

# **ANALYSIS OF PHILOSOPHICAL VALUES OF *BEGALAN* TRADITION AS THE INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL ETHICS**

**Annisa Ayu Mahardika<sup>1</sup>, Marwanti<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Engineering, Yogyakarta State University. E-mail: [ayu.unj@gmail.com](mailto:ayu.unj@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Engineering, Yogyakarta State University. E-mail: [marwanti@uny.ac.id](mailto:marwanti@uny.ac.id)

## **ABSTRACT**

Begalan art is one of the cultural relics of the Banyumas community which has been inherited until now. This research aims to: 1) describe the process or implementation of begalan tradition in Banyumas wedding custom; 2) describe about the philosophical values of begalan tradition in the wedding of Banyumas community; 3) and to describe the values of begalan tradition as the integration of ethics education in the society. This research used descriptive qualitative approach with primary data sources consisted of begalan artists, community members who were tge organizers of begalan art. The secondary data sources obtained from documentations and study of literatures. The data collection technique used were observation, interview and documentation. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling technique. Data validaton in this research used sources triangulation. While the data analysis used interactive model analysis consisted of some stages namely data collection, data reduction, data serving and drawing conclusions. The research findings were: 1) begalan tradition process in Banyumas' wedding custom consisted of two stages namely preparation stage and execution stage; 2) the philosophical values of begalan art in wedding custom of Banyumas society; 3) the values of begalan tradition as the integration of ethics education in society.

**Keywords:** Philosophical Values, Begalan, Banyumas, Social Etihics

## **1. Introduction**

The community in general has a pattern of life that is formed from every agreed habit of community members. These life patterns become one of the distinctive characteristics of a society that is different from other societies. From every habit that becomes a pattern of behavior it will produce a culture. Society and culture itself are two things that cannot be separated, where society is individuals who produce, accommodate and the main supporters of a culture, and culture itself will not be created without a society. Culture is human knowledge which is believed by the people concerned to be interspersed and covers human feelings and emotions and is a source for a clean and dirty assessment system, Clifford Geertz (Sutarjo, 2008). Culture which is a human personal characteristic in it contains norms and values that need to be owned and lived by humans and their supporting communities. Cultural appreciation can be done through a process of socialization. Socialization is carried out with the existence of contact between fellow people following customary rules and norms in the community itself.

Each region has a different culture. Banyumas is a region of Central Java that has a distinctive language and culture of Banyumas. Banyumas culture is very rich, one of which is the art of begalan. The begalan art is a traditional wedding ceremony in the Banyumas area.

Begalan is one of the distinctive traits of tradition in traditional weddings of Banyumas in which contains the advices for the bride and groom which is conveyed symbolically visualized in the form of drama fragments by two actors. According to the oral traditions and beliefs of the Banyumas community, it is a condition that must be done when marrying their children. Uniquely, not every marriage must use a child, but only in the marriage the first child gets the firstborn child, the eldest child gets the youngest child, and the youngest child gets the youngest child.

## **2. Method**

The research method used was descriptive qualitative. The research was conducted in Banyumas. The data collection technique used in this research were observation, interview and documentation. In a qualitative research, the primary instrument used was human instrument. According to Sugiyono (2010)

human instrument served to determine the focus of the research to choose the informants as the data sources, collect data, analyze the data, interpret the data and conclude the data.

The sampling techniques used in this research were purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The data validation technique used was triangulation of sources use, methods and theories. The data analysis in this research used interactive analysis. According to Endaswara (2006) data analysis in cultural research was a process of reviewing the interview results and documentations collected. After the analysis had finished, the research findings, then were served by using informal serving technique.

Begalan art was displayed with dances and the context of the dances were giving teachings or utterances addressed particularly to the bride and people coming to the wedding ceremony. The main purpose is to give advices for the bride so that they would live in harmony and peace, this custom was the embodiment and the demeanor of Banyumas society and was a public property.

### **3. Main Heading of the Analysis or Results**

#### **A. Definition and History of Begalan Tradition**

Begalan is a hereditary tradition in the Banyumas community. This tradition has a background both socially, historically, even religious and belief. Begalan comes from the words begal and the suffix "an", which means seizure or robbery in the middle of the road. Begalan here only seizes the bride and groom's time to give them advices as provisions for them to settle down. In the performance, the interesting thing is the dialogue between the seizers and the defenders, usually containing criticisms and advices for the bride and groom and delivered in the Banyumas language style, ngapak language, which was funny and humorous language.

Begalan was performed for the purpose of ruwat, it was a self-purification in order to get rid of bad lucks (suker) so they ones could get their happiness and safety back. This procession was created by the Duke of the Duchy of Banyumas which was because the British government was considered to be a mbalela (rebellious) to Sunanate Surakarta government who began to submit to colonial rule. He was considered rebellious because he wanted Banyumas Duchy to be independent as a free zone or to become an autonomous region, and no longer be a direct subordinate of Surakarta Kasunanan (Budiono, 2008).

Begalan art history started from the time of Duke Wirasaba, when he had the desire to marry his youngest daughter named Dewi Sukesi with the eldest son of the Duke of Banyumas XIV Raden Adipati Tjokronegoro (1850) named Pangeran Tirtokencana. After the marriage was carried out, the Duke was pleased to bring the bride and groom from Wirasaba to Banyumas or it could be called by "ngunduh mantan". The trip was done on foot, while the bride and groom were brought in a palanquin.

When the bride and groom crossed a haunted forest, the group was stopped by a man in black. The person wanted to seize all the luggages. Eventually a fight broke out which initially only psywar. But the seizer lost the fight, finally the group continued their journey and arrived at the Banyumas Duchy. The elders of the Banyumas area conveyed the message that each one had the intention of the first wedding or the intention of the wedding in the form of abstinence, it should be held to eliminate obstacles and magical powers that would disrupt the new family life.

According to the oral traditions and beliefs of the Banyumas community, it was a condition that should be done when marrying their children. Uniquely, not every marriage should use begalan, but only in the marriage of the first child who got the firstborn child, the eldest child who got the youngest child, and the youngest child got the youngest child. In this case begalan functioned as ruwatan (purification). Begalan was like ruwatan because if it was not done they would be threatened by forces that are beyond their reasoning, without ruwatan they would be devoured by Bethara Kala (the god of destruction).

The Javanese people held ruwatan to avoid calamity as a form of slametan or prayer. Slametan was held almost in every event that was to be repaired, commemorated or sanctified. Birth, marriage, death, moving house, changing names all require slametan (Geertz, 1981). The aim was to neutralize spirits that threatened and would cause chaos and created a state of safety (slamet) without disturbance (Geertz, 1981).

Begalan was a custom in the form of a pitutur (advice) given by begalan actors to the bride and groom or from parents to their children. This traditional art aimed to give advices to every human to be prosperous and to survive in the world and in the other side. Begalan was intended to dispose of sukerta

(dirt) that existed in humans before becoming parents (adults).

### **B. Philosophical Values in Begalan Tradition**

Humans were called animal symbolyeum, which meant that humans thought, felt, and behaved by using symbols as a means of communicating with others. Symbols could be in the form of writing, actions, objects or words of patterned behavioral activity from Javanese people involved in the symbol of action. Forms of culture were often embodied in the form of symbols. Javanese people were rich in these symbols. Throughout human history symbols had colored behavior, language, science, and religion. The symbol system was used as a medium to convey messages. Symbols had knowledge that was able to understand all forms and objectives of the symbols themselves (Hariwijaya, 2004).

For example, in a wedding ceremony which was called a symbol of the transition from a young man and girl to a husband and wife. The wedding party had a meaning as one of the announcements to the public that the bride and groom had officially become a husband and wife as well as a form of love for the last time because if later they were married the child was no longer the responsibility of the parents.

In carrying out the wedding ceremony at the Banyumas community before the wedding ceremony, there were also symbolic acts, namely begalan art performance. Symbols used in begalan art were objects in the form of kitchen equipment called brenong kepeng. The symbolic meaning in the equipments used in performing traditional art of begalan was a symbolic message addressed to the bride and groom, especially about life after marriage, residents who witness and those who hold the begalan art.

This Begalan tradition became the most important part of the wedding procession. The Banyumas community believed that begalan tradition was a symbol of giving advices and provisions from families to brides-to-be who will live a new life, because it was considered to have important meaning. Therefore, begalan was a way to transfer knowledge and values, especially the values of Banyumasan that are polite and tolerant, hard work, commitment, loyal, and respect for others. Banyumasan-Java values were packed in brenong kepeng. The equipments had symbols described by the seizers. The description was concerning social, economic, and spiritual meanings, especially for brides who will enter a new world.

Besides that, begalan was also reminding the old brides to the Banyumas noble values. From the whole functions, begalan art was not merely a show or entertainment but a qualified, high-value spectacle, because in begalan art there was dialogues which gave teachings or demands, especially aimed to the brides and to the public.

The number of equipments from the primary brenong kepeng equipment usually were 12. These were taken from the number of days in one week which is 7 days (Monday-Sunday) and 5 (legi, pahing, pon, wage, kliwon) days of market days in the Javanese calendar (dina pitu pasaran lima).

There were various kitchen equipments such as ilir, iyan, pikulan, kukusan, centhong, irus, siwur, cething kendhil, pari, tampah. There were also additional equipments such as tampah, pane (cauldron), kekeb, as sorok. The equipments used in begalan art usually were the pada umumnya merupakan household appliances that were commonly used everyday. The equipments were also a symbol that had meaning and function that was as advices to both the bride and groom and the audience presented. These equipments included:

- a. Pikulan which was made from bamboos representing family's independence which was able to stand alone.
- b. Pedang wlira (wlira sword), which was made of wood and painted in black and white, which came from an abbreviation wali loro that meant as two representatives. Wlira sword had a meaning that as a husband, he should be able to protect his wife.
- c. Ian was a square-form tool made from woven bamboos representing the earth we stepped on, its four angles representing human natures and as human, we had to be able to control those natures.
- d. Iilir or a fan made from woven bamboos representing spouse have to be able to calm each other.
- e. Cething, or vessel had a meaning that human living in society could not do anything they please.
- f. Kukusan had a figurative meaning that someone who get married mempunyai kiasan bahwa someone who is married should be able to correct themselves or introspection so that when getting a dispute between the two parties can be resolved properly.

- g. Siwur, represented a tool to earn money or to flush (creating a cool atmosphere in the household).
- h. Kendhil had an intent directed at the in-laws who should be able to cover their daughter-in-law badness. Their lack was also ours as parents-in-law.
- i. Munthu and cirri represented that the bride and groom could have subtle thoughts.
- j. Centhong represented as spouse in the household, they had to be able to decide which one was bad and good.
- k. Tampah representing the bride and groom who had strong will to live a married life.
- l. Kekeb was paired with kendhil pratala, because if the kendhil pratala was not closed, the contents would spill out everywhere. This was used as a foundation for humans, especially people who were married should be able to cover up the badness of the couple.
- m. Sorok had a meaning that as human being we were not allowed to be jealous and gossiping.

The brenang kepeng equipments contained many social ethical values that were relevant to use in the guidelines of people's lives in order to create harmony.

### **C. Concepts of Social Ethics in Begalan**

Ethics was a systematic thinking about morality, which did not produce goodness directly, but rather a more basic and critical understanding. Ethics was a science, not a teaching. So ethics and moral teachings were not at the same level. To understand ethics we should understand morals. Ethics in essence observed moral reality critically. Ethics did not give teachings, but critically examine habits, values, norms, and moral views. Ethics required accountability and wanted to reveal poisoning. Ethics did not give moral opinions just like that, but demanded that moral opinions were claimed to be accountable. Ethics attempted to clarify moral issues (Suseno, 1989).

The center of Javanese ethics was an effort to maintain harmony in society and the universe and that harmony guaranteed a safe state that was perceived as a value to itself. But cosmic harmony could only be maintained by all the elements in the cosmos that occupied the right place. Cosmos was a regular whole where each element had its right place and as long as the element had its place it would create peace and the world would be safe. Ascetically, Javanese ethics were relative, depending on their place. What should be done by an individual was determined and must be in accordance with its place in society and not the personal will that should be carried out but the demands from the place of existence that should be his attitude.

Based on the researcher analysis, one of the values of education from begalan show was social ethics education. Ethical education in begalan show referred to the good and bad teachings that should be applied by society in daily life. Social ethics education aimed to provide brides-to-be with the right to live in harmony and balance as a married couple. The value of social ethics in this research referred to Javanese ethics which included two aspects, namely living in harmony and respect.

#### **a. Principle of Harmony**

The principle of harmony aimed to maintain society in a harmonious state, such a situation by Frans Magis-Sosesno (1996) was called peaceful. Peaceful was in a state of harmony, calm and peace. Without disputes and conflicts united in the purpose of helping. Peaceful is ideal condition that was expected to be maintained in all social relations, especially in the family. The family itself was the smallest part of the community group which had an important role in establishing relationships between individuals and among other groups. Getting along in the concept of marriage here is also intended so that the bride and groom were always in harmony in the household.

#### **b. Principle of Respect**

In addition to the principle of harmony, Frans Magis-Suseno (1996) explained the second principle, which played a large role in regulating interactions in Javanese society that was the principle of respect. That principle said that every person in the way of speaking and carrying themselves should show respect for others, according to their degrees and positions.

The principle of respect was based on the opinion that all relations in society were organized hierarchically, that this hierarchical order was the value of themselves and therefore people were

obliged to defend it and to carry themselves according to it (Geertz in Frans-Suseno 1996). Likewise in married life a wife should respect her husband, a husband should also respect his wife even in social life should have a sense of awareness to mutual respect in order to create a harmonious life.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Begalan was a marriage tradition that was inherent in the life of the Banyumas community. This tradition had been passed down from generation to generation and as if it had become an obligation or customary law, if not implemented it would have an impact on the emergence of social sanctions in the form of ridicules and fears that it would become something unwilling or unwanted that would befall the bride's family, because things were also believed to reject reinforcements.

The philosophical meaning of brenang kepong equipments in traditional ceremony of begalan in Banyumas such as piwulang (teaching), pituduh (example), and pitutur (advice) especially for people who would lead a married life and generally for the other people. The philosophical meaning of each kitchen appliance contained the value of character education which could be understood as a life guide for all people.

The Banyumas government or the authorities, should make a number of policies in their efforts to maintain, protect and develop begalan art. So that begalan art could remain sustainable and become a hallmark of Banyumas Regency. This could be done by giving special information about begalan art to the art organizations in the rural area, spreading knowledge of art, especially begalan art through printed books and other communication media, also by holding a kind of festival or traditional arts competition especially begalan art. Whereas for artists, they should modify and innovate but not to eliminate the purity and characteristics of begalan.

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