Bhima in Postmodern Meaningfulness

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The Bhima character is the strongest character among the Pandawa brothers in the Mahabharata. This perception has been held since the classical age up to now, which made Bhima becomes a cultural icon of the archipelago. The character of Bhima has been turned into the symbol of wisdom, strength/firmness, honesty, truthfulness, obedience, social icon, and social icon. On the other hand, Bhima is also a symbol of Godliness, humanity, and evil. In their daily life, the Balinese understands the Bhima character as the Otonan Cermony as the symbol of strength in Bhima. In its development, the Bhima character also understood as: Kuku Bhima supplements, Jamu Kuku Bhima, Transportation means, cigarete advertising, birthday party, street name, Keris name, and food name.

Keywords: Mahabharata, Bhima, and cultural icon

The character Bhima, as far as is remembered and perceived by the people living in the archipelago in general and the Indonesian people who have relatively been influenced by the Indian Hinduism since Hindu culture was introduced into the archipelago is concerned, has not been a new thing. The character Bhima (which may be spelled Bima) is a great character in the Mahabharata epic. He is a great protagonist character and is well known as the character that carries out ‘dharma’ (righteousness). Apart from Bhima, there are other characters such as Yudhistira, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva. They are all called Panca Pandawa (the five brothers of Pandawa).

They are opposed to the 100 antagonist characters called Kurawa. They are the characters that carry out ‘adharma’ (badness). Logically, the opposition between dharma represented by Panca Pandawa to adharma represented by Kurawa seems to be topical if related to the essence of human life with its various dimensions. The dictionary of stereotypes of the two big families in the Mahabarat epic is particularly appreciated or perceived by the Balinese people as something which will eternally never change. Such an appreciation is transformed through various Balinese cultural activities starting from arts, religiosit, biology, food, characteristics and behavior adopted from the character Bhima.

Why people are interested in the character Bhima, as far as the context of the archipelago culture is concerned, has attracted cultural observers. That indicates that the character Bhima has been a cultural icon to various layers of the communities in Java and Bali in particular. This is shown by the