

The Disappearance of *Kopohan Batik* From The Javanese Society Life

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Abstract *Kopohan Batik* is a type of batik that has rarely been discussed. Although this type of batik has the same value as other types of batik used in the ceremonies marking the life cycle events in the Javanese society. This study aims to determine (1) what is meant by *kopohan batik*?; (2) Why is *kopohan batik* no longer recognized by the Javanese today? And (3) How to preserve "*kopohan batik*"? This research applied qualitative research method using Javanese cultural tradition approach and informants who are considered to be knowledgeable regarding *kopohan batik*, such as elders who understand the *kejawen* (Javanese) customs, *dukun bayi* (indigenous term for a person who assists childbirth traditionally) and their descendants who now mostly work as traditional baby massage therapists, midwife who had worked with *dukun bayi*, and *kopohan batik* users, in addition to various documents and literatures related to the life of the Javanese society. The research results showed that (1) *kopohan batik* is one of the complementary item at childbirth which is a valuable heritage; (2) The process of childbirth today no longer uses a Javanese-based ritual, since childbirth nowadays are done in hospitals with modern equipment and not at home as it had been done in the past; (3) Consistency is required to socialize the local wisdom with traditional cultural background which can still be acceptable by the modern science, especially in the terms of psychological and health aspects in the process of childbirth.

Keywords: *kopohan batik, Javanese traditional culture, dukun bayi.*

INTRODUCTION

One object that is always present in every kind of traditional ceremonies that are related to the life cycle of the Javanese society, including the birth ritual, is batik. However, there is a type of batik that complements the moment when a mother gives birth. This batik is called *kopohan* and has rarely been discussed today. Even the majority of the Javanese people today no longer know what is *kopohan Batik*. While in fact *kopohan batik* has meaning and function which is quite important, especially for babies to be born, specifically in terms of health. The culture of giving birth at home by using batik cloth equipment was characteristic of Javanese families. But unfortunately this culture has been replaced by the culture of giving birth in midwife's clinics or maternity hospitals. Thus, even if batik is still used, the batik used only functions as a sarong (blanket or cover), and not as a place/sheet to give birth as it used to be when people gave birth in their own home in the past.

In the past the birth process at home was assisted by a *dukun bayi*, Javanese indigenous term for women who usually assist normal child birth traditionally at home. They also serve as a nurse for the mother and baby until the baby age reaches "*selapan*", a period of thirty-five days. *Dukun bayi* usually work as farmers or laborers. They usually help child birth as a part-time job. *Dukun bayi* are well known and respected by the villagers because they are considered as parents who can provide help not only for the birth process but also to accompany new mothers who have no experience in handling babies (Handayani, 1994; Anggorodi, 2009; Pramono and Sadewo, 2012 ; Maryati et al, 2015). Regarding to this research, *dukun bayi* usually also guide mothers and their families in carrying out

rituals that accompany the birth of a baby, including how the procedure for burying the placenta which in the spiritual view of Java has an important role for the baby's life in the future (Padmosusastro and Sunarko, 1980; Hardjowirogo, 1987; Bratahiswara , 2000).

To this day there are still many Javanese who carry out traditional ceremonies related to the commemoration of phases in their life cycle. The ceremonies carried out from generation to generation are done since a baby is still in the womb, until when a person dies (Purwadi, 2005). Each stage of the ceremony has a procedure with its own meaning. Each ceremony can be witnessed by the public except for one part that has so far not been shown to the public, namely the process of baby birth. When a baby is born there is a series of procedures that have philosophical meaning and are equipped with several complementary items, one of which is batik. Even though Javanese people have adopted certain religions, some of them, especially those living in rural areas, still carry out various traditional ceremonies for birth with *Kejawen* (old traditional Javanese) beliefs.

The purpose of this paper is to reveal what *batik kopohan* is, what causes the Javanese of today to no longer recognize *batik kopohan*., and in order to preserve *batik kopohan*, what should be done to *nguri-uri* (Javanese term for "preserve") *kopohan batik* which has an important function in the life of the Javanese people.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used qualitative methods with a Javanese traditional culture approach. The technique used was interview in addition to literary study on

various documents and references related to various life cycle ceremonies in Javanese society, one of which is the ceremony at child birth phase; both before birth and after. Each ceremony used batik as a piece of equipment among other features.

A. Research Location

This research was conducted in Karanganyar Regency, Central Java. The research location is to the east of Surakarta city, Central Java, which belongs to the *Kejawen* influenced region, in addition to the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Banyumas, Kedu, and East Java (Herusatoto, 2001). Based on historical documents, the one who gave the name "Karanganyar" was Raden Mas Said or *Pangeran Sambernyawa* (Prince *Sambernyawa*), the first *Mangkunegoro* (Duke of Surakarta). Therefore, documents and references relating to Javanese life and customs were sought in Reksopustaka Mangkunegaran Surakarta (Library of Mangkunegaran Palace), while the informants interviewed were academics at Universitas Sebelas Maret and the Istitut Seni Indonesia in Surakarta, as well as practitioners' informants, namely *dukun bayi* that can still be found in Karanganyar area. They are still some of *dukun bayi* who help mothers who give birth at home and need help from them, although nowadays *dukun bayi* are not allowed to practice by themselves and must work with midwives as the government-recognized medical personnels. The traditional birth attendants, *dukun bayi*, in Karanganyar mostly continue their parents' work. After the duties of *dukun bayi* were replaced by midwives, they are now switching professions from traditional birth attendants who help mothers to give birth to *dukun pijat bayi*, traditional baby masseuse who help mothers care for their babies.

B. Research Stages

The focus of this research was on the complementary batik used by a mother during childbirth which is commonly referred to as "*batik kopohan*". There are very few references discussing this type of batik, so the main literature studied was about various Javanese ritual traditions with a background of *Kejawen* beliefs. In the topic of ceremonial traditions among Javanese people, there are some which mention about *batik kopohan* even though only a few and without thorough explanation. However, by reading the various documents and books about batik and the life cycle ritual traditions, the informant to be interviewed could be determined to complete what had been read.

The first informants were academics who studied Javanese culture. Through them there was enlightenment about the Javanese customs. The next informants were *dukun bayi* who were directly involved in the birth process until postpartum. Unfortunately, it was very difficult to find a *dukun*

nowadays. Therefore interviews were also conducted with midwives who replaced *dukun bayi* as medical personnel who were officially recognized by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia. The midwives usually work with *dukun bayi* to be able to interact with the local community, because so far, especially in rural communities, the people put more trust to *dukun bayi*.

The interview results were noted and recorded, while secondary data in the form of references from related documents and libraries were used as guides to understanding the input provided by the informants through interviews, especially those related to understanding Javanese rituals and their meanings. The results of the initial interview helped a lot in the next interview. In this study, almost all informants provided information for the next informants (snowball sampling) (Yin, 2013). This sampling was done because at the beginning there were many things that could not be determined regarding to the informants to be interviewed. Therefore the search for informants was carried out step by step until it could be determined to whom the interview should be conducted.

C. Data Collection Techniques

After reading a number of books about Javanese culture, and books about batik which generally only briefly mention *batik kopohan*, the initial question was submitted to the academics in Javanese Literature who were considered to have deep knowledge on Javanese culture, and practitioners who were directly involved in Javanese rituals, such as, *dukun bayi* and traditional bridal makeup artist. Particularly the traditional bridal make up artist and *dukun bayi* understand the *kejawen* ritual firsthand.

From the input obtained, other reviews were also carried out through several documents and references in the Reksopustaka Mangkunegaran Library of Surakarta concerning Javanese customs presented in literary works that describes the life cycle of Javanese people. In addition, through the various instructions obtained from the library data, interviews were conducted with several parties to complete and add input to the data that had been obtained through documents and library studies.

The data collection techniques in qualitative research are generally not done in a tight structured manner (Sutopo, 2002) because from the start, the direction of the data collection and to whom the interview should be conducted could not be established directly. These in-depth interviews were conducted with each informant that was found. The interview results that could support this research were collected and sorted according to the problem to be analyzed, while results that are considered to be less useful to add input were expected to be ignored.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

So far there has never been any research or special article that discusses about *batik kopohan*. Most of the researches on batik that are included in national and international journals are oriented on the problems in industry, tourism and marketing. In some documents and books about traditional Javanese ceremonies, *batik kopohan* is only mentioned a few times without any complete explanation. Padmosusastro et. Al. (1980) and Honggopuro (2002) briefly mentioned about *batik kopohan* which in addition is used as giving birth mat, is also used as a sling, and or a blanket. According to Mbah Sakirah, a former *Dukun bayi* in Jurug region in Karanganyar, the batik sling used to hold baby was previously used as *batik kopohan* (interview July 20, 2018). Researches regarding batik kopohan are usually associated with researches on *dukun bayi* and midwives in addition to explaining much about the role of *dukun bayi* in the Indonesian archipelago in general and Java in particular (Kejawen region) in assisting midwives during childbirth as well as carrying out birth rituals with all of the *ubo rampe* (Javanese = complementary items) or offerings, one of which is batik. In this case, *dukun bayi* play the role as traditional leaders in the matter of child birth (Handayani, 1994; Adimihardja, 2005; Pramono and Sadewo, 2012; Mariyati et al, 2015). Traditional birth attendants outside the Indonesian archipelago, such as Ethiopia, Nigeria, Uganda, Ghana, and Malawi also have an important role in childbirth customs (Tenaw et.al, 2018; Nwaneri, et.al, 2018; Abayomi, et.al, 2018).

The birth event in Javanese society is marked by various life cycle ceremonies. This is a reflection that all planning, behaviors, and actions have been regulated by the noble values which are inherited from generation to generation (Bratawidjaja, 2000). In the life of Javanese people, *dukun* (traditional healers) are women who are considered to have special skills to care for and treat women who will give birth when the baby is born and up to reaching certain age, namely *selapan* (35 days). The people involved in traditional ceremonies are those who act as leaders of the ceremony and those who understand the traditional ceremonial rituals (Koentjaraningrat 2016). *Dukun bayi* begins to take care of women who are pregnant since their pregnancy reaches a certain age. Their treatment is ceremonial, in the sense of preparing and carrying out pregnancy ceremonies. The status of *dukun bayi* in the palace is as an *abdi dalem* (court servant) of the palace's community (Purwadi, 2005).

Currently there are very few who still know and or have heard the term "*batik kopohan*". Generally those who know are Javanese people who still practice Javanese customs or *Kejawen* rituals; those who are learning about Java; and those living in rural areas. This is understandable because the times have

changed. The culture of childbirth at home has begun to disappear because of the existence of hospitals or clinics that care for birth problems. However, in some remote places which are far from health care centers, especially maternity clinics or hospitals, people choose to ask for *dukun's* assistance. Since the issuance of government regulations regarding childbirth by the Ministry of Health No. 97 of 2014, it is stipulated that childbirth must be carried out in health care facilities and that services for pregnant women must be provided by professionals in this case the midwife, if there is no obstetrician there. This is to maintain the maternal health according to health standards to reduce maternal mortality.

Midwives are professionals who have graduated from midwife education program who are recognized by the government and professional organizations in the territory of the Republic of Indonesia. Midwives have the competence and get the license to practice their duties and one of which is assisting child birth. But this does not mean *dukun* can no longer play a role. Through partnership programs with midwives, *dukun bayi* are still in charge of assisting and leading traditional birth ceremonies. This was also acknowledged by mbah Joyo (82 years). Mbah Joyo is a traditional birth attendant who is still actively helping mothers who not only live in Karanganyar and its surrounding areas that are included in the Central Java region, but also from other cities and even from East Java; like Ngawi, Ponorogo, Madiun. The places he visits are remote places. If there is a midwife there, mbah Joyo's task is only to continue the work of the midwife who has helped with the birth, which is to take care of the baby and the mother after giving birth until they are strong enough to carry on by themselves. Mbah Joyo's duty includes bathing the baby as long as the umbilical cord has not been detached from the moment during baby's birth until the baby reaches the age of *selapan* (thirty-five days).

The same explanation was given by Mbah Sakirah (86 years) from Jurug, Ngringo, Jaten, Karanganyar. Initially She was a traditional bridal makeup artis. At one time she was asked to help a mother who was giving birth. Since then she has been known by the surrounding community as a *dukun bayi*, in addition to being known as a traditional baby masseus, a person who takes care of baby's health in the traditional way. After the midwife is present, her role has been more of a companion in assisting the birth and especially to lead the family she helps in performing Javanese traditional ceremonies related to the birth process. In the procession, she will guide to prepare everything, including preparing a piece of batik which is then referred to as *batik kopohan*. According to Titik Murdaya (69 years old) a bridal make up artist from Ngasem, Colomadu village, Karanganyar regency,

kopohan can actually be taken from one of six types of batik cloth used at *mitoni* (seven month of pregnancy) ceremony, namely *wahyu tumurun*, *parangkusuma*, *udan riris*, *sidomukti* and or *sidoluhur*, *claws*, *babon angrem*.

Mrs. Anna Hoedoko (66 years old), another traditional bridal makeup artist from Jajar village, Laweyan district, said that *batik kopohan* was taken from batik, which is owned by the parents of the baby which they thought was the best in accordance with their expectations for their children. The type is more on classic batik cloth that has names and meanings. For that it can be taken from one of the batik that is used in *mitoni* ceremony or other classical batik. In this case, the most important thing is that batik used is a Javanese traditional fabric made by applying wax coloring on the fabric, either hand-drawn batik or stamp batik (Hitchcock, 1991). The meaning of classic batik patterns contains good prayer and hope. According to Anna, even though *batik kopohan* is no longer used as it was before, there is a need for continuous socialization for the future generations, at least in the form of writings or other activities that can always remind the people of their inheritance that has benefits, especially in terms of health. This is important considering that the values of batik tradition are now almost extinct because of the hustle among the people who use batik as one of the most profitable trading commodities. Market participants are now more concerned with the development of batik patterns to attract consumers' attention compared to maintaining a still classical style.

Times have changed and caused the life cycle traditional ceremonies to no longer be carried out because the life goals like those of our ancestors' such as maintaining harmony with nature have shifted into a merely hereditary habit that is oriented on entertainment. But in principle batik has never been separated from the life of the Javanese community, especially for the life cycle ceremonies. People's understanding of batik today is more about an equipment with meanings that are not fully understood.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis above, *batik kopohan* is a classic batik which has a meaningful pattern containing prayer and hope, which is used by a mother as a mat for childbirth. *Batik kopohan* is usually taken from one of the batik that is used as a complementary items in the *mitoni* ceremony, a ceremony held when the pregnancy is seven months old. Actually, *batik kopohan* can be in the form of hand-drawn batik with free patterns because there are no rules specifying it. However, each batik that has been used at the time of childbirth is believed to have strength that is very beneficial for the baby, especially on the baby's health. Besides being able to be used to carry the baby, this batik is usually used

a blanket. Javanese people who are still firmly upholding the *Kejawen* customs usually believe that when the health or peace of the baby or child who is immature is disturbed, *batik kopohan* can be used to "*nyuwuk*" (Javanese : meaning to take care or heal when there is interference from the supernatural being).

The changing times that make everything practical are also influential in the procedures in each aspect of life including those related to birth problems. People nowadays prefer hospitals to give birth. Although there are still people who give birth at home, especially for those who live in remote areas, in reality most people prefer to give birth in a maternity clinic or hospital. Besides that, the typical Javanese way of life with a background of *Kejawen* beliefs passed down from generation to generation has begun to fade and tends to disappear, including the birth traditions which are equipped with various *ubo-rampe* (complementary items) including *batik kopohan* which is no longer used, and even forgotten.

Batik kopohan is a valuable heritage of the Javanese customs related to the life cycle, especially birth in this case. Its presence from generation to generation gives many positive benefits, especially those related to health problems. Therefore, although *batik kopohan* is no longer used, an effort to socialize it through articles or cultural activities is needed so that *batik kopohan* which is an important part of the life cycle of every Javanese does not just disappear.

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