

# LEGEND AND FOLKLORE SYMBOLS: Dewi Sri

*So hallowed is rice around the world that this humble grain is often personified as a goddess. In Indonesia this is Dewi Sri.*

**H**arvest is the time of Dewi Sri, the Rice Mother. She is the goddess of the fertile Earth and the mother of the Javanese people; she brings the monsoons and ensures that her people do not starve.

In Bali, the farmers of the rice paddies pray to Dewi Sri for a season of plenty and in return she protects their crops. The Balinese also call her Dewi Cili, which means the fertile 'Ibu Pertiwi' or fertile Mother Earth.

## Goddess of many faces

Dewi Sri's consort is the god of sustenance, Wisnu, and her sacred symbol is the Anta Kusuma, a flower-shaped jewel. In the Javanese wayang cycle, mythological epochs of Javanese history, Dewi Sri is reborn many times: first as Sinta, and Wisnu becomes Rama, then Sri is reborn as Rukmini, and Rama becomes Kresna, and finally Sri is reborn as Subadra, and Kresna becomes Prince Arjuna.


*Dewi Sri is known across Indonesia as the Rice Mother and the Rice Bride.*




## symbolism of dewi sri


As the staple grain for 2.5 billion people, it is no surprise that rice has been linked with divine benefactresses. Even the Sudanese of Islamised West Java believe Dewi Sri is the personification of rice and praise her harvest.

**Seek the wisdom of the Rice Mother through your dreams, by placing grains of dried rice beneath your pillow before you sleep.**

 The Anta Kusuma, a magic jewel of Javanese and Balinese legend, is sacred to Dewi Sri. This flower-shaped gem may be used as a charm to bestow long life, health and prosperity, and love and happiness.

 At harvest time, Balinese women make fetishes of Dewi Cili. The rice stalks are saved and bound together in the middle to form a

womanly hour-glass figure, which can then be used as an offering to the rice goddess.

 The Javanese worship Dewi Sri as the mother of their people and she provides them with guidance through their dreams. If you would like Dewi Sri's advice while you sleep, place a few grains of rice under your pillow before you go to bed.