

# LAND MANAGEMENT, THE MYTH OF DEWI SRI, AND THE BALANCE OF JAVANESE COSMOLOGY, AN ANTHROPOGEOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

**Suwardi**

*suwardi\_endraswara@yahoo.com*

*Faculty of Language and Art, Yogyakarta State University*

## ABSTRACT

*The research was conducted in the Prangkogan Village, Purwosari, Girimulyo, Kulon Progo., Yogyakarta. The purpose of this study is to reveal the land management practice in the study area based on the myth of Dewi Sri who is believed to maintain the balance of cosmos. Significance assessment performed based on anthropogeographic approach. This research was conducted based on qualitative ethnographic methods. The results showed that agricultural land management still influenced by the myth of Dewi Sri. This "Dewi Sri myth" is trusted by the farmers because they believe that the gods were able to maintain soil fertility. Dewi Sri myth is also believed to be able to maintain the balance of the cosmos. In anthropogeographic terms, the farmers live in Prangkogan village are managing arable land and yard with a spiritual mindset. The traditional management of soils apparently is believed can bring fertility and prosperity to the community life.*

**Keywords:** soil management, Dewi Sri myth, cosmology, anthropogeographic

## ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini dilakukan di dusun Prangkogan, Purwosari, Girimulyo, Kulon Progo, Girimulyo, Kulon Progo, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mengungkap pengelolaan tanah dengan memanfaatkan mitos Dewi Sri, untuk menjaga keseimbangan kosmos. Pengkajian makna dilakukan secara anthropogeographic. Penelitian dilakukan dengan metode kualitatif etnografik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengelolaan tanah pertanian masih menggunakan mitos Dewi Sri. Mitos ini dipercaya karena Dewi Sri sebagai dewa yang dapat menjaga kesuburan tanah. Mitos Dewi Sri juga diyakini dapat menjaga keseimbangan kosmos. Dari sisi anthropogeographic menunjukkan bahwa kehidupan petani dusun Prangkogan, mengelola tanah garapan dan pekarangan dengan pola pikir spiritual. Pengelolaan tanah secara tradisi tersebut ternyata akan mendatangkan kesuburan dan kesejahteraan hidup masyarakat.*

**Kata kunci:** pengelolaan tanah, mitos Dewi Sri, kosmologi, anthropogeographic

## INTRODUCTION

Most of the villager of Prangkogan, Purwosari, Girimulyo, Kulon Progo live in farmland area. This village is located in the Menoreh Mountain. The farmers in this area manage and cultivate the rice and *palawija* (types of secondary crops) not only physically, but also non-physically. The treatment of soil is physically done by hoeing, sowing, planting, and picking, while the non-physical treatment for the land is conducted based on myths and local beliefs. Their non-physical management of farmland is based on mindsets and beliefs that exist for generations. Mystical mindset and beliefs of Javanese towards the spirit of the gods often affect the

community behavior, for example in Prangkogan village. They believe in the myth of Dewi Sri in cultivating and managing the farmland. The background of beliefs, offerings variety, puppet show, and and the whole series of mystical action that refer to Dewi Sri have not been studied before. There are only several study related to the myth of Dewi Sri, for example contained in *Jurnal Kejawen*, Mulyana [2006] tried to examine rituals related with Dewi Sri and Javanese religiosity. However, the research of this myth was not covering the management of traditional farmland. Dewi Sri Myth also has been discussed in the *Jurnal Jantra*, written by Sumintarsih [2007], especially in association of the myth with other rituals such

as marriage, *tingkeban* (*pregnancy celebration*), and so on.

The myth of Dewi Sri got a lot of attention, because there are elements of myth and efforts to preserve soil fertility. The soil fertility in Javanese philosophy of life is also related to the context of Javanese cosmology. The conclusions that can be drawn from the discussion in the article is that the Dewi Sri myth is a representation of Javanese thought. Javanese people think that they are originated from God. The origin of the plant fertility comes from the world above (God) which is manifested into human life.

In Hindu mythology, there is a term called *Cakti* [Sumintarsih, 2007]. *Cakti* is a symbol of the power to create something. Dewi Sri is Vishnu's *Cakti*. In Javanese mythology, Dewi Sri is always accompanied by Vishnu. In Javanese communities, the system of belief to Dewi Sri is always associated with good fortune and welfare. Therefore, in addition to land welfare, soil fertility is also geographically associated with various rituals. *Slametan* (celebration ritual) in agricultural tradition, is a manifestation of Dewi Sri myth to maintain soil fertility.

Study of farmland has also been carried out by *Kapungwe* [2012] in Indonesian Journal of Geography, vol 44 number 2, in Zambian society. This study highlights various land management and irrigations without associating with mystical action. Similarly, the study of farmland in Sleman regency by *Harini et al.*, [2012] did not discuss the mystical land management. Their study is based on a survey toward internal and external effects to the conversion of farmland.

From those two studies on the soil management, it seems that the study of farmland in the Prangkokan village associated with mystical aspect is a novelty. This is important because the Javanese people in

general and villagers of Prangkokan in particular believed that farmland as a form of natural resources that can produce enormous fortune if it is managed proportionally. Management of farmland associated with traditional way of thinking and action are also influenced by their mystical philosophy of life. Javanese philosophy of life established a tradition in typical farmland management. This is part of a discussion in the context of anthropogeography. It means that anthropogeography examine the relationship between cropping patterns, way of thinking, and traditions that are believed to save lives. Anthropogeography is a branch of Earth science that studies the earth and its inhabitants [Koentjaraningrat, 2010]. The science confirms that the arbitrary management of the earth (ground) generally produces less favorable impact to the owner. It is different when humans perform traditional management using a offerings ritual, utilizing spiritual culture, and religious acts, in which farmland will bring forth of prosperity for its owner.

## THE METHODS

### Setting and Selection of Informants

The setting is determined by purposive sampling. The targeted informants are farmers in the villager areas of Prangkokan, Purwosari, Girimulyo, Kulon Progo, Yogyakarta. The selection of these study area is in line with the Mulder [2001] statement, which said that Yogyakarta is one of the Javanese mystical bases. This mystical belief is underlying the people to continue manage the farmland traditionally.

The time of the research is determined with regard to opportunity of *penghayat*. This is done through personal approach, relaxed, *nglaras rasa*; temporary-silent, *bawa rasa*; and re-contemplating a context. The time context selected is *Rejeb* month, after rice harvesting, and next to the upcoming rice planting. During that

time, they perform a village cleaning action called *Sri Mulih* during the day and followed by an entertainment free act in the evening.

This research took traditional farmers with regard to religious heterogeneity, while they still perform mystical acts collectively. The setting taken is the act of farmers in their daily life, that cover village cleaning tradition, *wiwit* tradition, and *selametan* (ritual) for ancestral spirits.

**Data collection techniques**

The data are collected based on the concept of Kohut [Geertz, 1983], using near location experience, as opposed to distant experience. In this kind of way, the method is not much different with *EMIC models*, as opposed to the ethics modes [Pelto, 1978]. It means the researcher involved directly in the context of farmers community in Prangkakan village, Purwosari, Girimulyo, Kulon Progo. Researchers took a close watch, trying to feel same as the subject, and perform activities such as the subject of the research.

To obtain data related to mystical culture that is covered in ritual, puppet show, and village cleaning tradition, researchers conducted participant observation technique and in-depth interviews [Adler and Adler, 1994]. Data from the informants

then processed, reflected, perceived, imagined, associated with cues, symbols, attitudes, and then interpreted and asked again based on inter-subjective inducement.

**Analysis of the data**

The data were analyzed qualitatively, which means that the data are described through descriptive explanation. Data were analyzed inductively, and then described in based on anthropogeographic approach. The description of the analysis results is conducted through *emic* approach; it is the cultural ethnogeographic representation of the people who were inside the culture. With regard to the analysis, the researchers tried to understand the mystical practices on a symbolic level. Analysis of such data conducted based on *verstehen* approach, namely the interpretation of the data and then described in detail (in-depth description).

In-depth description is ethnography exposure method, which is characterized by three things, namely interpretive, a social conversation existence, and paraphrasing conversation to be easier accepted. Of those explanations can be compiled following research flowchart (Figure 1).

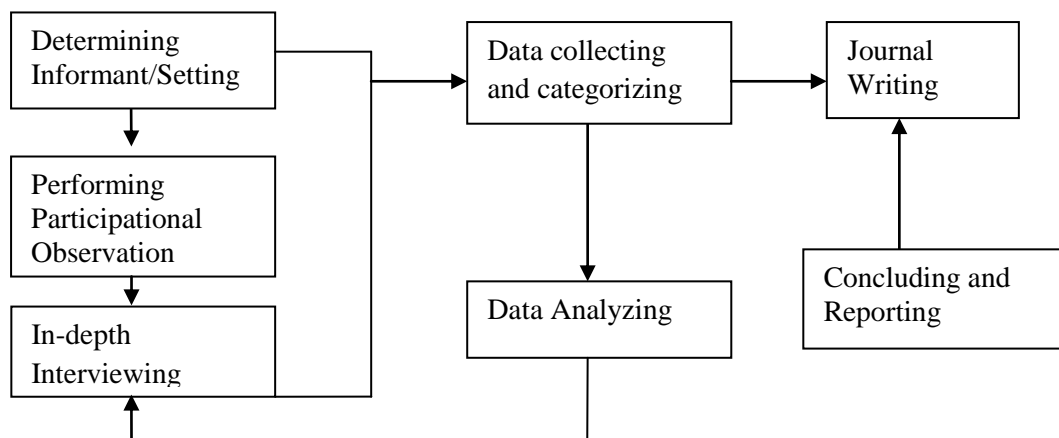


Figure 1. Flow Chart of Research

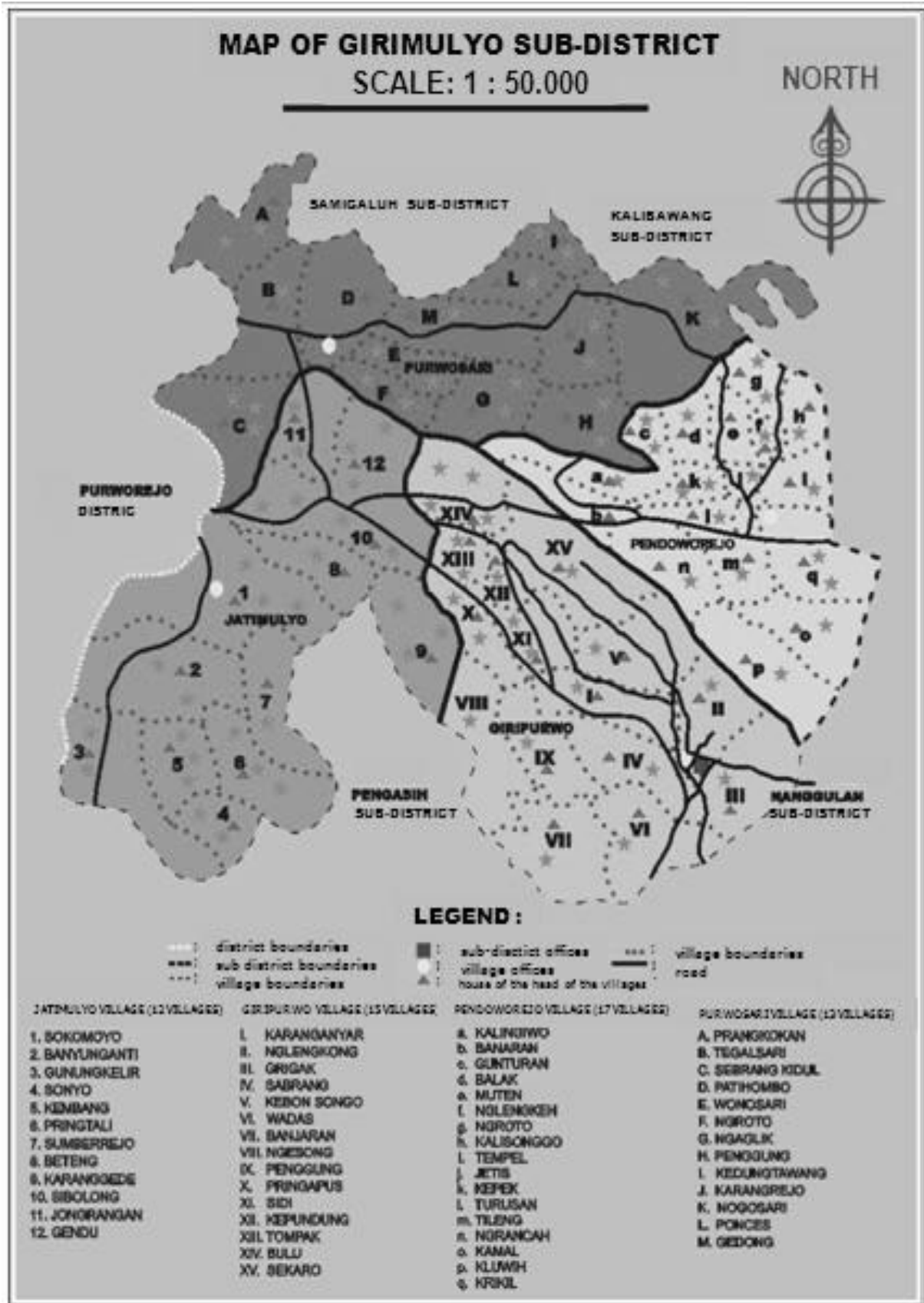


Figure 2. Setting Area of the Research, the Village of Prangkokan, Purwosari, Girimulyo, Kulon Progo [adapted from Suwardi, 2012]



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Dewi Sri Ritual and Myth of Soil Fertility

Farmers in the Prangkokan, Purwosari, Girimulyo, Kulon Progo village usually manage soil by hoeing (*Macul*), harrowing (*nggaru/nggrabah*), and plowing (*ngluku/mluku*). They still use local horoscope calculation (*petangan Java*) to determine the right time to work [Koentjaraningrat, 2010]. Beliefs in the horoscope are also shown in the mystical process of soil cultivation. So even though most of the management of soil has now changed by using tractors, they still conduct Dewi Sri special ritual in carrying the fields.

The rituals related to Dewi Sri, according to Santiko [Suyami, 2001], is analogously synonymous with the understanding of the concept of mother in Javanese culture. Javanese are conceptualizing mother as a synonymous to soil, because soil is producing fertility. Dewi Sri is the goddess who gave birth and spread fortune.

Therefore, the people of Purwosari considered Dewi Sri as a sacred Goddess. Ritual of agriculture has always been associated with Dewi Sri myth, as the incarnation of the god of fertility. People

do not dare leave the ritual, for any reason. Therefore, even in a simple form, Dewi Sri Ritual should always be held every year. The farmers tried to preserve the ritual by dues (*urunan*) funds. Someone who often initiated the rituals always require people to collect dues and fund some raw materials such as coconut, spices, fruits, and so on.

*Villagers are always obedient to dues together. Even if there are no crops (drought), they enthusiastically running the ritual. Before they do selamatan at village head's home, all residents worked together to clean the tomb of the village [Marto Jalal, 2010].*

Based on the description from the informant, it is enough to convince that Dewi Sri ritual activity is supported by all the villagers. Every people willingly expend the money and effort, because they have a spiritual responsibility to preserve the myth that could save their lives. The agricultural rituals are performed at the time of harvest, sow the seeds, and put the rice into the rice container (barn). Here is a picture of one of the Prangkokan villagers who are implementing offerings called *wiwit* (Figure 3).



Figure 3. A Citizen is Implementing *Wiwit* Offeringsi in the Fields

The images portray that this ritual is a meant of beginning in picking rice. *Wiwit* is held in the middle of rice fields, with offerings of a small cone, two *golong*, coconut made *Pelas* as a side dish, vegetables, *pulut* banana, and *gantel* made of betel. *Wiwit* is a Dewi Sri ritual at the start of picking rice. Dewi Sri Ritual then continued with storing rice to the barns (*mungguh lumbung*). Barn is the place to store rice for the Javanese. Barn is made of rectangular-molded wood and some are from pottery (soil). According to the villagers this ritual always continued with village cleaning tradition, in order to protect entire people who live in the farming area from disasters.

Village cleaning tradition is self-cleaning ritual both inner and outer, with the activities of: (1) clean the graveyards and village roads, (2) festivity in the village head's house, (3) lay a wreath (*nyekar*) to graveyard, (4) offering rice and store it into the barn, (5) puppet show, (6) entertainment. More than that, the villagers believe that when Dewi Sri was given offering, then she would participate in maintaining the welfare of rice in the barn. This tradition implies a message to keep the Dewi Sri's graveyards and grounds clean, so she is willing to take care of the soil welfare and fertility.

Purwosari villagers always positioned the barn in a respectable position. Barns, the cosmological placed on the back of the house called a chamber (*senhong*). *Senhong* is divided by Prangkokan People into three parts, there are (1) *senhong kiwa*, to store weapons and agricultural tools, (2) *senhong tengen* to sleep, and (3) middle *senhong* to store rice, tubers, and other agricultural products. Middle *Senhong* is also a sacred place, which is used for meditation (prayer). This sacredness is what causes the rice barn for storage is treated as a holy place [Suaka, 2013:48]. Barn is usually placed on middle *senhong*, there are two *Loroblonyo* statues nearby.

In the middle *senhong* there is *pasren*, a place to put offering and to meditate. In the left *senhong*, as a place to store farm tools and right *senhong* for home owners to sleep. In other words, the middle *senhong* is where *pasren* (agriculture) which is cosmological inhabited by Dewi Sri to keep the rice.

Before leaving the house to carry out the village chief festivity, people always put the offerings at the middle *senhong*. The offerings consist of bitter tea, two *golong* rice, small cone, and *ambeng* accompanied by side dishes. Usually when people conduct *selamatan* ritual at village head home, they bring offerings (*ubarampe*) into a small basket called *tenong*. Everyone follow the *selamatan* ritual together while watching the puppet show. *Kenduri* puppets being executed during the scene when Dewi Sri is lost, must be found, and returned to the kingdom of *Ngamarta*. At that time puppet show will be suspended and resumed after festivity prayer.

*The story that must be taken during the day is the story about Sri Mulih, since the era of ancestors. The change made each year is only the puppeteers. Dewi Sri had to be given flowers and splashes holy water from the elders. This is for the welfare of farm land. The person who gave the Dewi Sri puppet is also an elder, Mbah Jogosari. People are usually obedient. All men feel bad if they are not present in this collective festivity ritual [Marto Jalal, 2010].*

Puppet show with Sri Mulih story is considered as aesthetically prayer to preserve the fertile soil by people of Prangkokan, Purwosari, Girimulyo, Kulon Progo. Soil fertility is a symbol of prosperity. It is as said by Ki Marsono (a puppeteer who performing more than ten times of Sri Mulih story), the *antawacana* as the palace scene also be starting points for prayer in hope that it will bring welfare and garden soil fertility.

*Negari ingkang panjang punjung pasir  
wukir gemah ripah loh jinawi  
Tulus kang sarwa tinandur, murah kang  
sarwa tinumbas  
Wiji datan tinanem, kewan iwen datan  
kinandhangan*

Translation:

'Wide Country surrounded by the mountains and the ocean, prosperous, and wealthy. Every seed planted is always growing, commodity prices are not expensive, the seeds that were not be planted is grow by itself, the animals do not need to put in the cage.'

Sri Mulih puppet show is actually similar to *wayang wong* (general puppet show) in Sri Kembang show, In this play, Dewi Sri becomes a symbol of fertility. Dewi Sri figure, according *Hersapandi et al.* [2005:158], is motivated by the rice god who has been long believed by Javanese, goddess of fertility, and the Goddess of prosperity that is very close to the Javanese community life. The Sri Kembang show is similar to Sri Mulih in the puppet play. *Sri Mulih* stories are usually used by *Merti dusun*, especially in *methuk Dewi Sri* ritual [Subalidinata, 1985:21]. *Methuk* means pick Dewi Sri from heaven. The arrival of an angel as a

god of fertility usually greeted royally in *wiwit* ritual, which is the ritual of picking rice. *Wiwit* also called *methik* ritual. Thanksgiving at *methuk* manifested in *Sri Mulih* puppet show.

*This village cleaning ritual always take Sri Mulih play, especially during the day. Evening performances are free story. Dewi Sri was initially gone, want to find her sister named Sadono. If not "dimemule, diselameti", usually something happens in the village. Indeed he said the rice crop is often unpleasant, attacked by pests. People here have always believed Dewi Sri can bring fertility and good fortune [Marto Jalal, 2010].*

The play is an effort to take care of the management of farm land spiritually. Meanwhile, the incorporation of ritual *wiwit* with clean village ritual is also a symbol of the cleansing tradition. Besides the material leaned in the form of garden soil, the spiritually is also cleaned an inner cleansing effort of the Javanese tradition. Whenever the inner are clean and the ground is clean, the rice planted will blessed and produce fertile soil. Fertile soil is believed to bring fortune in by the community.



Figure 4. Puppet Show Scene Plays *Sri Mulih*



### Myth of Dewi Sri as Soil Balance Keeper

In Javanese religious insight, human occupied land comprises two layers, namely (1) *wadhag* layer, which means common ground 'that can be planted just about anything, such as rice, corn, soybean, and (2) layers of the cosmos, which means soil that contains spiritual insights. At this cosmos layer, the land inhabited by the forces of the cosmos. The power of the cosmos, according to the Javanese, means that the land is inhabited by a goddess named Dewi Sri. Most of the land in Java becomes farm land (agrarian). Therefore, Dewi Sri is much respected by the farmers. Dewi Sri is considered to have cosmological power.

Prangkokan villagers believe that the two layers of the soil should be managed "mystically". They also divide a variety of good soil to be processed as farmland. The distribution of soils associated with Dewi Sri and their myths to other gods that are considered sacred. The type of soil that they believe produce welfare to the life namely: (1) *Manikmaya* soil, which is the land with slopes facing to the east, is considered to bring a lot of fortune if properly managed, (2) *Kalawisa* soil, which the slopes facing to the west, is

considered to bring a lot of diseases, (3) *Manitis Vishnu* soil, which means an undulating/flat land to the north, is more suitable for farming, (4) *Sri Sadana* soil, which the slopes facing to the south, is considered to bring a lot of fortune. It can be seen from Figure 5.

Soil type (1), (3) and (4) are also believed by villagers Prangkokan, as soil that can bring good luck. Farm land in the Prangkokan village mostly has slope facing to the south and the north. Therefore, they strongly believe in the myth of Dewi Sri. Whenever Dewi Sri is adored, not let down, and not abandoned; soil under cultivation will bring a lot of luck. Myth of Dewi Sri as soil fertility goddess, has penetrated into all spheres of life in Javanese culture. Originally, Dewi Sri is associated with the concept of soil and the land occupied by Dewi Sri as a fertile soil.

Cosmologically, soil is the main element in human life. Soil is also involved in constructing the Javanese spiritual life. Therefore, inside the human body, there are elements of earth, wind, fire, and water. Soil elements, if well managed, causing the body fit and healthy. So if the Javanese carelessly cultivate the land, it is considered to bring in custody (misery).



Figure 5. Sri Sadana Land, bring a Lot of Fortune to its Owner by *Rudjiman* [2000]

*In 2010, people here have been attacked by an itching plague, almost in the entire village. Because in Sri Mulih puppet show an offering was missing, no chicken meat was placed on top of puppeteer. Actually it was already there but people forgot to set it up. On the night, almost all people are panic due to itching all over their body [Marto Jalal, 2010].*

Dewi Sri puppet show usually associated with the village cleaning ritual. The ritual is performed at the beginning of the harvesting time and at the end of the rice planting. Javanese people believed Dewi Sri is the ruler of soil fertility. According to Soedarsono [1999] it is influenced by Hindu culture in Java. Dewi Sri is a process of adaptation to the Javanese Hindu gods. The influence of Hindu culture gave rise to symbolic thinking of Java community. Dewi Sri can be said as a symbolic figure in the Java community [Herusatoto, 1987]. The influence of Hindu culture in soil management enriching the treasury of symbolic act of Javanese belief system. Respect and worship to Dewi Sri is cosmological thinking Javanese people, which mean that people live in farming area requires protection from the greater power. Dewi Sri is considered have the power as the ruler of the land of gods. Geographically, land will be fertile when Javanese man can work together with its ruler.

Dewi Sri is a form of animism cultural dialectic combined with Hindu culture. Dewi Sri figure considered as the savior gods of soil fertility. If the society worshiping Dewi Sri, they expect that there will be a help from the gods to cultivate the farm land. This is also reflecting an ethical Javanese life. Javanese ethics towards other beings are mystically manifested to maintain the balance of the cosmos. Magnis-Suseno [1984] states that the myth of Javanese society to Dewi Sri, actually is an ethical life. This myth formed Javanese belief, which must respect the superpower

called numinous power. Numinous power (gods) is the master of the supernatural, which is surrounding human life. This superpower if maintained will be achieved on the regularity of cosmos. This means that the *wadag* soil management is in the hand of the cosmos.

The cosmos is the cohesion of objects, events, both material and spiritual. This may affect the power of the cosmos tillage, layout, manifestation ritual, so that the Javanese survived supernatural interference. Even Akkeren [Magnis-Suseno, 1984] stated that the myth of Dewi Sri in the Javanese society efforts is related to soil fertility. Javanese farmers honored Dewi Sri, so there is no conflict when they cutting rice (*ani-ani*) to finish working on rice fields. This is the sensitivity of the Javanese who always proud of their ancestors spirit.

Dewi Sri ritual is conducted because of local belief that paddy plants derived from the body of Dewi Sri. Prangkokan villagers believe that in agricultural land, fertility will be maintained when the "guardian deity of the soil fertility" not to be disturbed. Tribute given to Dewi Sri as th ruler of fertility and good fortune within religious acts. Javanese religious actions are influenced by Javanese Hindu beliefs. The Javanese believe that the Dewi Sri as a god of fertility, represented through *slametan* ritual. This figure, according to Herusatoto [1987] is considered as the ruler of the god of plants. She is a symbol of fertility which is still believed by the Javanese society. Javanese belief in the rituals related to Dewi Sri is a representation of the human dimension, which still maintaining harmony, spirit, and nature [Geertz, 2011]. Belief in the god by Stange [1998] is considered as a very important force in the inner life of the Javanese people. Prangkokan People belief to Dewi Sri becomes interesting folklore. Dewi Sri is associated with the god of fertility. Fertility is associated with the

context of women as a symbol of fertility. Women are capable to give birth and progeny (productive). Agrarian society who manages soil associated with mystical mindset. People always look forward to obtain high rice crop productivity.

In *anthropogeographic* view, myth of Dewi Sri is affecting Javanese spiritual culture. The Javanese believe that the land, if occupied and cultivated regularly, will bring spiritual benefits, such as welfare. According to Mr. Sumarji (a rainfed farmer in Prangkakan, Purwosari, Girimulyo, Kulon Progo), he once got a message from Dewi Sri through a dream by his father who have died.

*If you want to get rich in food and clothing, you have to be diligent in cleaning the yard, the house, and the soil around you. If waking up when the morning, do not lose with the first cock-crow. If you want to eat, wait until the food cold. Dispose of waste so it does not disturb your surroundings. Land and environment is a friend of human life.*

In fact, according to Santiko [Suyami, 2001] Dewi Sri figure is not only regarded as a fictional figure, but more than that. She is known as a mythical figure that affecting human life, as the guardian of agriculture in particular and happiness in general.

The reason why Javanese adore Dewi Sri, according to Junus [1985], is because they still believe in the gods, just like the Hindus. Dewi Sri is regarded as the guardian of all disasters, and the fate of agricultural land in Java. Therefore, many Javanese people doing agricultural *selamatan* from *ngawu-awu*, which means seed (spread wiji), planting, *matun*, until picking rice or palawija. Dewi Sri is believed to be the goddess who *mbaureksa* safeguarding the welfare of farmers. So in *selamatan reksan*, people always include

mantra *bapa akasa* and motherland (the god the earth), who is none other than the Dewi Sri.

Javanese society glorifies Dewi Sri figure because she is regarded as a figure who can be a protector and bring happiness. Protection and happiness, realized when the soil is managed by ritual through *selamatan*.

Soft attitude and behavior are believed to bring wealth and prosperity. When the soil is planted with rice, and all the *palawija* are fertile, it will bring prosperity to the farmer. Abundant possessions, fame, health, were the tops of the welfare of life. Many kinds of rituals are performed by Javanese society to honor Dewi Sri. According to Mr. Sumarji, Dewi Sri is believed to arrived first in the village of Prangkakan, Purwosari, Girimulyo, Kulon Progo. She stopped by in his grandfather's house on *Kliwon* (Javanese days) Friday night. His grandfather said, Dewi Sri left an important message.

*My grandson, create two golong rice, wuduk rice, boreh flowers, dadap srep leaves, 'suruh ayu', bananas ayu, and wulung sugarcane. Bring it to the fields, and you undoubtedly will get fertile rice field. Pests in your rice field will be gone if you burn white incense in your rice field.*

Dewi Sri is also a guardian of four wind directions, which in Javanese culture known as *papat lima pancer*. If Prangkakan people are able to maintain the balance of the four wind directions, the welfare of the soil will be maintained. There is a song by puppeteer who always sing during the ritual.

*Adhuh biyung lunging gadhung  
Sanghyang Dewi ing bang wetan  
Tumuruna paring sabda teguh rahayu  
Widadara widadari tumuruna  
Ana taman agung jleg tanpa sangkan*

Oh mother of yam tree  
 Goddess of the east  
 Come down to give the word of salvation  
 God and goddess, please come down  
 In the spacious garden suddenly

*Adhuh biyung pupusing tela-tela bang  
 Sanghyang Dewi ing bang Kidul  
 Paring Tumuruna pangekering nepsu  
 Widadara widadari tumuruna  
 Nggusah drengki sreine titah*

Oh mother of yam tree  
 Goddess of south  
 Come down to give prevention against lust  
 God and goddess, please come down  
 Remove these acts of envy

*Adhuh biyung pupusing tela-tela bang  
 Sanghyang dewi ing bang kidul  
 Tumuruna paring pangekering nepsu  
 Widadara widadari tumuruna  
 Nggusah drengki sreine titah*

Oh mother of yam tree  
 Goddess of the west  
 Come down to let the word of salvation  
 Romance a secret so do not be tempted  
 In a spacious garden filled with beautiful  
 paintings

*Adhuh biyung oyoding wit pari kuning  
 Sanghyang dewi ing bang kulon  
 Tumuruna paring sabda teguh rahayu  
 Amrih lungiding asmara tan nggodha  
 Ana taman agung kang kebak rerencen  
 asri*

Oh mother of yam tree  
 Goddess of the north  
 Come down and sprinkle fortune  
 So that people who work the land  
 In the wide rice fields and reap fruitful  
 results

From the anthropogeographic side, the song above is an ideal embodiment of people in balancing their life. The balance can be achieved when all people are helped by the spiritual power of Dewi Sri.

Dewi Sri is referred as the goddess that can bring fortune. She is the sacred figure which can lead fertility to the farm land.

Chanting songs in the shadow puppet always use those words due to above reason. The lyrics are believed to have magic power as salvation prayer. The presence of puppeteer in the Sri Mulih shadow puppet show is an important factor as a medium of spiritual communication. The concept of *mulih* (return) is also synonymous with the word 'down'. When the goddess was down to the earth, she is considered returning as spiritual beings who maintain soil fertility. In this condition, *Groenendaal* [1987] stated that in the fertility rituals, the presence of puppeteer have a role as an intermediary of human relationships with supernatural powers (supernatural). In the ritual, puppeteer is considered to have an ability to communicate with supernatural forces. Puppeteer is a symbol of the human spirit or soul that can penetrate supernatural powers.

*Sri Mulih* shadow puppet play is a spiritual communication media. Puppet was moved by puppeteer. Puppeteer is a medium (intermediary), so that the Javanese were able to spiritually, aesthetically, and ritualistically connected. Therefore, before performing shadow puppets, puppeteer must conduct *laku prihatin* (Javanese pray) called *ngrowot* for three days. *Ngrowot* is puppeteer's *laku prihatin*, where he only eat tubers, such uwi, cassava, and *tela pendhem* (sweet potato). In addition, the puppeteer is only drink water as a symbol of purification. Self purification is a mental effort so that the shadow puppet performance can bring salvation.

Thus, it appears that the myth of Dewi Sri has a spiritual function to maintain the balance of cosmos. Relationship between humans and other forces are mystically managed by the Javanese. Such effort is a portrait of *anthropogeography*, that the

good relationship between creatures must be useful to each other. When the relationship is well managed, it will bring balance to cosmos. Harmony in the cosmos is a sign of welfare.

## CONCLUSION

From the discussion, it can be concluded that the management of farmland in the Prangkokan village, Purwosari, Girimulyo, Kulon Progo, is still applying spiritual management in addition to physical management. The spiritual Management is called non-physical management, especially in the form of Dewi Sri myth. Physical management is an outwardly ground preservation management. The both ways of soil management are important to maintain the balance of cosmos.

Non-physical soil management in the study area is constructed based on the philosophy of life and the Javanese mystical tradition. Javanese philosophy of life in Prangkokan Village, Purwosari, Girimulyo, Kulon Progo is based on the desire to preserve of the soil, especially as a source of life. Soil is not only physically meaningful as a place to live on and to grow crops, but also includes insights of Javanese cosmology. Javanese tradition in the village is affected by the public belief to the spirit of Gods. This belief also

## REFERENCES

- Adler, Peter and Patricia A Adler. (1994). *Observational Tecniques in Norman K Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Ed.) Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Geertz, Clifford. (1983). *Interpretation of Culture*. New York: Basic Book.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2011). *After the Fact*, Yogyakarta: LKIS.

influenced by Hindu beliefs. Both philosophy of life and their tradition are able to build Prangkokan community's spirit in carrying out their land because of the most of the people are living among the agricultures or farms.

The farmers in the Prangkokan live by managing the land and yard with spiritual mindset. Spirituality, it is done through a ritual called *selametan*. *Selametan* also aesthetically manifested in the puppet show. Therefore, in the beginning of farming season called *wiwit*; they pick the rice and put the rice into the barn; Prangkokan society still use traditional equipment to manage the land. The traditional soil management was able to bring fertility and prosperity to the community. Finally, the mystical mindset of the farmers do not need to be cornered as a polytheistic thing as it stays true to the original religion of the Javanese people.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Mr. Martodiharjo, as the head of the Prangkokan village who have permittedus to do this research. Like wise to the informants, especially Mr. Jalal Martoas an elder in the ritual. Hopefully Prangkokan village will always in prosper.

- Groenendael, Victoria M. Clara van. (1987). *Dalang di balik Wayang*. Jakarta: Grafiti Press.
- Harini, Rika, Hadi Sabari Yunus, Kasto, Slamet Hartono. (2012). Agricultural, Land Conversion: Determinant and Impact for Food Sufficiency in Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta: *Jurnal Indonesian Journal of Geography*, 44 (2): 121-134.
- Hersapandi, I Wayan Dana, Suraadjinah, dan Kasidi Hadiprayitno. (2005). *Suran; Antara Kuasa Tradisi dan*

- Ekspresi Seni*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Marwa.
- London: Harper and Rhow Publisher,
- Herusatoto, Budiono. (1987). *Simbolisme dalam Budaya Jawa*. Yogyakarta: Hanindita.
- Rudjiman. (2000). *Konsep Petangan Jawa*. Surakarta: Pustaka Cakra.
- Junus, Ahmad. (1985). *Upacara Tradisional dalam Kaitannya dengan Peristiwa Alam dan Kepercayaan Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta*. Yogyakarta: Depdikbud.
- Stange, Paul. (1998). *Politik Perhatian; Rasa dalam Kebudayaan Jawa*. Yogyakarta: LKIS.
- Kapungwe, Evaristo Mwaba. (2012). Traditional Farming Practices and Wastewater Irrigation Farming in Periurban, Zambia, Yogyakarta: *Journal Indonesian Journal of Geography*, 44 (2): 104-120.
- Soedarsono, RM. (1999). *Seni Pertunjukan Indonesia dan Pariwisata*. Bandung: Masyarakat Seni Pertunjukan Indonesia.
- Koentjaraningrat. (2010). *Kebudayaan Jawa*. Jakarta: Balai Pustaka.
- Suaka, Nyoman I. 2013. Folklor Bhatari Sri Kearifan Lokal Petani di Balik Warisan Budaya Dunia dalam Suwardi Endraswara Dkk. (Ed.) *Folklore and Folklife dalam Kehidupan Modern; Kesatuan dan Keberagaman*. Yogyakarta: *Prosiding Konges Internasional Folklor Asia*, tanggal 7-9 Juni 2013.
- Mulder, Niels. (2001). *Kepribadian Jawa dan Pembangunan Nasional*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Subalidinata, RS. (1985). *Sejarah Perkembangan Cerita Murwakala dan Riwatan Sumber-sumber Sastra Jawa*. Yogyakarta: Javanologi.
- Magnis Suseno, Frans. (1985). *Etika Jawa*. Jakarta: Gramedia.
- Sumintarsih. (2007). "Dewi Sri dalam Masyarakat Jawa" dalam *Jantra, Jurnal Sejarah dan Budaya*, No.3 Vol.II. Yogyakarta: Jarahnitra.
- Mulyana. (2006). "Spiritualisme Jawa: Meraba Dimensi dan Pergulatan Religiusitas Orang Jawa" Yogyakarta: *Jurnal Kejawen*, 2 (2):1-13.
- Suyami. (2001). *Serat Cariyos Dewi Sri dalam Perbandingan*. Yogyakarta: Kepel Press.
- Pelto, Perti, J. (1978). *Anthrophological Research; The Structure of Inquiry*.