



Life, death, and moral order in *sanghyang siksa kandang karesian*: An old Sundanese perspective on eschatological consciousness

I Made Dian Saputra^{1,*}, Heri Purwanto², Amarjiva Lochan³

¹ Master's Program in Balinese Language Education, Postgraduate Program, I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa State Hindu University, Denpasar, Bali 80236, Indonesia;

² Clergy Study Program, Faculty of Brahma Widya, I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa State Hindu University, Denpasar, Bali 80236, Indonesia;

³ Department of History, Faculty of Social Science building, University of Delhi, Delhi 110007, India.

*Correspondence: diansaputra@uhnsugriwa.ac.id

Received Date: April 18, 2026

Revised Date: July 7, 2026

Accepted Date: July 21, 2026

ABSTRACT

Background: This article examines *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* (SSKK) as an Old Sundanese ethical text that explores the relationship between life, death, and moral order. Unlike eschatological understandings that emphasize only the doctrine of the afterlife, this article interprets the eschatological consciousness in the manuscript as a moral framework that operates through teachings on mindfulness, self-control, social order, and the consequences of actions. **Methods:** Using a qualitative-hermeneutic approach, the data is analyzed through an examination of the moral teachings of SSKK and research reports on the discourse of religious moderation within the text. **Findings:** The findings indicate that SSKK constructs an eschatological perspective through four key themes; consciousness as the foundation of salvation, life as the arena for the fulfillment of *dharma*, social order as the guardian of harmony, and non-violence as the prerequisite for the preservation of human dignity. **Conclusion:** Textual evidence regarding the "*guru nista*" and "*catur buta*" demonstrates that death is not positioned merely as a biological event, but as the point at which the moral quality of human life receives its consequence. **Novelty/Originality of this article:** Thus, SSKK can be read as a model of Nusantara ethical eschatology: not a doctrinal system regarding the afterlife, but a moral pedagogy that positions righteous living as the path toward social and spiritual salvation.

KEYWORDS: eschatological consciousness; ethical eschatology; moral order; old Sundanese; *sanghyang siksa kandang karesian*.

1. Introduction

Studies of eschatology are typically situated within the realm of doctrine concerning the end times, the fate of the soul after death, heaven, hell, retribution, or the transformation of human existence after earthly life ends. While this framework is indeed important, it is insufficient for interpreting the entirety of religious and cultural traditions. In many local traditions of the Indonesian archipelago, ideas about life and death are not always structured as an explicit dogmatic system. They often function in the form of behavioral guidelines, moral prohibitions, social relations, governance ethics, and cultural strategies for maintaining harmony. Thus, eschatology deals not only with "what happens after death,"

Cite This Article:

Saputra, I. M. D., Purwanto, H., & Lochan, A. (2026). Life, death, and moral order in sanghyang siksa kandang karesian: An old Sundanese perspective on eschatological consciousness. *Life and Death: Journal of Eschatology*, 4(1), 22-39. <https://doi.org/10.61511/lad.v4i1.2026.3875>

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but also with “how humans should live before death.” It is this second question that serves as the entry point for this article in interpreting *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* as an Old Sundanese moral text.

Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian, hereafter referred to as SSKK, is one of the key texts in the Old Sundanese tradition. The research report serving as the foundational basis for this article confirms that SSKK is an Old Sundanese prose text outlining teachings and rules for communal life. This manuscript is not merely a philological relic but an intellectual document that preserves how the Old Sundanese society understood humanity, knowledge, power, consciousness, duty, and their relationship with the supernatural order (Saputra et al., 2025). Therefore, this manuscript should be read beyond the category of social ethics alone. It can be understood as a text that reveals the moral structure of life, and that moral structure carries eschatological implications.

Previous research on the SSKK has generally situated this manuscript within the fields of ethics, Old Sundanese history, moral education, sensory regulation, and religious moderation. Nurwansah (2020) emphasizes the importance of the SSKK text and its translation for reopening the horizon of Ancient Sundanese teachings. Nuraeni et al. (2020) interpret “*karma ning hulun*” as a concept of societal behavior toward rulers. Wijayanti et al. (2024) highlight sensory regulation as part of the construction of bodily ethics and consciousness. Meanwhile, the research report by Saputra et al. (2025) found that SSKK contains values of national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and acceptance of local traditions. All of these studies provide an important foundation for this article, but have not specifically linked SSKK to issues of life, death, and eschatological consciousness.

It is important to fill this gap because LaD places the relationship between life and death at the center of its academic focus. Eschatology within the scope of this journal can be approached from a multidisciplinary perspective, including through religion, philosophy, literature, anthropology, and the sociocultural impact of beliefs regarding death. In this context, the SSKK is noteworthy because it does not discuss death in the style of a systematic doctrine of the afterlife, but rather fosters an awareness of the moral consequences of human actions. Such awareness can be termed an ethical eschatological consciousness: humans are called to live righteously because life carries consequences, both within the social order and the spiritual order.

This article proposes the thesis that SSKK contains the ethical eschatology of the Sunda Kuna. The term “ethical eschatology” is not intended to suggest that SSKK is a dogmatic text about the afterlife in the sense of systematic theology. This term is used as an analytical category to explain how the manuscript connects moral living, death, the consequences of actions, the order of *dharmā*, and the spiritual fate of humanity. In this model, death is not merely a biological end but a horizon that compels life to be lived consciously, orderly, and responsibly. Therefore, teachings regarding fulfilling obligations, obeying rules, safeguarding state secrets, not aiding enemies, accepting differences, studying other cultures, rejecting violence, and embracing local traditions are not merely social values. All of these are part of a system of salvation that connects humans with the world, society, and the supernatural.

The research question of this article is how the SSKK constructs a view of life, death, and moral order from the perspective of Old Sundanese eschatological consciousness. The purpose of this article is to explain the structure of ethical eschatology in the SSKK, to elaborate on the role of consciousness as the foundation of salvation, to interpret social order as a moral path, and to demonstrate the relevance of this manuscript to the study of Nusantara eschatology. Thus, this article not only contributes to the study of Old Sundanese manuscripts but also expands the field of eschatological study from the doctrine of the afterlife toward the ethics of life.

Theoretically, this article is grounded in three pillars. First, Gadamer’s hermeneutics, which emphasizes that understanding arises from the encounter between the text’s horizon and the reader’s horizon (Gadamer, 2004; Hardiman, 2015). Second, the anthropological study of death, which views death not merely as a biological fact but as a social and cosmological event that shapes the meaning of life (Hertz, 1960; van Gennep, 1960; Turner,

1969). Third, studies of religion and culture that demonstrate that symbols, rituals, and moral values shape the community's world of meaning (Eliade, 1959; Geertz, 1973). These three pillars help interpret the SSKK as a text that connects the ethical, the social, and the transcendent.

The arguments of this article are organized into four sections. The first section explains the research methods and text-reading strategies. The second section discusses the position of SSKK as a text of Old Sundanese morality and an intellectual heritage of the Nusantara. The third section outlines the structure of eschatological consciousness through the themes of consciousness, *dharmā*, social order, and non-violence. The fourth section places these findings within the framework of ethical eschatology and their relevance to a pluralistic society. With this structure, the article seeks to construct an interpretation that is not only descriptive but also conceptual and argumentative.

2. Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach using hermeneutic methods. The qualitative approach was chosen because the objects of study—texts, symbols, moral teachings, and constructions of meaning—cannot be reduced to numerical data. In the tradition of qualitative research, texts are understood as fields of meaning that require in-depth, contextual, and reflective interpretation. The material object of the research is the SSKK, while the formal object is eschatological consciousness articulated through teachings on life, moral order, and the relationship between humans and the socio-supernatural order.

The primary data for this article is sourced from the SSKK text and its translations, particularly the Nurwansah edition (2020), as well as the research findings of Karlina et al. (1992/1993), which are cited as references in the research report. The report also notes that the SSKK, as an Old Sundanese manuscript, has two Kropak codes, namely 630 and 624, and contains moral teachings and rules for social life (Saputra et al., 2025). Secondary data was obtained from studies on the history of Old Sundanese, Hindu-Buddhist religion in West Java, hermeneutics, the anthropology of death, Hindu ethics, religious moderation, and studies of Nusantara manuscripts.

The analytical strategy was conducted in three stages. The first stage involved thematic identification of text sections related to consciousness, the unconscious, moral teachings, social obligations, relations with the king or state, tolerance, non-violence, and acceptance of tradition. The second stage involved categorizing meanings into the themes of life, death, moral order, and spiritual responsibility. The third stage is hermeneutic interpretation, namely reading these themes through the encounter between the horizon of Old Sundanese and the contemporary problematic horizon regarding eschatology, plurality, and social ethics.

Gadamer's hermeneutics is used not to impose modern meanings onto ancient texts, but to explain the process of dialogue between the text and the reader. Gadamer (2004) states that understanding always occurs within history, preconceptions, and tradition. Therefore, the researcher does not stand outside the text but enters into a dialogue with it. In the context of this article, the horizon of the SSKK as an Old Sundanese text is brought into dialogue with the horizon of contemporary eschatological studies. The result is not a mechanical transposition of old meanings, but a fusion of horizons that allows for a new reading: the SSKK as an ethical eschatological text.

To avoid overly speculative readings, this article limits the eschatological meaning to the dimensions of life-and-death consciousness, the moral consequences of actions, and the orientation toward salvation. This means the article does not claim that the SSKK constitutes a complete doctrine regarding life after death. Instead, this article demonstrates that the manuscript contains an eschatological consciousness in an implicit form: humans are urged to heed advice, uphold *dharmā*, avoid moral blindness, and build an orderly life. Thus, eschatology here is understood as an ethics of life situated within the shadow of mortality and spiritual accountability.

The presentation of results is analytical, not merely descriptive. Each finding from the text and research reports is linked to the theoretical framework and comparative literature. In this context, the concept of religious moderation identified by Saputra et al. (2025) is not used as a final framework but is reinterpreted as part of a broader moral order. National commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and acceptance of local traditions are understood as indicators that SSKK links social salvation with spiritual salvation.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 *The sanghyang siksa kandang karesian as a moral text and the eschatological horizon of old sundanese*

Eschatological consciousness in the *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* does not appear as a standalone doctrine of the afterlife, but rather as an ethical framework that guides humans to understand the consequences of every action in life. This text places human life within a close relationship between consciousness, moral duty, social order, and cosmological harmony. Thus, eschatology does not merely speak of human destiny after death, but also of how humans build salvation while in this world through actions that are conscious, orderly, and in harmony with *dharma* (Virgiastuti, et al., 2026).

Within this framework, the concepts of *ceta* and *acetana* serve as crucial starting points for interpreting human moral orientation. Consciousness is not merely understood as the ability to know, but as the ethical foundation for distinguishing actions that bring prosperity from those that pave the way toward ruin and hell. Similarly, *dharma* is not understood in an individualistic sense, but as humanity's connection to the order of duties, social roles, and collective responsibilities. Salvation in this text is therefore relational: one cannot attain spiritual goodness by disrupting social order, rejecting differences, or severing ties with local traditions and cosmologies. The following table summarizes the interpretive structure of eschatological consciousness in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* through four main doctrinal nodes, their moral meanings, and the eschatological implications that can be drawn from each concept.

Table 1. Interpretative structure of eschatological consciousness in *sanghyang siksa kandang karesian*

Doctrinal Node	Moral Meaning	Eschatological Implication
<i>Ceta</i> and <i>acetana</i>	Consciousness and unconsciousness as the basis of human action	Consciousness guides human beings toward <i>rahayu</i> —well-being, safety, and spiritual integrity—whereas unconsciousness opens the path toward destruction and <i>naraka</i> .
<i>Dharma</i> and the order of duties	Life is understood as a space for fulfilling social and moral obligations	Salvation is not merely individual, but is bound to the maintenance of social order and moral responsibility.
Tolerance and openness	The capacity to accept difference and to learn from other cultures	Social salvation is preserved through the prevention of conflict, violence, and identity-based hostility.
Local tradition and cosmology	Acceptance of local customs, symbols, and adikodratic structures	A meaningful life is constructed through harmony among human beings, culture, and the adikodratic realm.

The table shows that eschatological consciousness in the *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* moves from the inner dimension toward the social and cosmological dimensions. Human consciousness is first tested through one's ability to recognize the moral consequences of actions. However, this consciousness does not stop at personal self-formation. It must be realized through the fulfillment of *dharma*, respect for the social order, openness to differences, and acceptance of local traditions as spaces for the formation of life's meaning.

Thus, salvation in this text cannot be reduced to a metaphysical goal after death. Salvation is understood as a state of well-being encompassing personal wholeness, social order, and harmony between humanity and nature as well as the supernatural world. Conversely, hell does not merely refer to eschatological punishment but also to the destructive consequences of unconsciousness, violations of *dharma*, social violence, and humanity's disconnection from its cosmological order. This is what distinguishes the ethics of Ancient Sunda: eschatology is understood not as an escape from the world, but as a way of organizing worldly life so that it remains on the path to salvation (Saputra & Purwanto, 2026).

The SSKK is often understood as a didactic text because its content teaches norms, codes of conduct, and human obligations. Research reports indicate that, according to Nurwansah, the moral content of SSKK can be divided into three main sections: *dasa kreta* and *dasa prebakti*, *karma ning hulun* (society's conduct toward the king), and *pangimbuh ning twah* (supplements to actions) (Saputra et al., 2025). Atja interprets *Siksa Kandang Karesian* as norms and teachings of a wise life based on *dharma*, while Alnoza interprets it as a sacred guide for the community of the holy. Thus, from the outset, this text presents itself as a moral guide, not merely a historical record.

However, the status of SSKK as a moral text does not mean it is free from eschatological dimensions. Precisely because it governs life, it establishes a horizon regarding the consequences of human actions. In religious traditions, morality and eschatology are often closely intertwined. Human actions in the world are viewed as having consequences that transcend practical interests. Right actions maintain harmony; wrong actions bring about destruction. The SSKK operates within this logic. It teaches that human life must be lived with awareness, order, and caution because humans exist within an order greater than themselves (Purwanto, et al., 2025).

The key term linking morality and eschatology in the SSKK is *dharma*. *Dharma* is not merely a social rule but a principle of order connecting humans to the cosmos. In Hindu tradition and the Nusantara tradition influenced by Hindu-Buddhist thought, *dharma* encompasses the meanings of law, duty, the right path, and cosmic order. Therefore, a violation of *dharma* is not merely a breach of etiquette but also a disruption of the balance of life. It is at this point that life and death are connected. A person who lives in opposition to *dharma* is, in fact, preparing their own destruction.

This interpretation demonstrates that the SSKK must be situated within the intellectual history of Ancient Sunda, which does not sharply separate ethics, politics, religion, and cosmology. Munandar (2010, 2011) shows that Ancient Sunda society recognized a Hindu-Buddhist religious ethos intertwined with local concepts. Ancient Sundanese manuscripts do not merely discuss rituals but also establish a way of life. In the SSKK, this way of life encompasses the body, the senses, speech, knowledge, social relations, and relationships with authority. In other words, humans are understood as moral beings whose fate is determined by the quality of their consciousness.

If eschatology is limited solely to doctrines regarding the afterlife, then the SSKK may seem insufficiently explicit. However, if eschatology is understood as an awareness of life's ultimate direction and the moral consequences of actions, then the SSKK is, in fact, exceptionally rich. These texts present death as a horizon that is not always explicitly mentioned but continually operates through the impulse to live righteously. Death is present as a boundary that makes life accountable. It is not the center of the narrative, but rather the ontological backdrop that gives weight to moral teachings.

3.2 *Consciousness, unconsciousness, and the path of salvation*

One of the most important sections for reading the eschatological dimension of *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* is its discussion of *ceta* and *acetana*. The passage cited in the research report explains that *ceta* denotes consciousness, whereas *acetana* denotes unconsciousness (Prawirajaya et al., 2023a). The conscious person knows and remembers counsel, does not forget it, and therefore becomes the beginning of human happiness or

human well-being. Conversely, the unconscious person is one who forgets Hyang, becomes confused, fails to remember *tutur*, becomes the root of destruction, the seed of *kaliyuga*, dares to deny, becomes the seed of falsehood, and causes human beings to enter hell (*naraka*) (Nurwansah, 2020; Saputra et al., 2025). This section directly reveals the relationship between moral consciousness and eschatological destiny.

The passage is significant because it contains three levels of meaning. First, consciousness is the capacity to remember teaching. A conscious human being is not merely one who knows, but one who is able to preserve moral knowledge within action. Second, unconsciousness is forgetfulness of Hyang and the loss of *tutur*. Forgetfulness here is not merely psychological negligence, but spiritual disconnection. Third, the consequence of unconsciousness is destruction and hell. Thus, *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* affirms that salvation does not begin after death, but begins when human beings are able to live consciously.

From the perspective of ethical eschatology, *ceta* constitutes the foundation of salvation. Consciousness becomes the force that directs human beings to distinguish right from wrong, order from chaos, *dharma* from *adharma*. Without consciousness, human beings fall into *acetana*, a condition in which they lose orientation. This loss of orientation affects not only the individual, but also society. The text describes *acetana* as the seed of *kaliyuga*, that is, a sign of the collapse of the age. In other words, the destruction of an age begins with the collapse of human moral consciousness.

This interpretation is consistent with traditions of religious philosophy that regard consciousness as the gateway to the formation of the human person. In the Bhagavad Gita, right action cannot be separated from knowledge and self-discipline (Pudja, 2005). In the hermeneutical tradition, understanding also always involves the capacity to remember, interpret, and integrate meaning into life (Gadamer, 2004; Ricoeur, 1976). *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* gives local form to this idea. It does not employ the language of systematic philosophy, yet it teaches that the saved person is one who does not forget counsel and is not severed from Hyang.

The mention of hell in the passage from *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* provides an explicit point for eschatological reading. Yet hell here should not be understood only as a post-mortem place. It may also be interpreted as a moral condition resulting from unconsciousness. Human beings enter hell when their lives are ruled by confusion, falsehood, denial, and spiritual forgetfulness. In this way, *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* presents a form of eschatology that is both transcendent and immanent. Hell is the final consequence, but its signs are already visible in a life damaged by *acetana*.

From this standpoint, life and death are not absolutely separated. Life is the space in which human beings sow consequences, while death is the horizon within which those consequences acquire deeper meaning. Human beings who live with *ceta* prepare well-being; those who live in *acetana* prepare destruction. This is the core of the ethical eschatology of *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian*: salvation is the fruit of consciousness practiced in life.

3.3 Life as the fulfilment of dharma and the order of duties

In *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian*, life is not understood as unlimited freedom. Life is a field of obligation. Human beings are placed within a network of relations with teachers, parents, the king, society, language, culture, work, and the adikodratic order. Therefore, the ideal human being is not merely one who knows the teaching, but one who is able to position oneself properly. This proper self-positioning is an important feature of Old Sundanese ethics. It prevents human beings from arrogance, disorder, and violation of the social structure.

The division of moral teaching into *dasa kreta*, *dasa prebakti*, *karma ning hulun*, and *pangimbuh ning twah* shows that *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* understands life in layered terms. *Dasa kreta* and *dasa prebakti* discuss basic rules and forms of devotion. *Karma ning hulun* regulates the conduct of society toward the king or the state. *Pangimbuh*

ning twah provides supplementary guidance for good action. This structure demonstrates that morality is not concerned only with inner intention, but also with concrete action in social life (Nurwansah, 2020; Saputra et al., 2025).

In the research report, the value of national commitment in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* is found in teachings concerning obedience in paying taxes, compliance with rules, safeguarding royal secrets, and refusing to assist parties who become enemies of the kingdom (Saputra et al., 2025). In contemporary language, this value may be called national commitment. Yet within the horizon of Old Sundanese thought, it is more accurately read as fidelity to order. The state or kingdom is not merely an administrative power structure, but part of the order of life that must be preserved so that society does not fall into chaos.

The obligation to pay taxes, for example, cannot be read merely as an economic duty. It signifies the willingness of citizens to become part of the social body. Obedience to rules indicates the recognition that personal freedom must be situated within a shared order. Safeguarding royal secrets expresses the values of trust and loyalty. Refusing to assist the kingdom's enemies shows that betrayal of the social order is viewed as a destructive act. All these values indicate that a good life is a life that does not sever its bonds with the community.

From an eschatological perspective, social order has a deeper meaning. An orderly society is the space in which human beings can carry out *dharma*. Conversely, a society ruled by betrayal, violence, and disobedience becomes a space of destruction. Here, eschatology is not only individual, but also social. Individual salvation depends on one's ability to preserve society, while the salvation of society depends on the moral consciousness of its individuals. *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* therefore teaches that the path toward spiritual well-being cannot be separated from social responsibility.

This idea is relevant to the anthropology of religion, which views social norms as symbolic structures that keep the world meaningful (Geertz, 1973). Societies live not only because of material needs, but also because of the conviction that their actions are situated within a legitimate order. When that order collapses, human beings lose orientation. In *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian*, such orientation is preserved through *dharma*, devotion, obligation, and consciousness. To live morally is to live without separating personal interest from collective salvation.

3.4 Death as an ethical horizon and the consequence of action

Death in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* does not always appear as an explicit theme. However, the absence of a systematic discussion of death does not mean the absence of death-consciousness. In many moral texts, death functions as a silent horizon. It becomes the boundary that compels human beings to weigh their actions, remember counsel, and guard themselves against destruction. *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* constructs this kind of consciousness through its emphasis on the consequences of action. The conscious person becomes *rahayu*; the unconscious person becomes the source of destruction and the cause of entry into hell.

The horizon of death in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* can be read through the relationship between *ceta*, *tutur*, *Hyang*, *kaliyuga*, and *naraka*. These terms form an eschatological chain. *Ceta* leads human beings toward *rahayu*; forgetfulness of *Hyang* leads human beings toward destruction; destruction becomes the seed of *kaliyuga*; and ultimately human beings move toward *naraka*. This chain shows that death is not merely an end, but a knot in a moral process that has already begun during life. The end of the human being is determined by the orientation of consciousness.

In the anthropology of death, Hertz (1960) argues that death cannot be understood merely as a biological event because societies always give it social and spiritual meaning. Van Gennep (1960) reads death as part of rites of passage, while Turner (1969) shows that transition always requires a transformation of status and meaning. *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* does not discuss death rituals, but it does discuss the moral condition that determines the quality of human transition. In this respect, *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang*

Karesian offers a distinctive contribution: it locates preparation for death in the ethics of life, not merely in death rituals.

Thus, death in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* may be called an ethical horizon. An ethical horizon means that death provides both a limit and a direction for life. Human beings must live consciously because life culminates in accountability. Human beings must preserve *tutur* because forgetting *tutur* means losing the path. Human beings must remember *Hyang* because forgetting *Hyang* means being severed from the source of order. Death makes human action non-neutral; every action carries moral weight.

This ethical horizon also prevents the reading of eschatology from becoming merely a fear of the afterlife. *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* does not appear to frighten human beings with death. Rather, it educates them to live rightly. The threat of *naraka* does not stand alone, but is connected with the failure to remember counsel and preserve consciousness. This shows that the eschatology of *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* is pedagogical. It teaches human beings not to fall into destruction by cultivating consciousness in everyday life.

Death as an ethical horizon also explains why social values in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* possess spiritual weight. Paying taxes, obeying rules, accepting difference, rejecting violence, and learning other cultures are not merely worldly acts. They are all ways in which human beings guard themselves from *acetana*. Conversely, betrayal, falsehood, hatred, and violence are signs that human beings have lost *ceta*. Thus, before biological death arrives, human beings may experience moral death when they no longer live in consciousness.

3.5 Tolerance, openness, and social salvation

The research report by Saputra et al. (2025) finds that tolerance in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* is reflected in the acceptance of differences or other people's views, wisdom, prudence, openness, the spirit of learning other languages, cultures, and religions, mutual cooperation, collaboration, and the recitation of prayers from two religions. This finding is highly significant because it shows that *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* does not teach an exclusive morality that closes itself off from others. On the contrary, the text contains an ethics of openness.

In the reading of religious moderation, this value shows that Old Sundanese society had space for difference. Yet in an eschatological reading, tolerance has a deeper meaning. Tolerance is not merely politeness in a plural society. It is a condition of social salvation. A society that is unable to accept difference easily falls into violence, and violence is a form of moral destruction. Tolerance therefore becomes a mechanism for preserving life from destruction.

Openness toward other languages, cultures, and religions shows that knowledge is understood as a way of expanding horizons. In Gadamer's terms, understanding requires a fusion of horizons (Gadamer, 2004). *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* presents a local form of this principle. Human beings are not asked to close themselves off, but to learn from others with wisdom and prudence. This attitude differs from directionless relativism. Openness in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* remains within the framework of *dharma*. Human beings learn from others not in order to lose themselves, but to expand consciousness.

This ethics of tolerance may be compared with the principle of religious moderation formulated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2019), namely a balance between the practice of one's own religion and respect for the religious practices of others. However, *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* provides historical depth to this principle. It shows that openness is not merely a modern necessity, but has roots in the manuscript heritage of the Indonesian archipelago. Thus, *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* offers cultural legitimacy for efforts to build a peaceful society.

From the perspective of social eschatology, identity-based conflict may be understood as a form of collective death. It kills trust, breaks cooperation, destroys living spaces, and

turns religion into a justification for violence. *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* offers the opposite path: preserving life through consciousness, wisdom, and acceptance. In this sense, salvation does not only mean the salvation of the individual soul, but also the salvation of society from social destruction.

The spirit of mutual cooperation and collaboration found in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* also shows that human beings are not understood as atomistic individuals. They always live together with others. Therefore, the ethics of life is a relational ethics. Human beings become rahayu not by separating themselves from society, but by maintaining right relations. Moral order cannot be built by individual piety that ignores others. It requires the capacity to live together, including with those who differ in views, language, culture, and belief.

3.6 Non-violence, guru nista, and catur buta

According to the research report, the message of non-violence in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* is strongly reflected in the concepts of guru nista and catur buta (Saputra et al., 2025). Both are important because they provide a textual foundation for the eschatological reading of this article. Guru nista does not merely refer to a bad teacher or model, but also marks a pattern of life that brings human beings into moral disgrace. Catur buta refers to four forms of behavioral blindness that cause human beings to descend from the dignity of consciousness into coarseness, greed, evil, and spiritual destruction. Thus, non-violence in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* is not merely a social norm, but part of the order of salvation.

“...aya ma na janma paeh maling, paeh papanjingan, paeh napu, paeh ngabegal, paeh meor, sing sawatek cekap carut... ulah diturutan. ja eta kangken guru nista ngaranna...” The translation is: *there are people who die while stealing, die while sneaking into another person's house, die while deceiving, die while threatening, die while plundering, and commit all kinds of treacherous deeds; all of these must not be followed because they are called guru nista* (Nurwansah, 2020; Saputra et al., 2025).

This passage constitutes the strongest evidence that death in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* may be read as a moral consequence. The text does not merely mention criminal acts such as stealing, threatening, robbing, or deceiving as social violations, but places them within a sequence of disgraceful deaths. The phrases paeh maling and paeh ngabegal indicate that human death is not understood as neutral, but is evaluated through the quality of the actions that precede it. In this logic, death becomes a moral mirror of life. A person does not merely die as a biological body, but dies with an ethical trace that determines the meaning of that death (Prawirajaya et al., 2023b).

The prohibition ulah diturutan, “do not follow it,” reveals the pedagogical function of the text. *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* does not stop at recording wrongful acts, but transforms them into moral warnings. It is here that the idea of ethical eschatology becomes relevant. Eschatology in this manuscript does not primarily appear as speculation about the realm of the afterlife, but as an awareness that every action has consequences attached to the quality of human life and death. Thus, guru nista may be read as a moral-eschatological category: it marks a bad example that must be avoided because it leads human beings toward the decline of dignity, suffering, and loss of spiritual orientation.

The structure of moral consequence becomes even clearer in the discussion of catur buta. The research report explains that meriris includes the habit of stealing, taking without permission, robbing, seizing, and lying against the truth. This conduct is described as disgusting and as bringing suffering at the time of death; its perpetrator is cursed by Batara and does not reincarnate as a human being. Meanwhile, wirang refers to dishonesty, improper conduct, threats, and murder; at death, the perpetrator suffers and is reborn as a frightening animal. This sequence affirms that violence and falsehood do not merely damage social relations, but also damage the possibility of human beings preserving their spiritual dignity.

Based on this evidence, non-violence in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* has a direct relationship with eschatological consciousness. If the unconscious human being is described as the source of destruction and the cause of entry into *naraka*, then violence may be understood as the most concrete manifestation of unconsciousness. Violence destroys the body, but it also destroys the order of meaning. It makes human beings forget the dignity of others and forget Hyang. Therefore, rejecting violence means preserving life from the process of destruction, both spiritually and socially (Purwanto & Wedana, 2026).

In religious studies, violence often arises from the absolutization of identity and truth claims that leave no room for the other (Juergensmeyer, 2003). When religion is politicized, or when transcendental norms are used to justify hostility, human beings feel entitled to commit violence in the name of truth. The research report also notes that religious conflict may be triggered by group identity, absolute truth claims, and the mobilization of religious actors (Saputra et al., 2025). *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* offers a cultural response to this problem through teachings on consciousness, prudence, and the rejection of moral blindness.

Non-violence in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* cannot be separated from self-governance. Violence always begins with the failure to govern desire, anger, speech, and action. In this respect, the study by Wijayanti et al. (2024) on the governance of the senses in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* is highly relevant. Control of the senses is not merely an individual ascetic exercise, but a foundation for social peace. Human beings who cannot master themselves will easily harm others. Conversely, human beings who exercise self-control are able to preserve life.

This dimension is consistent with the principle of ahimsa in the Hindu tradition. Ahimsa does not only mean refraining from killing, but also refraining from causing harm through thought, word, and deed. Read through the horizon of *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian*, ahimsa is not a foreign concept externally imposed upon the text, but finds a local counterpart in the teaching on consciousness and the rejection of moral blindness. Violence is a sign of inner disorder; non-violence is a sign of moral order. Thus, *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* places peace as a condition for meaningful life.

From the perspective of life and death studies, non-violence is directly related to reverence for life. One reason religious moderation is considered important in the research report is that religion exists to preserve human dignity, including the preservation of human life from being taken (Saputra et al., 2025). This argument can be extended eschatologically: to respect life is to recognize that every life is situated within an adikodratic order and possesses a spiritual direction. Violence is a rejection of that recognition.

3.7 Local tradition, syncretism, and the cosmology of salvation

One of the strongest findings in the research report is the acceptance of local tradition. The report states that religion and local culture in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* appear to be intertwined, giving rise to a new religious-cultural formation. Elsewhere, it explains that within the adikodratic system of Old Sundanese thought, the *niskala* level is associated with Sang Hyang Jatiniskala, Sang Hyang Tunggal, Niskala, Taya, and Jatinistemen, while the *sakala-niskala* level contains deities from the Hindu-Saiva and Mahayana Buddhist pantheons, such as Śiva, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Indra, Kubera, Bayu, Candra, and Surya. At the *sakala* level, concrete forms appear in statues, yantras, scriptures, certain stones, and other objects (Munandar, 2011; Saputra et al., 2025).

This structure shows that Old Sundanese cosmology is neither singular nor rigid. It brings together local, Hindu-Saiva, and Mahayana Buddhist elements within an interwoven system. Munandar (2010, 2011) has shown that the religious character of Old Sundanese manuscripts and material remains contains Hindu-Buddhist elements blended with local tradition. In the context of this article, such blending is not only historically interesting, but also eschatologically significant. It shows that salvation is understood within a relational and layered cosmological space.

Acceptance of local tradition means that society does not sever its relationship with its cultural roots when receiving the influence of major religions. Instead, local tradition becomes a medium for interpreting the adikodratic. In religious studies, such a process is often called syncretism or acculturation, but these terms must be used carefully. It is not merely a mixture without principle, but a creative process of constructing a living order of meaning. *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* shows that Old Sundanese society was able to process various spiritual horizons into a moral and cosmological order that could be practiced in life.

From the perspective of ethical eschatology, the acceptance of local tradition means that the path of salvation is not separated from culture. Human beings do not live in an empty space. They live in language, custom, ritual, symbol, and collective memory. Therefore, salvation is understood through available cultural instruments. Local tradition becomes a vessel for remembrance, guidance, and the preservation of order. When local tradition is destroyed, society may lose its moral language. *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* instead shows that local tradition must be preserved as part of the order of life.

The research report provides an example of the acceptance of tradition through the recommendation to learn Javanese customs and culture when travelling to Java. This fact shows that Old Sundanese society was not opposed to other cultures. The culture of others should be learned, especially one's own culture, which must be practiced in everyday life (Saputra et al., 2025). This value contains an epistemic ethics: learning from others is part of the formation of the wise human being. Within an eschatological framework, learning from others is also a way to avoid *acetana*, because closure can generate moral blindness.

Acceptance of local tradition may also be compared with Baduy culture, which still preserves the seba ceremony as a form of gratitude and devotion to government. The research report mentions seba, kawalu, and ngalaksa ceremonies as examples of traditions that reveal the relationship between custom, gratitude, and social order (Rusnandar et al., 2012; Rusnandar, 2013; Saputra et al., 2025). This example affirms that local tradition functions as an ethical and social mechanism for preserving harmony. It is not a dead remnant of the past, but a living practice that connects human beings with agricultural produce, government, community, and the Sacred.

Based on the reading above, this article proposes the concept of Nusantara ethical eschatology. This concept refers to a model of eschatological consciousness that places moral life at the center of human preparation for death and for the spiritual consequences of action. In this model, eschatology is not reduced to teachings about the world after death, but is expanded into a structure of consciousness that shapes how human beings live, relate, remember, govern themselves, and preserve order.

Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian provides a strong foundation for this concept. First, it places *ceta* as the beginning of human *rahayu*. This means that salvation begins with consciousness. Second, it links *acetana* with destruction, *kaliyuga*, falsehood, and *naraka*. This means that unconsciousness has eschatological consequences. Third, it regulates social life through duties toward order. This means that individual salvation is not separated from social order. Fourth, it teaches tolerance, non-violence, and the acceptance of tradition. This means that salvation is also relational and cultural.

The concept of Nusantara ethical eschatology differs from doctrinal eschatology, which usually emphasizes descriptions of the afterlife. It also differs from secular ethics, which severs morality from the spiritual horizon. Ethical eschatology stands between the two. It views morality as a spiritual path and spirituality as a responsibility that must be embodied in social life. In this way, *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* can speak to contemporary discourses on moral crisis, identity-based violence, and the loss of life orientation.

This contribution also expands the understanding of Nusantara manuscripts. Old manuscripts are often read as literary heritage or historical data. Yet they can also become sources of social and religious theory. *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* does not only provide information about Old Sundanese society; it offers a framework for how life ought to be lived. This framework can be used to construct local theories of the human being,

consciousness, and salvation. Thus, this article encourages Nusantara manuscripts to be treated not merely as objects of study, but also as sources of concepts.

In the context of life and death studies, this article shows that eschatological inquiry can be developed through local texts that do not always speak directly about death. Precisely in texts such as *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian*, the relationship between life and death appears more subtly. Death is present through teachings on the consequences of action, the danger of forgetting Hyang, and the necessity of living consciously. Thus, *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* opens a path for reading eschatology as a moral pedagogy of life.

The relevance of *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* for contemporary society lies in its capacity to provide a cultural foundation for shared life. Indonesia is a plural society facing the challenges of intolerance, the politicization of religion, identity conflict, and symbolic as well as physical violence. In this situation, *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* offers a paradigm that shared life must be built upon consciousness, order, tolerance, non-violence, and respect for tradition. These values are not foreign to Nusantara culture, but have roots in old texts.

Religious moderation, which is currently promoted by the state, can gain historical depth from *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian*. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2019) formulates four indicators of religious moderation: national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and acceptance of local tradition. Interestingly, the research report finds all four indicators in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* (Saputra et al., 2025). This article adds that these four indicators can be read more deeply as a structure of ethical eschatology. This means that moderation is not merely a socio-political strategy, but also a moral path for preserving life from destruction.

In a plural society, an overly narrow eschatological consciousness can give rise to exclusivism: salvation is claimed only by one's own group, while others are viewed as wrong or dangerous. *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* offers an alternative. Salvation is not built by opposing the other, but by becoming conscious, wise, open, and non-violent human beings. This is not relativism, but an ethics of *dharma*. Human beings remain rooted in their beliefs and traditions, but do not turn those roots into reasons for rejecting the humanity of others.

Another aspect of relevance lies in the importance of remembering. In the rapid pace of modern life, human beings easily lose *tutur*, that is, counsel, memory, and moral guidance. *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* reminds us that forgetting Hyang and forgetting *tutur* are the beginnings of destruction. This message may be translated as a critique of modernity, which often severs human beings from tradition, nature, community, and spiritual responsibility. Modern life requires *ceta*: reflective consciousness capable of weighing the consequences of action.

Thus, *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* is not only relevant to philological studies or the history of Sunda. It is also relevant to character education, the strengthening of religious moderation, public ethics, and eschatological studies. This manuscript teaches that the future of shared life depends on the human capacity to preserve moral order. If human beings lose consciousness, they do not need to wait for death to experience hell; social hell can emerge in the form of conflict, hatred, betrayal, and violence. Conversely, if human beings cultivate consciousness, life becomes a space of *rahayu*.

3.8 Moral order as a pedagogy of death

Reading *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* as ethical eschatology requires attention to the term "moral order." Moral order is not merely obedience to external social norms. It is the condition in which inner consciousness, social action, and spiritual orientation move in one direction. In *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian*, human beings are not understood as free-standing subjects, but as beings always bound to *tutur*, Hyang, teachers, kings, society, language, and tradition. Therefore, morality is not measured only by personal intention, but by the human capacity to maintain right relations with the entire field of life.

Moral order becomes a form of the pedagogy of death because it teaches human beings to live with the awareness that every relation has consequences.

The pedagogy of death in this article does not mean education in the fear of death. It is more accurately understood as education against wasting life. Major religious traditions as well as local traditions often make death a mirror of life. Death reminds human beings that power, the body, wealth, and social status are temporary. Yet *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* does not develop this reflection in an ascetic language that rejects the world. It instead places the world as a space for the fulfilment of obligations. Human beings must fulfil their duties, safeguard secrets, obey rules, avoid betrayal, accept difference, and reject violence. All this shows that awareness of life's end does not lead human beings to abandon the world, but to become responsible within it.

Here an important distinction appears between an eschatology of escape and an eschatology of responsibility. An eschatology of escape views the world as a place that must be left behind as quickly as possible for the sake of afterlife salvation. An eschatology of responsibility views the world as an ethical field that determines the quality of salvation. *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* is closer to the second model. It does not teach that salvation is obtained by severing oneself from society. It teaches that human beings become *rahayu* when they are conscious, remember counsel, and properly fulfil their social roles. Thus, death does not erase the importance of social life; rather, it deepens it.

Moral order also functions as a critique of life ruled by *acetana*. Unconsciousness in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* is not merely not knowing, but refusing to remember, refusing to listen, and being unable to position oneself properly. In contemporary society, *acetana* may appear in various forms: narrow fanaticism, digital hatred, corruption, violence in the name of religion, disregard for nature, and severance from tradition. All these reveal human beings who are technically alive, yet morally disoriented. In the language of *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian*, such a condition approaches the seed of *kaliyuga*, the age in which order collapses because human beings forget the source of their consciousness.

For this reason, *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* may be read as a text that teaches a Nusantara memento mori. Yet unlike memento mori in the Western tradition, which is often expressed through skull symbolism or meditation on transience, the memento mori of *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* operates through the ordering of life. To remember death is to remember *tutur*. To remember *tutur* is to remember obligation. To remember obligation is to ensure that life does not fall into chaos. Death-consciousness is therefore translated into social wisdom, not merely individual contemplation.

This article does not negate the reading of *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* as a text of religious moderation. On the contrary, it uses the findings on religious moderation as an entry point toward a deeper reading. National commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and acceptance of local tradition are important categories for explaining the relevance of *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* for contemporary Indonesia. However, these categories do not fully explain why such values are important within the horizon of the text. This article shows that these values are important because they are related to the structure of salvation. A society that is orderly, tolerant, non-violent, and respectful of tradition is a society that preserves life from destruction. Thus, moderation has an ethical-eschatological foundation.

In relation to the study of Sundanese ethics, this article offers a new emphasis on the relationship between consciousness and final consequence. Ethical studies often stop at an inventory of good and bad values. This article moves further by asking how good and bad values are situated within a view of human destiny. The answer appears in the relationship between *ceta* and *acetana*. Good values are not only socially beneficial, but also direct human beings toward *rahayu*. Bad values do not only damage social relations, but also become causes of *naraka*. Thus, ethics in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* is not flat; it possesses eschatological depth.

In relation to eschatological studies, this article offers an expansion of object and method. Eschatological studies often focus on theological texts that explicitly discuss the afterlife, apocalypse, resurrection, or judgment. *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* shows that local moral texts may also contain eschatological consciousness. To find it, researchers

need to read the relationship between teachings on life, consequences of action, consciousness, and the adikodratic order. This approach is important for Nusantara studies because many local texts do not sharply separate theology, ethics, politics, and cosmology. If researchers look only for explicit doctrines of the afterlife, the eschatological richness of local texts will be missed.

At the conceptual level, this article also seeks to avoid two reductions. The first reduction is to treat *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* merely as a traditional moral text whose relevance is only historical. The second is to rigidly impose Western or Middle Eastern categories of eschatology upon an Old Sundanese text. The middle path taken here is dialogical hermeneutics: allowing the text to speak through its own terms while connecting it with contemporary academic questions about life and death. In this way, *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* does not lose its distinctiveness, but neither is it confined to the past.

The most important implication of this reading is the recognition that local tradition possesses theoretical capacity. *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* does not merely provide data for theories that come from elsewhere; it can itself generate concepts. Nusantara ethical eschatology is a concept that grows from the reading of the doctrinal structure of *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian*, then is enriched by hermeneutics and the anthropology of death. This concept still needs to be tested against other manuscripts, but it already indicates an important direction: local knowledge can make a substantive contribution to global discourses on mortality, morality, and salvation.

Thus, the position of this article lies at the intersection of philology, religious studies, moral philosophy, and eschatological studies. Philology provides access to the text; religious studies explains the relationship between human beings and the sacred; moral philosophy interprets the structure of obligation; and eschatological studies reads the final orientation of human action. This intersection is consistent with the character of *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* itself, which does not operate within the separated disciplines of modern scholarship. The manuscript views life as a whole. Therefore, its reading must also be holistic: connecting words, actions, society, cosmos, and the final horizon of human life.

4. Conclusions

This article concludes that *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* may be read as a text of Old Sundanese ethical eschatology. Although the manuscript does not formulate a systematic doctrine of the afterlife, it constructs eschatological consciousness through the relationship between right living, moral consequence, death, and human spiritual destiny. The reading of guru nista and catur buta strengthens this thesis because both explicitly connect disgraceful actions, violence, falsehood, suffering at death, and the possibility of existential decline after death. Thus, death in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* is not merely a biological end, but a moment that discloses the moral quality of life.

The main finding of this article is that eschatology in *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* is not centered on fear of the afterlife, but on the pedagogy of life. *Ceta* becomes the basis of the human being who is *rahayu*, whereas *acetana* becomes the source of *kaliyuga*, falsehood, destruction, and *naraka*. This shows that salvation begins with the quality of consciousness. A life lived with consciousness, social obligation, openness, and non-violence is a path for preserving human dignity before society and the adikodratic realm.

The theoretical contribution of this article is the concept of Nusantara ethical eschatology. This concept expands the study of eschatology from post-mortem doctrine to an ethics of life that prepares human beings for death and for the spiritual consequences of their actions. *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* shows that Old Sundanese society possessed a rich way of understanding life and death through moral order. Therefore, this manuscript deserves to be situated within academic discourses on eschatology, social ethics, religious moderation, and the intellectual heritage of the Indonesian archipelago.

For future research, more detailed philological study is needed on key terms such as *ceta*, *acetana*, *tutur*, *Hyang*, *kaliyuga*, *naraka*, *guru nista*, and *catur buta*. Comparative studies

with other Old Sundanese manuscripts, Old Javanese texts, and Hindu-Buddhist traditions of the Indonesian archipelago are also necessary in order to test and enrich the concept of ethical eschatology. In addition, an English-language version of this article for international publication should be developed in accordance with journal requirements, with stronger primary references and comparison with global eschatological scholarship.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to all parties who supported and contributed valuable insights to the completion of this research.

Author Contribution

All authors contributed to the conceptualization, methodology, analysis, and writing of this manuscript and approved the final version for publication.

Funding

This research received no external funding.

Ethical Review Board Statement

Not available.

Informed Consent Statement

Not available.

Data Availability Statement

Not available.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Declaration of Generative AI Use

During the preparation of this work, the authors used Grammarly to assist in improving grammar, clarity, and academic tone of the manuscript. After using this tool, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and took full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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Biographies of Authors

I Made Dian Saputra, Master's Program in Balinese Language Education, Postgraduate Program, I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa State Hindu University, Denpasar, Bali 80236, Indonesia .

- Email: diansaputra@uhnsugriwa.ac.id
- ORCID: N/A
- Web of Science ResearcherID: N/A
- Scopus Author ID: N/A
- Homepage: <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=xaCdOXcAAAAJ&hl=en>

Heri Purwanto, Clergy Study Program, Faculty of Brahma Widya, I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa State Hindu University, Denpasar, Bali 80236, Indonesia.

- Email: heri.arkeo@uhnsugriwa.ac.id
- ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4333-9528>
- Web of Science ResearcherID: N/A
- Scopus Author ID: 57935684400
- Homepage: <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=-DxL5rEAAAAJ&hl=en>

Amarjiva Lochan, Department of History, Faculty of Social Science building, University of Delhi, Delhi 110007, India .

- Email: amarjiva@history.du.ac.in
- ORCID: 0009-0003-4036-2698
- Web of Science ResearcherID: N/A
- Scopus Author ID: 59008676000
- Homepage: <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=mNPf9JgAAAAJ&hl=en>