because of its strong thematic alignment with the Matawai Amahu philosophy of Djara Hammu. Both reject human domination over nature and teach that true well-being is only achieved through harmony with the environment and community. On the other hand, Lao Tzu's teachings provide a

[18] D.C. Lau, Tao Te Ching (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), 58–59

[19] Lasiyo, "Eastern and Western Philosophical Thought," *Journal of Philosophy* (1997): 8

[20] Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, Dao De Jing: Making This Life Significant (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003), 45.

[21] Ellen M. Chen, The Tao Te Ching: A New Translation with Commentary (St. Paul: Paragon House, 1989), 27

universal philosophical framework that deepens the meaning of local East Sumbanese philosophy, making it not merely a cultural value but a global ethical principle.[33] Both traditions firmly reject human exploitation of nature and emphasize that true well-being is only achieved through harmony. Harmony is achieved not merely as a limitation on human endeavor, but as a driving force for harmonious adjustment between life and the interaction of existence.

In connecting the two cultures and the philosophical foundations of these two foundations, there is a meeting between Lao Tzu's concept of ziran (natural nature) with the rhythm of savanna life and the sacredness of water in Sumbanese culture. The concept of ziran, combined with the life of the Sumbanese people, shows the harmony of life with the surrounding environment.[22] Humans in Taoist teachings are required to develop a life in accordance with natural nature, namely not depending on their own desires but tied to other created nature. This shows the existence of a personal bond as fellow creatures. This bond is not depicted as a restraint, but a symbol of strength and concrete self-union with nature.

Both East Sumba and Taoism view nature as a moral and spiritual order, not merely a physical space. Creation is not viewed as another object for personal gain, but as a unified entity equal to humanity. Humans are expected not to view creation as a personal reflection, or to elevate it to a higher level of respect through spirituality.[23] This moral and spiritual order is demonstrated through unity, which for the people of East Sumba serves as a guiding principle for utilizing the natural resources as a guarantee of life. By utilizing the resources of nature, humans have a responsibility and obligation to ensure its survival.

This concept of resonance teaches a way of thinking and acting that unites personal interests with environmental and community sustainability. This creates an integrative balance, making humans the primary actors, while nature and other creations serve as complementary subjects. The connection between local East Sumbanese philosophy and Taoism gives rise to an open mind regarding the integration and complete unity of humanity throughout the ages.[24] Attention to human nature, manifested in interactions with the natural environment, serves as a

[22] Russell Kirkland, "The History Of Taoism: A New Outline," 183.

[23] Alan Watts, *Tao: The Watercourse Way* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975), 44.

[24] Ambrosius Randa Jawa, "The Marapu Ritual in East Sumba Society," Avatara: Journal of History Education 2, no. 1 (2014): 5.

benchmark for change and radical attitudes that are communally accepted. Community life emphasizes integration and how harmony in life is not merely a spiritual force, but plays a role as a way of life embodied in the philosophy of the East Sumbanese people and in the teachings of Taoism.

A Comparative Analysis of Lao Tzu's Philosophy in Matawai Amahu pada Djara Hammu

Lao Tzu's distinctive philosophy is the teachings of Taoism contained in the Tao Te Ching. This book is believed to contain not only Lao Tzu's own thoughts but also those of other figures such as Yang Chu, as well as interpretations by Lao Tzu's disciples who also contributed to its compilation.[25] Taoism in the Tao Te Ching encompasses three key elements: the concept of Tao (the Way of God), Te (virtue), and wu-wei (non-action).

First, the concept of the Tao (the Way of God). The Tao is understood as the principle underpinning all of reality, yet it itself does not fall into the category of "everything." Everything that appears in the world is a concrete form, but the Tao cannot be treated as an object like other things. Although it cannot be understood as an entity that "exists" in the ordinary sense, the Tao is precisely the source from which all existence springs; that is why it is called the Existence that transcends all forms of existence.[26] The passage from the Tao Te Ching, Chapter 25, is one of the key texts for understanding the concept of the Tao as the cosmic principle that precedes all things. Lao Tzu describes the Tao as formless, voiceless, and without substance, yet complete, eternal, and the source of heaven and earth. Because of its indescribable nature, humans have simply given it the name "Tao," but even that is merely a forced designation.[27]

Furthermore, the Tao is understood as the singular source underlying the entire cosmic order, serving as the foundation of all things and determining the processes that occur in nature. Everything in the world possesses positive and negative aspects and moves within a dynamic of mutual transformation and complementarity. Since all of reality follows this natural pattern, humans are encouraged not to act against nature, but to live in harmony with the natural laws that govern the balance of the

[25] Djoko Pitoyo, "The Wise Person According to Taoism," *Journal of Philosophy* 16, No. 3 (2006): 253.
[26] Djoko Pitoyo, "The Wise Person According to Taoism," 254.
[27] Djoko Pitoyo, "The Wise Person According to Taoism," 255.

universe.[28] This idea also aligns with the local philosophy of Matawai Amahu Pada Djara Hammu, which stems from the awareness that humans, nature, and ancestors exist within a single sacred cosmic order, the balance of which must be preserved. Matawai (water) or matawai ahamu, meaning "golden spring," symbolizes the sacred source of life, while djara hammu, or the horse, symbolizes strength, endurance, and the balance of life.[29] Both position nature as the center of an ethical order—not an object of exploitation—one that is both cosmic and spiritual.

Second, the concept of Te (virtue). Lao Tzu asserts that virtue is a moral strength for those who possess it, through which virtue radiates authority and power to others. Virtue refers to simplicity, reasonableness, innocence, purity, and naturalness.[30] In the ethical dimension, Lao Tzu emphasizes the concept of Te, or true virtue, as the concrete manifestation of the Tao within human beings. If the Tao is the universal path that governs the cosmic order, then Te is the way humans embody that order in their daily actions. According to Wing-tsit Chan, Te is "the moral power or virtue that enables one to live in accordance with the Dao," that is, the power of virtue that allows humans to live in harmony with the laws of nature without imposing their personal will.[31] Within the context of the local philosophy of East Sumba, this idea aligns with the values embedded in that local philosophy—such as the virtue of maintaining balance among nature, humanity, and ancestors—where this philosophy has taken root within the rich culture of East Sumba, characterized by symbols, rituals, and worldviews. This philosophy is deeply rooted in the Marapu teachings, the indigenous belief system of the Sumba people that places the balance between humans, nature, and ancestral spirits at the center of life.[32] Leadership without coercion, reflected in the kabihu[33] deliberations and customary consensus, as well as the principles of humility and simplicity known by the phrase *Luri Hanggale Hawola Tera la katiku*

[28] Sudarto, "A Comparison of Chinese and Indian Philosophy," *Artefak Journal* 3, no. 2 (2015): 137.

[29] Oe. H. Kapita, The Society of Sumba and Its Customs (Waingapu: Committee for the Publication of Regional Cultural Texts, 1976), 25.

[30] Joko Pitoyo, "The Wise Person According to Taoism," *Journal of Philosophy* 16, No. 3 (2006): 262.

[31] Wing-tsit Chan, A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 139.

[32] Ambrosius Randa Jawa, "The Marapu Ritual in East Sumba Society," Avatara: Journal of History Education 2, no. 1 (2014): 5.

[33] Social structures such as kabihu (kinship groups) and paraingu (traditional settlements) serve as the framework for the actualization of these values, where every decision is made by consensus and carried out with a spirit of shared responsibility

natoma la kamiti Hinggi Pa-kalambungu natoma la karoka. If translated literally, it means "enough for clothing, food, and shelter."[34]

Third, the concept of wu wei (doing nothing). Wu wei guides humans to act in accordance with their natural nature—spontaneously, naturally, and without coercion—free from manipulation or the urge to satisfy selfish desires.[35] In Taoist teachings, humans are called to live in harmony and unity with nature, to cherish all of its creations, and to love them as they love themselves. The essence of wu wei's wisdom lies in the humble attitude of placing oneself within the natural order.[36] Furthermore, "doing nothing" in this context emphasizes the principle of avoiding actions that go against nature, living in accordance with one's natural disposition without ambition, and acting naturally, so that everything will fall into place on its own. In Chapter 19 of the Tao Te Ching, it is said: "Show your simplicity; embrace your true nature; restrain your sense of self; limit your desires."[37]

Within this framework, when viewed in the context of East Sumba society, this allows the community to adapt to nature rather than conquer it, because violating nature constitutes a violation of the sacred Marapu order.[38] Water, or matawai, is viewed as a blessing, while horses, or djara, are treated as agents of ecological and social balance. Thus, within the concept of wu wei—acting in accordance with ziran, or the natural order—the local philosophy of East Sumba harmonizes with the rhythms of the savanna, the seasons, and the sacredness of water. Wu wei, as a natural way of acting, is also embodied in the rituals and cultural expressions of East Sumba society. Cosmic rhythms, respect for ancestors, and the maintenance of natural relationships with the spirit of Marapu are intended to preserve balance. This is further emphasized when examining the community's social relationships. Although not explicitly addressed in the practical aspects of East Sumba culture, the community is understood as part of the cosmic order, not merely a social structure.

[34] Interview with a traditional leader from East Sumba, September 7, 2025.
[35] Djoko Pitoyo, "The Wise Man According to Taoism," 264.
[36] Djoko Pitoyo, "The Wise Man According to Taoism," 266.
[37] Djoko Pitoyo, "The Wise Person According to Taoism," 266.
[38] Oe. H. Kapita, The Society of Sumba and Its Customs (Waingapu: Committee for the Publication of Regional Cultural Texts, 1976), 9, 13, 27.

Lao Tzu describes virtue as being like water—nourishing all that exists.[39] Virtue is realized when one aligns one's life with the Tao, and this is expressed through wu wei, or action without compulsion. Wu wei emphasizes that humans should not act against the harmony of nature, but rather maintain closeness to it, limit personal ambition, and act reasonably and proportionately. Alan Watts explains that for Lao Tzu, water is an ethical and cosmological metaphor: it does not struggle against, but simply flows and gives life to all. It serves as an example of how humans should live without greed, without violence, and without defying the laws of nature.[40] From this, it is evident that Lao Tzu's philosophy forms an ecological and social ethics grounded in cosmic awareness: humans are not the masters of nature, but rather part of a broader web of life.

Contributions to Global Cultural Etichs

The local philosophy of Matawai Amahu in Djara Hammu and the Tao Te Ching in Lao Tzu's philosophy both emphasize harmony as the core of life's order. The local philosophy of East Sumba emphasizes harmony among humans, nature, the community, and ancestors as a form of respect for others and ancestors. Meanwhile, in the context of Lao Tzu, humans and nature are connected through the Tao and ziran (natural order). Everything follows its own natural laws and unfolds as it should. Therefore, humans must accept the gift of life as it is and utilize it wisely.[41] For Lao Tzu's belief is a belief in nature, in the mechanisms of nature. Furthermore, both emphasize nature as a sacred realm; in the local philosophy of East Sumba, water (matawai) and horses (djara) are symbols of purity and balance that represent the strength and social dynamics of East Sumba society. For Lao Tzu, nature is a moral order, not merely a physical space.

Taoism and the Matawai Amahu philosophy of Djara Hammu share a common ground regarding the harmony between humanity and nature, yet they are grounded in different philosophical foundations. Taoism is metaphysical and universal, whereas Sumba's philosophy has grown out of the context of its traditional customs, rituals, and social relations. While Taoism places greater emphasis on the inner

[39] Iriyanto Widisuseno, "The Natural Ethics of Taoism and Their Implementation," *Humanika* 23, No. 2 (2016):51

[40] Alan Watts, Tao: The Watercourse Way (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975), 41–43.

[41] Iriyanto Widisuseno, "The Natural Ethics of Taoism and Their Implementation," 51

transformation of the individual, Sumba philosophy centers on communities such as the kabihu and paraingu. Their spiritual structures also differ: Marapu is personal and religious, whereas Tao is impersonal and natural-metaphysical. Therefore, dialogue between the two must be conducted with care so as not to diminish the distinctiveness of each tradition.

The dialogue between the local philosophy of Matawai Amahu in Djara Hammu and the philosophy of Lao Tzu opens up a fertile space for reflection, yet it must still be interpreted with caution. Based on the analysis in this paper, several points deserve attention, including: first, both stand on different philosophical foundations. Taoism operates in the realm of universal metaphysics, positioning the Tao as the unnamed and ineffable principle of the cosmos, whereas the local philosophy of East Sumba is rooted in rituals, customs, and a symbolic world born from concrete human interactions with the land, water, ancestors, and their community.

Second, there is a conceptual gap regarding the subject of ethics. Lao Tzu's philosophy emphasizes the inner transformation of the individual through simplicity, stillness, and the principle of Wu Wei. This ethics is contemplative and places greater emphasis on self-harmonization. In contrast, the philosophy of East Sumba grows from highly explicit communal relations: kabihu, paraingu, customary deliberation, and genealogical solidarity. Third, there is a fundamental difference in spiritual structure. In the Marapu belief system, the relationship between humans and the sacred is personal and dialogical: ancestors are living subjects in rituals, prayers, and offerings.

Taoism, on the other hand, is based on the impersonal Tao—not a god, but a cosmic principle that operates without will or personality. Fourth, although both traditions emphasize harmony with nature, their philosophical foundations differ. East Sumba philosophy views nature as part of the sacred order of the ancestors: water is a blessing, horses are a responsibility, and a violation of nature means a violation of the cosmic order. Meanwhile, Lao Tzu regards nature as a spontaneous expression of the Tao, so that harmony is cosmological in nature, not ritualistic.

Thus, a comparison between Matawai Amahu in Djara Hammu and Taoism offers rich insights, but must be guarded against oversimplifications that obscure their respective distinctiveness. A responsible comparative approach requires us to view both as distinct traditions with their own unique histories, inner worlds, and horizons of meaning.

CONCLUSION

Matawai Amahu in Djara Hammu is an expression of the local wisdom of the people of East Sumba that encapsulates a worldview centered on the sanctity of nature, social balance, and spiritual connection with ancestors. As a symbol of the "golden spring" and the "horse," this philosophy serves as the foundation of the ecological, social, and religious ethics of the people of East Sumba. It not only governs the relationship between humans and nature but also forms the basis of communal life. On the other hand, Lao Tzu's teachings in the Tao Te Ching, through the concepts of Tao, Te, and Wu Wei, teach that balance in life can only be achieved if humans return to the rhythm of nature. Tao is the universal path of the cosmos; Te is the virtue that enables humans to live in accordance with the laws of nature; and Wu Wei is action without compulsion that rejects aggression, ambition, and domination.

The dialogue between these two traditions reveals that they converge on a crucial point: both reject the exploitation of nature, affirm the need for cosmic balance, and teach that a good life arises from harmony, not domination. The philosophy of East Sumba is rooted in ritual, community, and a spiritual-personal relationship with ancestors; while Taoism is grounded in impersonal metaphysics and the inner transformation of the individual. Therefore, a dialogue between the two must be carefully constructed, yet allow space for each to enrich the other.

The synthesis between Matawai Amahu in Djara Hammu and the thought of Lao Tzu demonstrates that the local wisdom of East Sumba possesses a philosophical depth on par with the great Eastern traditions. Both advocate for ecological ethics and cosmic humanism, which are highly relevant to the modern world currently plagued by environmental crises, social fragmentation, and the loss of cultural roots. Thus, the philosophy of East Sumba is not only important for local identity but also makes a significant contribution to the philosophy of the Indonesian archipelago and global ethical thought..

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The Correlation Between the Term "*Ngunduh Wohing Pakarti*" by Sri Susuhunan Pakubuwono IV and the Thought of Siddhartha Gautama

Ignatius Surya Darmawan[a,1]

[a]*Fakulty of Theology Wedabhakti, University of Sanata Dharma, Yogyakarta, Indonesia*

[1]suryadarmawan0222@gmail.com

Abstract

"Ngunduh Wohing Pakarti" is a Javanese philosophy and local wisdom that literally means "reaping the fruit of one's own actions". This expression carries a moral teaching regarding the law of cause and effect, suggesting that every human action whether good or bad will eventually return to the individual. This study aims to examine the origins of the term, the factors contributing to its widespread dissemination, and its relevance as a life guide for Javanese society. The methodology used in this study is a literature review, involving the collection and analysis of data from various books and scientific journals. Analysis shows that the teaching of "Ngunduh Wohing Pakarti" has long existed and was documented in the Serat Wulang Reh, written by Sri Susuhunan Pakubuwono IV (1788-1820). These values spread widely due to the significant influence of the palace (Keraton) leadership, who were highly respected and obeyed by the community at that time. The study concludes that the philosophy of "Ngunduh Wohing Pakarti" serves as a powerful motivation to prevent negative behaviors such as greed and dishonesty, while maintaining social harmony through the principles of "rukun" (harmony) and "kesopanan" (politeness). In a modern context, this value remains highly relevant for implementation in ethical business governance and in building the character of the younger generation to ensure they have a strong moral foundation.

Keywords

Reciprocity, Karma, Reaping.

INTRODUCTION

The Local Philosophy Selected "*Ngunduh wohing pakarti*"

Ngunduh wohing pakarti this means that everyone will reap the fruits of their own actions. *Ngunduh* means to pick, *wohing* means fruit, and *pakarti* means action. Thus, *Ngunduh wohing pakarti* can be interpreted to mean: everyone will reap the fruits of their own actions. The teaching regarding the phrase *ngunduh wohing pakerti* has been taught since ancient times, as evidenced by the discovery of a text written by Sri Susuhunan Pakubuwono IV (1788-1820) found

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in the *Serat Wulang Reh*. *This Javanese proverb holds a profound meaning for daily life, emphasizing that every person must bear the consequences of their own actions.* From there, this saying has become a guiding principle and a foundation for life, deeply ingrained in Javanese society. In the context of *Ngunduh Wohing Pakarti* and setting a good example, one must discern, filter, and carefully consider the teachings or advice received. One must look at what is said, not who is saying it. If one chooses the wrong role model, it will have a detrimental effect on oneself.[1]

One of the Key Issues Raised

In Javanese society, there is a term that is often referred to as *Ngunduh wohing pakarti*. This concept relates to the law of cause and effect, the law of karma, or the principle of "you reap what you sow." It turns out that this concept is not unique to Javanese society; rather, it represents universal values and principles that are shared by many, even if expressed in different forms and terms. In this article, the author will explore the meaning behind the term *Ngunduh wohing pakarti* who lived among the Javanese people with the philosophical ideas of the Eastern philosopher Siddhartha Gautama.[2]

DISCUSSION

The Background

Siddhartha Gautama

Siddhartha Gautama was a teacher, philosopher, and spiritual leader known as the founder of Buddhism.[3] His father was a king and tribal chieftain named Shuddhodana Gautama.[4] His mother, Mahamaya, died just seven days after he was born, and he was raised by his mother's sister, Mahaprajapati. He married Yashodhara

[1] Iswatin Wahyu Ningrum, "Ngundhuh Wohing Pakarti dan Keteladanan dalam Serat Wulang Reh," *Jurnal Online Baradha* 19, no. 4 (May 10, 2024): 225, Doi: https://doi.org/10.26740/job.v19n4.p212-227.

[2] Hitesh Manubhai Patel, "Gautama Buddha's Philosophy of Educational Values," *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research* (*IJMER*), Vol. 15 No 6 (2023): 62, Doi: http://ijmer.in.doi./2023/12.06.50 www.ijmer.i.

[3] Abhijit Das, "Universal Ethics and Human Cultural Values through the Teachings of Gautama Buddha: Some Observations from the Perspective of Philosophical Anthropology," *Journal of Contemporary Philosophical and Anthropological Studies* 3, no. 1 (2025): 3,8, https://doi.org/10.59652/jcpas.v3i1.414.

[4] George Boeree, *Siddhartha Gautama Buddha*, 1-4, http://webspace.ship.edu/cgboer/BuddhistPsychology.pdf.

at the age of 16 and spent his youth in Kapilavastu.[5] Siddhartha was sheltered in the palace and forbidden from seeing things considered commonplace by the common people, including the elderly, the sick, the dead, or anyone dedicated to spiritual practice. Driven by restlessness and curiosity, Siddhartha eventually witnessed the reality of suffering outside the palace: frail elderly people, the sick, corpses, and a monk renouncing worldly life. He realized the truth that all beings grow old, fall ill, and die. This led him to seek a way to overcome suffering. At the age of 29, he left the palace. For six years, he practiced extreme asceticism and self-mortification, but realized that these extreme practices did not yield answers. Siddhartha then decided to find a middle path between the extremes of luxurious living and extreme self-mortification.

Siddhartha lived and taught in the region bordering modern-day Nepal and India between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE.[6] The name Siddhartha Gautama means "one who has achieved his goal," while the name Buddha itself means "one who has awakened," "one who is enlightened," or "one who has attained perfect enlightenment." The exact dates of Siddhartha's birth and death are unknown, but some modern historians estimate that he was born between 623 BCE and died in 543 BCE, when the Buddha was 80 years old.[7]

Reasons for Choosing Siddhartha Gautama

Siddhartha Gautama taught values not unlike the concept of Ngunduh wohing pakarti, which has been practiced by Javanese society. These shared life values have evolved and been expressed through different terms, yet their core essence remains largely the same. The teachings of Siddhartha Gautama are widely known across various circles and from the perspective of Buddhism. Siddhartha Gautama was a teacher, philosopher, and spiritual leader known as the founder of Buddhism; for this reason, I have chosen his teachings to be compared with the local philosophy of Ngunduh wohing pakarti, which was selected earlier.

By drawing on the teachings of the philosopher Siddhartha Gautama, I hope to gain a better understanding of the term Ngunduh Wohing Pakarti as coined by Sri

[5] Patel, Gautama Buddha's Philosophy Of Educational Value*s*, 3.
[6] George Boeree, *Siddhartha Gautama Buddha*, 3.
[7] Boeree, *Siddhartha Gautama Buddha, 3*.

Susuhunan Pakubuwono IV, which has served as a guiding principle for the people of Java.

About the Philosopher Siddhartha Gautama

Political, Social, and Cultural Context

In the political sphere, many small kingdoms and republics began to stabilize under Magadha. The promotion of freedom of thought and discussion led to the emergence of the sangha community. One of the most significant political and social contexts during the Buddha's time was the dominance of the caste system, which caused widespread discontent. In the Buddha's time, the Brahmins acted like lords, and the other castes were enslaved to them. As a result, the common people were completely neglected, and discontent grew. The domination of one group over another, and the caste system that was established, only intensified competition between groups and became a tool in the hands of group leaders to pit people against one another. It is emphasized that if the Buddha's understanding of the criteria for a Brahmin (character and insight) had been universally accepted, the current Indian caste system would never have emerged.

In the social sphere, there was a rigid caste system and high levels of social inequality. The Buddha rejected the caste system and taught spiritual equality. The time and place where Siddhartha Gautama lived and where Buddhism emerged were marked by a crisis of human values, strict social domination based on caste, and a deep need to find a solution to human suffering. Indian society during the Buddha's time was characterized by a highly hierarchical social system, in which the Brahmins held dominant power. In the Buddha's era, the Brahmins acted like great lords, while the other castes were enslaved to them. The general populace was completely neglected, and this led to widespread discontent among the people. The Buddha intellectually challenged the Brahmin supremacy based on birth by analyzing the qualifications a Brahmin should possess (birth, knowledge of the Vedas, a charming personality, noble character, and wisdom).

In the cultural/religious sphere—Brahmanical rituals and Vedic ceremonies dominated. The Buddha emphasized ethics, meditation, and personal enlightenment. The cultural context during the time of Siddhartha Gautama was heavily influenced by the dominant Vedic/Brahmanical religious and social traditions, as well as a crisis of human values that drove Siddhartha to seek a new spiritual path. Meanwhile, in the

economic and urbanization spheres, trade and cities were growing. Buddhist teachings spread easily among merchants and the common people. The era of Siddhartha Gautama (around the 6th century BCE) can be understood through two main aspects: the economic conditions faced by society and how Buddhist teachings addressed the management of wealth and material possessions.

Intellectual Biography

The intellectual biography of Siddhartha Gautama traces a journey from luxury to wisdom, from an external search to inner enlightenment. Siddhartha Gautama was not only a spiritual leader but also a great thinker who taught a rational, ethical, and universal philosophy of life centered on awareness, freedom, and compassion. His intellectual journey was driven by a crisis of human values and culminated in the formulation of the Middle Way, which emphasizes rationality and right conduct. His intellectual journey began with a deep dissatisfaction with worldly reality and suffering, which drove him to seek the True Nature of Reality. The intellectual turning point occurred during meditation under the Bodhi Tree, marked by a series of profound insights. This process involved stages of deep meditation with an emphasis on purifying the mind to achieve concentration and tranquility.

The Teachings of Siddhartha Gautama

General Considerations

Siddhartha Gautama's teachings constitute a philosophy of consciousness and inner freedom. He rejected the extremes of luxury and self-mortification, and taught the Middle Way a life of simplicity, mindfulness, and compassion as the path to liberation from suffering. Siddhartha Gautama discovered that neither the luxurious life he enjoyed in the palace nor the extreme practices of self-mortification led to enlightenment, so he found the Middle Way. Buddhist thought is an intellectual approach that places the highest importance on rationality and centers on the purification of the mind to achieve liberation.

Special Considerations

There is no effect without a cause, and no cause without an effect. Human beings are fully responsible for their own lives; what they experience now is the result of past actions, and what they do now will shape the future. At any moment, a person can change the course of their life by creating new, positive karma. Buddhist

philosophy is fundamentally an empirical and ethical approach that emphasizes that humans are fully responsible for creating their own destiny through their actions and moral conduct. The concept that "There is no effect without a cause, and no cause without an effect" is the philosophical foundation of Buddhism known as Dependent Origination. The concept of karma embodies the law of cause and effect on a moral and personal level, affirming that what one experiences now is the direct result of previous actions.

Personal Response

Synthesis

Ngunduh wohing pakarti has become the Javanese people's philosophy of life and a guiding principle in their daily lives. It is necessary to exercise caution in every action; in addition to believing that one will reap the consequences of one's actions, one must also believe in the law of karma that will befall them.[8] The philosophy of Ngunduh wohing pakarti means that everyone will reap or bear the consequences of their own actions. This reflects a strong belief that everything whether right or wrong, good or bad, happiness or misfortune stems from within oneself.[9]

This concept aligns with the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, who taught that there is no effect without a cause, and no cause without an effect. Human beings are fully responsible for their own lives; what they experience now is the result of past actions, and what they do now will shape the future. At any moment, a person can change the course of their life by creating new, positive karma.

Critical Notes

Ngunduh Wohing Pakarti in the context of Javanese culture, it is not much different from the law of karma in Eastern philosophy. In Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions, the term karma derives from the word *karman* which means action. Karma is the universal moral law that every human action brings consequences for the person who performs it. The same principle is expressed as "Apa yang kamu tabur, itu yang kamu tuai". The relationship between cause and effect or the law of karma manifests as actions and their consequences. There is a correlation between *Ngunduh*

[8] Purweni Widhianningrum, "Ngunduh Wohing Pakarti:The Moral Roots of BusinessGovernance Principles," *The International Journal of Accounting and Business Society* 31, no. 1 (2023), 75.

[9] Ningrum, *Ngundhuh Wohing Pakarti dan Keteladanan dalam Serat Wulang Reh*, 219.