

The Tradition of Keleman Asking for Rain in Peniwen Village, Malang

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Abstract

Indonesia is a country rich in culture and ethnic groups. This has given Indonesia a diverse range of traditional cultures and customs that have been passed down through generations and are still preserved today. The diversity of ethnic groups in Indonesia enhances national unity. Various cultures among these groups help unite their communities, with preserved traditions serving as a means to strengthen social bonds. Culture is reflected in the behavior and activities of a community. One preserved tradition is the Keleman Tradition, which seeks God's blessing for rain to begin the rice planting season. This tradition is still practiced in Peniwen Village, Kromengan District, Malang Regency. The study aims to explore the history, practices, significance, and preservation of the Keleman tradition in this community. This study employs a qualitative approach to explore the Keleman tradition in Peniwen Village, which has evolved into a local custom. Due to no rain in October, the Keleman tradition will be held on October 30 at the village hall. This event involves agricultural counseling from local authorities, and residents are expected to bring food for Encek. The tradition serves as a plea for rain and expresses gratitude for safety and sustenance.

Keyword: Tradition, Custom, Keleman, Asking for Rain

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an agrarian country where villages are closely linked to crop cultivation, and where the type of work is a significant distinguishing factor. Collective farming is a characteristic of rural economic life, and the term “countryman,” which is often equated with “farmer,” “cultivator,” or “agriculturist,” shows how closely agriculture and villages are linked (Sorokin: 1932). The history of human development was initially determined by the need for food in accordance with environmental conditions and capabilities. Agricultural activities then became the result and next stage in the evolution of human culture. This cultural revolution confirmed that humans received gifts from nature without asking for them.

The Javanese people have instruments or local wisdom called traditions in responding to various events. For example, when their region experiences famine and prolonged drought or various events that cause instability in the community due to climate, weather, and other factors. These traditions are still preserved today, even though modern approaches to dealing with such events have become familiar in society. This can also be seen in the community of Peniwen Village, Kromengan District, Malang Regency, which faithfully carries out one of its traditions. Namely, Keleman, a tradition or custom of the local community to pray for rain. Hundreds of villagers flocked to the Peniwen village hall. They did not come empty-handed. In their hands, they carried various types of food, known as encek. The encek brought by each villager was collected. After performing prayers together, the encek was eaten together. Keleman is also performed if rain has fallen before October. Thus, Keleman is not only a custom of asking for rain, but also a prayer that the rain that has fallen will not become a disaster for the community. The Keleman custom is different from the customs or traditions of asking for rain in other Javanese communities. For example, the Ojung custom is a ritual of asking for rain using a medium of striking rattan. In Keleman, there is only a communal prayer to the Creator to ask for and give thanks. A total of 350 residents of Peniwen Village gathered at the village hall and sat together. They prayed solemnly for rain, led by local religious leaders. The solemnity of the residents, who were dressed casually in accordance with Keleman customs, was a manifestation of their obedience and submission to God Almighty. Previous research on the same topic as this study was conducted by:

1. Dila, R. F. (2017) entitled “Kelem and Metik Rituals for Farmers in Wonokasian Village, Wonoayu District, Sidoarjo,” which discusses how the kelem and metik rituals have important meanings and functions for farmers in Wonokasian Village. This ritual is a form of expression of gratitude, prayer, and hope for farmers to get a bountiful rice harvest. This ritual is also a means of preserving the traditions and culture of their ancestors that have been passed

down from generation to generation.

2. Research by Yuli, T. S. (2021) entitled "The Wiwitan Tradition and Religious Behavior of the Javanese Farmers in Jati Baru Village, Tanjung Bintang District, South Lampung Regency" discusses how the wiwitan tradition is a form of gratitude for a bountiful rice harvest. This tradition is also a prayer to Dewi Sri for continued abundant harvests. The Wiwitan tradition contains important cultural and social values, such as mutual cooperation, togetherness, and gratitude. The Wiwitan tradition also has a positive influence on the religious behavior of the community.

3. Research by Suwandana, E. (2020) entitled "Lexical Meaning and Cultural Meaning of the Clorotan, Kelem, and Wiwitan, as well as Character Education Values in Gayaman Village, Mojoanyar District, Mojokerto Regency," explains the agricultural traditions and the impact of the Kelem, Clorotan, and Wiwitan agricultural traditions in Gayaman Village every year before the planting of rice seeds. The lexical meaning and cultural traditions of Keleman, Clorotan, and Wiwitan in Gayaman Village, the people of Gayaman Village who adhere to Kejawen, will certainly not ignore the agricultural traditions of Keleman, Clorotan, and Wiwitan and are very careful, because the people of Gayaman Village have good manners and are very careful when doing something. And

4. Research conducted by Probowati, Y. (2022, July) entitled "The Extinction of the Lexicon of Local Wisdom in Harvest Ceremonies as the Heritage of the Ancestors of the Community in Bongso Wetan Village, Menganti District, Gresik Regency" explains the internal and external factors causing extinction, as well as efforts to preserve it. The local wisdom in the Harvest Ceremony in Bongso Wetan Village, which is threatened with extinction, is caused by internal and external factors. Continuous preservation efforts are needed to protect this ancestral heritage from disappearing.

5. Research conducted by Hanif Fatul Ilma (2024) entitled "The History and Meaning Behind the Traditional Cultural Parade of Jeru Village: An Expression Of Gratitude And Sustainable Cultural Heritage" explains that the keleman tradition is not only part of their culture but also a foundation that strengthens the relationship and unity among the Jeru Village community.

The difference between existing research and the research conducted by the researcher lies in the research context, as existing research has explored similar traditions in different regions.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. Qualitative research is a research method based on philosophy used to examine a scientific condition (experiment) in which the researcher acts as an instrument, data collection technique, and analysis that is qualitative in nature, emphasizing meaning. Descriptive research focuses on a deep understanding of current phenomena. In this study, a qualitative descriptive method was used to explain in detail the history and meaning behind the cultural parade tradition of Peniwen Village. This study was conducted in Peniwen Village, located in Kromengan District, Malang Regency, East Java. This study also used social action theory, which is capable of analyzing traditions as actions carried out based on existing customs and values.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Origins of the Tradition of Asking for Rain

The tradition of asking for rain has existed since ancient times and is part of the beliefs of traditional communities that depend on agriculture. As an agrarian society, our ancestors relied heavily on the weather, especially rain, to ensure their survival through agriculture. When prolonged droughts occurred, communities began to develop rituals to pray for rain, which were often associated with beliefs in gods, ancestors, or natural forces. The tradition of asking for rain is commonly practiced by communities during long dry seasons. This is because, during this time, several areas will be hit by drought due to the lack of rain. The tradition of asking for rain also exists in the village of Peniwen, Kromengan sub-district, East Java. The history of the origin of the tradition of asking for rain in the village of Peniwen takes us back to the time of our ancestors, when the community depended entirely on agriculture as their main livelihood. A bountiful harvest was not only considered a physical result, but also seen as a gift and blessing from God Almighty that should be appreciated and celebrated together.

The tradition of asking for rain is commonly practiced by communities during long dry seasons. This is because, during this time, several areas will be hit by drought due to the lack of rain. The tradition of asking for rain also exists in the village of Peniwen, Kromengan sub-district, East Java. The history of the origin of the tradition of asking for rain in the village of Peniwen takes us back to the time of our ancestors, when the community depended entirely on agriculture as their main livelihood. A bountiful harvest was not only considered a physical result, but also seen as a gift and blessing from God Almighty that should be appreciated and celebrated together. Over time, this tradition has evolved but still retains its essence and profound significance. The people of Peniwen village have certainly experienced changes in their way of life and technological advances, but the

keleman parade tradition continues to serve as a strong spiritual and cultural foundation. Through this procession celebration, they not only ask for rain from God Almighty but also maintain and preserve the close bond between humans, nature, and the spiritual dimension. This tradition is not just an ordinary annual event but also a focal point that reminds them of their important role in the wider natural ecosystem and their responsibility to preserve environmental sustainability and inherit the culture of their ancestors. In Indonesia, there is a tradition of asking for rain that is still preserved by the community. With its diversity of ethnic groups and cultures, the tradition of asking for rain varies from region to region. Here is an explanation of several traditions of asking for rain in Indonesia:

1. The Cambuk Badan Tiban Tradition

Location: Trajak Village, Boyolali, and Tulungagung.

Process: Two adult men stand shirtless in the middle of a field and whip each other's bodies with palm tree branches until they bleed. The blood that flows is believed to bring rain.

Meaning: This tradition was passed down by a king and is believed to bring rain with the blood that flows from the whipping.

2. Ujungan Tradition

Location: Purbalingga and Banjarnegara.

Process: People use a piece of rattan as a weapon to hit their opponents. Men gather in the middle of the field and whip each other an odd number of times. If it hasn't rained yet, the whipping continues.

Meaning: This tradition is performed to ask for rain and express gratitude for the agricultural harvest.

3. Sintren Dance

Location: Various regions in Java.

Process: A magical dance taken from the story of Sulasih and Sulandono's romantic journey. The dancer in this tradition is a virgin who is considered pure. This dance is performed by the dancer in an unconscious or trance-like state. Meaning: This tradition is performed when the community experiences a long dry season to call for rain.

Overall, the tradition of asking for rain in Indonesia reflects the close relationship between the community and nature, as well as the acculturation between customs and religion that continues to be maintained today. Each tradition has its own unique meaning and process, but all aim to

ask for rain and maintain soil fertility.

How the Kaleman Tradition is Practiced

The Keleman tradition in Peniwen Village, Kromengan District, Malang Regency, is practiced solemnly and diversely. The following are the details of how it is practiced:

1. Encek Collection:

Encek is a food arrangement used in the Keleman tradition in Peniwen Village. Measuring about 50 cm, encek consists of four boxes made of banana leaves and separated by small bamboo. Each box is filled with a portion of food, usually rice and side dishes, which are symbols of prayers for the best results from the community's hard work, especially in the context of agriculture. Encek also serves as an expression of gratitude for the harvest and hope for blessed rain for the land. Every resident of Peniwen Village brings food called Encek to the village hall. Encek is a form of gratitude to God Almighty.

2. Communal Prayer:

Hundreds of residents gather at the village hall to pray together. This prayer is led by local religious leaders and aims to ask for rain if it has not fallen in October, or to pray that the rain that has fallen will be a blessing for the community¹².

3. Eating Encek Together:

Eating Encek together has a deep and diverse meaning depending on the context and traditions practiced. Here are some meanings associated with eating Encek together:

a) Gratitude and Prayer:

Encek is often used as a symbol of gratitude and prayer. For example, in the tradition in the Peniwen Village, Malang City, Encek is used as a container for traditional Javanese food served as an expression of gratitude to God Almighty.

b) Harmony and Mutual Cooperation:

Eating Encek together reflects the spirit of mutual cooperation and harmony in the community. In this tradition, residents share food and prayers together, creating strong bonds between them.

c) Hope and Prayer:

Encek is also used as a medium for offering prayers of hope. For example, in the tradition in Peniwen Village, yellow palm leaves shaped to face upwards in Encek are used as a medium for offering prayers so that those who pray will receive heaven and blessings in their lives.

d) Strengthening Family and Community Ties:

Eating Encek together is often done during family or community gatherings. This creates precious moments that strengthen the bonds between family and community members, as well as building togetherness while enjoying delicious dishes. Thus, eating Encek together is not just a culinary ritual, but a valuable event that carries the meaning of unity, togetherness, and happiness. After praying together, the Encek brought by the residents is collected and eaten together. This is a form of gratitude and surrender of creatures to God Almighty.

e) Community and Government Participation:

The Keleman tradition is not only attended by residents of Peniwen Village, but also by surrounding residents and the Kromengan Subdistrict Government. This shows that this tradition is very important to the local community and government.

f) Regular Implementation:

The Keleman tradition is held every October. If it has not rained, they pray for rain. If it has already rained, they pray that it will be a blessing for the community. Thus, the Keleman tradition in Peniwen Village is an effort to pray for rain and as a form of gratitude for the blessings given by God Almighty.

The Meaning of the Tradition of Asking for Rain

The tradition of asking for rain is a cultural practice carried out by communities in various parts of the world, especially in areas that often experience drought. This tradition usually takes the form of rituals, prayers, or traditional ceremonies with the aim of asking for rain from the forces of nature or the gods believed to control the weather. The meaning of this tradition is not limited to literally asking for rain, but also reflects the spiritual relationship of the community with nature. In many cultures, rain is considered a blessing that brings life, fertility, and prosperity. Therefore, the tradition of asking for rain also often reflects gratitude, dependence, and respect for nature as well as belief in divine power. Each region has different ways of carrying out this tradition. In Indonesia, for example, several tribes

have unique rituals for asking for rain, such as the Hudoq Ritual in Kalimantan, or the Seba Ritual in West Nusa Tenggara, which involve offerings, prayers, and traditional dances. This tradition has deep roots in local beliefs and has been passed down from generation to generation as part of the cultural identity of the local community. The Keleman tradition in Peniwen Village has a deep meaning as a form of supplication to God to bring rain, especially before the rice planting season. Keleman also serves as an expression of gratitude for the blessings given, as well as the hope that the rain that falls will not become a disaster for the community.

This ritual involves communal prayer and the offering of traditional *encek* food, which reflects the obedience and surrender of the residents to the Creator. By preserving this tradition, the people of Peniwen maintain close spiritual and social ties within their community. The tradition of *kelemam* for the people of Peniwen Village also has a deep meaning and represents values that are highly valued by them. First of all, this tradition is an expression of gratitude and appreciation to God Almighty for giving rain with the hope of producing abundant harvests and fertile soil provided by nature. Through each stage of the rain-seeking tradition, including the procession of praying together to God for the Almighty, the spiritual connection between humans and nature is strengthened. Furthermore, the *keleman* tradition also serves as a means of preserving and passing on the cultural heritage of the ancestors. Every aspect of this tradition, such as traditional clothing, agricultural tools, and traditional foods like *encek*, carries values that have been passed down from generation to generation. The community of Peniwen Village proudly preserves the authenticity and originality of this tradition as a form of respect for their ancestors and as an effort to maintain their rich cultural identity. Finally, the Keleman tradition strengthens the sense of brotherhood and unity among the residents of Peniwen Village. By participating together in this celebration, social relationships among become stronger and more solid. This tradition is a moment to unite and share happiness, reminding them of the importance of supporting each other and celebrating life together. Thus, the Keleman tradition is not only part of their culture, but also a foundation that strengthens relationships and unity in the Peniwen Village community.

How to Preserve the Tradition of Asking for Rain

Preserving the tradition of asking for rain in Indonesia requires an approach that respects local cultural values while remaining relevant to the times. Documentation and research are important to preserve this tradition by recording it in the form of writing, video, or audio. Academic research can also help understand the meaning, history, and process of this ritual, so that it can be preserved and studied by future generations. Education and socialization are also essential, where schools and cultural institutions can introduce this tradition through formal and non-formal education, teaching its importance not only as a cultural heritage but also as a form of respect for nature. In addition, cultural

festivals can be held to showcase the tradition of rainmaking, allowing the wider community, especially the younger generation, to learn about and appreciate this ritual. Through festivals, this tradition can be celebrated and preserved in a modern context. Empowering local communities is equally vital by involving indigenous groups that still practice this tradition in various cultural preservation programs, as they are the guardians who possess direct knowledge of the meaning and process of the ritual.

The tradition of rainmaking can also be promoted through cultural tourism, where it becomes a tourism attraction that provides economic benefits for local communities while preserving their cultural heritage. Collaboration with media and technology can further enhance preservation efforts by using social media, films, or digital platforms to promote and disseminate these traditions to younger generations. Technology can also help create applications or websites containing information about traditional customs in various regions. Finally, government support plays a crucial role, as the government can assist through policies, funding, and the promotion of this tradition at both national and international levels.

The preservation of traditions must be part of a structured and sustainable cultural program. With collaborative efforts involving various parties, the tradition of rainmaking can continue to thrive and remain relevant in modern society without losing its cultural essence. The Keleman tradition in Peniwen Village is a tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation. However, the Keleman tradition still exists today by preserving the Keleman tradition in Peniwen Village as follows: The people of Peniwen Village, Kromengan District, Malang Regency, preserve the Keleman tradition through several meaningful efforts that ensure its continuity and relevance. One of the most important ways is by teaching the tradition to the next generation. The people of Peniwen Village actively introduce the history and meaning of the Keleman tradition to children and young people so that it remains alive and understood by future generations. This intergenerational teaching helps strengthen their connection to cultural roots and community identity.

The Keleman tradition is also preserved through its regular implementation every late October. If rain has not yet fallen, the community gathers to pray for rain; if it has already rained, they pray for the rainfall to bring blessings to the village. The consistency of this annual schedule plays a crucial role in maintaining the rhythm and continuity of the tradition. Community participation is another important element in sustaining Keleman. All residents of Peniwen Village are expected to attend and contribute food called *encek*, which is later collected and shared after communal prayers. This collective participation not only keeps the tradition alive but also strengthens social ties and a sense of togetherness among villagers.

The preservation of the Keleman tradition also benefits from strong support from the local government and religious leaders, including the Kromengan sub-district head. Their involvement helps

ensure that the tradition continues to be valued and respected by the wider community. Moreover, the people of Peniwen Village integrate the Keleman tradition with their religious beliefs, making it an inseparable part of both spiritual and social life. This harmonious blend of custom and faith reflects a form of cultural acculturation that enriches the identity of the community.

Through these sustained efforts, the people of Peniwen Village have successfully preserved the Keleman tradition as an important part of their local wisdom and cultural identity. Beyond being an expression of gratitude, the Keleman tradition functions as a way to safeguard and transmit the ancestral heritage of the village. Every element of this tradition embodies values and norms that have become integral to the community's way of life. By continuing to uphold the Keleman tradition, the people of Peniwen Village not only protect their cultural wealth but also strengthen social solidarity and unity. This tradition stands as a symbol of togetherness in diversity and serves as an inspiration for younger generations to appreciate and cherish the cultural legacy passed down by their ancestors.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the keleman tradition in Peniwen Village, Malang Regency, East Java, has been thoroughly explored in terms of its history, how the keleman tradition is carried out, the meaning of the keleman tradition, and also how to preserve the keleman tradition. The historical traces of the origins of this tradition take us back to the time of our ancestors, when the community was completely dependent on agriculture as their main source of livelihood, and keleman became a means of asking for rain so that agricultural yields would be more abundant. This tradition is not merely a means of expressing gratitude, but also serves as an important tool in preserving and passing on the cultural heritage of their ancestors. Every aspect of this celebration embodies cultural values that have been upheld by the people of Peniwen Village for many years, reinforcing the cultural identity they are proud of. Additionally, the Keleman tradition strengthens the bonds of brotherhood and unity among the residents of Peniwen Village, serving as an important moment that reminds them of the importance of unity and mutual support in navigating life.

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