

# Strengthening Local Wisdom Through Stories Ajisaka and Naga Linglung's Odyssey in Java

Rahayu Nur Istiana<sup>1</sup>\*, Ani Rakhmawati<sup>2</sup>, Nugraheni Eko Wardani<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Universitas Sebelas Maret

\* Corresponding author. Email: [istianayaya@gmail.com](mailto:istianayaya@gmail.com)

## ABSTRACT

Folklore is one of the cultural products of the Indonesian people which is believed to be able to provide positive values to strengthen local wisdom. The purpose of this study is to describe and explain the story of the adventures of Ajisaka and Naga Linglung, the characters, and their relationship as strengthening local wisdom. This type of research is descriptive qualitative with content analysis method. Sources of data are books *Cerita Rakyat dari Kabupaten Karanganyar (Jawa Tengah)* [Folklores from Karanganyar Regency (Central Java)] and informants. Data collection techniques with document analysis and interviews of informants. Data analysis using flow analysis model. The results show that the story of Ajisaka and Naga Linglung's odyssey is full of goodness. These two figures reflect the character as a form of local wisdom, namely religious, hardworking, cooperative, and polite. Strengthening local wisdom can be done by refreshing the characters of Ajisaka and Naga Linglung to the younger generation through literary learning.

**Keywords:** local wisdom, folklore, Java

## 1. PREFACE

The cultural diversity of the Indonesian nation can be a characteristic that symbolizes the identity of a nation because in culture there is local wisdom. In every ethnic group and culture in Indonesia, there are noble values called local wisdom [1]. Local wisdom is also said to be an idea that arises in an area that contains knowledge and moral values as the basis for the formation of the culture of a particular area.

One of the cultures owned by the Indonesian people is oral literature [2]. Folklore is a part of oral literature which is a wealth belonging to the people whose presence is based on the desire to socially connect to other people [3]. Khan [4] states that folklore is a cultural treasure that circulates by mouth with a minus of authorship and is not similar to works in printed media known to the author. Folklore is a product of human thought which is an important genre of folklore that symbolically reflects one's expectations. The hope contained in a folk story can be in the form of noble values which are the cultural heritage of the ancestors [5].

One of the folklores that developed in Karanganyar, Central Java, is *Asal Mula Sapta Tirta Pablengan*. It is briefly told that the seven springs in Sapta Tirta Pablengan came from Naga Linglung who wanted to come to the surface to leave holes which eventually

became the source of the seven springs. Previously, Naga Linglung had been fighting for days against Dewata Cengkar who had transformed into a giant crocodile in the Southern Sea. This was done by Naga Linglung as a form of devotion to his father Ajisaka.

Ajisaka as the king of Medang Kamulan tried to protect his people from the rage of Dewata Cengkar who always asked for victims to prey on fishermen. Ajisaka who wanders asking for instructions from God to be able to defeat Dewata Cengkar finally finds an answer by being met with Naga Linglung. Ajisaka is a religious character who has straight thoughts, holds fast to religion and truth, and does not sway in life.

From the description above, it is known that Ajisaka and Naga Linglung have hardworking and responsible characters. The two characters of this story together struggle to defeat Dewata Cengkar to protect the people of Medang Kamulan to create a peaceful and prosperous life. The hard work done to realize prosperity or welfare is one type of local wisdom. Furthermore, it is explained that the value of local wisdom aims to create a prosperous and peaceful society, of course, accompanied by a better community personality. In other words, local wisdom can be in the form of values, norms, habits, institutions, and traditions that can contribute to peace.

The value of local wisdom contains values that are considered universal. The cultivation of local wisdom values is very important in the era of globalization with the hope that the Indonesian nation will not be hit by a moral crisis. Singh [6] stated that folklore in both original and modified forms is widely used in literary works to analyse contemporary issues such as identity crises and existential dilemmas. The value system needs to be revitalized, especially in realizing personal and national character such as diligent worship, honest in speech and action, positive thinking, and self-sacrifice. This honest character is now almost extinct.

Characters in folklore with good characteristics are refreshed by introducing them to the younger generation so that they can strengthen the value of local wisdom. The reflection of ethics and morals can be conveyed through the attitudes, behaviour, and words of the characters in folklore. Folklore with dragons, knights, and princesses has tremendous potential to make disaster education effective for early childhood if it is interpreted, integrated, and demonstrated with science. From this review, it is believed that strengthening local wisdom can be obtained by imitating the characters in folklore.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This type of research is descriptive qualitative. Qualitative research tries to understand or interpret phenomena in terms of meaning. Furthermore, it is explained that qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of a theoretical framework for the study of social humanities research.

The research method uses content analysis which is a form of research technique that utilizes a set of procedures to put valid conclusions from books and documents [7]. Content analysis is carried out on folklore that is included in cultural research because it seeks to reveal the uniqueness, existence, and cultural reality of folklore in the form of local wisdom values through the characters in folklore.

Sources of research data are (1) the book "*Cerita Rakyat dari Karanganyar (Jawa Tengah)*" written by Maryanto and Raharjanti (2010) [8] published by Grasindo. In the book there is a legend "*Asal Mula Sapta Tirta Pablengan*" (The Origin of Sapta Tirta Pablengan) with the main characters Ajisaka and Naga Linglung. Source of data (2) documents from interviews with informants from the Karanganyar Regency Tourism Office assigned to the Sapta Tirta Pablengan Tourism Object.

Data collection techniques (1) document analysis of the legend *Asal Mula Sapta Tirta Pablengan*; (2) interviews with informants from the Karanganyar Regency Tourism Office. The informant named Sugeng has been invited to take care of Sapta Tirta Pablengan since childhood by his grandmother. Researchers as human instruments function to determine the focus of research, collect data, evaluate data quality, analyse data, interpret data, and draw conclusions from theory.

The validity of the data using a triangulation method, namely comparing the data of folklore texts with informant interviews. Data analysis used flow model analysis which consisted of four components as follows: (1) data collection in the form of story documents and informant interviews; (2) data reduction with data that has been obtained is written and reduced for later analysis; (3) data presentation, data is presented for interactive analysis; and (4) concluding is the final stage.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 *The Story of Ajisaka and Naga Linglung's Odyssey*

Ajisaka became king in Medang Kamulan after he managed to get rid of Dewata Cengkar who was said to like to eat human flesh. Dewata Cengkar was successfully thrown into the middle of the fierce South Sea. However, Dewata Cengkar did not perish, he instead transformed into a fierce white giant crocodile. When the South Sea surged with waves as high as a mountain, it was a sign that the white crocodile was on a rampage and demanded victims of the fishermen of the Medang Kamulan people.

Ajisaka wanders in search of clues to destroy Dewata Cengkar. When his journey reached a deserted hill, Ajisaka was then imprisoned to ask the creator for guidance. For days the King of Medang Kamulan united all his heart and mind to ask the Creator for help. In his wanderings, Ajisaka dripped with sweat which became the forerunner of his offspring, the Naga Linglung.

Naga Linglung looked for Ajisaka's whereabouts to be recognized as a child. Ajisaka wanted to acknowledge Naga Linglung as a child as long as he can kill Dewata Cengkar. Naga Linglung managed to kill Dewata Cengkar but was so badly injured that he was confused and could not find his way home. Naga Linglung infiltrated the ground and emerged to the surface. However, Naga Linglung appeared in the Pablengan area, not in Medang Kamulan. The place where Naga Linglung appeared was what later became *Sapta Tirta Pablengan*.

### 3.2 *Strengthening Local Wisdom Through the Story of Ajisaka and Naga Linglung*

Trust in God is a value that has been embedded in the Karanganyar community. Every action taken is always for the grace of God. As seen in the activity of praying to God carried out by the community in the object of Sapta Tirta Pablengan both from the surrounding area and outside Karanganyar. The results of the interview with Sugeng (an informant) showed that people still believe in the benefits of water in Sapta Tirta Pablengan such as for treating disease by bathing in Sendang Dukun (warm water). In addition, the local community when they want to have a purpose come to Sapta Tirta asking for permission by bringing "ubo rampe". The essence of the activities carried out is to pray to God for help and all the efforts made such as bathing with warm water and carrying "ubo rampe" are beliefs of the surrounding

community that have been introduced from generation to generation by ancestors. Local wisdom is defined as values that are created, developed, and maintained by the community itself so that it becomes a way of life for the community.

Ajisaka's character is known for his religious character by always asking God for help. Ajisaka in his wanderings always prays to God for instructions on how to defeat Dewata Cengkar. This can be seen in the following quote from the story.

*Raja yang dikenal suka bertapa dan mengembara itu pun kemudian pergi secara diam-diam untuk mencari petunjuk guna membinasakan buaya raksasa yang membuat onar di Laut Selatan itu. Ketika perjalanannya sampai di sebuah bukit yang sunyi, Ajisaka pun kemudian bertapa untuk memohon petunjuk Sang Pencipta.* (The king, who was known to like to meditate and wander, then went secretly to look for clues to destroy the giant crocodile that caused trouble in the South Sea. When his journey reached a deserted hill, Ajisaka was then imprisoned to ask the Creator for guidance) [8].

Meditation or in Javanese terms called "*semedi*" is a form of worship performed by Ajisaka. Meditation is a form of traditional values contained in folklore (Sujiono, 2019: 43). Haq [9] used the term *Tahanuts* to refer to meditation or meditation as a form of worship to gain spiritual strength. Thus, imprisonment, meditation, or *tahanuts* are not only forms of religious values but also traditional values or are acculturation of religious values and cultural values. Islam itself is presently assimilated during local culture and build a harmonization between beliefs both based on religion and belief in mystical.

The creation of religious values or characters believing in the existence of The Creator presented by Ajisaka's character in folklore is a form of maintaining or strengthening one form of local wisdom. One form of local wisdom is religion, which is related to humans and God and is required to respect fellow believers. One form of local wisdom is religious values which are always represented in social actions, namely belief in God as ruler.

The representation of local religious wisdom is also shown by the figure of Ajisaka who continues to ask God for guidance in fighting the Giant Crocodile. In the end, Ajisaka arrived at a village which he felt was a hint from God. The representation of religious local wisdom is also found in the folklore of Raden Wijaya from the Trowulan district of Mojokerto Regency through the figure Raden Wijaya always asking for instructions before establishing the Majapahit Kingdom. [2]. The representation of Ajisaka's religious actions can be seen in the following quote.

*Setelah beberapa hari berjalan dan tak lupa di sepanjang jalan terus memohon petunjuk dari Sang Pencipta, sampailah raja di sebuah desa. "Mungkin ini desa yang dimaksud dalam petunjuk gaib itu." Kata Raja Medang Kamulan itu di dalam hatinya.* (After a few days

of walking and not forgetting along the way and asking for guidance from the Creator, the king arrived in a village. "Perhaps this is the village referred to in the occult clue." The King of Medang Kamulan said in his heart.) [8]

Javanese spirituality introduces the practice *laku mati sajroning urip* or dying in life. It means that later one can achieve happiness and the glory of life when the body is dead or returns to the Creator. Javanese culture teaches the return of humans to their origins and the purpose of human life, *Mulih mula nira, sangkan paraning dumadi* [10]. The way humans must be able to control or even kill all bad traits, lust, and greed that exist in humans themselves. Ajisaka, while wandering, once felt at the point *laku mati, Sajroning urip* [death within life]. Ajisaka surrendered everything to God, surrendered to God which meant that not only the body was resting but also the mind. When the body rests, it is balanced with the spiritual. At that time, humans are truly said to rest in their entirety, release their bodies and hearts with divinity, submit to God's *qada* and *qadar*, feel enough, be grateful, and be patient.

Ajisaka and Naga Linglung both fought against the white crocodile that was the incarnation of Dewata Cengkar. It took hard struggle and strong determination to fight white crocodiles because fights can last for days. In addition, the battlefield took place in the southern seas instead of on land. Hard work is a form of serious behaviour to deal with the problems encountered so that they can complete the task well [11]. This can be seen in the following quote:

*Perkelahian dahsyat antara kedua makhluk ganas itu tak terelakkan lagi. Kedua-duanya sama-sama hebat dan sakti. Tubuh kedua makhluk menyeramkan itu tampak timbul dan tenggelam dan semburan ombak raksasa yang ditimbulkannya. ... Berhari-hari perkelahian itu tak kunjung selesai. Baru pada hari ketujuh Laut Selatan mulai Tenang, pertanda pertarungan itu sudah berakhir* (A fierce fight between the two ferocious creatures was inevitable. Both are great and powerful. The bodies of the two creepy creatures seemed to rise and fall and the giant waves they created. ... For days the fight was not over. It wasn't until the seventh day that the South Sea began to calm down, a sign that the battle was over) [8].

This story quotes suggested that Ajisaka and Naga Linglung have the character of hard work and never give up. Prosperity or welfare is one type of local wisdom that can be realized with hard work. Ajisaka and Naga Linglung work hard against Dewata Cengkar so that the people of Medang Kamulan felt a peaceful life so that prosperity and prosperity are created. The character of hard work is refreshed for the younger generation to be imitated in solving every problem faced so that it can strengthen the local wisdom of the reader or listener through values. Reading folklore can provide positive value, especially for the younger generation, namely the discovery of the value of hard work.

*Gotong royong* or cooperation is a form of cooperation carried out in community groups to create happiness together. Mutual help, commonly called "splice" in Javanese society, is a form of local wisdom. Cooperation does not only exist on the island of Java but also in other areas in Indonesia with their respective traditions. Such as the *Rambu Solo'* Ceremony Tradition in Toraja which is a funeral tradition that reflects mutual help, cooperation, and is familial.

Ajisaka and Naga Linglung tried to work together in confronting their enemy, Dewata Cengkar. The figure of Ajisaka did not immediately reject the request of the Naga Linglung who claimed to be his descendant. Ajisaka preferred to solve the problem by discussing and collaborating with the Naga Linglung. This can be seen in the following quote:

*Prabu Ajisaka pun tampak menimbang beberapa saat lamanya mendengar riwayat naga itu. Lalu katanya, "Baik aku akan mengakuimu sebagai putraku, namun ada syaratnya."... Raja Medang Kamulan itu pun menyatakan kesanggupannya untuk mengakui sang naga sebagai putranya asalkan sang naga dapat membunuh buaya putih jelmaan Dewata Cengkar (Prabu Ajisaka also seemed to consider for a while hearing the dragon's history. Then he said, "Fine, I will acknowledge you as my son, but there are conditions." ... The King of Medang Kamulan also declared his ability to recognize the dragon as his son as long as the dragon can kill the white crocodile incarnate Dewata Cengkar) [8].*

In other folklore also implied the existence of cooperation and cooperation. In the Ronggolawe story, there is a collaboration between Raden Wijaya, Arya Wiraraja, soldiers, and their sons to establish a kingdom by clearing forests. Furthermore, in the story of the occurrence of the Ranu Grati Lake, it is reflected in the cooperation between residents to look for meat obtained from hunting as a requirement to carry out village salvation. The attitude of cooperation and cooperation contained in the figures of Ajisaka and Naga Linglung is a representation of local wisdom so that if this story is re-enacted, it is hoped that it will strengthen the value of local wisdom that has been formed in the life of the community, especially Karanganyar. One form of local wisdom is caring for the environment where humans are destined as social beings who cannot live alone so they must need help from others (cooperation). One form of local wisdom is to live in harmony and positively communicate with each other so that they help each other.

Ajisaka still reflected a polite character even though he has become a ruler, namely the king in Medang Kamulan. Politeness is described when Ajisaka does not choose a drink and drinks immediately when he is served by the village woman with a jug of water. Ajisaka did not forget to thank the village woman and promised to repay her kindness before saying goodbye. Courtesy is a form of local wisdom as one of the characteristics of human

goodness. The values in local wisdom are applied in everyday life. This can be seen in the following quote:

*"Biyung, bolehkah aku meminta air sedikit saja?" kata Ajisaka kepada perempuan desa itu. ... "Terima kasih banyal, Biyung. Suatu saat tentu akan ada yang membalas semua kebaikan biyung," kata Ajisaka dan segera meneruskan pengembaraannya. ("Biyung, may I ask for a little water?" said Ajisaka to the village woman. ... "Thank you very much, Byung. One day, of course there will be someone who will repay all of the biyung's kindness," said Ajisaka and immediately continued his wanderings) [8].*

In local wisdom, there are values or characters of honesty that are implemented in everyday life. Local wisdom can be found in the form of folklore, songs, words of wisdom, proverbs, suggestions, slogans, and ancient books that are combined in daily activities. Naga Linglung said honestly that he was a descendant of Raden Ajisaka. Naga Linglung came from the sweat of Ajisaka who was drunk by the rooster and then lays eggs and incubates. After hatching, it is not the chicks but the dragons that hatch. Naga Linglung then asked the village woman about the whereabouts of her father Raden Ajisaka. The village woman answered honestly that her father, Raden Ajisaka, had left the village. The value of honesty contained in folklore is one of the characteristics inherent in humans and is the main key in doing something.

*"Raja Medang Kamulan? Berarti Gusti Ajisaka?" ("King of the Medang Kamulan? Does that mean Gusti Ajisaka?")*

*"Benar, Biyung. Ayahku sang Ajisaka," lanjut anak naga itu lagi. ("That's right, Byung. My father is Ajisaka," continued the dragon child again.)*

*"Sayang Baginda Ajisaka sudah pergi," ujar perempuan desa itu tampak kecewa. ("Unfortunately, Your Majesty Ajisaka has left," said the village woman, looking disappointed) [8].*

Naga Linglung and the village women had an honest nature because they convey truthful and open information. Honest values are emphasized in a folk story because all good deeds will bring goodness in the future [12]. The village woman's honesty and the Naga Linglung brought goodness because the Naga Linglung was able to meet her father. Short story, on the orders of his father, Naga Linglung can defeat the giant white crocodile so can bring peace to the peoples of Medang Kamulan. Politeness is a type of local wisdom that can build peace and a good community personality.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Local wisdom is a form of intelligence in the form of values created and maintained by the community itself based on experience which is then used as a guide in social life to create a prosperous and peaceful society. Wise characters reflected in the figures of Ajisaka and Naga Linglung such as religious, hardworking,

cooperative, and polite are forms of local wisdom that are believed to strengthen local wisdom.

The forms of local wisdom created by the community will develop dynamically according to global demands. Refreshing the values of local wisdom is given to the younger generation as heirs and successors of local wisdom through the characters in folklore. This can be done through formal education, namely using folklore as literary learning material. Thus, it is necessary to do further research on how folklore, especially the story of Ajisaka and Naga Linglung, is material for learning literature in schools to strengthen local wisdom in the younger generation.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Surahman. (2018). Penguatan Kearifan Lokal dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di Era Globalisasi. *Senabasa: Seminar Nasional Bahasa dan Sastra*. 481 – 487. Universitas Muhamadiyah Malang.
- [2] Sujiono.(2019). Analisis Kajian Nilai Pendidikan dalam Cerita Rakyat Raden Wijaya di Kecamatan Trowulan Kabupaten Mojokerto. *Purwadita: Jurnal Agama dan Budaya*, 3 (2), 43-50.
- [3] Semi, M.A. (1993). *Anatomi Sastra*. Padang: Angkasa Raya.
- [4] Khan, F. (2018). The Concept of Folklore: An Overview of the Psychoanalytic Reading of Folklores. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences (IJELS)*, 3(6), 1059–1061.
- [5] Das, R. (2014). Psychoanalytical Study of Folktale. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 19(10), 13–18.
- [6] Singh, M. R., & Devi, Y. P. (2020). Amalgamation of Folklore and Contemporary Issues in Girish Karnad's *Hayavadana* and Salman Rusdhi's *Midnight's Children*. *Research Journal of English Language and Literature (RJELAL)*, 7 (1), 2321 – 3108.
- [7] Moleong, L. J. (2009). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
- [8] Maryanto and Raharjanti. (2010) *“Cerita Rakyat dari Karanganyar (Jawa Tengah)*. Jakarta: Grasindo.
- [9] Haq, M.Z. (2012). *Mangkunegara I: Kisah kepahlawanan dan Filosofi Perjuangan pangeran Sember Nyawa*. Bantul: Kreasi Wacana.
- [10] Rahyono, F.X. (2015). *Kearifan Budaya dalam Kata* (edisi revisi). Jakarta: Penerbit Wedatama Widya Sastra
- [11] Indiarti, W. (2017). Nilai-nilai Pembentuk Karakter dalam Cerita Rakyat Asal-Usul Watu Dodol. *Jentera*. 6 (1), 26 – 41.
- [12] Fatimah, F. N. & Sulisty, E. T. (2017). “Cerita Rakyat Dewi Sri Tanjung sebagai Upaya Mewujudkan Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Nilai Kearifan Lokal. *Proceeding of 2nd International Conference of Arts Language And Culture*. Surakarta: Universitas Sebelas Maret, 606-610, 4 November 20187.