



“Quality and Analogue”: The Essence of Food and Beverage Ethno-wellness at Sumedang Palace, West Java, Indonesia

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Abstract: Ethno-wellness comprises a comprehensive fitness system encompassing philosophical principles, knowledge, cultural norms, and physical practices to maintain and enhance body fitness within specific ethnic communities. These practices have been transmitted both through written manuscripts and oral folklore. Originating from ancient manuscripts, Ethno-wellness was initially limited to the royal court, adhering to established standards through royal tradition. Simultaneously, orally transmitted versions spread widely among the general public, resulting in various regional adaptations. This article investigates Ethno-wellness, tracing its origins back to the manuscripts of the Sumedang Kingdom. The Sumedang Kingdom is the remaining kingdom in West Java, characterized by its functional organizations, customs, social structures, and culturally significant royal palace, despite lacking political power. Qualitative research, utilizing interviews and observations, highlights the continued practice of Ethno-wellness philosophy, knowledge, and traditional fitness techniques within the royal court, which is essential for adequately fulfilling leadership roles. The methods employed in maintaining physical fitness involve activating and nourishing bodily organs through massage techniques and consumables prepared from spices that have hot and cold qualities or are analog to human organs. Notably, Ethno-wellness Sumedang holds potential for development into one of the SPA Wellness Nusantara, representing a distinctive SPA tourist attraction in Indonesia.

Keywords: Ethno-wellness, Manuscript, Spa-wellness.

1. Introduction

In the history of Sundanese culture in West Java, Indonesia, the region known as Sumedang holds a crucial position both geographically and socio-politically. Sumedang is geographically situated at the center of Sundanese culture, commonly called Priangan in West Java, Indonesia (Mahdi, 2018). Historically, it was a sovereign kingdom in the past, forming part of the legendary Great Kingdom of Pajajaran on Java Island's western part. Culturally, Sumedang is considered the heart of past Sundanese civilization, with numerous sites, artifacts, manuscripts, and other cultural elements still meticulously preserved within the Sumedang Palace (Meisari et al., 2021). The Sumedang Palace's long historical journey, from the Sumedanglarang kingdom to its current form as the Sumedang Regency government, is evidenced by a wealth of high-value historical relics (Thresnawaty, 2011). These precious artifacts were meticulously collected by the descendants of the Kings of Sumedang, culminating with Prince Aria Soeria Atmadja in the mid-20th century. In 1955, the Prince Sumedang Foundation was established to primarily manage and preserve Sumedang's historical heritage (Tubagus & Yanti, 2020). Prince Aria Soeria Atmadja donated these artifacts to the Geusan Ulun Museum in Sumedang City, which was once a vital component of the Sumedang Palace and continues to stand as a source of pride for the people of West Java. Both the palace and the artifacts housed within it have evolved into a revered heritage tourist attraction, drawing visitors from both domestic and foreign locales (Gantina et al., 2021).



Fig. 1 Background in The Sumedang Palace

Source: Researcher (2022)

In examining the culture and traditions of Sundanese fitness at the Sumedang Palace in West Java, this article explores ethnic or fitness traditions known as ethno-wellness, emphasizing massage techniques and consuming food and beverages infused with spices. Specifically, the article addresses three key questions: (1) The philosophical underpinnings of Sumedang's ethno-wellness, (2) The role of wellness in the local community's way of life, and (3) How food and massage techniques have become central elements of Sumedang Wellness Spa.

Wellness, as described in English, pertains to a holistic approach encompassing various aspects of an individual's life, such as physical, emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual, and environmental factors (Wanarani, 2023; Kartika et al., 2017). It represents a state in which a person achieves their optimal potential across all dimensions, going beyond mere absence of illness (Dillette et al., 2020; Nurfalih, 2017). In this concept, the focus is not solely on treating diseases but also on prevention and enhancing overall health through a balanced lifestyle, stress management, positive social connections, intellectual and spiritual growth, and a healthy environment (Damijanić, A. T., 2019).

Urban areas often provide SPA institutions as a means to achieve fitness. SPA institutions trace their roots back to the Unani Tibia medical system, originating from ancient Greece. This system involves principles such as balancing bodily humor based on hot and cold qualities, using opposing treatments for disease categories, and employing water evaporation in treatments (Foster & Anderson, 1985). The Unani medical system was adopted and developed by Arabs during their domination of Europe from the 13th to 15th centuries. Subsequently, it spread to Islamic countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Following the decline of the Islamic Empire, European nations redeveloped the medical system and disseminated it to their colonies across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It also blended with other traditions such as Ayurveda from India and Chinese Traditional Medicine (CTM) upon the arrival of the Spanish and Portuguese in the 16th century. Initially, SPA institutions catered mainly to feudal aristocrats and bourgeois individuals but evolved into a cultural aspect of urban health accessible to diverse groups. By the end of the 20th century, SPA institutions became a popular health destination for various demographics and a thriving fitness tourism attraction.

In Indonesia, SPA institutions assimilate with the ethnic medical systems present in various Indonesian ethnic groups, including Javanese, Madurese, Sundanese, Betawi, Kalimantan, and others. Ethnic groups refer to system of grouping people based on cultural identity (Suparlan, 2005). These institutions, known as ethno-wellness, employ traditional therapeutic techniques such as herbal concoctions, massages, breathing exercises, physical exercises, and meditation. Ethno-wellness refers to an ethnic or cultural health and fitness system recognized and practiced by the majority of a particular ethnic group. It is deeply ingrained in the group's knowledge, continuously practiced, and equipped with various objects or materials (herbs or equipment). According to Koentjaraningrat's (1997) that is called culture. Ethno-wellness is deliberately studied by a specific group of people and widely acknowledged as a shared heritage among the ethnic community. In Indonesia, the habit of word of mouth is considered tradition or even folklore (Danandjaja, 1996).

In the context of Sumedang's ethno-wellness, the primary method involves massage or acupressure, meditation, breathing exercises, and consumption of food and beverages made from spices. This article focuses on the significance of food and drink made of spices within the Sumedang Palace's ethno-wellness. Foster & Anderson (1985) suggest that non-Western cultures view food as a form of medicine for various reasons: (1) Certain foods possess qualities, such as hot or cold, essential for maintaining balance in the body. Consuming foods with warm or hot qualities can offset cold environmental conditions, ensuring balanced hot and cold conditions within the body, and promoting health and fitness. (2) An analogy exists between the form, appearance, and characteristics of food and the function of human organs. Consuming food derived from plants or animal organs enhances the vitality of corresponding human organs, promoting overall health and fitness. (3) Food and drink may have a placebo effect based on traditional and cultural beliefs passed down through generations. Consuming specific foods is believed to result in health and fitness benefits, creating a suggestive effect on individuals who consume them. (4) Food and drink, as elements of material culture, differ from nutrition, which refers to biochemical compounds necessary for the body, such as carbohydrates, proteins, minerals, vitamins, and water. Not all sources of nutrients found in nature are culturally classified as food, and humans consume nutrition based on cultural knowledge.

2. Methodology

The data for this article were gathered through in-depth interviews with doctors from the Sumedang Palace with over 30 years of experience. These interviews covered the philosophy of fitness, fitness tradition principles within the palace, fitness maintenance practices, ingredients, and their effects. Additional interviews were conducted with royal healers' assistants and confirmed with the royal courtiers, particularly the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Sumedang. In addition to interviews, observations were made inside and outside the palace, considering the palace's physical condition, decorations, collected artifacts, and overall arrangements. These observations aimed

to understand the context of ethno-wellness at the Sumedang Palace, as well as its role as a heritage tourism attraction.

3. Results and Discussion

Sumedang's strategic position in West Java, encompassing its history, culture, economy, and geographical significance, makes it a significant reference point for other regions in the province, particularly in terms of culture (Hermawan et al., 2017). The well-preserved Sumedang Palace stands as the epicenter of Modern Sundanese culture in West Java, setting the standard for cultural elements, values, and practices, exemplifying the glory of Sundanese culture in the region and providing orientation for other Sundanese areas in Indonesia. Sundanese culture, including aspects related to health and wellness, continues to thrive at the Sumedang Palace, and the article discusses Sundanese fitness traditions present there, some of which are also found in other Sundanese areas within West Java. The palace consists of 7 arrangements or *Sapta Panata* which must be mastered by royal relatives if you want to become a superior knight. The Seven Arrangements are (1) *Tiplanningner*; (2) *Regional Planner*; (3) *Genealogist*; (4) *Vow History*; (5) *Panata Gama*; (6) *State Ruler*; (7) *Panata Calagara*.

Tiplanningner and Regional Planner

Time discipline (*tiplanningner*) is a crucial aspect of life, as time is an irreplaceable and non-reversible resource. Sumedang, in contrast to the broader Indonesian public, has its unique approach to time management, which involves dividing a day into 20 hours (rather than the conventional 12) and recognizing nine days in a week (as opposed to the standard 7). This distinct time perception influences various aspects of daily life, including human interactions, engagement with nature, and health-related behaviors. Additionally, the concept of regional planning plays a pivotal role in Sumedang's history. The region holds historical significance as it was the successor to the once-mighty Pajajaran, a legendary kingdom in West Java. The transition of power from the Kingdom of Pajajaran to the Kingdom of Sumedang Larang was marked by the symbolic transfer of the Binokasih crown from the last King of Pajajaran to the King of Sumedang Larang. This crown signified the dominion of the King of Pajajaran, which extended across all of West Java, except for Banten, which had become its own independent kingdom. This historical legacy continues to shape Sumedang's identity and territorial organization.

Genealogist and Vow History

Genealogist or five feet is simply defined as tracing the Sundanese human lineage. The Sundanese recognize the lineage from the mother or father's side, which includes ten levels of descent upwards and ten levels of descent downwards. People who are still in the ten layers up or down can be categorized as relatives. Other Sundanese people only recognize seven descendants upwards and seven descendants downwards who are still in the circle of relatives. Vow history, namely historical arrangement. In the knowledge of the Sumedang people, history is not in accordance with the time period, in history there are names of the same figures but different time periods. For example, a character named Prabu Siliwangi is not one person, but many people lived in different periods of time who have the same nickname. The name Siliwangi is the nickname of the Kings of Pajajaran, but not all Sundanese kings have the title King Siliwangi, there are certain privileges that cause a King of Pajajaran to be entitled to the nickname King Siliwangi.



Fig. 2. Picture of Mahkoa Binokasih
Source: Researcher (2022).

Panata Gama and State Ruler

Panata Gama is interpreted an arrangement related to belief. The Sundanese have been religious since ancient times before major religions (Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism) arrived. The original belief system of the Sundanese people until now is called Sunda Wiwitan, which can be found in Sumedang, Kuningan, Baduy, Kasepuhan Gunung Halimun, and other areas throughout the province of West Java. State Ruler is also called a tiered constitutional system from small kings, subordinate kings, and maharajas. The small king is called Raja Mandala, its scope is small cities, and the attribute of power in the form of headgear is called the walls. Subordinate kings lead the kingdom's territory, which is part of a larger kingdom (a kind of empire). The king of the subordinate kingdom uses a crown smaller than the maharaja's crown (the king of the kingdom that is his superior). The Sumedang Larang Kingdom is a subordinate kingdom of the Pajajaran Kingdom. The shape of the headdress and the small size of the crown symbolize the size of the position of the king and his kingdom. The relationship between the small king, the subordinate king, and the emperor is regulated in Pandika Pinata State.



Fig. 3. Painting of The Handing over situation of The Binokasih crown from the kingdom of Pajajaran

Panata Calagara and Sapta Panata

Panata Calagara is a permanent committee that regulates palace protocol or executors special tasks from the King. It can be said to be a royal protocol that regulates the behavior of royal members, the relationship between the king and his superiors (princes), the relationship between princes and ponggawa, the relationship between the king and state guests, and so on. All of these relationship patterns are regularly ted organizers of events. To be able to run *Sapta Panata*, a leader in the Sumedang larang kingdom must have self-knowledge that is taught and instilled in an environment of royal relatives called Padika Tata Salira (Self-Employment Method) namely a system intended for a leader wherever his position must be healthy, fit (wellness) and qualified.

Preparing *Pandika Tata Salira*

Before knowing God, a man must know himself in terms of the body, from the soles of the feet to the head, because the formation of the human body and the operation of the systems in the body reflect God's power over man. The operation of the nervous system which is reflected in the nerve nodes throughout the human body and other systems such as respiration and blood circulation is a reflection of God's power, as described below: (1) Nerve knots in the legs and organs on the soles of the feet, there are several nerve nodes that are connected to the organs of the whole body from head to toe; (2) Practice Breathing; (3) Nine Important Points on the fingers that are Analogous to the nine days of the Week; (4) Achieving Wellness through time (schedule time); (5) Food and Potions Disease.

Nerve Knots in The Legs and Organs

A number of nerve nodes are connected to the organs of the whole body from head to toe. That is why carp ancestors left traces in the form of footprints (tape chronicle Adam, who in other areas is called Nabi Adam). The soles of the feet were initially imprinted on the ground by stamping the right foot first. Then, the left foot, until it was created on the story (mark) on the ground, the sign or symbol in the form of the sole of the foot is moved to a permanent medium, namely a stone, so that it lasts longer, the symbol is commonly called an inscription. When the soles of the feet are struck against the ground, they cause nerve stimulation in the feet related to the nerves of the human organs. The best time to move the feet is at 7 am Sumedang time, equivalent to 8.24 am normal time. The right leg is stamped on the ground three times and the left 3 times alternately. If you feel a bit sick to your head or feel stiff or sore, this is a sign of a reaction to nerves that are experiencing interference responding to produce immunity in the body, or a reaction to nerves whose organs are experiencing disorders. Then after the

reaction is obtained, it is continued by inhaling slowly from the nose, sucking in air, and releasing it through the mouth to push air. At the time of inhaling followed by mudra or hand movements by clenching and releasing the head repeatedly in about 1 minute. This movement is a physical exercise and is followed by taste or mental exercise by means of meditation or silent reflection for a moment.

Practice Breathing

There are standards that regulate breathing exercises based on the royal family tradition. In addition to do the exercise, the Sumedang Palace recognizes the breath trick flowing from the chest to the stomach, then lowering it to the genital center (phallus), then it is turning back (stream air of breath to back body) and carrying it upwards until it reaches the cerebellum or the tip of consciousness (that is why the back of the head will hurt when you have a cold and if you catch a cold it is in the form of flatulence, the treatment is in the form of massage of the back of the body or back). The results of this breathing exercise will result in relaxation of the body and brain. The exercise should be carried out at 7.00 Sumedang time or 8.24 normal time. Breathing is done through the nose to draw air in and through the mouth to push air out. The measurement of breath pressure is in three categories, namely: coarse pressure, soft pressure (micro, not audible); very gentle (nano) pressure, the Sumedang people use nano-sized breath pressure to reach the nerves of the smallest parts of the body. This breathing technique is useful for healing and preventing health problems from within the human body.

Nine Important Points

Nine reflex points are directly related to the body's organs in the human body. If these reflex points are touched or massaged, there will be a positive effect on the immunity of the body's organs that are connected. We add another 0 (zero) reflection points of the nine reflex points, making ten reflex points on the fingers that can be stimulated to maintain fitness.

Achieving Wellness Through Time

The following are various activities that affect fitness based on the arrangement time (schedule time): (1) Meal times, determined according to meal times in multiples of 6 such as at 6 am Sumedang time (7.12 normal time) is breakfast time; 00.00 Sumedang time is the same as 10-12.00 normal time, is the resting time for humans and buffaloes who are employed, when it is time to enjoy coffee is also called coffee time with palm sugar, cassava which is also given palm sugar or yams (as a source of carbohydrates); 6 pm Sumedang time (7.12 normal time) is the time to enjoy a staple or full meal; (2) Religious activities 10-1.12 pm Sumedang time equivalent to 12 pm normal time is the right time to hang on (staring) Lookup (to unite) such as worship, meditation, or husband and wife relationship; (3) Rest time around 2 am Sumedang time or 3.36 normal time, which is the quietest time when the day is over or sleeping). Sleep doesn't have to be long; the important thing is quality. (4) Getting up before dawn, the activities carried out before getting up from bed must include breathing slowly from the nose, exhaling through the mouth, and then opening the eyes; after the sun is visible then look at the sun with the eyes while rubbing the eyes and nerves around the eyes, then stare at the sun until tears come out which are believed to contain antiseptics to kill eye viruses. If there is a disease in the eye it will hurt, the pain must be endured for a while because the natural healing process is taking place. To achieve better eye health, it is best to continue the therapy for up to 15 minutes later.

Food and Potion Disease

Food and potion disease prevention involves controlling the impact of external factors on the human body, particularly through consuming foods sourced from both vegetables and animals. Plant-based foods originating from immobile trees or plants can induce a sense of lethargy in individuals, leading to a desire to be virtuous but lacking the motivation to work. Conversely, animal-derived foods, such as meat, may possess aggressive properties. To counterbalance the effects of consuming plant-based foods, which can lead to feelings of laziness, individuals should incorporate foods containing animal substances to regain enthusiasm and energy. Similarly, when experiencing heightened aggression or hunger, a diet rich in plant-derived foods can restore equilibrium and promote a smooth metabolism. For optimal health, it is recommended to favor non-fried cooking methods like baking or boiling. Among these, Pepes, a cooking technique that preserves mitochondrial cells in food and reduces the impact of free radicals, stands out as a healthier choice. Boiling also helps retain the nutritional value of the food. On the contrary, frying can lead to a loss of nutritional content and the formation of harmful polyunsaturated fats, which in turn generate free radicals and contribute to obesity. Adhering to these dietary practices can bolster disease prevention efforts and support overall well-being.

In addition to dietary choices, Sumedang also possesses traditional health concoctions that are traditionally consumed within the royal palace, as outlined below: (1) Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*), especially red ginger, Indonesian people have used both of them for generations as drinks, spices, herbs, or mixtures of medicines.

Ginger is considered warm or hot quality, so it is efficacious for treating disease, the Sumedang community believes that red ginger is useful for improving blood circulation and preventing blood clots; (2) Kunyit is mixed with water to make a scrub to get rid of body odor, bacteria, and evoke the charm of olive on a woman's skin; (3) Temulawak (*Curcuma xanthorrhiza*), is Like ginger, culturally considered of warm quality, so it is very suitable for curing diseases that are culturally categorized as cold, such as liver or jaundice; (4) Temukunci (*Boesenbergia pandurata*), it is more commonly used as a spice, cuisine that usually uses temukunci as the main seasoning is made from rice field conch (acquaintances in Sundanese); various types of shellfish; freshwater fish; sea snails, etc. Removes the fishy smell and adds flavor; (5) (It is) For beauty, white rice flour mixed with water that has been condensed becomes an ingredient for scrubs and smoothes the skin; (6) The traditional powder is made from burnt kaffir (*kawung*) branches and the dust is taken (black or white, preferably white). The powder is directly attached to the face to get a bright impression on the face; (7) Kasay is a kind of mask (the herb is rubbed when washing your face or bathing), made from young guava leaves which are rubbed with your hands or smoothed with a stone tool and then applied to your face to remove dirt or dead skin cells on your face; (8) Urang aring, aloe vera, burnt straw, burnt hazelnut, and sour ripe mango can be used for shampoo; (9) Stew Betel leaf (*daun sirih*) can be used to cure leucorrhoea or diseases of other female organs.

In addition to focusing on women's beauty, the Sumedang Palace offers remedies for enhancing male potency. The underlying principle revolves around the notion that men should maintain vitality in intimate relationships, achieved through regular breathing exercises that foster male vigor. To further boost male vitality, it is essential to supplement it with various ingredients, such as (a) a concoction of red ginger and brown sugar, recommended to be consumed at least one hour before engaging in sexual intercourse; (b) a combination of honey and duck egg yolk, as male ducks are believed to possess strong sexual prowess; (c) the consumption of fresh green coconut (both water and meat) to improve sperm quality, ideally taken once a week. After engaging in sexual activity, a foot (knee) massage is recommended to prevent bone calcification, and increasing water intake is advised to maintain overall health and strength.

There are several guidelines that women must adhere to in order to maintain their health and attractiveness. These guidelines include avoiding certain foods: (a) during menstruation, cucumbers should be avoided due to their potential to hinder the removal of impure blood, leading to bacterial formation; (b) limiting consumption of raw cabbage to prevent the development of unpleasant odors in the female genital area; (c) abstaining from chives (*kucay*), which may cause body odor; and (d) refraining from consuming shrimp as it is believed to cause odor in the female organs.

Similarly, men have their own set of restrictions: (a) excessive consumption of purple eggplant should be avoided as it may interfere with male strength; (b) minimizing the intake of petai and jengkol is advised, as these foods contain high levels of purines that can hinder blood circulation in the genitals. To counter the potential negative effects of these foods, regular exercise and increased water consumption are recommended.

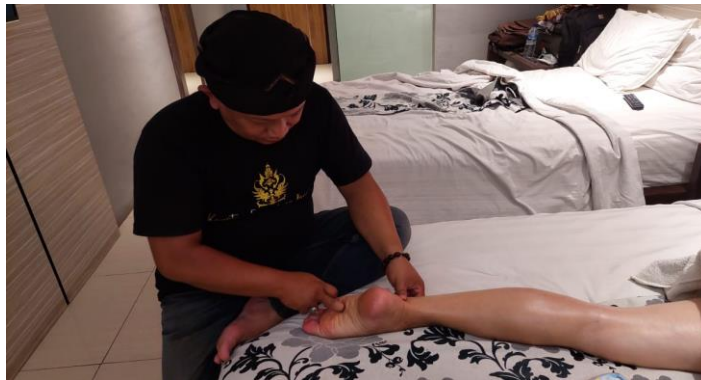


Fig. 4. The nerves massage technic on the soles of the feet
Source: Researcher (2022).

Traditional teachings on wellness were disseminated orally to the general public, as well as within the royal court, where they were conveyed by royal physicians. However, detailed information regarding cultural values, the philosophy of the *Kraton*, *Sapta Panata*, and *Salira* plans, are documented in palace heritage books, which are not made public. Each royal heirloom book is under the control of specific palace institutions, and the contents are closely guarded, with officials withholding information from one another. As a result, each official possesses only their own specialized knowledge and does not exchange information with others. The transfer of knowledge occurs through oral transmission from officials to students within the *Keraton* family, and these students do not refer to other heirloom books for their teachings.

4. Conclusion

The philosophy of Ethno-wellness in Sumedang emphasizes maintaining fitness through natural means such as physical exercise, acupressure on nerve nodes related to the body's organs, breathing exercises, and the use of locally available spices and ingredients that are believed to possess certain qualities or resemblances to human organs. These elements contribute to achieving wellness naturally when incorporated into diets, beverages, spices, or remedies. The role of wellness in the lives of local communities is to culturally maintain health and fitness as a prerequisite for fulfilling social functions in accordance with their status and daily responsibilities. This state of well-being is attained through cultural practices. The principles of wellness, as practiced, are derived from palace manuscripts used exclusively by the royal physician for the royal court and are not disclosed to anyone outside the palace. The potential exists for the Ethno-wellness of the Kraton to be developed into a distinguished Indonesian SPA brand with international recognition.

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