

SYMBOLIC MEANING OF LOCAL WISDOM IN THE SLOPE OF MOUNT LAWU: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY ON DUKUTAN VILLAGE CLEAN-UP CEREMONY

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ABSTRACT

The research aimed to describe the procession of the Dukutan village clean-up ceremony, sesaji and its equipment, and its symbolic meaning. The research was conducted using an ethnographic approach. Data sources were events, sesaji and its equipment, cultural observers, and ceremony performers. The sampling techniques used were purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques. The techniques used to collect data were observation and in-depth interviews. Data validity test was conducted using source and method triangulation techniques. Data analysis was done using an interactive model. The results are, firstly, symbolic meanings of the procession are (a) cleaning-up in Menggung Site symbolizing respect to Narotama, (b) collection sesaji symbolizing the meaning of commonness and gratitude expression, (c) parade symbolizing environment-monitoring behavior, and (d) brawl symbolizing a conflict between Nglurah Lor and Nglurah Kidul. Secondly, symbolic meanings of sesaji are (a) tumpeng of corn rice, symbolizing human-to-God relationship, (b) ares and tempe bakar, symbolizing simplicity, (c) gandik symbolizing wellbeing, and (d) boiled food made of palawija symbolizing natural wealth. Thirdly, other equipments include (a) encek, symbolizing human beings' submission to God, (b) kendi or vessel containing water, symbolizing the source of living, (c) iket, symbolizing a medium to expel evil spirit, and (d) incense smoke symbolizing behavior to remove badness. Generally, the symbolic meaning found in the research is related to social harmony and environmental conservation.

Keywords: symbolic meaning, Dukutan village clean-up ceremony, procession, sesaji, ethnographic

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has extraordinary cultural wealth, including local wisdom implanted in many community traditions and habits. Local wisdom is life perspective, knowledge, and varying living strategies in the form of activities carried out by local people to answer various problems and fulfill their needs (Taufan et al., 2022). Local wisdom is conceived as a form of culture constituting one of the ancestral heritages containing a large number of wise values, replete with wisdom and good values, performed and preserved by local people in the form of historical ideas, art, custom,

religious ceremony sourced from the local people (Saeroji & Wijaya, 2022). Local wisdom is a form of original knowledge from cultural and noble values used by local people to rule and regulate their life order (Nuwa, 2020). The local wisdom can be not only ideas, but also regulation and activity. Local wisdom can be guidelines for community members to behave well. In this era of globalization, the existence of local wisdom is essential. This is because local wisdom can be a filter to select various global aspects belonging to various aspects of community life (Jumriani et al., 2021).

Nowadays, local wisdom begins to be forgotten

by its own community. Young generations' consumptive behavior and weaker identity of local culture prove the people's poor awareness of maintaining local culture. People are more interested in foreign cultures. They consider a customary ceremony as one of the local wisdoms that Indonesia has more practical and up to date (Nahak, 2019).

One factor that causes the young generation to forget the local culture is their poor interest in learning and their awareness of loving their culture. In addition, the globalization era can generate a more modern community lifestyle (Nahak, 2019). Globalization with new products resulting from sophisticated technology will give a distinctive challenge to the states rich in culture, including Indonesia. Globalization has an impact on the change of the community's taste. As a result, local products begin to be marginalized. Many young generations are currently tempted by popular cultures and their attributes. The impacts involve, among others, lifestyle, fashion style, technology use, film and music preference, and concern with local culture.

The current swift globalization generates moral and national problems. Nationalistic values begin to fade, and local wisdom values in a region have begun to be forgotten. The fading moral values of a nation will lead to a weaker national identity, so cultural identity and local wisdom values are no longer a typicality that should be maintained. It is in line with Dewi and Budiwirman (2020) stating that globalization can impact identity, culture, and even creed or faith crises.

Research shows that globalization affects the young generation's life and mindset. This mindset makes some of them think that something traditional, such as traditional arts, is outdated, so they are less interested in them and start to forget them. The research has also found that many young generations view foreign arts as better and more interesting than Indonesian traditional arts. They are less aware of the importance of maintaining traditional arts as Indonesia's national identity (Siburian et al., 2021).

Saenal (2020) has explained that in the presence of the globalization era in Indonesia, the known culture is based on the basic values of a culture that has begun to shift. A set of local wisdom values deriving from culture sent down from generation to generation, often called high culture (*budaya adiluhung*), begins to get its competitor. If it is neither preserved nor developed, local culture or wisdom will be worryingly extinct. In relation to the statement, Iryanti (2017) says that the negative impact of globalization includes the degraded values of national culture due to the entry of foreign cultural values that have dominated the local cultural values. The degraded values of national culture can be seen, among others, in the young generation's indifference to local cultural values developing and becoming local identity.

Why are traditions rooted in local wisdom increasingly abandoned by young generations? This is because traditions are considered to be something that is no longer relevant to present and future lives

(Nurchayanti, Sachari, & Destiarmand, 2020). This assumption will endanger local wisdom preservation in a region.

For example, the extinction of local wisdom occurs in the Lingga Regency (Suhardi & Astuti, 2021). The attempt to introduce it to young generations does not run as expected. Young generations in Lingga Regency no longer know a variety of folklore existing, including local wisdom values. This also occurs in the Kajang Luar Tribe. The shift in social and cultural values leads the Kajang Luar Tribe to no longer hold tightly to their ancestral social and cultural values (Saenal, 2020).

This phenomenon is relevant to Muhyidin (2022), stating that a nation's self-identity is one of the basic problems encountered in the education and culture sector. An attempt can be made to strengthen local culture by maintaining and preserving it. Developing culture through the characters and strengthening local identity and wisdom is important.

The cultural and character development should lead to national development based on local wisdom values so that local culture can always be maintained in Indonesia (Iryanti, 2017). Many elements are contained in the village clean-up (*Bersih Desa*) ceremony. Koentjaraningrat (2015) explains that the elements of ceremony consist of (1) *sesaji* (meal offering); there will always be *sesaji* in each of customary ceremonies or rites. This *sesaji* constitutes food, objects, and so on intended for the spirit of ancestors. (2) Prayer is the most important element of a traditional ceremony. Prayers are offered to ask for salvation from ancestors, ancestral spirits, gods, or God. (3) Eating together; enjoying the meal prepared together as an expression of gratitude. (4) Procession or parade; procession is intended to expel spirits, ghosts, etc. (5) Fasting, as the form of religious act. The objective of fasting is, among other things, to clean up the self and to strengthen the mind. (6) Asceticism and meditation are used as a means to get closer to gods or God.

Indonesia is known as a nation with diverse cultural wealth. According to Koentjaraningrat (2015), the customary ceremony is the manifestation of the culture existing in each region. Customary ceremonies are a form of culture based on human activity within society. This social system indicates the activity of people interacting with each other over time.

One of the traditional cultures still held routinely in Nglurah Hamlet, Tawangmangu village, is a Dukutan village clean-up ceremonial tradition. Tawangmangu is a region with many local wisdoms, such as traditions, culinary products, and crafts. One of the traditional cultures still maintained in the valley of Mount Lawu, Tawangmangu, Karanganyar Regency is Dukutan. This tradition involves villagers in two hamlets existing in the Menggung Temple area (Wati et al., 2019b).

Dukutan Tradition is a routine held by the Nglurah Hamlet people, aiming to ask God through their ancestors to give abundant harvest yields and express gratitude to nature for their achievements

throughout the year. Although Nglurah Hamlet people adhere to Islam religion entirely, they still believe in supernatural powers and have not left the Dukutan tradition (Pangestu et al., 2021).

The Dhukutan ceremony is held on *Wuku* Dukut, the 29th out of 30 *Wuku* known by Javanese people. To local people, the Dhukutan ceremony is necessary for the safety of all people and their offspring and descendants. The Dhukutan ceremony is real evidence that the people keep upholding cultural values and establishing close relationships with their ancestors. This ceremony is based on a story sent down from generation to generation and an embryonic founder of Nglurah Village. It is said that the village located on the slope of Mount Lawu was established by a *patih* or prime minister of Kahuripan Kingdom named Narotama, who wandered to the western part of Nglurah (Nglurah Lor). At that time, Narotama met a woman with supernatural powers who came from the opposite village (Ngurah Kidul) named Nyai Rasa Putih. However, this encounter results in enmity. Magic contests occurred almost every day. This fight even spread to involve people from other villages. Uniquely, love grew from the series of fights, and finally, both agreed to get married. Having gotten married, this couple of warriors were crowned to be *pepunden* or leaders of Nglurah village with predicates Kyai and Nyai Menggung (Budiandya, 2017).

The village clean-up ceremony held by indigenous people in many regions in Indonesia functions not only as cultural and spiritual activities for the community but also improves social solidarity within the community. It can remove the sense of egoism regarding individual interests, improve the concern with fellow human beings, and solidify religious life.

In this context, the ceremony functions as a medium of communication, not only spiritual but also social communication (Malik, 2019). Human culture is replete with symbolism. Symbolism is a thought emphasizing the pattern based on a symbol (Herusatoto, 2008). The interpretation of the symbolic meaning of the village clean-up ceremony should be delivered to young generations. The attempt that can be taken is to document local wisdom, in this case, the village clean-up ceremony, by teaching it to the young generation.

The topic of the Dukutan ceremony is interesting to study. Considering the aforementioned problem, the research aims to describe the preparation and procession of the ceremony, the symbolic meaning of the procession, *sesaji*, and equipment used to implement the Dukutan village clean-up ceremony.

Some previous studies have been conducted on local wisdom by Lestari and Wijayanti (2020), Wati et al. (2019a), Santoso et al. (2021). The first one is conducted by Lestari and Wijayanti (2020). It aims to find out the local wisdom values of the Samin community that are in danger of extinction. Samin community preserves social values in the form of teachings that should be done and not be done. Some

teachings that cannot be done are slanderous, greedy, resentful, accusing without evidence, envious, treating others unfavorably, accusing, and stealing; and some other teachings that should be done are being honest, obeying teaching, and concord. The local wisdom values of the Samin people can be applied not only locally to the Samin tribal community but also nationally and globally. Globally, the wisdom value of the Samin community can create world peace. This research is in line with Lestari and Wijayanti's (2020) research on local wisdom. Lestari and Wijayanti (2020) have studied specifically the local wisdom values of the Samin community in danger of extinction, while the research focuses on the symbolic meaning of the ceremony, *sesaji*, and its equipment in the Dukutan ceremony.

The second research is conducted by Wati et al. (2019a). They study Islamic religious values in the Dukutan Ceremony as the character education for elementary school students. Religious values reflected in the Dukutan Ceremony are honesty, obedience, discipline, praying, gratitude, and reliability. In the procession of the Dukutan village clean-up ceremony, the religious character education values are helpful to students to be smart intellectually and emotionally. The research recommends that educators in Tawangmangu region use Dukutan village clean-up ceremony as learning media to teach the religious character education values to elementary school students. The research is in contrast to Wati et al. (2019a) research focusing more on Islamic religious values in the Dukutan Ceremony to be used later as character education for elementary school students. Meanwhile, the research emphasizes ceremony preparation, procession, symbolic meaning, *sesaji*, and its equipment more. However, both studies equally research the Dukutan ceremony.

The third research by Santoso et al. (2021) discusses the local wisdom of the Ulur-ulur Tlaga Buret Ceremony in the Tulungagung region. This ceremony is an expression of gratitude for the abundant water source from the lake. The procession consists of preparation, parade or cavalcade, Dewi Sri and Jaka Sedana sculpture bathing (*jaman*), prayer, and flower sowing. For closing the program, a Tulungagung regency-typical art performance is shown that contains local wisdom, religious, social, and knowledge values. This previous research is similar to the research as they investigate the procession of ceremony. The difference lies in the type of traditional ceremony studied.

The research is carried out to explore and describe the symbolic meaning of the procession, *sesaji*, and equipment of the Dukutan Ceremony. Research on local wisdom, particularly village clean-up ceremonies, is important to improve people's awareness of the importance of culture as the nation's identity.

METHODS

The research applies an ethnographic approach

focusing on ceremony preparation, procession, the symbolic meaning of procession, *sesaji*, and equipment used in the Dukutan village clean-up ceremony. The ceremony is held in Nglurah village, Tawangmangu sub-district, Karanganyar regency, located on the slope of Mount Lawu. Before 1990, the basic food of people in this village was corn because paddy was not appropriate to be planted in Tawangmangu due to its high rainfall and steep land.

Events, cultural objects, and informants become the data sources in the research. The event includes the preparation on the first day (Sunday *Pon* or Monday *Pon*), the procession on the first day (Monday *Wage*), and the second day (Tuesday *Kliwon*). The data source in the form of cultural objects includes *sesaji* (meal offerings) and equipment used in the village clean-up ceremony. The informant consists of two cultural observers, two environment neighborhood coordinators (*Korling*), a religious figure (*Modin*) as 'the leader of the rite', three public figures, two *sesaji* makers, and twelve performers of the Dukutan ceremony procession. The sampling techniques used are snowball sampling and purposive sampling techniques. The snowball sampling technique is used to find key informants who comprehend the symbolic meaning of the implementation of the Dukutan ceremony. A purposive sampling technique is used to identify the citizens and the public figures engaging in the implementation of the Dukutan ceremony.

To collect data in the form of the Dukutan ceremony procession and procedure as well as *sesaji* served, observation is conducted with video recording help; while to collect the data of symbolic meaning, the in-depth interview is carried out with audio recording help. Data validity test is carried out using source and method triangulation techniques. Source triangulation is conducted, for example, through crosschecking the truth of information on the symbolic meaning of the procession obtained from the ceremony performer with the confirmation given by the local cultural observers. Method triangulation is applied, among others, through crosschecking the truth of observation results in the process of preparing *sesaji* by interviewing the *sesaji* maker. Then, the data are analyzed using an interactive model encompassing data collection, data reduction, data display, and verification/conclusion (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Each village clean-up tradition or ceremony developed in a certain community usually has a different procession and symbolic meaning. The research describes the preparation, procession, symbolic meaning of the Dukutan ceremony, symbolic meaning of the *sesaji*, and equipment used in the Dukutan ceremony in detail.

In the Dukutan traditional ceremony procession, before the village clean-up ceremony is held, some preparations should be made by the citizens, including

sesaji making and personal preparation. Basic materials used in preparing *sesaji* must come from corn and *palawija* (secondary crops). *Sesaji* should be prepared from corn without paddy element at all because it is said that corn is their *danyang's* (a spirit protecting a place or region) favorite food. In addition, they respect the god of fertility, Dewi Sri Kuncung, who they believe brings fertility and prosperity to Nglurah village. The name Dewi Sri Kuncung derives from the phrase *kuncung jagung* (young corn) because the basic plant produced in Nglurah is corn.

In preparing this *sesaji*, some rules should be obeyed by the local people. If these rules are not obeyed, unexpected things will occur, including *pagebluk* or prolonged disaster. The rules are (a) the cooks should be in pure condition or free from dirt, (b) the cooks should be adult or married women, (c) all equipment used should be actually clean, (d) the *sesaji* prepared may not be tasted, blown, or smelt, (e) the material used may not contain rice and oil, and (f) the meal should be prepared using right hand. If the process of cooking is conducted using fuel wood, they should use the right hand to enter the wood into the furnace (Sumarwati et al., 2016).

For the process of preparing *sesaji*, the corn is soaked for two days, then ground into fine flour and mixed with grated coconut. The seasoning used is salt only. During the cooking process, the cooks are not allowed to taste their cooking. In preparing *sesaji*, the principles of simplicity and precision are emphasized. Flour and grated coconut are mixed in one container and then steamed until half-done. Then the dough is divided into two parts: one part is steamed again to prepare *tumpeng*, and another part is prepared in various shapes, such as *gandhik*, and then steamed again.

Before the Dukutan village clean-up ceremony, every citizen prepares and cleans themselves physically or spiritually. This preparation is conducted to make the ceremony successful and to avoid the disaster that comes from the *dhanyang's* curse. The procession of the Dukutan village clean-up ceremony involves cleaning up the Menggung site, collecting *sesaji*, parading around the village, and brawling (Sumarwati et al., 2016). In this procession, Nglurah people work together and participate actively in supporting the implementation of the Dhukutan Ceremony.

Menggung site or Menggung temple is an archeological heritage site located in Nglurah hamlet, Tawangmangu village, Tawangmangu sub-district, Karanganyar regency. It is located in a hilly area with many big trees growing around it. The word '*Menggung*' derives from the name of Mbah Menggung, actually Narotama, the follower of King Airlangga. Narotama ran away to Wonogiri and established a resting place in Nglurah. Airlangga decided to return to Kediri with his other followers, but Narotama and his subordinates preferred living in Nglurah.

The Dukutan village clean-up ceremony is started with cleaning the site up together (cooperation or *gotong royong*). The environment around the site

is cleaned from leaves or other rubbish, making it dirty. The activity of cleaning up the Menggung site in Nglurah village symbolizes respect for Narotama (the savior of food disaster) in Nglurah village of Tawangmangu. Menggung site environment is very beautiful, as the Banyan tree and other trees make the site shady. Figure 1 shows the condition of roads to the Menggung site that have been cleaned.



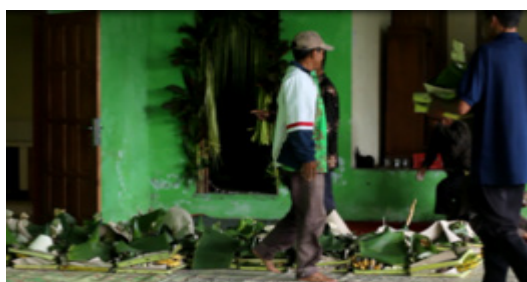
(A)



(B)

Figure 1 Menggung Site

The next stage of the ceremony is to collect the *sesaji*. There are three types of *sesaji* prepared by the people, but not all people prepare them. The three types of *sesaji* are, firstly, *sesaji* is prepared by the head of neighborhood. This *sesaji* is dedicated to two *dhanyang* believed to protect the village, Kyai Menggung and Nyai Rasa Putih. This *sesaji* will later be stored in a *sanggar* or *tinon* (a place for storing the *sesaji*). Secondly, *sesaji* is brought to Menggung temple, similar to the one brought to *sanggar/tinon*. Thirdly, it is type of *sesaji* prepared by the people. This *sesaji* is prepared in large quantities. The collection of *sesaji* symbolizes togetherness and expression of gratitude. It can be seen in Figure 2.



(A)



(B)

Figure 2 (A) People Collect *Sesaji* (B) Three Types of *Sesaji* Collected

The night before the Dukutan ceremony is held, the *sesaji* collected are prayed for by the people, led by *Bapak Modin*. They ask for the smooth implementation of the Dukutan ceremony in the following morning, and they hope that they will be spared from any disaster and be blessed with health and well-being. It can be seen in Figure 3.



(A)



(B)

Figure 3 (A) Pray for *Sesaji* and (B) People Praying the *Sesaji* under the Guidance of *Bapak Modin*

On Tuesday *Kliwon* morning, a parade is held (Figure 4). After all the personnel has been ready, *sesaji* is then paraded to the houses of villagers on the way to *punden* (a place where there are graves of people who are considered to be the forerunners of village society). On the way to *punden*, all people shout 'Horay-Horay'. *Sesaji* is brought by some adult men. There are two *sesaji* parades: Nglurah Lor and Nglurah Kidul, both of which enter the *punden* from two different gates. The parade encircling this village

symbolizes environment monitoring or environment-maintaining behavior. After the company enters the yard of *punden* or Menggung temple, the *sesaji* is out onto the prepared pandanus mat. Then, this *sesaji* is prayed by the village elder.

The series of ceremonies that should be implemented during the ceremony in the temple include burning incense and tying the head of sculptures using *iket* (head covering made of cloth tied in a circle around the head). The sculptures are those of Kyai Menggung and Kyai Rasa Putih. The prayer is led by the village elders, and then water coming from the *air sumber* (source of water) is divided from *kendi* (vessel) to those wanting it. This *air sumber* is believed to elicit livelihood and to grant wishes.



(A)



(B)

Figure 4 (A) Parade Around the Village and (B) Parade Goes to Menggung Sites

The main ceremony of the Dukutan village clean-up ceremony is a brawl (see Figure 5). Before the brawl is organized, *sesaji* that has been prayed is mixed into one container called *pincuk*. This *pincuk* is made of intact banana leaf roasted on the incense burnt before use. Each village or RW (citizen association) prepares two *pincuk* brought by two adult men. The *pincuks* containing a mix of various meals are brought to encircle the temple three times and thrown out of the temple. It is intended to prevent the disaster from coming into the village. The spectators receiving the *sesaji* throw are believed to get blessed from the *dhanyang*. This *sesaji* is used as a weapon for brawl. In the fourth circle, the ones bringing *pincuk* throw *sesaji* and *pincuk* to each other. *Sesaji* thrown includes *tumpeng jagung* and *gandik*. *Tumpeng nasi jagung* (*tumpeng* corn rice) has been squeezed and mixed

with other *uba rampe* (ingredients) and then changed into a weapon. The slightly hardened *gandik* becomes the most preferred weapon as it can be thrown more easily.

This brawl ceremony symbolizes the warning that a conflict has ever occurred between Narotama (Kyai Menggung) and Nyi Rasa Putih. Finally, the conflict ends peacefully, and both of them get married. Ngurah villager's concern for the environment and togetherness is also demonstrated in the Dukutan ceremony. After the brawl ends, the citizens immediately clean up the *punden* area from rubbish and dirt resulting from the procession of brawl between citizens.



(A)



(B)

Figure 5 (A) The Implementation of Brawl and (B) Brawl Ends After the *Sesaji* Thrown Has Been Used Up

Sesaji used is *tumpeng nasi jagung*, *bothok ares* and *tempe bakar*, *gandhik*, and *palawija rebus* (boiled *palawija* or secondary crops). *Tumpeng* is cone-shaped corn rice served with side dishes (see Figure 6). The cone shape of *tumpeng* symbolizes the relationship between human beings and God. Human beings are at the bottom, and God rules at the top. Therefore, *tumpeng* symbolizes a hope that human beings should believe in the presence of God, the only one, as the creator of everything on earth. In addition, *tumpeng* also symbolizes a mount as the high place where human beings will feel closer to God. The side dishes complementing the *tumpeng* should originate from nature and be processed simply, burnt, or boiled/steamed. It symbolizes that human beings should live modestly and be close to nature. The side dishes of *tumpeng* include *tempe bakar*, *sayur lodeh kluwih*, *bothok ares*, *bothok pelas*, *telur rebus setengah* (a half

of boiled egg), and *urap*.



Figure 6 *Tumpeng* and Side Dishes

Bothok is a kind of food made of soybean soaked for two hours, then ground with mixed coriander, garlic, galangal, salt, sugar, and grated coconut. The dough is then wrapped with banana leaves and boiled until done. *Sayur ares* is made of the inside part of young banana midribs. To get this inside part is by peeling the outer layers of the midrib. In *sesaji*, *tempe bakar* (roasted *tempe*) is usually stabbed with a skewer and then stuck into the *tumpeng nasi jagung*. The *bothok ares* and *tempe bakar* symbolize simplicity.

Gandik and *tawonan* (see Figure 7) are two meals made of corn flour; the difference lies in their shapes. *Gandik* is cow back-shaped, while *tawonan* is small round-shaped. *Gandik* is made in four colors: red, white, yellow, and black. To prepare red *gandik*, brown sugar is added to the dough. Yellow *gandik* is prepared by adding turmeric solution to the dough. Black *gandik* is prepared by adding coal powder to the dough, while white *gandik* is made originally without adding anything. Meanwhile, *tawonan* is made in two colors: red and white. The colors of *gandik* symbolize welfare originating from nature, while *tawonan* symbolizes endless sustenance.



(A)



Figure 7 (A) *A Gandik* and (B) *Tawonan*

Corn, sweet potato, cassava, banana, and nut are examples of boiled *palawija*. Javanese people have been accustomed to processing the produce to be used in a traditional ceremony by boiling or steaming it to maintain the purity of the produce. The boiled food becomes the favorite as it is healthier than the fried. Boiled *palawija* symbolizes that nature has provided the food that human beings need. The equipment used in the Dukutan village clean-up ceremony is *encek*, *kendi* (vessel), *iket*, and incense smoke.

In Dukutan tradition, each family makes a set of *sesaji* consisting of two *encek* of *sesaji* with different content. An *encek* is a place made of plaited bamboo in a square shape with a banana leaf midrib on its edge, intended to put *sesaji*. *Encek* is also defined as the means of submitting *sesaji*, meaning that human beings should submit themselves to God and be subjected and obedient to Him. *Kendi* (a vessel made of clay to store water) plays an important role in social life, particularly in traditional communities. The basic function of *kendi* is to store drinking water. However, it also has another function: the equipment of social-cultural rites and even religious rites existing in the archipelago.

In the Dukutan ceremony, the *kendi* contains water added with incense. Visitors who want to drink water from the *kendi* are pleased to do so. The pure water in the *kendi* has many positive values, such as curing disease and eliciting happiness. Those drinking water in the *kendi* believe that they will get a blessing after they drink from the prayed *kendi*. The *kendi* containing water symbolizes the source of life.

Iket is a head covering made of cloth tied in a circle around the head by men in Java and Bali. *Iket* can be plain or patterned cloth, square in shape, and used by folding it into a triangle, wrapping it around the head, and tying it at the back. Its symbolic meaning is that it is believed to be able to expel evil spirits.

Incense is an aromatic biotic material that releases fragrant smoke when burnt. The incense used in the implementation of the Dukutan ceremony is made of sulfur. The symbolic meaning of incense in the Dukutan ceremony is aromatic material or fragrance to respect the souls of ancestors. The ancestors intended are Nyai Rasa Putih and Kyai Menggung. The smoke resulting from the burnt incense is defined as the eradicator of any evils. The smoke of incense (Figure 8) symbolizes the behavior of removing badness.



Figure 8 Incense Smoke

There are symbolic meanings contained in the procession of the Dukutan ceremony. Firstly, the symbolic meanings of the procession are (1) the cleaning-up ceremony in Menggung site symbolizing respect to Narotama, (2) the collection of *sesaji* symbolizing the meaning of commonness and gratitude expression, (3) the parade symbolizing environment-maintaining behavior, and (4) brawl with corn rice symbolizing a conflict between Nglurah Lor and Kidul. Secondly, symbolic meanings of *sesaji* are (1) *tumpang* of corn rice, symbolizing human-to-God relationship, (2) *ares* and *tempe bakar*, symbolizing simplicity, (3) *gandik* symbolizing wellbeing, and (4) boiled food made of *palawija*, symbolizing natural wealth. Thirdly, other equipments include (1) *encek*, symbolizing human beings' submission to God, (2) *kendi*, symbolizing the source of living, (3) *iket*, symbolizing a medium to expel evil spirit, and (4) incense smoke, symbolizing behavior to remove badness.

Human beings are called animal symbolism. Human beings are never inseparable from symbols or signs around them. Through the sign, they communicate and send messages. Symbolism is something prominent and present in a tradition or custom (Herusatoto, 2008).

The analysis of symbols is subjective in nature. The author should include socio-cultural context, theories, concepts, and data to explain analysis and interpretation. It is relevant to Mulyana (2010) that a symbol has some properties: (1) a symbol is haphazard, capricious, and arbitrary in nature, (2) a symbol basically does not have meaning; it is people that give it meaning, (3) symbol is varying between on culture and another, between one place and another, and between one temporal context and another. Sulaeman et al. (2020) state that symbolic meaning is created by the traditional community as a medium for ritual communication activity.

Several symbols can be analyzed in implementing the Dukutan traditional ceremony. Symbolic analysis involves analyzing the *sesaji* and equipment used in the Dukutan ceremony. According to Asif and Ali (2019), symbols can be seen in pictures, words, art, architecture, and common household items. Symbols are another way of communicating certain thoughts, meanings, and hopes of cultural groups.

Bersih Desa (Village clean-up ceremony), according to Geertz (1983), is a *slametan* rite or Javanese customary ceremony to provide *sesaji* to *danyang desa* (the spirit protecting the village). *Sesaji* is obtained from the food donated obligatorily by each of the families. *Bersih Desa* is performed by the people in the hamlet to clean up the village from the disturbing evil spirits. Therefore, *sesaji* is given to the *danyang*, as the *danyang* is believed to be a village guard. Thus, the *Bersih Desa* ceremony is held on the grave of *danyang*.

In the Dukutan ceremony, *Bersih Desa* symbolizes respect for Narotama (Kyai Menggung's another name). This *sesaji* is served to Kyai Menggung

and is believed to protect the village from starvation and disaster. The Nglurah community's life is highly dependent on nature. They praise and believe in natural and invisible power and also the highest spiritual power of God. Respect for the ancestral spirit demonstrated by Nglurah villagers is one of the symbolic acts done by the Javanese people (Setiawan, 2017). In Javanese belief, there are good and evil spirits around them. As suggested by Herusatoto (2008), Javanese people praise the good spirits and ask them for blessings while they ask the evil spirits not to disturb their lives. Respect for ancestral spirit can be achieved by, among others, holding a Dukutan traditional ceremony.

The statement is in line with Mutiara's research (2023), stating that *Bersih Desa* is a *sesaji* (offerings) contributed to the *danyang* of Rasau Village used by villagers in the attempt to maintain their security or safety. By implementing the *Bersih Desa* ceremony, they believe they will avoid calamity and live more peacefully and prosperously. It is relevant to the tradition of *tolak bala* (ward off misfortune) performed by Simaroken villagers (Imanda et al., 2021). The tradition of *tolak bala* is the attempt of warding off disaster that will come to the plant to be planted. They believe that by performing the tradition, they can avoid any disease. In line with this, Ningsih (2019) states that the tradition performed by a community is an attempt to ask God and their ancestors to save and protect them. This tradition is performed as a form of respect to ancestors, believed to be one's blessing and protection. Prayer is the basic requirement in the activities of the *Sadranan* ceremony. People offer prayer fervently. They flock to the graves carrying food for alms (*sedekah*) (Murwaningsih et al., 2020). Kurniawan and Setyawan (2021) state that the series of *Sedekah Gunung* (mountain alms) ceremony is the manifestation of gratitude to nature for blessings and natural products the people can get. *Sedekah Gunung* ceremony contains philosophical meanings and ecological messages implied in the form of its *sesajen* (meal offering).

Another research on village clean-up ceremony has also been conducted by Cahyani et al. (2023). This research has found that the *Bersih Desa* tradition performed in the Blitar region in *Muharam* month is the embodiment of the religious community and a means of implementing Pancasila values. Meanwhile, *Merti Desa* activities existing in Kemranggen village are the people's attempt to build community concord through participation, cooperation, and cooperation regardless of religion, ethnicity, race, social strata, and profession (Muhajir et al., 2019).

The second procession in the Dukutan ceremony is the *sesaji* collection. Before holding the Dukutan traditional ceremony activity, every citizen makes preparations either physically or spiritually. It is relevant to research conducted by Sumarwati, Suryanto, and Anindyarini (2016). Physical preparation pertains to body cleanliness, while spiritual preparation emphasizes soul cleanliness. All of these preparations are carried out to make the ceremony

implementation run well and smoothly; in this case, men and women should fully ablution (*mandi besar*). Similarly, before cooking *sesaji*, the people who will cook *sesaji* must do complete ablution, the water used for cooking should be new and clean, and the places or containers used should be clean. To the Nglurah people, this preparation is intended to ascertain the successful implementation of the ceremony and to avoid disaster due to danyang's curse (Sumarwati et al., 2016). There is an assumption that *sesaji* in the Dukutan ceremony may not be made of rice. If one of the people uses rice as the basic material to prepare *sesajen*, Bethara will be angry. Bethara's anger can be disaster, calamity, or harvest failure. *Sesaji* has many philosophies that can be taken as a life lesson (Wati et al., 2019b). The symbols in the Dukutan ceremony can be manifested into objects and ceremonial facilities used in each of the ceremonial elements. Several *sesaji* still can be revealed for its meaning and definition. However, many others are no longer known (Budiandya, 2017). One of the customs still maintained today is the *Slametan* ceremony, in which various *sajen* (*sesaji*) are used to symbolize certain messages. In her research, Puspita (2018) finds that *sajen*'s name reflects Prigi coastal people's belief in Allah SWT and his invisible creature, who is the ruler of certain areas, such as Nyi Roro Kidul. The tradition of serving *sesajen*, according to Fauziah, Lubis, and Ema (2021), represents the expression of gratitude to ancestors and Sanghyang Sri. The symbolic meanings of the *sesaji* collection performed by the people are togetherness and expression of gratitude.

The parade is the third procession existing in the Dhukutan ceremony. The parade around the village symbolizes environmental monitoring/behavior to take care of the environment. The symbolic meaning of parades in traditional ceremonies is also found by Fahmi (2020), who states that traditional parades existing in Cipaat of Indramayu regency are religious, social, and moral values that can be implemented in daily life activities. It is also found that the social relation contained in parade tradition strengthens the friendship relation (*silaturahmi*) and harmony in fraternity.

The last procession in the Dukutan ceremony is a brawl. In this procession, the ceremony participants throw *sesaji* at each other. *Sesaji* thrown is corn rice. The symbolic meaning of the brawl is the conflict between Nglurah Lor and Nglurah Kidul. There is a folklore behind this brawl event. This brawl symbolizes the hostility between Kyai Menggung and his disciples, and Ny Rasa Putih and her disciples, which ended peacefully then (Setiawan, 2017). In the presence of folklore in the Dukutan ceremony, this ceremony is expected to be remembered and known better by the public. Dewantara (2022) has studied the terminologies in the Dukutan ceremony (an Ethnolinguistic study) that explain the lexical and cultural meanings of the brawl. In the article, he mentions that a brawl is a gang fight, a mass scrimmage. In the Dukutan ceremony, the brawl is a tradition that should be held compulsorily

by throwing corn rice (*sego jagung*). Meanwhile, as a cultural meaning, a brawl in the Dukutan ceremony is a tradition representing the conflict between Eyang Menggung and Nyi Rasa Putih groups that ends peacefully and with unity so that both of them become a complementary couple. It can be interpreted that unity can result in prosperity and glory. In addition, brawls are also defined as a tradition that repels all sorts of dangers.

The symbolic meanings of *sesaji* are (1) *tumpeng* of corn rice symbolizes the relationship between humans and God, (2) *bothok* ares and *tempe bakar* (roasted tempe) symbolizes simplicity, (3) *gandik* represents welfare, and (4) boiled *palawija* symbolizes the nature richness.

Studies on the symbolic meaning have also been conducted by Saddhono and Kurniawan (2017) and Fauzi and Saddhono (2019). In their research on the Begalan customary ceremony in Banyumas et al. (2017) have found that the use of *sesajis* can symbolize the expression of gratitude, the repellent of disaster, and the manifestation of prayer to ancestors. The *sesajis* used in *Mantenan Tebu* tradition in Tasikmadu Karanganyar (Fauzi & Saddhono, 2019) include *nasi gurih*, *nasi golong*, *nasi asahan*, *jajanan pasar*, *jadah*, *rengginang*, *ingkung ayam*, *pisang raja*, *jenang*, *tumpeng robyong*, *palawija*, and buffalo head. From the interpretation of such symbols, the relationship between Javanese people and God can be seen. A good relationship with God is expected to grant the Javanese people's request for an abundant harvest, a smooth sugarcane grinding season, and safety.

Meanwhile, the symbolic meanings of ceremonial equipment are, among others, (1) *encek* symbolizes human's submission to God, (2) *kendi* symbolizes the source of life, (3) *iket* symbolizes a means of repelling evil spirit, and (4) incense smoke symbolizes the behavior of removing badness. The philosophical meaning of *encek* emphasizes the importance of always remembering Allah through *dzikir*. In addition to the philosophical meaning, there is another philosophical meaning related to *encek*, which is the importance of cooperating and helping each other face life problems. Help can be given in both material and non-material forms. Plaited bamboo in the *encek* symbolizes the need for human power to cooperate with each other (Wati et al., 2019b).

From the procession of the Dukutan village clean-up ceremony, *sesaji* and its equipment as well as its symbolic meanings, it can be concluded that many good values and local wisdom values are contained within it. This is in line with Njatrijani's (2018) research finding that the symbolic meaning of each tradition or local wisdom not only has life values for the community but also contains virtue values in living within a nation and state. Local wisdom is a magnet to moral learning, and it is very potent in character-building education to prepare for better future generations (Indah & Rohmah, 2022). Generally, the symbolic meaning found in this research is related to social harmony and environmental conservation.

Local knowledge will survive if only local learning is applied concretely to daily life (Chaer et al., 2021). Several local wisdoms have been so embedded into the people's lives that they can build the character of local people. They include local wisdom from natural wealth, historical sites, social environment, and culture containing good moral messages (Mazid et al., 2020). Bali's local wisdom is a strong traditional cultural value system between culture and religion that has become the root and basis of Balinese people's lives. The existence of Bali cultural values is still maintained until today (Dwijendra, 2019). The local wisdom values are still very relevant to life today. This statement is in line with Anggraini (2023) finding the myths following tradition in explicit relation to Kajang indigeneous people in South Sulawesi, concerning their people's residence and lifestyle. The existence of Kajang people is well-known for they still preserve their regional original tradition. They still hold tightly to their traditional belief system. The existence of local wisdom is very important to maintain the existence and sustainability of the natural environment. It is manifested into the symbolical relation between human beings and natural environment (Niman et al., 2023). Some myths still seem to be relevant and take an active part in their daily life.

CONCLUSIONS

There are some activities that are done during the Dukutan ceremony procession: cleaning up the Menggung site, collecting *sesaji*, holding a parade, and holding a brawl. The symbolic meanings of the procession are (1) the cleaning-up of the Menggung site symbolizing respect to Narotama, (2) the collection of *sesaji* symbolizing commonness and gratitude expression, (3) the parade around the village symbolizing the behavior of taking care of the environment, and (4) brawl with corn rice symbolizing a conflict between Nglurah Lor and Nglurah Kidul.

The symbolic meanings of the meal offering (*sesaji*) are (1) *tumpeng* of corn rice, symbolizing the relationship between humans and God, (2) *bothok ares* and *tempe bakar* (roasted *tempe*), symbolizing simplicity, (3) *gandik* symbolizing wellbeing, and (4) boiled food made of *palawija* (secondary crops) symbolizing the local village's natural wealth. Thirdly, other equipments include (1) *encek*, symbolizing that human beings should submit themselves to God, (2) *kendi* or vessel containing water, symbolizing the source of living, (3) *iket*, symbolizing a medium to expel the evil spirit, and (4) incense smoke symbolizing behavior to remove badness.

From the procession of the Dukutan village clean-up ceremony, *sesaji* and its equipment as well as its symbolic meanings, it can be concluded that many good values and local wisdom values are contained within it. Those goodness and local wisdom values are still enacted today and can be the guidelines in daily life. The Dukutan village clean-up ceremony implies

the attempt to always accommodate the stakeholders' needs to make this ceremony acceptable to the young generation. Thus, in the next implementation, some reforms should be made to the ceremonial process, *sesaji*, and equipment. Therefore, similar research should be conducted on the next implementation of the Dukutan ceremony.

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