



The Values of *Tunggul Wulung* Tradition in the Purview of National Identity: A Socio-Historical Study

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Abstract

This article focuses to elucidate the noble values of the *Tunggul Wulung* tradition. The qualitative approach was used in this research to analyze the meaning of *Tunggul Wulung* tradition by focusing on the ceremonial aspect and the activities of Villagers of Jurang. The data were conducted by field observation, interview, and documentation. The results of the research show that *Tunggul Wulung* tradition consists noble values such as kinship, cooperation or *gotong-royong*, politeness, tolerance, and deliberation. These values are summarized in the processions of *Tunggul Wulung* ceremony, from preparation to the main procession of the ceremony. The authors mention a notion that the values of *Tunggul Wulung* tradition are essentially the living values of Indonesian society. The values should be conserved and actualized in order to strengthen the national identity.

Keywords: National identity; *Tunggul Wulung*; Local tradition

Introduction

National identity refers to specific or distinctiveness characters, which are owned by a nation. This identity consists of noble values that are covering moral values and social values. The values represent in behaviors or actions of a group or even a nation. As an inherited aspect of society, the values should be preserved and transmitted to the younger generation. Indonesia, as one of the nation-states in the world, also has distinctive characters, such as a sense of togetherness, cooperation or *gotong royong*, tolerance, solidarity and so on, which alive in rural life and its existing traditions and cultures.

However, the national identity faces a great disruption in the globalized world that challenges the existence of the nation and local cultures. Santoso (2008) explains the weakness of spirit of nationalism is caused by several problems such as the low quality of human resources, the critical condition of militancy to the nation, and the decrease of national identity. Therefore, the introduction of national identity is very important for a nation, as proposed by Catwright, who was cited by Hasan (2012: 124) that “Our personal identity is the most important thing we possess”. Catwright’s argumentation can be interpreted that identity is the most important thing of society. Thus, if society lost the self of the nation, it means, they lose the existence as a nation too.

According to Tilaar (2007: 32), the national identity is a collective agreement such as the ideals of the future based on the shared experience of history in bittersweet experiences. By the same goal, common bond, sense of kinship, and sense of belonging to reach a goal or a better future are formed. In cultural senses, Ki Hajar Dewantara states that the Indonesian culture is forming by the top of cultures owned by ethno cultural groups in Indonesia. The meaning of the top of culture refers to a decisive element in the local culture that could strengthen the national solidarity. In such efforts, the national education takes the important role to support the local culture and develop the national welfare. Besides the formal path, the informal dimension could be used to strengthen the national identity. In fact, for long periods, the norms or laws within the local community become crucial dimension in the emergence of local cultural awareness as well as foster the identity of Indonesia. Thus, the exploration and conservation of the local tradition, local cultures, and local history should be nurtured.

Tradition is such an enigma that includes interrelating dimension of knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and others aspects relate to the abilities or habits of humans as a member of society. Selo Soemardjan, who was cited by Purwanto (2007: 22), reveals that human creativity, human senses, and human works form culture. According to Mursal Esten, tradition is the hereditary habits of a society based on their cultural values. Tradition reflects behave of members society, whether in supernatural or religious life (Jacobus., 2006: 21). Tradition organizes how humans interact as social beings among individuals in society and between human and nature. Tradition evolves into a system of patterns and norms that rule the use of sanctions and threats towards any abuses and or the perversions.

Tradition is the part of the human life mechanism because it facilitates personal development of community members. In same spirits, WS Rendra in Johanes Mardini's book emphasizes the importance of tradition. In his thought, the society could be fallen to a chaotic and barbaric situation without tradition (Mardini., 1994: 13).

In a circumscribe definition, tradition refers to the whole of material things and ideas that have come from the past but still preserved to this day. The tradition, in this definition, is a legacy of the past. It consists of the cognitive action in giving meaning to the behavior of speech, ritual, and various life aspects of human or a number of people who act collectively (Wasid et. al, 2011: 30).

This article elucidates one of the local traditions in Indonesia namely *Tunggul Wulung* tradition. *Tunggul Wulung* tradition can be categorized as the historical heritage that is preserved continuously until nowadays. The elucidation will be focused on the historical account of *Tunggul Wulung* tradition, the details of *Tunggul Wulung* ceremony, and the values of *Tunggul Wulung* tradition. The authors believe that the study of *Tunggul Wulung* tradition is important because of this tradition has rich noble values that could be used to strengthen the national identity and conserve the local values. By this study, the values of *Tunggul Wulung* tradition could be applied in other forms of research in the future, particularly in history and educational field.

Tunggul Wulung and Its Historical Account

Tunggul Wulung tradition is the local culture that exists at Jurang Village in Manyaran Sub-district, Wonogiri Regency, Indonesia. *Tunggul Wulung* derives from the name of sacred stick and keris or Javanese small knife. *Tunggul Wulung* is held over generations and perceived as a sacred and meaningful tradition for the Jurang villagers. Until these days, *Tunggul Wulung* tradition is held yearly to express their gratitude to the God for the blessings of health and fortune and the abundant harvest.

According to the custodian and the elder of Jurang Village, *Tunggul Wulung* tradition is a legacy of the Majapahit Kingdom. Before the fall of Majapahit Kingdom, some of the aristocrats and their

followers fled from palace to Gunung Kidul area. They tried to escape the attack of Islamic army of Demak. Among them was Prabu Brawijaya, who later is known as the last king of Majapahit Kingdom (Putranto., 2003: 225).

Geographically, Jurang Village is the area directly adjacent to the Gunung Kidul area. Jurang Village lies near a cliff of the hill, which becomes the perfect place to hide in those days. Although the area of Jurang Villages is on the hill, the area of villages is known for abundant harvest because of its fertile soil for agricultural land. Besides, the people of Jurang Village were well known have industrious and tenacious spirit in their work, particularly in cultivate optimally the agricultural land. Thus, it makes the harvest of the Jurang Village is known as high-quality product compared to other areas.

The existence of *Tunggul Wulung* as Majapahit's legacy is supported by Putranto's (2003) research. Putranto informed the figure namely Betara Katong, who is known lived in Betoro Kidul Village and Karang Asem Village in Ponjong Sub-district, originally is Jaka Umbaran, who was the descendant of Prabu Brawijaya. Jaka Umbaran changed his name to Betara Katong in order to disguise his identity from Demak's army.

In his early journey, Betara Katong lived in Betoro Kidul Village settled in Kadipaten Gondang in Tegal. About fifteen years later, he moved to Tegal Betoro and then Mokhsa or liberated into a state of bliss. The descendant of Betoro Katong, namely Mbah Bodo lived in Betoro Village. One day, Mbah Sakrip, who was a Muslim, came from Bayat Klaten to Betoro Village. Mbah Sakrip's arrival caused the followers of Mbah Bodo embrace Islam. Meanwhile, Mbah Bodo still held the religion of Betoro Katong, which most likely is Hindu. Mbah Bodo then moved to Dongang in Wonogiri area then to Manyaran area. While the followers of Mbah Bodo, who has converted to Islam, married the followers of the Mbah Sakrip and generates the offspring, who later became the forerunner of Betoro Kidul Village.

The Processions of Tunggul Wulung Ceremony

As the authors had mentioned before, *Tunggul Wulung* ceremony expresses the gratitude to the God for the blessings of health and fortune and the abundant harvest. Based on the field observations and interviews, the authors obtained information that the tradition is perceived by the people of Jurang Village as the sacred and blessed procession. Then, once a year, specifically at Thursday *Kliwon* in Month Besar, the people of Jurang Village is held *Tunggul Wulung* ceremony. The people assemble to organize a *Kirab* or a collective solemnize by bringing the stick and keris walk around the village.

The procession of *Tunggul Wulung* ceremony is started by a preparation, few days before the main procession. The villagers held a meeting to ensure that the ceremony can run well. In the meeting, the people discuss the division of tasks and responsibilities that should be done by the community. After the meeting, the people are held *Bersih Desa* or collectively clean up the village one day before the ceremony, in which the people took to the streets to clean the village. In addition, if there are people who send animals as an expression of gratitude, such as cows and goats, the slaughter of animals was done at the custodian's home one day before the ceremony. After that, the meats are distributed to the villagers. Meanwhile, some of them are saved to be cooked for *Tirakatan* or the evening procession.

The night before the main procession, the people gather at the custodian's house for *Tirakatan*. The people see the heirlooms of the *Teken* (relic stick) and *Keris* (Javanese small knife) of *Tunggul Wulung*, which are only issued once a year in the *Kirab* ceremony. The female prepares the *Tirakatan* by cooking the foods for the people as well as foods for *Sesajen* (particular food for the predecessor), such as *ingkung* or chicken, *jenang* and *tumpang* (a mount-shaped rice). At 10 o'clock pre midnights, all *Sesajen* are put out for the *ijab* (prayed) by the villager's *Modin*. After that, the people eat together; rice cone and

cassava are distributed to the villagers. After the meal, the villagers back to their home. Meanwhile, some of the villagers stay awake in the custodian`s house to continue the *Tirakatan*. They did not sleeping all night long until morning to pick up blessings from *Tunggul Wulung*.

At 2 o`clock after midnight, the women ravine to the custodian`s house to deliver sticky rice that had been cooked at home. There is a rule that the sticky rice should not be tested the taste first. According to their belief, those sticky rice is a sacred food, thus, they should respect by not testing the taste of the rice before the main procession. The women who delivered rice the sticky rice will be given 1 pieces of tobacco, containing tobacco and betel leaf, which must be brought to their home. After sticky rice collected about more than 100 grinds, the sticky rice served on the table. At the dawn, the custodian prepares to perform the carnival. First, the custodian dresses up in Javanese traditional clothes, such as the bridegroom. At the time of the carnival, several men followed the custodian as the guardian of the custodian.

Kirab is held around the Jurang Village to Wono Leren. Wono Leren is a small forest located in the middle of the rice field. This place believes as once a place of *Simbah Tunggul Wulung* took a rest on the way to the Jurang village. Before the custodian and the entourage arrive, some of the male villagers had reached first to clean Wono Leren. After the custodian and the entourage came, then, the custodian will put heirloom *Teken* and *Keris Tunggul Wulung* on the tree that located in the middle of Wono Leren. The next procession is the custodian pray using Java language.

When all procession in Wono Leren completed, the custodian bring back the *teken* and *keris Tunggul Wulung*, and then perform the *Kirab* around the village followed by guards and men. The *Kirab* moves forward towards the *Sasana Tunggul Wulung*. In the *Sasana*, all the men, women, and children have gathered to clean the *Sasana*. *Sasana* is a house that is used to be a place to put *Tunggul Wulung*. *Sasana* is permitted to be cleaned once a year at the procession of *Kirab Tunggul Wulung*. When the *Kirab* arrives at *Sasana*, the heirlooms are brought to move around the *Sasana* three times while the custodian an entourage is praying and showing flowers.

One of the guards brought a powder that is made from turmeric and rice flour. This powder, which was made from the dawn, is applied to the villager's body. All the villagers should take the powder, even if there are people who cannot attend the *Kirab* or clean in *Sasana*. They should take the powder be kept by other family members. According to their belief, the powder brings blessings and health for the Jurang villagers.

In the *Sasana*, there is a place of water that should be filled by the custodian once a *pasaran* day that is at noon to the afternoon in *Kliwon* day. On a daily life, women are not allowed to visit *Sasana Tunggul Wulung*. Meanwhile, the custodian and male villagers are allowed. According to interviews with the custodian, the authors obtained information that the water in the *Sasana* is used for drug or rehearsal water for villagers, and it is believed could cure the pain. Water could only be collected by the custodian. The villagers are not allowed to take the water. The water, which is poured by the custodian, is taken from the water source in the hill of Jurang Village.

After the procession at *Sasana Tunggul Wulung* completed, the heirlooms is brought back to a place where the custodian washed the heirlooms by water flowers. Mrs. Sumiyem, who had decades made the water flowers, makes the water flowers. The water flowers are made from the water bath of *kanthil* flowers, *kenanga*, jasmine, and roses. In this procession, the heirlooms are opened from the wrapper and then washed with water flowers. This procession has a meaning as a representation of respect by giving a smells to the heirloom. In this ceremony, the custodian spells a prayer in the Javanese language that is unknown by the villagers. After that, the *Tunggul Wulung* heirlooms are inserted into its place.

Villagers, who have gathered at the custodian's house, serve out all the sticky rice that has been delivered on the night before. Prayer is done together as an expression of gratitude for the blessings that abound to the villagers of the Jurang village. The sticky rice is distributed and then brought to the home by the villagers without any remains. According to the belief of the villagers that eating, taking and bringing offerings or food that existed at the *Tunggul Wulung* ceremony will bring blessings and livelihood for them. From the description above, the authors perceive that *Tunggul Wulung* tradition at Jurang Village in Pijiharjo, Manyaran District, Wonogiri is one of the ancestors' tradition. The spiritual and social objectives of this tradition are the human respect for God Almighty and the nature that has been friendly and provide prosperity to the Jurang villagers of Jurang. Because of the *Tunggul Wulung* heirloom is essentially a symbol of the fertility of Jurang village. In the preparation and implementation stages of the *Tunggul Wulung* Kirab tradition, the whole villagers, from young to old, participates together to prepare *ubo rampe* (offerings), clean the village, clean up the *Sasana Tunggul Wulung*, and follow the *Kirab*. They all pray and follow the procession, although the villagers embraced different religions and some of the people are the newcomer.

The values of Tunggul Wulung Tradition

From the elucidation of historical account and the procession of *Tunggul Wulung* ceremony, the authors extract some noble values of *Tunggul Wulung* tradition. Six noble values that could be summarized are gotong royong or cooperative, the kinship, tolerance, compliance or obedience, mutual respect, and deliberation.

1. Gotong Royong or Cooperative

Indonesian society is popularly known for their spirit of cooperation and mutual help, which unfortunately has started to fade in society. In *Tunggul Wulung* tradition, the spirit of *gotong royong* can be seen from the community togetherness in preparing the ceremony of *Tunggul Wulung* Tradition. All villagers from men, women, and children are working each other in the processions with the spirit of *gotong royong*. However, the spirit of *gotong royong* is still alive only in rural life. Meanwhile, in the big city this spirit has faded even gone.

2. The kinship

Kinship is the reflection of unity in diversity, such as the spirit of Indonesia. Indonesia consists of many tribes, cultures, and languages, which merge into one nation of Indonesia, such as a single-family home. In the *Tunggul Wulung* tradition, the villagers work collectively to strengthen the relationship among them.

3. Tolerance

Indonesia is a multicultural country. Indonesia has a various race, tribe, culture and even religion that can live side by side as one family. It proves the high tolerance among society. As in the *Tunggul Wulung* tradition, the procession that included many layers of society from various religious backgrounds follow the activities without discriminating other. At the time of the *Kirab Tunggul Wulung*, all villagers participated.

4. Compliance/ Obedience

The *Tunggul Wulung* tradition shows the spirit of compliance or obedience of the villagers to their culture and religion. Although they might be more familiar with modernity, however, the younger generation seems to keep the tradition by including in the procession of *Tunggul Wulung* ceremony. The villagers of Jurang are very responsible for carrying and transmitting the *Tunggul Wulung* ceremony from generation to generation.

5. Respect

One of the attitudes that emerged in the *Tunggul Wulung* ceremony was the public's respect for the elders in the Jurang village. The villagers respect each other between the young and the old as well as the parents who love the young. In the *Tunggul Wulung* tradition, the elders give confidence to the custodian whose age under the elders to lead the *Kirab*. Besides that, the elders also protect the villagers, receive community's suggestion regarding the preparation of *Tunggul Wulung* ceremony.

6. Deliberation

In the preparation stages of *Tunggul Wulung* ceremony, the villagers of Jurang conducted a deliberation to divide the work and responsibility. It has a function to prevent the mistakes during the ceremony. Deliberation is held to reach a collective agreement in solving the problems in the procession of *Tunggul Wulung* ceremony, particularly regarding the committee's tasks and responsibilities.

Six noble values of *Tunggul Wulung* tradition cover the social aspect of the society. The social aspect helps the society to live integrally and supports the collaboration among them. Added by the knowledge, this social aspect underpins the social transformation of the society (Abidin et al., 2017). In one side, the social aspect of *Tunggul Wulung* tradition unites the villagers into one vision. On the other side, the tradition elevates the collaboration among the villagers especially to strengthen the harmonious society.

Conclusion

The national identity is the distinctiveness characters that become the richness of a nation. The national identity is summed up in the behavior or actions that represent the character and the noble values of a nation. The local wisdom as the cultural heritage has an important role as an inspiration in the strengthening of the identity of a nation. The efforts to strengthen the identity of an ethnic or national group become very important in the era of globalization to prevent the fade of the local culture. The local culture faces a cultural homogeneity. Thus, the *Tunggul Wulung* tradition, as the Indonesian local culture, should be preserved. Furthermore, this tradition consists of noble values such as cooperative or *gotong royong*, the spirit of kinship, respect, compliance, deliberation and so on. These values should be perceived as the cultural capital of the nation. Therefore, it should be managed and developed in order to strengthen the national identity of Indonesia.

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