

Symbolic Meaning Behind Traditional Rite “Sedekah Sampar Banyu” Wonolopo, Mijen Semarang

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Abstract. People of Wonolopo carry out appreciation of tradition and culture “Sedekah Sampar Banyu” synergistically with the diversity around them. It can be observed by the rousing festivities of the traditional rite which is presented annually. This tradition contained series of symbols with meaningful and functional symbolic elements in it. It is unfortunate that a lot of people did not understand the meaning of the symbol in this tradition and merely consider it as a culture celebration festival. If omitted, it will evoke meaning reduction of a tradition understood by people. This research is intended to describe comprehensively about “Sampar Banyu” tradition, explain the symbolic meaning in detail and analyze symbolic forms and their functions in “Sampar Banyu” tradition. This research is done as an initial step to preserve local culture. Regarding the implementation, this study is conducted by applying qualitative research method through observation, interview and documentation. Data that has been collected is analyzed using a comparative descriptive method. In “Sampar Banyu” tradition there is also worthwhile values for human viability, such as religious values which is the basis value to human related to devotion towards God. Social and cultural values are also substantial for society. Both are the reflection of human themselves. Results of this research are expected to provide knowledge about forms and meanings in “Sampar Banyu” tradition in Wonolopo and are capable to be used as a reference to develop the next research, and as an effort to preserve and expand the potency in Wonolopo.

1 Introduction

Traditional rite is one of the rituals conducted by society. In every region, traditional rite has their own uniqueness, from the title to the procedure, both can be different. Function of the general traditional rite leads to the function of beliefs or religious value; pray to God for abundant blessings and avoided from misfortune. Besides that, most people have faith toward the existence of external power beyond human, such as the spirits and the gods who are believed to be human guardians.

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People socio-cultural beliefs are very firm to their daily lives. Such beliefs deliver a form of customs and culture. Those beliefs will be interpreted into procession, either the ritual or ceremonial which reflect the substance of the beliefs.

Performance of traditional rite has the aim to establish a positive relationship with the spirits, either revered or feared spirits. Traditional rite is full of ritualistic values and solemnity. Besides that, most of it is a low self-esteem expression before the nature's power because they believe that people activities are in direct contact with the forces behind human realm [1].

Wonolopo is a region in Mijen sub-district area. The distance between the center of Semarang and Wonolopo are approximately 18 kilometers. Wonolopo is still a rural area. It consists of 51 RT and 10 RW. Total population of Wonolopo was 9.210 persons in 2019 which was divided into 4.564 men and 4.646 women. Since 2012, Wonolopo has been appointed as one of Semarang city tourism villages. To support the program, thematic villages emerged in Wonolopo, for example Jamu village, Ranting Pelangi village, Embung village, Leri village, Ampiran village, Flora village and Sepakbola (soccer) village.

Wonolopo has a tradition which is still conducted and preserved until now, that is "Sampar Banyu". The people believe that preserving tradition equals to maintaining the way of life they did for centuries. They also believe that the water-source which exists in Wonolopo is their ancestral heritage and needs to be preserved. Then they attempt to conserve the culture with progress so that the ritual can be presented every year.

2 Method

Research of traditional rite "Sampar Banyu" using qualitative approach. The data collection technique is focused on:

- a. Observation is a direct method of observing an object. The purpose is to discover and gain factual and accurate data.
- b. Interview is a procedure to collect data by asking questions to informants.
- c. Literature review is a process of searching information and data about the object which will be researched from written source.
- d. Documentation is an activity or process to provide documents by using accurate evidence based on the record from various information. The activity is including notes, pictures, videos, and others.

This research belongs to the field research category. Basis of this research is sociological which moves based on the qualitative research. The method used for analyzing data is descriptive qualitative with the following steps: (a) Select relevant data, (b) Create objective notes, in this case, researcher do grouping and reducing data as well, (c) Create reflective notes, (d) Make a data summary, (e) Perform triangulation, checking the data validity by summarizing double data which can be obtained in three methods: (1) extend the observation duration in the research area to match the written data with the data from the field, (2) match the data by doing more interview with informant, (3) match the written data and with library resource.

3 Literature Review

Traditional rite can be interpreted as a ritual of giving offerings to the Almighty, God, as a gratitude and prayer to acquire welfare. This is conducted by all citizens.

Siswadi et al [2] stated that people of Purwogondo perceive Tuk Serco as a bounty of Lord. Besides that, the functions of Tuk Serco are medication, purification, a place to performing ritual. There is local wisdom among Purwogondo people; knowledge, values,

ethic, moral and norms which divided into: suggestion, prohibition, penalties and expressions used as attitude and behavior guidelines in preserving Tuk Serco. To maintain local wisdom, people give understanding and advice to their families, neighbors and relatives about values, ethic, moral and norms including religious norm as attitude and behavior guidelines in doing tradition instinct to respect Tuk Serco. To preserve local wisdom in the future, the following steps are required: (a) strengthening community spirit, (b) increase understanding, awareness, concern and participation of the people to reach environmental wise, (c) provide legal protection (law) with local regulation, (d) encourage Purwogondo to become religious tourism village.

Martini [3], in her research about *Makna dan Fungsi Upacara Sedekah Laut bagi Masyarakat Banyuwoto Dukuhseti Pati* stated that “Sedekah Laut” ritual is an annual activity—precisely in the month of Sura (Javanese calendar)—conducted by people of Banyuwoto, Dukuhseti sub-district, Pati. This tradition has been held for a long time and be able to become a culture attraction that firmly attached to people of Banyuwoto. Generally, the ritual has a purpose to sending gratitude to God and as medium to pray for welfare for fishermen and family so that they will not get any disturbance when going to work. The main focus of this research is about the meaning contained in “Sedekah Laut” ritual and its function for local communities.

Rukiyah. “*Makna Simbolik Ritual Jembul Tulakan Kecamatan Donorojo Kabupaten Jepara*” Anuva (Kajian Budaya Journal, Information and Library), Semarang: FIB Undip (2019). The purpose of this research is to explain the origin of Jembul Tulakan ritual, its procession and the symbolic meaning. The method used in this research is interview, literature review, direct analysis and descriptive explication. Folklore and culture are theories of this research. Results of this research show that Jembul Tulakan ritual begins from the dreams of eight villagers at the same time. Ritual processions are began with washing the foot of the headman (village chairperson), circling the “jembul” and *resikan*. The symbolic meaning of this ritual is sense of togetherness and brotherhood.

Ndaru Retno Wardani. 2019. “*Makna Simbolik Ritual Sendhang Gedhe Desa Kandri Kecamatan Gunungpati Kota Semarang*”. Thesis. Javanese Language and Culture Department, Faculty of Language and Art, Universitas Negeri Semarang. The results of this research are as follows: (1) The form of the ritual tradition Nyadran Sendhang Gedhe is divided into three parts, that is preparation, useful values and entertainment. (2) The meaning of ritual tradition Nyadran Sendhang Gedhe is sense of togetherness and mutual sharing. Besides that, this tradition is also teach about life modesty. Nyadran Sendhang Gedhe ritual is also contained useful values, such as religious values related to devotion towards God. Social and cultural values are also substantial for society. Both are the reflection of human themselves.

4 Result and Discussion

Procession of “Sedekah Sampar Banyu”

“Sedekah Sampar Banyu” begins with people’s cavalcade around village while bringing tumpeng, nasi ambengan and crops as a symbol of prosperity. Nasi tumpeng represents hope towards God so that people wishes and wants can be accepted. Nasi Ambengan is a symbol for togetherness and harmony among Wonolopo people. Side dish is a main complimentary menu, a symbol for complement in life.

Hereafter, the group of cavalcade stops around the water-source owned by people of Wonolopo which its age is hundreds of years but water is still used by a lot people. The procession of “Sedekah Sampar Banyu” begins with breaking the jug that is done by public figure and continued with splashing the water or “sampar banyu” as a form of gratitude that

the water-source has become the source of livelihood for people of Wonolopo. “Sedekah Sampar Banyu” ends with pray, eating together and performing dances (usually kuda lumping) by young people.

Along with the times and changes in people’s social life, “Sedekah Sampar Banyu” experiencing some developments in form and functions. One of the factors that triggers the change is Keputusan Walikota Semarang No. 556/407 December, 21, 2012 (Semarang City Government, 2012).

According to the decree, Wonolopo has been appointed as one of Semarang city tourism villages. Tourism village is a rural region that offers the atmosphere reflecting indigenous village either from the aspect of socio-economic, socio-cultural, daily traditions, has buildings architecture and unique spatial structure, or peculiar and appealing economic activity also has a potency to develop various tourism components, such as attraction, accommodation, food and beverage and any travelling needs.

Presently, “Sedekah Sampar Banyu” is still conducted people of Wonolopo. Nevertheless, the form and its function transformed into entertainment, economic and cultural preservation. “Sedekah Sampar Banyu” becomes an interesting object to attract tourists to come to Wonolopo as a consequence of tourism village program.

Meaning and Functions of “Sedekah Sampar Banyu”

“Sedekah Sampar Banyu” has meaning and functions as follows:

- a. Ritual purpose, pray to God for abundant blessings and avoided from misfortune.
- b. Entertainment purpose, “Sedekah Sampar Banyu” becomes society festival to people of Wonolopo and Mijen. It can be concluded that “Sampar Banyu” has changed ritual function to secular function.
- c. Communication purpose, contained in the function of art that art has a communicative function (relation). The relation between citizens and Semarang city government becomes communication media which is useful to people of Wonolopo. They can deliver any issues to the government in hoping to get the best solution.
- d. Culture preservation, it can be conducted by maintaining and developing cultural elements. The process is through transmission or delivery of cultural patterns from one generation to another. Related to ritual tradition purpose, its existence can be understood integrally with the context of the supporting community existence. Ritual tradition has functions to support lives and fulfill necessities to maintain social collectivity of Wonolopo people. As well as reciprocal preservation of community tradition is consistently maintained.
- e. Education purpose, learning by doing is an education process for people. Education is a culture inheritance process for generations. Creativity, innovation, enculturation and acculturation occur during “Sedekah Sampar Banyu” shows that human is an active creature. The role of “Sampar Banyu” tradition to the society is spiritual education, work ethic education, embedding high values and education preservation nature.
- f. Economic purpose, Wonolopo has been appointed as tourism village. Automatically, the performance of “Sedekah Sampar Banyu” has become one of the tourism assets in Wonolopo. The procession of “Sedekah Sampar Banyu” which brings a lot of people as well as combining the elements production of community centers in Wonolopo and its surroundings. Economically, “Sampar Banyu” tradition also beneficial for local’s UMKM in Wonolopo to promote their products, such as Jamu, decorative plants and hydroponic vegetables.

They open the promotion and selling stands around the area of “Sampar Banyu” tradition conducted.

5 Conclusion

Traditional rite “Sedekah Sampar Banyu” is a ritual tradition presented hereditary by people of Wonolopo, Mijen Semarang annually. This traditional rite is one of cultural assets owned by the society. The performance of the ritual has the aim to pray for local people safety while working on the sea and gain more fish than the previous year. Symbolic meaning behind the traditional rite can be seen from the materials and tools which have been prepared in it. Cultural value that can be taken is an embodiment of gratitude, obedience to hereditary traditions, togetherness and harmony, increase regional income. Values contained in “Sedekah Sampar Banyu” are local culture has to be preserved and well-managed to enrich national culture. The change of people mindset has influenced value meaning in “Sedekah Sampar Banyu” so that value shift phenomenon occurs. Traditional rite “Sedekah Sampar Banyu” which was originally intended as expression of gratitude and means of praying for safety to annual festival and becomes a tool to gain profit aside from entertainment.

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