

The Fusion between Buddhism and Mother Goddess Worship in Vietnam through the Image of Nam Hai Bodhisattva

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ABSTRACT

The image of Nam Hai Bodhisattva in Buddhism in Vietnam has a special relationship with folk beliefs. Nam Hai Bodhisattva was one of the incarnations of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva (Lam Thanh Dac, 2008), a Bodhisattva in Buddhism, full of great compassion and generosity, willing to listen to all sufferings of the human world to protect and help people in need. The name of Nam Hai Bodhisattva is especially familiar to people in coastal areas of Vietnam and her image which is very simple and very dear is regarded by the people as a goddess, not merely a Bodhisattva in Buddhism. In this article, using key research methods such as fieldwork, observations, and in-depth interviews, we focus on understanding the “becoming a Mother – Goddess” of the Nam Hai Bodhisattva image in folklore, thereby contributing in clarifying the relationship, the interaction between Buddhism and The Goddess Worship in Vietnam, and understanding the merger between Buddhism and Mother Goddess Worship in Vietnam through the image of Nam Hai Bodhisattva.

Keywords: Avalokiteshvara, Bodhisattva, Buddhism, Folk Beliefs, Nam Hai Bodhisattva, Vietnam.

Introduction

During the process of Buddhism’s introduction and development in Vietnam, it can be seen that Buddhism and the cult of Goddess Worship in folklore are always related. In fact, they are complementary to each other because Buddhism and The Worship of the Goddess have many similar cultural elements that is compassion, tolerance, protection, and especially the simplicity and closeness to the masses.

Some articles are interested in exploring this issue, typically including the article, “On the foundation of formation and development of Mother Goddess Worship of Vietnamese people in the Northern Delta – in terms of Philosophy” by Nguyen Huu Thu (2012). From a philosophical point of view, this article studies the basis of the formation and development of Mother Goddess Worship of the Vietnamese in

the Northern Delta region, which is due to the influence of natural conditions, of wet rice civilization, needing many people to do farming, using human strength to plow and cultivate rice. At the same time, women also play a very important role in the family and in making handicraft products, exchanging goods ... whereby, gradually a mind of worshipping Mother and Mother Goddess Worship was born. Besides, this article also points out the relationship between Buddhism and folk beliefs, including Mother Goddess Worship. Buddhism integrates with the traditional cultural elements of Vietnam, including Mother Goddess Worship. Many Buddhist temples have dedicated their internal space to Worship Mother. The author also points out that the fusion between Buddhism and Mother Goddess Worship is according to people’s spiritual needs, there is no coercion.

Vu Hong Van (2019), while “Discussing more about the origin of the Vietnamese Mother’s Goddess Worship,” also shared the above point of view, saying that folk beliefs are united with Buddhism, showing that many

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pagodas worship the Mother and many goddesses were transformed into Mother by the Buddha.

Phan Thi Kim (2015) and Le Thi Thanh Thao (2018) study the same problem above and point out the fusion of Buddhism with Mother Worship and folk beliefs through some cases in Hai Phong and Tien Giang. These studies also showed that in order to survive and develop in this land, Buddhism was mixed with folk beliefs and transformed to suit folk belief activities. The manifestation of this is that many temples worship other gods, including male deities and goddesses.

In general, these articles show that there is a special combination between Buddhism and folk beliefs in Vietnam. Many temples Worship more male Gods and Goddesses in Vietnamese folk beliefs, many Goddesses are Buddhist to increase solemnity, among those articles mentioning that Nam Hai Bodhisattva – one of the incarnations of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, was worshiped with other Goddesses. However, up to now, there has been no article that clearly shows the folk incarnation of Nam Hai Bodhisattva, which is typically the case in Bạc Liêu. Here, unlike the other cases of the Buddhist deity, here is the famous Buddhist deification of the Bodhisattva. The name Nam Hai Bodhisattva is particularly familiar to the people of the coastal Mekong Delta, the last land of Vietnam. In this article, “The fusion of Buddhism and Mother Goddess Worship in Vietnam through the image of Nam Hai Bodhisattva”, we focus on understanding the “incarnation of motherhood” of the image of Nam Hai Bodhisattva in folk, thereby contributing to clarify the relationship and interaction between Buddhism and Mother Goddess Worship in Vietnam.

Method

We study “The fusion of Buddhism and Mother Goddess Worship in Vietnam through the image of Nam Hai Bodhisattva” from a cultural perspective, and study, in depth, the case of Nam Hai Bodhisattva in Bạc Liêu, a typical site is enough to justify the research problem. At the same time in this study, mainly we use qualitative research methods.

To study the problem of “The fusion of Buddhism and Mother Goddess Worship in Vietnam through the image of Nam Hai Bodhisattva”, we use some research methods as follows:

The first is the documentary study method. We learn about this issue through previous documents, directly related to our research, to know how the previous research was conducted, what issues have been researched, through which we see gaps in research that

need to be supplemented- that is the contribution of this paper to science.

Second, we use the ethnographic fieldwork method, that is, to go to the locality where the research object is located, to conduct observations and attendance, and interview a few subjects in-depth.

With attendance and observation methods, we go to the study site during festivals and on weekdays to conduct observations. First, I stood outside to observe the ritual practices of the people, then performed the rituals myself to feel the people’s consciousness for the study subject, Nam Hai Bodhisattva, thereby understanding the importance of Nam Hai Bodhisattva in the folk consciousness.

With the method of interviewing, we talked with some local people and some visitors, to learn about the reasons why they call Nam Hai Bodhisattva Mother, why they worship at 12 o’clock at night, and some other matters to know what kind of feelings they have for Nam Hai Bodhisattva, and if there is any transformation from a Bodhisattva in Buddhism to a Goddess, Mother in mind folk formula.

In addition, the methods of analysis and synthesis will help deploy and implement research problems.

Result and Discussion

Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva and Nam Hai Bodhisattva

Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, or Nam Hai Bodhisattva, is widely worshiped in Mahayana Buddhism. Avalokitesvara means contemplation, reflection, and listening to the sounds of the world. The Buddha (Emily, Chultz, & Lavenda, 1995) also taught that Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva had thirty-two abundant transforming bodies to save all who recited this name of the Bodhisattva, eternally.

Regarding the title of “Nam Hai Bodhisattva”, according to a Chinese myth, Bodhisattva was the third daughter of a king, whose name was Dieu Thien. Growing up, despite the King’s objections, the princess decided to become a monk. The angry king ordered her to be killed. Pluto took her to hell, where the princess turned hell into the Pure Land, helping the needy. Pluto released her and the princess was reborn on Pho Da Mountain and became a savior of fishermen (Lam Thanh Dac, 2008).

In China, the image of Bodhisattva is often carved, painted in a standing posture in the clouds; riding a

dragon on a waterfall; or standing on an island to save the victims, because the sea represents the reincarnation of the Buddha. According to researcher Ta Chi Dai Truong (2000), "Chinese seafarers know the saying:" Pray to Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva to help overcome danger at sea, "on the way down to the South to meet a dangerous stormy area so Avalokiteshvara East Sea became Nam Hai Bodhisattva" (Ta Chi Dai Truong, 2000, p.182).

Besides, we still know the second aspiration of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva's 12 aspirations is "Do not be afraid of hardship to save sentient beings, always present in the East Sea, to save the sunken people, when a lot of thunderstorms" (Truong Thu Trang, 1997, p. 76). Therefore this Bodhisattva is called Nam Hai Bodhisattva. In the Lotus Sutra, the Prussian Gate, Shakyamuni Buddha praised the many deeds of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva. It also mentioned that if someone was struck by a storm in the sea, one prayer to this Bodhisattva would save the person.

During the flourishing of Buddhism in India, Indian merchants often carried Avalokiteshvara statues on pilgrimages to pray for peace. Merchants, along with Indian monks, came to Vietnam and Buddhism went to Vietnam in the way of the Southern tradition. According to a survey by researcher Phan Thi Yen Tuyet, in Lai Son Island, Kien Hai District, Kien Giang Province, the Nam Hai Bodhisattva statue is placed in a majestic standing posture in the heart of a ship placed on a high mountain, overlooking the sea, as if always observing the sea for the rescue of seafarers (Nguyen Thanh Loi, 2014).

Thus, Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva has the Nam Hai Bodhisattva title for some of the above-mentioned reasons and most importantly, saving the victims at sea is one of its "functions" – the vow of this Avalokiteshvara.

The phenomenon of 'Became Mother – Goddess of Nam Hai Bodhisattva' in folk beliefs in Vietnam

In the coastal areas of Vietnam, especially in Mekong Delta, Nam Hai Bodhisattva has a special place in the minds and hearts of the people. This Avalokiteshvara has almost completely become "Became Mother – Goddess Worship", becoming a Mother – Goddess in the minds of the coastal people here, as the Goddess of the Sea, patronizing the fishermen where the wind blows.

Became Mother – Goddess through vocative and folk tales

Currently people, not only in the Mekong Delta but also in the South, affectionately call Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva

Mother, and Nam Hai Bodhisattva Nam Hai Mother. It is possible that the origin of Nam Hai Mother's name comes from Place of worship Nam Hai Bodhisattva in Bạc Liêu, a province in the Mekong Delta, because there are Nam Hai Bodhisattva statues there that are especially respected by people inside and outside the province. The belief of Nam Hai Bodhisattva or Mother of the South Sea here has a very powerful spillover. People around the region often say that they go to visit Mother and everyone knows that it is Nam Hai Mother. How to call Mother to express the affection of the people for this Bodhisattva? In their minds, Nam Hai Bodhisattva is a Mother, a Mother in folk beliefs, as gentle, sheltering, willing to listen and understand in order to help them.

In Bạc Liêu, there are many stories about the origin of Nam Hai Bodhisattva. There are legends that tell:

The origin of the Place of Worship Nam Hai Bodhisattva was formerly a small temple built by seafaring people to worship Princess Thuy Te (also known as Ms. Thuy Long or Long Nu or Thuy Long Goddess – a Goddess who governs a river). When the statue of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva was erected here, according to the folklore, Princess Thuy Te was identified with the statue of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva and called Nam Hai Bodhisattva (Tran Hong Lien, 2004).

Another legend says that in the past, people in the area had set up a small temple to Worship Thien Hau, a sea goddess from China. She was born on March 23, Giap Than year (1044) on My Chau island, Bo Dien district, Hung Hoa district, Phuoc Kien province, the seventh child of Lam Nguyen fisherman, also known as Lam Thien Nhan. Her grandfather used to be the General Director of Phuoc Kien. When she was born, she did not cry or scream, so she was called Mac Nuong (The silent girl); at eight she could read; eleven years old she was a Buddhist monk; thirteen years old, she knew how to write poetry as a gift from God. She was a famous swimmer since she was 15 years old. At the age of 16, according to folklore, Lam Mac Nuong collected two pieces of "Dong Phu" (words painted on pieces of copper) under the well and practiced them, so she became a miracle lady and famous from there through the incidents of rescuing people across the sea.

Every time the boat people at sea were in distress people would call and pray to Thien Hau Goddess who is considered the patron goddess of the seas. Newly arrived immigrants often set up the temple to worship her first, thanking her for being safe. In the process of reclaiming land to Bạc Liêu to make a living, Chinese immigrants established a temple to worship her and chose

March 22–24, as her day because on March 23 is her birthday. Later, when the statue of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva was erected here, due to the folklore she was identified with the statue of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva and called Nam Hai Bodhisattva, meaning Bodhisattva in the South Sea. In this story, according to folk beliefs, Nam Hai Bodhisattva was identified in particular, as Thien Hau Goddess and Nam Hai Bodhisattva became a Model – Goddess in folk.

The study of Vu Van Chung (2018) on “The fusion of Buddhism and The Worship of Thien Hau Thanh Mau in the South” has also identified the relationship between Quan Am Bodhisattva and Thien Hau Thanh Mau, in which Quan Am Bodhisattva is worshiped next to Thien Hau and is considered a Goddess.

Besides, people in coastal areas also spread the word about the legend “Whale save people”, a species of spirit fish living in the sea in Vietnamese folk beliefs. Legend has it that seeing seafarers always encountering many waves, obstacles, and seeing that life is very fragile, Buddha Patriarch, having a compassionate heart, sent Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva to tear his robes into hundred pieces and drop them into the sea into a flock of Bee fish. Then Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva turned the elephant bone into magic Whale bone, with his special skeleton. Whale is allowed to collect sugar (shorten the distance) to promptly save people, rescuing boats stranded on the high seas. This legend made a profound impact on the fishermen’s thoughts about the kindness and sacrifice of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva. Therefore, in the area in front of Whale Mausoleum, fishermen often built the majestic and solemn monument of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva. In this case, Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva was worshiped in the Mausoleum of Whale as a Goddess.

Similarly, the legend of the Buddha said that one day Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva traveled on the East Sea, seeing the hungry people often having to go to sea to find food in conditions of life threatening storms... Mercy, Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva tore his robes, threw them into the sea, and turned them into countless whales. Along with the elephant skeleton, the “way to shorten the path” (magic shortening the path) was given by Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, the whale being tasked to save people in the midst of a storm. The reason it is called a Whale is because it is as big as an elephant. Therefore, fishermen in Binh Thuan, a coastal province in central Vietnam, say ‘Every time in distress at sea, I remember 12 prayers (the twelve main prayers) to ask Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva for help’ (Huynh Minh, 2002). In addition,

there is a traditional belief that the whale is an incarnation of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva saving people in distress at sea. He was transformed into Nam Hai Whale on a cruiser trip to the South. Thus, the legend of Nam Hai Bodhisattva in the island waters is often associated with the story of the great fish, the whales, or the salvation of people at the sea.

In addition, in the legends of Princess Lieu Hanh (meaning Holy Mother Lieu Hanh), there is a legend clearly stating the story of Song Son great war. Legend has it that while Mother Lieu Hanh was in a critical situation because of the murder of Dao Noi priests, Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva appeared, and saved and freed Princess Lieu Hanh. Since then, Holy Mother Lieu Hanh takes Refuge in the Three Jewels, obeys the dhamma, transforming good according to the Buddha.

So clearly whether it is a folk tale or a Buddhist story, this Bodhisattva always occupies an especially close position in the hearts of the masses and is loved by people everywhere as a gentle mother.

Became Mother – Goddess through the space of worship

Worship of Mother and Goddess was originally influenced by Buddhism, so the temple of the Mother and Goddess is often found in Mekong Delta, to worship Buddha in the backyard, or else the Buddha image is found in the temple precinct. In previous studies by Phan Thi Kim (2015), Vu Van Chung (2018), Le Thi Thanh Thao (2018), ... also pointed out the union between Buddhism and folk beliefs in Vietnam through self and deities, Buddha in either Buddhist or folk worship facilities. Especially in Bạc Liêu, the image of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva is always worshiped in almost all temples to worship Mother and Goddess with the name Nam Hai Bodhisattva, or “Nam Hai Mother”. She is also known as Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva to save suffering for sentient beings. It should also be emphasized that: Avalokiteshvara in Indian Buddhism was originally a Male God, but when He came to China and into our country He “Became Mother – Goddess”, even “Became Mother” became Holy Mother Avalokiteshvara in The Worship of Mother Goddess in Vietnam.

Nam Hai Bodhisattva in the minds of Mekong Delta and surrounding areas has become the image of a merciful Mother, saving all sentient beings. The image of Nam Hai Mother is always placed in The Mausoleum of Whale, on Bat Nha boat, or has its own Temple in The Mausoleum of Whale area, or standing on the lotus, the image of Mother is everywhere. Even the Whale legend mentioned above

is said to have come from Mother's robes that were turned into Whale to save people.

In addition, Nam Hai Bodhisattva is also worshiped at home by many families in Mekong Delta. Depending on different economic conditions, there will be different ways of worshipping Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva at home, differing in the size of the statue, in the place where the statue is- exposed or inside the house.

It should be added that, in the beliefs of the Gods of Mekong Delta, among the worshiped Mother – goddesses, there is Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, Nam Hai Bodhisattva. She was worshiped in the most solemn place in the house and had her own set of altars. That is the position of the altar of God, which is supposed to be lower than the Buddha altar (if any), but higher than the ancestral altar of the ancestors. The altar is on the right (from the inside looking out), facing the front; do not place the Mother – Goddess altar in the bedroom or an unclean place. If you place a picture of Mother – goddess next to the male god of fate (usually Quan De Thanh Quan), then you must make sure to put her painting on the right, otherwise the blade of the servant of the male god will cut her, so the host will be reprimanded. In addition, some well-off families, with one or more floors, set aside an outer space of the highest floor to be used as a very solemn church room.

In addition, the statue of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva is also placed on cars and boats; women often wear necklaces with emerald-shaped Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva. Her picture is also used by people to squeeze into their purse to carry her like a guardian deity.

Became Mother – Goddess through festivals and religious practices

For this we study the case study at Place of Worship Nam Hai Bodhisattva in Bạc Liêu, a province in the Mekong Delta. Even now every year there are celebrations of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva on February 19, June 19, and September 19 corresponding to the day Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva was born, ordained and attained 'nirvana'. Besides, on the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th of the third lunar month, the Vietnamese Buddhist Association of Bạc Liêu Province organize the Nam Hai Bodhisattva Festival. Closely following the activities of the festival, we find that some folk belief activities attract almost all people to the ceremony, in which Nam Hai Bodhisattva plays the role of Mother, Goddess, not just Bodhisattva in Buddhism.

During the three days of the rituals and some activities of the festival, thousands of people from many places flock

to prayers and festivals. A special feature is that even though the people coming to the festival are from inside or outside the province, they often go with all the family members, they come to worship with a solemn attitude and an undying belief in supreme divinity. We observed that most of the people who come to Quan Am Phat Dai, in addition to burning incense, kneeling, they also go to the lotus – the foot of the statue of Quan Am Nam Hai, they pour stream water on the lotus, then they touch this water to wash their faces, or they touch their hair and body, and whisper a prayer.

Regarding this, we have known about the so-called Mana (supernatural powers). Anthropologist A.F.C. Wallace cited some "minimum categories of religious behavior" (Emily & Lavenda, 1995, p. 250). These categories are, on some level, the self-created characteristics of religion. According to Wallace, religious activity includes one or more of the following: Prayer; Music; Physiological training; Promote; Read morals; Acting scenes; Mana; Taboo; Party; Mental health; Gathering of ritual celebrations; Premonition; Icon.

Mana refers to: "Sublime power that has no personality, but sometimes it is thought that it can be transferred from one thing to another. Healing by putting a hand on the sick person is an example of a force to pull the disease out of the sick person, or to destroy it. At Guider some believe that the ink used to copy the scriptures of the Koran is also powerful. Washing the Quran writing ink on the board and drinking this wash water will impart the power of the prayer to the drinker's body. This principle holds that sacred objects must be touched in order to be empowered (Emily & Lavenda, 1995, p. 251)."

Thus, it is not known where this principle came from Vietnam and when, but the people here have practiced touching the supernatural powers, sacred objects to be empowered. In this detail, Nam Hai Bodhisattva is considered as a Mother – Goddess, so people practice touching the statue to be empowered.

Here, when attendees of the festival were asked about their purpose of coming here, 85% answered that they came mainly for religious purposes, their main activity is to pray, perform worship, and activities such as watching music, visiting shopping, just an extra activity, giving additional joy to them during the pilgrimage. Therefore, the most expected activity for the worshiper is setting up the altar to worship her at midnight. This is not an activity hosted by the organizing committee, but entirely performed by the people. I don't know when but on the night of March 22 of the lunar calendar every year, that

is the first night of the festival, no one tells anyone, each group of people offers gifts, choosing a spot around the area of Nam Hai Mother statue, solemnly setting up the table of offerings and the incense smoke, always waits from the afternoon to the night, and wait at 12 am to start the ceremony, chanting prayers for peace (Truong Thu Trang, 2017, p. 134).

Another point makes us note that in the late hours of this night more than 60% are people from other places. They come from places like Ho Chi Minh City, Vinh Long, Tien Giang, An Giang, Can Tho, Hau Giang, Soc Trang, Ca Mau, etc. and only about 30% are from Bạc Liêu. Surveying a circuit around the festival now, we only occasionally meet one or two people who are around the Place of worship Nam Hai Bodhisattva (Truong Thu Trang, 2017, p. 135).

Following the pilgrims, asking about the reason they came here, they innocently answered, "it's very spiritual", to achieve your prayers; or they say that trading and business is too difficult, so they come to ask for fortune and pray; many people said that their descendants or themselves going out to fishing for a long time should come to pray; many people also come to "pay in return", because what they wish has come true, etc...

So clearly one of the most important reasons for them to come to the Nam Hai Bodhisattva festival in Bạc Liêu, to the objects worshiped here is to have peace of mind. We have seen many people from far away provinces, they live in Kien Giang, Vinh Long, Ho Chi Minh City ... They often go to the whole family and usually come very early to choose the best location among the ceremonial venues. They are then presented with great offerings and each family member is equipped with a small notebook to write content, prayers. When they pray, their expressions were mainly sincere.

The late night worship at 12 am is a characteristic of the Goddess – Goddess worship in Vietnam, not a Buddhist ritual. People put their spiritual faith in the Goddess they revere, the gentle Mother they believe is always there and listens to them, and at 12 am the folklore believes that the gods will listen to them better, they call it "spirit time".

Through the aforementioned things we see that even though society is increasingly modern, science and technology is increasingly advanced, dreams are deciphered, natural phenomena are explained ... people are still full of beliefs about a distant world, about the gods surrounding them; there is still much beyond their control. They are still "terrified" of gods, terrified of what they

do not know. Coastal people are still more insecure, still praying for the supernatural forces to protect them. That is, the spiritual stabilizing function of religions, beliefs in general, religions and beliefs in coastal areas of Bạc Liêu in particular, including Nam Hai Bodhisattva faith still remain valid.

In summary, the religious and belief practices with Nam Hai Bodhisattva have helped coastal Vietnamese people find certain mental security. Some people also said that while going out to sea, looking at the statue, or a picture of Nam Hai Mother (Nam Hai Bodhisattva), they felt empowered; when in danger, they always recite Her name to be saved; While still far from shore, her statue facing the sea was like a lighthouse to show the way for fishermen to return.

Conclusions

In summary, the contribution of this study has shown that, in the minds of the Vietnamese people, Nam Hai Bodhisattva is a Mother, Goddess of the Sea, a mother of a country, not merely a Bodhisattva.

When Buddhism entered Vietnam, Buddhism and Mother Goddess Worship influenced each other. The interpenetration and mutual influence between Buddhism and the worship of Mother Goddess and the Goddess of popularization tend to be understandable because it is the common belief of the people. The same reason can be interpreted for the relationship between compassion and charity, the spirit of community, and the promotion of good and elimination of evil, which are the foundation in the principles of behavior of traditional society. These two types of beliefs complement each other to meet the spiritual needs of the people: According to Buddha, to cultivate virtue of life, in the next life, we can go to Nirvana to make life brighter and freer; According to Mother Religion, worshipping Mother is hoping for the graceful blessings that bring health, fortune and luck to everyday life. Nam Hai Bodhisattva became a Mother in the Vietnamese folk belief, demonstrating the close harmony and attachment between Buddhism and folk beliefs, Buddhism has a special place in the mind of the Vietnamese people, become the traditional culture of Vietnamese people.

The limitation of this study is that it has not done a comprehensive study in Vietnam, this is just a study in the Mekong Delta, especially in the case of Bạc Liêu, where Nam Hai Bodhisattva belief develops most strongly; at the same time, he has not yet looked to the world to compare

how Nam Hai Bodhisattva religion developed, whether or not this phenomenon of becoming the Mother of the Bodhisattva is becoming a goddess. Therefore, this is the next interesting research issue that we aim to continue to contribute deeply to this field.

Competing Interests Statement

I declare that I have no significant competing financial, professional, or personal interests that might have influenced the performance or presentation of the work described in this manuscript.

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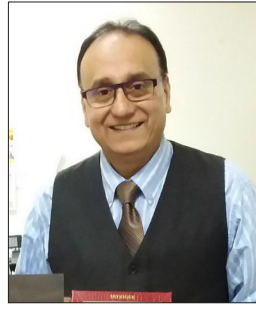
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He joined Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia, in 1996. Since then, he has been with UPM where he served as a Lecturer. In addition, he functioned as the Chief Executive Editor with several prestigious academic journals. Subsequently in 2018, he was offered to work as a visiting Professor at BINUS University, Indonesia.

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