

# The Variety and Meaning of The Coastal Community Tradition of Bungo Wedung Indonesia

## (Ragam dan Makna Tradisi Masyarakat Pesisir Bungo Wedung Indonesia)

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### Abstrak

Desa Bungo, Kecamatan Wedung, Indonesia adalah salah satu daerah yang masih memegang teguh tradisi-tradisi daerahnya sebagai wujud melestarikan budaya. Seiring dengan perkembangan teknologi dan ilmu pengetahuan, banyak tradisi di desa yang dianggap sudah tidak modernis oleh masyarakatnya. Oleh sebab itu, beberapa kepala pemerintah desa maupun masyarakat di Desa Bungo, Kecamatan Wedung berusaha tetap mempertahankan tradisi di wilayahnya sebagai wujud melestarikan tradisi atau budaya lokal dan ketika dikembangkan dapat berpotensi terhadap pemasukan daerah. Tradisi-tradisi pesisiran di wilayah Desa Bungo yang masih dijalankan di antaranya Apitan, Syawalan, dan Sedekah Bumi, makna tradisi ini sebagai wujud syukur masyarakat kepada Tuhan. Ada tradisi Nyadran, Kirab Budaya Panji Kusuma adalah tradisi yang dilakukan sebagai bentuk rasa hormat masyarakat pesisir dan mengenang jasa pahlawan yang telah mendirikan desa di wilayah pesisir. Ada pula tradisi Keong Keli, Barian, Kembang Sayang, yang pada dasarnya mengandung makna wujud usaha masyarakat agar terhindar dari malapetaka dan bahaya. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode etnografi, pengumpulan data menggunakan wawancara mendalam dan observasi. Dari tradisi-tradisi pesisiran yang dilakukan masyarakat Bungo menunjukkan bahwa masyarakat pesisir menggantungkan hidupnya dari laut dan kekayaan sumber daya alam untuk bertahan hidup.

**Kata kunci:** budaya Jawa, komunitas Bungo, tradisi lokal, tradisi pesisir

### Abstract

This study aims to critically analyze the problem of environmental management in Indonesia as a part of global ecological crises and its consequences for the issue of inter-generational justice. To achieve the objective of the study, a phenomenological method is used together with methodical elements of interpretation, induction-deduction, reflection, idealization, and heuristics. This study finds that the occurrence of environmental management problems in Indonesia which increasingly leads to ecological crisis conditions is not only caused by the management paradigm that is still anthropocentric, but also as a result of unequal access and distribution of resources and capital. Utilization of resources is dominated by a small group of people who control capital and marginalize the participation of local communities. Hence, there is a natural exploitation by humans which is a derivative of human exploitation of humans. This condition endangers not only the present



generation, but also the posterity. In conclusion, it is necessary to reformulate the basic principles in environmental management politics in Indonesia that are able to anticipate these two types of exploitation to anticipate demands for inter-generational justice.

**Keywords:** coastal tradition, communities Bungo, Javanese culture, local tradition

## INTRODUCTION

Culture is matters related to reason and reason (Koentjaraningrat 1993:9; Muhaimin 2001:153). Culture is the way we talk, dress, the food we eat, how to prepare it, the gods we create, how to adore it, how to divide our time and space, dance, the values we socialize to our children and all the other details that shape everyday life (Geertz 1981:42; Giddens 1991:102). Therefore culture has elements that are universal so that in urban or rural communities can also be found. Seven cultural elements, namely: the system of language, knowledge, social systems, equipment and technology life, livelihoods, the religious system and the arts (Kluckhohn 1951:399; Koentjaraningrat 1993:9; Tasmuji 2011:154).

Human efforts in the framework of fulfilling their life needs certainly rely on the ability of humans themselves in utilizing and making nature an object that can be managed in meeting their needs. So it can be said that culture is caused by human desire to fulfill their needs; in the form of behavior, lifestyle, economy, agriculture, kinship system, social stratification, religion, myth and (Paisun 2010; Anwar 2013; Nura'ini, Wakidi, and Basri 2014). All these aspects must then be fulfilled by humans in their lives which at the same time spontaneously will give birth to culture or tradition.

Tradition is the similarity of material objects and ideas that come from the past but still exist today and have not been destroyed or damaged. Tradition can be interpreted as true inheritance or inheritance of the past (Peursen 1988:11; Sztompka 2007:69). So anything done by humans for generations from every aspect of their lives to make life easier can be said to be a meaningful tradition that is part of the culture.

One area that still upholds the traditions of the region as a form of preserving culture is the area in the District Wedung, Demak, which is one of the coastal areas in Central Java close to the Java sea coast with a population of 80,827 people. Wedung Subdistrict is the widest area or equal to 11 percent of the total area in the Demak Regency and oversees 20 villages.

Along with the development of technology and science, there are many traditions in the village that are considered not modernist by the community (Giddens 1991, 1996, 2003; Jalil and Aminah 2016; Asfina and Ovilia 2016). Moreover, teenagers are no longer introduced to culture or tradition by their parents. The young generation no longer knows the history and culture of their villages and regions. Even this is also felt by the people in the coastal areas of Bungo Village, Wedung District, Indonesia, teenagers prefer to watch television, social media on smartphones rather than learn and know the traditions of the region.

Therefore, a number of village government and community leaders in Bungo Village, Wedung District, Indonesia try and maintain the traditions in their region as a form of preserving local traditions or culture and when developed can have potential for economic growth in the region and introduce to the young generation that coastal areas also have some superior traditions and can be developed for the advancement of the region and its human resources.

## METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach and is an ethnographic study. Ethnography is the

description and interpretation of culture, social group or system (Creswell 1998:58; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995:250; Herdiansyah 2010:75). This research analyzes a community and studies customs or traditions. This study conducted a collection, classification, and analysis of the culture of the coastal communities of Bungo Village, Wedung District, Indonesia, namely analyzing the traditions of coastal communities that still exist and continue to be carried out every year. The data collection through observation, in-depth interviews with a number of informants and literature studies, for taking pictures by photographing.

The observation made by the writer is direct observation. This is done by direct observation or sensing of an object, condition, situation, and behavior. After making further observations recording the symptoms or phenomena under study. Observations were made to obtain data on the traditions of the coastal community of Bungo Village. Researchers used in-depth interviews to obtain primary data from informants. In-depth interviews conducted by researchers are unstructured interviews because they are considered so that the questions can be developed in accordance with research interests. The data sought by this interview method is the tradition of the Bungo Village coastal community that still exists today.

This study uses the analysis of cultural themes, namely analysis by understanding the typical symptoms of the previous analysis. This analysis tries to collect the many themes, cultural focus, values, and cultural symbols that exist in each domain. In addition, this analysis seeks to find the relationships contained in the domain being analyzed, so that it will form a holistic entity, finally revealing the dominant themes and which are less dominant. Data that has been collected will be reduced ie classified, organizing data and discarding unused data, after that the data is presented in the form of narration and ends with drawing conclusions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Geographical Condition of Coastal Areas of Bungo Village

Bungo Village has an area of 7.96 km<sup>2</sup> with a total of 5,713 inhabitants and a population density of 718 people/km<sup>2</sup>. Territory village of Bungo District of Wedung fairly minimal local public facilities, such as ATM, mini market, petrol stations, and public transport. Mostly in the region subdistrict, the Wedung community still uses sea transportation that is a boat to connect one village with another village. In addition, sea transportation has become one of the main transportation areas in the Wedung District area to take the community to carry out their daily activities such as leaving for work and transporting goods.



Figure 1. Sea Transportation in the Coastal Zone of the Building  
(Source: observation in Bungo Village)

In addition, the Bungo Village area of Wedung District is a coastal area with a dense population and the majority of the population is Muslim because population density that is not matched by facilities makes the Bungo coastal area a minus and impressed slum area. This can be seen from the lack and scarcity of clean water, dirty dwellings and livestock systems that are adjacent to dwellings.



Figure 2. Environmental Conditions of Coastal Communities in Wedung District  
(Source: Observation)

### **Traditions of the Coastal Building Community of Bungo Village**

Tradition translated as inheritance or forwarding process norms, customs, rules, treasures. Basically, traditions can be changed raised, rejected and combined with a variety of human actions (Peursen 1988:11).

If tradition is associated with the rapid development of the times, technological advances and modernization certainly affect the Indonesian people, both urban and rural communities. Likewise with tradition, with the development of technology and science, many traditions are considered unreasonable, contrary to religion and creed, the absence of regeneration from the players or actors in the traditional event, making the traditions in an area began to disappear and no longer carried out by followers or the community.

Similarly, the traditions that exist in the coastal areas of Java. The coastal area of Java has a variety of coastal traditions, but along with the development of technology and science and lifestyle changes, little by little the coastal traditions begin to disappear and are rarely implemented by coastal communities. To prove this, the researchers conducted observations and interviews directly with several coastal communities in the Bungo Village area, Wedung Indonesia District.

*First*, the Apitan (alms of earth) tradition is held every Wednesday in the Apit month on the Javanese calendar. This Apitan traditional activity one day before that was Tuesday conducting a carnival or a cultural parade with two mounds of rice. The first rice mound contains marine products and the second mound contains agricultural produce. Then, the second day, on Wednesday, made a pilgrimage to the tomb of Panji Kusuma by carrying two mounds of rice paraded from the village hall to the tomb of Panji Kusuma. Panji Kusuma was the first person to establish and be in the village of Bungo and the forerunner of its inhabitants and was a descendant of the kingdom of Kediri. So that the Bungo village community highly respects Panji Kusuma as their figure and ancestor. After the pilgrimage process is completed, then the rice mound is prayed together, and after the prayer session is over, the community will jointly fight over the rice mound for safety. So the Apitan tradition in the village of Bungo is carried out on three consecutive days, the first day begins with a cultural parade, the second day of the Panji Kusuma tomb pilgrimage and the last night there is a puppet show for one day and night.

Slightly different from some villages in the Wedung sub-district, in the village of Bungo from the village leader to the people, they highly appreciate the traditions of coastal communities that have been abandoned by their ancestors and do not want local traditions lost and displaced by foreign cultures. The tradition of Apitan, Kirab Panji Kusuma is a form of gratitude for the blessings of God.



Figure 3. Apitan Tradition in Bungo Village (Kirab Panji Kusuma Culture)  
(Source: documentation of Bungo Village activities)

*Second*, the biteng tradition (warfare). This tradition is carried out by holding wars using *biteng* (broomsticks) in the village of Bungo, but not a real war. This tradition as a form of strengthening community relations with other hamlets around the village of Bungo.

*Third*, the Barian tradition is to beg for rain. This tradition is carried out if it has not rained for a long time and the community has experienced drought and lack of clean water. This tradition is the same as the conch tradition in Kendalasesem village, which is done if the community expects rain to fall. The Barian tradition begins with the community providing a *rujak cerobo*, after which the prayer is prayed together with a *kyai*, after the prayer is over, the *kyai* who leads the prayer is watered with the *rujak cerobo*. Bungo villagers believe in the Barian tradition and hope that prayer will be answered soon and rain will soon fall.

*The fourth* tradition in Bungo village is *nanggap joget* (dancing). This tradition of dance responsiveness is carried out after the great harvest as a form of community gratitude for abundant crops because for coastal communities the land and paddy water in the coastal areas are salty but agricultural products such as rice and corn are always good and plentiful. The tradition of dancing in responsiveness is that it is responsive (inviting) *sinden* to dance day and night. This tradition is carried out by the Bungo village community as an entertainment event for people who are tired of working both in the fields and at sea.



Figure 4. Tradition *Nanggap Joget* Village Bungo  
(Source: documentation of Bungo Village activities)

Furthermore, the *fifth* tradition in the village of Bungo is Kembang Sayang. This tradition is carried out by the Bungo village community if one is married, namely by installing a *flower of love* at the time of his marriage. Kembang Sayang, which are two *debog* (stems) of bananas, is decorated with flowers, *janur* and *kudo pahit*. The meaning of this Kembang Sayang tradition is that the bride will not be disturbed by spirits.



Figure 5. Kembang Sayang Tradition in Bungo Village  
(Source: documentation of activities Bungo Village)

The *sixth* is the Syawalan tradition. If in the village of Bungo there is alms earth which is the tradition of Apitan, Kirab Budaya Panji Kusuma, then for sea alms is the tradition of Syawalan namely by throwing the goat's head into the sea and at night the *ketoprak* performance. The meaning of this tradition is a form of gratitude for the people of the village of Bungo, especially those who earn a living as fishermen at sea for abundant and good sea products. Tradition Syawalan is done every 7<sup>th</sup> Syawal.



Figure 6. Tradition Syawalan  
(Source: documentation Activities Bungo Village)

The *seventh*, tradition in the village of Bungo is the Tombak Sewu tradition. The purpose of the *tombak sewu* is the broomsticks that are given spices *pawon* (kitchen), such as shallots and garlic. After that, the *tombak sewu* is placed under the crib (bed) of the newborn baby. This tradition is carried out by the Bungo village community so that newborn babies are not disturbed by spirits (supernatural beings) and are not taken by bad people. In addition to the *tombak sewu* there is also a tradition of hand-to-hand *burns*. This tradition is the same as the *tombak sewu*, which is to keep newborn babies from being disturbed by spirits, but this tradition uses *gombal* (cloth) that are *linting* (rolled up) and burned a day and night should not be extinguished. This is believed by the people of the village of Bungo if the smoke from the *gombal lintingan* can drive away ghosts (spirits) that will disturb the baby.

Culture basically has a uniqueness that can shape the uniqueness of a person and a region. This is because culture is universal, both in regions, regions, and countries that have different cultures and affect the people in their area. Different cultures and existing cultural elements are of course also influenced by the geographical location of an area and the natural and human resources in the region.

Culture on the coast is also different from the culture in urban areas, human resources in villages are also different from human resources in cities. This is due to differences in accessibility, facilities and social interactions, both in villages, cities and coastal areas.

Coastal areas are transitional areas between terrestrial and marine ecosystems that interact with one another. Communities living in coastal areas on average work as fishermen and the sea becomes a part of the life of coastal communities. When viewed from a geographical location, the coastal communities in the Wedung District tend to be harsh, loud and if talking like angry people (yelling), this is because if talking at sea is not loud it will not be heard. Situations and conditions such as this eventually become a character of the coastal community in Wedung Subdistrict in communication, which is harsh. And this also happens to the average coastal community in other regions, due to the geographical location which makes coastal communities hard.

There is an interesting thing from the coastal community Wedung District namely coastal traditions that are still being done. These coastal traditions are a form of gratitude for coastal communities and ways of communicating coastal communities with other communities and also with their Lord.

Along with the development of technology and science, many coastal traditions are starting to disappear and are considered haram because it is contrary to Islam. However, there are still many villages in the Wedung District area that carry out traditions in coastal areas every year, because the village leaders and the local community are still trying to maintain the local culture.

The traditions of the coastal area in the District of Wedung including Apitan, Syawalan, and Sedekah Bumi is are traditions as a form of community gratitude to God for abundant marine and agricultural products, however, coastal communities depend heavily on marine products. This supports the results of research on the *Nyadran* tradition carried out by the populace from generation to generation as a thanksgiving to God (Nura'ini, Wakidi, and Basri 2014), but what distinguishes from the Bungo Village of Wedung District is not only the sea party tradition but also the aspect agriculture, where the area is coastal but the agricultural output is good. While the *Nyadran* tradition, the *Kirab Panji Kusuma*, is a tradition carried out as a form of respect for coastal communities and in memory of the services of heroes who have established villages in the coastal region. The *Keong Kali* and *Barian* tradition is a tradition carried out by coastal communities to ask God for rain, this is done if it hasn't rained for a long time in their area.

Coastal traditions in the sub-district of Wedung are in accordance with the opinion (Sztompka 2007:69) where tradition is a hereditary policy. Traditions also provide fragments of historical heritage or cultural history that are seen as beneficial to society and the younger generation; Give legitimacy to the view of life, beliefs, institutions and rules that already exist in the community; Providing convincing symbols of collective identity, strengthening primordial loyalty to nations, communities and groups, binding citizens or members; Help provide and as a place of escape from complaints, disappointments and dissatisfaction of modern life.

Basically, the coastal traditions in Wedung District are forms and ways of communicating the gratitude of coastal communities and their requests for nature, God and other communities. Coastal

traditions in the Wedung District area teach other communities to share, work together and receive and care for what God has given, such as the sea, fish, and plants (rice fields).

With the traditions that are carried out every year such as alms sea (Sedekah Laut), Syawalan, and Wayang Apitan are a form of confirmation of the existence of the coastal community of Wedung District and as a way for people outside the Wedung District area as well as local and foreign tourists to come and get to know Wedung coastal areas. This certainly will not be realized if the coastal community of Wedung District acts closed and antipathy towards the outside community and tourists. This is done so that the traditions or traditional art does not fade because of the times, such as the perceived musicological Netherlands Jaap Kunst that traditional arts today are not able to maintain it will fade with the times (globalization), this occurs because the perpetrators of the traditional arts are not able to regenerate; his supporters and players gradually disappear (Lindsay 1991). Therefore it can be concluded that the coastal community of Wedung District is a community that is able to receive information from outside and can communicate with people outside its territory and is able to preserve coastal culture as a form of existence a.

## CONCLUSION

Coastal traditions in the sub-district of Wedung District include Apitan, Syawalan, and Alms sea, the meaning of this tradition as a form of community gratitude to God because of the abundant marine and agricultural products, however, coastal communities depend heavily on sea products, people's feasts in the coastal areas is a form of gratitude for the riches of the sea. While the Nyadran tradition, the Kirab Panji Kusuma Cultural is a tradition carried out as a form of respect for coastal communities and in memory of the services of a hero who had established a village in a coastal area on a pilgrimage to his grave. The Keong Kali and Barian tradition is a tradition carried out by coastal communities to ask God for rain, this is done if it hasn't rained for a long time in their area. The Kembang Sayang tradition is a tradition carried out by coastal communities to expel spirits so as not to disturb newborn babies and for Kembang Sayang used for brides.

Coastal communities as well as rural and urban communities have different characteristics, but when they can adapt to and communicate with each other differences will not be a problem but it makes mutual tolerance. Traditions in the coastal areas of Bungo Village, Wedung District can be developed into local culture so that they can attract local and foreign tourist interest to come to the coastal area of Wedung District, so that they can bring income to the coastal area and open jobs for local communities so that they can improve the standard of living of coastal communities.

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