

Bhima in Postmodern Meaningfulness

I NYOMAN LINGGIH

Department of Religion Education, Faculty of Dharma Acarya, State Institute of Hindu Dharma Indonesia, Indonesia
E-mail: iyomanlinggih@yahoo.com

Tokoh *Bhīma* merupakan tokoh yang paling kuat dari Panca Pandawa dalam cerita Mahabharata, persepsi masyarakat ini melekat dari jaman klasik hingga saat ini, sehingga ketokohan *Bhīma* telah menjadi ikon budaya masyarakat Nusantara. Tokoh *Bhīma* sebagai simbol kebijaksanaan, simbol kekuatan/*teguh*, jujur, kesungguhan hati/taat, ikon kesuburan, ikon iklan, ikon sosial. Di samping itu *Bhīma* adalah simbol kedewataan, kemanusiaan, dan juga kebutakalaan. Dalam Kehidupan sehari-hari masyarakat Bali memaknai Tokoh *Bhīma* dalam upacara *otonan* sebagai simbol kekuatan, dengan harapan agar anak yang diupacarai memiliki kekuatan seperti *Bhīma*. Dalam perkembangan pemaknaan Tokoh *Bhīma* dimaknai sebagai : minuman suplemen kuku *Bhīma*, jamu kuku *Bhīma*, sarana transportasi, iklan rokok, acara ulang tahun, nama jalan, nama keris, dan nama makanan.

The *Bhīma* character is the strongest character among the Panca Pandawas in the Mahabharata, this perception has been held since the classical age up to now, which made *Bhīma* becomes a cultural icon of the Archipelago. The character of *Bhīma* has become the icon of wisdom, strenght/firmness, honesty, truthfulness, obidience, fertility, advertotial icon, and social icon. On the other hand, *Bhīma* is also a symbol Godliness, humanity, and evil. In their daily life, the balinese understands the *Bhīma* character in the Otonan Cermony as the symbol of strength as *Bhīma*. In its development the *Bhīma* character also understood as: Kuku *Bhīma* supplement drink, Jamu Kuku *Bhīma*, Transportation means, ciggarete advertising, birthday party, street name, Keris name, and food name.

Keywords: Mahabharata, *Bhīma*, and cultural icon

The character *Bhima*, as far as what is remembered and perceived of 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 to 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 *Yudistira*, *Arjuna*, *Nakula* and *Sahadewa*. 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 dichotomy of stereotypes of the two big families in the Mahabrata epic is particularly appreciated or perceived of by the Balinese people as something which will eternally never change. Such an appreciation is transformed through various Balinese cultural activities starting from arts, religiosity, 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