

# The Myth Of Yeh Haa: Mapag Toya Tradition Communication System In Water Conservation

*by Airawata Turnitin*

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## The Myth Of Yeh Haa: Mapag Toya Tradition Communication System In Water Conservation

I Wayan Suwadnyana<sup>1</sup>, I Wayan Wastawa<sup>2</sup>, I Ketut Sudarsana<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

*The recent issue of water shortage in Bali is very intriguing to be analyzed scientifically since it is caused by the shift in land function for tourism and residential development purposes, excessive use of groundwater, deforestation, and poor protection of lakes, rivers, and irrigation systems from pollution. These phenomena beg the question of the existence of local values which can serve as a guide in water preservation. Based on observation, interview results, and the analysis of the Yeh Haa myth in Balinese traditional text reported in this scientific article, it was found that the tradition of performing Mapag Toya ritual in conserving water exists in ritual, social, political, and economic dimensions. The subak's Mapag Toya ritual is performed with various symbols as the ritual's communication medium. Furthermore, Mapag Toya is performed by the Balinese subak members through social groups by channeling the water, cleaning the irrigation system, and planting trees to preserve water.*

*The present study aims to analyze the Yeh Haa myth as a ritual communication system in water preservation. The analysis was done based on the content of Lontar Padmacangah and Lontar Dharma Pamacul as the philosophical source and context of Mapag Toya within the subak members in the Tabanan regency in Bali province. The theories used herein were the Theory of Religion, the Theory of Symbols, and the Theory of Semiotics. Based on the analysis it was concluded that the subak members in Tabanan regency are still adhering to the myth and ritual based on Hinduism, which are implemented in the form of concrete action such as tree planting as well as maintaining and cleaning subak irrigation systems. The system consists of the Empelan (dams), Telabah (primary waterway), Tembuku Aya (water distribution structures), Telabah Pamaron (water dividing structures), Tembuku Danaan (sada structures), and Tembuku Pengalapan (waterways channeling water to individual rice fields). These activities are*

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<sup>1</sup> Universitas Hindu Negeri I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia, iwayansuwadnyana@uhnsugriwa.ac.id

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Hindu Negeri I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia, balivas65@gmail.com

<sup>3</sup> Universitas Hindu Negeri I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia, iketutsudarsana@uhnsugriwa.ac.id

*performed through ritualistic communication and group communication among the subak members.*

*Keywords: Myths, Communication System, Mapag Toya Ritual, Water Preservation.*

## **Introduction**

Three important concepts need to be explained to fully comprehend the content of this paper, namely (1) The Mapag Toya tradition; (2) Myth, and (3) Water preservation. The concept of Mapag Toya comes from two words, mapag and toya. mapag is an ancient Javanese word from the root word of papag which was then absorbed into the Balinese language as mapag. This is because both the phonemes “p” and “m” belong to the same family of phonemes. The word papag becomes an active verb if it is preceded by the letter “a” becoming apapag which means “to meet”, especially in combat, fight, crash, and clash. Meanwhile, when it is preceded by the letter “u” it becomes umapag which has the meaning of “to welcome”, “to receive”, etc., (Zoetmulder, 2006).

Papag in the Balinese language is pronounced as mapag, a verb that means “to welcome” or “to receive”. In the context of Mapag Toya ceremony, the word mapag has the meaning of to look for and to welcome. Meanwhile, the word toya comes from a Sanskrit word that means water (Zoetmulder, 2006). In Bali toya also means water, the phrase toya wangsuhpada refers to the holy water (tirtha) obtained after praying at a temple during piodalan (temple festival day). The phrase means “holy water which comes from washing God’s feet”. Hence, such a ceremony is also known as patoyan ceremony, a part of the “Dewa Yadnya” (Pemerintah Daerah Propinsi Daerah Tingkat I Bali, 1993: 739). Therefore, Mapag Toya refers to a ceremony performed to look for or to welcome the water which will be used to irrigate the rice fields belonging to the members of a subak. In performing the ceremony, the subak members will also perform kempelan ritual. The ritual implies the action of “looking for water”, which is performed communally by all members of the subak.

In a more universal paradigm, Mapag Toya can be associated with religious myths and political power over the use of water. The concept of myth is a communication system, namely a message. This justifies one's prejudice that myth cannot be an object, concept, or idea; myth is a way of meaning (Barthes, 2004). In myths, one can witness how humans formulate strategies and regulate the relationship between the forces of the universe. Myth is a story that provides certain guidelines and directions for a group of people (Pursen, 1998:36-37). Myth always points to events that occurred in the past. On the other hand, the distinctive patterns of myths are characteristics that make

myths remain relevant and usable in the contemporary context for understanding religious meanings and people's cultural views of the universe. At least myths have a 'universal logic' that should be examined to identify the character of a particular community's cultural mentality and religiosity (Duijia, 2009). This is confirmed by Baal (1987) myth as a system framework of a religion which in the past or the present has been or is being applied as religious truth. Certain patterns expressed by myths, which are described by myths are timeless. These patterns explain what happened in the past, but at the same time can explain what is happening now, and what will happen in the future.

We then can pose the question, does looking for water have to be accompanied by myths and religious rituals? Channeling water for agriculture is an obligation, is it not? Myth is a way to strengthen beliefs and regulate human actions in daily life. To irrigate rice fields, water for drinking, and other needs, Mapag Toya is not only related to myths about water but also related to other elements of the universe. It is in the framework of water conservation that myths are used as a religious truth to be easily understood by mankind. Through these religious myths, it will be easy for men to carry out their obligations in water conservation. Mapag Toya conveys an element of obligation. Krama subak (the members of a subak) are obliged to conserve water that flows through every plot of their rice fields, something that must be carried out which is related to a person's rights to get a share of water, and this obligation is a requirement for the continuity of human life and the worship of God.

This obligation implies conservation. Conservation in The Official Dictionary of the Indonesian Language is defined as protection from destruction or damage; preservation; or maintenance (Erawati & Luwih, 2023). The concept of preservation implies preventing the destruction or damage of something (water), and how preservation can have an impact on the harmony and balance of the ecological environment and ecosystem for the continuity of the next generation.

The relationship between water and human life in modern times and the globalization era is a very interesting discussion. Water problems have an impact on social life and can also lead to social conflicts if their use to meet community needs is not managed properly. For example, the case of water disputes resulting from the construction of hotels and apartments in the villages of Miliran, Penumping, and Guwongan Yogyakarta in 2013. This development resulted in a water crisis for residents due to groundwater extraction for hotel and apartment needs ([perkim.id/permukiman](http://perkim.id/permukiman), 2020). Research from the Idep Selaras Alam Bali Foundation found that Bali experiences a crisis of clean water, especially freshwater, due to underground seawater intrusion due to excessive exploitation of groundwater, polluted groundwater, high conversion of green lands, lack of use of a lot of surface water.



wasted into the sea, and lack of water supply during the rainy season (mediaindonesia.com, 2019).

The two cases above can illustrate how the impact of human actions that are not friendly to the environment and mismanagement of water causes water shortages. For that, the ancestors have provided ideas or ways to conserve water. However, it is not easy to conserve water because it is related to various interests, from economic interests, the livelihoods of many people, power politics, ecological and ecosystem sustainability, to religious interests (Mirzachaerulsyah, et al. 2022; Hadriani, 2022). Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to say that Hindus through their religious traditions use water as a medium of worship, and holy water is given the meaning of giving strength and inner peace to those who drink it. This religious tradition also functions as a way of glorifying and preserving water, where water is one of the noblest elements in Hinduism. Socio-culturally, water is important for quenching thirst, irrigating plants, bathing, recreation, and providing fertility and welfare for mankind, on top of that it also serves as a cultural symbol of cleansing, purification (tirtha), and as a blessing or amertha.

### **Review of Literature**

To the best of the authors' knowledge, there has never been a scientific analysis of the Yeh Haa myth in the Mapag Toya Tradition. Several sources were used as references for this scientific work, including an article entitled The Study of Panglukatan Water Quality at Tirtha Empul Temple's Spring Bali, written by Subagia & Suta (2021). This article discusses the quality of the water in the spring at Tirta Empul Temple, which is a freshwater spring, also known locally as air kelebutan. This spring is used as a source of drinking water, a spiritual cleansing ritual (melukat), and for spiritual activities by the people of Manukaya village and Balinese in general. The second source was an article by Tarigan entitled Agricultural Transformation and Water Crisis in Bali from the Perspective of Political Ecology (Transformasi Pertanian dan Krisis air di Bali dan Perspektif Ekologi Politik) (2016). This article focused on the impact of the development of mass tourism which has caused a water crisis and a change in the main basis of agriculture. This article aimed to analyze the process of agricultural transformation and the water crisis that occurred in Bali and its impact on the socio-economic and cultural life of the community and the future of tourism itself. The political analysis found impacts on the environment and the agricultural sector, particularly land conversion, employment, the economy, and the use of water resources. These matters have an impact on resource conflicts between various stakeholder sectors and tend to marginalize agriculture, the decline of

local subak institutions, and the potential to suppress natural resources and the original culture of the Balinese people. The next article was written by Putra (2017) entitled Fact or Fiction: Deconstructing the Water Crisis Discourse in Bali with the Stories of Tantri (Fakta Atau Fiksi: Dekonstruksi Wacana Krisis Air di Bali Dengan Kisah Tantri) (2017). In his article, he questioned whether the water crisis issue in Bali is a fact or fiction through the deconstruction of the water crisis-related stories in The Stories of Tantri,

## Method

The present study is a qualitative analysis with entitled Yeh Haa Myth: Mapag Toya Tradition Communication System in Water Conservation. This study used a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The data were obtained using literature study technique. This technique provided an opportunity for the author to conduct an in-depth critical analysis of the primary data source in the form of literature, namely Lontar Padmancangah text, and through secondary data from observation, interviews, and literature studies, to obtain relevant and supporting data to answer the problems posed herein.

## Result and Discussion

### 1. Yeh Haa Myth: Social Bonds Based on Social Networks in Water Conservation

Myth is a traditional story about supernatural events and the life of the gods. Myth is a form of story that is not much different in form and nature from a fairy tale (Risianti, & Rahayu, 2023). While fairy tales are a form of folktale that continues to live in, or as part of, a local culture. As a form of oral tradition, fairy tales are closely related to the lives of the people who support them and naturally have an effect on the lives of said people. (Sukada, 1987). Both myths and fairy tales play an important role in Balinese society. Fairy tales are more than just a source of solace or entertainment at night, they also play a role in the context of carrying out religious rituals (Sukada, 1987). Similarly, as a story, myth is full of meaning which relates to one context of people's life and can be used as a guide for life both in terms of daily life practices and in religious practices. Myths tell, among other things, how the gods saved the universe from the attacks of the giants, or about a king who is obliged to provide welfare based on a sense of sympathy and empathy for the misfortune that befell his people.

The Balinese people's local wisdom regarding the preservation of water is widely expressed in myths and inscriptions from the ancient Balinese era (Sedana, 2023). Many myths about water are found in local stories, which were later adopted as scientific orations, such as

(1) The Myth of I Ratu Ayu Mas Měmbah a Theo-Anthropological Approach (Mitos I Ratu Ayu Mas Měmbah Pendekatan Theo-Antropologi) by I Nengah Duija, 2009. (2) The Myth of Tukad Petanu in Gianyar Regency, (3) The Myth of Belulang Hot Springs. The local community believes that two springs are flowing into one pool of water. The hot spring flowing from the north is believed to have originated from Mount Batukaru, while the spring flowing from the East is believed to have originated from Mount Agung. This causes worship at Luhur Batupanes Temple to be oriented to both Mount Batukaru and Mount Agung. This was reinforced by the erection of a shrine called Bukit Makudus to worship Dewa Giri Tohlangkir in Mount Agung. In addition, there is a tradition of obtaining holy water (tirtha) and sacrificing water buffaloes (mulang pakelem) to Mount Agung as a part of the ngenteg linggih ceremony or other major ceremonies held at Luhur Batupanes Temple. (4) The Myth of the Waterfall where the free-roaming buffalo bathes, in Mekar Sari Village, Baturiti District, Tabanan. According to ancestral stories, there was a free-roaming buffalo who keeps bathing there. It happened so often that the waterfall was then called "Kipuan Kebo" which means "where the buffalo bathes". Since the buffalo always returns for his bath, the place was considered sacred. Because there must be something that drives the buffalo to bathe in that particular place. This led to the sanctification of the waterfall as a place to perform a spiritual cleansing ritual (melukat) (travel.okezone.com, 2017, downloaded December 5, 2021). In mythological logic, Kipuan Kebo implies that humans, in their religious conduct, should not be like a buffalo. After the buffalo bathed in a dirty pool of water, he cleaned his body in clear and holy water, but then he returned to bathe in the dirty pool of water. Humans are expected to be able to practice religion properly, which means after purifying themselves they should not return to doing things that are prohibited by their religious teachings.

Due to the many myths about water in different regions in Bali, it is necessary to carry out studies to find out the true meaning of these myths, as part of the local wisdom of the Balinese people in inculcating knowledge about water conservation. There is a myth, although it does not explicitly mention Mapag Toya ritual, implicitly this myth is related to Mapag Toya which has religious and political dimensions, namely the "Yeh Haa myth" which is found in the Padmancangah text belonging to Ida Bujangga Banjar Kupang Penebel, among others mentions:

"apan pangdaning Sang Hyang Widhi, matrak kang bumi Tawanan , masuwe tan kahanan warsa, kali pangkung tan pa we. Dadi ta mangen-mangen I putra padanan, apan wruh masa tosning buhpalaka, dadi kasengin I Dewa Gede Penarungan lunga nyraya ka Batupanes Belulang nunas amertha, raris I Dewa Gede Penarungan memargi.



Sedatenge ring Batupanes laju akarya pasanghyangan, ring pasanghyangan sira mayoga, ngredana Hyang Sinuhun nunas amertha, anging tan wetu ikang amertha dumugi mawali ta sira ka dangin Pasar. Tur laluhangen ta merasa sira makarwa, tan suruding kahyun ira muwah lumampah ta sira karwa jumujug ring alas "Bebegan" asraya ta sira ring Puncaksari.

Ring pijerning ayoga hana mawirasa sabda mantra kasengin ta sira ring "Batulumbang" pagunungan Suka. Tan yasa layu ta sira karwa ngalor ngidul ke Batulumbang. Sedateng sira yeku, tur raris ngingenang yoga sira inganeng sahalek, kandugi wetu ikang amertha sor wetning taru "Haa" (toya haa) ndan ri samangkana yusaning 1589 tapa ta sira mawalik ke Tawanan dangin pasar....

Translation:

"As intended by Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa, the land of Tabanan was hit by prolonged heat for years causing the loss of water from rivers and streams. This made I Putra Padanan feel sad, for he knew that the heat would have remained for a long time, therefore I Dewa Penarungan was sent to beseech for God's blessing (amertha) in the form of water in Batupanes Belulang. Hence, I Dewa Penarungan left for Belulangan, when he arrived there, he built a shrine (pengayengan), it was there he beseech God's blessing. Unfortunately, he failed to obtain God's blessing, thus he returned to Tabanan Dangin Pasar, this made both of them feel sad.

But they did not lose hope, they both set out for Begbegan (Bugbugan) forest to meditate at Pucaksari Temple. During their meditation they received a revelation to go to Batulumbang in the area of Suka (Soka) mountain, it was there he received amertha or water from under the "Haa" tree (Haa river). This happened in 1589, after they finished their meditation, they returned to Tabanan Dangin Pasar....

As a system of government, the formation of strong social bonds is politically inseparable from social networks that are built according to the goals that need to be achieved. Per Bourdieu's theory of capital, capital does not only refer to money, but real capital also involves cultural capital and social capital. Social capital is an indicator to measure the deviation of social relations (social dysfunction) in the Subak community. In Balinese society, bonds through mere social capital are not enough, it is necessary to activate a way to make these bonds stronger, namely through the implementation of religious rituals. As a belief system in the religious component, religious people show their religious emotions in various ways. In a socio-political system, a leader is naturally the center of government orientation for the welfare of its people. Therefore, in times of water crisis (chaos), a leader would not only take rational actions but also take actions



beyond the reach of his logic, namely through spiritual activities by doing meditation (yoga semadhi) as described by the myth above.

The logos analysis of the above myths is not only concerned with the past but also with the present and the future. This can be seen in the desire of a king for the welfare of his people. The meditation is intended as a "citta wrtti nirodha" or the pausing of the mind and focusing it on one thing, i.e., God. The myth of Yeh Haa implies that the king strived to seek answers to the water-related problems. His meditation guided him to use his logic to find water in Begbegan forest and meditated in Pucaksari Temple (the source of all life). There, due to the power of his Jnana, the king received a revelation to continue his journey to Batulumbung (the source of life) and obtained water from under the Haa tree which later became the name of a river, Haa River (Yeh Haa).

Scientifically speaking, it makes perfect sense for water to come out from under the tree. Because forest or woods is the source of life. Based on Hindu beliefs, apart from being a religious space, the forest also functions as a cultural space and a livelihood space. As a cultural space, forests and mountains in it can foster artistic inspiration and cultural creativity that can develop human noble intuition, in this case, the forest functions as Mahavana. The forest also functions as a livelihood space. Forests can provide additional income for the surrounding community, and other benefits from the usage of the forest. The forest also functions as a reservoir that stores and distributes water throughout the year, in this case, the forest functions as Sri vana. The forest also functions as a religious space, because the forest has the function of tapavana, namely as a place for the establishment of holy places (temples) with their sacred areas.

In the Hindu tradition, trees are the driving force of God, as the manifestation of God. Besides, trees are also known as visvapurusa or the soul of the universe.

In various holy verses worshiping trees it is mentioned, viz:

Vanaspatim pavanamana madhva samngdhi dharaya, Sahasravalsam haritam bhrajanam hiranyayam. (Rgveda 9.5.10)

Translation:

"O Lord Soma (plants)! Grant water for these plants with a thousand streams and let them be green and illuminate them with brilliant golden radiance, with Your fragrance like flowing honey."

The above verse from the Rigveda shows that plants and water need each other. Where there is a forest there is rain to bring life, where there is water there are also trees growing to store and distribute water, streaming like the nectar of life. Thus, the Yeh Haa myth is not just a myth, but rather a contemporary picture of how humans save

the natural environment to preserve life as a source of prosperity for human life.

The myth above also describes the practice of Mapag Toya, which is then used as a protocol by all subak members in performing religion-based water conservation, both in royal kingdom areas which are now recognized as the area of a regency, as well as communal areas in each subak. Mapag Toya is usually carried out at springs and dams in the respective subak's areas. For example, for subaks in the western region of the Penebel district, it is carried out in the Yeh Mawa River, and for the subaks in the central area, it is usually performed at the Batu Lumbung Temple which has its headwaters at Tamblingan Lake. Apart from springs and dams, the Subak communities in Tabanan Regency are also orienting their worship towards holy places, especially at the Kahyangan Jagat Temples areas where a subak organization obtains water for their rice fields. Therefore, some subaks are focusing their worship at Tambawaras Temple, Muncaksari Temple, Luhur Petali Temple, Batulumbung Temple, Luhur Besikalung Temple, and other Kahyangan Jagat temples.

Following political conditions in the ancient kingdoms, these holy places were under the control of the king, and the king then placed his family members as temple custodians (*penyengceng pura*), hence, the Subak members obeyed and respected the king. They believe that all problems related to pests and water in the subak area can be solved by the king or his royal family representative through religious rituals. This led to the rise of the mythical belief, that a king or an elder from the palace has magical powers to drive away the pests from the rice fields. This can be done by simply carrying the king on a litter around the rice fields in a subak area or even by washing the king's feet in the headwater of the dam (*empelan*) or *temuku pamaron*, and other ways according to each subak's traditions. Religious practices like this will strengthen the socio-political relationship between the king and his subjects as a patron-client relationship (Kiriana, et al. 2023; Asih & Triguna, 2022).

Patron-Client is the relationship between the two roles that can be expressed as a relationship to social networks, especially from bonds involving instrumental friendship where an individual with a higher socio-economic status (the patron) uses his influence and resources to establish relationships with his community. In the context of remnants of royal power from the past, religious activities that are still practiced today are through ties to the control of a temple or a holy place, performing ceremonies at a temple, the practice of exorcising pests in the subak area, to the Mapag Toya ceremony. Relationships like this are still carried out and intertwined in such a way within the community, both the Traditional Village community and the Subak community, so that they continue and have never stopped to this day,

although not as intense as it was during the day of the kingdom in the past. Traces of the practice of patron-client relations or commonly known as 'patronage' (Adam Kuper & Jessica Kuper, 2000; Apsari, 2022) which are still performed are: (1) Giving the honor to the king (cokorda) by inviting him to perform the mendem pedagingan ritual in temples; (2) Giving the honor to the king to sit next to the ancient Balinese holy priest (Kubayan), priests (pamangku) and the High Priests (Sulinggih) during religious rituals in the temples; carried in a litter around the rice fields in exorcising pests, and other religious rituals. The existence of the structure that created a relationship between the palace (king) and the Subak members automatically led to the domination and hegemony of the royal elite, hence, people are still paying tribute for the land (ngaturang sarin taun) to the palace for the safety and protection of crops from pests attacks. This is also accompanied by the religious practice of requesting holy water to the palace from the king during ceremonial celebrations in the subak area. In addition, subak members also request holy water from Kahyangan Jagat temples, starting from temples around the Subak area to temples in the regency area.

## 2. Mapag Toya Tradition as Water Conservation Communication System

### a. Mapag Toya as Subak Members' Communication System ritual

Balinese Hindus always strive to achieve harmony in the relationships between humans with their God; humans with other humans; and humans with their environment; always use symbols as a medium of communication in their social interactions in these three domains of relationship. As animal symbolicum, symbols are never separated from humans' efforts to communicate, both verbally and non-verbally, because symbols strengthen personal and group identities. The Mapag Toya tradition is a pattern of behavior or belief that is part of a culture that has long been known so that it becomes a hereditary custom and belief (Sorkanto, in Syukriadi, 2016). Furthermore, Mapag Toya is also a social activity for the members of farmer groups which in Bali is called krama subak.

The Mapag Toya tradition, which is also known as kempelan, is performed by the krama subak based on Hinduism teachings. The meaning's manifestation in the symbolic interaction of the Mapag Toya ritual is imploring to study and comprehend every action and mindset practised by the Balinese farming community as a concept of identity (Wahyuni, et al, 2023). Therefore, this activity cannot be separated from religious rituals accompanied by various ceremonial symbols. This ritual aims to fetch the water. Mapag means 'fetch' and toya means 'water'. It is performed by a group of farmers to ask the God of Vishnu as the representation of God to give registers that are maintained them rain because the famers start doing their rice field.



Include mapag, toya, and other offering media (Sartini, et al, 2019). This Mapag Toya ritual is carried out before the farmers go down to the fields to work on their land. The farmers first work together to channel the water from the headwater to downstream with a ritual process using the simplest ceremonial offerings consisting of: peras pejati: daksina, peras, soda rayunan, penebusan bebek-siap, canang meraka, panyeneng, salaran dapdap, segehan selem as presented in the following figure.



The Offerings for Mapag Toya Ceremony

Source: I Wayan Wastawa, (2015)

More elaborate offerings for the ceremony are mentioned in the text of Lontar Dharma Pamacul 59a corresponds to an auspices day when it coincides with the full moon, Mapag Toya with its various rituals, as described by the following excerpt:

Tatakramaning tedun ring sawah, Mapag Toya rumuhun ngawa dahuh ring empelan, ngangke purnama, bantenia, sasayut pengambeyan, pras panyeneng, sorohan maguling pebangkit, gelar-sanga, ayam brumbun pinaka layang-layang, dagingnia olah genep, jejatah lembat asem, dadi 5 sangkwi, tumpengnia manca warna. Mwang tadahan sang asedahan empelan, sega sapangkon, iwaknia karangan, sajeng sakraci, suci 1, daksina 1, artha 225 salaran bebek putih, sata putih krama subake ngadakang tatajen, wus katur upakarane sami, anhudang ring ulon empelan, mangkana tingkahe Mapag Toya magawe landuhing wai.

The Mapag Toya carries the meaning of a request to Lord Vishnu as the manifestation of God, to bestow water that will always irrigate the farmers' fields, to fertilize the plants for a successful harvest. The Mapag Toya ritual is a symbol of surrender to Goddess Gangga, with the belief that humans depend on God, and it is God who provides salvation for humans, and to obtain salvation, humans surrender to Him (Koentjaraningrat, 1987; Dharmaputra, 2023)



All the symbols displayed in the ritual act as a medium of communication to convey a request to God (Jutari & Nerawati, 2023; Redana, 2023). The ducks and chickens used as tetebus (redemption) are all black and have a special symbolism. The black color is a symbol of Lord Vishnu, the ruler of water, with Bhatari Ganga as his shakti, who symbolizes fertility. This tetebus has the meaning that the ritual communication performed by krama subak has received a blessing from God. In the text of Lontar Çiwagama it is stated that Bhatari Gangga is Hyang-Hyangning Segara Danu or the Goddess who rules the seas and lakes.

"...irika Bhatari Gangga sinung nugraha de Sanghyang Widhi pinaka Hyang-Hyangning segara danu, dadi patirtaning rat kabeh Nguni pwa katekan mangke..."

Translation:

It was there that Bhatari Gangga was blessed by Ida Sanghyang Widhi Wasa as the goddess of danu (water) which became a place to obtain purification and prosperity for all humans, both in the past and in the present (Wastawa, 2015).

Depiction through ceremonial means is a form of the depiction of God. After all, Hindus interpret God not only based on Jnana kanda or the results of their thoughts and logic but also through karma kanda, namely from various symbols because the two are interrelated with one another. For this reason, in addition to ritual communication, transcendental communication is also carried out, namely by chanting prayers, mantras, and holy songs to invoke His grace. Thus, in the religious practices of Hinduism, there is a unity among the Three pillars of Hinduism, namely Tattwa, (philosophy); Susila (behaviors, ethics), and Acara (ceremonies with all forms of offerings).

#### b. Mapag Toya as a Group Communication System for Krama Subak

The myth above implies that a king or a leader must protect and care for the welfare of his subjects. The concept of obligation implies something obligatory, something that must be done, or something mandatory. As an organization, subak has a traditional-personalistic social structure based on familial and friendship values. The social structure serves as a form of social control, resulting in an egalitarian distribution of work and water accompanied by religious values and various rituals. To conserve water related to the Mapag Toya ceremony, there is also a sense of obligation, in this case, it relates to the distribution of water enjoyed by subak members to irrigate their fields. The members of the subak are obligated to work together to look for water to be directed from the headwater which is then divided and channeled through the primary irrigation system and then to the secondary and tertiary system right down to the individual rice fields.

The Mapag Toya tradition requires the kempelan activity, namely the maintenance works of the irrigation system and the fair distribution of water based on the size of the subak member's rice fields. This obligation occurs because subak members are bound by the irrigation system which passes their rice fields. It was during this kempelan activity that head of subak (Pekaseh) carried out social interactions to distribute water according to the rules of the atektekan. Atektekan is a unit of measurement for the distribution of water to irrigate rice fields. The kempelan activity also requires the repair and maintenance of the water channel (telabah) along with the reservoir called temuku, both temuku aya and temuku in each of the water channels leading to the Krama Subak rice fields.

Before the implementation of the Mapag Toya tradition, Subak as an organization carried out group communication through meetings (paruman) attended by religious leaders, Subak leaders, and the Subak members to make joint decisions through deliberation regarding the implementation of the Mapag Toya ritual as well as to solve the problems faced by the Subak. Through transparent group communication, the group decided the steps to be in performing the Mapag Toya ritual. Water conservation through Mapag Toya is not limited to ceremonies only, but also physically distributing water and maintaining the irrigation system from the headwater to downstream so that the water will flow properly to irrigate all the Krama Subak rice fields. Substantially, water conservation should not only start from the headwater or the dam but should start with the preservation of the surrounding environment of the headwater, especially the preservation of forests and trees. The tree is our Mother, the savior, the exterminator of the negative effects of pollution, and the protector of mankind and humanity. The Japa Kala Samapta states that "living trees living people, dead trees dead people ". This means that humans will live and continue living if the forests and trees are always maintained because forests and trees are the givers of life to humans. When the trees die it will be difficult for humans to maintain their life, because when trees die, animals die too. In the end, the law of matsya nyaya or The Law of the Fish will apply. It is a fundamental law of nature where it is described that big fish eats small fish, and the strong eat the weak. Thus, as a result of the death of the trees, the humans will survive by devouring weaker humans, and in the end, there will be an apocalypse. Such is the description of how important trees and plants are for animals and humans as an ecosystem unit (Eka, 2023).

Besides implied in the texts of the Kasuwakan lontars in Bali, the preservation of water as an obligation in the Mapag Toya ceremony is also mentioned in the holy book Artharvaveda XVIII.1.17. Water is very important for the survival of humans and other living things. There are three elements of the universe vitally needed in the cycle of

maintaining and preserving harmonious relationships between humans and their natural environment, namely:

Trii chandāsi kavayo vīyetire puruūpa darśata viśvacakanam. Apo vātā oadhayastā-

Ekasmin bhuvana-ārpitaāni.

Translation:

“The wise men find that there are three things that cover the entire universe. They have different forms and different aspects. They observe everything. They are water, air, and plants. These things are provided for each world” (Titib, 1996).

The three elements mentioned above are mutually dependent on each other, plants need water and water comes from plants, which ultimately provides a clean atmosphere or air. Yajur Veda VI.22 states: “Mā-apo hisīr, mā- oadhir hisīh. Which means “Do not pollute the water and do not hurt or cut down the trees”. The forests and rivers are precious treasures (Rgveda III.51,5 and Rgveda I.59.3).

Inra ya dyāva oadhir uta-āpa, rayī rakanti jīrayo vanāni.

Translation:

“The following are the protectors of natural wealth: the atmosphere, medicinal plants, and herbs, rivers, streams, water sources and forests” (Titib, 1996).

Yā parvateu-oadhiu-apsu.

Translation:

“There is wealth hidden in those mountains, in those plants (the forests), and in those rivers” (Titib, 1996).

The process of creation in the subak ritual can be seen from the Mapag Toya ceremony, which implies bringing together the sources of life, namely Lord Vishnu and Dewi Wasundari so that a compounding process occurs between water and soil. In the concept of Hindu cosmology, it is stated that in the beginning there was only water, and Brahman, which is the essence of God was sleeping on the water in the form of Vishnu. Because water is also called nara and a bed is called ayana, Lord Vishnu who sleeps on the water is called Nārāyana. From the water came the golden egg (anda), then from the egg Brahma was born. Because Brahma created Himself, Brahma is also known as Svayambhu, which comes from the words bhu (born) and svayam (by himself). For one year Brahma lived in the egg, then Brahma broke the egg into two pieces. Then Brahma created heaven and earth from the broken egg (relevant to The Big Bang Theory). The heavens, the cardinal directions, time, language, and the senses, were created in the heavens and the world (this sentence is similar to what



followers of other religions often cite, namely; God is said to have created the heavens and the earth) (Donder dalam Wastawa, 2015).

Water is the source of life, water is a means of healing, and water is a source of holy power from God, therefore water needs to be worshiped because water is part of the three world gems besides soil and plants. In the teachings of Hinduism, water is very sacred, hence, many Vedic sacred verses glorify water. As mentioned in the sloka of the Book of Brhad-aranyaka Upanisad III.7.4, which states:

Yo'psu tistham, abhyo'ntarah, yam âpo na viduh, yaspah sariram, yo'po ntaro yamayati, esa ta âtmântaryâmy amrtah.

Translation:

He who dwells in water, and also remains in the water, the water does not know it, his body is water, who controls water from within the water, he is the controlling atman from within that is eternal" (Donder, 2007:229).

The uniqueness of the Balinese environment is built upon its traditional wisdom, namely the thinking paradigm which is a synthesis between the sharpness of analysis and the sensitivity of the senses. Balinese traditional wisdom always strives to achieve balance, compatibility, and harmony between God, humans, and the environment by subordinating human existence to the totality of the universe (Surata, 1999:34). The existence of the Nyegara-gunung conception is an understanding of the natural circulation of water. Under normal conditions, the mountain functions as a buffer zone and absorbs rainwater through the thick forests. Maintenance of the forest as the headwater (luan) will affect the condition of the water downstream (teben).

It has been mentioned above that water is seen as a form of Lord Vishnu, one of God's manifestations that functions to protect. Even though it started as a symbol, at a practical level water is truly a source of life. Because without water all creatures will disappear. Therefore, it is not an exaggeration if there are people who physically worship water. Both theologically and in reality, water sources as part of the life of all living things on this earth, need to be maintained through various traditions, one of which is the Mapag Toya ceremony. In addition, water also has a very important function in rituals.

Water conservation through the Mapag Toya ceremony is one way to implement the Sad Kretih concept, especially in the Danu Kretih and Wana Kretih aspects. Danu Kretih is the effort to protect the lake as a source of water that can fertilize the plants and flow the water downstream. While Wana Kretih is an effort to preserve forests and mountains as reservoirs for storing and channeling water to rivers. To build a dynamic social harmony in Balinese society the subak organization is important. Because the subak organization has the



potential to perform actions to conserve water and forest. Dense forests will serve as a buffer area and rainwater reservoir. Maintenance of the forest as an upstream region (luan) will affect the condition of the water downstream (teben).

The social communication meaning of the Magpag Toya implementation is to build social solidarity among subak members to regenerate the social life of future farmers and to maintain subak identity. In addition, it also promotes harmonious living with the environment in the context of preserving water and the environment in general. The meaning of preserving the environment is by implementing the cultural philosophy of Tri Hita Karana, namely the three causes of harmony, consisting of: parhyangan (harmonious relationship between humans and God; pawongan (harmonious relationship between humans; and Palemahan (harmonious relationship between humans and their environment).

### **Conclusion**

Mapag Toya, can be communicated through local wisdom myths based on religion and politics which contain the logic of conserving water sources in supporting the welfare of society by a leader to strengthen his patron-client ties. Mapag Toya in Hindu theological and cosmological points of view, is a worship of Nini Dewi Gangga, or a meeting between Lord Vishnu and Dewi Wasundari (water and earth) in the process of creation. Besides respecting the orientation of sacred areas in the hulu-teben concept, which is implemented through the Nyegara Gunung ritual; The Mapag Toya ceremony is a form of ritual and social communication. It represents religious practices as the guide for the behavior of subak members in fulfilling their obligations in the preservation of water sources and the irrigation system so that water can flow through the Subak members' rice fields and downstream to achieve a common goal.

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