

Curses and Rituals as Antidotes: The Significance of Offerings in Dreadlocks Cutting Ritual for Santri

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Abstract:

The deadlocks cutting ritual, known as 'ruwatan rambut gimbal' is one of the events in the Dieng Culture Festival which requires the presence of uborampe in its implementation. This study aims to reveal the symbolic significance of the uborampe which share a conceptual similarity with totems. This study uses a qualitative research with a semiotics analysis of Charles Sanders Peirce. The findings of this research indicate that: first, the uborampe presented in the ritual can be called a totem because it comes from animals and plants and symbolizes other sacred things. Second, the people of Dieng Banjarnegara are adherents of limited totemism or quasi totemism, because the totem in the dreadlock cutting ritual is not worshiped but contains an element of expected prayer. Third, forms of syncretism between Hindu, Javanese, and Islam appear in the use of prayer in Javanese and their meaning and offering of uborampe ritual. Fourth, the meaning of the totem in the treatment of the dreadlock cutting ritual in the perspective of Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotics is categorised in three forms: symbols, icons, and cum icon symbols. The symbolic significance of one uborampe can be manifested in various meanings adjusted to the community that carries out the interpretation.

Keywords: Dreadlock, CuttingRitual, Semiotics, Syncretism, Totem

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, there are many religious rituals that present offerings (Gibson, 1994, p. 64) as an important means to counteract curses, distress, disaster and other sudden negative occurrences affecting individuals. In Indonesian coastal Muslim communities, there is a sea alms ritual (or other terms in local language) to safeguard fishing communities when they venture out to sea (Fakhriati et al., 2023). Likewise, agricultural communities (Rusli et al., 2021, p. 176) perform rituals of giving alms to the earth (or other terms in local language) which is used as a medium to ward off crop failure and other misfortunes (Silaban et al., 2020). In general, rituals carried out by Muslim communities in Indonesia elaborate Islamic religious values with local culture that existed before Islam came to Indonesia (Koopman, 2023).

In this paper, the researchers focuses on a specific ritual carried out by Muslim communities, known as the deadlocks cutting ritual which is carried out in Dieng Banjarnegara, Indonesia. This ritual involves cutting the messy hair of children, typically aged between six months and six years. The loose hair is considered mysterious as it appears suddenly, which is preceded by an increase in the child's body temperature (fever). According to the beliefs of the Dieng people, the messy-haired child is considered to be a gift from Ki Kaladete who is believed to be the baureksa (guardian or ruler) of the Dieng plateau. On the other hand, it is also believed that dreadlocks must be cut to eliminate all curses, bad luck and potential danger that will happen to the child in the future. Because of this feature, cutting dreadlocks is also carried out using specific steps and offerings. It is believed that cutting hair without any conditions or offerings will bring back dreadlocks in children. Among the offerings (or called uborampe in local language) that must be provided during the ritual are bucu necklace, and bucu robyong (Geertz, 2008, p. 56). Apart from that, in the series of rituals, there are prayer readings that are said in a combination of Javanese and Arabic.

Based on these facts, researchers are interested in studying the phenomenon of using offerings in the ruwatan ritual of cutting dreadlocks. More specifically, the researchers wants to unveil the symbolic meaning of uborampe offerings from religious figures (known as 'santri' in Clifford Greetz's terminology) who are ritual practitioners. From the literature collected by the author, various meanings of offerings based on a person's religious typology have been identified. This difference has actually been confirmed by Clifford Greetz that Javanese Muslim society has three typologies, namely santri, abangan, and priyayi (Nasir & Jinan, 2018, p. 9). These diverse societal horizons have allegedly resulted in differences in interpretations of religious rituals.

Based on the literature mapping conducted, this paper falls into the category of cultural (anthropological) studies using semiotic theory to uncover symbols (offerings) and their meanings as interpreted by santri (religious figures) around the Dieng community. In general, the study of dreadlock cutting ritual is divided into four major areas: Culture – including the theme of religion as culture –, Economics (Purnomo et al., 2023), Psychology (Satria, 2017), dan Education (Rahmaniar et al., 2022). Within this extensive

landscape of dreadlock ritual studies, this paper attempts to contribute to the field of religious studies intertwined with culture.

Several previous researchers have conducted research within the focus of this study (religion and culture). Among them, research has been published by Ken Widyawati and Kafita Almadina & Maman. Both share the same focus, including the meaning of offerings. The difference lies in the method of analysis used, Ken uses meaning from a general perspective (not referring to a specific societal typology) while Kafita and Maman use Roland Barthes' analysis in studying the meaning of offerings. Although they serve as adequate initial references, both only analyse the non-verbal symbols of offerings, with verbal aspect not receiving significant attention from either of them.

Based on the aforementioned information, the researchers have not found similar studies, making this research still relevant and urgently needed. The first two studies mentioned above primarily focused on the symbolic meaning of non-verbal signs, not delving deeper into the symbolic meaning of verbal elements in a more comprehensive manner. Thus, this research differs from the three studies mentioned earlier because the researchers focuses the study on the symbolic meaning of the totems in the ceremony of cutting dreadlocks as a more radical and holistic non-verbal sign, and the prayers offered as verbal signs through the semiotic study of Charles Sanders Peirce. The aim is to reveal how syncretism exists between Islam and Hinduism in verbal and non-verbal signs.

This article aims to reveal the semiotic meaning of the offerings used in the ruwatan ritual of cutting dreadlocks and other things related to the ruwatan of dreadlocks based on the meaning carried out by the Santri (religious figures in Dieng Banjarnegara Indonesia. The meaning of offerings is urgently carried out so that the wider community know the essence of the traditions that are preserved, so that there is no attitude of extremism by saying that local culture is contrary to the teachings of the Islamic religion (Hirst, 2010, p. 58), which ultimately gives rise to radicalism. On the other hand, the implementation of rituals by presenting offerings without considering a deep understanding of religion has the potential to eliminate the existence of the religion one adheres to (Samovar et al., 2016).

This paper employs a qualitative field research design with phenomenology as the approach. Qualitative research is used to describe and analyse phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, thoughts of people individually and in groups (Bachri, 2010, p. 50), regarding the significance of offerings in the ritual of ruwatan dreadlocks. The locus of this research is located in Banjarnegara, Dieng, Central Java, Indonesia starting from October 2021 to June 2022. Data collection was carried out through observation and in-depth interviews. The informants in the research consists of three religious figures who were practitioners of dreadlock cutting in the Dieng Banjarnegara area and three children with dreadlocks and the parents of children with dreadlocks. The selection of informants was carried out using purpose sampling. Researchers chose informants who had a deep understanding of the process of cutting dreadlocks by the Santri. The researchers attempted to reveal the awareness of the research

subjects regarding the interpretation or meaning of objects that are considered as offerings or totems in the ritual of cutting dreadlock. The data analysis technique used is descriptive-analytical. The stages carried out in analysing the data are (1) Editing, where the researchers double-checks the accuracy and completeness of the data. If the data are deemed insufficient to answer the main problem described in the introduction, then the researchers again conducts interviews with the informants, (2) Coding, where the researchers carries out data classification, data observation, and makes comparisons with data from other sources, and (3) Discussion with colleagues who have similar research objects to gain deeper insight into research objects. Furthermore, the researchers described the activities and offerings presented in the dreadlock cutting ritual and the interpretation carried out by religious figures. Subsequently, the researchers analysed the meaning using the semiotic theory formulated by Charles Sanders Peirce, including the study of icons, indices, and symbols. The researchers then attempt to trace how these meanings emerge through discursive analysis developed by Talal Asad (Asad, 2009, pp. 1–30).

DISCUSSION

The Muslim Community of Dieng Banjarnegara Indonesia and the Characteristics of Its Religiosity

The people of Dieng generally hold religious views influenced by certain mainstream religious community organisations, such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, but they also still maintain the traditions carried out by their previous ancestors (F. Fauzi, 2021). Among the ancestral traditions still practiced are the traditions of ritual ceremonies at weddings, circumcisions, childbirths, and the dreadlock cutting ceremony, which is the material object of this study. On the other hand, these mass organisations also do not prohibit these activities as they are as not considered to violate the basic principles (*asl*) of religion (S. Sofyan, 2021).

As explained above, despite the population embracing Islam, Christianity and Catholicism, there is still a belief system in spirits and ancestral spirits manifested in certain rituals, one of which is the dreadlock cutting tradition. This belief cannot be separated from the historical identity that has been formed over time. As explained by Puspa Ayu Damatanti, Kejawen beliefs are beliefs held by the people of Dieng before the arrival of Hinduism and then Islam which began to spread in Jawa (Damayanti, 2011b). Thus, Dieng is currently inhabited by a majority of Muslim people. According to Sofyan, the arrival of Islam in Dieng was dynamic, so the patterns of religious rituals were harmonised with previous beliefs and highly respected local culture. As a result, Islam did not completely alter or replace the physical and non-physical heritage of the previous religion, including the dreadlock cutting tradition.

According to its history, the tradition of cutting dreadlocks cannot be separated from the role of one of the three figures who opened up the Dieng area for residential. The three figures in question are Kyai Walik, Karim, and Kolodete who spread Islam in the Dieng Banjarnegara region. In the literature, it is stated that Kyai Karim had a role in compiling and formulating the governance of Dieng Banjarnegara. Meanwhile, Kiyai Walik

has a role in 'babat alas' or land clearing in Dieng Banjarnegara. Kyai Kolodete is known as 'baurekso' or the guardian of the North Banjarnegara region, including Dieng, Kejajar, Satieng, and Garung (Priatna, 2014, p. 54).

The general belief in the community is that children with sudden dreadlocks are considered descendants of Kyai Kolodete who is believed to be the ancestor of the people of Dieng Banjarnegara and Nyai Roro Kidul. A child who has dreadlocks is seen as chosen and privileged child, but this distinctive mark must be cut because if it is not cut and returned to its owner, called Kolodete and Nyai Roro Kidul, the child will face difficulties (bala') in adulthood. The difficulties referred to are things that endanger the child's mental health. For this reason, it is necessary to ban dreadlocks in several rivers in Dieng, such as the Kali Tulis and Kali Srayu Rivers which are believed to flow into the South Sea where Nyai Roro Kidul lives (Cr, 2004, p. 67).

However, the above perspective is not the only perspective regarding the origins of dreadlocks. There are many other perspectives regarding Kyai Kolodete and Nyai Roro Kidul. For example, there is another opinion which says that Kyai Kolodete is a Rishi or Hindu religionist, and he is also considered a supernatural being or 'mbaurekso' spirit who guards Dieng Banjarnegara. On the other hand, there are also those who say that female children with dreadlocks are a gift from Nyai Roro Kidul who was given to Nini Dewi Ronce Kalaprenye, so that female children with dreadlocks are considered to be the incarnation of Nini Dewi Ronce Kalaprenye (Febriyanto et al., 2018a).

Thus, previous religious beliefs and legacies can still be seen today. Traces of the development of Hinduism can be proven by the existence of temple buildings on the Dieng plateau, based on Junghun's observations quoted by Scheltema, showing that more than twenty temples are scattered in the swamp forest. After the swamps were destroyed, only eight remained that could still be recognized, because the temple building in Dieng is the oldest building in Java. This shows that there was a Hindu civilization that once controlled Dieng, and Islam did not destroy the ancestral remains of the Dieng people (Satria, 2017). Apart from the physical relics of previous beliefs, the relics that are still preserved are non-physical things, such as the dreadlocks above.

Based on the description above, the religious system of the Dieng community has its own characteristics where syncretism and cultural acculturation become the articulation of community beliefs in building a value system which is the basis for acting and carrying out cultural events. The dreadlock cutting ritual has a value system represented by a system of symbols, all of which are influenced by the religious system of the Dieng people.

The Origin of Dreadlocks in Children from Dieng Community Perspective

The dreadlocks that appeared suddenly were interpreted with various interpretations by the people of Dieng. There are several belief groups in society regarding the emergence of dreadlocks, including:

The first group of people believes that children who suddenly have dreadlocks are descendants of Kolodete (Marlina et al., 2021, p. 4). However, regarding who and where ki Kolodete comes from, there are still different versions among the Dieng community. The first version states that ki Kolodete was a Hindu sage who lived on the Dieng plateau. Kolodete is considered a ruler and guardian (*baurekso*) as well as a *dhayang* who provides protection on the Dieng plateau. Apart from that, Kolodete is also believed to be the

ancestor of the Dieng plateau people (Febriyanto et al., 2018b, p. 4). According to local beliefs, Kolodete had dreadlocks and never cut them until the people of Dieng could live prosperously. Before *moksa*, Kolodete advised that if there is a Dieng boy with dreadlocks, he is his incarnation and is a lucky child, and to remove the dreadlocks he must go through the ritual. In another version, it is stated that Ki Kaladete was the husband of Nyi Roro Kidul who controlled the Telaga Balekambang area in Dieng. From here the belief emerged that children with dreadlocks were descendants or entrusted to them by Nyi Roro Kidul. So the hair must be cut and returned to the Kidul sea through a procession at the Written River or Serayu River. Dreadlocks must also be cut according to the first sura in the Javanese calendar. Because people believe that the date of the first sura is the date when Ki Kaladete and Nyi Roro Kidul got married (Widyatwati, 2012, p. 9).

Another version of this group believes that the dreadlocked child was the favorite child of Nyai Roro Kidul as ruler of the south coast of Java. They believe that the child was a dancer at the big ceremony on the evening of one sura in the kingdom of Nyai Roro Kidul. With this belief, the people of Dieng believe that children with dreadlocks are special children who bring blessings and good fortune to their families and the people of Dieng. Based on the researchers' review, these speculations are related to the character of the Abangan community's interpretative nature toward phenomena, tending to associate aspects beyond reason with *dhayang* (supernatural beings).

The second group of people believes that ki Kolodete is Tumenggung Kaladete who was one of the dignitaries at the Yogyakarta Palace. Tumenggung Kaladete then went to Dieng and began carrying out tripping to build the village area. Because the natural conditions are very cold, it is very difficult to create agricultural land. Seeing this reality, Tumenggung Kaladete vowed not to bathe, be dirty or have dreadlocks until the Dieng area could become prosperous and prosperous. This oath was held until Tumenggung Kaladete died. The children descended from Tumenggung Kaladete also have dreadlocks, this has become a public belief that when Dieng children have dreadlocks they are descendants of Tumenggung Kaladete and should be treated special. Because they (children with dreadlocks) are believed to be children who bring blessings (Hamsah, 2020, p. 263).

The next version is not much different from the previous one, only that Tumenggung Kaladete was a Yogyakarta palace official who embraced Islam. Tumenggung Kaladete came to Dieng in an effort to spread the teachings of Islam. After successfully entering the Dieng plateau, Tumenggung Kaladete created the Islamic Dieng area with a "fortress" system. The eastern part of Dieng was placed by Kiai Selomanik in Kali Terban village as his fortress. The western part of the fort was placed by Kiai Mangkuyudho in Karang Tengah Village. Meanwhile, the southern part is placed by Kiai Girik in Sigunung Village. The Tumenggung or Kiai Kaladete himself is in Dieng at the Kalibeber Islamic boarding school as the center of the Muslim community. The existence of these Muslim figures is highly respected by the people of the Dieng Plateau. It is even said that they have the power of connivance (Nisa', 2020, p. 50) and could also have direct contact with Muslim figures from India, Sheikh Gegaha Abdullah Hariri, whose grave is in Dieng (Hamsah, 2020, p. 263). After these figures died, their existence, which was initially respected, shifted to being revered and used as "eternal ancestors" by the people of Dieng. Especially Tumenggung Kaladete had dreadlocks, so the belief emerged that children with dreadlocks were the incarnation of Tumenggung Kaladete (Zaidi et al., 2020, p. 124). On the other hand, religious leaders in the Dieng area believe that Kiyai Kaladete's dreadlocks are caused by natural factors. When he did 'babat alas' to clear the land for settlement, his

long hair got entangled with tree branches and tall grass, causing his hair to grow and become dreadlocks. Based on the researchers's review, it can be understood that the above speculation on meaning tends to be interpreted by the community using the santri typology, including Kiyai Sofiyan as a dreadlock hair cutting practitioner in the Dieng area who believes that Kiyai Kolodete's dreadlocks occur naturally.

While the process of cutting dreadlocks carried out by religious figures in the Dieng Banjarnegara area differs from the more festive cutting ceremony carried out in a lively manner at the Dieng Culture Festival (DCF). If participants in dreadlock cutting ceremony at the DCF event are more general, not limited to the Dieng community, then the implementation of dreadlock hair cutting by local religious figures is only carried out by the indigenous Dieng community. Apart from that, the process of cutting dreadlocks carried out by religious figures seems simpler compared to cutting dreadlocks at the Dieng Culture Festival.

If we refer to the implementation of the dreadlock cutting ritual ceremony carried out by religious figures, there are three stages involved. In the first stage, known as a preparatory stage, parents who have a child with dreadlocks, visit a religious figure and state their '*matur*' (a form of respect) along with their intentions and objectives, which is seek assistance in conducting the dreadlock cutting ritual. During this visit, the day of implementation, the venue, determination of the child's request and number of witnesses are agreed upon.

Based on interviews conducted, the location where the ritual of cutting dreadlocks is carried out either at the parents' house or at a prayer room close to the parents' house, specifically for those who have dreadlocked children. This location differs from where the hair cutting is carried out by traditional leaders, which takes place in the Batu Tulis area. The number of witnesses participating in the ritual ranges from 20 to 40 community members who frequently engage in feast or recitation activities. The chosen days are determined based on the financial capacity of the parents. Considering that in carrying out the dreadlocks cutting ritual, parents must prepare various types of *tumpang* (coned-shaped) rice and prepare the child's request to have their hair cut. Fulfilling the child's request is a method of persuading the child to agree to have their hair cut. Based on Kiyai Sopiyan's account, there were children who asked for '*jaranan*' performances, but due to high cost of presenting a *jaranan* performance, the parents negotiated by replacing the *jaranan* performance with buying a more affordable mobile phone.

The second stage is implementation. At this stage, children with dreadlocks clean themselves first by bathing. Bathing carried out by children does not have to be at the purification site. Children can shower at home before going to the prayer room or shower in the prayer room bathroom. After being in the prayer room, the religious figure gave a lecture first in front of the attending community at the dreadlock cutting ceremony location. The content of the sermon delivered is related to the aim of implementing cleansing ritual which is only addressed to Allah SWT. After delivering the sermon, the child whose hair was to be cut sat on a simple chair and all the witnesses present, parents and religious figures who had their hair cut stood. The child's parents and religious leaders were in front, while the community stood in a circle forming the letter O. After that, the religious leaders took scissors which had previously been soaked in a bowl filled with water and sprinkled with red and white roses. Shortly before carrying out the cutting, the religious figure reads a preparatory prayer, namely */ilahi Anta maqsudi, wa ridaka mathubi/* 'O my God, you are my goal and your blessing is something I ask for' in Javanese, read with */hanuding*

kanti karso panguji opo doyo insun/ (S. Sofyan, 2021). After reciting the opening prayer, the religious figure cuts the child's hair, accompanied by several prayers such as the Prophet Sulaiman Prayer and the *Nurbuwat* Prayer. After the hair is cut, the religious figure performs a closing prayer, called the *munjiyat* prayer, which is followed by cutting the *tumpeng* and eating it together with the people who were present at the time as witnesses.

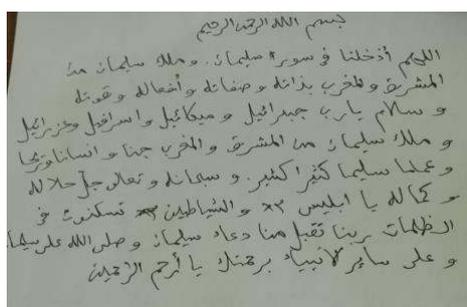


Figure 1. Prayer of Prophet Sulaiman
(Source: Personal Documentation)

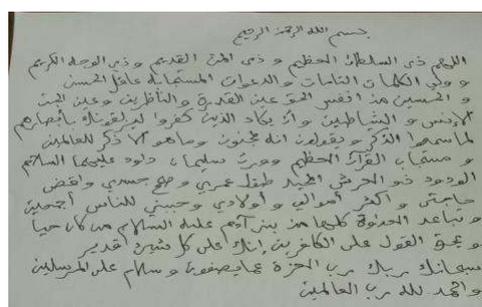


Figure 2. *Nurbuwat* prayer
(Source: Personal Documentation)

The third stage is closing. After the hair cutting process is complete and closed with prayer, the hair that has been cut does not have to be hung. Religious leaders invite parents to wrap cut hair or bundle it and throw it away. The place to lay the cut hair is the writing area. After that, parents and religious leaders cut the *tumpeng* in the form of *bucu robyong*, *bucu kalung*, and *ingkung* to be consumed by children with dreadlocks, parents, religious leaders, and the community as witnesses.

Offerings According to the Dieng Banjarnegara Community Santri Typology

If seen through the Totem and Totemime theory formulated by Emile Durkheim, the offerings prepared by the Dieng people during the ritual of dreadlock cutting can be said to be totems (Jones, 1986, p. 79) in a limited sense. In the dreadlock cutting ceremony, there are several objects that are considered symbols that represent other things that are considered sacred or holy. Totem, according to Emile Durkheim's understanding, is a symbol that represents something else that is worshiped (Hirst, 2010, p. 98). At the symbol level, researchers see that objects presented in rituals such as roses, either red or white, chicken *ingkung* which comes from white feathered chickens, *tumpeng*, and so on are symbols that represent other sacred meanings or substances. According to the author, this also falls into the totem category. However, the people of Dieng do not make these symbols something to be revered. Remembering that these objects are considered sacred because they represent the goodness that the Dieng people hope to receive from Allah SWT.

The offerings presented in dreadlock cutting ceremony are diverse. The completeness of offerings between community groups also varies. In general, there are those who use a complete variety of offerings, such as: (1) *Tumpeng kalung* made from white rice with the top edge decorated with a coconut that has been cut off the top and bottom. Then the middle part is inserted into the top end of the *tumpeng*, (Noth, 2006, p. 45) (2) *Tumpeng robyong* is white rice that is shaped in such a way as to resemble a mountain. The mountains of rice are then planted with various types of market snacks. (3) *Tumpeng Rasul*

or *Rasulan* is a tumpeng made from yellow rice. This tumpeng is called the tumpeng apostle because the making of this tumpeng is dedicated to the Prophet Muhammad saw, (Rusmana, 2005, p. 205) (4) *Tumpeng ijo* is a tumpeng made from the usual raw material of rice but then given a green color (Piliang, 2012, p. 67). (5) *Tumpeng Abang*. *Tumpeng abang* is a *tumpeng* made from red rice and shaped into a cone like other *tumpeng*. This tumpeng is placed in a *wakul* (rice container) made of bamboo and there is no decoration on it. (Halim, 2017, p. 76) (6) *Tumpeng ireng*. *Tumpeng ireng* is a *tumpeng* made from rice like other *tumpeng* but then colored black (in Javanese it is called "*ireng*"). *Tumpeng ireng* is a symbol of evil, sadness and various kinds of negative auras that exist in life. (S. Sofyan, 2021) (7) *Golong*. *Golong* is rice that is shaped into a round-size of an adult's fist and then accompanied by various kinds of side dishes and vegetables. *Sego golong* or *nasi golong* is a symbol of determination. (8) *Ambeng*. *Ambeng* is white rice placed on a *tampah* (a kind of tray but made from woven bamboo) accompanied by side dishes and vegetables. (9) *Inkung*. *Inkung* is a chicken that is slaughtered, then cut in the middle to remove the "innards" and then cooked whole without cutting it into pieces. (10) Market Snacks. The market snacks used in *ruwat* consist of seven types which include banana, sticky rice abang (red), *serabi*, white sticky rice, *krecek*, opak and *kelepon*. Tose market snacks have the meaning "do not get lost."

The native Dieng community who cut dreadlocks on religious figures do not use as many *ubo rampe* offerings as the seajen mentioned above. One of the religious figures who is a practicing the dreadlock cutting ceremony explained that in the independent cutting process, the conditions for the offerings prepared were not as many as the offerings presented in the series of dreadlock cutting ceremony at the Dieng Culture Festival. Apart from that, the meaning of the offerings explained is slightly different from the meaning of offerings at the Dieng Culture Festival. The offerings presented at the dreadlock cutting ceremony by religious figures amount to four offerings, including *bucu kalung*, *cucu robyong*, *ingkung*, and roses.

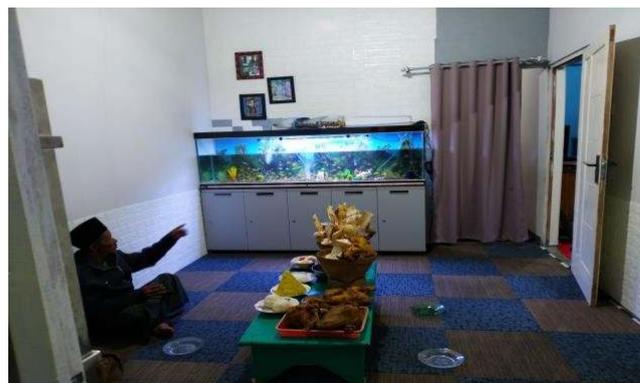


Figure 3. The Process of dreadlock cutting ritual Implementation by Religious Figures equipped with offerings and children's requests in the form of aquarium
(Source: Personal Documentation)

The following is *Uborampe* cutting dreadlocks and its philosophical meaning according to local religious figures: First, *Bucu kalung*. *Bucu Kalung* is actually the same as *tumpeng kalung* but sometimes its size is smaller than *tumpeng*. *Bucu kalung* is rice made into a cone and topped with coconut which has been peeled and cut off each end so that it resembles a bracelet or necklace that can be looped around the end of the rice. On top is also added a boiled egg which is ready to be consumed. Based on the narrative of religious figures, the *bucu kalung* is a symbol of hope that the child with dreadlocks will always be surrounded by goodness. These virtues are symbolized by various kinds of food stuck at the end in the form of coconuts, boiled eggs, and other foods if needed.

In this case, the researchers observe differences in the interpretation of the symbols of 'bucu kalung' and the 'tumpeng kalung' as seen in the DCF event. These difference are due to community groups that interpret the meaning of 'bucu kalung' or 'tumpeng kalung'. According to traditional figures, the 'tumpeng kalung' symbolises the burdens faced by dreadlocked children because they have been entrusted with the "responsibility" of dreadlocks by Kolodete. On the other hand, religious figures understand that t'bucu kalung' represents a prayer so that children will always be surrounded by goodness. This difference is caused by differences in the horizons of the community groups in Dieng between communities with a strong Javanese culture, and communities with Javanese culture that have been acculturated to certain religions, especially Islam. Understanding the history of Ki Kaladete for the community seems to give rise to differences in the interpretation of community groups regarding the offerings presented in the ceremony procession. Researchers saw that the circular shape of the peeled coconut at the end of the rice cone was an icon and symbol. In Charles Sanders Peirce's theory, icons and index signs can have a symbol-sign identity at the same time. The icon in question is the circle of good things (coconut as a food from nature which is included in the *halalan tayyiban* category) in the bucu (rice made into a cone) which depicts the hierarchy of life where everything must be aimed at the end (the Almighty) Allah SWT. In addition, the hierarchy below are creatures including humans. Therefore, society hopes for a circular goodness between humans' relationship with God (*hablu min Allah*) and goodness between creatures (*hablu min an-nas*). The similarity of the hierarchical imagination with the shape of 'bucu' in Peirce data semiotics is considered an iconic sign, however, the meaning of society that is agreed upon between community groups shows that the 'bucu kalung' also has an identity as a symbolic sign.



Figure 5. Variety of offerings in the dreadlock cutting ceremony
(Source: Personal Documentation)

Second, *Bucu Robyong*. *Bucu robyong* is the same as *tumpeng robyong*, just the name is slightly different. *Bucu Robyong* is also a rice cone (*tumpeng*) which is surrounded by traditional market snacks such as peyek, banana, lambing sari, mendut, and so on which are stuck around the *tumpeng*. According to Kiyai Sofyan - as a religious figure - interprets *bucu rombyong* as a symbol of the hope that the child will always be surrounded by goodness and good fortune from everywhere. Sofyan added that *Bucu Robyong* is a hope that the fortune that the dreadlocked child will receive will come from all directions. He also added a normative basis by mentioning the verse of the Koran */wa yarzuqu Allah min haisu la yahtasib/*. From this it appears that the icon sign is found in the rice cone and the food around it, market snacks are metaphorical icons of good fortune. Even though in Islam sustenance is not limited to material objects, traditional market snacks as a form of sustenance symbolise sustenance in a more general form.

Third, *Inkung*. In the independent of dreadlock cutting ritual, the provided *inkung* (offering) is not chosen indiscriminately. The chicken slaughtered and used for the *inkung* must be a chicken with white feathers or at least have yellow legs, not black. A white-feathered chicken in the *inkung* symbolises the hope that the child with dreadlocks will grow into a good and clean person. The chicken is then prepared as *inkung* so that the community can also enjoy the chicken, signifying the goodness emerging from the child, which is expected to have an impact felt by the surrounding community. Essentially, what is cleansed and purified is the heart, which is the center of all human behavior. In this context, the researchers see that the meaning of the white chicken, representing purity or cleanliness, can be categorised as an icon and symbol. The icon is found in the color white, associated with the quality of being clean. Of course, the interpretation of white as purity also represents an agreement made by a specific community. However, it is essential to understand that, in practice, Kyai Sofyan states that these criteria are not absolute. If a white-feathered village chicken is not found, then someone conducting the dreadlock cutting ritual can use a chicken with different colored feathers, as long as the chicken's legs are yellow, not black (S. Sofyan, 2021). In this aspect, the researchers observe that the *inkung* chicken used as an offering in the dreadlock cutting ritual is both an iconic sign and a symbol, where purity, identified with cleanliness, is symbolised by the white color of the chicken's feathers. Additionally, the community's interpretation of self-purification with chicken feathers is based on the agreement within the community.

Fourth, red and white roses. Usually placed in one container, red and white roses are mixed in one container. Red and white roses symbolise beauty. The scent of roses is not overpowering but still fragrant when smelled, as if saying "look at my child (who is being treated) as if you were looking at a rose, it is beautiful to look at and you won't want it to be picked carelessly." This symbolises that parents want to participate in handing over their children to society so that they can help maintain their children's relationships and prevent them from getting involved in negative social circles.

In exploring the various meaning frameworks for *umbo rampe ruwatan*, it is necessary to understand that these variations do not only originate from differences in typology alone, but are also closely related to the complexity of past, present experiences and future hopes that form religious narratives. (Sulaiman, 2018, pp. 142–143) In the framework of Talal Asad's discursive theory, this negotiation process can be interpreted as a reflection of the dynamics of power, knowledge, and practices that influence each other.

The significance of *umbo rampe* ceremony is seen as the result of negotiating cultural values (Caputo et al., 2019, p. 7) and the interplay between past experiences,

current experiences and future expectations (Keller, 2018, p. 30) This can also be understood as a concrete manifestation of discursive processes. Discourse here encompasses a series of linguistic actions, symbols and practices that shape collective representations (Keller, 2018, p. 30) regarding pre-Islamic traditions and Islamic values. In this context, Kyai Sofyan functions as a discursive forming agent managing the articulation of these meanings, creating a narrative that align with the normative foundations of religion and are acceptable to the community. The normative foundation in Islam as an element that harmonises the meaning of *umbo rampe ruwatan* offers a perspective that can be linked to the concept of "regime of truth" in discursive theory. This concept reflects the dominance of a particular ideology or belief system that regulates the production, distribution and validation of knowledge (Capilla, 2021, p. 314). In this case, Islamic norms play a central role in forming a regime of truth that directs the way of understanding the practice of the dreadlock cutting ceremony.

Conflicts that may arise, as seen in the view of the puritan group, are a form of resistance to the domination of the truth regime promoted by Kyai Sofyan. However, it is important to remember that this conflict is not simply a struggle between local traditions and religion, but rather a reflection of a broader negotiation process in society. Kyai Sofyan's concept as a representation of normative-contextualist Muslims requires a deeper understanding of the concept of contextualization in discursive theory. Contextualization here includes placing meaning in the specific context of local society. Kyai Sofyan, by integrating Islamic values into the context of the ruwatan tradition, illustrates how religious meaning cannot be separated from local social and cultural realities. It is important to note that every significance expressed in this context is always grounded in the normative foundation of Islam. While there may be debates or disagreements with puritanical groups that might see it as a form of "syncretism", a more in-depth analysis cannot overlook that Islamic teachings cannot be completely separated from traditional heritage. Communities that have a close relationship with the dreadlock cutting tradition continue to shape their Islamic identity through a process of acculturation and reinterpretation (Fattaah, 2022).

Kyai Sofyan can be seen as a representative of normative-contextualist Muslims. Its normative nature lies in the consistency of the meaning of *umbo rampe ruwatan* which always refers to normative principles in Islam. Meanwhile, its contextual nature can be seen in its ability to contextualize each understanding according to the social and cultural realities of the local community. This creates a harmony between the normative aspects of religion and the contextual existence in the formation of Islamic identity in that society. From this, it is evident that there is complexity in the negotiation process between local traditions and religion (Richardson & Rammal, 2018, p. 2) in shaping the meaning of religion. Thus, to understand how the construction of religious meaning emerges, one must not only view it as a mere reflection of theological teachings but also consider the dynamic interactions between various historical, social and cultural factors in a society.

CONCLUSION

Based on the aforementioned description, it can be concluded that offerings falling into the totem category within the Dieng Banjarnegara community are manifested in ubo rampe or objects presented in rituals, whether they be of animals or plants origin. These objects symbolise something sacred and are expected to be present in the lives of children with dreadlocks and the surrounding community. Consequently, these objects can be identified to be totems. It is just that these totems are not revered by the people of Dieng. Therefore, the researchers concluded that the people of Dieng Banjarnegara were adherents of limited totemism or could be characterised to be quasi-totemism. Forms of syncretism between Hindu, Javanese and Islamic teachings surface through the use of Javanese prayers and their interpretation of umbo rampe. These rituals are not solely intended as models for Muslims (such as the Prophet Muhammad) but there are also those intended for the ingkang baurekso of the Dieng plateau, called Ki Kolodete. The hopes of the people of Dieng who rely on Ki Kolodete not to get angry (to be able to provide protection) are also juxtaposed with hope in God at the same time. The meaning of totems in dreadlocks in Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic perspective can be categorised into three signs; First, the meaning of totems falls into the category of symbols such as the meaning of ambeng. Second, it is included in the iconic category, such as the meaning of tumpeng abang. Third, there are several totems that have two identities at once, including symbols and icons, for example in the meaning of the white chicken used in ceremony. The meaning of symbols for several umbo rempe has several kinds of interpretations depending on the interpreting community. For example, the cultural community (represented by cultural figures) interprets the tumpeng necklace or bucu necklace as a burden placed on a child who has dreadlocks to be able to look after it as a gift from Ki Kolodete and Nyi Roro Kidul. Meanwhile, in religious communities (represented by religious figures), the tumpeng necklace or bucu necklace means that the tumpeng is a prayer so that the child with dreadlocks will always be surrounded by goodness in his life.

This research is likely to be further developed in different aspects and perspectives, such as power relations and other factors influencing the visualisation of Islamic teachings in the practical realm. This could either add to or reduce the results of the current research conducted by the researchers.

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