



*Bhima - Leyden Museum*

In the story of the Dewa Ruci, told in the poem dating from 1470, taken up by Yasadipuro in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and having its origin in the Mahabharata, Bhima takes the leading role and travels in search of Amrita or Tirta Pawitra, the water of immortality or Elixir of Life. During his search, Bhima enters the ocean where he meets the snake Nabat-Nawa or Naga Varuna, which he kills with his Pancanaka nail. It is in this same passage, song N°8, that Bhima learns from Dewa Ruci that the four colours traditionally found on his loincloth, (the Dodot or Poleng), are white accompanied by the three other colours, black, yellow and red. This combination of colours makes the heart ungovernable and represents both purity and worldliness. Bhima, through the teaching of Dewa Ruci will dominate and master these different aspects inherent to human life. It is also on this occasion that Bhima will earn his characteristic hairstyle in the shape of a lobster tail, called, Gelung Supit Urang.

His apprenticeship accomplished, and once he had actually entered Dewa Ruci's mind through meditation, Bhima found a small statue, a reflection of his own image, made of a material as smooth and white as ivory. It will remain as a testimony to his elevation and mastery of the material and spiritual worlds. Called Pramana, this small statue is the link between the material and spiritual aspects of human existence. The light emanating from it is the energy that animates us and which, at our death, merges with the Supreme Being.