

## THE FOLKLORE ABOUT FOOD SUSTAINABILITY ACCORDING JAVANESE CULTURE

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### ABSTRACT

Folklore reflected the development of human mind. There are many local wisdom appeared in the folklore. Javanese has living for thousands years in the island and fit to the change of life. Food is the vital thing in the human life and it has found in the food sustainability according Javanese folklore. My research location is in area around Surakarta kingdom. It called in Javanese word "cedhak ratu adoh watu" (near the king and far from stones) and as the best place to live. People believe it is as the peaceful place due to the near of the king. The research found that the folklore about the origin of the food in Javanese tradition is not so far from Hinduism influent. The emergence of food associated with the story of Dewi Sri is the origin of all kinds of foods that are considered good in Java. The story is about Dewi Sri who has falling love to her brother namely Sadana. It will be incest married so their parent driven them from the house. Dewi Sri destroyed her body and incarnated to be rice. Her head incarnated to coconut, her hands to be banana, her foot to be every food found under soil (potato, cassava, and sweet potato), her teeth to onion, her breast to be bengkoang, etc. Generally, according Javanese folklore, there are three kinds of food without rice: 1. Pala kasimpar (food which grow on the solid e.g. cucumber, melon, water melon, etc.) (2) pala kapendem (food which grow under soil, e.g. potato, sweet potato, cassava, etc.), 3. Pala gumatung (food which grow over the soil e.g. banana, coconut, etc.). The foods are must be respected everyday caused the as the reincarnation of Dewi Sri. Javanese around the kingdom not realized food from the sea. It is cussed the location is far from sea and not explored the sea in the daily activities as the source of the food. The folklore is from agricultural people. The existence of Dewi Sri is a symbol of prosperity. Sri is the rice (food) and her brother Sadana is the cotton (cloth). Food and cloth (sandang dan pangan) are the basic needs of human life. To devote them, every traditional Javanese house has special room called pasren (means the place for Dewi Sri, the Prosperous Goddess). It means the existence of the Gods will maintain food sustainability according Javanese concept.

Keywords: folklore, Dewi Sri, food sustainability

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### Introduction

A policy needs based on local wisdom. It is urgent for us to uncover local wisdom about food sustainability. We hope folklore can give an advice about food sustainability in Indonesia because folklore has long live for centuries in Java.

The target of our research is to find new materials in order to find food sustainability in the oral folklore, half oral folklore, or non oral folklore in Javanese tradition. There are three kinds of place according Javanese, e.g. (1) place near the palace (cedhak ratu adoh watu), (2) highland or mountain area (cedhak watu adoh ratu), and (3) coastal area (pesisir)

Food sustainability concept has relation to the natural condition. The story about Dewi Sri in Javanese folklore has relevance to the food sustainability concept in the agriculture people around Java palace, especially about the plant and harvest of rice, the basic food.

Today people said the local wisdoms have many special qualities. Bali's subak (a way to schedule in planting rice) for example is part of intangible heritage in the traditional agriculture. We hope our research can devote a concept of food sustainability based on local wisdom which has grown for many centuries in Java. It is as a way to find local wisdom about food sustainability and food security, something that very urgent in our daily life.

Folklore is part of culture. Folklore is mentifact and sociofact. It is meaning folklore is mental facts and sometime appears in social activity. For example, folklore about Dewi Sri (mentifact) sometimes appears in artifact as *loroblonyo* figure, in sociofact as activities in plant and harvest rice. It is in the some meaning when Tengger people throw ritual things in the Bromo mountain's crater in the Kasada rime in the relevance the mentifact about Rara Anteng and Joko Seger who believed stay in the crater (Sutarto, 1998).

Folklore is part of traditional people culture. So folklore is oral material and any ritual in a collective and descended by next generation on oral way or with examples actions. So not all folklore is in oral way. The kinds of folklore are narrative e.g. myth, legend, song, magic sentence, question word, and so on. Folklore consist social activities, e.g. ritual ceremony, dance, and so on (Abrams, 1981:66). So, folklore contains a wide range in oral and non oral materials. Folklore has many signs (physic, social, culture, language (Danandjaja, 1986).

Food is a basic need. It is clear that we need to maintain food sustainability and food security. There are five kinds to maintain food sustainability:

- (1) On home and individual orientation;
- (2) Food access on every time
- (3) Insist on the access of house and individual, physically, economically, and socially
- (4) Orientation on food nutrition
- (5) Orientation in health and productive life.

It is clear that to maintain food sustainability we need concept of food sustainability according local wisdom. The concept of food sustainability was found in every culture and we try to uncover it from Javanese folklore. In ritual ceremony called *kenduri* is a kind of nutrition fulfillment. In the ceremony there are vegetables, plant side dish, and side dish of animal (egg, fish), fruit, and snack. The materials are from around the house and it is mean to maintain food sustainability by planting the fruit and taking care domestic animal. The food from the ceremony must be distributed the the neighbors and it to promote food sustainability around the village. This research tries to uncover about the concept of food sustainability in Javanese folklore.

Food sustainability is universal concept. In its application in the community, there are many kinds with specific way. The Javanese concept comes from many cultural elements found in Javanese culture. The elements of Javanese culture consist of three things, namely:

- (1) Genius local element
- (2) Element from Hindu and Buddha
- (3) Element from Islam

Genius local element is element from the around area. It is the origin element come from their experiences along the life. In *Negarakrtagama* text from Majapahit we found many local elements, although this text wrote in the Hindu's era di Javanese history. In the equal right is this is the story of Hang Tuah in Melayu culture or Saweri Gading in Bugis culture (Sudardi, 2014).

In the next we will discuss about the origin of foods in the Javanese folklore. We will discuss about village purification in honoring Dewi Sri (the godness of food) and the story of the origin of food that came from Dewi Sri's corpse.

### Research design

The location of my research is in Surakarta around the Javanese palace. Javanese people call this place as "cedhak ratu adoh watu" (near the king far from the stone (mountain). It is a best place.

It is a descriptive research toward a master plant to form food sustainability and much proposal policy to develop and maintain food sustainability by using Javanese folklore. It is a descriptive and explorative research. He variable is about folklore to develop food sustainability. Our aims are collecting the relevance of folklore about food sustainability and then transform it to be hypothesis (Vredenberg, 1985:53). The appeared hypothesis is alternative hypothetic to the food sustainability.

To get the found or develop theories, our research used interpretation procedure. The procedure contains data conceptualization and the researcher as an instrument research. It is a non statistic procedure (Strauss and Corbin, 1997:14)

The main product is an oral tradition description as a base to maintain a policy in developing food sustainability di Javanese culture. We serve a systematic network to build a theory. So theses research doesn't not just organize the phenomena, but also to find causal network (Vredenbregt, 1985:51-52).

### Discussion

The folklore about the origin of food in Java is many kinds. There are two palaces (kraton) in Surakarta, namely Kasunanan (the big one) and Mangkuenagaran. Although many kinds of food in Surakarta, but we insist our research on folklore of food dan its sustainability around the palaces.

### Village Purification

We found bersih desa ceremony (village purification ceremony) around the palaces. This annual ceremony is to Dewi Sri and Deva Sadana. This myth is very popular in Java for centuries ago, especially in agriculture people.

Sri and Sadana is a tragic love story. Dewi Sri and her brother Sadana are the children of Prabu Sri Maha Penggung. Sri and Sadana were falling in love. Their parent prohibited this love because it will be incest marriage. He drove out them and then Sri and Sadana lived in Dadapan village in the house of Kyai Gading Pamkil. According to Kyai Gading Pamkil, Sri and Sadana can continue their love in the next incarnation. Sri incarnated to be rice and Sadana incarnated to be cotton, symbols of Javanese

prosperity (food and dress). Sri and Sadana are gods of prosperity according Javanese agricultural people. In the palace and traditional Javanese house, there are **pasren** (mean special place for Sri) or **krobongan** (mean sacred place). This sacred place consists of cotton mattress, bed cover, pillow, always on oil lamp. No one sleep in this place, because it is special for Dewi Sri. Pasren symbolized the existence of Sri and Sadana, the god of rice (food) and dress (cotton). Pasren is the sacred and central place in palace or traditional Javanese house. This story actualized in the ritual ceremony along the plantation of rice.

1. Wiwitan: ritual for planting the rice. Before planting the rice, the farmer give offerings in every corner of their fields: red and white rice mush and fermented fish (terasi).
2. Pregnant rice: the farmer give rujak (chilled fruit), special food for pregnant women in Javanese people. It symbolized the pregnant Sri.
3. Harvest Rice: farmer give offerings rice and whole cooked chicken.
4. Finishing the harvest: After the harvest finished, people held village purification (bersih desa) by performing puppet show title Sri Mulih (mean Sri go home). It symbolizing Sri go home from he field. It is time to leisure or "thank giving day". Bersih desa is worship for Dewi Sri and Sadana as a symbol of prosperity. Sri Mulih legend is in shadow puppet play. The play is only performed at the time of the event the village purification (bersih desa). It was said that Dewi Sri has left Amarta. It makes it difficult atmosphere. Rice can not grow and people experiencing hunger. Clothes became expensive.

In such situations, Bambang Probokusuma comes. He was the son of Arjuna and Dewi Supraba. He came to Ngamarta to be recognized as the son of Arjuna. Arjuna is willing to admit a child with the condition that he must be able to bring back Dewi Sri return to Amarta. Semar help Bambang Probokusuma. He managed to bring Dewi Sri back to Amarta. The country has becoming into a prosperous country back.

Amarta is a reflection Kasunanan. According to the story, Mataram kings are descendants of Arjuna. The story is the actualization of the story of the ancestors to bring prosperity of the country.

### The Origin of Food

The origin of food come from the myth of Dewi Teknowati. In the *Serat Pustaka Raja Purwa* (mean Book of Old King) told that the origin of food come from the body of Dewi Teknowati. Dewi Teknowati is a beautiful girl come from Narada's crystal gem. Batara Guru (Syiva) was falling in love with her. But Dew Teknowati refused the god and killing herself by drinking poison. The corpse were brought to the word to be buried. In the Dewi Teknowati's cemetery growth any kind of food in the table bellow.

No.	Part of body	Grow to be
1.	Hair	Rice
2.	Head	Coconut
3.	Teeth	Cucumber
4.	Hand	Banana
5.	Breast	Jicama (bengkoang)
6.	Calf of leg	Cassava

Javanese people has grouping food according the position from the ground in three kinds:

- (1) Pala gumantung (hanged in the three: coconut, papaya, banana, durian, rambutan, etc.)
- (2) Pala kasimpar (on the ground: cucumber, water melon, cucurbit a, etc.)
- (3) Pala kependhem (buried in the ground: cassava, jicama, peanut, potato, etc.).

The myths give us the concept of food sustainability. Sri and Sadana are symbol of prosperity. The prosperity depend on rice. It mean that Javanese people has to has rice in their daily life. Dewi Sri has to stay in the house. The myth of Dewi Teknowati reflected the concept the variety of food. It mean "all is from the some source, all is god". Kenduri or ritual ceremony with any kind of food reflected the fulfillment of nutrition. According to Indonesian government, the terminology of nutrition fulfillment is "four healthy, 5 complete" (empat sehat lima sempurna). It means that the good nutrition for daily food are 4: staple food, vegetable, side dish, and fruit. It will be complete by drinking milk. Actually, animal milk is not so usually in Javanese tradition. So the concept of fulfillment nutrition according Javanese concept is just 4 healthy. But, today milk is daily drink for middle have people. Drinking milk is part of their status.

Rice is special food for Javanese people. It deposits in special barn called **lumbung**. Lumbung is for depositing rice with its shell. To maintain it's dry, lumbung built about 45 centimeter over the ground. Rice without shell and ready to cook stored in a place called **pedaringan** in the house.

The story of the origin lumbung comes from a legend about Jaka Tarub. Joko Tarub's wife was an angel named Dewi Nawang Wulan. When Nawang Wulan take a bath in the lake, Joko Tarub steal Dewi Nawang Wulan' clothes. The dress is a dress to fly up into the sky towards heaven. Because his clothes were stolen, then Nawang Wulan not be able to return to heaven. Joko Tarub store clothes Nawang Wulan under grain. Nawang Wulan then became the wife of Joko Tarub and has a daughter named Nawangsasi.

Nawang Wulan has a magic power. When she was cooking rice, she just take a stalk of rice and it had been able to meet the whole family. He always advised that Joko Tarub didn't look into the cooking pot. Because of her busy washing clothes, Nawangwulan left the kitchen to wash clothes in the river. Joko Tarub curious. He looked into the cooking pot. He saw that

Nawang Wulan just cooked only one stalk of rice. Because it had been seen by a human, the miracle were gone. From the day, to cook the rice must be broken somewhere called **lesung**. More and more, rice was loose. Finally, the rice runs out and Nawangwulan find her clothes. Nawangwulan then wear it and fly to heaven leaving Joko Tarub. Since then, the Javanese people should store grain lots in the place called the *lumbung*. According to the story, Joko Tarub is the ancestor of the kings of New Mataram.

## Conclusion

Javanese folklore familiar with the food sources around them. They divided the food into three types. The food was divided based on the condition of the soil. The types of these foods showed the diversity of food to meet food sustainability.

Kenduri is reflected the nutritional adequacy. Various types of food into one. Food has become enough nutrients because it consists of staple foods, side dishes, vegetables, and fruit. Javanese people are not used to drinking the milk of animals that animal milk is not mentioned as one type of food. The food is described is food grown from a corpse goddess Teknowati. This shows that the early food is the food of plants.

The food is very important. Javanese food glorify associated with prosperity. Food and clothing are basic necessities that had to be available. They respect of food and clothing by bringing Dewi Sri and Sadana. Both the goddess and the god are the god of prosperity for Javanese.

The presence of food in Javanese folklore is also associated with the court of Mataram or Kasunanan and the story of it is linked with the story of their ancestor. They regard as descendants of Arjuna.

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