

## THE ECOLOGICAL VALUES IN THE *SEDEKAH BUMI* CEREMONY IN KALITANJUNG HAMLET, BANYUMAS REGENCY

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### ABSTRACT

*The issue of ecology has gained global attention due to widespread environmental damage, including in Indonesia. Our ancestors possessed local wisdom that helped preserve ecological balance, one example being the Sedekah Bumi (earth alms) tradition in Banyumas, Central Java, Indonesia. This research aims to examine the values of ecological wisdom and the role of the Sedekah Bumi ceremony in shaping the community's ecological awareness, particularly through the processions and offerings made in Kalitanjung Hamlet, Banyumas Regency. Additionally, it explores how the indigenous people of Banyumas have managed to preserve this tradition to this day. The study employs a qualitative descriptive research design with an ethnographic approach. Data collection techniques included observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The theoretical framework for this research is based on Keraf's nine principles of environmental ethics. The findings reveal that the ecological wisdom inherent in the Sedekah Bumi tradition is closely linked to the community's way of life. This deep connection with nature has given rise to nine key ecological values: respect for nature, moral responsibility for nature, cosmic solidarity, care for nature, the principle of "no harm," simplicity and harmony with nature, justice, democracy, and moral integrity. This research contributes to existing theories and provides practical implications for further studies on the Sedekah Bumi tradition in various regions.*

**Keywords:** ecology, local wisdom, Sedekah Bumi, environmental ethics

### INTRODUCTION

Traditional ceremonies, as rituals, hold profound significance within society, as their values are reflected in the stages of preparation, execution, and conclusion. The local wisdom embedded in these practices encompasses dimensions of solidarity, religiosity, education, and ecology (Fardayanti & Nurman, 2013; Oktaviana, 2020; Riyan & Mulyati, 2023; Sehandi, 2022). Such ceremonies therefore not only preserve cultural identity but also serve as living expressions of community values that continue to shape social and environmental awareness.

Solidarity is fostered through the collaborative efforts involved in preparing and carrying out traditional ceremonies (Syafrita & Murdiono, 2020).

he community plays a crucial role in these events, as mutual assistance is essential for ensuring successful preparation (Yulianti et al., 2022). These ceremonies are not limited to human interactions but also express a relationship with God, thereby embodying the religious values inherent in them. Each procession includes prayer rituals that serve as expressions of gratitude, hope, and communal petitions to the Divine (Pahmi & Zakariah, 2021).

Another significant aspect of traditional ceremonies is their ecological value, which plays a vital role in promoting sustainable living and protecting the environment (Riyan & Mulyati, 2023). Ecological values manifest in taboos, myths, offerings to spirits, and various rituals. These practices are not merely symbolic; they serve as practical measures

for environmental protection that are passed down through generations. Violating these taboos often results in serious consequences for those who offend them (Maryadi, 2015).

Humans remain significantly reliant on their surrounding environment (Rusdiana, 2015). Thus, it is crucial to maintain a positive relationship with ecology to ensure a harmonious living space. People are expected to work towards environmental sustainability, particularly concerning land, water, and air (Cholili, 2016). These three ecological elements function as vital resources for human survival and development, making their protection a fundamental aspect of ecological wisdom.

The global community acknowledges the significance of the relationship between humans and the environment. Consequently, countries collaborate to promote a harmonious coexistence with nature. The United Nations, through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), establishes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), comprising 17 objectives that aim to achieve sustainable development. Goal 15 specifically seeks to protect, restore, and promote the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, manage forests sustainably, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and prevent biodiversity loss (United Nations, 2015). Achieving these goals requires humans to take proper care of the environment.

The Javanese community values the concept of *memayu hayuning bawana*, which means that humans should strive to maintain harmony with the universe (Endraswara, 2017). Indonesia, with its rich diversity of ethnic groups and regions, develops various ways to live in balance with nature. This knowledge and these practices of coexisting with the environment exist since ancient times, are passed down through generations, and represent a positive outcome of local wisdom. According to Article 1, paragraph 30 of Indonesian Law No. 32 of 2009, local wisdom is defined as the noble values that guide societal living, including the sustainable protection and management of the environment.

From this discussion, it is clear that humans are inextricably linked to their environment. A harmonious relationship between humans and nature is described as naturalism. However, this naturalistic approach gradually shifts to anthropocentrism (Sufia et al., 2016). One significant cause of environmental degradation is the anthropocentric perspective, which overlooks the importance of ecological wisdom. Additionally, the weakening of traditional institutions and the decline in the application of ecological values contribute to the challenges of environmental preservation (Thamrin, 2013). The root of the ecological crisis lies in misguided perceptions that humans have of themselves, nature, and ecosystems (Satmaidi, 2015).

Environmental degradation is becoming increasingly alarming. Damaged ecosystems threaten all forms of life, both present and future. Between

2005 and 2013, tropical regions lose an average of 5.5 million hectares of forest each year due to conversion for agricultural purposes (Pendrill et al., 2019). Furthermore, from 1950 to 2017, 35% of Indonesia's territory experiences deforestation at an average rate of 985,200 hectares per year (Santoro et al., 2023).

The traditional ceremonies in Banyumas are chosen as the subject of research due to the region's rich cultural values and unique characteristics. A core cultural principle of the Banyumas community is *blaka suta*, which emphasizes honesty and egalitarianism (Ahdiati & Kusumanegara, 2020; Setyaningsih et al., 2020). Banyumas is also renowned for its traditions and local wisdom, collectively referred to as Banyumasan culture, which comprises a wealth of cultural assets rich in local knowledge (Lelono & Widjatini, 2019).

The *Sedekah Bumi* (earth alms) ceremony in Kalitanjung Hamlet, Tambaknegara Village, is selected for analysis because its traditional processions continue to be conducted in full. This annual ceremony takes place specifically in the Javanese month of *Sura*, from Thursday *Wage* to Friday *Kliwon*. According to interviews with community members, the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony is performed to preserve the village environment. In 1982, when the ceremony is conducted incompletely, the village experiences a pest infestation that harms farmers. The pests are eventually eradicated through various efforts, including aerial spraying. Villagers believe that this disaster occurs because some aspects of the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony are omitted or performed improperly.

Research on ecological local wisdom is also conducted by Niman (2019) and Anwar (2019). Niman (2019) finds that internalizing local wisdom values makes a positive contribution to environmental preservation. Similarly, Anwar (2019) discovers that the behaviors promoted by oral traditions help maintain ecological balance.

Ecological studies conducted through traditional ceremonies are also undertaken by Hadi (2019), Hakim (2021), Hidayati et al. (2021), and Nahuddin et al. (2023). Hadi (2019) finds that the *Ngayu-Ayu* ritual fosters harmonious relationships between humans and nature, thereby promoting environmental sustainability. Hidayati et al. (2021) reveal that the *Baritan* tradition of the Dieng community serves to protect the environment and prevent disasters. Hakim (2021) notes that the *Merti Code* tradition aims to safeguard ecological elements. Nahuddin et al. (2023) conclude that the *Sedekah Bumi* tradition embodies values and principles of environmental protection and management.

However, no ecological research specifically focuses on traditional ceremonies in Banyumas. Previous studies instead analyze the traditional art of *lengger*, with Kumala et al. (2020) finding that *lengger* in Banyumas philosophically relates to ecological maintenance, encompassing soil fertility, plants, animals, and humans. Additionally, Suwarsito and Suwarno (2018) examine disaster mitigation through local wisdom in the Banyumas region and conclude

that local wisdom is preserved and wisely applied to mitigate landslide risks.

As noted earlier, relevant research on this topic exists, but none focuses on preserving local wisdom and ecology through traditional ceremonies. The theory employed in this study is environmental ethics theory, which encompasses nine ecological values (Keraf, 2010). The research location has never been analyzed from an ecological perspective, making the application of this environmental theory a novel approach. In response to these gaps, this research aims to examine the values of ecological wisdom and the role of the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony in shaping the community's ecological awareness through the processions and offerings carried out in Kalitanjung Hamlet, Banyumas Regency. Furthermore, this study explores how the indigenous people of Banyumas continue to preserve this tradition in contemporary times.

## METHODS

This research takes place in Kalitanjung Hamlet, Tambaknegara Village, Rawalo District, Banyumas Regency. It employs a qualitative descriptive design, with data consisting of words, images, and non-numerical information (Moleong, 2002). The investigation incorporates excerpts from interviews, observations, and document analysis. A total of 11 informants participate, representing various roles within the community. These include the head of the *kasepuhan* (village elders) *Kejawen* Kalitanjung (KI) community, who provides data on the *Sedekah Bumi* procession and the offerings used in the ceremony; the head of the Sabawana Kalitanjung art studio (RU), who provides information about the art forms presented and their meanings in the ceremony; *Gubrak Lesung* performers (SA, SI, RA), who provide information about the artistic aspects of the ritual; the prayer reader (TI), who explains the content and meaning of the prayers; the *ujudan* reader (KA), who provides information on the content and meaning of the *ujudan*; the offering maker (AR), who details the offerings and their symbolism; the earth purification puppeteer (TU), who describes the story performed in the *wayang kulit* (puppetry) performance; the head of the Kalitanjung tourist village (AZ), who outlines the *Sedekah Bumi* tourist procession; and lastly a Banyumas historian (BU), who provides insight into the origins of the earth alms tradition. The research is conducted over the course of one year, spanning 2024, ensuring comprehensive documentation of the cultural and ecological practices of the community.

The activities begin with the preparation of a research proposal, which takes place from January to February. Following this, research preparations are conducted through observations and interviews from March to April, culminating in the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony. Based on the preliminary research findings, interview instruments are developed from May to June.

Observations and interviews are carried out during the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony in Kalitanjung Hamlet in July. Data validity testing, conducted through follow-up interviews, occurs from August to September. Finally, the research report is compiled from October to December.

The research strategy employed in this study is ethnography, which aims to provide a comprehensive description of a culture. This includes both material aspects, such as artifacts, tools, clothing, and buildings, as well as abstract elements like experiences, beliefs, norms, and value systems of the group being studied (Ulfatin, 2022). Researchers observe the behaviors of individuals or groups in their natural environment, noting their characteristics and habits within the community (Zuchri, 2021). The type of ethnography applied in this research is realist or descriptive ethnography. This traditional approach focuses on detailing a cultural group through specific examples drawn from the individuals being studied (Morissan, 2017).

The data used include the procession of the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony, the *sesaji* (offerings) used during the ceremony, (and the ecological values reflected in both the procession and the offerings. Data on the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony are collected through field notes, documentation of observations, and transcriptions of interviews. Sampling techniques include purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is employed to identify informants with an in-depth understanding of the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony, while snowball sampling is used to gather additional data on the procession.

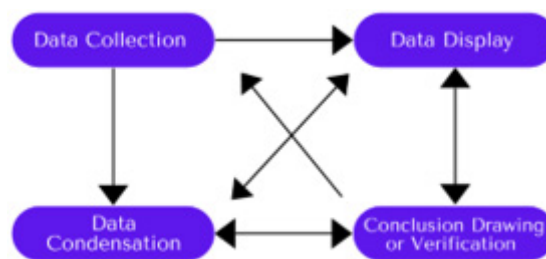


Figure 1 Data Analysis Techniques

The validity of the data is tested using triangulation of sources, methods, and theories. Data analysis follows the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (2014). This analytical process consists of three main stages, which is data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction occurs continuously throughout the research process and culminates in the completion of the report. The selected data include the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony procession and offerings, which are connected to local wisdom. Data are collected from field notes, observational documentation, and transcriptions of interviews. Data reduction involves grouping the information according to categories that represent



ecological values, also based on the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony procession. The data are presented in a descriptive narrative format, designed to facilitate an in-depth analysis of the findings. The final stage involves drawing conclusions, during which data verification is conducted through triangulation of sources, methods, and theories. The following details illustrate the data analysis techniques, as presented in Figure 1.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony consists of three main stages: *bersih desa* (village cleansing), *ruwat bumi* (earth purification), and *sedekah bumi* itself. The ceremony is held in the month of *Sura*, specifically from Thursday *Wage* to Friday *Kliwon*. If Thursday *Wage* does not occur in *Sura*, the ceremony is rescheduled to Monday *Wage*. Research findings—based on observations, interviews, and document analysis—show that the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony in Kalitanjung Hamlet is carried out over three days. This tradition has been passed down through generations and continues to play an integral role in the community’s cultural life. The following description outlines the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony as practiced in Kalitanjung Hamlet, with a summary of its principles and associated rituals presented in Table 1.

Respect for nature is the belief that humans have a moral obligation to protect and preserve the natural world. Since humans are part of nature, it is essential to acknowledge that nature itself holds intrinsic value that deserves respect (Keraf, 2010). This principle is demonstrated in the distribution of *air leri* (blessed rice water) during the *ruwat bumi* procession, as shown in

Figure 2. The rice water, prepared by the organizing committee and blessed by a *dalang* (spiritual leader), is distributed to the community and applied as an organic liquid fertilizer. The community believes that using *air leri* on plants enhances soil fertility and promotes plant growth. Studies indicate that organic liquid fertilizers improve soil quality, support environmental health, and increase plant productivity (Permatasari et al., 2022).



Figure 2 Blessed Rice Water Prepared by a *Dalang*

The next act demonstrating respect for nature involves the ritual sacrifice and burial of a goat’s head, as shown in Figure 3. The goat’s head is offered to the earth as a symbolic gesture of reverence. The decision to bury only the head, rather than the entire body, holds philosophical significance. The goat’s head represents the human capacity for thoughtful decision-making, serving as a reminder to avoid foolish actions.

Table 1 Analysis Results of Ecological Values

No	Ecological Principle	Procession
1.	Respect for nature	a. <i>Ruwat bumi</i> (distribution of blessed rice water) b. <i>Sedekah bumi</i> (sacrifice and burial of a goat's head)
2.	Moral responsibility for nature	<i>Bersih desa</i> , <i>ruwat bumi</i> , and <i>sedekah bumi</i> (the community cooperates to hold the annual ceremony)
3.	Cosmic solidarity	a. <i>Bersih desa</i> (prayer recitation of Prophet Sulaiman’s teachings) b. <i>Ruwat bumi</i> (chanting “ <i>Rumekso ing Wengi</i> ” and collective prayers) c. <i>Sedekah bumi</i> (recitation of community intentions)
4.	Care for nature	<i>Bersih desa</i> (community cleans the village and graveyard)
5.	"No harm" principle	<i>Ruwat bumi</i> (the narration of the origin of the earth and Dewi Sri to encourage people not to harm nature)
6.	Simplicity and harmony with nature	<i>Bersih desa</i> , <i>ruwat bumi</i> , and <i>Sedekah Bumi</i> (The community creates decorations from young coconut leaves and conducts communal meals)
7.	Justice	<i>Sedekah bumi</i> (rotation of goat head contributions, equitable food distribution)
8.	Democracy	<i>Bersih desa</i> , <i>ruwat bumi</i> , and <i>Sedekah Bumi</i> (village funds allocated for each activity)
9.	Moral integrity	<i>Bersih desa</i> , <i>ruwat bumi</i> , and <i>Sedekah Bumi</i> (annual rituals as a form of moral consistency)

Consequently, it functions as a metaphor for human wisdom and rationality, reinforcing the community's ecological and ethical values.

The goat's head includes sensory organs—eyes, a nose, a mouth, and ears—that allow it to interact effectively with its environment. The ritual burial of the head symbolizes the release of negative traits and characteristics. For instance, the eyes represent the importance of avoiding harmful sights, the ears signify refraining from listening to negativity, the nose symbolizes rejecting unpleasant experiences, and the mouth denotes abstaining from harmful speech.



Figure 3 Burial of the Goat's Head

This burial ritual serves as a symbolic gesture to eliminate negativity and restore balance. Offering the goat's head signifies gratitude to the Earth and demonstrates respect for nature. The sacrifice also functions as an intermediary between God and humanity, emphasizing the sacredness of the ritual. The community believes that neglecting this ritual may result in misfortunes and disruptions to harmony (Sholikhah & Widodo, 2022). The burial of the goat's head thus becomes a crucial component of the *Sedekah Bumi* tradition, expressing gratitude for blessings such as sustenance, health, and peace (Robiah, 2020). Interviews further reveal that this ritual is believed to enrich the soil and strengthen ecological sustainability.

Additionally, the principle of responsibility is paramount. Moral responsibility toward nature requires humans to make collective efforts and take actions to protect the universe and all its contents (Keraf, 2010). This commitment to responsibility is evident in the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony, which is consistently practiced as part of the community's traditional rituals. If the ceremony is not performed, it creates a sense of incompleteness in the community. According to stories from Kejawen elders, neglecting the ceremony may invite misfortune. The community believes that the Earth is a mother to all, and showing devotion to it is just as important as honoring one's own mother.

The community further demonstrates its commitment to fostering a harmonious relationship

with nature by recognizing the Earth as the source of life. Through regular and consistent performance of traditional ceremonies, local people actively contribute to caring for the universe. This dedication reflects a strong sense of moral responsibility to maintain balance and harmony between humans and the natural world.

This principle of responsibility also leads people to feel guilt when natural disasters occur, as such events disrupt the balance of ecosystems (Rumapea et al., 2023). In the face of floods, forest fires, or extreme climate change, humans often experience a sense of burden because of their moral duty toward nature. This sense of guilt motivates them to take proactive measures to protect and restore ecosystems and to adopt sustainable practices in their daily lives.

The concept of cosmic solidarity arises from the understanding that humans are an integral part of the universe (Keraf, 2010). This realization fosters a sense of solidarity and shared obligation toward nature and other living beings. Cosmic solidarity serves as a moral guide, similar to the taboos found in traditional societies, which align human behavior with the larger ecosystem. It functions as a framework that regulates human actions within the boundaries necessary for maintaining cosmic balance.

In the context of this research, a prayer for protecting an area from pests exemplifies the principle of cosmic solidarity. This practice demonstrates humanity's awareness of its interconnectedness with the universe and its reliance on nature for survival. Communities believe that by praying for protection against pests, they reaffirm their loyalty and connection to the natural world. Such prayers symbolize a collective commitment to coexist harmoniously with all creatures created by God.

During the *Sedekah Bumi* procession, prayers accompany the rituals to reinforce this principle. Each *rukun tetangga* (RT; a community association at the sub-village level) performs a goat sacrifice as part of the ceremony. A *kayim* (village religious leader) leads the prayers over the sacrifice, asking for divine protection and balance. This ritual reflects both religious devotion and the ecological value of solidarity, as it embodies the community's effort to remain aligned with the wider cosmos.

The purpose of these prayers is to ensure the community's safety in both this life and the hereafter, shielding them from harm and evil. The prayers also express devotion to Prophet Sulaiman, who, in Islamic tradition, is believed to possess the miraculous ability to communicate with all kinds of animals. His name is mentioned in these invocations as a symbol of wisdom and harmony with the natural world.

During the *ruwat bumi* ceremony, prayers are conveyed through chants and *umbul doa* (prayer recitations). One of the chants is the *Kidung Rumeksa ing Wengi*, a hymn passed down from Sunan Kalijaga, which is recited by a spiritual leader. These chants function as both a spiritual safeguard and a cultural expression of gratitude, reinforcing the role of prayer

in maintaining cosmic and ecological balance.

The *wayang kulit* performance in the *ruwat bumi* ceremony concludes with an umbul doa led by a spiritual leader. This prayer reflects the community's acknowledgment of its dependence on nature for survival and the importance of sustaining ecological balance. By recognizing that humans are part of nature, the ritual underscores the principle that human well-being relies on the continuity and harmony of the ecosystem. Below is an excerpt from the prayer:

*"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."*

Translation:

"In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. May dangers be averted; dangers from the east, return to the east. Dangers from pests, sickness, and evil forces. May the village head of Tambaknegara and all the residents of Tambaknegara remain safe and sound. Subdued by angels, protected by Allah."

This prayer seeks protection from dangers approaching from all directions—east, west, north, and south. It expresses the hope for safety against disasters, harm, and calamities, while simultaneously showing gratitude to God. During the prayer, a spiritual leader intercedes on behalf of the Tambaknegara community, asking for deliverance from pests, illness, and misfortunes, with the intention that these adversities retreat to their origins to ensure the safety of the village.

Both the *kayim* and community representatives lead the final prayer during the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony. The prayer delivered by the *kayim* resembles the one performed during the goat sacrifice, emphasizing devotion and gratitude. In contrast, the prayer from the *Kejawen* community incorporates personal intentions, highlighting the integration of communal and individual spirituality, as illustrated in Figure 4.



Figure 4 Prayers Recitation by *Kasepuhan*, followed by *Kayim*

The principle of cosmic solidarity encompasses a collective sense of responsibility toward nature and other living beings. Humans empathize with environmental challenges because they perceive themselves as inherently interconnected with the natural world (Wibowo et al., 2012). This empathy extends beyond human relationships to include the environment, fostering a shared sense of fate and responsibility. Such an outlook is expected to reduce anthropocentric behavior (Merta et al., 2022) and to encourage individuals to oppose actions that damage the ecosystem (Rohmi, 2022).

Another principle is compassion and caring, which refers to a moral obligation directed toward others without expecting anything in return (Keraf, 2010). This principle is reflected in efforts to maintain environmental cleanliness and harmony. These actions are not motivated by personal benefit, but rather serve as an expression of gratitude for nature's beauty and a commitment to preserving ecological balance and sustainability.

For instance, village cleaning activities are organized in preparation for the upcoming traditional rituals. During these events, community members work together to clean the areas surrounding the main roads that serve as the routes for the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony. These initiatives reflect the principles of compassion and care for nature. In collaboration with the traditional *Kejawen* community, residents also tend to ancestral graves, which are regarded as an essential part of nature that requires maintenance and respect. The act of cleaning graves symbolizes care for all living beings, including humans and other creatures.



Figure 5 Residents Engaged in Village-Cleaning Activities

The environment responds positively to humans when they treat it kindly (Rusdiana, 2015). Nature provides beneficial outcomes when cared for, but adverse effects result from careless exploitation (Italiana & Hafsari, 2023). When humans show kindness and concern for the environment, it reciprocates with positive benefits, demonstrating that human and environmental well-being are interconnected and mutually influential.

The principle of "no harm" emphasizes humanity's moral obligation and responsibility to avoid causing damage to the natural world (Keraf, 2010). Indigenous communities often practice this principle by upholding taboos, such as treating certain



natural elements as sacred and untouchable. Violating these taboos is believed to bring misfortune, including illness or even death.

The significance of environmental stewardship is also evident in the *wayang kulit* performances at the *ruwat bumi* procession, as shown in Figure 6. These plays often portray Dewi Sri, a symbol of fertility. Her story conveys a profound message about the relationship between farmers and their land, encouraging farmers to care for their fields as Dewi Sri nurtures the fertility of plants. This narrative reflects the belief that nature and humanity are akin to siblings who must protect one another. Dewi Sri's story underscores the importance of collaboration between humans and nature, reminding farmers to honor life cycles and maintain balance to ensure agricultural sustainability.

Rituals like *ruwatan* revisit past stories that impart essential life values and provide opportunities to express gratitude for the blessings bestowed upon humanity. The tale of Dewi Sri highlights her compassionate care for plants, ensuring they grow abundantly and thrive without harm. She symbolizes the importance of attentiveness and kindness toward nature in securing abundance and prosperity for humans.

Farmers are reminded to preserve and tend their fields just as Dewi Sri nurtures the fertility of crops. This storytelling reinforces the need for collaboration between humans and nature to sustain life. Through these performances, farmers learn to value life cycles and maintain environmental balance, thereby supporting sustainable agricultural practices. The following figure captures a moment from a *wayang kulit* performance.



Figure 6 *Wayang Kulit* Performance

The “no harm” principle is an environmental ethic that advocates for attitudes and behaviors that do not harm or threaten other living beings in nature (Ramadani et al., 2022). This principle reflects an awareness of the importance of maintaining balance and harmony between humans, the environment, and other living beings. It fosters mindfulness of the environmental impact of every action and promotes a caring and empathetic attitude toward all forms of life.

The principle of simplicity and harmony with nature is also fundamental. It emphasizes values,

quality, and a good way of life over wealth, material possessions, and social status (Keraf, 2010). Humans are encouraged to utilize nature responsibly, adhering to the principle of sufficiency—using only what is necessary for a decent human life. As a result, modern patterns of consumption and production must be restrained.

The simplicity of life in Kalitanjung Hamlet is evident in the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony, which relies on resources readily available within the community. This tradition requires minimal expense as materials are sourced directly from the surrounding environment. For example, the village government provides *tarup* (canopy materials), bamboo, and other necessities using land within the village itself. Labor is supplied by residents who voluntarily participate in *gotong royong* (communal work), reflecting the collective interests of the village rather than those of the village head. The required costs are covered through monthly community contributions or *jimpitan* (small voluntary collections).

The principle of simple living in harmony with nature underscores the use of natural resources for both medicinal purposes and cultural celebrations, aligning closely with the environment (Sukmawan & Nurmansyah, 2014). This principle arises from an understanding of humanity's dependence on the natural environment as the primary source of resources to meet human needs. Such harmony not only demonstrates respect for nature's wealth but also fosters a stronger relationship between humans and their environment, as represented in Figure 7.



Figure 7 Residents Creating Decorations with Coconut Leaves



Figure 8 *Tumpeng* Decorations for the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony

Decorations for the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony are crafted from natural materials that highlight principles of biodegradability and recyclability. The materials come directly from the surrounding environment, ensuring alignment with local ecological values. Figure 8 illustrates an example of a decoration created by the community for use during the ceremony.

The simplicity of life is further evident during communal meals. Residents use natural resources from their environment to serve food. For example, goat stew or *gulai* (a traditional curry dish) is served in bamboo containers, as shown in Figure 9. Bamboo, a rapidly renewable and eco-friendly resource, is selected as a sustainable alternative to synthetic materials that could harm the environment. These bamboo containers embody a harmonious integration of humans and nature, underscoring the community's commitment to sustainability.



Figure 9 Residents Transporting Bamboo for Goat Stew

The simplicity of traditions is also evident in the communal meals during the *ruwat bumi* and *Sedekah Bumi* processions. In the *ruwat bumi*, the community shares a meal to conclude the event, as shown in Figure 10 below. Tables are arranged with several *tumpeng* (traditional cone-shaped rice dishes) placed on banana leaves. Eating together on banana leaves symbolizes a simple way of life. Banana leaves, as a readily available natural material, require no special treatment and remain environmentally friendly.



Figure 10 Communal Dining during the *Ruwat Bumi* Procession

Using banana leaves as a dining mat reflects gratitude and respect for natural resources while

preventing plastic pollution and other forms of waste. The use of biodegradable organic materials also supports sustainable agricultural practices and resource management. For example, the *takir* (traditional container), made from banana leaves, is often used to hold *jenang* (sweet porridge), side dishes for ceremonial meals, or other traditional dishes during celebrations (Nugrahani & Parela, 2022). The shape of the *takir* symbolizes gratitude for the blessings of the earth and the sustenance provided by God (Oktariawan & Riwanto, 2019).

Banana leaves contain essential compounds, including polyphenols, proteins, hemicellulose, allantoin, and lignin (Aliasra & Hernawati, 2021). They are also classified as biodegradable organic waste (Julaeha et al., 2019). Simple practices, such as using banana leaves as food mats, raise awareness about the importance of sustainability in daily life. Moreover, the use of biodegradable organic materials supports the local economy, particularly farmers and local producers who cultivate these resources. By purchasing and using organic products, individuals contribute to local economic growth and reinforce long-term sustainability.

The principle of justice in the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony emphasizes the equal participation of all community members. Every individual has access to this cultural and religious event, reinforcing the belief that everyone holds the right to engage in significant communal rituals (Keraf, 2010). This principle is practiced through the fair rotation of responsibilities, such as the annual contribution of a goat head by each *rukun tetangga*, ensuring that each neighborhood unit equally shares in the ceremonial duties.

During the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony, which takes place every Friday *Kliwon*, the entire community gathers at the main crossroads of Kalitanjung Hamlet. A key tradition is the annual contribution of one goat head by each *rukun tetangga* (RT; neighborhood unit). This contribution rotates annually, beginning with the highest-numbered RT and proceeding downward. For example, if this year begins with RT 06, the following year begins with RT 05, continuing until the rotation returns to RT 06 or RT 07 after completing the cycle at RT 01.

This rotational system ensures fairness, as each neighborhood unit bears equal responsibility. Every unit takes turns contributing a goat head, and the resulting dishes are evenly distributed among residents. All community members participate in and enjoy the communal feast.

Each RT also brings a *tumpeng* to be blessed collectively. Afterward, the goats are cooked into *gulai* and served for everyone to share, following a thanksgiving prayer by the customary leader. Residents gather at the crossroads to enjoy the communal meal as an expression of gratitude, as shown in Figure 11.

The outcomes of the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony, whether in the form of food, agricultural produce, or other natural resources, are distributed equitably and without discrimination to all community



members. Every individual has both the right and the responsibility to participate in determining sustainable resource management policies and practices. This principle ensures fairness and promotes collective stewardship of environmental and cultural resources within the community.



Figure 11 Dishes Shared during *Sedekah Bumi* Ceremony

The principle of justice implies that environmental protection and management must proportionally reflect fairness for all citizens, encompassing interregional, intergenerational, and gender equity (Nahuddin, et al, 2023). This principle emphasizes intergenerational equity, ensuring future generations have the same access to natural resources as the current generation. Gender equity is also prioritized, ensuring that women's roles and participation in environmental management are equally recognized and valued.

The principle of democracy is closely linked to the inherent diversity of nature. It provides space for differences, diversity, and plurality (Keraf, 2010). Those who care about the environment embody democratic values. This principle is particularly relevant in environmental policy-making, as it influences the condition, degradation, or pollution of the environment. Democracy, as a moral and political principle, ensures the implementation of pro-environmental policies.

Interviews revealed that the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony is held annually. The scale of the celebration—whether grand or modest—depends on the available funds. Since 2015, funding for this event has been included in the village budget, allowing funds to be allocated for customary activities, which have greatly benefited the Kalitanjung Hamlet community.

Allocating village funds for traditional activities, such as the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony, demonstrates community participation in decision-making. Both the community and the government jointly allocate these funds to support traditions and cultural events deemed significant to them. This budgeting policy highlights the government's wise decision-making in prioritizing the community's well-being. By supporting the budget for *Sedekah Bumi*, the government underscores its commitment to improving societal welfare.

The allocation of village funds for traditional

ceremonies, such as *Sedekah Bumi*, can be seen as an embodiment of democracy, as it involves community participation in decision-making, ensures transparency and accountability in the utilization of funds, and protects the rights of minorities within society. The principle of moral integrity is particularly directed at public officials, demanding that they uphold respectful moral attitudes and behavior while adhering to ethical principles that safeguard public interests (Keraf, 2010). Specifically, this applies to public policies that could harm the environment, such as the issuance of permits with adverse environmental impacts.

Moral integrity dictates that the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony should be carried out with profound respect and strict adherence to the religious and cultural teachings that support its practice. The ceremony held in Kalitanjung Hamlet illustrates this principle of moral integrity in its execution. For instance, the incorporation of natural offerings in each procession is evident, as demonstrated in Figure 12



Figure 12 The *Kejawen* elders of Kalitanjung Hamlet Preparing Offerings

The researchers find that ecological wisdom is embedded in the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony, as reflected in its ecological principles and practices. The theoretical framework used to analyze these principles is the environmental ethics principles theory proposed by Keraf (2010). The ceremony incorporates nine principles: respect for nature, moral responsibility for nature, cosmic solidarity, care for nature, the “no harm” principle, simplicity and harmony with nature, justice, democracy, and moral integrity. The *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony consists of three main processes: *bersih desa*, *ruwat bumi*, and *sedekah bumi* itself, all of which integrate these ecological principles.

The *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony continues to exist today and functions as an annual ritual for the people of Kalitanjung Hamlet. The consistent implementation of the ceremony is inseparable from the ecological values described earlier. The majority of Tambaknegara residents believe that the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony must be performed in full each year. The ceremony serves as an expression of gratitude to God and a form of prayer for safety and well-being. Since the time of their ancestors, this tradition has been passed down and maintained by the residents, becoming an integral part of their cherished cultural heritage.

The community believes strongly that the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony must continue to be performed. If it is neglected, they fear that a disaster or calamity will occur in Kalitanjung Hamlet. In 1982, the ceremony is not conducted due to a prolonged drought that causes a famine, leading to the activity being canceled for economic reasons. The failure to perform the ritual ultimately brings calamity upon the community. When the planting season arrives, crops in the area are infested by pests, resulting in widespread crop failures. The community's belief in the negative consequences of not performing the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony forms an integral part of the identity and spiritual beliefs of the Kalitanjung Hamlet residents.

The community consistently demonstrates great enthusiasm when preparing for the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony. This enthusiasm manifests through contributions made for purchasing goats, performances during the ceremony, and competitions for decorating tumpeng and booths within each RT. Community participation plays a vital role in making the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony lively and successful every year. Residents collaborate by dividing tasks according to their roles, where some groups focus on cooking the goats, while others handle the decoration of stalls. Although the ceremony is deeply rooted in Javanese values, it incorporates a joint prayer led by a kayim, an essential figure because the majority of the community practices Islam. The *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony strengthens community solidarity, fosters ecological awareness, and reinforces cultural identity amid the pressures of modernization.

These findings align with those of Cambah (2022), who identifies two ecological values in the *Nahunan* ritual of the Dayak Ngaju people, which is viewing nature as family and recognizing the mutual dependence between humans and nature. The concept of nature as family originates from the core beliefs of the Dayak Ngaju regarding their relationship with the environment. The *Nahunan* ritual emphasizes interdependence between humans and nature, highlighting that nature provides for human needs without being subjected to exploitation. Similarly, the *Bersih Desa Dukutan* ceremony, held on the slopes of Mount Lawu, reflects a commitment to social harmony and environmental preservation (Anindyarini et al., 2024). This perspective underscores the importance of actively engaging the community in environmental conservation through traditions that embody ecological values. Individual involvement in environmental activities remains essential for preventing environmental damage (Faujiah & Marzuki, 2021). Furthermore, disaster mitigation efforts are supported by the community's social wisdom, which is preserved as a crucial component of their cultural system (Setiawati et al., 2022).

The *Sedekah Bumi* tradition is closely connected to values and principles of environmental protection and management (Nahuddin et al., 2023). These principles include sustainability, harmony and balance, integration, utility, caution, justice, participation,

and local wisdom. The ceremony demonstrates how ecological ethics are embedded in local cultural practices, fostering both environmental stewardship and community cohesion. These findings align with studies on the *Petik Laut* (sea harvesting) tradition, which emphasizes responsible utilization of marine resources and regular environmental monitoring to ensure sustainability (Agustina et al., 2023).

In contrast, Hastuti and Rahman (2023) highlight the ecological values communicated through rituals. The *Maccera Tappareng* ritual conveys various ecological messages that aim to protect the surrounding environment and preserve Lake Tempe. This ritual establishes customary rules for fishermen, including prohibitions on fishing on Thursday nights, Fridays, and the three days before and after the religious holidays (Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha). Additionally, the ritual limits the use of more than three types of fishing gear, and those who violate these rules face customary penalties, known as *idosa*, reinforcing ecological responsibility within the community.

## CONCLUSIONS

The ecological wisdom inherent in the *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony in Kalitanjung Hamlet, Banyumas Regency, is deeply connected to the community's way of life. This ceremony serves as an expression of gratitude to God and a plea for safety. The community's strong relationship with nature gives rise to nine ecological values, which are analyzed using Keraf's theory of environmental ethics.

This research provides a fresh perspective on understanding ecology by demonstrating how local wisdom contributes to addressing environmental issues. The findings strengthen existing theories and offer practical implications for further research on the tradition of *Sedekah Bumi* in various regions. Future research may investigate variations of the ceremony elsewhere to discover additional ecological values beyond those identified in Banyumas.

The *Sedekah Bumi* ceremony represents a crucial element of local ecological wisdom that requires preservation and conservation. The Banyumas Regency Government can help sustain this tradition by allocating funding, providing infrastructure, and offering guidance to the community. Moreover, the government can promote the ceremony nationally and internationally through cultural exhibitions and scholarly publications.

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results), R. W., and R. S.; Wrote the paper (compiling data into articles), A. R. A.; Other contribution (guiding the work process), R. W., and R. S..

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