Analysis of Educational Values Embodied in the Maras Taun Tradition

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Abstract. The tradition called Maras Taun is a traditional ritual enacted by the community in Selat Nasik District of Belitung Regency to express their deep gratitude for rice harvest. This research aimed to reveal educational values embodied in the tradition Maras Ta’un. The research method used in this research is qualitative ethnography. Qualitative ethnography is a scientific framework that includes research techniques, theories, and all descriptions of culture, where ethnography here is used for data collection and is carried out descriptively, while to get educational values in the Maras Ta’un tradition, using Tillman’s theory. The result of the research showed that the tradition Maras Taun bear a significant realtion to educational values fostered in Tillman’s theory, including (1) the values of love, happiness, and humility embodied in the community’s togetherness in holding the ritual and party, which they consider to be the right moment to cement their friendship (silaturahmi); (2) the values of tolerance, peace, modesty, and sincerity which could be seen from their process of making lepat, in which the event organizers were responsible for making big lepat, while other members of the community were to make small lepat which they give to those who could not get the big ones; (3) the value of mutual aid maintained in their communal work in collecting such raw materials as wood for stage setups and kitchen purposes; (4) the values of freedom and respect which could be seen from the fact that all members of the community were free to partake in any game developed in the event; and (5) the values of unity and responsibility preserved by the establishment of the committee responsible for the enactment of the tradition Maras Ta’un.

Keywords: Educational Values · Tradition · Maras Taun

1 Introduction

Indonesia is the home of various ethnics, religions, cultures and traditions. Each ethnic group spreading over the country has its own traditions with their unique characteristics, which generates the national, cultural wealth of Indonesia. Such diverse cultures add attractive features of a country, and they can be frequently found in Indonesia. Diversity

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can sometimes help settle a difference of opinion about Indonesian cultures, and human behaviors create the quality of life for those who have learned about themselves [8]. Each of the ethnic groups in Indonesia has a culture and tradition which have been well preserved in their daily life and must be maintained continuously [4]. Furthermore, the term “culture”, in Latin cultural, means to cultivate, maintain and practice [3].

Without humans’ knowledge, cultures have contributed to the creation of artwork like music, dance, fine art, and crafts among others. Culture either as a process or as a product basically embodies cultural values, norms and the results of humans’ actions. In the light of this statement, there three dimensions of culture: (1) the evaluative dimension, namely norms and values which control human behavior in cultural life; (2) the cognitive dimension which includes an abstract concept of cosmology, worldviews, and human ideas; and (3) the symbolic dimension, which means that human interaction in life displays commonplace symbols in cultural life [3]. In this, Williams stated that culture can be used as a development process of knowledge, aesthetics and deep spirituality [11].

Local cultures in Indonesia are rich in values and philosophical meanings [7]. Every single local culture in Indonesia has its unique signature which is indicative of distinguishing characteristics of each province, island and region in Indonesia. By turns, the culture becomes a mascot of a region from which it comes and helps make the region widely recognized. One of the unique cultures which can represents Belitung region is what is called Maras Taun. Maras Taun is a traditional ceremony conducted by way of expressing gratitude for the success achieved and displaying a good attitude toward Mother Nature [20]. The tradition Maras Taun is held annually after rice harvest time. It involves all members of the community in the region, who will enjoy public entertainment provided after the ceremony. Maras Taun is a humanistic tradition, which means that it not only holds a religious ritual after harvest time but also allows precious time for friendship strengthening activities. What is more, the tradition Maras Taun is also a way of maintaining symbolic values and meanings embodied in every one of its segments and in the process of preparing the enactment of the ritual.

The values and meanings represent the prayer and hope of the community for their social life.

The Maras Taun tradition is only understood by adults who always take part in carrying out the ritual. People who take part in the planning or implementation of the ritual are mostly appointed for people over 21 years old, but it does not rule out the possibility of children or people from outside the island of Belitung also following the tradition, but only limited to participating or participating in the entertainment program, so there is a knowledge gap over the values and meanings contained in the tradition. The gap can be seen from not knowing the values contained in the ritual, for example, it can be seen from the implementation of ritual events that do not see caste differences between rich and poor people, whether educated or not all blend together to carry out rituals, so that research on the maras taun tradition has a positive impact on society and can also open up new horizons of knowledge to the public that in the Maras Taun tradition there are many values that can be emulated.

Products of a culture can build up an intelligence support with which to educate human beings and lead them to the better way of life. In John Dewey’s view, education
is a process of shaping and developing innate abilities which include thought and emotion [12]. Furthermore, education is a process which explores three dimensions: personality, national community of individuals, and all aspects of reality, be it material or spiritual, which are influential in shaping characters, destiny, and forms of individuals and a community [14]. Education plays a major role in the life development of an individual or group of individuals as it can help increase their intellectual and mental capacity to face any problem.

Nowadays, to acquire education in a normal condition is harder than it was before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic occurring worldwide. The COVID-19 pandemic is utterly disastrous for all Earth inhabitants. It has negatively affected all aspects of human life, and education is no exception [1]. In response, the education system has to be devised to accommodate changes in human civilization, which may produce technologically sophisticated. On the one hand, technology is undoubtedly necessary for human life; on the other hand, technology to some extent has altered the behavior of humans, namely by making them hopelessly addicted to it [17]. It is common today that technology has influenced the lifestyle and mindset of people, especially those of teenagers. In years past, books and pencils were all students had with them when going to school; meanwhile, today’s students are used to bringing cell phones, in addition to books and pencils, as their means of communication [18].

Based on the aforementioned data, it is obvious that the pandemic also has negatively affected education. In response to this fact, the researcher tried to reveal the values embodied in the tradition Maras Taun which continues to be held in the present time. Hopefully, this can generate intelligence support for the building of people’s characters and can also lead to no knowledge gap between the community that does the planning and implementation (committee) and the general public.

2 Research Method

This is qualitative, ethnographic research. According to [13], qualitative research is conducted to holistically understand phenomena related to all that the subjects of the research experience like behaviors, perceptions, motivations, and actions in a particular natural setting by using natural methods. [10] stated that qualitative method is a postpositivism-based research method in which a researcher serves as the main research instrument and data collection processes involves using data triangulation. Furthermore, in qualitative research, the data analysis is carried out by using induction, namely applying inductive reasoning, which stresses on meanings rather than generalization.

The process of collecting, analyzing and investigating data is undergone by employing an ethnographic approach. According to Endraswara [3], ethnography is an action of collecting data and research materials in a systematic procedure by focusing on behaviors, social situation, and any cultural objects of a community or group of individuals. Spradley [9] stated that ethnography is a study of cultures. Ethnography is a conceptual framework which includes research techniques, theories and comprehensive description of cultures.

After ethnographic data about the tradition Maras Ta’un were collected, the data were analyzed by using Tillman’s theory to reveal educational values embodied in Maras Taun.
Tillman [16] stated mentioned 12 educational values: peace, respect, love, tolerance, sincerity, humility, collaboration, happiness, responsibility, modesty, freedom, and unity.

3 Findings and Discussion

1. Socio-historical Context of the Ritual Maras Taun/Rice Harvest

Belitong is a medium-sized island adjacent to Sumatra Island. Belitung or Belitong was once referred to as Biliton. Belitong is an island on the east coast of Sumatra, Indonesia. It is located between the Gaspar dan Karimata Straits. It is also widely known as Negeri Laskar Pelangi. Belitung Island is administratively divided into two regencies: Belitung and Belitung Timur Regencies [20]. Mentioned that Malays are the native people of Belitung Islands [19]. Based on the characteristics of their language, origins, and custom, people of Belitung can be considered one of the major sub-ethnicities of Malay people, hence they are known as Belitung Malays, who actually prefer to call themselves Urang Belitong. People on Gersik Island, an island adjacent to Belitung Island,

especially those living in Selat Nasik Village, have a traditional ritual which they hold every year. They used to call the ritual Peringatan panen padi (the celebration of rice harvest). Peringatan panen padi is a ceremony to express gratitude for their success in rice cultivation and production.

“Peringatan panen padi” was once held by chanting prayers and expressing gratitude in the house of a customary leader (pemangku adat) whom Belitung Malays call dukun. In the course of time, peringatan panen padi was renamed Maras Taun. The name Maras Taun consists of two words “Maras’ and Taun’. In the local dialect, Maras means “to cut”, while Taun’ means “year”, hence “Maras Taun” literally means “to cut years”, namely to mark the end of the harvesting season and the beginning of the growing season (Interview with the customary leader, Bahani, 2020-9-10)

The tradition Maras Taun has been commemorated since Belitung Malays first put a large wood under the plow from March to July. At the time, the large enough wood was divided for each member of the community into some paddy fields in which they began to plant rice. This land clearing for rice cultivation was done by traversing the wood and then burning some parts of the wood by agreement they had reached before. The method of land clearing by burning the wood was based on the result of the public discussion (musyawarah). Belitung Malays called such land clearing by burning a wood nunu ume or the burning of rebak (woods). The nunu ume was then followed up by nugal (cultivating rice).

The time it took them three months and ten days to produce rice, from the beginning of planting rice to harvesting it. To fulfil their daily needs, most of the Belitung Malays worked on the land, and spent their spare time going to sea. When the farming produced high yields, Belitung Malays who worked in farming wanted to show their gratitude for the success and share their happiness with other community members, as well as praying for the next growing season. It was at the time like this that the customary leader commanded Belitung farmers to prepare some foods made from their grain yields, one of them is what they called lepat. They brought those foods to the house of the customary leader before giving them to non-farmer members of the community.
In the beginning, *Maras Taun* contained was performed by only uttering prayers for the state of equanimity (*slamet*) at the house of the customary leader. It took place in April. Under the command of the customary leader, all members of the community joined in prayers to God solemnly. After the prayer utterance, all members of the community were invited to eat the food prepared together. This village feast was held in a traditional way. The foods prepared included *lepat* (*lemper*), liquid palm sugar, fishes, *ketan* (sticky rice), and chicken [20].

*Maras Taun* is a traditional ritual in which prayers of grateful thanks to God are offered. In addition to expressing gratitude for the success achieved, it is conducted to display a good attitude toward Mother Nature. Such traditional, religious ceremony was regularly performed by early ancestors of Indonesian peoples, like the ritual called *seren tahun*. The ritual *seren tahun* is a traditional ceremony of agrarian communities of Sundanese people conducted by way of thanking God for granting them fertile land and bountiful harvests. It is also a nonverbal means of instilling moral values into those people so that they use natural resources appropriately [6].

Based on an interview with the customary leader, Bahani 2020-9-10 stated that during the previous enactments of the tradition *Maras Taun* community members usually present performance art, be it music, dance, or other art work. The following is a more detailed description of the performance art as well as its necessary equipment.

a. **Lesong panjang**

*Lesong panjang* is a musical instrument which ruplicate a piece of equipment used to grind rice. The two-piece instrument is one of the instruments presented in the performance art. The first piece is *lesong* or *lesung* (a huge mortar) a bowl-like basin on which rice is placed to be grinded and crushed. The other one is *alu* (a long pestle), a long stick used to hit and press rice on the *lesong*. In this performance art, both *lesong* and *alu* are made of such special wood that the impact of both tools produces loud and clear sound. The size of the *lesong* is usually 1 to 1.5 m long and is 25 to 30 cm in diameter. It is obvious that the instrument is named *lesong panjang* because of its size. *Lesong panjang* is usually played by four women, who will make rhythmic motions alternately by pounding the *alu* to the *lesong* to the extent that they emit a beautiful sound in a perfect rhythm desired.

b. **Bekeruncong/Stambul Pajar**

The unique characteristic of *Bekeruncong* lies in its unique, lilting sound it produces. The music played on the instrument is accompanied by a few lines of poems about praise, advice, hopes, and wails. This instrument is usually played at night because of the lilt of its sound and soft, quiet music accompanying it. In the event of *Maras Taun*, the
instrument is played as the closing performance in the night of the ceremony. While listening to the music of *Berkeroncong* call it *begalor* – and take sips of tea or coffee.

c. **Betiong**

*Betiong* is a music performance which involves music instruments and vocals (a song accompanied by the recitation of poems). The musical instruments played include *gendang*, *tawak-tawak* dan *kelinang*.

d. **Dulmuluk**

*Dulmuluk* is a one-act play. The play usually tells stories about ancient kingdoms and popular folklores. The performance of dulmuluk usually involves a number of people, ranging from twenty to thirty players.

e. **Begambus**

*Begambus* a music performance using a stringed musical instrument called *gambus* which are made of wood and to whose body are stretched some nylon strings. The Belitung gambus has a slender body and the top of it is shaped like the head of deer.

Furthermore, based on his interview with the customary leader (2020-9-10), Bahani mentioned that there are two games involved in the enactment of the tradition. Belitung farmers often played those games in the growing season, namely in their spare time from planting rice grains and protecting those grains from pest birds. Those two games will be described in detail in the following.

f. **Gasing Game**

*Gasing* is a wooden plaything with a string or rope wrapped around its body. The toy is played by pulling the rope and throwing the toy, which makes it spin. There was a *gasing* competition, in which two or more players compete with each other. The only rule in the game is that any player whose gasing can spin longer is declared the winner. The game was usually played during the land cleansing time.

g. **Menanginan Game**

The *menanginan* game was usually played when those farmers were protecting their fields. This game was played on such a hill that the noise produced by the game could be heard from afar. This means that the game was not merely for joy; the game was also played or the purpose of scaring wild animals and preventing them from devastating their rice fields or stealing almost ripe rice.

Based on the aforementioned discussion, it can be said that the tradition *Maras Taun* was once followed by those people living on Selat Nasik Island of Belitung District. Nowadays, the enactment of this tradition has attracted other people outside the island. Besides, there is a series of events held before the commemoration of the tradition *Maras Taun*. Those events play a large repertoire of traditional performance art of Belitung people as mentioned above. In addition, such traditional games as the *gasing* and *menanginan* games, which were actually played between the growing and harvesting seasons, are also played by Belitung people to support the commemoration. With such high socio-historical context, it is true that *Maras Taun* is believed by Belitung people
to have social values absolutely necessary for the efforts to create social harmony and strengthen friendship among members of the community.

4 Educational Values of the Tradition Maras Taun/Rice Harvest

High values of a thing refer to its worth, proportion, content, quality and characteristics which have great importance and practical usefulness to humanity [2]. The word “educational” means providing education or relating to education [2]. Education should be to maximize the use of human quality and facilities by mastering the art of learning, the art of teaching, and the art of life or culture, which hopefully produces mindful people able to attain the highest level of success [15]. Those definitions lead to a conclusion that educational values are the ones providing education or articulating the core principles of education.

The ritual Maras Taun instills high values embodied in the overall parts of the ritual: the preparation of the ritual, every single segment of the ritual, and some events after the ritual. Those high values were revealed from the ritual Maras Taun from the perspective of Tillman’s theory of educational values. The educational values of Maras Taun is described in detail as follows.

a. The Values of Love, Happiness, and Humility

Love is a force or emotion within human beings for good behaviors like consideration and care for other fellow humans, animals, or the nature. Love is a force leading to the creation and maintenance of strong, harmonious relationships. Love means that I am kind, considerate person full of care [16]. The tradition embodies the value of love which it instills into all people present in the ritual. The enactment of the ritual Maras Taun itself represents the community members’ awareness and action to conserve their environment and cement their friendship with each other (Fig. 1).

Happiness is a peaceful condition without violence and gratitude for everything achieved. Happiness is naturally found in one’s self by giving and receiving love and peace [16]. Everyone is filled with happiness thanks to the liveliness of the ritual and people’s humility and togetherness by not recognizing different socio-economic status: the rich and the poor experience a sense of unity. Humility improves from pride, the

Fig. 1. Happiness (Reza Pahlawan)
elimination of prejudices, the absence of arrogance, the great respect for the rights of others [16].

b. The Value of Tolerance, Peace, Modesty, and Sincerity

Tolerance is openness to and respect for differences by way of finding perfect peace [16]. The value of tolerance seemed to be preserved by the fact that all people present in the ritual Maras Taun, whether they are the member of the community or those coming from adjacent islands, could have an eat the food prepared and provided in the ritual. Everything had been taken into consideration of which the division of the process of making lepat was indicative. As mentioned above, which the event organizers were responsible for making big lepat, while other members of the community were to make small lepat which they give to those who could not get the big ones. This embodies the values of peace and modesty. Peace is a mental state of being calm and quiet. The state can be reached by choosing not to commit violence, feel gratitude for present conditions, promote justice, and emphasize the importance of communication, which all can encourage people to be engaged in the pursuit of truth [16]. Meanwhile, modesty is the quality of being natural and able to learn form nature, the admiration for beauty, and the tendency not to exaggerate problems. Modesty also teaches ones to appreciate every little thing in life and to use natural resources wisely for the better future of the succeeding generations [16] (Fig. 2).

The value of sincerity was embodied in the community’s hard work and effort to celebrate the tradition. For example, their sincerity encouraged them to obey the prevailing rules, one of which is that no one is allowed to go to fields during the enactment of the ritual. Not only is sincerity about telling the truth of a matter, but it also enables ones to

Fig. 2. Tolerance (Reza Pahlawan)
determine what they can believe to be true and can improve their physical and mental condition [16].

c. **The Value of Collaboration**

The community members’ good teamwork in their mutual aid is a good example of the fact that almost all the segments of the ritual *Maras Taun* embodied the value of collaboration. Based on the research, they helped each other to collect wood for stage setups and kitchen purposes, prepared food for the ritual, and attended rehearsal to entertain other community members and other visitors to the ritual with dance performances. Collaboration happens when some people work for the same purposes, commit good deeds, pay proper respect for each other, and have love and awareness of the importance of good and equal sharing with each other [16] (Fig. 3).

d. **The Value of Freedom and Respect**

In the ritual *Maras Taun*, all people were allowed freely to join any game played and enjoy any performance art displayed. This suggested that the value of freedom is deeply held in the ritual. Freedom is a condition in which an individual can commune with other individuals without any worries about negative things or problems in their heart and mind [16] (Fig. 4).

Enjoying freedom, those people began to feel respected – the value of respect. Respect gives community members added confidence to take part in the ritual. Respect is important for individuals to discover their own natural talent, and it allows them to show appreciation for others’ talent, which also instills confidence into them [16].

e. **The Value of Unity and Responsibility**

The embodiment of the value of the unity could be seen from the establishment of the steering committee of the enactment of the ritual. In spite of their different opinions, the members of the committee shared the same purpose, namely to successfully conduct
the ritual. Unity can be achieved by sharing opinions, hopes and noble purposes in public interests. Unity can help ease a huge problem, offer valuable experience of collaboration, bring people great joy in practice, and create an empowering atmosphere in a group [16]. With unity comes responsibility. Responsibility is to do things well, accept necessity, and perform jobs heart and soul. Responsibility is not only about an obligation but also about the way leading to the achievement of a purpose [16] (Fig. 5).

The aforementioned discussion leads to a conclusion that the ritual Maras Taun embodies a number of high traditional values to which the effort to provide character
education for present people, especially the native community of Belitung Island, should refer. Upholding such traditional, educational values will enable community members to be considerate individuals with clear thinking and positive behavior and to crate a multicultural society and live in it. Gafar stated that character education is a process of instilling life values into the personality of individuals to the extent that the values shape their behavior [5].

5 Conclusion

The tradition Maras Taun is an annual ritual enacted by a native community in Selat Nasik Island. Initially called Peringatan Panen Padi, the ritual is an expression of gratitude for good rice harvest. In the past time, the ritual was performed only by chanting prayers for the state of equanimity at the house of the customary leader, whom the native people of the community usually call dukun. In the course of history, people stopped calling the ritual peringatan panen padi. As is known thus far, the ritual has been referred to as Maras Taun, which consists of two words: Maras and Taun. In Malay language, Maras means “to cut” and Taun means “year”. Under this definition, Maras Taun is a ritual in which the native community in Selat Nasik Island mark the end of the harvesting season and the beginning of the growing season.

The ritual Maras Taun embodies a prevailing set of high traditional values important especially for the native people of the Island to create a more favorable social condition. Traditional values believed to be embodied in the ritual Maras Taun include the values of love, happiness, and humility which can be seen in the community’s togetherness in holding the ritual and party, which they consider to be the right moment to cement their; the values of tolerance, peace, modesty, and sincerity which could be seen from their process of making lepat, in which the event organizers were responsible for making big lepat, while other members of the community were to make small lepat which they give to those who could not get the big ones; the value of mutual aid maintained in their their communal work in collecting such raw materials as wood for stage setups and kitchen purposes; the values of freedom and respect which could be seen from the fact that all members of the community were free to partake in any game developed in the event; and the values of unity and responsibility preserved by the establishment of the committee responsible for the enactment of the tradition Maras Ta’un.

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