



# The Meaning of Dewi Sri in the Perspective of Spiritual Ecology in the Indigenous Peoples of Kampung Naga and Kampung Cireundeu

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Keywords:</b> Cireundeu Village; Ecofeminism; Shri Devi; Theology.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Article history:</b> Received 2024-03-24 Revised 2024-12-10 Accepted 2024-12-15</p>	<p>This research explores the cultural significance of Dewi Sri among the indigenous communities of Kampung Naga and Kampung Cireundeu, focusing on the similarities and differences in her essence as well as the relationship between these beliefs and Ecofeminism. Conducted in Tasikmalaya Regency and Cimahi, the study employed an anthropological approach with a comparative method to analyze religious practices and ancestral values. Findings revealed that both communities regard "goah" as a sacred area for storing staple foods, accessible only to women, who perform rituals honoring Dewi Sri with offerings like coconut and golden banana salads. This reflects the values of Spiritual Ecofeminism, emphasizing the interconnectedness of nature, femininity, and spirituality. The research highlights how Dewi Sri symbolizes a spiritual representation of women, serving as a medium for promoting sustainable environmental practices within these communities.</p> <p><b>Contribution:</b> The research enriches academic discourse by linking indigenous knowledge systems to contemporary Ecofeminist frameworks, thereby fostering a deeper appreciation for the role of cultural heritage in environmental stewardship.</p>

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Humans, as the pinnacle of the ecosystem, have higher power and are responsible for environmental sustainability (Boyer, 2018). The change in human thought patterns from theology to anthropocentrism affects the relationship with nature. Colonization in Indonesia resulted in the brutal exploitation of nature to achieve economic prosperity, resulting in destruction and industrial waste (Lowe & Manjapra, 2019). Traditional society lives a simple life dependent on nature, influenced by theology and natural centrist orientation. Their life cycle is shaped by interactions with the environment. The socialization process helps individuals adapt to their group (Darusman, 2016). Changes in modern society are creating a gap between urban and rural environments. Rural communities tend to maintain beliefs in myths and the supernatural, while urban communities tend to be more modern. Myths in traditional societies serve as a guide to life with sacred and symbolic values, covering social, cultural, spiritual and human relationship aspects with the environment. Belief in myths develops and varies in each region, influenced by stories passed down from generation to generation, feelings and individual perceptions (Lemba et al., 2023). Levi-Strauss emphasized

that myths should not only be seen from the perspective of psychoanalysis but also from history and the factors that cause myths to occur (Lévi-Strauss & Kroeber, 2006).

Dewi Sri represents the preservation of nature which depends on women's roles in giving birth, caring for and educating, in contrast to a development approach that emphasizes conquest (Garg et al., 2020). This research focuses on the indigenous communities of Kampung Naga and Kampung Cireundeu, which are communities with strong local culture and wisdom in the midst of modernization, becoming legal subject entities that still maintain their traditions and values. Naga Village is located in Neglasari Village, Salawu District, Tasikmalaya Regency. Meanwhile, the Cireundeu traditional village is located in Leuwi Gajah Village, South Cimahi District, Cimahi Regency. These two indigenous communities have special characteristics, very closely holding on to the customs inherited from their ancestors. In this research study, researchers examine the practices of both in the community's expression and meaning of the existence of Dewi Sri.

The essence of traditional life in Kampung Naga, rice farming is the main source of income. Rice is a source of income and full food security efforts for the people of Kampung Naga. Meanwhile, the people of Cireundeu Village are unique and different from the general habits of Indonesian society, which does not use paddy or rice as a staple source of food for its residents. Community behavior that is bound by ancestral customs and traditions adheres to a principle in the form of:

*"teu boga sawah asal boga pare, teu boga pare asal boga beas, teu boga beas asal nyangu, teu nyangu asal dahar, teu dahar asal kuat* (Jabbaril, 2018).

[It's okay not to have land, as long as you have rice, it's okay not to have rice, as long as you have rice, it's okay not to have rice, as long as you can cook rice, it's okay not to be able to cook rice, as long as you eat, it's okay not to eat, as long as you can survive].

The indigenous people of Cireundeu Village have consumed Rasi for almost a century. Rasi is rice made from cassava. This was originally a form of resistance to colonialism. Apart from the customary law which makes rice taboo, the beliefs of the Cireundeu people also differ in terms of the mythological figure who is believed to regulate Cireundeu's natural fertility. In other areas, many people believe in the presence of Dewi Sri in agricultural life. This is different from Cireundeu which believes in Nyai Pohaci. Nyai Pohaci is the goddess of fertility and essence who takes care of natural fertility so as to produce food for consumption by the people of Cireundeu. Even though today's times are developing more rapidly and the Cireundeu people are open to the progress of the times, the existence of the cultural traditions of the Cireundeu people still persists. This is in accordance with the proverb that is adhered to, namely *"Ngindung ka waktu, mibapa ka jaman"* [Mothering to time and fathering to the era], which means appreciating time and respecting the era (Alipour Amir et al., 2021).

Furthermore, these differences will be sharpened by studying the traditions between Kampung Naga and Kampung Cireundeu in their respect for Nyi Pohaci or Dewi Sri. Dewi Sri is known as the wife of Lord Vishnu who is believed in Hinduism to be the Protector Goddess in the Trimurti teachings. In West Java itself, Dewi Sri is also called Nyi Pohaci which is closely related to Mother Earth or Goddess of Rice. In general, Sundanese people have their own sympathy in the form of respect through religious ritual traditions for the expression of Dewi Sri (Nastiti, 2020). Even though the people of Cireundeu Village do not use paddy or rice as a staple source of food, the people of Cireundeu Village have not lost their sympathy for Dewi Sri, this is shown by the various knick-knacks inherited from their ancestors which are related to expressing respect for Nyi Pohaci.

The human relationship with nature is considered analogous to the human relationship with the female womb. Women's involvement in nature management is seen as crucial for the success of nature conservation. Spiritual ecofeminism emerged in the indigenous communities of Kampung Cireundeu and Kampung Naga, respecting the nature of women and nature. Myths, such as Dewi Sri, are used as media to support the ecofeminist movement and sustainable nature conservation. This spiritual belief glorifies nature and women, with three main elements: immanence, interconnectivity, and community. In modern society, alpha is an entity and perspective that tends towards patriarchal hierarchy, places nature as colonial land and does not include women in nature conservation. This has a negative impact on the sustainability of

nature. Ethics in maintaining and caring for relationships between humans and humans, as well as humans and nature, should work in balance, and things like this do not exist in modern society, on the contrary, in traditional or indigenous communities such as those in Kampung Naga and Kampung Cireundeu, they live in harmony. with nature and coexist well (Rohman & dkk, 2022).

Based on this background, the researcher carries out the urgency of research in the form of a comparative study of the meaning of Dewi Sri in the perspective of spiritual eco-feminism in the indigenous communities of Kampung Naga and Kampung Cireundeu. The relationship related to the values and meanings attached to the character of Dewi Sri is in harmony with the spirit of ecofeminism which emphasizes the nature of women as mothers of the earth. Based on the background explanation above, the author limits this research to the discourse on the meaning of Dewi Sri in the perception of the indigenous people of Kampung Naga and Kampung Cireundeu in a theoretical study of Spiritual Ecofeminist thought. What is the meaning and existence of Dewi Sri in the people of Kampung Naga and Kampung Cireundeu, what is the spirit of ecofeminism in the beliefs of the people of Kampung Naga and Kampung Cireundeu towards Dewi Sri, what are the similarities and differences in the essence of Dewi Sri in the people of Kampung Naga and Kampung Cireundeu.

## 2. METHOD

This research was conducted in Naga Village which is located in Tasikmalaya Regency, Salawu District, Neglasari Village and Cireundeu Village which is located in Cimahi, South Cimahi District, Leuwigajah Village. By using an anthropological approach with comparative methods. An anthropological approach understands religion through religious practices in society, especially those related to ancestral values and background values passed down from generation to generation. This approach allows the observation of religious phenomena clearly. Comparative studies are used in this research, where objects, such as the people of Kampung Naga and Kampung Cireundeu, are compared. This approach helps analyze the causal factors of certain phenomena and compare interrelated variables. Comparative studies focus on systemic variables, and place more emphasis on social observations that are not limited to certain territories (Silverman, 2013).

A feminist framework is used as a perspective for this research. This perspective emphasizes the importance of recognizing and respecting women as human beings who have the potential and ability to develop. This research is not only for women but is also carried out by women, with a focus on compensating for the inferior characteristics of women that are the product of devaluing culture. The feminist perspective highlights the power relations inherent in science (Bayeh, 2016).

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Not Geographical Research Location

Kampung Naga is a traditional settlement in West Java Province, located in Neglasari Village, Salawu District, Tasikmalaya Regency. With a land area of 1.5 hectares, a height of 488 meters above sea level, and bordered by the Ciwulan River to the east, hills to the west, and a small ditch to the south. To reach the village, you need to walk 600 meters along the road and climb 444 steps. The traces of the history of Kampung Naga suffered a loss which is known as "torch out" because written records were lost due to a large fire in 1956. The DI TII Kartosuwiryo rebel group set the fire after residents refused an invitation to join. Relics such as the mansion, former public rice barns, forbidden forests, and former *pangshalatan* are historical clues. From the former *pangshalatan*, it can be concluded that Kampung Naga has existed since Islam descended.

There are several versions regarding the origins of Kampung Naga. The first version states that the residents came from Mataram who went into hiding after the defeat against the VOC, changed their name, and called their village Kampung Naga. The second version shows Eyang Singaparna, a messenger from the king from the east who founded Bumi Ageung (Mansion) as the first residence. The third version states that the original residents of Kampung Naga came from the slopes of Mount Galunggung, descendants of Si Ngaparna, the king of Galunggung who converted to Islam. In various versions, it is found that Eyang Singaparna is considered the hero of the Kampung Naga community, Islam has been a religion since the

16th to 17th centuries AD, and the community came from the Sundanese tribe with the meeting of Javanese culture during the Mataram troops' attack on Batavia. (Qodariah & Armiyati, 2013).

Meanwhile, traditional rituals consist of several things as follows: Seclusion Ceremony: Performed on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, as a form of obedience to traditional rules and respect for ancestors. Hajat Sasih Ceremony: Held to ask for blessings and salvation from the ancestors and Grandmother Singaparna, as well as to express gratitude to God. Marriage Ceremony: Involves a series of stages such as the *sawer ceremony*, *nincak endog*, opening the door, *ngariung*, *ngampar*, and *munjungan*. Life Cycle Rituals: Involve the salvation of pregnant women, circumcision rituals, as well as celebrations related to birth, birth, marriage, and death.

Then, Cireundeu Traditional Village, Cireundeu Village has the characteristics of a village that is currently quite traditional and preserves Sundanese culture, especially in terms of culture and agriculture. Cireundeu Village has an area of 158,473 Ha, consisting of 30 Ha for agriculture and 8 Ha for settlement and the rest is forest. Ecologically, Cireundeu Village is surrounded by Mount Gajahlangu and Mount Jambul to the North, Mount Puncak Salam to the East, Mount Cimenteng to the South and Pasir Panji, the landfills and Mount Kunci to the West. Administratively, the Cireundeu Village area has the following boundaries; East side: Cibogo Village RW 07, 17 Leuwigajah Village North side: Kihapit Village RW. 10 Leuwigajah Subdistrict West Side: West Bandung Regency South Side: West Bandung Regency. The Cireundeu Village settlement is physically the same as other villages, with modern houses and technology. The uniqueness of Cireundeu Village is its non-physical culture which is continuously maintained, especially in terms of food security. The Cireundeu Village settlement is divided into two settlement groups. Physically, the two settlement groups in Cireundeu Village are not that different, what differentiates them is their customs and culture.

In settlement one there are two groups of people, namely indigenous people who have the Sundanese Wiwitan belief and non-indigenous people who are Muslim. These indigenous communities still adhere to ancestral traditions such as the habit of consuming cassava as a staple food. In this settlement between indigenous communities and Muslim communities, the settlement conditions are limited by footpaths. Meanwhile, in settlement two, almost all of them are Muslim and the people consume rice like Indonesian people in general (Heryana, 2012).

Cireundeu comes from the name "reundeu tree", because previously in this village there was a large population of reundeu trees. The reundeu tree itself is a tree used as herbal medicine. Cireundeu Village in Cimahi City is famous for its people whose staple food is cassava. This idea began in 1918 during the colonial era when there was a crisis of staple food (rice) and in addition, this area was located in a mountainous area so there were no rice fields to produce rice. In 1964, Cireundeu village was given an award by the government for the first time, namely the "Food Hero" award. It's just that due to limited information in our country, Cireundeu Village, which began consuming cassava rice as a staple food since 1918, only became known to the public in 2006. And in 2006, it often received various awards, one of which was an award in the form of "Food Verification" from the Government. especially the Minister of Agriculture.

The Cireundeu people practice the Sundanese Wiwitan religion or belief, which emphasizes the worship of natural forces and ancestral spirits (animism and dynamism). Even though it is considered to have elements of ancient monotheism with the existence of Sang Hyang Kersa, the majority of Cireundeu people still consume cassava as a staple food and adhere to the teachings of Prince Madrais from Cigugur, Kuningan. Even though physically it is an ordinary village, Cireundeu is de facto recognized as a traditional village because of the strict implementation of *karuhun* traditions. This community maintains the philosophy of life and morals of their ancestors, while maintaining Sundanese beliefs and identity so that they do not change.

The Cireundeu community has a concept of space consisting of Leuweung Larangan (forbidden forest), Leuweung Kuncian (reforestation forest), and Leuweung Baladahan (agricultural forest). They maintain and share land functions according to this concept, respecting natural sustainability. Even though they are predominantly agricultural land, they have strict regulations regarding forest use and preservation. Local traditions include cassava cultivation, rice planting, as well as traditional ceremonies such as Daftar Taun Ngemban Taun. Wedding ceremonies are regulated by customary rules, prohibiting divorce, polygamy and interracial marriage. Overall, the Cireundeu people preserve traditional arts such as Karinding, Celempung,

Gamelan, Seni Dengung, and Angklung Buncis, which reflect the richness of culture and local wisdom values. Ceremonies such as weddings, deaths and shaving babies' hair are carried out according to special traditional provisions.

### The meaning of Goddess Sri in Sundanese society

Then the meaning of Dewi Padi or Dewi Sri, which in Sundanese people's beliefs is called Nyimas Pohaci Sanghyang Sri, is a mythological figure who has a unique value for Indonesian society in general. (Sugita et al., 2021). The Big Indonesian Dictionary explains that myths are stories of a nation about ancient gods and heroes that contain interpretations about the origins of the universe, humans and the nation itself which contain deep meanings expressed in supernatural ways. ((KBBI), 2019).

In West Javanese myth, there are many stories related to Dewi Sri, such as *Wawacan Pohaci* and *Wawacan Sulanjana*. One popular story is *Wawacan Sulanjana*, where Dewi Sri was born from an egg produced by Dewa Anta. Dewa Anta met an eagle on the way and its egg broke, becoming Kalabuat and Budug Basu. Dewi Sri grew up to be a beautiful girl and, after a tragic story, became a symbol of fertility and prosperity for the people of West Java, especially after plants growing from her grave were planted in the Pakuan.

There are quite a lot of myths that color the lives of Sundanese people. This mythological thinking pattern seems to be influenced by the beliefs they adhere to. Myth is a sacred story in symbolic form that tells a series of real and imaginary events concerning the origins and changes of the universe and the world, gods and goddesses, natural forces, human heroes and society (Waryanti, 2015). In the study of religions, the term ritual is usually defined as a deliberate repetition of conventional and stylized words and actions with special significance. (Ellwood et al., 2007).

The ritual of honoring Dewi Sri or Nyi Pohaci, as a symbol of fertility for farmers, is an important part of the life of agrarian communities in Java and Sundanese Tatars. In this belief, Dewi Sri is considered as the source of life, especially in the context of rice farming. The Sundanese community is known for two forms of rice cultivation, namely huma (farming) and paddy fields. Respect rituals are performed starting from land preparation to post-harvest, involving various traditional communities in West Java such as the Baduy community, Ciptagelar Ancestry, Banten Kidul, Kampung Naga, Garut, Cigugur, Kuningan, and others. The ceremony includes the process of tilling the land, planting, and storing the harvest in the barn.

The stages of rice cultivation in the Sundanese people start from *nyacar*, *mopok*, *ngawalajar* (first hoe), *mindu* (second hoe), *ngeueuman taneuh* (soaking the soil), *nglangler* (turning the soil), *ngararata* (leveling the land), melting, *nyaplak*, *babut*, *tandur*, *nyaian* (irrigation), *nyayuman*, *narberak* (fertilizing), *ngabaladah* (first weeding), *ngarambet mindu* (second weeding), *mangkas* (cutting the leaves of rice that looks shady), *tunggu pare* (dispelling birds), *melet* (tying around the paddy in order not to fall due to the wind), harvest, transport (transport), and finally put the rice in the barn (Nasiti, 2020).

Before carrying out each stage, it is usually started by praying, also asking permission from those who control (*nu ngageugeuh*) the land and also from Dewi Sri. The ceremony to bless rice seeds is carried out by singing several rhymes (*kidung*), which are intended to invite Dewi Sri to come down to earth and bless the rice seeds in several areas in West Java. Baduy people start planting rice by playing angklung. After that, planting rice seeds is called *mitembeyan tandur* (planting seeds) which is done by women. In the end, generally in Sundanese society, a ritual known as Mapag Dewi Sri is held. The term *mapag* in Sundanese means to pick up and Dewi Sri means the goddess of rice or a symbol of fertility (Rohmana & Ernawati, 2014). Mapag Dewi Sri is a ritual carried out to honor Dewi Sri, the rice goddess who is thought to have given prosperity and happiness to farmers. This ritual is an expression of gratitude to God for abundant agricultural products and is usually carried out when harvesting rice. The majority of traditional farmers who still believe in mystical things are involved in this ritual, calculating farming time based on their mystical beliefs. This ritual aims to express gratitude, preserve local culture, and teach humans to be grateful for God's gifts and maintain the balance of nature.

### The meaning of Goddess Sri in the Indigenous People of Naga Village

The meaning of Dewi Sri in the Sundanese people has long been known for two types of rice cultivation, namely *huma* and rice fields. The *huma* tradition is a Sundanese tradition known as farming communities.

Ceremonies honoring Dewi Sri, better known as Sri Pohaci or Nyi Pohaci (an abbreviation of Nyi Pohaci Sanghyang Sri) are still carried out by people in West Java, especially indigenous communities such as the Baduy community, Ciptagelar Ancestry, Southern Banten, Kampung Naga, Garut, Cigugur, and others. Ceremonies honoring Dewi Sri are carried out from land processing to post-harvest. The ceremony begins with land processing, starting from preparing the land for planting to putting the rice into the barn.

The process of cultivating rice fields in Sundanese society involves a series of stages, including praying and asking permission from the land owner and Dewi Sri before each step. The ceremony to bless rice seedlings is carried out by singing rhymes or ballads to invite Dewi Sri. After harvest, the people of West Java carry out large ceremonies such as *mitembeyan* to express gratitude and honor the Goddess of Rice with offerings. The *seren taun* ceremony is also carried out after harvest in traditional villages with variations between villages. The people of Kampung Naga make rice their staple food, a product of rice farming which they grow traditionally and rely on mystical values. The rice plant is considered to have mystical value, and the process of planting and harvesting it involves rituals such as treats before planting and harvesting as well as belief in the Rice Goddess or Pohaci as the giver of life.

According to the research results of Ahman Syadi on Kampung Naga (2004) the traditional community of Kampung Naga inherited the obligation to live in simplicity, seen in the expression; *teu saba, teu soba, teu banda, teu boga, teu weduk, teu bedas*, etc.; meaning that his ancestors did not inherit anything more, but were required to live in simplicity. Likewise, the treatment of animals and plants is not to change and exploit nature but to try to behave in accordance with nature's demands. Belief in natural (physical) objects is considered to have a soul or physical things must have spiritual or magical properties, such as rice is believed to have a spiritual, namely Dewi Sri or often called Sanghyang Sri (Darusman, 2016).

The meaning of Dewi Sri for the indigenous people of Kampung Naga is quite close to the Goddess of Rice, or the Goddess of fertility. Various expressions are lived by the indigenous people of Kampung Naga in using or honoring the existence of Dewi Sri. This can be seen from the various occult practices and a set of rituals carried out by the local community, from starting planting, caring for, and harvesting to serving rice, which is filled with philosophical meanings. When the rice planting season begins, the people of Kampung Naga prepare the planting land ready for planting, including certain calculations. At least the planting months of the Kampung Naga traditional community have been determined for generations to be January and July (Darusman, 2016). The rice planting area that will be planted after being prepared in such a way will be protected with a set of rituals and prayers aimed at asking God and the intermediary Dewi Sri.

The indigenous people of Kampung Naga adhere to the Sundanese philosophy of "*Mipit kudu amit, Ngala kudu bebeja*" which is interpreted as everything must be preceded by permission or saying goodbye. This procession begins with scattering the seeds, to planting the rice seedlings into the rice fields, accompanied by the laying of offerings known as "*ngerujak pare*". *Ngerujak pare* is an offering placed near a stream of water in the form of coconut salad and palm sugar; coconut can also be replaced with golden bananas. The purpose of placing this offering is in a corner of the rice field, with the aim of protecting the land from evil spirits and pests. Apart from coconut salad, the offerings are usually accompanied by *hanjuang* plants, and some others include incense in the offerings.

Then before harvest, the rice field owner will carry out a ritual of salvation again, and the harvest time is determined by calculating the days by local traditional leaders. This ritual is carried out when the rice begins to fill or what is called "beulah bitter melon". The next big traditional ceremony or ritual is carried out during the rice harvest; in Sundanese society in the Arab region, it is known as the Mapag Dewi Sri ritual. This ritual is carried out together by making offerings of *taneur* shoots. This ritual is also a form of local wisdom, which is carried out by working together to gather together in the meeting hall, and some of the women prepare several dishes to eat together.

The rice harvest is always busy because it is a thanksgiving for the blessings of the harvest, especially for the community, rice is a symbol of strength and is glorified in society, where rice is also a basic need for the community to survive (Rolitia et al., 2018). After carrying out this ritual, the harvest results cannot immediately be processed in the next process, but rather through the "*ngaleseuhan*" stage, a ritual carried out by women or mothers. This procession is aimed at expressing gratitude for the harvest results. Furthermore, the rice will be taken care of by Indung Goah (Hidayatullah, 2020).

*Indung Goah* is a term that refers to the mother or wife in the Kampung Naga community. Their main task is to store rice in a *goah*, a partitioned room in the kitchen that only women or mothers can access. Every house has a *goah* that only the woman who owns the house can enter. *Goah* is divided into two parts, namely the storage area for rice and paddy. The location of the *goah* is always close to the kitchen and parallel to the kitchen (parents), with the parents' sleeping position facing the *goah*. The position of the *goah* is determined according to the *weton* or the wife's birthday. The kitchen is considered to have high importance, shown by the *tulak bala* symbol on the kitchen door, indicating the significance of the kitchen with the presence of *hawu* (fireplace) in it in Kampung Naga culture.

*Goah* is an intimate sacred area with special activities for women in it; for this reason, there are also special rituals carried out by women as a form of respect. The ritual procession of presenting offerings in the form of *ngarujak* also acts as a procession of giving offerings in the form of *rujak* to the rice goddess who is in the *goah*, making the center and core of the space in this activity the *goah*. Because of the communication between the wife and higher entities, namely the gods and goddesses in the form of offerings, the *goah* space becomes sacred both during ritual processions and on other days (As'ari & Nandang, 2016). The *ngarujak* ritual is intended as a form of gratitude, and a request for the protection of the food one has, in this case, paddy or rice, which is the main food security; this ritual is addressed to Dewi Sri. This ritual is carried out specifically by women on certain nights, namely every Tuesday and Friday nights. Another meaning expected from this procession is Dewi Sri's blessing to get the blessing of a little rice and feel full (Sunarti et al., 2022).

### **The meaning of Dewi Sri in the Indigenous People of Cireundeu Village**

The belief system of the indigenous people of Cireundeu Village is rooted in the teachings of Prince Madrais in 1918. These teachings carry a philosophy of moral values believed by the Cireundeu people regarding how to carry themselves in life. Even though decades have passed, the people of Cireundeu still firmly embrace and practice these teachings in their daily lives. This belief is known as the Sunda Javanese Religion (ADS) or Sunda Wiwitan, part of the Buhun Religion (Jabbaril, 2018). The people who adhere to ADS in the Cigugur area, Kuningan Regency, view religion as a means of application in life, not just a means of worship, and they continue to adhere to traditions with rarely found sites of worship.

The people of Cireundeu Village state that there are two terms in their religion: First, the term human relationship with humans and human relationship with nature. The relationship between humans and humans means social creatures who must have good relationships and not recognize differences. Second, the relationship between humans and nature is divided into 3 provisions. First is *Gusti Nu Asih*, second is *Manusa Nu Ngasuh*, and third is *Alam Nu Ngasah*. Prince Haji Ali Madrais, who is recognized as the ancestor of the Cireundeu people, probably received the title Haji not because he actually went to fulfill the pillars of Islam but received the title Haji because he was considered a leader or Imam. Prince Madrais, who is usually called Kiai Madrais, is a descendant of the prince of the Gebang Sultanate, a sultanate in the eastern part of Cirebon. When the Dutch East Indies government attacked the Gebang sultanate, Prince Madrais was evacuated to the Cigugur area, Kuningan. Prince Madrais is also called Prince Sadewa Alibasa who was raised in Islamic traditions.

However, then Prince Madrais developed the understanding he extracted from the traditions of the agrarian Sundanese community. According to the Cireundeu indigenous people, the taboos are as follows. a). Don't eat other people's sweat, this means we must not eat other people's rights such as plundering, robbing, stealing or hurting other people. b). You should not force other people to adhere to the beliefs they adhere to. Meanwhile, the things that must be done are: a). Saur must be made (telling and speaking must be done carefully and must be in the appropriate place. b). Language must be refined (speak well and politely). c). Mutual Cooperation d). Religious Tolerance. The Sundanese Wiwitan sect still exists and has loyal adherents in the Cimahi city area, West Java Province, such as in the residential location of the Sundanese Wiwitan community in Cireundeu Leuwigajah village, South Cimahi, Cimahi City. This belief is also known as the *karuhun urang* method (ancestral tradition). Wiwitan Sundanese religion, Madrais teachings or Cigugur religion. They believe in God, and firmly maintain their beliefs and keep their Sundanese identity from changing.

The meaning of Dewi Sri. The Cireundeu community has unique historical traces compared to other traditional village communities in the West Java region. This uniqueness also intersects with the transition of the meaning of Dewi Sri as the Goddess of Rice. The people of the Cireundeu traditional village have long stopped consuming rice (paddy) as a staple food source, however the local people have not lost their respect for the existence of Dewi Sri or in the beliefs of the Cireundeu people known as "Kersa Nyai". During the Dutch colonial period, precisely in 1918, Cireundeu Village experienced a food crisis caused by the drying up of rice fields. Apart from that, the Dutch colonialists at that time also confiscated food produced by the people of Cireundeu Village. It was impossible to ask the Dutch colonial government for a solution to the suffering of the food crisis. This situation prompted a prominent figure, namely Abah Haji Ali, to leave Cireundeu Village to look for a solution to the problem, until he arrived in the Cirebon Sultanate area.

Abah Haji Ali in Cirebon met a figure who provided enlightenment, rediscovering old wisdom in the life of the Sundanese people. This advice implies the value that survival is the essence of life, not depending on other parties. Abah Haji Ali, with this awareness, plans to convert rice fields into cassava plantations to overcome the food crisis and free the people of Cireundeu Village from dependence on rice as food. This desire is a form of Abah Haji Ali's struggle to achieve progressive independence, not only from Dutch colonialism, but also from the difficulties of life and dependence on other parties. To strengthen his determination to fight the food crisis, Abah Haji Ali encouraged people not to consume rice, but to switch to cassava or other tubers as an alternative.

The people of Cireundeu Village have a philosophical view of food, viewing rice as a worldly food that can give rise to excesses. On the other hand, the taste of Rasi (Cassava Rice) is considered simple and brings out an earthy nature. They realize that the tradition of consuming cassava passed down from their ancestors brings blessings, provides physical and spiritual freedom, and eliminates fears related to rising prices or scarcity of food. By consuming Rasi, the people of Cireundeu Village can create an inspiring food security system. Their lives are intertwined in harmony with fellow citizens and with the natural environment. Even so, the existence of Dewi Sri or Kersa Nyai still has a special space in the social, cultural and spiritual order of the Cireundeu community through *Goah* as a place to store basic commodities. *Goah* is considered a sacred area in the house, located within the scope of the kitchen, and may only be accessed by women. The Rasi storage area is also accompanied by rice as a form of respect for Dewi Sri, who is considered the Goddess of Food. This rice is placed in an earthen barrel and regularly replaced as a form of annual respect.

There are a series of traditional rituals that are still carried out by local people as a form of respect, including the ritual before harvest. In traditional communities generally, the ritual is carried out when harvesting rice, in the people of Cireundeu Village it is carried out when harvesting cassava. The ritual is prepared with a number of offerings in the form of water flowers and perfume. Then the offerings that have been prepared are delivered first to the traditional elders to be prepared or prayed for. The offerings that have been prayed for are then taken to the garden, then the farmer chooses one of the cassava that is considered the best to continue the ritual by pouring offerings and scattering flowers accompanied by a prayer as a form of permission or farewell, which in Sundanese is known as "*mipit kudu amit, ngala must be beja*" (Widhi, 2024).

Furthermore, there is a ritual specifically carried out by women, in a sacred area, namely the *goah*. This ritual has intimacy between women and the figure of Dewi Sri. The ritual carried out is in the form of offering offerings, the offerings contain coconut salad, bread salad, tamarind salad, flower water, bitter coffee, bako and kawung leaves. Then the offerings are stored in a barrel, which contains rice. This is intended as a form of respect for Dewi Sri, the implementation itself is carried out every Monday, Tuesday night and Thursday, Friday night. (Yana, 2024). Another effort to glorify Dewi Sri can also be seen from the consistency of the people of Cireundeu Village who carry out the activity of hanging rice bundles along with their stalks in the front rooms of their houses. Even though local people believe that rice is no longer allowed to be consumed, the character of Dewi Sri always lives in the people's beliefs. Dewi Sri is also believed to be a *gegodongan* spirit or a spirit that lives in plants, therefore the meaning of Dewi Sri is not just the Goddess of Rice.

### Analysis of the Spirit of Ecofeminism

According to philosophers, the ideology of ecofeminism explains that the ecofeminism movement was born from movements associated with the worsening environmental conditions. Philosophers argue that the



basic concept is dualism between feminism and ecology with the ultimate goal of proving resistance to the concept of patriarchy. (Aprilia & Mahfudzi, 2020). Women in the world of Sundanese mythology are in an honorable position. Their position, honor and dignity are not under the control of men, in fact in certain cases they occupy a strategic place in the framework of giving birth to a quality human being. There is a philosophy in which the praise of women *Indung nu ngandung bapa nu ngayuga*; *Munjung* is different for *Mount Muja*, it's different for *Sagara*, but *Munjung* is a different matter for the *muja ovaries*, it's a different matter for the father. (The mother who conceived the father is the cause; praise is not to the mountains, worship is not to the sea, but praise to the mother, worship to the father) are some of the expressions that Sundanese people still know today. It reflects the respect and glorification of the parents who gave birth to and cared for their children. The figure of *Indung* in the hearts of Sundanese people has a deeper meaning. The meaning is not just and limited to the meaning of a woman giving birth to her children. More than that, the figure of the mother has become the highest symbol in Sundanese mythology and at least has an honorable position in the social strata of society. (Heryana, 2012).

Emeis stated that myths are ancient stories from the time when humans still felt at one with nature and the supernatural events around them. Myths usually describe the birth of a nation, the meeting of elders with gods, spirits, and so on. The gifts and sufferings obtained, the agreements and also the prohibitions made. Myth is not based on logical thoughts, but rather feelings, mythical thoughts, which humans do not have in this modern era. William R. Bascom (Djajasudarma, 2008). Clarifying Emeis' opinion that a myth is a story that is considered to have really happened and is sacred by those who tell the story. Myths are characterized by gods or semi-god creatures, they occur in other worlds or in worlds that are not the world we know today, and they occur a long time ago. Mite as stated by Hoykaas (1952: 117) is a story about gods and goddesses that has a religious origin and is a belief in the origins of a nation or lineage, in addition to containing magical elements.

Based on the opinions of several figures as previously stated, it can be concluded that myths are always related to sacred, magical and magical properties, are believed to be as if they were happening, the characters involved are connected to a god or goddess, and have a historical background. Mythical figures who are alive and some of whom are still often the target of offerings at certain ceremonies in Sundanese society are *Dayang Sumbi*, *Sunan Ambu*, and *Nyi Sri Pohaci*. The figure of each mythical figure will be described below.

In Sundanese belief, the name *Dewi Sri* itself has other names, namely *Nyi Pohaci Sanghyang Sri*, *Nyi Dangdayang Tresnawati*. There are three levels of nature, according to mythology as expressed in the *pantun* story. The three levels of nature referred to are (1) *Buana Nyungcung*, where *Sang Hyang Keresa* resides, which is located at the top, (2) *Buana Panca Tengah*, where humans and other creatures live, and at the bottom (3) *Buana Larang*, namely hell. Between *Buana Nyungcung* and *Buana Panca Tengah* there are 18 natural layers arranged from top to bottom. The top layer is called the *Sacred Earth of Alam Padang* or called *Alam Kahiyangan* or *Mandala Hiyang*. This natural layer is where *Nyi Pohaci Sanghyang Asri* and *Sunan Ambu* live.

Sundanese people, whose population geographically and demographically (in the past) made a living from farming, place the figure of *Dewi Sri* in the main place. In various aspects of life, especially matters related to agriculture, *Dewi Sri* is the center of worship. The various ceremonies carried out by the farming community cannot be separated from their belief in or respect and worship of *Sri Pohaci*. There are various respects made by the Sundanese people to express their devotion to *Dewi Sri*, this occurs not only during harvest or post-harvest, but also occurs from the time the land is cultivated. In farming activities there are spells that are used when carrying out ceremonies at each change of activity. For example, when clearing a field, a cultivator says the following prayer of *amit* (Heryana, 2012).

Table 1. Prayer to start clearing the field for planting with English translation

Terms in Sundanese	English translation
Ka luhur	To the top
ka sang rumuhun	To the god who rules the sky
Ka handap	To the below
Ka sang batara	To the god who rules the earth
Ka para dewa dewi	To other gods and goddesses
Ka siluman	To evil spirits
Ka sileman	To good spirits

Ka dewa kalakay salambar	To the gods of a pair of dry leaves
Anu nyicingan bumi	The one who rules in the universe

Source: Extracted from the field, 2023.

Next, the cultivator continued with the following words:

Table 2. Mention of Goddess when praying for the cleansing of fields with English translation

Terms in Sundanese	English translation
Ema	Mother
Bapa	Father
Abdi neda widi	I ask permission
Bade maka ieu huma	Will open land (farm)
Ulah aya nu ganggu	Please don't disturb anyone
Ngaguna sika	Failed it
Berkah dua salametna	Blessings of safe prayers
Kalawan	And
Rahayu sadayana	Rahayu (blessing) everyone

Source: Extracted from the field, 2023.

The most important stage in planting rice in the fields (huma) is ngaseuk. Ngaseuk comes from the word aseuk. Aseuk itself means a stick with a sharp tip and functions to make holes for rice seeds. During ngaseuk, a quite large and lively ceremony is held. The following is a prayer for holding Ngaseuk:

Table 3. Prayer when making a hole for planting seeds with English translation

Terms in Sundanese	English translation
Bul kukus	Wipe away the smoke
Doa rosul	Prayer for the Apostle
Nya Menyan	Namely incense
Nitipkeun Sri Pohaci purnama alam sajati	We entrust Sri Pohaci full moon to true nature
Ka sukmaning bumi	To the soul of the earth
Ka sukmaning bumi	To the spirit of the earth
Ka sukmaning geni	To the soul of fire
Ka sukmaning angin	To the soul of the wind
Titip ka Prabu susuk Tunggal	Entrust the single implant to Prabu
Aku-akuan anak incu	So that they like being recognized as children and grandchildren
Putu Nabi Adam	Grandson of the prophet Adam
Umat Nabi Muhammad	People of the Prophet Muhammad
Mihape bisi aya	We left it
Anu ngaganggu	Don't let anyone disturb you
Ngagunasika	Damage
Bisi aya jalan siluman	Just in case there are genies and demons
Iblis	Devil
Bisi aya nu ngaganggu	If something bothers you
Rong-rong gogodongan	All kinds of plants
Muga-muga pangnyilarkeun	Hopefully it's protected
Aku akuan anak incu puti	I confess my grandchildren
Nabi Adam	Prophet Adam
Umat Nabi Muhammad	People of the prophet Muhammad
Nyuhunkeun lulusna	Pray for safety
Mulusna	Success

Beresna palerena	So that the results
Sing aranekeh alabatan sereh	Multiply (lemongrass extract)
Sing arunukuh	So that it bears abundant fruit
Alabatan dukuh	Like hamlet fruit

Source: Extracted from the field, 2023.

When harvest time arrives, the previous ceremony is carried out again, called the Mipit Ceremony or commonly called Nyalin. At this nyalin ceremony, a prayer (jangjawokan) is read as follows:

Table 4. Prayers when harvesting with English translation

Terms in Sundanese	English translation
Bul Ngukus	Smoke billows
Doa Rasul	The Apostle's Prayer
Nya menyan pancering iman	Frankincense as the mother of faith
Hatur salam panarima	Convey greetings for his protection
Hatur sangu pangabakti	Serving rice as a sign of bakto
Jisim abdi bade ngamitekuen ieu Sri Pohaci	We will keep Sri Pohaco
Purnama alam sajati	True natural full moon
Dumeh geud nepi kana bukuning taun	Because the year has arrived
Geus keuna mangsaning bulan	Because the month has arrived
Nu ngarumpag ngumbara di alam dunya	Who wanders in this universe
Ayena geura maruli	Now please
Ka gedong Sri Ratna Inten	Return to the Sri Ratna Intan Building

Source: Extracted from the field, 2023.

The role of women or in other words ovaries which is interpreted as mother, in Sundanese terms is more obvious in ceremonies related to agricultural customs. Starting with the mythological story of Sanghyang Dewi Sri and ending with various rules of conduct related to special treatment when planting rice. Respectful behavior towards Dewi Sri is visible from the beginning of planting until post-harvest. It is full of ceremonies and spells to start a job

### The Spirit of Ecofeminism in the Meaning of Dewi Sri

Spiritualist ecofeminism was developed by Starhawk and Charles Spretnak. Based on a view that tries to justify the dangers caused by humans to nature. Spiritualist ecofeminism understands environmental damage with patriarchal spirituality. Ecofeminism understands environmental damage with spirituality. Spiritualist ecofeminism has three core concepts, namely; 1) Immanence (immanence), 2) Interconnection (interconnected), 3) Compassionate-lifestyle (lifestyle) (Nelfita, 2020).

The focus of the study object in the research combines two elements between the meaning of Dewi Sri which is believed in the traditional community of Kampung Naga and the people of Kampung Cireundeu with the spirit values of Spiritual Ecofeminism, looking at the special features of Dewi Sri's essence which is in line with the form of argumentation of values in spiritual Ecofeminism. Dewi Sri is a sacred entity and her existence is appreciated as a Goddess figure who is glorified by the people of Kampung Naga and Kampung Cireundeu. Although in the ritualistic space men have a relatively more dominant space or scope than women. However, this does not rule out the sacred value of Dewi Sri, who is identified with the female sex as the mother of rice (Khairunnisa, 2014). Dewi Sri is a symbol of fertility and the origin of rice. Rice is also close to women both practically and culturally, which is maintained through knowledge of myths and legends. Practically, this is demonstrated through the division of women's roles in the domestic realm who are responsible for managing family food. The connection between women and nature is culturally demonstrated in language beliefs and practices. Women are symbols of fertility and spiritualism about nature (Masrurroh & Dewi, 2023).

The meaning of Dewi Sri in the people of Kampung Naga is believed to be God's messenger who is tasked with providing an abundance of food. The value of Dewi Sri does not stop with respect for rice alone, but the lexicon of the concept of rice also clearly shows the form of respect the indigenous people of

Kampung Naga have for Dewi Sri. In the diakeul process, for example, which aims to make the rice fluffier or sticky when consumed, the respect of the Kampung Naga indigenous people for Dewi Sri who has provided abundant harvests, especially rice, is reflected. On the other hand, it turns out that the diakeul process implies the message that rice, which is a gift from God, must be served well because the diakeul process can make the rice taste fluffier and tastier to consume. (Hidayatullah, 2020).

In the traditional community of Cireundeu Village, even though rice is no longer a staple food, the character of Dewi Sri is always echoed, with changes in essence. This transformation shifts or develops in meaning following changes in the culture of the society, with developing history. A series of ritual agendas are still directed at Dewi Sri, who was originally the Goddess of Rice and became a spirit or figure known as the Goddess of Plants. This effort to glorify is a form of respect for the existence of Dewi Sri, who is considered the source of life. The Cireundeu indigenous people have principles "Teu Nyawah Asal Boga Pare, Teu Boga Pare Asal Boga Beas, Teu Boga Beas Asal Bisa Nyangu, Teu Nyangu Asal Dahar, Teu Dahar Asal Kuat". The Cireundeu indigenous people never lack food because of the abundance of cassava.

In the study of Spiritual Ecofeminism, the meaning of Dewi Sri is like a heavenly entity sent by God who is responsible for the availability of human food, through her blessing on rice or staple food plants. As a ritual that places Dewi Sri, a female figure as the central figure, *wiwitan* is a cultural expression that places women as respected figures. (Sathotho, 2023). Through various rituals carried out by the indigenous people of Kampung Naga and Kampung Cireundeu, a relationship that refers to agricultural traditions is created to promote a more respectful and reciprocal relationship with the earth.

There are basic principles that can be internalized in the behavior of the indigenous people of Kampung Naga and Kampung Cireundeu, which are in line with the essence of Ecofeminism, namely living simply and in harmony with Nature. (Sathotho, 2023). In the scope of this society really prioritizes simplicity and protecting nature with various traditional values. This shows that this existence is able to overcome the concerns of modern society which believes that there is inequality between men, women and nature. Ecofeminism can help overcome social injustice by exploring the connection between women and the degradation of nature, and by challenging dominant paradigms that perpetuate oppression of women and nature. (Sathotho, 2023). The personification of nature (Dewi Sri) as a woman shows how efforts are made by agricultural communities to maintain natural fertility through actions in the form of rituals. From the prayers and actions carried out, this ritual is an expression of gratitude and hope that the figure of Dewi Sri will continue to give the best to society.

So, in this case, rituals can be a powerful tool for promoting ecofeminist values and encouraging a more sustainable and just relationship with nature. By incorporating ecofeminist principles into our rituals, we can help create a more just and balanced society for all living things. Dewi Sri's character in this community emphasizes privilege and equal roles that balance the behavior patterns and beliefs of the local community. In both indigenous communities, there are similarities in rituals that specify the object and the perpetrators are women. This shows the balance and close intimacy between women and nature. Dewi Sri, as a fertility figure, has a special intimate space with traditional women in local community beliefs. This special space is called "*goah*". Where the *goah* in these two traditional communities is a space that can only be touched by women and there are special ritual activities that are only carried out by women.

The rituals carried out by these two communities have become traditional values expressed through local wisdom. In the discipline of anthropology, local wisdom is known as local genius. Epistemologically, local wisdom consists of two words, namely wisdom, which means wisdom, and local, which means local. Local wisdom is understood as good local ideas, values and views that are embedded and followed by members of the community. Local wisdom, which is a form of local intelligence in society, can overcome life's problems. Of course, things like this can encourage people to maintain local traditions and wisdom in order to be able to resolve conflicts and reduce the emergence of conflicts. This answers the allegations that Ecofeminism is concerned about regarding the unequal roles between men and women, which have the potential to damage nature and make nature a colonial territory. In both communities, the environment is well maintained, and the community lives well and respects each other, especially the existence of Dewi Sri as a figure who is identified as a woman who has a special character.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Ecofeminism is a movement that demands the rights of women and nature, considering nature to have feminine characteristics like women. Charles Spretnak's Spiritual Ecofeminism theory was used in a study of the meaning of Dewi Sri in the indigenous communities of Kampung Naga and Kampung Cireundeu in Sunda. Both communities are unique regarding the existence of Dewi Sri, who is closely related to the Goddess of Rice. The Kampung Naga traditional community grows rice as a basic necessity and carries out various rituals with spiritual values towards Dewi Sri, even though they are Muslim. They maintain traditional values in processing agricultural land and agricultural products.

The Cireundeu indigenous people, even though they switched from rice to cassava as their staple food, have not lost their respect for Dewi Sri. Most of the Cireundeu indigenous people adhere to the Sundanese *Wiwitan* belief, but still have similarities with the Kampung Naga indigenous community in their rituals and respect for Dewi Sri. Both indigenous communities have the concept of *goah* as a sacred area for storing staple foods that can only be touched by women. Special rituals are carried out by women in honor of Dewi Sri, by giving offerings in the form of coconut salad or golden banana salad. This similarity reflects the values of Spiritual Ecofeminism which examines the harmonious relationship between nature, women and spirituality.

Thus, it can be said that in Mircea Eliade's perspective, life is based on two different things (heterogeneous), namely sacred and profane. It is known that sacred means something that has sacred value, while profane is something that is considered impure. So in this case, *goah* is a sacred area, because it has holiness which is characterized as an area that can only be touched by certain individuals and is related to spiritual values, namely the existence of the revered Goddess Sri. Meanwhile, the relationship between the meaning of Dewi Sri that is maintained among the indigenous communities of Kampung Naga and Kampung Cireundeu shows the spirit of Spiritual Ecofeminism which represents the figure of Dewi Sri as a spiritual symbol of women. These myths contain supernatural connotations which can become a medium for upholding and carrying out the eco-feminism movement as an agenda for sustainable nature conservation. Spiritual ecofeminism sees that humans need to adhere to beliefs that clearly respect the nature of women and nature.

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