

## PROPETHIC VOCATION FOR WOMEN TO GUARD WATER AND EARTH FROM DESTRUCTION OF GOD CREATION<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

- Women and men were born from her/his mother. God creates womb in the woman's body. What the meaning of this reality? Women have to care human life from her body, her mind and heart, her faith. But, woman cannot take care by herself, because her ecology influences her life. She needs to support her body with health food, clean water for reproductive health and many kinds of herbs to prevent her from sickness. She has to maintain her healthy not only for herself, but also for the offspring. Every child eats originally from and as her/his mother eats. Women Reproductive Health depends on the good ecology.
- Human drama happened in Buyat Pante, North Sulawesi Indonesia in the year 2000. There, a mining gold industry "New Mont" threw away tailing to the Buyat bay. This bay is the source of economic life for fishermen Buyat Pante. All fish go away from this bay and some fish had polluted by chemical arsenic, antimony, mercury and manganese. Tailing from the gold mining had been polluted fish and also the river and well, the source of clean water of the peoples. Slowly the people's health decrease. First of all children feel itches, then emerges swallow on their body. Women also feel like this, but special for women they get problem for their menstruation. They bleeding and come out black blood clot from their womb. In that time there are some pregnant women. The baby were born unhealthy, their skin scaly, and most of them died before 5 years old.
- From that story I learn that clean water is urgent need to woman reproductive health, especially the need for woman vagina, womb and other reproductive organ cleanness. Womb is the place where human life to begin processing.

### Land and Water destruction threatened human health and human life

- A poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge in his poetry "***Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner***" wrote: "*Water, water you are everywhere, but no one drop can be drunk*". Why we have to use water efficiently? Because clean water to become

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scarce. According to the United Nation Report for Water Development “around the middle of this century there will be 60 countries in this world lack of water”. Almost 98% water in this planet are salty water, cannot be consumed. Less than 1% total clean water to be provided for us. Most of them saved in snow and ice in the Pole<sup>2</sup>

- The climate changing has influenced water situation; also some factors like: 1) decreasing of water resources underneath soil, swamp area, along the rivers and bays, 2) there are not equal division of water in every area in this planet, 3) conflict in the borders, and 4) privatization of water.
- Global water to be used for agrarian 70%, for industries 22% and for House Hold 8%<sup>3</sup>. More than half of the big rivers in this world have been polluted by industries, also bays and seashore. The illness related with clean water like thypus, malaria, and skin illness, caused 5 million per year death peoples, most of them are children<sup>4</sup>.
- Water in the bottles average 25% is tap water and according the Natural Resources Defence Council (NRDC) in US, this water does not comply with the request microbiology cleanliness<sup>5</sup>. Mineral water industry gets a lot of profit from environmental resources selling. Perrier Groups, which is posed by Nestle Firm is the second biggest water industry in the world. Nestle has 30% market of mineral water. Danone has 15%, Pepsi and Coca-Cola are runner-up for water industry. The value of this industry 22 billion and will increase 30% potential every year<sup>6</sup>.
- In this century water become most values commodity after gold and oil. World Trade Organization and GATS (General Agreement Trade and Service) to manage water through regulations and laws. These laws and regulations to be provided for the multinational corporation. The International Monetary Fund and World Bank use credit requirement through privatization of water for every country who wants to get credit from World Bank. Water privatization is a tool of Multi National Corporation for making water commodity.

## **Feminist Consciousness is the Women Ideology of life**

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<sup>2</sup> UNEP, Prediction of Global Ecology

<sup>3</sup> Rob Boden, Water Supply: Our Impact on the Planet (Hodder Wayland 2002)

<sup>4</sup> WWW.Worldwater.org

<sup>5</sup> Water for All Campaign, Public Citizen (www.citizen.org/cmep/water)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid



- Soil and water are woman's symbol wind and fires are man's symbol in Asia. All those material are human being needed. Food and ecology is source of life. Ancient people eat what ever they find. They look for food which provide in the environment. Man and woman body is different biologically, so their body needs to feed different food. That is why women lived in the caves and near the forest, men go hunting and to catch fish. Woman's body especially woman reproductive health need to clean water, so women live near source of water. They guard this source for their principle woman need. Water and women has close relationship during menstruation period. Javaness women called menstruation "nggarap banyu" means "to manage water", because in this period she needs to a lot of water. Franciscan perspective called water as **sister water**<sup>7</sup>. Since the ancient ages, women manage the source of water.
- Since in the mother's womb child swim in the fetal membrane water. This is water of life. When child was born, fetal membrane water comes out first and then she or he follows her. She accelerates be born of child, biologically and universally. This is the deep meaning water of life.
- Around 10,000 years ago a woman from a plant-gathering tribe returned home after a long day collecting seed in the wild. She stumbled, and the basket with the collected seed fell to the ground. The woman picked up the seed as best she could but some remained on the soil and eventually became buried. The rain came, spring and winter passed and when the woman was collecting food the following summer, she happened to pass the place where she had dropped the seed the previous autumn. To her surprise she noticed grain growing in abundance on the spot. She scattered more seed on the ground that year and to her delight it once again yielded results. This happened somewhere on the Middle East's fertile crescent - the arc that extends from Palestine through Syria, southern Turkey, Iraq and Western Iran. This is the first women founded agriculture<sup>8</sup>. Women have authority to plant food material freely, guided by their experience to feed her children and her women community. Food is feminist ideology.
- I learn another story of women. This story happened in the year 1950's, in Yogyakarta Indonesia. My grand-parents are peasant, lived in the Merapi's

<sup>7</sup> Water is woman symbol

<sup>8</sup> John Madeley, "Foof for All, the Need for A New Agriculture", ZED Books, 2002, p 1



valley a fertile agriculture area. The people plant rice, corn, cassava and vegetables. The women from this village have authority to plant what ever they want. Men give authority to the women because they trust that women should manage food and water very well. My grand mother is a woman leader. She has a community who very concern with agriculture, especially seed, fertilizer, and caring water sources in that village. Many water resources exist in my grand parents' village. It scattered under the big trees, edge of the rivers and on swamp areas. My grand mother lead to manage the water system and its sources, for agriculture and also for all village house hold families. This community has tradition to make ritual for feeding soil, animals, likes rats in the rice field and tiger which come from Mount Merapi. Banana "raja" is food for soil because it rich of glucose. She makes green fertilizer and ashes from dry leaves. Before planting period, they feed the soil and give them organic fertilizer. They also feed rats because rats like to eat young paddy when they are hungry. The women in the village has job like to control water system, to select good seed and crop will be planted, to do pest control and provide organic fertilizer. The division of job between men and women depend on their capacity. Women's capacity for managing water, soil and food plantation were acknowledged by all agrarian people.

- From all above stories I learned that formerly the women have authority to maintain ecology and decided what seed they make and what crops they want to plant. Food, water, food plantation are closed relationship with women. Women have experiences and from this they have capacity and theory how to manage it. But industry has broken and eliminated this women authority/rights and this means women lost their principle feminist capacity.

### **Theological Reflection**

- Water is a primordial reality and it has urgent role for human life and its ecology. Water symbolized every step of human life. Ancient myth and modern science agree and determined water as the original of life, fetal membrane water is the place human being starts her/his life. Water has its own circle and there outside cannot be controlled. Rain for all people without discrimination. Water is not private possession. But when government policy controlled the water, human rights for water become a serious problem of life. This situation conscious us for reflecting to our original life. The scriptural view of the earth



and ecology told us that in the beginning of life is God. The biblical creation story opens with a vision of darkness, wind and water (Gen. 1:2). Out of the Creator's energies the elements emerged. Formless matter takes form. The Creator fills the void with land and water (Gen.1:6-10). The Creator inaugurates creation with power, and there was light (Gen.1:3). Again and again, act by act, the Creator spoke and it happened. God saw that everything was "good" (Gen.1: 12). Creation mirrored the goodness of the Creator in the responsive relationship of all species. God gives all the creatures to people because of love. Therefore the Psalm praise the Creator as the One who sustains what we now call the earthly ecosystem, the web of life (Psalm 104:10-12; 16-18,24)

- Prophetic tradition views pollution is a biblical term that conveys God's disgust at the moral fouling of human relationship and the impact of social degradation upon God's beloved Earth. In our day the word pollution depicts environmental contamination. The prophets obviously lacked our scientific knowledge, but they were highly sensitive to the interaction that knit the human community to the natural landscape and the divine purpose. The prophets saw that pollutant, entering the sensitive web of life at once point, spread quickly through the whole. Although concerned about the impact of pollution upon human welfare, they were equally concerned about God's honor and the health of the landscape (Isaiah 24: 4-6). The prophets always spoke out when the King abuse his power to destruct ecology as the source of life. The prophets missions to proclaim justice in the world include justice for nature. The new vision of justice culminates in a covenant between the Creator and the created. The land is removed from politics to the realm of ethical decision.
- Jesus' embraced the world is description of the Reign of God. The Gospel of John begins with "in the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1). This is a meditation on the word of God. John identified Christ with the whole creative process (John 1:1-5). Out of the creative process emerged the world. Jesus came in this world to renew the creation of God. The Kingdom that Jesus announced embraced the life of this world, animal, vegetable, and all human. Jesus used parables for his teaching. Most of his parables related with nature, agriculture, food and human life. Jesus did condemn the greed for power and wealth, which brings about unnecessary poverty and inhuman oppression. For



to day, what Jesus' condemn is the government abuse of power by policy which destruct ecosystem. Global regulation is controlled by big industry countries and do not pay attention to develop countries. The "Few Country" make unjust decision for "The Many Countries".

- Christian tradition as Franciscan spirituality reflected to the nature. Saint Francisco from Asisi admired God's creature and doing theology trough nature. He called water as his sister, sister water. Ecology is our sibling, who take care our life, so we have to love her, by caring and guarding. We can also learn from modern theology "**the earth as revelatory**" theology of Thomas Berry. He rejoices over the Earth's evolutionary history and its revelatory dimension. Through his analysis he found that nowadays, people especially in industry countries, have substituted the myth of Creation and vision of the Reign of God in the Earth to progress basic on production and accumulation capitals. Berry considers today and every day, every moment, a new moment of revelation. In each moment we are made aware of how the Divine operates in and through the universe. Another theology from Sallie McFague, as another feminist theologian, she suggested the model of God. She rejects the Enlightenment perspective which separate God with the human being, God and nature. This view influenced people see themselves as separate from everything else. The world was there for human to use as they wished and God taking a power distant interest. Mc Fague believes that there are good reasons for rethinking our views of God. We view God affects how we view ourselves, our role in the world, our responsibility for the fate of the world. Human hold in their hands the fate of many millions of species, including their own. So we can and should re-envision God to realize God authority. She reminds us that we view God as King or as Father only a metaphor. Metaphor might be present such a destabilizing, challenging, loving God to us. There fore McFague says that God and human connected one another, because God loves human and the world. She views Earth as God's body. God incarnate to Jesus is a passionate love and bonding with the Earth. When we view the Earth as God's body, for Christian profoundly change our relationship with the world. We also love the world for caring and sustaining.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Nancy C. Wright & Donald Kill, *Ecological Healing, A Christian Vision*, Orbis Book, NY, 1993



- The theology of world includes our theology of water and earth. From theology of Creation to theology of Incarnation can inspire us to do theology of water and earth. Making equal relationship, caring water and earth as our sisters are our manifestation our love to God, our response to God's love.

**Let us joint the Social Movement to change the World**

- Faith without doing is nonsense. Doing theology for ecology can be expressed through many kinds of activities and concrete action. From the prophetic dimension we have to proclaim justice and peace for all creation. We are called to invite people go into process sustain discernment.
- Women are called to the original authority as water resources guard, saved food manager and caring the earth. Women are in the security food chain, from water, soil, seed, crops, herbs, spices, fuel and nutrient food. The wisdom of women often unvoiced, should be more fully utilized by all social units, their families, communities and government. Feminist power should be promoted, by village women empowerment. Village women society hided a lot of feminist potential regarding their close relationship with ecology and culture. We have to dig more and more these feminist potential.
- We as woman can do: Learning to become ecological activist. Develop our awareness and invite another to joint us save the world, Create women community as motor of social movement and caring to the water. Earth and security food, to do social analysis in feminist perspective continuously, supporting organic farming and food sovereignty movement. .
- World Social Forum provides opportunity to women and supported this movement to change the world to the Justice and Peace world and people joint to our process transformation. This process begins from me first.

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