



Internalization of Ecological Values through Wayang Kulit Sedekah Bumi in Kalitang Hamlet, Banyumas, Indonesia

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Abstract

Sedekah Bumi (earth alms) in Kalitang Hamlet is held annually, and one of the processions is ruwat bumi with wayang kulit (shadow puppet). This research aims to describe the ecological values of wayang kulit in Kalitang Hamlet, Banyumas. This is qualitative research with an ethnographic approach. The data sources consist of the procession and the local community. The sampling techniques used were snowball sampling and purposive sampling. The data collection technique was done through nonparticipant observation and an in-depth interview. The data analysis was explained in three processes: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. The results of this research show that there are ecological values in wayang kulit sedekah bumi. The ecological values in wayang kulit sedekah bumi consist of environmental education values, respect for nature, the fact that humans and nature are interdependent, and nature as a relative.

Keywords: *Ecological Values; Wayang Kulit; Sedekah Bumi*

Introduction

Indonesia, with its diverse tribes and areas, has many ways to live in harmony with nature. The community's wisdom and way of life for coexisting with the environment has existed since the ancestors. This is a beneficial result of local knowledge. According to Article 1 paragraph 30 of the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 32 of 2009, local wisdom is the noble principles that apply in the community life system to, among other things, conserve and manage the environment sustainably. Local wisdom encompasses the responsible use of natural resources and the significance of customs and traditions in environmental protection.

Local wisdom exists in every region (Utami et al., 2017). This local wisdom may additionally reflect a distinct personality for each place, which is likewise tied to the environment. Each region has its

approach to environmental preservation. Many methods have been modified to meet the needs of the region. Local wisdom on the plateau will differ from that in the lowlands. Habits and knowledge are also tailored to each region's way of life. These many local wisdoms depict human adaptation to their environments. Cultural values, traditions, as well as knowledge passed down through generations become important principles for maintaining human-environment harmony.

Every region's local wisdom has been customized to the geographical conditions. Some architectural structures, such as the traditional house in South Sumatra, are preserved. Rumah Limas (pyramid houses) built in marsh areas differ from Rumah Limas built on the plateau, yet both are environment-adaptive (Siswanto, 2009). In order to maintain the ecosystem, the traditional ceremony of Ngaruwat Bumi is also held in Subang, West Java (Haryanti, 2018). With the indigenous wisdom of Kemalik, the Sasak tribe community in Sade Hamlet, Rembitan Village, Pujut Sub-district, Central Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara maintains the ecosystem. Kemalik is a restriction to entering Mount Kiyangan's indigenous forest irresponsibly; anyone who violates the rule will suffer later (Mansur, 2018).

According to the preceding explanation, humans and the environment are inextricably linked. Naturalistic behavior refers to the harmonious relationship between humans and the environment. Naturalism, or living in harmony with nature, has given way to anthropocentrism (Sufia et al., 2016). The anthropocentrism viewpoint, which disregards environmental wisdom, is one of the causes of environmental degradation. Because it disregards sustainability values and a healthy ecosystem, this viewpoint has become the main cause of environmental deterioration.

Indonesia indeed has many traditional ceremonies to maintain environmental preservation, but there are also problems regarding the fading of values in traditional ceremonies. The fading value of local wisdom in various regions is caused by several factors. One of them is digital technology. Digital technology can have both positive and negative impacts. The negative impact is that the cultural value of local wisdom or local culture begins to shift due to digital technology or the internet (Widiatmaka, 2022). Traditions that live in a human community undoubtedly play an important role in maintaining the continuity, identity, and unity of the community itself (Nyaming, 2019). Internalization of local wisdom values can make a positive contribution to the preservation of the natural environment (Niman, 2019).

The shadow puppet performance at the earth alms ceremony in Kalitang Hamlet, Tambaknegara Village, was chosen as the object of study because the procession ceremony is still carried out completely. The earth alms tradition is held once a year in order to maintain the harmony of the relationship between individuals and ancestors or with nature (Suryani, 2014). The puppet show is performed as a Ruwat Desa (village cleanse). Ruwat is a tradition that must be followed to cleanse the village from disasters (Hakiki, 2022). The community believes that the Ruwatan is not only to save them from danger but also to remind them of their ancestors and is a form of expression of their gratitude to them (Wahidah, 2015). Ruwatan Bumi is a form of gratitude to God Almighty for all that is obtained from the crops (Basuni & Sudrajat, 2017).

Research about puppet performance as part of Ruwat has been conducted by Hidajat (2016), Safa'atillah & Chanifah (2021), dan Budhi et al. (2022). The result of Hidajat (2016) research shows that mask puppets have a specific function as a cleanse medium to obtain the community's participation and give spiritual support in the ritual to chase away the danger. Safa'atillah & Chanifah (2021) found that *wayang ruwatan* and earth alms at the graves of village elders and founders attract tourists to Sukoanyar village. Furthermore, research by Budhi et al. (2022) showed that there were findings in the form of a process of conveying the character of educational values to the community, including curiosity, honesty, and chivalry, respect, religion, obeying rules, fairness, intelligence, creativity, and critical knight.

There are pertinent studies based on the explanation above, but no research on the ecology of shadow puppets in earth alms. This research is significant because it will not only add to a more in-depth understanding of the relationship between shadow puppets and ecology, but it will also provide innovation and fill a hole left by earlier studies. A study like this could provide new insights into the interaction between culture and environment in the context of the earth alms tradition.

Methodology

This is qualitative research with an ethnographic approach. Ethnography commonly aims to explain a culture thoroughly, either in the form of material such as artifacts, tools, clothes, structures, etc., or in abstract terms like experiences, beliefs, norms, and values from the group under study (Ulfatin, 2022). Data sources include processions and local community leaders. The sampling techniques used were snowball sampling and purposive sampling. Data collection was done through non-participant observation and in-depth interviews. During observation, the researcher played a passive role. Interviews were conducted with informants to find out about the traditional ceremony procession. The validity test used source and method triangulation. Source triangulation in the research was used by checking the data through interviews with different informants. Method triangulation focuses on the use of different data collection methods. The data were analyzed using interactive analysis. Analysis, according to Miles et al. (2014), is divided into three streams of activities: (1) data reduction, (2) data presentation, and (3) conclusion drawing. Data were selected, namely traditional ceremonial processions related to ecological values.

Results and Discussion

Description of Kalitanjung Hamlet, Tambaknegara, Banyumas

This research was done in Kalitanjung Hamlet, Tambaknegara Village, Rawalo Sub-district, Banyumas Regency. Rawalo Sub-district has 9 villages; one of them is Tambaknegara. Demographically, Tambaknegara village consists of 7 hamlets and 8 *grumbul* (group). The hamlet that carries out the earth alms ceremony is Kalitanjung Hamlet. The majority of residents are Muslims, with a total of 2,778 residents. The hamlet also has the Kasepuhan Customary Community, Kalitanjung. The community adheres to the Kejawen Islamic faith. The community contains more than 200 members. Every year, the community organizes various rituals related to its beliefs, one of which is earth alms.

Purpose of Wayang Kulit Performance in the Sedekah Bumi Tradition

There are several purposes for holding the *wayang kulit* performances in the earth alms tradition. The first purpose is to get rid of pests and disasters in the village. It also has the purpose of asking for soil fertility and abundant agricultural products. The puppeteer tells stories about the origin of the earth and also stories about agriculture. This is done so that the community always remembers and is grateful for the harvest obtained. The existence of moral messages and teachings about the harmony of humans, nature, and God is also an effort to obtain blessings and village safety. In particular, the implementation of the ceremony always leads to the hope of safety, balance, and harmony in all aspects of life in the universe (Sukmawan & Febriani, 2023).

The *wayang kulit* performance is also done to preserve the culture of the village. The younger generation can recognize and understand the value of tradition in their village. This performance can also bring together the younger generation and the older generation in one educational spectacle. There are several aspects of the view of *wayang ruwatan* performances that have the significant of strengthening the morals and character of youth (Widodo, 2021). It also aims to unite the community. All the differences in

the village melt into one when the Ruwat Bumi is held. Every year, the community works together to help the *wayang kulit* performance succeeds.

This *wayang kulit* performance is also held to create a sense of serenity and tranquility in the rural community. This is because the community believes that without this procession, something is missing. This notion is expressed in the assumption that the village community will feel incomplete without the shadow puppet performance, and there will be a void in their life order. The community also thinks that if Ruwatan is not held, the hamlet will be afflicted by disasters such as the arrival of agricultural pests. *Wayang kulit* is perceived by villagers as a spiritual requirement that protects the environment.

The Wayang Kulit Performance in the Sedekah Bumi Tradition

Earth alms in Kalitanjung Hamlet are held every year. The series of earth alms includes a *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet) show. The sequence of earth alms in Kalitanjung Hamlet, starting from the village clean ritual, ruwat bumi ritual, and earth alms. The *wayang kulit* performance is performed during Ruwat Bumi. The earth alms ceremony is held in the month of Sura from Thursday Wage (*Kamis Wage*) to Friday Kliwon (*Jumat Kliwon*). If there is no Wage Thursday in Sura month, it is changed to Wage Monday (*Senin Wage*).

The *wayang kulit* performance is held on Wage Thursday or Wage Monday. The performance is held in the courtyard of the village head's house. The performance starts in the morning. The event starts from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The performance is attended by Tambaknegara villagers, Kalitanjung Kasepuhan, village officials, and other invited guests. Before the show began, several Javanese songs were sung by male *sinden*.



Picture 1. The moment of the *wayang kulit* audience at the Ruwat Bumi (earth festival)

The puppeteers used in ruwat bumi are specialized puppeteers. Not all puppeteers can become Ruwat puppeteers. There are several requirements to become a village Ruwat puppeteer. Firstly, the puppeteer is able to omit pests or disasters. There is a prayer that is prayed to God to omit the pest in Kejawan society known as *kidung*. Second, his body is clean, meaning that he has a clean soul and spirit. Third, he is a descendant of a Ruwat puppeteer commonly called a Lunglungan puppeteer; for example, his grandfather was a Ruwat puppeteer and then passed it down to his children and grandchildren. A puppeteer in Ruwatan is a person who is believed to have faith, skills, and various experiences to perform rituals (Ghofir & Pratama, 2023). In the Ruwatan ceremony, the puppeteer functions as a link between the real world and the supernatural world (Rukiyah, 2017).



Picture 2. Male sinden in a wayang kulit performance

The shadow puppet performance in Kalitang Hamlet is unique in that the Sinden are all male. Kalitang Hamlet inhabitants believe that there should be no female Sinden in the village. The community believes that using a female Sinden will result in tragedy. The female Sinden will be devastated. The belief was then passed down till the present day. Until recently, male Sinden served in shadow puppet shows.

The Ruwat Bumi ritual is a *wayang kulit* performance that depicts the development of the earth from prehistoric times to agriculture (Sumiarti & Miftahudin, 2018). Based on the interview results, the story told in the Ruwatan event namely Babad Alas Wanakarta. The puppet story narrates the events from the beginning of time to the end of the world. The first story involves a god who carried a mountain. The mountain was broken into several smaller mountains. The mountain was divided into three sections: western, eastern, and central. The agricultural story then described the story of Dewi Sri. Initially, a revelation in the form of an egg occurred. The revelation then soared away, and was chased by the god. There was an enormous snake somewhere else. The snake's mouth was wide open, hunting for food. The revelation then entered the snake's mouth in the form of an egg. God was then made aware of it. The snake initially refused to concede that an egg had entered its body. The snake eventually admitted and withdrew the egg. The egg was subsequently divided into three sections, each of which created a figure: Budug Basu, Lukmowati, and Dewi Sri. The farmers are then entrusted with the three figures. Dewi Sri can then cultivate a variety of edible plants.

There is a hymn in the *wayang ruwat* performance. The hymn that is chanted is *Kidung Rumeksa ing Wengi*. *Kidung Rumeksa ing Wengi* is a legacy of Sunan Kalijaga. This song is recited by the ruwat puppeteer. Here is one of the stanzas of the song.

<i>ana kidung rumekso ing wengi</i>	there is a song of supplication in the middle of the night
<i>teguh hayu luputa ing lara</i>	that makes free from all diseases
<i>luputa bilahi kabeh</i>	free from all calamities
<i>jim setan datan purun</i>	even the devil's genie does not want to come close
<i>paneluhan tan ana wani</i>	any kind of magic does not work
<i>niwah panggawe ala</i>	let alone evil deeds
<i>gunaning wong luput</i>	free from distress

<i>geni atemahan tirta</i>	fire becomes water
<i>maling adoh tan ana ngarah ing mami</i>	even thieves stay away from me
<i>guna duduk pan sirno</i>	the seven perils will vanish

Kidung Rumecko Ing Wengi serves to bridge supernatural things (Sakdullah, 2014). The message in the hymn teaches human to always establish good relations with all living things (Permadi, 2022). The message in the hymn underlines the importance of maintaining the balance of nature and harmony between humans and nature. Apart from being a spiritual tool, this hymn has also proven to be useful in an agricultural context. This hymn is useful for farmers so that their crops are not attacked by pests (Shofwan, 2021).

The gathering ends with a prayer conducted by Ki Dalang (The Puppeteer). The prayer is commonly referred to as *umbul doa*. *Umbul* means up and *doa* means prayer, so *umbul doa* is an expression of thanks for abundant sustenance, especially crops (Warto & Suryani, 2020). The goal of prayer is to be protected from all hazards. The recitation of the prayer is also a statement of sincere appreciation to God for the abundance of food, the prosperity of the harvest, and protection from all calamities (Maulana et al., 2023). According to *umbul doa*, every activity or action must be followed with prayer (Pramulia, 2018). The following is an extract of *umbul doa* from the shadow puppet performance.

Bismilahirrohmanirohim, tulap-tulap tanggul ana tulap saking ngetan, bali o ngetan. Tulap saking hama, saking lara, saking drubala, ranca baya rinadejan wesi. Wilujenga pak lurah Tambaknegara, sakmasyarakat e Tambaknegara. Tinaklukan dening malaikat e, pinayungan dening Allah.

Laa Ilaaha Illallah

Bismilahirrohmanirohim, tulap-tulap tanggul ana tulap saking kidul bali o ngidul. Tulap saking hama, saking lara, saking drubala rancabaya rinadejan wesi. Wilujenga pak lurah Tambaknegara, masyarakat e. Tinaklukan dening malaikat e. Pinayungan dening Allah.

Laa Ilaaha Illallah

Bismilahirrohmanirohim, tulap-tulap tanggul ana tulap saking kilen bali o ngilen, tulap saking hama, saking lara, saking drubala rancabaya rinadejan wesi. Lujeng Pak Lurah, sak masyarakat e Tambaknegara. Tinaklukan malaikat e. Pinayungan dening Allah.

Laa Ilaaha Illallah

Bismilahirrohmanirohim, tulap-tulap tanggul ana tulap saking ler bali o ngaler. Tulap saking hama, saking lara, saking drubala rancabaya rinajegan wesi. Lujeng a pak lurah sak masyarakat e Tambaknegara. Tinaklukan malaikat e. Pinayungan dening Allah.

Laa Ilaaha Illallah

These sentences include prayers or wishes for protection from any disaster, danger, or calamity, as well as expressions of gratitude to God. The puppeteer, as the leader of the prayer, requests that the people of Tambaknegara village be kept away from all pests, illnesses, and calamities. The calamity may appear from various directions. Therefore, it is mentioned one by one, from the side of the direction, so that the disaster returns to the previous direction so that it does not reach Tambaknegara village; both from the north, south, west, and east.

There are three offerings used in Ruwat Bumi: Komaran, Tumpeng (Indonesian cone-shaped rice), and Rasulan. Komaran contains crops, including bananas, *petai* (bitter bean), *jengkol* (dog fruit), bananas, combs, tea, rice, and other crops. Rasulan is rice with chicken, dried tempeh, and tempeh chips wrapped in banana leaves. There are 3 tumpeng in this Ruwat Bumi event, namely tumpeng kuat, tumpeng hias, and tumpeng rawe. The tumpeng hias contains peanuts, *petai* (bitter bean), tempeh chips, and crackers and is then decorated. Tumpeng kuat is a plain tumpeng. Tumpeng rawe is a tumpeng that is covered with grill.

Ecological Values in *Wayang Kulit* Sedekah Bumi

Environmental Education Value

When the community comes together to prepare for the shadow puppet play, the first environmental education value is reflected. The day before, the community held a village clean-up. Kalitang residents also clean the graves of the village's founders. There are two grand graves of the village founders: the East Grave and the West Grave. The activity shows that the community cares about the environment around them. The community also protects and respects their ancestors by continuing to care for the existing cemetery. The values of environmental education can be a role model for future generations because, in the process, the older and younger generations together keep the village clean.

The story told by the Ruwat puppeteer is the next value of environmental education. The shadow performance explains the origins of the earth as well as agriculture. Dewi Sri, as a symbolic character in shadow puppetry, represents not only the fertility of the land but also ethical and moral ideals that can serve as a role model for society. Dewi Sri is a spiritual emblem of women, and her characteristics include firmness, wisdom, nurturing, and education (Azhima et al., 2020). Her tenacity and wisdom can serve as an inspiration for maintaining ecosystem balance and caring for the land in order to attain ecosystem sustainability. The belief in Dewi Sri in Indonesian society as the Goddess of Rice, which is closely related to fertility, plays an important role in agriculture (Nastiti, 2020).

Respect for Nature

Respect for nature is the primary ecological value in Ruwat Bumi. The Ruwat Bumi ceremony pays homage to nature and the surrounding environment. Through the play told in the performance, humans respect the universe. The Dewi Sri play reveals symbols regarding the community's behavior when honoring rice or other agriculture (Sunardi, 2023). To avoid pests, the teachings in the shadow puppet can remind people to continually maintain and care for the agricultural ecosystem. Dewi Sri is the mother, and the mother is nature; honoring the existence of Dewi Sri's spirit is done by respecting nature (Rohman et al., 2022).

Humans embrace God's gift of wide rice fields, fertile rice, and a healthy, safe, and successful society by being grateful (Sutiyono & Suharjana, 2018). One of the aims of Ruwat Bumi is to express gratitude to God for the blessings bestowed upon us. Furthermore, to ensure the preservation of the ecosystem, pray to God to prevent all disasters. People not only show their appreciation to God through Ruwat Bumi acts and symbols, but they also remind themselves of the significance of keeping the ecosystem balanced. The understanding of the interconnectedness between humanity, nature, and the sustainability of existence together reflects the ritual's respect for nature. Ruwat bumi is not simply an annual religious rite; it is also a way to raise environmental consciousness. They appear to remind us of what would happen if we neglected to utilize the environment properly through prayers and historical narratives (Aliyudin, 2018).

Humans and Nature Are Interdependent

Humans and nature are inseparable. In Javanese society, the symbolization of the value of balance through Dewi Sri is linked to the concept of *memayu hayuningrat*, which mandates maintaining the balance, truth, beauty, and goodness of nature at both the micro and macro levels so that human imbalances have an impact on environmental balance (Sulaksono et al., 2021). *Memayu hayuningrat* promotes living in tune with natural cycles, especially agricultural activities. This equilibrium must be maintained to sustain environmental balance. Local communities can help achieve this equilibrium through tradition.

There are offerings in the tradition of earth alms, particularly in shadow puppetry. The presence of offerings in Ruwatan demonstrates human reliance on nature. Ruwatan offerings are results of nature, which are then enjoyed by the community. The offerings are symbolic of the fact that all food and technology utilized by humans are inextricably linked to natural elements (Riyan & Mulyati, 2023). The offerings are also a form of gratitude for the harvests provided by nature. Furthermore, the equipment and tools used are natural. Banana leaves are used as a base for cuisine by the people of Kalitang Hamlet. The food supplied to the audience is also grown on their land. This also emphasizes that every aspect of human life is inseparable from the involvement of nature.

Human reliance on nature is also reflected in his prayers to God Almighty. The request appears in both the hymn and the *umbul doa*. It is sung in the *kidung*, *ana kidung rumekso ing wengi*, *teguh hayu luputa ing lara*, *luputa bilahi kabeh*. This signifies that there is a supplication hymn in the middle of the night that renders it free of all sicknesses and disasters. In the *umbul doa*, the puppeteer also asks that the village be protected from bugs, illness, and other evil forces. This is from the prayer's extract; *bismilahirrohmanirohim*, *tulap-tulap tanggul ana tulap saking ngetan*, *bali o ngetan*. *Tulap saking hama*, *saking lara*, *saking drubala*, *ranca baya rinadejan wesi*. *Wilujenga pak lurah Tambaknegara*, *sakmasyarakat e Tambaknegara*. *Tinaklukan dening malaikat e*, *pinayungan dening Allah*.

In this context, hymns and *umbul doa* are more than just an art form; they portray a sense of human dependency and susceptibility to natural forces and God's will. These prayers express faith in spiritual power and a desire for protection and blessings. It also reflects the concept that humans have a role to play in caring for and conserving the environment while simultaneously acknowledging the potential dangers that nature might present. This understanding of one's reliance on nature will result in a more balanced and sustainable life.

Nature as a Relative

People can appreciate the value of nature in their lives if they recognize it as a relative (Cambah, 2022). The concept of nature as a relative can help people realize that they have a caring, responsible, and respectful attitude toward the environment. In traditional rituals, the concept of "nature is a relative" is used to foster attitudes and behaviors that promote environmental sustainability and ecological balance.

Dewi Sri's story has a significant message concerning the relationship between farmers' lives and their agricultural land. Farmers are supposed to care for their land like Dewi Sri cares for plant fertility. This is because nature and humans are like brothers and sisters who must look after one another. The narrative of Dewi Sri teaches about the human-nature partnership. Farmers are urged to respect the life cycle and preserve balance in order to achieve agricultural sustainability.

Conclusion

Earth alms activities in Kalitanjung Hamlet, Banyumas Regency, are held every year in the month of Sura. One of the processions in the activity is Ruwat Bumi through shadow puppet shows. The puppeteer who leads the Ruwatatan event is a special puppeteer for Ruwat Bumi. The uniqueness of this shadow puppet show is that the Sinden is male, not female.

Ecological values in the shadow puppet earth alms consist of environmental education values, respect for nature, humans and nature are interdependent, and nature as a relative. These values exist in the procession, stories, offerings, and in the shadow puppet earth alms. Therefore, shadow puppets in the Ruwatan procession have a spiritual function and an ecological function. This ecological function can enrich people's understanding of the importance of sustainability, natural balance, and the interdependent relationship between humans and the environment.

This study is only concerned with environmental values and shadow puppet presentations in Kalitanjung Hamlet, Banyumas. Other researchers are expected to perform studies on ecological values at various traditional events. Furthermore, more researchers can perform traditional research in a variety of other places, both domestically and internationally. The advancement of ecological study is projected to be beneficial for environmental conservation actions based on local community wisdom.

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