

# OFFERING CEREMONY “SEDEKAH LAUT, IN CENTRAL JAVA

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**Abstract:** The cultural ceremony known as the *Sedekah Laut* is a ceremony held once a year, more precisely at the beginning of Shura month. This ceremony intends to give one a request for more abundant seafood than before. *Sedekah Laut* is related to the offering or named with alms to the Queen of South. This study aims to describe how the event of Sedekah Laut ritual in Cilacap. The method used in this research is observation and interview. This research is useful to increase the knowledge about culture in the archipelago for the readers and for the general public. The results indicate that the ritual has several functions for society that include social, cultural, economic, and religious dimensions. The special functions of the ceremony are to thank the Almighty God for his mercy to bless the community with the rest of the fish subsistence and to pray for the salvation of life

**Keywords:** Ceremony, Sedekah Laut, Cilacap.

## INTRODUCTION

Culture is the result of human work or more can be called a habit that is cultivated based on the values contained in it, which grow and develop cumulatively, consciously and deliberately. Culture has a great meaning for a nation, in other words, the culture of the nation has become a perfect level of life. Culture was inherited from previous ancestors with customs and traditions as important elements. Java Island has a lot of cultural heritages inherited from generation to generation, which can take the form of objects such as temples, places of worship, statues or other buildings that have value, while relics in the form of ceremonial customs and traditions such as death ceremonies, Sedekah Laut ceremonies, religious ceremonies and so on.

Sedekah Laut ceremonies are often referred to as rituals because they contain cultural values that are thick with religious matters. In addition, marine charity is one of the legacies in the form of ceremonial activities that not everyone does, but only certain people who have interests in it such as fishermen and residents around the sea. However, this has become an interesting matter because the Sedekah Laut ceremony has become the public property of the people of Java island, especially the people who live in coastal areas. Sedekah Laut ceremony for ordinary people is the disposal of things into the sea or into the river water that flows into the sea. In the southern sea region, the Sedekah Laut ceremony was also carried out by giving various offerings to the south sea mbau mutual funds (known as KanjengRatuKidul (NyiRoroKidul). The belief about the existence of KanjengRatuKidul is not only owned by the fishing community, but has become the property of the general public.

Sedekah Laut ceremony on the south coast located in Cilacap Regency is held once a year, namely in the month of Sura (Java Calendar) to coincide with Tuesday kliwon or Friday kliwon, on that month. In general, the purpose of this ceremony is to convey gratitude for the fortune given by God Almighty and to ask for safety for the fishermen and their families so that in fulfilling their daily duties as fishermen do not get any interference, so that they get a lot of fish catch. In the beginning the Sedekah Laut was actually carried out as a form of gratitude for the favors of the catch of the fish to the Queen of the South, but then the awareness grew the practice of gratitude and prayer delivered to the Almighty God.

Sedekah Laut Ceremony become a tradition or tradition that is very strong attached to the Cilacap community, which is always carried out by Cilacap fishermen without being obsolete by the influence

of any era and has a strong appeal to be used as one of the attractions or performances of cultural tourism while exploring and preserving the national culture. based on these reasons, a problem formulation is drawn, namely (1) what is the marine charity background, (2) how is the process of preparation of ceremonies, equipment and preparation of offerings, (3) how is the Sedekah Laut procession

## **METHOD**

This research is a type of qualitative research using collection methods in the form of observation and interviews. observations made by going directly to the observation object were the Sedekah Laut procession carried out in the Shura month of the Javanese calendar. while interviews were conducted with several competent people to answer questions from researchers such as Cilacap natives who live on the coast and often perform Sedekah Laut ceremonies, then the people who handle the event, besides that, are visitors who are used to seeing or just seeing the ceremony procession Sedekah Laut. While the data analysis method used in this study is the description method, namely this study describes the formulation of the problem based on the data obtained.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **A. Sedekah Laut Ceremony Background**

The Sedekah Laut ceremony is said to have originated from the event of the growth of Wijayakusuma flower in the era of King AjiPramosa of Kediri which for years has created trust for kings in Surakarta and Yogyakarta, as flowers are believed to have vertical meanings of both color and form or form. KembangWijayaKusuma consists of three colors (red, green and yellow) with 5 (five) petals and 7 (seven) makhota which have their own meaning for a leader. The red color of the crown means the power to form new cells in the human body; virtual green color has the power to maintain the cells of the human body; yellow color has the power to replace cells in the human body. These three colors will blend together to form a dazzling bluish-white color, so that the flower after blooming will dazzle bluish-white color which is believed to have been fused with the divine. The 5 (five) sheets represent the meaning of the philosophy of Pancasila; crown 7 (seven) sheets symbolize 7 (seven) elements in the human body, namely hair symbolizing ethnicity and ethnicity; the skin symbolizes religion or belief; blood symbolizes class; muscle symbolizes position; meat symbolizes social status; bone symbolizes work or power, and sunsum symbolizes intellectual ability, mindset, opinion or outlook (Ronggosegoro, 1990).

The nature of these elements stand upright not cracked by heat, not faded by rain, was not deterred by the pounding waves and exposure to the storm, so that every king or the country's leaders not to drown in three (3) things: the throne, wealth and women, and should have a soul wise represented in flowers wijayakusuma, so every good king's coronation of His Majesty in Surakarta and Yogyakarta Sultanate always send 40 (forty) delegates to reclaiming for picking flowers Wijayakusuma. Before undertaking the task of picking, the envoys made a pilgrimage to the tombs of figures ancestor around reclaiming such pesareyan (tomb) Duke Banjarsari in Karangsucu, pesareyan Duke wiling in Donan, pesareyan Duke Purbasari in Dhaunlumbang, pesareyanKyaiSingalodra in KebonBaru and pesareyanPanembahanTlecer in Nusakambangan (Ronggosegoro, 1990). Other tombs also visited were pesareyanKyaiAgengWanakusuma in Gilirangan and pesareyanKyaiKhasanBesari in Gumelem (Banjarnegara). In addition to pilgrimage or bloom, they do tahlilan and alms to the poor. The next night nyepi (meditated overnight) at the Sela Mosque, which is a cave on the island of Nusakambangan that resembles a mosque. The picking of Wijayakusuma flower was also carried out during the reign of

Susuhunan Pakubuwono XI, namely when Sunan Pakubuwono XI just came into contact (crowned king). Even this ancestral custom is said to have been carried out long before that.

According to Babad Tanah Jawi, Adipati Anom, Sunan Amangkurat II had sent an envoy to pick Wijayakusuma's flower, which was after he converted himself as the king of Mataram to replace his father. According to a Dutch historian H.J. de Graaf, the jumenengan event was held at Ajibarang on July 7, 1677 on his way to Batavia when pursued by Trunojoyo. According to the information, the method of picking Wijayakusuma flowers is not by hand but by way of magic through samadi. Previously the king's envoys held a "anchoring" (Sedekah Laut) ceremony in the middle of the sea near the Karang Bandung island. Before being picked, the tree was bandaged first with the cinde up to the top. Dressed in white all the messengers came under it, if the truth was answered, Wijayakusuma flower will bloom and give off a fragrant odor, then the flower will fall itself into the prepared vehicle, then the delegates will bring it to the palace to be presented before Susuhunan Sri Sultan, the ceremony will be carried out with a certain ceremony, it is said that the flower is made as a rujak and eaten by a king who is about to be crowned, and thus the king is considered legitimate and can bequeath the royal throne to posterity and offspring. Myths about flower Wijayakusuma gave birth to the Sedekah Laut culture ceremony held every month by the south coast fishing community, by flooding its fortune to south coast sea.

In Cilacap the traditions of marine charity originated from the command of the 3rd Cilacap Regent Tumenggung Tjakrawerdya III who ordered Pandanarang fisherman elders named Ki Arsa Menawi to float offerings to the south sea along with other fishermen on Friday Kliwon in the month of Sura in 1875. Larung offerings to the sea or better known as the traditional Sedekah Laut ceremony, which until now is still a custom or tradition that is carried out regularly once a year on Tuesday Kliwon or Friday Kliwon in the month of Muharram. Even starting in 1983 the Sedekah Laut ceremony was appointed as an attractive tourist attraction for foreign tourists.

## **B. Ceremony Preparation, Equipment Preparation, and Preparation for Offerings.**

The Cilacap fishing community prepares the sea alms ceremony since one year before the traditional ceremony is held, especially regarding the preparation of funds. Fishermen generally give regular dues every month to welcome the traditional sea alms ceremony. The amount of the fishermen's contribution varies depending on the catch or income of each fisherman. Preparation of the sea alms traditional ceremony is very long and very complicated. This is because it requires a lot of offerings for the ceremony procession so that the equipment needed is also a lot. Generally the equipment needed for sea alms ceremonies in some areas on the south coast is almost the same. The following equipment must be prepared for alms ceremonies.

- 1) Outboard boats, which are outboard motorized boats which will later be used to carry offerings that will be docked into the sea.
- 2) Ancak, made of bamboo parts woven in a rectangular shape. This tool is commonly used for places or pedestal offerings
- 3) Jodhang, made of rectangular shaped wood; this place is usually used to transport offerings that will be taken to the coast
- 4) Pengaron, this tool is made from clay and used for rice.
- 5) Takir, this tool is made from banana leaves that are formed which at both ends are given a leaf or young nyiur leaves; this tool is used for the place of jenang which will be used for offerings.
- 6) Ceketong, made of glass which is used as a plate and spoon for a place to eat and picks it up.

### **Preparation for Offering**

- 1) The fishing community must also prepare offerings for the traditional alms sea ceremony procession. The offerings that must be prepared are very diverse, namely: offerings that are specifically intended for Kanjeng Ratu Kidul which will later be anchored or sent to the sea,

- telon flower, which is a variety of flowers, such as roses, jasmine, kantil, kenanga and so on which are all fragrant;
- 2) women's beauty equipment includes powder, comb, perfume, eyebrow pencil, etc. all of which smell good;
  - 3) the clothes for pengadek or complete for women, there are cloth clothes, underwear, kutang, and kebaya, all of which must be new;
  - 4) Jenang, various kinds of jenang, some are red, white, black, barley, etc. ;
  - 5) Market snacks, namely small meals such as beans, slabs, slondok, etc. which are all purchased on the market;
  - 6) Udhuk rice or savory rice, rice cooked with coconut milk, salt, etc. and after cooking the taste is savory;
  - 7) Buffalo head, cow head or goat's head;
  - 8) Chicken ingkung, roosters cooked whole with both legs and wings tied, which after cooking tastes savory;
  - 9) Sanggan banana, the selected banana is the number one quality plantain, meaning that it is very old, not defective, and the number must be even;
  - 10) Pulut plantain, this is a combination and comb the plantain and comb it;
  - 11) Side dishes, consisting of rempeyek, crackers, soybeans, tauto and so on;
  - 12) Vegetables, consisting of cabbage, tirnun or beans cut into small pieces.

### C. Sedekah Laut Ceremony Procession

The sea alms ceremony before the day of the ceremony was preceded by a procession or pilgrimage to Karang Bandung Beach (Majethi Island) which is located in the southeastern part of Nusakambangan Island conducted by the customary leader of the Cilacap Fishermen and followed by various fishermen groups and the community to ask the Almighty God to fish catch on abundant fish harvest season and fishermen are given safety.

In addition to the Nyekar ceremony, the ceremony participants also took holy or magical water around Majethi Island, which according to legend is the place where Wijayakusuma flowers grow.

The series of traditional sea alms ceremonies began with a pilgrimage to Karang Bandung. The ceremony to hand over offerings from the Honggodo foundation to the committee was followed by tirakatan in the district pavilion, which was preceded by a cutting of tumpeng. The tirakatan program was filled with reading alms and recitation. The ceremony procession starts with the report of Tumenggung to the Duke, graduation and Samir by the Duke to Tumenggung, followed by the procession, which is preceded by the handover of offerings or joli from the district hall to TelukPenyu beach, followed by the joli from the beach of TelukPenyu to the South Sea , then continued with various kinds of traditional art performances by each group until evening (Anonim, 1999).

The procession *nyekar* or pilgrimage begins one day before the sea alms event, which is on Monday Pon or Thursday Wage at 07.00 WIB until the afternoon, continued at night starting at 19:00 with the event 'Malam Tirakatan' or pengajian at the Cilacap Regency pendopo. While on Friday Kliwon or Tuesday Kliwon was the culmination of the event, " The JolenTunggul Proceedings Procession Ceremony " which departed from the Regency pavilion towards TelukPenyu beach, followed by procession and jolting by the procession participants dressed in traditional fishermen's customs. Cilacap past. Arriving at TelukPenyu Beach, the offerings were then transferred to a fishing boat that had been decorated with colorful decorations to be floated or thrown into the sea in a small island area called Majethi Island.

Traditional art that is often performed during the sea alms ceremony is Jalungmas (Jaipong, Calung Banyumasan), Lenggeran, Kuda Lumping and wayangkulit. Usually puppet shows are performed at night one night, both in the district pavilion and in the villages or villages of each

fisherman. At present not only the traditional art performances they hold but also have begun to develop into a single organ show that invites famous singers to attract many tourists to see them (Anonim, 2001), with pop songs, tasters, and ndang-dut.

### **Functions and Meanings of Sedekah Laut**

The function and meaning of traditional ceremonies for both the ceremonies and the community, according to Novianti (2007), involves four aspects, namely cultural, religious, economic and literary aspects. The cultural aspect of the marine alms ceremony in Cilacap for the perpetrators and the community is a depiction of the previous community customs, where the community is believed to be a culture that must be carried out for generations. An example is the tradition of nyekar or a pilgrimage to Karang Bandung Beach (Majethi Island) one day before the implementation of sea alms.

Based on the aspect of religious charity the sea on the southern coast of Cilacap contains religious significance. Sea alms ceremonies for the Cilacap fishing community mean religious (spiritual), meaning that the sea alms ceremony is considered as a form of request or prayer to the Almighty, so that fishermen do not encounter many obstacles in fishing and are given safety with abundant fish catches; besides that it is also a manifestation of the gratitude of the fishing community for the catch of the previous years which was presented to the Queen of the South Coast (NyiRoroKidul) which is considered the ruler of the southern sea.

Sedekah Laut are a form of expression of offerings as requests for permission to the rulers of the south coast that arise because of motives, drives, hopes, and at the same time concern. There is a feeling of helplessness or inability to obtain (maximum results) when the community does not carry out sea alms rituals, so that the types of things that are considered suitable to offer to parties who will receive offerings (offerings), and by how the offerings are carried out by the ritual process in the form of utterances, actions, etc.) so that the goal (hope, desire to survive, with abundant results, is spared from obstacles and calamities) can be achieved. In this case the sea alms ceremony is considered as a request and prayer.

These religious expectations and realities are manifested in the depiction of goods used for sea alms ceremonies on the southern coast of Cilacap, which implies as an offering of praise to the presence of Almighty God through KanjengRatuKidul as guardian of the South Sea, for their safety and income in fishing in SegoroKidul or the South Sea. The meaning or symbol of offerings used in the sea alms ceremony, according to Ronggosegoro (1990), is as follows.

- 1) Tumpeng is a symbol of divinity, that is God who has created, arranged and will roll the universe (Kiyamat) is called a *gingkiingkanghanyipto*, *gingkiingkanghamurbolangustiingkanghamaseso*. Tumpeng which is used generally consists of 4 (four) levels, namely the first level called *Heneng* which consists of various dishes which have meaning as a diversity of ethnic groups in the world along with customs, procedures, ceremonies (ritual, cultural and spiritual different religions) called *Shari'a*; the second level is called *silence* in the form of rice which is seen from various points of view is the same, also called *torekat*; the third level is called *Huni*, the rice is getting smaller, which is seen from all the same points of view, but the shape is getting smaller, which is called the *essence*; and the fourth level is called *Hanni*, which is the peak of tumpeng as a point or focus, the meaning of which is to draw closer to the Supreme God, as the peak of the ruler or *Makrifat*. The meaning of tumpeng as a whole is an offering to the Almighty God or the *purwa of madyawasenajagadisisine*, the universe or universe and all its contents.
- 2) *Sanggan bananas* have the meaning that the king or queen is the person who is the top or not above him in the structure of society. *Raja banana* is meaningful as an effort to keep followers sticky so that the relationship between the king and the people remains eternal and attached.

- 3) Ameng rice, meaning to get the salvation from God Almighty, and rasulan rice
- 4) Chicken ingkung (whole) in the form of a good young rooster that has never been pitted, not flawed, its long comb as a potential hero of the next generation, which symbolizes the completeness of the apostle, whose meaning is addressed to the lord of the Great Prophet Muhammad.
- 5) The fresh water in the jug has the meaning of safety
- 6) Beauty equipment or cypress (mirrors, combs and powder) and women's clothing that is anchored means that the equipment is a favorite of women to dress up, which means respect for women - all of which are aimed at KanjengRatuKidul or NyaiRatuKidul to dress up or dress up.
- 7) Flowers or flowers or sekar as a symbol of the request for fragrance, in the form of telon flowers (roses, jasmine and kanthil) and setaman flowers (flowers in the garden). Roses express winawar pottery-tembungingkang sweet, meaning chosen with beautiful and good words. Jasmine flower is as common as lathi, or lips are spoken through the lips. Bungakantil, or sekantilmugimugitansahquanthil-kanthilwontensalebetingnala, may always be attached to the heart and impressive. While setaman flower symbolizes as human beings to love and love each other.
- 8) Market snacks consist of a variety of foods, namely snacks that come from the market or are traded in the market, which means that, when piping pindanewonglunga the market will break up the market will be mangrove, omahedhewe-dhewe, humans live in the world like people go to the market to buy necessities for life and after they are finished they will return to God Almighty.
- 9) Drinks or wedang in the form of wedanggoyang, wedangsalam, wedang orange, wedang bitter coffee and laughter. Wedang shake in the form of coconut flowers (manggar), rock sugar and white water so that the heart does not choke (restless), always gets peace; wedangsalam in the form of bay leaves, rock sugar and water as a safety request; orange juice in the form of baby orange juice and rock sugar as a request to always be given instructions; bitter coffee symbolizes eternity or permanence; while laughter is in the form of fresh water and tawa leaves (dadap-srep leaves) to avoid negative things.
- 10) The head of a buffalo or head of a cow or head of a goat as a symbol of ignorance that must be buried, buried or floated far into the sea, meaning that as humans we must throw away the nature of ignorance and learn to educate the nation. Wulung or black cane symbolizes the sweetness or happiness of a lasting life.
- 11) Chives or new coconut trees grow as a good start or start

The meaning of sea alms from the economic aspect is inseparable from the factors of tourism, marine activities is one of the annual agendas held in the South Coast area of Cilacap. So that the tour manager also tries to package the tradition to become more attractive and can be used as a promotion to attract tourists. Local people also try to continue to increase this activity as one of the annual tourism potentials in Cilacap with the hope that the number of tourists visiting Cilacap will increase and increase the income of the community (Pikiran Rakyat, 18)

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The traditional marine alms ceremony on the south coast of Cilacap Regency is a tradition or custom held by the Cilacap fishing community once a year, namely every month of Suro (Javanese calendar) which coincides with Tuesday Kliwon or Friday Kliwon. This traditional ceremony contains religious meaning that is as a manifestation of gratitude for the fishermen's catch and the request for safety prayers and the abundance of fish catches the following year. This traditional ceremony also contains cultural, social and economic meanings.

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