



FEMALE DEITIES IN BALINESE SOCIETY: LOCAL GENIOUS, INDIAN INFLUENCES, AND THEIR WORSHIP

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Abstract

One of the main issues that has been discussed in Indonesia regarding the democracy process in a modern world is about the feminism and gender issues. On the one hand, women are considered to play limited roles, whilst on the other hand, the men have always been considered to play a significant role. This can be traced back in the long process of the Balinese history not only in terms of political aspect, but also in the context of socio cultural aspects. It is important to look at what has happened in the Balinese societies, since Bali is known as a Hindu mozaic in Southeast Asia.

The Balinese society has its own culture based on local culture that is strongly influenced by the Indian or Indic culture. The Balinese society is a patrilineal system, in which a man has a higher position, but in fact it was even Bali had a woman princess, who was of mixed Javanese and Balinese heritage, a wife of King Udayana of Bali between the 10th and 11th century. Both of them were considered as the Balinese kings at the same time. In the era of these two kings they were successful in integrating between Hinduism and Buddhism.

Until now, the Balinese believe the soul of Mahendradatta as Durga. The main questions that will be addressed in this paper are firstly: how do the Balinese interpret the female deities? Secondly, how do they worship them? Thirdly, what is the meaning of this worship in terms of religious and cultural aspects in the modern and postmodern time? By discussing these issues, it is expected that we will have a better understanding on how the Balinese worship the female deities in the prehistoric, classical, and modern times in the context of a global or universal culture.

Keywords: Local genius, women and feminism deities, Hinduism, Balinese culture.

Introduction

One main issue that has been discussed in Indonesia regarding the democracy process in a modern world revolves around feminism and gender issues. This can be understood since there are many differences between the social roles and expectations of men and women. On the one hand, the women are considered to play a limited role, while on the other, the men play a significant role. This development can be traced back to the long process of Indonesian history in the context of its political and social cultural aspects.

It is important to look at what has happened in the Minangkabau and the Balinese societies, since both these societies are renowned to be strongly concerned about their cultural heritage in comparison to other societies in Indonesia. In the case of the predominantly Islamic Minangkabau society in West Sumatra, which was influenced by Hinduism in an earlier period, women hold a higher social position than men under the matrilineal system. In Bali, where most of the population are Hindus and are under a patrilineal system, men hold a higher position than women. The difference of the position is significant in how we should understand the cultures of both the Minangkabau and the Balinese society in the context of modern and post modern Indonesia.

It is important to note that Bali is the only one and the latest of a Hindu

mosaic in Southeast Asia (Ramstedt, 1999: 403). The Hindu religion in Bali is named as Water Religion or *Agama Tirtha*. The meaning of water or “*tirtha*” refers to the River of Sindhu in India (Ardhana, 2016: 1). At the present time, there are a number of common grounds between Balinese Hinduism and Indian Hinduism. For instance, in Indian Hinduism many people look upon *Brahman* as the supreme God. In Balinese Hinduism, many people take upon *Sanghyang Widhi Wasa* as the supreme God. The Balinese term of *Sanghyang Widhi Wasa* is just like *Brahman*, since *Sanghyang Widhi Wasa* is believed to encompass global dualities. This can be seen in Kakawin Sutasoma, written by Mpu Tantular as follows:

“*Rwaneka dhatu winuwus war-a Budha Wiswa. Bhineka rakwa ringapan kena parwanosen. Mangkang jinatwa kalawan siwatwa tunggal. Bhineka tunggal ika tan hana dharma mangrwa*”.

In the Balinese terminology, it is well known as *Rwa Bhineda*, in which the ideology of unity and diversity later developed.

In Balinese Hinduism, *Sanghyang Widhi Wasa* is believed to have several avatars, and most of the Hindu Gods and Goddesses of Bali were traditionally merged. Indeed, there are similarities between the beliefs of Balinese Hinduism and Indian Hinduism. However, a number of Balinese Hindu beliefs and practices were merged into Balinese Hinduism

due to historical links that the Balinese shared with the Javanese, particularly during the golden age of Hindu Javanese culture, namely, the Kediri period in the 10th and 11th century. Kieven notes that there are many ritual and religious practices in Bali such as the concept of *Kundalini* in the context of *Pitrayadnya*, which supports the idea of *tantra* rituals *sraddha* (Kieven, 2014: 107). *Pitrayadnya* is a ritual or Hindu ceremony for the ancestors, starting from the death to the holy ceremony in Bali.

These kinds of religious issues have had their roots in the long process of Indonesian history from prehistoric period to classical history, and we can see now in the modern and postmodern times. Hence, to have a better understanding of these issues it is important to look at what happened in the prehistoric period, later when the Balinese society got Indian or Indic influence in terms of the spread of Indianisation or Hinduism. Additionally, one needs to touch on the classical Balinese history regarding how the Balinese people have interpreted the role of female deities in the long period of Balinese history, in which can be seen the dominant role of Hindu Javanese culture in creating present day Balinese culture.

Therefore, in this paper I would like to focus on several issues: firstly, how have the Balinese people interpreted the female deities? Secondly,

how do Balinese worship these female deities? Thirdly, what is the meaning of this worship in terms of religious and cultural aspects either in modern or postmodern time? By discussing these issues, it is expected that we will have a better understanding of how the Balinese worship the female deities in the prehistoric, classical, and modern times within the context of a global or universal culture. By analysing these issues, it is expected that we will have a better understanding of how the Balinese worship the female deities in relation to the notion of sustainable religious and cultural developments and in the context of the strengthening the Indonesian and global or universal culture.

Oral Tradition and Folklore of Female Deities in Bali

Based on the archeological and historical accounts, the ancient Javanese and Balinese cultures were, in many respects, influenced by the Indian or Indic culture. These influences, as Eiseman (2000) notes, were engaged at a highly evolved level, and flourished as far back as 3000 BCE along the banks of the River Sindu, now called Indu. It is from this name of River Sindu or Indus that the word “Hindu” derived (Eiseman, 2000: 14). Early contacts between India and Indonesia began 2000 years ago until today. In fact, Balinese culture has been strongly influenced by the Indian culture, with

its components very much based on Indian or Hindu philosophy, indigenous animism and ancestral worship that are still being practised today.

Ardika (2012: 2) notes that archeological excavations at Sembiran and Pacung in north eastern Bali unearthed several types of Indian pottery as well as glass and carnelian beads. He adds that Sembiran and Pacung produced the largest collection of Indian potteries in Southeast Asia. In addition, he argues that there were direct contacts between Bali and India in the first century. Philosophy has been the main wellspring of ideas and Hinduism and Buddhism which originated in India, which has been travelling beyond the frontiers of their origin to Southeast Asia for more than two thousand years (Timbul Haryono 2012: 41-42). In addition, Heine-Geldern (1956: 1) notes that this philosophy had spread to the Southeast Asian regions such as Java at the beginning of the century. The development of the Indian civilization was not a coercive expansion in Java; in fact local people had shown their loyalty to the original Indian culture against outside influences. The ancient Balinese people are called *Bali Aga* or *Bali Mula* (Indigenous Balinese). The centre of Bali Aga is located in East and North Bali, generally around the coastal lakes or in the mountainous regions such as Sidatapa, Pedawa, Tigawasa, Sembiran, Lateng, and Dausa (Rema 2014: 5). *Bali Aga* society has been sustaining its

cultural traditions in villages such as Trunyan and Tenganan that were built before the Hindu era.

In southeastern Indonesia, in Sumbawa, for instance, there is considerable evidence that shows how its traditions could be closely linked to Hinduism in regards to the legends of Bima. While it is still unclear about the previous *rajas*, the Ninth Raja is believed to have begun human history in Sumbawa. The ninth Raja, Maharadja Pandu Dewanata ruled the Paradise, called *Kahyangan*. He had five children, namely, Dharmawangsa, Sang Bima, Sang Dewa, Sang Lula or Kula, and Sang Rajuna. It is told that the first child stayed in the Paradise while the other children went to Java and ruled the island. Later other traditions claim that Sang Bima was brought by a bird to Bima where he established a *kerajaan* or kingdom (Ardhana, 2000: 34—35). This evidence shows the attempt of legitimisation of the Biman kings as the descendants of ancestors who were Javanese Hindus. In addition to this, there is also the belief in a mythological snake, called *naga*, that is believed to be the *Gottin* (goddess) of the underworld. These beliefs have been found in India and other regions in Asia such as China, Myanmar, Assam, Thailand and Java; important influences that still exist as collective memories of the people in the region.

With regards to these indigenous and ancestral worships, not many

accounts of female deities in the prehistoric times in Bali can be found. Visual evidence of the presence of these women/female deities worshipped by the Balinese lie in statues that exist, particularly in mountainous regions. The story about *Men Brayut* (a mother with her many children), for instance, tells the extraordinary character of a Balinese woman. It is believed that anyone who mentions this name by mentioning this name will be blessed with children. It is said that Men Brayut was a housewife who came from a poor family and had 18 children. To fulfil the needs of her big family, she worked very hard, even performing work usually done by men. Moreover, she was able to sustain peace and harmony within her big family and other people in her community. Thus her exemplary behaviours are encouraged to be followed by Balinese. Not only is Men Brayut a symbol of prosperity, she is also a symbol of the motherland, as described by how her children always stayed closed to her, even grasping her hair or legs to survive. She was equal and even handed in her treatment of all her children. This symbolic story has become part of Balinese folklore and is often told as a bedtime story, relating how strong Balinese women are in carrying out tasks in their daily lives. Having a strong work ethic, patience, honesty, care, and a sense of camaraderie and ability to remain steadfast in facing problems are qualities that are highlighted in this

ancient tale. To explain how popular and significant the story of *Men Brayut* is to the Balinese, several villages in Bali have built shrines and temple reliefs devoted to *Men Brayut* so that people can come to pray to her. These can be found at the *Pura Goa Gajah* and the *Pura Dalem* in Belang Samu Village, Kusamba. In fact, there are two examples of sites in which devotees come to pay their respects on certain days to Men Brayut.

Local Genius, Lingga, and Yoni

From historical accounts, Indian or Hindu ideas on astrology and cosmology have been found to exist in the western part of India from the 3rd century. The spread of Indic or Indian knowledge occurred over a long period in Southeast Asia and other regions. These ideas spread to Java in the early part of the century, according to Heine-Geldern (1956: 1). As like what occurred in other Southeast Asian countries, in the Balinese life, Indian ideas turned out to be significant and strong evidence are found that those ideas contribute to the formation of the Balinese identity (Ardhana, 2011).

It can be seen in the context of parallelism between the macro cosmos and the micro cosmos. In addition to this, it would appear that these ideas had spread to the regions in peaceful ways (Villiers 1993: 44, Sardesai 1997: 17). Certain inscriptions from the Hindu period, particularly in the 4th

century, have been found in Indonesia. For example, it is known from the inscriptions found in the first Hindu kingdom of Kutai in East Kalimantan. According to archeologists, it was the first Hindu kingdom in Indonesia subsequently followed in West Java in the seventh century, by Tarumanegara as the second Hindu kingdom in Indonesia. Historical accounts show that after West Java, Hindu then went on to spread to Central Java. Natural disaster was one of the reasons why the spread evolved from West Java to East Java. In addition to this, during this period (7-8th Century), Hindu lessons were written in Palawa scripts and Sanskrit language. This could be one reason why not many people could understand better the Hindu or Indic lessons. Stutterheim (1929: 190) researches the Ancient Bali civilization within the historical periodization of Java, especially in the beginning of the Mataram era, and continues with the power deprivation by Sanjaya of which the exact period is unknown. Following this period, a new period called the Ancient Bali periodization (Oudebalische Periode) began. Moreover, the developments which took place from the pre-historical period until the classical historical period of Bali showed that a civilization had formed in Bali enriched with Hindu-Buddhist values at the same time. These values with strong Hindu influences developed from East Java in the 11th and 12th centuries during the

reign of King Udayana.

A relatively new element in the context of world division is the concept of *Tri Hita Karana* which originated from the Hindu scriptures. It signifies a close relationship between religious philosophy and the space orientation in the Balinese traditional architecture, namely in the positioning of God, Man, and Devil, called *Tri Angga*. The concept of *Tri Angga* relates very closely with the spiritual compass, which consists of nine directions called the Nawa Sanga or the Sanga Mandala (Wisseman Christie, 1986). In terms of the cosmological orientation it consists of eight cardinal directions and the centre. Each direction is symbolized by a God and his colour as shown in table 1.

It shows that some elements of the Indic culture had been absorbed and adapted as Balinese culture, or what is called “Balinization”.

The family shrine, the most sacred area of the compound, is located in the most auspicious northeast (*kaja-kangin*) corner of a Balinese house compound. It is identified metaphorically with the head. The area of the family shrine is always enclosed within a sacred enclosure (*pamerajan*). Inside the area of the family shrine are other shrines dedicated to various Hindu gods (e.g. *Surya*, *Saraswati*), nature spirits (*Sridevi*, *Ibu Pertiwi*), and family ancestors. It is important to note that Indonesians refer to their land as *Ibu*

Table 1. The *Mandala* System

The Direction		The Colour	The God
Puseh	Center	all colours	God Shiwa
Kaja	North	black	God Wisnu
Kaja Kangin	Northeast	blue	God Sambu
Kangin	East	white	God Iswara
Kelod Kangin	Southeast	violet	God Maheswara
Kelod	South	red	God Brahma
Kelod Kauh	Southwest	orange	God Rudra
Kauh	West	yellow	God Mahadewa
Kaja Kauh	Northwest	green	God Sangkara

<i>Tri Loka</i>	<i>SwahLoka</i>	<i>Bwah Loka</i>	<i>Bhur Loka</i>
Three places	atmosphere	lithosphere	hydrosphere
<i>Three angga</i>	<i>utama</i> (main)	<i>madya</i> (middle)	<i>nista</i> (lower)
Three spaces	<i>luhur</i> (the highest)	<i>madya</i> (centre)	<i>sor</i> (bottom)
	head	body	foot
Universe	atmosphere	lithosphere	hydrosphere
The earth	mountain	land	sea
The village	<i>pura</i> (temple)	<i>masyarakat</i> (compound)	sea
<i>Pura</i> (the temple)	<i>meru</i>	<i>jaba tengah</i> (middle area)	<i>jaba sisi</i> (outside area)
	<i>mrajan/sanggah</i> (family temple)	<i>bale</i> (family room, bed room, working room)	<i>kori/pamedalan</i> (entrances/gate)

Pertiwi (woman or feminine) and not *Bapak Pertiwi* (Man). Goddess *Sri* or Dewi *Shri* (Javanese language), or *Nyai Pohaci Sanghyang Asri* (in Sundanese language) represents the goddess of agriculture, rice and rice fields, both in Java and Bali. The worship has taken place since the pre-Hinduism and pre-Islamic Java. It is mentioned about the role of Setesuyara, who is considered as a goddess in Balinese mythology. Setesuyara, together with the god *Kala*, control the underworld in Balinese folklore. The Balinese believe that each human being possesses a soul, which

should be respected. It is important for the Balinese to observe the Balinese calendar to determine the good and the bad days in the context of performing rituals and ceremonies (Eiseman, 2000). A significant event is the *Tumpek Wariga*, which is celebrated every 210 days or every six months in the Balinese calendar. *Wariga* means the seventh *wuku* in the Balinese calendar to seek out good and bad days for performing rituals and ceremonies. Indeed, *Tumpek Wariga* has internal and external meanings (Eiseman, 2000: 172).

Table 2. The Balinese and Indian Names

The Balinese Names	Hindu Names
Kosika	Iswara
Garga	Brahma
Metri	Mahadewa
Kurusia	Wisnu
Pretalya	Shiwa
Centing Kuning	Uma

Certain rituals related to ancestral worship already exist in Bali. In addition, megalithic culture also continued in relation with the establishment of the Balinese or Hindu temples and palaces (Ardhana, 1993 and Ardhana, 2011). The statues worshipped as the various gods in India can be seen in Bali in the form of stones, namely the God Surya (or the Sun God). In the old Balinese myths, four gods had the task of protecting the four directions in the form of the gods *Kosika*, *Garga*, *Metri* and *Kurusia*. However, in the process of Hindu-ization, these gods received new names (Gust, 1994: 14).

From the above table it can be seen that *Centing Kuning* had changed its name into the Goddess Uma. According to *Wayang Purwa* or the Old Puppet story, the story of Uma related to the change was when the *Betara Guru* (or God Shiwa) persuaded his wife to fall in love with him. But Uma opposed him since his behavior was against good ethics. The sperm of the *Betara Guru* fell in the ocean and gave birth to *Bathara Kala*. In Bali, for instance, before the 9th to 11th century and

before the Majapahit period in East Java, it was believed that most of the local people were Wisnu adherents, in which the God Wisnu was considered as the highest god in the process of Hinduisation in Java. The God Wisnu and his consort the *Goddess Sri* (or *Goddess Danu*) were believed to be the gods of prosperity. It is not surprising that Wisnuism developed in the period of Udayana's reign, between the 9th and 11th century. When Kediri was under the reign of Airlangga, the third son of Udayana, he was depicted as a king who rode Garuda, a bird that was a symbol of Wisnu, not Shiwa. It is interesting to mention that Airlangga was an oldest son of the king Udayana (989 - 910), who reigned Bali by marrying with Mahendradatta of East Java heritage. After becoming a princess, she was better known as Sri Gunapriyadharmapatni (989-1011). At that time, the concept of Devarajacult, in which the Raja or King was believed to be similar to God, also developed (Rema, 2014: 2). Bali had a woman princess, who was half Javanese and Balinese,

named Shri Gunapriyadharmapatni or Mahendradatta who was a wife of King Udayana of Bali in the 10th to 11th century. Both of them were considered to be the Balinese kings at the same time. It is important to note that according to the local tradition that Mahendradatta as “a woman king of Bali” was also worshipped as the deity Durga. In the story of *Calonarang*, she was related to the goddess Durga (Gottowick, 2005: 160). Goddess Durga is a consort of Shiwa. Similarly, Durga is considered as the partner of Shiwa in Balinese Hinduism. Sculptures of Dewa Durga are located at Hindu Pura Dalem sites of Bali. In certain local traditions in Kediri, East Java and also in Bali, it is mentioned that Mahendradatta is related to the story of *Calonarang*, who is well-known by modern Balinese. In contrast, the story of *Calonarang* is not well-known in East Java (Ardhana, 2015). Gottowick mentions that this *Calonarang* is related to the story of *Rangda* and *Barong* in the context of the Balinese dance. Gottowick quotes from Bandem (1981, 1995) states that “the *Rangda* is the heroine of the performance and represents the protection of the village against sorcerers” (Gottowick, 2005: 78). In addition to this, he mentions that the *Rangda* is related to the Goddess Durga who was the wife of the Shiwa (Gottowick, 2005: 78). There is also the performance of the *Barong Landung* in which the wife of the *Barong Landung*

(or *Jero Gede*) is a Chinese woman called *Jero Luh*. The *Jero Gede* and *Jero Luh* symbolize a man and a woman represented in the belief of *lingga* and *yoni*. As Gottowick quotes from Kemper (1991):

“the *Lingga* is a phallic representation, the attribute of, or symbol for, Shiwa. The *Yoni*, in whose centre the *lingga* is placed, is the female symbol. Together they represent the unity of all phenomena” (Gottowick, 2005: 162, 173, 184).

This can be understood since Shiwa is believed to be the highest God in Bali. It is also important to note that after the 10th century, more Balinese people believed in the Hindu religion, especially *Shaiwa Siddhanta* as is shown by the presence of many *Lingga Yoni*, particularly in Gianyar, which was the centre of the Balinese kingdom in the Classical Balinese historical period. It can be added that the people believed in respecting the ancestors combined with the Hindu-Buddhist values as a result of the influence of religious leaders brought to the local society by Mpu Kuturan and Mpu Bharadah. Mpu Kuturan also built traditional Balinese villages, called *Desa Pakraman* (Pakraman Village) in the period of Udayana. This had the function of organizing and maintaining social harmony (Geriya, 2013: 43). It is important to note that in the period of Classical Balinese history, particularly in the period between the 10th and 11th century, there was a new epoch in the context of Balinese history. This

period focused particularly on the new foundation of the Balinese civilization and culture in the reign of the king Udayana. Since the 11th century, King Udayana has been known to be the king of Bali, being the man who laid the foundations of Balinese culture, especially in terms of politics, law, and government of ancient Bali.

The worship of female deities can also be found in Central Java. After the spread of Hinduism from Central Java to East Java, followed by a Hinduisation or Indianisation from East Java to Central Java during the fall of Majapahit kingdom, the biggest Hindu kingdom in East Java. Evidences of these influences can be seen in certain Hindu temples, such as the *Sukuh* and *Cetho* temples that were built around the 15th century. In these temples there are many linggas and yonis, the symbols of prosperity. These temples become places of interest for tourists who wish to understand the meaning of the temple, and the significance of the lingga and yoni. According to local tradition, if there was uncertainty in various situations due to harvest failure, then there would be a ceremony performed in which water would be splashed on the yoni, the symbol of the female deities. Afterwards, holy water would be sprinkled among the rice fields in the regions in order to obtain peace and prosperity. This, in fact, was the way that local people in Central Java and Bali worshipped female deities

in the past. However, besides the local rituals, religious rituals and ceremonies in accordance with the Goddesses Saraswathi, Sri or Danu or Laksmi, and Durga are still practiced in Bali in the modern and postmodern times as explained below.

The Worship of Female Deities in Present Day Bali

As with other places in Asia in general, and in Southeast Asia in particular, the Hindu adherents believed in *Tri Murti* (*Brahma*, *Wisnu* and *Shiwa*) or the Hindu triad meaning God as creator, preserver, and dissolver or recycler of life. Temples are dedicated for them, namely, the *Pura Desa* for *Brahma*, the *Pura Puseh* for *Wisnu*, and the *Pura Dalem* for *Shiwa* (Eiseman, 2000: 351). Each of the three gods has his partner, such as Saraswathi for *Brahma*; Laksmi or Sri for *Wisnu*, and Uma or Durga for *Shiwa*. The section below discusses how the Balinese worship their female deities. In addition to this, the most important shrines is the *Sangghah Kemulan*. Each family who is a Hindu adherent has the *Sangghah Kemulan*, a shrine containing three compartments dedicated to the Hindu *Trimurti* of *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, and *Shiwa*. The *Sangghah Kemulan* is a simple, house-like, wooden structure raised on pillars and standing on a column made of brick or sandstone. The *Sangghah Kemulan* is naturally located on the most sacred corner of the family shrine

compound, the *kaja-kangin* corner. The God Brahma is also associated with male ancestors of the household, while Vishnu is with female ancestors. When a Balinese man marries, he should build one of these shrines. This *Sangah Kemulan* is commonly referred to the Besakih Temple, as a Mother Temple for the Balinese Hinduism (Ramstedt, 1999: 408).

The Worship of Goddess Saraswathi

Brahma, believed to be a creator, has Saraswathi, the goddess of knowledge, as his wife. The Balinese worship the Goddess Saraswathi every six months on *Saraswathi Day*. The date devoted to her worship is the last day of the *Pawukon* cycle, *Saniscara Watugunung*. Saraswathi is depicted playing a musical instrument and astride a swan (Eiseman, 2000: 354). So significant is Saraswathi that some folklores abound that students are not permitted to read their books before giving the *Banten Saraswathi* (offerings) to the goddess. The purpose is to make the students aware of the importance of education for people to develop good emotions and morals. Not only is Saraswathi Day celebrated in the family temple, it is also celebrated in the community and even the government temples.

There are some values that need to be elaborated to make the students understand about this meaning. In

this case, it is important to understand the symbolic significance of Goddess Saraswathi, who is depicted as a beautiful woman. In the context of philosophy are some reasons how the Goddess Saraswathi is depicted as a beautiful woman. However, the point to be understood here is that the Goddess is a symbol of knowledge. Hence, everybody who wants to gain knowledge should try to reach her, though in actual fact, she can not be touched, since the characteristic of knowledge is not to be owned. Everybody has to learn and continue to learn. In each household the celebration of the Saraswathi day begins by collecting all of the books, including school books, and putting them together on a table. The parents will give the offerings, named *canang*, that will be placed on the books. The *canang* is a common, small, everyday offering in the shape of a shallow square tray containing a *porosan*, fruit, flowers, and a *sampian*. The *sampian* is a decorative part of some offerings, consisting of intricately cut young coconut leaves “sewn” together with bamboos skewers. The size and degree of elaboration vary greatly (Eiseman, 2000: 352 and 364).

The celebration of Saraswathi Day is commonly officiated by a *pemangku* (priest of lower rank) or priest. Before the celebration of Saraswathi, named also as the Deity of the Book, knowledge and learning, a celebration is held in each household

and also together at the public square with many people such as students, lecturers, governments offices, etc. This celebration is commonly held in the Jagatnatha temple, which is built in certain villages in each city or regency, particularly in the period of the New Order regime in Indonesia (1967-1998).

The Worship of Goddess Sri or Laksmi, Danu, and Uma

According to Balinese oral tradition, the God Wisnu made Dewi Pertiwi (the Goddess of Earth) pregnant and give birth rice. Therefore, the Goddess Sri is the favourite among all in the Balinese society. It can be understood on how the Balinese respect the Goddess Sri as the goddess of rice, since for the Balinese by eating rice they can live and go on to develop religious rituals and ceremonies for rice plants. The daughter of Goddess Sri, named *Dewi Melanting* (Goddess Melanting), is also popular within the Balinese society in accordance with the Goddess of Market (Covarrubias in Adrian Vickers, 2012: 288). The worship for the Goddess Sri or Laksmi in every ceremony named *Odalan* is related to the God Wisnu who is believed to be a protector. The *Odalan* is the anniversary festival of a temple. It falls once every 210 days according to the Pawukon calendar, or occurs once every lunar year according to the *Saka* calendar. The *Pawukon* calendar is the Balinese' calendar consisting of only

210 days. This calendar governs most, but not all, anniversaries, auspicious days, and religious events (Eiseman, 2000: 360). In Balinese Hinduism, Dewi Sri symbolises an extremely exceptional god. The reason of this is that Dewi Sri is considered to be exclusive to Bali. To put it differently, Dewi Sri is considered as a Balinese Hindu body which the Balinese traditionally didn't derived from a different tradition. Dewi Sri is the Goddess of Rice.

The Balinese are really dependent to the Goddess Sri or Laksmi, since most the nature of Bali is dependent on agriculture. In other words, the irrigation system, called the subak system has a significant role. The Balinese archeological evidence from the 9th century CE mentions several terms related to the irrigation system. The term of *Subak* or already appeared in Balinese inscriptions in the 11th century CE. The *Subak* as the traditional Balinese irrigation system is based on the philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana*. The concept of *Tri Hita Karana*, in the context of Balinese rituals. It means three things that cause happiness or prosperity including *Palemahan* (environment), *Pawongan* (human beings/people) and *Parhyangan* (God). The *Palemahan* is related with the areas and environment of the *Subak*. The *Pawongan* is related to the *Subak* members and the *Parhyangan* is related to the *Subak* Temple or *Pura Bedugul*. *Tri Hita Karana* is a concept of balance

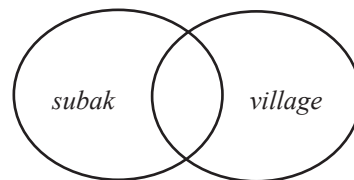
and harmony between humans and God, between human being and human being and in harmony with the environment.

Therefore, it is important to look at how the Balinese worship the female deities and how they relate to the goddesses as protectors. The Balinese believe in the *mandala* system in which there is a God in every compass. For instance in the middle is the God Wisnu. In other words, since the Batur lake is located in the middle of Bali island, it is believed that the God Wisnu and his partner the Goddess Laksmi is worshipped in the Batur temple, which is located very closely to the Batur Lake and Batur mountain. In addition to this, it is interesting to look at a myth that relates between the Batur temple and the Besakih temple as noted in a myth of *Sang Kulputih*, in *Usana Bali*. The Batur temple represents left, woman, daughter, lake or water, and Mount Batur; the Besakih temple represents right, son, mountain, Mount Agung (Stuart-Fox, 2010: 74).

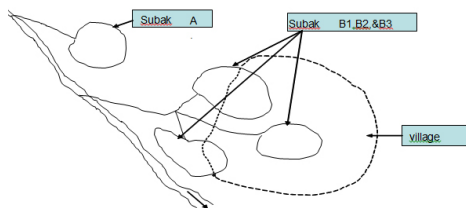
The great pura like the Besakih temple, Dewi Danu or *Ulun Danu Beratan*, and Batur temple are located in the high elevation of the forest. The God Wisnu and the Goddess of water are positioned in the upstream area. The Balinese believe in Dewi Danu (Goddess of the Lake) who is worshipped in Batur temple. The Batur Lake has a significant role in watering many subaks in the northern parts as well as the southern part of Bali. The

water that flows from the mountain will irrigate the rice field as long as the subak (traditional irrigation system in Bali) in the Tabanan regency. It means that there are many subaks with the water coming from Batur Lake. Because the Balinese are proud that God has awarded them these fertile lands, it is not surprising also that they accord some important ceremonies and rituals related to the worship of female deities such as the Goddess Sri or Laksmi in Bali.

Subak or *Kasuwakan* is an irrigation system that links with a temple, *Pura Uluncarik*, or *Pura Bedugul*, which was built by farmer communities who worship the God of prosperity, called Goddess Sri, wife of the God Wisnu. The *Subak* system can be described as a complex of rice



picture 1. Overlapping the border between village and subak in Bali (Windia, 2015b: 69)



picture 2. Subak and its management (Windia, 2015b: 71)

Table 3. Subak system and its relationship between religion and ritual in the context of Tri Hita Karana

Man - God	Man - Man	Man - Nature
<i>mapag toya</i>	<i>krama subak</i>	water distribution
<i>ngendagin tanah</i>	<i>nguun seka</i>	land management
<i>nandur</i>	<i>nguun seka</i>	rice planting
<i>kekambuhan</i>	<i>nguun seka</i>	cleaning the ricefield
<i>biyukukung</i>	farmer, duck breeder	maintenance

Source: Kaler Surata, in Artha Wiguna and Suprio Guntoro, 2003: 84, cf. Windia, 2015a: 75

fields in Bali that obtain water from one conduit or from one branch of a conduit. The owners of the rice fields that make up such a complex constitute a *Subak* Association called *Sekeha Subak*. The *Subak* leaders open the meetings, see that the decisions and rules are carried out, impose fines and penalties and act as treasurers of the organization (Covarrubias 1937: 72). As Geertz (1972: 30, in Staab, 1997: 26) mentions as follows:

“The focus of this ritual system is a rice-goddess cult..., and it is conducted at every level of the subak from the individual terrace, through the subsections of the subak, to the subak as a whole. At the higher levels there are specific temples, with assigned priests, special ceremonies at special times, and specific altars, gods, offerings, and prayers. These various ceremonies are symbolically linked to cultivation in a way which locks the pace of that cultivation into a firm, explicit rhythm. Even more interestingly, however, the ritual system not only does this internally within the subak, but also reaches beyond the individual subak to insure intersubak coordination within a given drainage region...”

Falyey pinpoints that in all regions of Southeast Asia, the sophisticated water system integrates rivers and

canals and included timed water rights and water reuse (Falyey, 2015: 21). The Balinese worship the female deities such as the Goddess Sri, called *Tumpek Wariga*, *Tumpek Bubuh*, *Tumpek Uduh* or *Tumpek Pengatag*. In the Balinese calendar, *tumpek* occurs 35 days of the five day week, that falls on Saturday or Saniscara. There are certain *tumpek* namely *Tumpek Landep*, *Tumpek Uduh*, *Tumpek Kuningan*, *Tumpek Krulut*, *Tumpek Kandang*, and *Tumpek Wayang* and others go by other names (Eiseman, 2000: 367). The worship in the *Tumpek Uduh* regarding the vegetation and plants is addressed to the God Sangkara (Pink, 1993). Through this ceremony, the Balinese demonstrate how much they love nature by pouring *bubur* (porridge) to the plants that symbolize prosperity. The dependency of the Balinese is not only related to nature, but also to the spiritual aspects as mentioned by Bandem:

“In the early stages of Balinese society (...) also known as pre-Hindu Society) the people not only depended on nature, they also dedicated themselves to a spiritual life.

Their dances also were spiritual and their belief in animism and totemism gave their dances a magical quality. One Balinese dances which may be inherited from the pre-Hindu society is the Barong dance” (Bandem: 45 in Gottowick, 2005: 141).

This is the local wisdom of the Balinese to their nature (Eiseman, 2000: 181-182).

The Worship of Goddess Durga or Uma

The Balinese strongly preserve and maintain their local culture, prior to Hinduism cultural traditions. This can be seen until now, for example, in the concept of *Bhatara* and *Bhatari* the Balinese terminologies for Gods and the ancestor worship, called *Atmasiddhadewata* or *Dewa Pitra*, held in certain temples (family temples) such as *sanggah*, *merajan*, *pura dadya* or *paibon*, *pura panti* and *pedharman* (Rema, 2014: 3--5). The Balinese greatly respect their ancestors through ancestor worship as they have written in lontar or tal, or babad and inscriptions. From this, it can be seen to what extent the Indian or Indic culture influenced the Balinese culture until now. In this regard, it shows clearly the Balinese worship for the woman or feminism deities in Bali.

The important role of the female deities in Bali can be seen, for instance, in a famous myth during the lunar eclipse that relates how the Goddess Ratih or *Dewi Ratih* (the symbol of the moon) was eaten by *Kalarau*. The

Kalarau is a demon in the Balinese mythology, who possesses only a head and not a body. It is told that the *Kalarau* disguised himself as a god and took a mouthful of *Tirtha Amertha*, though the water is meant only for the gods. The Goddess Ratih informed Wisnu, who at once took up his magical discus-like *Cakra* and hurled it at *Kalarau*, cutting off his head. However, *Kalarau* had just reached his throat. Once the head touched the holy water in the *Tirta Amertha*, the *Kalarau* was revived and can live again. The *Kalarau* was very angry with the goddess Ratih as he had been deceived by her. The *Kalarau* pursued her and successfully devoured her. Since the *Kalarau* had no body, the goddess Ratih disappeared for a moment and reappeared again from his rear (Eiseman, 1: 66). However, the *Kalarau* wanted to attack the goddess Ratih until in the heaven. When the *Kalarau* successfully catches the goddess Ratih, the *Gerhana Bulan* or lunar eclipse happens. Nala argues that for the young generation of Balinese, it is difficult to give an explanation to understand the lunar eclipses based on this myth (Nala, in Ramstedt, 2004: 79).

As we already known the Balinese gods have been changed from their native Indian names. In the lontar, *Andhabhuwana* for instance, mentions about the change from Goddess Uma to become Goddess Durga. The God Shiwa asked the Goddess Uma to find milk. However, the Goddess Uma lied

to God Shiwa, in which the Goddess Uma did not tell the truth where she had obtained the milk. According to the tale, the Shiwa became angry with her. Hence, he changed the Goddess Uma into the Goddess Durga. It can be said that the Balinese seldom merged gods, into Balinese Hinduism, without changing their beliefs or the form which surrounded them. Therefore it is consequently, even though most of the Hindu Gods and Goddesses of Bali eventually descend from Indian Hinduism, these days however there are not many parallels between, the Goddess Durga from Balinese Hinduism and the Goddess Durga from the Indian Hinduism. The reason is that the Goddess Durga, in the Indian Hinduism, is believed to be one among the female avatars from the God Shiva. In the Balinese belief it is said that the Goddess Durga is the god who protects the cemetery. It can be understood in the Balinese Hindu beliefs, that the God is not only in the temple, but also in the cemetery, in which the cemetery is also considered as a sacred place, in which the Goddess Durga is worshipped.

Therefore, the God Shiwa is described in the Indian Hindu faith that he might take the shape of *Kali* or Paravati and Uma. In addition to this, the *Kali* is commonly portrayed, in Indian Hinduism, as a vengeful version of Shiva, a black body, a body with several hands gripping a bloody knife and the other hand holding a

dismembered head, and a body which has a necklace of skulls. In other words, in the Balinese Hinduism, it is also called as *Rangda*, which is believed to be among the avatars of Dewi Durga. In other words, the *Rangda* is literary “widow” and the *Rangda* is one of the two central figures in the *Barong* play, representing the negative side of man. The *Rangda* is related to Goddess Durga, wife of Shiwa who represents his destructive role (Eiseman, 2000: 363). Additionally, the *Rangda* or a demon is similar to Kali. However, while Kali, in Indian Hinduism, symbolises an extremely gloomy as well as revengeful aspect of Shiwa, in the Balinese Hinduism, the *Rangda* symbolises an extremely gloomy and revengeful aspect of Dewi Durga. The *Rangda* is commonly portrayed, in the Balinese Hinduism, as a body with ugly physical qualities and an arch foe of Bali’s favourite defender(s), a cannibal, bloodthirsty, a specialist in black magic, and as the Queen of Witches, (like inch lengthy nails, hairy knuckles, and sagging bosoms) (Gottowick 2005, 120). Therefore, the *Rangda* is believed to be a body which the Balinese traditionally got from the Javanese as mentioned in the Javanese historical account.

Conclusion

Lessons from the Indian continent have been adopted in Bali from the first to the eighth centuries through the

trade route between India and China and its influences can still be observed in present day Bali and Indonesian society. Despite the existence of these Hindu influences, Though the influences of the Indian or Hindu lessons have been in existence, the Balinese society has still its own local culture that can be traced back to the present day Bali, for instance the story of Men Brayut, a mother with many children.

At the present time, there are a number of similarities between Indian Hinduism and Balinese Hinduism. In Indian Hinduism many people adore Brahman like a supreme God and in Balinese Hinduism many people adore *Sanghyang Widhi Wasa* like a supreme God. However, the Balinese term of *Sanghyang Widhi Wasa* is just like Brahman, since *Sanghyang Widhi Wasa* is believed to cover all global dualities in Balinese terminology.

In the context of women or feminine deities in Bali, one of the significant ones to consider is Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge and also a partner of Brahma, who is believed to be the Creator. In relation to the goddess Saraswati, the Balinese have a ritual every six months in which they worship the goddess Saraswati and have a day declared as *Saraswati Day*.

Secondly, regarding Goddess Sri (or goddess Laksmi): the worship of Goddess Sri or Laksmi is related to the God Wisnu, who is believed to be a protector. There is a strong dependence

on the Goddess Sri or Laksmi by the Balinese, naturally, since agriculture plays a dominant part in the life of Balinese. In fact, the irrigation system, called *subak*, has a significant role in the daily life of the Balinese. It is important to look at how the Balinese worship the women or feminine deities in relation to the goddesses as protectors.

Thirdly, it is the God Shiwa who is the consort of the Goddess Uma. Both Indian and Balinese accounts inform that the Goddess Uma has changed her name into the goddess Durga.

Indeed, the Balinese seldom merge gods into Balinese Hinduism without changing some beliefs or the form surrounding them. Therefore, even though most of the Hindu gods and goddesses of Bali descend from Indian Hinduism, there are not many parallels among the original gods of Indian Hinduism to their Bali Hinduism versions. A clear example is the goddess Durga of Balinese Hinduism and the original goddess Durga of Indian Hinduism. In the original Indian Hindu version, goddess Durga is believed to be among the female avatars of the god Shiva.

As described in the Indian Hindu faith, the god Shiva can take on the shape of Kali, Paravati or Uma. In addition, Kali is commonly portrayed in Indian Hinduism as a vengeful incarnation of Shiva, embalmed with a black body; a body with several hands, one of which grips a blood-

stained knife while another hand holds a dismembered head, on her neck sits a necklace of skulls. In Balinese Hinduism, the Kali is a far departure from the native Kali as represented in the Indian Hindu belief. In Bali Hinduism, Kali is called as Rangda, who is believed to be among the avatars of Dewi Durga. The story of Durga

developed in Bali most likely during the 10th to 11th century within the context of the story of Calonarang in East Java. According to the local tradition in Bali, the Calonarang is Mahendradatta, a wife of the king Udayana. Until now, the Balinese believe that the soul of Mahendradatta is Durga, the consort of Shiva.[]

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