

Challenges for Designing of Hindu Crematorium in Puri, Odisha, India

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Abstract - This paper considers the cremation ceremony in the context of the life of the inhabitants of a Balinese community, tracing relationships between ritual itinerary and topography, and highlighting tensions and conflicts that have emerged between these ritual traditions and recent developments in tourism. The unique feature of the cremation ceremony is not only its procession, and particular architectural forms, but also the accompanying festival events that parade from the house of the deceased to the cemetery. In the investigation, we will explore the historically important site of the Tabanan Palace that forms the geographical and symbolic focus of the ceremony and the route of the procession in the context of the cremation service with its community of participants/onlookers. The processions, and their related rituals, have long been recognised as an integral part of the civic life of the community, which is increasingly being jeopardized as a result of the impact of commercial use. The investigation asks if the preservation of these ceremonies can exist in harmony with these recent developments, without undermining the still vibrant traditional practices of the society.

Key Words: Religious ceremonies, cremation ritual

1.1. Background

Hinduism is a way of life from birth till death derived from hindu mythology. Hinduism, upholds death as real and natural as life. It recognizes the world and encapsulates it in "the philosophy of creation, sustenance and destruction" (Dr. G.Chatterjee, 1998). It is believed that the human life is the most refined form of existence for the soul. Hence, death of a human being leads to 'moksha' (salvation) of the soul, liberating it from the cyclic process of birth and rebirth.

Grief is a natural human response to separation, bereavement or loss, in particular the loss of a loved one. The terms grief, mourning and bereavement are often used interchangeably, however they have different meanings. Grief describes an individual's personal response to loss and has emotional, physical, behavioural, cognitive, social and spiritual dimensions (Greenstreet 2004). Mourning is the outward and active expression of that grief.

It is through the process of mourning that grief is resolved. Bereavement refers to the period after loss during which grief and mourning occur. It is the state of having experienced a loss. Bereavement is a form of depression, which usually resolves spontaneously over time. The person who is bereaved may experience anxiety, insomnia, inertia, hyperactivity or a feeling of helplessness. Grief, mourning and bereavement may be affected by personality, culture, religion, the nature of the relationship with the deceased person and the way in which he or she died. Stroebe et al (1993) defined bereavement as a state of loss, triggering a grief reaction that manifests in a set of behaviours known as mourning.

Theories and frameworks

Many theories or models of grief have common themes or stages (Lindemann 1944, Kübler-Ross 1969, Parkes 1975, Bowlby 1980, Worden 1991). Diagrammatic representations such as the 'grief wheel' are often used to describe the process and stages involved in grief, suggesting that it is rarely a static process. However, other models, for example the dual process model of coping with bereavement (Stroebe and Schut 1999), provide a more flexible approach to the interpretation and management of grief. It describes how a bereaved person copes with the experience of loss in everyday life, along with other lifestyle changes that develop as a result of that loss. The dual process model is based on the principle that when people are grieving, the manner of coping is a two-way process: 'The person moves between grieving and trying to come to terms with the loss' (Dunne 2004).

Grief, mourning and remembrance are experienced in and mapped upon (i) physical spaces, including the public and private arenas of everyday life; (ii) the embodied-psychological spaces of the interdependent and co-producing body-mind and (iii) the virtual spaces of digital technology, religious-spiritual beliefs and non-place-based community. Culturally inflected, dynamic emotional-affective maps of grief can be identified, as a form of deep-mapping, which reflect the ways in which relationality to particular spaces and places is inflected by bereavement, mourning and remembrance. Individual's emotional-affective cartographies can intersect, overlap, or conflict with, others' maps, with social and political consequences. The conceptual framework outlined here is illustrated by a schematic representation of grief maps.

And the most challenging part is integrating the landscape with the cremation and other supplementary areas. What are the aspects of architecture that can support mourners through the bereavement process? Much has been written about the way architecture can affect people's emotions. But what if we look at it the other way around? Can we design spaces that are attuned to the concerns of the users?

The psychological function of grief was thought to release the individual from his or her bond with the deceased. This was achieved by looking back at the past and reliving memories of the deceased person. Detaching from the deceased involved working through the loss so that the grief could be overcome. This was often termed 'grief work'. This focus on letting go of, or detaching from, the deceased to accommodate grief is still debated among theorists (Payne et al 1999).

1.2 Concept

According to Hinduism, which is more a way of life than religion, upholds death as real and natural as life. It recognizes the world and encapsulates it in "the philosophy of creation, sustenance and destruction" [Dr. G.Chatterjee, 1998]. It is believed that the human life is the most refined form of existence for the soul. Hence, death of a human being leads to 'moksha' (salvation) of the soul, liberating it from the cyclic process of birth and rebirth.

What after a human belonging to Hinduism is declared "dead" as per clinical terminology?

Every community has its own religious beliefs towards cremation and the people execute the proceedings as per certain rules and regulations depicted in their holy books or preaching. In Hinduism, Garuda Purana, one of the eight Puranas of the holy book Gita contains the rites & regulations to be followed in the cremation process.

According to Garuda Purana, after ascertaining the death of a person, his or her son should proceed with last rites to the body. As the first step towards the last rites, the corpse should be washed with water and it's (he or she has now become it) clothes should be replaced with new ones. However, while performing the last rites to a corpse, rites are performed only to the deceased person alone. This rite is called ekoddiṣṭaśrāddha. Then the body is taken to the burning ground.

While carrying a corpse from the place of death to the burning ground, śrāddha ceremonies are performed at six places and they are – at the place of death, at the main door, at the cross roads, at the burning ground and finally on the funeral pyre. The performance of these six ceremonies satisfies six gods.

In all these ceremonies, the head of the corpse should be on the southern side.

Before the actual cremation begins, there is a ceremony called piṇḍavidhi. Piṇḍa is a ball of rice offered to the dead. The departed soul is said to become a pitṛ (ancestors) by eating piṇḍa-s. The funeral pyre should be cleansed and the corpse is placed on the pyre and the fire is lit after worshipping Kravyāda (a type of fire god) who is supposed to consume the flesh of the corpse with a request to consume the flesh and carry the soul to the heaven. When the fire is in full flames, oblations are offered with ghee and sesame seeds (also known as gingelly seeds) in the pyre. After paying respects to the burning corpse, relatives leave the place; take bath and reach home only to return again the next day morning.

Next day morning, the remaining ashes are collected and transferred to an earthen pot and this ritual is called saṁcayana. Ashes are collected in earthen pot and the pot is immersed in holy rivers or sea. Then for the next ten days piṇḍa-s are offered to the preta (the corpse is now known as preta) along with water. This ten day period is called āśauca (āśauca mean impurity).

1.2.1. The interrelations between bereavement, grief, mourning, remembrance and space

Space/place

Mapping death has long been an important preoccupation of epidemiologists and social scientists, with demographers and health geographers mapping varying rates of disease and mortality between (Stamp, 1964) and within countries (e.g. Dorling, 1997; Dorling & Gunnell, 2003 on suicide). Useful as these maps are, medical geography itself has shifted from studying 'dots on maps to embodied subjects' (MacKian, 2000, p. 95).

Furthermore, rather than being fixed, maps are increasingly recognised as relational and always in process, always becoming (Kitchin et al., 2013). Ultimately, whether quantitative or qualitative, 'maps' continue to be powerful exploratory and theory-building tools which can represent patterns and relationship, including a holistic view of a person's 'world of experience' and how this might vary over time (MacKian, 2000, 2004). The

purpose of this paper is to consider how to identify and map individual and collective experience of the impact of the death of another significant person, a question of how to access the non- or more-than-representational 'geographies that exceed representability' (Bondi, 2005, p. 438), how to articulate something of the ineffable.

Whilst death itself is often described in spatial terms e.g. 'passing to the other side', 'going to a better place', grief and mourning tend to be described in more temporal language, such as 'it takes time' and 'time heals'. However, as Bondi et al. (2005, p. 5) have argued 'embodied emotions are intricately connected to specific sites and contexts': bereavement, grief and mourning are experienced within space and can be both triggered and ameliorated in relation to particular places at particular times (Maddrell, 2009a, 2009b, 2011, 2012a, 2012b, 2013). While the significance of particular places have been studied, e.g. national or regional cultural contexts (see Yarwood et al. (2014) on geographies of green burials and Watkins (2013) on Britain's varied regional mourning rites and practices), the focus here is on understanding how bereavement mediates and influences the embodied and lived relationship to and with an assemblage of different spaces at any given time. The varied ways in which the experiences of grief and mourning intersect with different spaces and can be understood in 'spatial' terms are explored with reference to mapping meaning or the invisible topography of grief, a form of emotional deep-mapping, and thereby to understand more of the spatialities of bereavement, grief and mourning.

In the *Production of Space* (1994) Lefebvre describes space as organic, fluid, alive and dynamic. He challenged his readers to 'capture in thought the actual process of [the] production of space' (Merrifield, 2000, p. 173). Understanding the impact of death and bereavement on people's understanding and relation to place is part of that 'production' process. 'Theory must render intelligible the qualities of space which are at once perceptible and imperceptible to the senses...It will doubtless involve careful excavation and reconstruction, necessitate both induction and deduction, journey between the concrete and the abstract, between the local and the global, between self and society, between what's possible and impossible ...' (ibid.). This is the challenge addressed by this paper: how to render intelligible the perceptible and imperceptible qualities of space and spatial relations shaped by bereavement and grief; how to provide a framework that brings to light the spatial relations which underlie emotional geographies of grief, mourning and remembrance without objectifying them; how to reveal the interrelation of the material and emotional-affective, cognitive and the sensory, the individual or group and their wider social-cultural contexts.

1.3 Why Cremation at Puri?

Puri is an important religious place of Hindus. It is one of the 4 Dhams (Pilgrims places) according to Hindu Mythology and sees millions of devotees visiting the Jagannath temple throughout the year seeking the blessings of Lord Jagannath. Swargadwar is the cremation ground of Hindus in Puri. As the name suggests, 'Swarga-' means Heaven and '-dwara' means Gate or door. Hence, 'Swargadwar' is the 'Gateway to Heaven'. It has direct linkage with the Jagannath Temple and hence considered as a sacred place. The sea of Puri evidence the death of many people each day, witnesses the souls vacate the physical body and move to the immortal life in Heaven. As this place is considered as the door to heaven, several bodies from various part of the country are brought here for the last ritual.

The other traditional beliefs associates with this pilgrim place are as follows:

- During Amavasya (new moon night), Lord Narayana who is believed to have incarnated in the form of Lord Jagannath visits the sea after crossing Swargadwar.
- As per mythology the beach is the bathing place of Sri Chaitanya Mahadev which is an important part of Hinduism.
- The Brahmadar, the log of wood from which the three main deities are carved out, floats to the beach at Swargadwar.
- Local belief among people that “if anybody dies here, the soul departs for heaven where it attains ‘Mukti’ referring to salvation.”
- The Goddess Samsan Kali acts as the protector of all the souls entering the heaven.
- The Samsan kali of the Swargdwar is horned by all the tantric practicing their vidyas in the Samsan of Swargdwar
- The fire used for cremation here is considered as holy fire as it is directly been brought from Lord Jagannath’s kitchen.

The cremation of Puri-swargdwar is considered as a very holy place and believed that anyone whose last rituals are performed here will straight go to heaven. His soul receives Mukti, meaning freedom from all burdens. A very sensitive sentiment is attached to the Swargdwar and many people come to visit this holy place too. It is said that the fire of this cremation never stops burning. Everyday hundreds of dead bodies comes for cremation.

Swargdwar maintains and patronizes a strict and orthodox belief in their rituals. Only Hindus are allowed to be having cremation in this ground. The place is a dark silent place, though it is situated in the crowded area of Puri, where tourists in hundreds and thousands come. In the dark, one can see the flame of the burning funeral, showing the light of faith and destiny. The door of heaven is always lighted with flames and creating path to the souls for heaven.

What makes Swargdwar different is the calmness of the place, and the spiritual connection attached to it. People losing their near and dear ones, bringing them to this place hoping that the souls will go to heaven. People from various places come to visit the Swargdwar; even many foreigners come to this place to get connected to the Lord.

1.4 Existing Challenges:

Being located in the heart of the commercial area which is extremely chaotic, Puri Swargadwar faces the challenges as:

- **The encroachment of the site:** The site initially was of 16 acres of land, donated by Sri Adisankaracharya to be used as a cremation ground of Hindus. Due to increase in number of tourists per year, and increasing development of Puri and Swargadwar being an important heritage site, more and more number of hotels and commercial areas are built up in the site, causing a tremendous encroachment. Presently, the total area available for cremation in Swargadwar is only about 1 acres. This heavy encroachment has led to difficulties in the cremation process as the average footfall for cremation is approximately one hundred dead bodies.
- **Existing structures** within the site which are connected to the religious sentiments of the people: The present site consists of built structures like the temples other than the Samsana Kali temple, the tombs of some famous persons like Biju Pattanaik, etc. which consume the useful space meant for cremation but as they are connected to the religious beliefs of the people there is a social binding in relocation or revitalization of the area.
- **Vendors occupying the site periphery:** The entrances of the site are occupied by the vendors selling various eateries and commodities which are in unhygienic condition due to exposure to the ashes from the cremation and also cause hindrance in the development of the area because of their encroachments.
- **The sea beach** facing the site which needs to be designed properly: The Southern side of the site overlooks the sea. This provides a beautiful picturesque view and also very much connected to the religious sentiments of the people so also act as an important part in the design to be taken proper care of.
- **Ashes from cremations:** The ashes after cremation go into the air and pollute the surrounding. The control of the release of the gases after the cremation need special concern as they pose threat not only to the humans but also to the surrounding ecosystem.

- **Trespassers to the site:** The site is vulnerable to the trespassers like cows, dogs, etc. which along with polluting the space cause harm to themselves as well. No proper restriction and security in the entrances causes them to enter the site which is needed to be solved by proper designing.
- **Absence of barrier free environment:** The site entrance from the Marine Drive and other buildings in the site are accessible only through stairs. There is no provision for especially abled persons to easily access the site. This needs to be overcome through proper designing of the site.
- **Buffer to the visibility into site from main thoroughfare:** Many tourists visit the sea beach every day and the site of cremation process going on and its ritual of scattering the ashes in the sea gives them a disturbing view and negative feeling. Therefore it is also a challenge to the design of the site to make its environment user-friendly without any type of visibility to the interior.




An attempt has been made by the researchers to study and analyze the existing site conditions and arrive at a proposed sustainable solution for revitalization for the crematorium complex.

2. Contextual Analysis:

People employ rituals to demonstrate where they belong and who they are. But rituals are not merely ways to present an alleged identity. They are performative actions (Austin, 1976) i.e. actions that bring about ontological changes. And it may also be argued that, "A ritual is employed to confront death with life's most cherished values"14 and hence "the practice of ritual is thus an expression of self within the context of a greater consciousness that bridges the gap between generations" Cremation grounds are the spaces where people assemble and are assembled with both dead and alive, across generations and in recent development, cross-culturally. As described by Aldo Rossi "The city itself is the collective memory of its people and like memory it is associated with objects and places." 15 Therefore these places of cremation are those very critical spaces which may be argued to have an effect on one's space of mind.

The table below is a comparison of statement give a fair understanding as to how the concepts of death get related to the myths, beliefs and rituals in Hinduism and also form the basis for research on the spaces of death

Table 1 Case Studies:

	VAIKUNTHA MAHAPRASTHANAM CREMATORIUM, HYDERABAD	SWARG VATIKA CREMATORIUM, TELANGANA	ASHWINIKUMA CREMATORIUM, SURAT
SITE AREA	3.7 acres	3.2 acres	5500 SQM~3.5acres
BUILT UP AREA	1300sqm	1391sqm	2300 SQM
CREMATIONS PER DAY	10-20 BODIES	40-50 BODIES	20-25 BODIES
WAYS OF CREMATIONS Open air Gas chamber Electrical cremation	4-1 	102 - 	45- 
PLANNING	-Reveals itself slowly through the stages of the process with amalgamation of built and open spaces. -Spaces are built by taking up 3 concepts – Eternal Embrace; Ulterior Honor and Furthest	- Embodies a sense of discovery and procession -Several options for scales of gathering -strong relationship to the landscape, hence	-Activities under one building -Easily approachable areas with covered passages

There are restrictions on eating salt, lentils, oil and a number of other foods during the mourning period. Restrictions on the eldest son are even stricter. He often can eat only one meal a day consisting of rice, ghee and sugar and must shave all the hair from his body and conduct hours of rituals and take periodic ritual cold baths for a period of mourning that lasts up to one year.

Rites with offerings known as shaddha are periodically held after a person has died to nourish the soul in the afterlife. The rites are often performed once a year and feature a feast with a plate of food of food offered to the dead. Hindu believe the living must feed the dead living in the World of the Fathers. If the ancestors are properly taken care of they will reward the living with prosperity and sons. The shaddha is thought to day back to the Aryans. It is viewed as a meeting between the living and the dead. The souls of the dead who are nor properly buried are thought live outside the World of Fathers as ghosts that torment their relatives until they are there. custom

Architecture and Ritual explores how the varied rituals of everyday life are framed and defined in space by the buildings which we inhabit. It penetrates beyond traditional assumptions about architectural style, aesthetics and utility to deal with something more implicit: how buildings shape and reflect our experience in ways of which we remain unconscious.

In considering how all architecture has to mesh with the habits, beliefs, rituals and expectations of the society that created it, the book presents deep implications for our understanding of architectural history and theory. It also highlights the importance for architects of understanding how buildings frame social space before they prescribe new architectural designs of their own. The book ends with a recent example of user participation, showing how contemporary user interest and commitment to a building can be as strong as ever.

Semantic architecture or non-domestic built elements used for ritual ceremonies, which has a symbolic meaning and has helped in the establishment of architectural form

Ritual behavior basically deals with three concepts of place, time and acts that are totally mixed with the idea of soul existence or immortality.

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