

Hindu-Buddhist Influence on the Myths of Rice Gods in Southeast Asia and Its Role in Modern Agriculture Development

Yang Jing Qing, Maman Lesmana
Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Indonesia

Abstract: The myths of rice gods are popular folk myth in Southeast Asia that passed down to today since ancient times. This research contains a discussion of the myths of rice goddesses from three Southeast Asian countries - Thailand, Indonesia and Philippines to discover why and how Hinduism and Buddhism influenced mythical texts of rice gods in Southeast Asia by influencing local social environment. This research is a comparative research, researched with interdisciplinary theory, acculturation theory etc. The result of this research is that the myths of Sri gods circulating in Southeast Asia are indigenous folk tales. Its contents continued to be enriched after Hinduism and Buddhism entered Southeast Asia. This not only strengthens the cultural diversity of Southeast Asia, but also encourages the development of agricultural communities by integrating it as local agricultural wisdom. In the era of globalization, traditional agriculture is facing the impacts of industrialization and modernity, so that the natural environment is polluted. Southeast Asian agricultural wisdom with Hindu-Buddhist philosophies should be traced and promoted to inherit traditional rice cultivation methods. This can not only pass on and protect traditional agricultural culture, but can also promote harmony between nature and humanity, sustainable use of natural resources.

Keywords: the myths of rice gods, Hinduism, Buddhism, agricultural society, Southeast Asia

I. INTRODUCTION

The myths of rice gods in Southeast Asia are influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism because the cultures of India and Southeast Asia are similar in many aspects. The well-known anthropologist, A. L. Kroeber (1947, 322-330) defined the East Indies archipelago as "one cultural zone" or "one cultural area", in other words the "Indian-Southeast Asian Ethnic Enclave". This is why when people mention rice gods, they always focus on the East Indies. The rice god is an object of worship in the cultural circles of the East Indies, because India and Southeast are located in the same monsoon zone, so there are many similarities in the cultural sphere. In this regard, the British scholar Frazer (1990) has introduced the cult of "rice mother" in the East Indies in the book *The Golden Bough*.

Generally, the rice gods in Southeast Asia have several similarities. First, the rice gods in Southeast Asia were created based on primitive beliefs and local agricultural culture. Worship to rice deities emerged in Southeast Asia as a result

of changing social systems and the development of primitive beliefs, then integrating with foreign cultures, including Hinduism and Buddhism as the first foreign religion that influenced the myths of rice gods in Southeast Asia. In Primitive societies, the rice gods represented magical power and vitality. The worship of rice gods was a way for ancient people to admire nature and give thanks for its gifts as living sources. This philosophical psychology of gratitude for nature is very consistent with Hindu-Buddhist philosophies.

Second, the object of worship in Southeast Asia is women who symbolize reproduction abilities. In Southeast Asia, it is widely believed that rice like humans has a soul. In addition, the process of growing rice is also like the process of growing humans, humans eat rice to gain souls and sustain life. It is possible that the rice goddess was worshiped not only because it was influenced by material values, but also because the Hindu-Buddhist philosophies of gender was selectively integrated into the myths of rice gods in Southeast Asia. The rice goddess was considered as a mother who provided food for her children. This view is exactly the same as the gender concept of Brahmanism. Brahmanism believes in reproductive worship related to agricultural production. Meanwhile, it was thought that the rice gods in Southeast Asia could not only help farmers obtain great harvests, but also help humans to overcome difficulties and avoid disaster.

Third, the myths of rice gods in Southeast Asia were generally created based on the unique cultures of each ethnic. Many ethnic groups in Southeast Asia are culturally unique, being separated from on another by mountains and sea. Therefore, the versions of the rice god myth in Southeast Asia are more diverse than in other regions. Based on different geographical environments, the versions of the rice god myths in mainland and maritime Southeast Asia that are influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism also show the different degree of similarity.

In mainland Southeast Asia, the mythical texts of rice gods can be found in Buddhist temples, such as Wat Angkor in Cambodia and Wat Si Saket in Laos. The myths of rice gods in the countries of mainland Southeast Asia were developed and enriched because of historical and political changes. Due to the close geographical location and the connection of mountains and rivers, the similarity among the versions circulating in several countries from mainland Southeast Asia

is striking. The expansion of the kingdom territory has promoted the cultural integration of various countries on the mainland, such as Champ, Angkor, Funan and so on. Almost all the myths of rice gods in mainland countries have been influenced by Buddhism. Therefore, this paper selects Thai versions that are sufficient to reflect the influence of Buddhism in mainland Southeast Asia as one of the research objects. In maritime Southeast Asia, there are also many different versions of the myths of rice gods, such as goddess Sri in Indonesia and bulul in Philippines. But the versions' difference is very striking as the countries in maritime countries are separated by sea. For example, the myths of goddess Sri in Indonesia were influenced by Hindu as many Hindu Kingdoms were built on Nusantara. However, the myths of bulul in the Philippines were never influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism, as these two religions had little influence on this country.

By studying the myths of rice god of three countries above-Thailand, Indonesia and Philippines, the readers can understand how Hindu-Buddhist philosophies influenced the myths of rice gods in Southeast Asia, and how the traditional wisdom is promoted in the myths, and promotes the inheritance of traditional farming techniques in modern agricultural society.

II. METHODS

This study is qualitative and comparative study, analyzing a collation of previous research in three countries above to analyze the influence of Hinduism and Buddhism in Southeast Asia. Different from previous mythological studies, which may pay more attention to mythological texts, this paper also focuses on the intertextuality between mythology and external factors. Therefore, this research analyzes the content of myths, related rituals and agricultural activities that were influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism in Southeast Asia. Theoretically, this research conducted with an interdisciplinary approach, namely using multi-disciplines includes gender, myth, social and so on. All of these disciplines are used for explaining how the mythical text can interact with external factors, so myths can be functional.

How Hinduism and Buddhism Influenced the Myths of Rice Gods in Southeast Asia?

Myth is folk literature created by the people collectively. Its content is constantly enriched and changed with the changes of history, and always meets the needs of social development. Therefore, it has been passed down from generation to generation. Myth is created and spread not only because it's cultural value, but also because myth can reflect and promote the positive social values, which is conducive to maintain social stability and national unity. Durkheim (1915) believes that several forms of manifestation of religious life and its social function. Among these, including myths that being religious had the function of maintaining social order and maintaining the social class system. Based on Durkheim's theory, Malinowski (2014) proposed that myths were created

because myths became a necessity for life in reality that can reflect history and primitive social life. What can be used as proof is that social activities such as telling myths are texts that describe religious rituals, morality and social principles. Dhavamony (1995) also proposes that myth reflects the mental life of primitive people so that what myth reflects is selective. Myth in relation to religion is of interest not only because it contains occult things or events concerning supernatural beings, but also because the myth has an existential function for human life and its function must be explained. In Southeast Asia, the myths of rice gods absorbed Hinduism and Buddhism philosophies into the myths, so myths have social function.

The influence of Hinduism and Buddhism on the myths of rice gods in Southeast Asia was achieved in the acculturation process, foreign culture is gradually accepted by the local ethnic and adapts to the local culture, without eliminating the original elements in the ethnic groups that accept foreign cultures. In the Memorandum for the Study of Acculturation, Redfield (2002) proposes that foreign cultural elements are selectively accepted by the recipient groups because: a. economic benefits; b. social benefits; c. conformity to the cultural patterns that exist in the receiving community; d. changing socio-cultural aspects that encourage people to accept a functional culture. Following will discuss how Hinduism and Buddhism acculturated into the myths of the rice gods that circulating in three countries.

The Myths of Rice Gods in Thailand

Rice goddess is commonly known as Mae Phosop, also called *Mae Khwan Khao* (mother of rice prosperity) in some parts of Thailand. In Thai, *Mae* means 'mother', this word is related to the power of women, and women are referred to as '*Mae*' meaning 'the greatest one' (Pranee Whonthes in Jotisakuratana, 2012). Mae Phosop is a goddess more associated with ancient Thai folklore than the structured religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. (泽维尔, 2014). Although Thailand is a multi-ethnic country, it is rare for academics to categorize the myth of the rice goddess in Thailand based on the respective ethnic cultures, because Thai culture has been heavily influenced by majority-Thai ethnic culture, Hinduism and Buddhism. Therefore, the influence of Hinduism and Buddhism on the myths of the rice goddess in Thailand is mainly striking in the version of Thai ethnic. The rice goddess myth of ethnic Thai (in central Thailand) is as follows:

Mae Phosop is the rice goddess, her mount is goldfish. One day, people had a party at Vesali (Sanskrit: Vaishali) and discussed Buddha and Mae Phosop who was better, mercy and generous to mankind. All of the people agreed that Buddha's mercy was greater than that of Mae Phosop and Vishwakarman (in Hinduism he is considered the "Universal Head of Architect"). Mae Phosop was very angry so they moved to live in a temple in Himavata (forests on the top of the Himalayas). After that, famine occurred everywhere, people only got rice husks even though they had tried to raise

rice and manage paddy fields carefully. Famine caused many people to die so people asked Buddha for help. The Buddha sent Indra's mount to find Mae Phosop and ask him to return to the human world. However, Indra's mount found no way to the mountain, so asked notopterus to find Mae Phosop. But when notopterus found Mae Phosop, she did not want to go back to the world, because human beings were not grateful to her mercy. She gave seven seeds to notopterus and *Vishawakarman* gave a magnet to make hoes and sickles for cultivation. After notopterus went down the mountain, he told the mount of Indra's Mae Phosop's exhort. From then on, when the rice was about to mature, human beings held a worship ceremony for the rice goddess (水稻研究所, 1999).

This manuscript contains a lot of Buddhist philosophies, such as causality that has educational and enlightening significance. It can also be found that the Buddha's status as a foreign conflicted with the local god, but both of them are worshiped by the Thai people. Although there is Hindu god in mythology, Hindu philosophies has little influence on the rice goddess myth in Thailand. The integration of Hinduism and Buddhism with the local primitive beliefs, led to the transformation of the content of rice goddess myths, but never shook the rice goddess's high status in the local society.

The primitive belief in Thailand is animism. Animism traditionally and historically practiced by the Tai ethnic group is called Tai folk religion or Satsana Phi/ Ban Phi. According to the traditional Thai belief, every living thing has a Khwan, Khwan is the living force that is in a living being, 'Khao' means 'rice' (Sathienkoset, 1963). Mae Phosop is a local female goddess of the Thai agricultural society (Mae Kham Pang, 1988). Thai primitive beliefs are very concerned about the harmony between humans and nature. The Thai people believe that there are gods and goddesses in the mountains, rivers and even houses that can protect people from natural disasters and diseases. This is the main reason that traditional Thai beliefs prohibit the exploitation of nature, and teach humans to respect nature. After Buddhism was introduced to Thailand, the philosophies of Buddhism fit very well with the ecological outlook of Thai animism, so its religious thoughts are more easily accepted by local people. Buddhism promotes a reciprocal relationship between human beings and nature. This is reflected in all the phenomena in the universe which affects and interacts with each other. Human beings appreciate nature and protect it because humans make use of natural resources for food, clothing and shelter.

Buddhism believes in the cycle of cause and effect. Anything that is done by humans, animals or nature will affect humans, animals or nature in the future. Therefore, Buddhism also forbids destroying plants, including crops. Primitive belief is an important part of traditional agriculture. In this case, Steven Piker (1968) also argued that the religion practiced by Thai peasants mixed Buddhist and non-Buddhist elements. Among these, magic-animistic elements such as magic, spirit and soul are the most important components of his belief. It can be seen that the Thai people selectively accept foreign

culture that does not conflict with the local primitive beliefs and use it to consolidate and help the development of their primitive beliefs.

Another influencing factor is that the secular benefits gained through the belief in Buddhism is very in line with the utilitarian purpose of Thailand's primitive belief. Primitive beliefs pay more attention to real life needs such as health, food and safety than to solve abstract metaphysical problems. This is another reason why Buddhism was absorbed into the myths of the rice goddess in Thailand. Thai magico-animistic beliefs and practice as exclusively worldly oriented, and it is this feature that most distinguishes animism Thailand from Buddhism (Steven Piker, 1968). In addition, magico-animism also does not contain explicit morals and ethics to limit daily behavior. However, myth of the rice goddess in Thailand contains a lot of moral principles. It can be more certain that the content of the Thai rice goddess is indeed influenced by Buddhism. Buddhism fundamentally teaches its adherents to do good and love peace for the sake of mankind's salvation. The presence of Buddhism in the midst of the reality of human life offers a way of salvation so that it can help humans to avoid or get out of various sufferings. In this way, Buddhist does not seem to be related to Thai animism in essence, but adhering to Buddhist doctrine for self-interest is consistent with the utilitarian aims of primitive belief. Farmers pray for a good harvest with the aim of achieving prosperity, as well as for achieve a better future life. Meanwhile, Buddhism also pays more attention to the law of cause and effect, or it is called "karma" in Buddhism. Therefore, farmers also hope to achieve more in the future or the next life by doing well.

As a result, religion supports farmers in producing rice by holding rituals to get rid of bad luck and ask for rain. Although the rituals of worshiping the goddess *Mae Phosop* held by Thai society do not really reflect characteristics of Buddhism and Hinduism, the time to hold an annual Buddhist ceremony always corresponds to the cycle of rice cultivation (Tambian, 1970). In addition, regulating Buddhist holy days and related ceremonies also take into account its compatibility with the local crop grow cycle. Rice yield is an indicator that can reflect whether the kingdom is rich and strong, whether the monarch's rule is conducive to social development and even personal status. A shortage of rice indicates that society is out of balance with productive forces. In Buddhist country like Thailand, getting good rice yields demonstrates the rulers can lead people to live happy lives, family has good personal qualities according to the moral doctrine of Buddhism. In ancient society, rice symbolized wealth and prosperity. Families that can harvest more have a higher social status. The desire for wealth and fame is what motivates voluntary peasants to accept Buddhism. This is why the myth of rice goddess in Thailand always encourages people to do good such as respecting elders, giving thanks and so on.

The spread of the Hindu-Buddhism in Thailand also never shook the status of women in local beliefs. Although the

integration of Buddha into Thai culture was not as smooth as Hinduism, the local rice goddess mythology clearly shows the conflict between Buddha and the worship of the rice goddess. Unlike the primitive beliefs in Thailand, women in Thai Buddhism are not allowed to have dominant power, their role is only to support a male's domination position. Among these, the norms in Buddhist Attha Garudhamma are enough to reflect the discrimination of Buddhism against women. However, under the influence of Buddhism and Hinduism, the goddess of rice Mae Phosop is still the most sacred god believed in local agriculture society.

From the above discussion, can conclude that Buddhism is accepted by Thai society because it is conducive to maintaining social order and spreading these moral concepts as a correct value through myths of rice goddess. It can be seen from many Buddhist clans in Thailand that women are not allowed to enter the holiest places in the temple, because Theravada Buddhism believes that men are clean, while women are dirty. However, Theravada Buddhism recognizes the status of women as life-givers, so mothers should be respected. In Thailand's complex religion system, the goddess Mae Phosop is the only goddess of the local faith who does not have to kneel before Buddha. It also can find some of the original texts in another parts of Thailand that describe the goddess Mae Phosop provide rice seeds as the source of the life of the Buddha, she returned to the human world because of the next Buddha will be born. The goddess Mae Phosop is thought to born before the Buddha was born, and stronger than the Buddha. This reflects the conflict and associations between Buddhist philosophies and Thai animism, and finally Buddhism compromises with local animism.

The Myths of Rice Goddess in Indonesia

In Indonesia, the influence of Hinduism on the local culture is more prominent, especially in Java island, where there were several grand Hindu kingdoms established, such as Sunda Kingdom established by Sundanese people in the West Java, the Majapahit kingdom established by Javanese people and Bali kingdom in Bali island. Each ethnic group in Indonesia created rice goddess myths stories based on their own culture, and can reflect strong influence of Hindu religious thoughts to local culture. Among them, the Java version, Sundanese version and Bali version contain a lot of Hindu philosophies.

The goddess of rice who is respected and worshipped is goddess Sri. Goddess Sri is very well very well-known among farmers and is also often regarded as the goddess of wealth, fertility and prosperity, the goddess who gives success to long life, health and many children (Subroto, 2019). The word Sri is named from the Sanskrit word *śrī* which means fertility, wealth, luck, health, beauty, personification (Libert, 1976). The myths of the rice goddess circulating in the agricultural society of Java, Sunda and Bali are as follows:

Sundanese Version:

In heaven, Batara Guru wanted to build a meeting hall and every god had to donate building materials. Dewa Anta who is

a snake god was very sad because his physical limitations, so he was unable to fulfill the order and was then rebuked by Narada. His deep sorrow made him shed tears. His tears became three eggs which he would offer to Batara Guru as a substitute for building materials. But two eggs falling to the earth become two wild boars named Sang Kalabuat and Sang Budugbasu. The remaining egg is dedicated to Batara Guru and a baby girl named Nyi Pohaci Sanghyang Sri was born from the egg. Several years later, she grew up to be a beautiful girl. Batara guru attracted by her beauty, wanted to marry her. But she had become Batara Guru's child who was raised by goddess Uma, so Batara Guru couldn't marry her. Then the gods poisoned Nyi Pohaci Sanghyang Sri and her body was buried in the land of earth. From her body grew various plants such as coconut from her head, rice from her eyes, upland rice from the chest, trees and grass from other body parts. Raja Pajaran was ordered to maintain plants that would be useful to human life (Suyami, 1988).

Java Version:

In the Banyumas area, which is located in Java, it is said that Batara Guru met with other gods in heaven, Batara Guru wanted to send down "*wiji widayat*" (farming wisdom/ seed of life). All gods must accept without exception, because they will not be able to get "*wiji widayat*" if all of the gods didn't work together. At that time, they did not realize that Batara Ramayadi was not present at the meeting. Therefore, when Batara Guru sent down the "*wiji widayat*", the gods could not hold it, so the "*wiji widayat*" slid down to the seventh layer of earth, right into Sang Hyang Anantaboga's mouth. Sang Hyang Anantaboga was brought to meet Batara Guru and was forced to vomit "*wiji widayat*" from his stomach. But what came out was a baby girl who was given the name Sri, and a baby boy who was then named Sadana. The two babies were adopted by Batara Guru in heaven.

As an adult, Sadana wanted to marry Sri. Batara Guru forbade it but Sadana still insisted. Then Sadana was cursed and died. Batara Guru ordered Wangkeng and Wangkas to throw Sadana's body into the sea, but the coffin was opened on the way by Wangkeng. Suddenly from inside the chest came out different kinds of animals. Wangkeng was scared and then went to follow the animals into the forest. Wangkas closed the coffin, then threw it into the sea. Sadana's carcass then became a variety of fish and sea animals.

Sri very sad because Sadana's died. Finally, Sri also executed by Batara Guru's curse, because she always whined for something that couldn't possibly be fulfilled. Batara Guru told Batara Narada to throw Sri's body. The body was then given to a farmer (women) who was expecting the descent of "*wiji widayat*". The farmer was ordered to bury Sri's body and diligently water it. One week later, from Sri's body, different kinds of plants grew up, including rice (Suwandi, 1963).

Bali Version:

In Bali, Vishnu was incarnated as a wise king named king Pretu. King Pretu is eager to create prosperity in the world. He

asked the Earth Goddess for help. However, the Earth Goddess couldn't do much. Earth Goddess suggested that the king of Pretu asked for help from Indra. Indra didn't want to help because he was forced and threatened by Pretu. So, there was a fierce battle and Indra lost. Hearing that there was a battle fight between King Pretu and Indra, Sang Hyang Kesuhun Kidul (Brahma) was worried, then sent a messenger to King Pretu to provide assistance in the form of seeds. As for what was sent was a pigeon carrying black seeds, '*kuteh*' birds (*dara kucir*) carrying white seeds, '*sugem*' birds carrying yellow seeds, and '*titiran*' (turtledoves) carrying red seeds.

On the way, the envoys met a *gandrawa* who wanted to snatch the seeds. Then there was a battle between the *gandrawa* and the '*sugem*' bird, until the seed, which was carried, fell to the ground. The four messengers, immediately returned to Sang Hyang Kesuhun Kidul, who was angry and then cursed that the yellow seed that had fallen couldn't become food, but only became a coloring agent. The three birds still carrying seeds were ordered to continue their journey, delivering the seeds to the king of Pretu. On the way, the three of them met Batari Sri (Wisnu's wife who also wanted to visit the King of Pretu). The birds asked Batari Sri to enter the seeds and then grew into rice plants. White seeds became white rice, black seeds became black rice, red seeds became red rice, the yellow seeds that fell during the battle eventually grew into a tree turmeric (Rakag, 1963).

The influence of Hinduism on the myth of the rice goddess in Indonesia is mainly reflected in the relationship between the ruler and subordinates. This class division was promoted by rulers when it was firstly introduced to consolidate the regime. The islands of Java and Sumatra before 5th century were always influenced by Brahmanism. At this time, Hinduism was brought by traders in India and spread in the archipelago. Before Hinduism entered Indonesia, the ancestors of the Indonesian people formed a complete social and cultural system. The influence of Hindu-Buddhism in Indonesia at that time was 'bottom-up', that is, influenced society first and then was accepted by leaders from several ethnic tribes. This could explain why the ancient Hindu kingdoms on the island of Java were always based on tribal communities such as Java, the Sunda and Bali. After 5th century, several Hindu Kingdoms began to appear on the island of Java and neighboring islands. The kings of the kingdoms tend to promote themselves as the incarnation of the Hindu gods. The kings were people who created prosperity (Bali version), the god of supreme power and other deities affiliated with him (Java, Sundanese version). In ancient Hindu Kingdoms in Indonesia, the kings regarded himself as an avatar of Shiva or Indra was no doubt an effective way to maintain political security, thus ensuring a stable society.

In the economic field, many of Hinduism's ideas can affect the social economy including the agricultural economy. In Hinduism there are four main objectives, namely *artha* (material prosperity, security, means of life), *kama* (pleasure, sensuality, emotional fulfilment), *dama* (the virtuous, proper,

moral life), and *moska* (liberation and release) as ultimate goal in human life. These four concepts are called Purusartha in Hinduism (Sharma, 1999). Although Hinduism views *moska* as the most important goal in everyone's life, Hinduism also does not deny the importance of material resources and wealth for human life, Hinduism also does not deny the importance of material resources and wealth for human life. Hinduism believes that to maintain physical life, humans must fulfill basic needs of daily life, including clothing, food and shelter. This secular goal is perfectly consistent with the goal of worshiping the goddess Sri in Indonesia. From the texts belonging to several tribes in Indonesia, it can be found that not only plants such as rice, coconut trees, but also the creation of animals that can meet basic human needs.

The values conveyed by the myth of the goddess Sri is promoted for maintaining the social class structure and the development of economy to maintain social stability and political security. It can be said that the influence of Hinduism on Indonesia society in ancient times was enormous and comprehensive. Its' influence in agriculture was indirect, Hinduism has influenced the mythological content of goddess Sri by influencing the social environment, especially the agricultural environment. There are also agricultural activities, related rituals and agricultural wisdom containing the philosophies of Hinduism. Hinduism is integrated with primitive beliefs, local farming techniques to form the unique farming wisdom.

In Javanese society, the first ritual to worship goddess Sri is performed by men. The ritual followers provide 9 grains of rice in the field, one grain planted in the middle of the rice field and eight grains planted in the corner of the field. The dishes served to goddess Sri are betel, whiting, white porridge, stone, banana and flowers. After the leader of the ceremony reads prayers and burns incense, some of the dishes will be placed in a corner of the fields as dishes for the gods who guard the rice fields. The rest of the dish is then distributed to the workers in the fields (Tabloid, 2016). In Hinduism, there are also nine deities with the responsibility of guarding the nine cardinal directions, they are called Nawadewata, or Dewata Nawa Sanga. The nine rulers are Lord Shiva who is surrounded by other deities in eight directions. Dewata Nawa Sanga consists of three words, namely, "Dewa" which means the holy rays of God, "Nawa" which means nine and "Sanga" is a collection of the nine main gods in Hinduism (Yendra, 2009). The nine gods control nine cardinal directions. Farmers planting nine grains of rice in the nine cardinal direction is also a way to worship Hindu gods, because they believe nine gods can control the cardinal directions.

In fact, apart from the Javanese people, the Sundanese people also believe the changes of the season caused by changes in the four winds direction. In ancient Sundanese society, the four winds were very important because have a major influence on daily life, especially in agriculture, which fulfilled the most important needs and related ritual

ceremonies (Emon Suryaa Tamanna, 1992). This is an example that Hinduism is practiced in Javanese and Sundanese agricultural activities. Except for the belief in the wind directions, the cosmology of Hinduism is also very much in accordance with the Sundanese cosmology in dividing the space of the universe.

Before Hinduism-Buddhism was introduced in the West Java, the religion practiced by the Sundanese people was the original religion, namely Sunda wiwitan. Sunda Wiwitan has undergone several major changes in its development. Among these include influences from Hinduism and Buddhism. However, primitive beliefs remain a belief, especially those held in local communities. According to the Sunda Wiwitan ontology, the universe consists of three parts: (1) *Buana Nyungcung*, location where Sanghyang Kersa lives; (2) *Buana Panca Tengah*, where humans and other creatures live; (3) *Buana Larang*, is hell (Deni Miharja, 2015). Between *Buana Nyungcung* and *Buana Panca Tengah* are 18 natural layers arranged from top to bottom. Kanekes people believe that areas in this world (*Buana Panca Tengah*) are differentiated based on their level of holiness. The top layer is the Bumi Suci Alam Kahyangan (holy heavenly palace) or Mandala Hyang. This layer is where Nyi Pohaci Sanghyang and Sunan Ambu (highest goddess in Sundanese primitive beliefs) live. Likewise, this kind of division of the universe also exists in Hinduism and is very similar to that of the Sundanese.

According to Hindu cosmology, the universe is divided into three worlds, namely *swarga* (upper realm, *Pertiwi* (earth) and *Patala* (underworld) (Parmeshwaranand, 2001). *Patala* consists of seven lokas (plane or realm of existence) of which the seventh is the lowest being the realm of the dragons, also called Naga-loka. *Swarga* is one of the seven highest lokas in Hindu cosmology (B. K. Chaturvedi, 2004). *Swarga* is considered a place of transition for pious souls who have done good deeds in their life but are not ready to become moksa. Comparing Sundanese primitive beliefs and Hinduism cosmological views, it is not difficult to find these two beliefs have similar cosmological views in dividing the space of the universe, so that Hinduism cosmology was more easily accepted by the Sundanese people.

In Balinese society, the acculturation of Hinduism into primitive beliefs can be seen from its irrigation system. The Subak irrigation system is a traditional organization based on the Tri Hita Karana concept originating from Hinduism. Tri Hita Karana explains the relationship between humans and god (*Parahyangan*), the relationship between humans and others (*Pawongan*), and the harmonious relationship between humans and nature (*Palemahan*). Subak as a part of tradition has even become the identity of Hindus in Bali. In this way, Subak is an organization that is structural and systematic, with each member carrying out their respective duties. As a traditional organization in Bali, it is characterized by (1) having management staffs called Prajuru Subak, (2) having members of rice farmers called Karma Subak, (3) having an area in the form of rice fields with clear boundaries, (4) has a

source of irrigation water, (5) has one or more Bedugul temples, namely the holy place of worship of god in its manifestation as the Goddess of Fertility. (6) has awag-awag (basic rules), (7) have full autonomy, both in managing their household interests and freely having direct relation with outsiders (Sutawan, Windia & Sudana, 1989). Hinduism is a religion that pays great attention to order and rules. It can be said that Subak is a religious agrarian system.

Tri Hita Karana as the wisdom of traditional agriculture inspired by Hinduism in managing an agrarian society is the central connotation of Subak. Such philosophies not only guarantee high agricultural production, but also promote stable and orderly social development. Meanwhile, THK also pays more attention to the harmony between humans and nature. This also reflects the Hinduism cosmological concept that humans are one of the parts in the nature system, must protect the surrounding natural environment to create harmony between humans and nature. The worship of the goddess Sri in Bali is also manifestation that humans take from nature and give back to nature. Goddess Sri as a goddess is a medium that connects humans and nature by maintaining this harmonious and rising circulating system, all being in this new world can regenerate continuously. So, THK from Subak is the best example to highlight the application of Hindu philosophies to agriculture in Bali.

All of the agricultural wisdom that contains Hindu philosophies prove that Hinduism has a profound influence on Indonesia agricultural society in ancient times, which has formed Indonesia's unique agricultural culture.

The Myths of Rice Gods in Philippines

The Filipinos in ancient times still rely on agriculture, hunting and fishing as well as natural resources from the forest. In Philippine agricultural society, the goddess of Fertility most commonly worshiped was the goddess Lakapati as the head of the gods. Lakapati not only can guarantee agricultural harvests such as rice, but also another main sources of life, such as seafood and forest products. However, the worship of rice gods is mainly in landlocked province-Ifugao, Luzon. The unique natural environment here has forms local rice culture based on terraces.

The rice gods in Ifugao is named bulul. Different from Thailand and Indonesia, the rice gods in the Ifugao province, Philippines are a couple, that is Nabalul and his wife. This is because primitive Ifugao people have realized that both men and women play an important role in reproduction. The content of the myth is as follows.

There used to be a giant Narra tree named Bongbong in the village Ifugao. Humidihid is the head of this village.

Bongbong obtains magical powers from the sky, can make a loud whining sound. His voice scared the villagers, and Humidihid was irritated and angry, because he would have trouble sleeping if the sound of the Bongbong didn't stop. He provided a bottle of wine and an ax to the place of the giant

Narra tree. Under the tree, Humidhid shouted in a loud voice, “shall I cut this big tree and make it a house?”. However, the giant narra tree still made a big noise. In a moment, Humidhid shouted again, “can I make you a bench?”. The noise still didn’t stop. After some more time, Humidhid inspected the tree and shouted “may I make you a ceremony box?”. No matter what he said, Bongbong continued to make noise.

Half a day passed, he shouted one last time, that “may I cut you and make a statue of the harvest every year?”. At that moment, the narra tree suddenly stopped and was silent. Humidhid pour a cup of rice wine and drink it slowly. Then he raised his ax and prepared to cut down the tree. As dusk began to set, he knew the taboo of cutting down trees at night, so he immediately returned home. The next morning, Humidhid ate breakfast and took his ax, a bottle of rice wine to cut the tree. After he cut the tree down, Humidhid carved eight pairs of bulul from the main trunk of the narra tree. At night, the villagers had a party and all people rejoiced on the body of the bulul. All the villagers rejoiced and danced together. A fat chicken is sacrificed and its blood is lubricated the village on the body of bulul. A priest chanted the myth of rice gods, so that the souls of Nabulul and his wife are always in the statues, and can always guarantee the resurrection and abundant harvest (Dancel, 1989).

Philippine mythology is a collection of folk tales and epics related to primitive Filipino beliefs, which includes different ethnic beliefs in different ethnic myths. The myth of rice gods is full of local primitive beliefs. Philippine mythology seeks to explain the forces of nature in this world by telling the stories of the lives of ancestors, the actions of national heroes and others. Primitive Filipino beliefs have historically been called animism, meaning “the belief of their ancestors”. To put it simply, the three basic concepts of Filipino animism are 1) the gods created this world; 2) the gods created all the creatures in this world; 3) all forms of nature in this world have a soul (Shi Xueqin; 2015). Worship to the rice gods bulul is based on the third concept.

Similar to the primitive beliefs of other ethnic groups in Southeast Asia, the development of the primitive beliefs of the Filipino ethnics goes through two stages. Namely the worship of natural forces and the worship of gods. The cult of natural forces was an early stage in the development of primitive beliefs. The second stage refers to the progression from ancestor worship to worship of gods. From this stage, the Filipinos have realized the importance of material production for humans. Therefore, they worshiped various natural gods, including the mountain god, the water god, the fire god and others. Among these, the rice god was one of the objects of worship of his primitive belief system.

The creation of the bulul is divided into several stages along with holding ceremonies. Bulul is usually made in pairs as told in the myth, and the material is taken from a narra tree. The making of bulul carvings involves an elaborate and luxurious ritual. First the proper wood must be collected from the forest. That’s where the initial carving was. When

finished, the owner will bring the bulul statue home and be greeted with a party. The *alwen* bulul ritual is performed by a priest to ensure that the statue gets strength. The bulul was carefully cared for and respected to avoid the risk that the ancestors caused illness. Another ritual marks the completion of bulul. In this ritual, a priest reads the myth about the origin of bulul, after completing this ritual it also means that the power described in the myth has been incorporated into the newly created bulul. Then the bulul statue is placed in the rice barn until the rice harvest season to produce a bountiful harvest. Bulul is a representation of the Ifugao ancestors and is considered to be able to get power and wealth from the presence of ancestral spirits in rituals (William, Veli Watti & Martines, 2008). Of course, bulul is also appeared in ceremonies related to rice production and related worship rituals.

The ritual of worshiping the rice gods in the Ifugao community is a collective activity, followed by respected people from their respective families. Usually, this ritual is only held when the rice is harvested for the first time. The first bulul worship ritual is called Lukat in the Ifugao farming community (Dancel, 1989). To mark the start of the rice harvest and ritual cycle, the rice fields are weeded, the terraces are cleaned. At first holding rituals, people danced and played drums. Ifugao people will slaughter a chicken and smear chicken blood on bulul’s body. At the same time, a priest reads the myth of a prayer for the souls of the god Nabulul and his wife to enter the statue. May they both always protect the rice from pests and produce a bountiful harvest. In addition, the priests also asked the gods to strengthen the embankments and fill the fields with water so that rice could grow with sufficient nutrition. During this ritual, everyone rest for three days and is prohibited from leaving the village. On the last day the rice is carried transferred to the barn.

Rituals of worshiping bulul are primitive, both the dishes for the gods and the tools used in this ritual are made from natural materials, even the rings and necklaces to decorate bulul are also made of rice stalks and sugarcane leaves. This also shows that the primitive beliefs in Philippine agriculture have never been influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism religion. However, the Philippines has also established a complete belief system. This belief system continues to this day and today’s Philippine beliefs are also characterized by ancestor worship and god worship.

Form the rice god/goddess myths, and related agricultural activities, rituals of the above three countries, it can be seen that the introduction of Hinduism and Buddhism has enriched agricultural wisdom in Southeast Asia, promoted the development of primitive belief systems, enriched and improved it continuously. Finally, the myths of rice gods have become an important cultural driving force for national economic and social development.

The Role of Traditional Agricultural Wisdom in Modern Times

Hinduism and Buddhism have useful social functions for social development by influencing the myths of rice gods in Southeast Asia, so that the myths of rice gods are always passed on from generation to generation. It can also explain why agriculture-based societies are always more stable than other societies. The myth of the rice gods is the result of wisdom belonging to the people of Southeast Asia, guaranteeing agriculture as the basis for the development of the country. Practically and pragmatically, the concept of ecology in myth that promotes harmony between humans and nature is conducive to protecting the polluted natural environment in modern times. In addition, traditional farming methods such as intensive farming is conducive to promoting organic rice cultivation.

The rice produced by traditional agricultural technologies is organic rice. Organic rice cultivation is the use of natural and organic planting methods in the process of growing rice. And no chemical fertilizer, pesticides, and growth regulators are used in planting. Meanwhile, using organic fertilizers. Apart from that, pest control methods are also natural. Growing organic rice has strict requirements for rice fields. Only rice fields that have never been polluted can grow high quality organic rice. Organic agricultural production does not use modern methods such as genetic engineering, but follows natural laws and ecological principles, and adopts a series of sustainable technologies to ensure ecological balance and sustainable use of natural resources. This not only encourages the economic development of Southeast Asia based on organic rice exports, but also guarantees the health of people in Southeast Asia.

Worshipping rice gods in Southeast Asia is carried out in a series of agricultural rituals and ceremonies that correspond to the rice growing cycle. In both Thailand, Indonesia and Philippines. Farmers follow the principle of observing the laws of nature and adopt the power of nature to carry out farming activities. This conforms to the concept of primitive beliefs and also conforms to the Hindu-Buddhist cosmology. This agricultural system is still worthy of promotion today. Maintaining and passing on cultural, spiritual humanism and the harmonious concept of agriculture play an important role in protecting biodiversity, enhancing and protecting the ecological environment, ensuring food security, promoting sustainable use of resources, inheriting ethnic culture, protecting unique rice field landscapes, and promoting tourism development rural. In the current wave of urbanization and industrialization, and traditional agricultural techniques facing the threat of disruption and loss. Therefore, it is very important to promote connotations and values in contemporary agricultural culture by protecting and inheriting agricultural culture such as the myth of the rice gods in Southeast Asia.

III. CONCLUSION

The people of Southeast Asia worship the rice gods not only for a bountiful harvest, but also for avoiding bad luck and disease. The myth of the goddess Mae Phosop in Thailand is

more influenced by Buddhism, while the myth of the goddess Sri in Indonesia is more influenced by Hinduism. The myth of the bulul gods in the Philippines was entirely based on local culture and beliefs.

Hinduism and Buddhism in its spread in Southeast Asia has never changed or threatened local primitive beliefs, because there are many similarities in religious philosophies between primitive beliefs and Hinduism, Buddhism. The Hindu-Buddhist influence subtly affected the local social and humanistic environment so that Southeast Asia people do not fell alien or be shocked.

Southeast Asia needs Hinduism and Buddhism to develop its culture and promote the development of its society and local primitive systems. The spread of Hinduism and Buddhism not only encourages cultural development in Southeast Asia, but is also useful for building an orderly society, beneficial for maintaining political stability and security. In this process, Hinduism and Buddhism influenced the myth of the rice gods by influencing the social environment, then the myths that developed in this social environment were influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism. Myth, religion and social interactions have created the myths of the rice gods as what we read today.

The myths of the rice gods in Southeast Asia constantly being preserved and passed on by agricultural societies are conducive to building a harmonious humanistic environment and protecting the natural environment. It also encourages agricultural societies in modern times to follow traditional agricultural economic development, and protect the health of people in Southeast Asia.

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