

# THE VEDIC RELIGION IN NUSANTARA\*

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**Abstrak. Agama Weda di Nusantara.** Pedagang-pedagang yang berlayar dari India dan Asia Tenggara berperan penting dalam menyebarkan agama-agama India di Nusantara. Para brahmin diundang oleh penguasa-penguasa lokal untuk melegitimasi status baru mereka dan melaksanakan upacara-upacara bagi mereka. Misalnya, menurut sejumlah prasasti yūpa dari abad ke-4 Masehi, Raja Mūlavarman dari Kutai, Muarakaman, Kalimantan Timur, melakukan pekerjaan-pekerjaan mulia (*punya-*), dengan memberi sumbangan pada persembahan kurban (*yajña*) yang dilakukan di suatu *punyatama. ksetra* yang dikenal dengan nama *Vaprakeśvara*. *Yajñas- yajña* dilaksanakan oleh para *vipra* (semacam brahmin) yang datang ke Kalimantan dari berbagai tempat. Dengan membandingkan data arkeologis dan sumber-sumber tertulis, misalnya prasasti-prasasti berbahasa Sansekerta, kita dapat menyimpulkan bahwa agama Veda merupakan agama India pertama yang dianut oleh para penguasa di Nusantara. Setidaknya tiga raja telah mengundang para brahmin telah untuk melakukan *yajña-yajña*, misalnya Raja Mūlavarman (dari abad ke-4 Masehi), Raja Pūrnavarman dari Tārumanagara (pada abad ke-5 Masehi), dan Raja Gajayana dari Kanjuruhan, Jawa Timur (pada abad ke-7 Masehi). Raja yang disebutkan terakhir bahkan menganut Sivaisme (Hindu-Saiva), namun ia mengundang pendeta-pendeta Veda untuk melakukan *yajña* Veda. Ritual-ritual Veda mungkin dilakukan pula di Kota Kapur, Bangka. Tinggalan berupa altar-altar Veda, fragmen arca Visnu, dan temuan-temuan lain ditemukan di situs tersebut.

**Kata kunci:** Kampong Keling, Veda, Vaprakeśvara, Barhis, Vipra, Gṛhyayajña, Śrautayajña, Yūpa.

**Abstract.** *The seafaring traders from India as well as from Southeast Asia had an important role in spreading the Indian religions to Nusantara. The brahmins were invited by the local rulers to legitimize their new status and doing rituals for them. For instance, according to the yūpa-inscriptions from the 4th century AD, King Mūlavarman from Kutei, Muarakaman, East-Kalimantan was doing meritorious works (punya-), by giving donations in the sacrificial offerings (the yajñas) performed at a punyatama. ksetra known as Vaprakeśvara. These yajñas were done by the vipras (a kind of brahmins) who came to Kalimantan from many places. By comparing the archaeological data with the written sources, i.e. the Sanskrit inscriptions, we are able to formulate that the Vedic religion was the earliest Indian religion embraced by the rulers in Nusantara. At least 3 kings had invited the brahmins to do the Vedic-yajñas, i.e. king Mūlavarman (from the 4th century), king Pūrnavarman from Tārumanagara (in the 5th century), and King Gajayana from Kanjuruhan, East Java (in the 7th century). The last mentioned king, actually converted to Sivaism (the Hindu-Saiva), but he invited the Vedic priests to do the Vedic yajña. The Vedic rituals probably were also done in Kota Kapur, Bangka. The remains of the Vedic altars, fragments of Visnu statue and other finds were found at that site.*

**Keywords:** Kampong Keling, Veda, Vaprakeśvara, Barhis, Vipra, Gṛhyayajña, Śrautayajña, Yūpa.

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## 1. The Expansion of Indian Culture to South-East Asia

The relation between India and Southeast Asia dated back to prehistoric times. There are Buddhist statues found in the Neolithic sites for instance in Oc Eo, Cochin China, Kuala Selingsing in Perak, Sempaga on the west coast of Central Sulawesi, in Bukit Seguntang, Palembang etcetera. However, our knowledge is very limited about this early traders, because the Indian sources kept silent about their activities, nor has any light ever been thrown upon them by other sources. Did they trade only by sea or also by land-routes (by silk-roads) and when did they start trading? Were there other missions for them to do besides their commercial navigations?

An Indian scholar, Mookerji (1912), had an opinion of Hindu imperialism occupying the shores and hinterland of Further India and Nusantara. According to him, the ksatriyas founded colonies outside India while talented artists arrived from Bengal, Kalinga, or Gujarat erected the matchless sacred monuments in Southeast Asia including Java (Bosch, 1961: 5). Many scholars, for instance J.C. van Leur (1960), and F.D.K. Bosch, were against this "colonization theory". Bosch gave argument that if a certain Indian prince had undertaken a tour of conquest (*digvijaya*) to far away countries, he would have mentioned it in one of his *prasastis* (inscriptions). Besides, if a group of Indian people came to stay for a time being to build temples, there should be found the remains of the Indian settlements known as *Kampung Keling* nearby the temples<sup>1</sup>.

Further Bosch mentioned another mission for this commercial navigation. The Buddhist priests went out from India to propagate the new doctrine of salvation anywhere. There were *Buddhist missionaries* who crossed the desolate passes of the Himalayas to preach the Buddhist doctrine in Tibet, others followed the

early caravan routes, pushed on to the oases in the deserts of Central Asia and finally reached China, whilst others joining the trade ships sailing from Ceylon or the mouth of the Ganges tried to reach Southeast Asia and China (Bosch, 1961: 8-12). These hypotheses can be proved by the archaeological finds at the coastal areas on the ancient trading routes, among others are the Buddhist statues with Amaravati style found at Bukit Seguntang, Palembang, and at Sempaga nearby Karama River on the west coast of Central Sulawesi.

The history of the expansion of Indian culture to the east was characterized by Buddhist and Hindu cults. However, the coming of the Brahmanical priests to Southeast Asia had different characters from those of the Buddhist priests. The Indian Law books contain prohibitions for brahmins against overseas travel, which was regarded as ritually polluting (De Casparis, 1992: 287). They also went to Southeast Asia with the trade' ships not to propagate their religion as the Buddhists bhiksus did, but they were invited by Southeast Asian rulers to conduct the Vedic rites (*yajña*). This can be proved by the inscriptions from Kutei, Muarakaman. From the earliest inscriptions and archaeological finds, evidently the Vedic religion is the earliest Indian religion in Nusantara. A large part of Indonesian territory had exerted its influences, among others were Kutei (Kalimantan), Tārumanagera (West Java), Kota Kapur (Bangka) and we still have evidence of the Vedic ritual in Java from Dinoyo inscription of the 7th century (Satari, 2005).

## 2. The Vedic Religion in India and in Nusantara.

The spread of the Vedic religion in India may be placed approximately between 2500–1500 BC. This is the period during which the Aryans, having come down into India from Central Asia, entered their homeland, first settled in the Indus valley, and gradually expanded and developed their

<sup>1</sup> "Kampung Keling" was mentioned by F.D.K. Bosch as places where Indian traders to stay, as the coastal towns. But here I use this name "Kampung Keling" for the settlement of the Indians.

Aryan culture and religion. The written sources of the period consist of the four Vedas, i.e. the Rgveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda. The Rgveda composes of hymns for the gods/goddesses, the Yajurveda deals with sacrificial formulas, the Samaveda refers to melodies of the sacrificial formulas, and the Atharvaveda describes spells and magic formulas (Radhakrishnan, 1971: xvii-xviii, 3-4). The Rgveda comprises of 1017 hymns for the 33 gods and goddesses, all personifications of natural forces to which the Vedic faith owed the designation *naturalistic polytheism* (Radhakrishnan, 1971: 4). Though the Rgveda speaks of plurality of gods, when worship is accorded to anyone of them, he becomes the chief god, the creator, the preserver and the destroyer of the universe. So it means, the god who is considered the highest one always depends on the aim of the worshipper. This tendency is called *kat-henotheism* (*kat*: in turns) (Majumdar, 1960: 37; Radhakrishnan, 1971: 4). The characters of the deities in the Vedic hymns often overlap. For instance, the god Visnu has the character of the solar deity, and also shared the character of Indra (Gonda, 1954: 25-31). Agni was considered as the mediator between men and deities, but in some hymns Visnu also was the deity of offerings, because he liaised between men who did *yajñas* (known as the *yajamānas*) and the deities to whom offerings were dedicated, and he also bestows heat on the offerings.

Sacrifices (*yajñas*) occupied a prominent place in the Vedic religion, these included offerings of milk, grain, ghee, juice of plants and fruits known as Soma, etcetera. There were two kinds of sacrifice, the *grhya yajña* (domestic sacrifice), daily sacrifice, performed in every house led by the householder himself, A simple *homa* sacrifice in which cooked food was offered to Agni, Prajapati and Surya (Hopkins, 1971: 16). The other was the *śrauta yajña*, the big sacrifices performed by priests, and were done in an open ground known as *Ksetra* or *Vedi*. There were many kinds of *Śrauta-yajña*, the most important

*yajñas* were the *Somayajña*, the *Rājasuya*, the *Vajapeya*, and the *Aśvamedha*. In the sacrificial ground were built three basic fire (*agnis*) designated as *Gārhapatya*, *Āhavaniya* and *Daksināgni*. Each of the fire rested on an altar with a specific contour: round for *Garhapatya*, represents the earth, built on the west-side of the shed, a square altar for *Āhavaniya*, represents the four directional sky, built on the east-side, and *Daksināgni* a semicircular altar, represents the atmosphere between earth and the overarching heavens, built on the southern side. It means *agni* in his three forms of altars are the symbol of the three worlds brought together in the sacred *ksetra*. The *Garhapatya*, was mainly used to prepare food for the sacrifice, and later the prepared food for the offerings were placed in the *Āhavaniya* fire. The *Daksinagni* or the “southern fire”, was less used in rituals; however, it had special function of warding off hostile spirits and receiving special offerings to departed ancestors (Hopkins, 1971: 18-19)<sup>2</sup>. Between the two main fires was the *Vedi*, a ritually grass-lined pit, in the middle of the pit was built a hearth (*agni*). *Kuśa* or *darba grass* was piled surrounding the *agni*, This piling grass was called *barhis*. The form and measurement of this *Vedi* was varied depended on the ritual they prepared, (Thibaut, 1875; Hopkins, 1971: 18-19; Gonda, 1985: 140-141, 150). However, according to Gonda, there is no passage in the Rgveda mentioning the hearth (*agni*) in the *Vedi*<sup>3</sup>. The *barhis* was just the grass strewn on the sacrificial ground three or five layers as a seat for the gods, especially for Agni, and they are considered to be there to the fortifying power of the hymn addressed to them. (Gonda, 1985: 140; Bosch, 1961: 186, 190-191). Besides altars and *barhis*, the *yūpas* or the sacrificial shafts to tie the sacrificed animals were erected

2 Outside to the east of the sacrificial shed a plot is demarcated, it is called *Mahāvedi*, a trapezium altar. On its eastern side is the High Altar, the *Uttara Vedi*. This *Uttara Vedi* is the principal and primary *Vedi*, had a square shape.

3 According to Hopkins (1971: 18-19), *Vedi* was a ritually insulated grass pit in which oblations and sacrificial utensils were placed to preserve their power when not in use.

near the entrance to the ksetra. These *yūpas* were carved from the trunks of a special tree, but at later period, when the Vedic ritual were revived in the Hindu period, the *yūpas* were made of stones (John Irwin, 1980: 13-14).

### 3. The Vedic Religion in Nusantara

Seven *yūpa*-inscriptions were written in Sanskrit language and the scripts represent the earliest type of the *Pallava-grantha*, propably from the 4-5th century AD, and were discovered at *Muarakaman, Kutei, East-Kalimantan*. Four of the *yūpa*-inscriptions were already published by H.Kern in 1881, and another three *yūpas* were found nearly 40 years later and were published by B.Ch. Chhabra in 1949. However one of these inscriptions is badly damaged impossible to be read.

The inscriptions were issued by King Mūlawarman, telling about his donations on the religious ceremonies he has done. One of the inscription mentions a *bahusuvarnakam* (a lot of gold) as his donation, and another 5 inscriptions mention another Mūlawarman's meritorious work (*punya*), by giving donations among others are "viṅṣatir ggo sahasrikam" (20.000 cows), "vṛṣabha ekadaśam" (eleven bulls), "kapila-" (the red monkey), "kalpavṛkṣa-", "tila-parvata-" (a lot of sesame oil), "dīpamālaya-" (the lamp with flowers), "jaladhenum," (water of the cow, probably milk, ) and "ghṛtadhenum" (ghee), "bhūmidāna-" (land grant). This great donation ceremonies were performed at a *punyatama-ksetra*- known as Vaprakeśvara by the Vipras who came here (*vipraih ihāgataih*). Here is an example of the inscription mentioning the donations:

1. *śrīmato nṛpa-mukhyasya*
2. *rājñah śrī Mūlavarmmanah*
3. *dānam punyatame ksetre*
4. *yad=dattam-vaprakeśvare*
5. *dvijatibhyo=gni-kalpebhyah*
6. *viṅṣatir ggosahasrikam*
7. *tasya punyasya yūpo 'yam*
8. *kṛto viprair ihāgataih*

*Translation:* "The donation of twenty thousand cows belonged to his Majesty king of kings Śrī Mūlawarman was given for the Brahmins who resemble the sacrificial fires, at the *punyatama ksetra* known as Vaprakeśvara. This *yūpa* of the deed of merit was set up by the Vipras who came here".

Apart from the inscriptions mentioning the *yajñas*, there is an inscription that mentions Mūlawarman's genealogy. It mentions Kunduṅga, the grandfather, and Aśvavarman as the father of Mūlawarman. In this inscription, Aśvavarman is called *vamśakartṛ-*, "the progenitor or the founder of the dynasty". It mentions as follows:

1. *śrīmatah śrī narendrasya*
2. *kunduṅgasya mahātmanah*
3. *putro 'śvavarmo vikhyātah*
4. *vaṅśakṛta yathānśuman*
5. *tasya putrā mahātmanah*
6. *trayas=traya ivāgnayah*
7. *tesān=trayānām=pravarah*
8. *tapobala-damānvitah*
9. *śrī mūlavarmmā rājendro*
10. *yastvā bahusuvarnakam*
11. *tasya yajñasya yūpo 'yam*
12. *dvijendrais samprakalpithah*

*Translation:* "The son of his mayesty the mighty great Kunduṅga, known as Aśvavarman, the founder of the dynasty, really likes Anśuman. His eminent three sons look like the three sacrificial fires. Foremost of the three and distinguished by austerity, strong, and self restraint is the illustrious Mūlawarman, king of kings, who already has performed a *bahusuvarnaka-* (a lot of gold) sacrifice, determined by the eminent Brahmins.

The name Kunduṅga is not a Sanskrit name, and according to Chhabra it should be a local or Tamil name, but his son Aśvavarman and his grandson Mūlawarman have already Sanskrit names. Did all these ceremonies mention in Mūlawarman's inscriptions are related to legitimating, and also serve as a kind of agreement embracing an Indian tradition?

A *yajña*, *bahusuvarnaka-* (a lot of gold), was also mentioned in this inscription.

According to Nilakantha Shatri, *bahusuvarnaka-* is the same with “*bahuhiranyak-*”, and the gift of *bahuhiranyaka-* together with a great number of cows, were considered the most meritorious *dāna-* in the Vedic *Somayajña* ritual (Nilakantha Shastri, 1936: 520-521).

After studying Mūlawarman’s inscriptions, I consider that King Mūlawarman had converted to the Vedic religion. First he performed his offerings not in a temple (*prāsāda*) but on a *ksetra* known as Vaprakeśvara. This name Vaprakeśvara is always thought has a special connection with Baprakeśwara, a name related to rsi Agastya, in the inscriptions from Java. H. Kern inclined to interpret Vaprakeśvara as “sacred fire” (*heilig vuur*). Purbatjaraka and A.K. Nilakantha Shastri connected Vaprakeśvara to rsi Agastya (Nilakantha Shastri, 1936: 516). I agree more with Kern; however I do not identify Vaprakeśvara with “the sacred fire”, but with *barhis*, the sacred *kuśa grass* piled on the sacrificial ground, especially in the central Vēdi where the gods were invited to sit down on it. *Vapra-* means “heap, mound, ramparts, mud wall, slope of a hill, high river bank” (MacDonnell, 1954: 269). So Vaprakeśvara means “*a (sacred) heap for the gods to sit*”. This *barhis* was considered the most sacred and to be charged with mystic power appears many times in the hymns of RgVeda, for instance: “Happy days fall to the share of him on whose sacrificial straw you, Agni, have seated yourself with the gods” (Bosch, 1961: 190). The god Agni is considered as the messenger, intermediary between men and gods. He is requested to bring the oblations to the gods. He is also known as the witness of the offerings, and during the ceremony he is always asked to sit on the *barhis* together with the other gods (Gonda, 1985: 141).

To give a clearer picture, here is another one *yūpa* inscription translated by Chhabra (1949):

1. *śrī mūlavarmmā rajendra(h) sama(re)jita pārthi(vān)*

2. *karadām nṛpatīmśa = cakre yathā rājā yudhisthira*
3. *catvārimśat = sahasrāni sa dadau vaprakeśvare*  
*bā.....trimśat=sahasrāni punar=ddadau*
4. *.....sa punar = jivadānam prithagvidham*
5. *ākāśadīpam dharmmātmā parthivendra(h) svake pure*
6. *..... .....* *..... ...mahatmana*
7. *yūpo = yam sth(āpito) viprair = nnānā.... ih = ā(gataih)<sup>4</sup>*

*Translation:* “The illustrious monarch Mūlawarman, having conquered (other) kings in the battlefield, made them his tributaries, as did king Yudhisthira. At Vaprakesvara he donated forty thousand.....; he again donated thirty thousand. The pious king once again (gave?) *jivadana*, of different kinds, and a lamp to illuminate the sky of his town as a righteous duty of king of kings a great king..... the pious one. The *yūpa* has been erected by the Brahmanas who have come here (from) different (parts)” (Chhabra, 1949: 373).

This inscription gives us an interesting data, The mentioned *yūpa* has been erected by the brahmins or *vipras* from different parts. So it means the brahmins did not come necessarily from one place, probably they came from India as well as from other places (Southeast Asia, or from Java?).

Besides inscriptions, there are not many archaeological remains from Muarakaman. Several years ago Habib Mustopo gave me information about the archaeological finds. When he went doing survey to Muarakaman, Kutei, he found a rough shaft probably unfinished *yūpa*, and he saw a small gold statue of Visnu. According to him this statue is in Museum Tenggara. This Visnu statue probably is the same with the gold figurine of a four-armed Visnu discussed by Bosch in 1925<sup>5</sup>.

Another proof of the spread of the Vedic religion in the period of early history of

<sup>4</sup> See Chhabra, 1949 and Poerbatjaraka, 1952: 9.

<sup>5</sup> The translation is mine.

Nusantara are discovered in *Tārumanagara, West-Java*. There are three statues, two of them are Visnu statues and one Siwait statue, and seven inscriptions inscribed on stones. However, only five of the inscriptions are able to be read and translated because the two inscriptions, the Pasir Awi and Muara Cianten, are written in a cursive writing unknown yet to us (Sumadio, 1984: 42; Santiko, 2001). The five inscriptions, i.e. the Ciaruteun, Kebon Kopi, Cidanghiang (Lebak), Jambu and the Tugu inscriptions share a number of characteristics: they are inscribed in stone, written in Pallava scripts and using the Sanskrit language. There are no dates on the inscriptions, but based on the form of the scripts, these *Tārumanagara* inscriptions are supposed dated from the 4th-5th century AD. These inscriptions are of the utmost important for our knowledge of the religion of *Tārumanagara*. According to J.L.Moens, Pūrṇawarman was converted to the Vedic religion with the greater emphasis on the worship of Surya whose character mixed with that of the Mitra deity (Moens, 1940). I agree with Moens that Pūrṇawarman converted to Vedic religion, but from the inscriptions I can infer that Pūrṇawarman *singled out* Visnu, not Mitra-Surya, for special worship. Visnu in the Rgveda is famous with his three steps habitually done by him everyday to traverse the earth, the atmosphere and the sky from east to west (*first step*), from the west back to east through zenith or *Suryaloka* (*second step*), and from the *Suryaloka* back to east (*third step*). Because of this three steps Visnu is known as *Trivikrama, Vikramana, Vikrānta, Krānta*; the name come from the root *kram+vi* means “stride along, traverse”. With his three strides Visnu was believed to conquer the universe, According to the Śatapatha Brahmana, Visnu was worshipped by the kings who want to be a great king. It is mentioned “by making the steps, he (the king) rises high above everything here, he becomes Visnu and gains these worlds”. This ceremony “to become Visnu” was done in one of the big

*yajña*, probably Rājasuya or Somayanja (Gonda, 1954: 57-59).

Pūrṇawarman tried to make equal with Visnu by applying Visnu’s appellation *Vikrānta*, for himself, and he also made his footprints equal with those of Visnu. He named himself “*vikrānta*” in the Ciaruteun and Cidanghiang inscriptions. This *Cidanghiang* inscription or *Lebak inscription* was found in 1947 on the bank of Cidanghiang River, Munjul sub-district, Pandeglang district. It consists only of two lines running as follows:

- *vikranta 'yam vanipateh prabhuh  
satyaparā(k)ra(mah)*
- *narendrasya bhūtena śrīmatah  
pūrṇavarmmanah*

*Translation:* This is the conqueror of the three worlds (with his three steps), his majesty King Pūrṇavarman, the great king, the hero (and) to be the banner of all kings in the worlds<sup>6</sup>.

Pūrṇavarman wanted to be a great king (*cakravartin*) like Indra by comparing his elephant’s footprints with those of the Airavata’s, Indra’s elephant in the Kebon Kopi inscription:

- *jayavisalasya tarume(ndra)sya  
ha(st)inah..... (Aira)vatabhasya  
vibhatidam=padadvayam* (Vogel, 1925: 27).

*Translation:* Here shines forth the pair of footprints and adopt the likeness of the Airavata, are the footprints of the elephant of king of Taruma, who wields power in glory.

Considering the importance of the role of the “Visnu’s strides ceremony” for a king, probably Pūrṇawarman was performing the ceremony, perhaps in the *Rājasuya* or *Somayajña*, a symbolic ceremonial acts of performing “Visnu strides” was done, while mantras were read by priests and offerings were presented to complete the ceremony. After the ceremony was completed, his footprints which are said to be equal to Visnu’s were impressed on the stone inscription of Ciaruteun (Santiko, 2001:

<sup>6</sup> Poerbatjaraka, 1952: 10.

431-432). To give the clearer picture, here is the inscription of Ciaruteun running as follows:

*Vikrāntasyāvanipateh  
śrimateh śrī pūrṇavarmanah  
Tārumanagarendrasya  
Visnor iva padadvayam* (Vogel, 1925: 22).

*Translation:* This pair of footprints like those of Visnu, (the footprints) belonged to his majesty Pūrṇavarman king of Tārumanagara, the great king (who is famous) with his three strides (Santiko, 2001).

Another inscription, i.e. the Tugu inscription, may throw some light on the religion of that of Tārumanagara era by the name of the two canals dug by the order of the great king Pūrṇavarman, i.e. the rivers Gomati and Candrabhaga. Those two names are the tributaries of the river Sindhu (Indus) the first settlement of the Aryan in India. In this inscription is also mentioned a ritual done by the brahman and Pūrṇavarman contributes 1000 cows as offerings (*yajñas*). The inscription may throw some light on Tārumanagara's religion, so I quote it here<sup>7</sup>:

*purā rājādhirājena gurunā pīnabāhunā  
khātā khyātām purīm prāpya  
candrabhāgārnnavam yayau  
pravarddhamāne dviviṅśad-vatsare  
nirgunaujasā  
narendradhvajabhūtena śrimate  
pūrṇavarmanā  
pārabhya phālgune māse khātā  
krsnātasmititthau  
caitrasukle trayedsyām dinais  
siddhaikaviṅśakaih  
āyatā satsahasrena dhanusām sasatena ca  
dviviṅśena nadī rāmya gomatinirmalodaka  
pitāmahasya rājarser vvidīrya śibirāvanim  
brahmanair ggo-sahasrena prayīti  
kṛtadaksinā*

*Translation:* Formerly the big river Candrabhāga<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> It is written in Tarapada Bhattacharyya (1963): *The Canons of Indian Art or a Study of Vastuvidya*, Calcutta Firma L. Mukhopadhyaya page 13.

<sup>8</sup> The inscription was transcribed by Boechari.

was dug by the teacher of the great king, who has strong arms, (it) flowed after reached the town, in the twenty second of his Majesty Pūrṇavarman's ongoing years, the great king, who has all the good characters (and) becomes the banner of all kings in the world. In the proper month of Phalguina, in the dark half of the month, (and) finished in the month of Caitra in 21 days, the beautiful river Gomati with clean water was dug through the royal camp belonged to Pitamaha Rajarsi, it covers 6.122 dhanus. He closes with a ceremony by offering 1000 cows by the brahmins.

In addition to the inscriptions, there is a written records which probably dates from the Tārumanagara, originated in China from notes made by Faxian, a Buddhist traveller. Faxian went to India to visit Buddhist holy places, and in AD 414 he planned to return to his country through Sri Langka. But on his voyage home, his ship was attacked by a violent storm, and he was shipwrecked on Ye-bo-di (Yepoti: Java?). According to Faxian, there were only few Buddhists in Yebodi but quite a lot of brahmanas who did not practice their religion as they should (Poerbatjaraka, 1951: 15; Santiko, 2001).

Did Faxian saw the Vedic ritual in Tārumanagara, which was different from the Hindu ritual in India? So he concluded that the religion in Tārumanagara was not practised properly?.

The other remains of the *Vedic yajña* are found in *Kota Kapur, Bangka island*, probably from the 5th-6th century. The site was excavated by Pusat Penelitian Arkeologi Nasional and Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient from 1994-1996. The excavation provide us with an interesting finds, i.e. two temple-remains (?): one feature measured about 4,5 x 4,5 metres and the other about 2,25 x 2 metres, made of limestones. Both of them have opening on the north side. The associate finds from the remains are fragments of Visnu statue(s), fragments of ceramics and potsherds, charcoal, gold-foils, shreds of iron etc.

(Tri Marhaeni, 1997). From its characteristics, I am not sure whether or not the features are the remains of temples. The measurements are too small and also the opening on the north side is unusual for temples. Probably those two are the remains of the Vedic altars for the *yajña* with the great emphasis on the worship of Visnu, as fragments of charcoal are found in the features. Many years ago, Suroso from Pusat Penelitian Arkeologi Nasional told me about the find of a rough *liṅga* in the centre of one of the feature. By comparing with the foto of the unfinished *yūpa* from Muara Kaman shown to me by Habib Mustopo, probably the rough *liṅga* from Kota Kapur is an unfinished *yūpa*.

The Vedic ceremony was still recognized in Java in the 7th century. The Dinoyo inscription (682 Śaka) mentions about the ceremony of the replacement of the cendana-wood (*Devadaru*) statue of rsi Agastya with a black and wonderful marble statue of the rsi and put it in a beautiful abode for the maharsi (*mahārsi bhavanam*) built by king Gajayana. In this ceremony the king is helped by the Vedic priests who are expert in rituals. The offerings are well-fed cows, herds of buffaloes, given by the kings to provide for the *caru* (oblation) and *havis* (burnt offering of grain, Soma, milk, ghee) for the seers.

The Vedic ceremony took place during Gajayana's reign of Kanjuruhan was written by Soejatmi Satari in 2005<sup>9</sup>. According to Satari, Gajayana was doing Somayajña also known as Agnisthoma, a great offering for the god Agni. In the first paragraph of the inscription is mentioned the capital city of Devasimha (the father of Gajayana) is protected and sanctified by *Putikeśvara* which illuminates (in all directions). The *Putikeśvara* was usually translated as Siwaliṅga, however Satari translated as "the sacred fire that illuminates in all directions". The fire here is the god Agni in the Vedic religion (Satari, 2005).

9 The inscription was transcribed by Boechari.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the earliest inscriptions and archaeological finds, evidently the Vedic religion<sup>10</sup> spread in the early phase of Nusantara history. However, in Nusantara, this Vedic religion gave emphasis on the worship of Visnu. Worshipping Visnu as Vikrānta or Visnu Trivikrama will gain many things, such as to overcome hostility, to destroy enemies, as for kings they will get powers and energies inherent in kingship, to become king of the world (*cakravartin*).

There are Visnu statues, one gold statue from Muarakaman, two statues from Cibuya West Java, and fragments of Visnu statue from Kota Kapur Bangka, which lead me to the assumption that the early Vedic religion in Nusantara singled out Visnu for special worship. Besides Visnu, Agni was an important god, mentioned explicitly in the *yūpa* inscription and as *Putikeśvara* (the sacred fire that illuminates in all directions) in the Dinoyo inscription. However, in Dinoyo inscription the god Visnu is not mentioned, because the religion of King Gajayana was Hinduism (Siwaism). He probably worshipped Agastya, because the rsi was Siwa's disciple and considered as the mediator between men and Siwa<sup>11</sup>. Another possibility is that Agastya is known as Mānya or Māna in the Rgvedic hymns connected with the knowledge of architecture<sup>12</sup>.

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10 Agni is also considered as the witness of the sacrifice, because he is considered as the personification of fire.

11 The footprint are not the real impressions because it is too small for normal human footprints.

12 It is written as her paper submitted to the Seminar of Pertemuan Ilmiah Arkeologi (PIA) in Yogyakarta in 2005.

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