

## Functions and Values of Ritual “*Larung Sesaji Kelud*” in the Community of around Kelud Mountain

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**Abstract.** *Larung sesaji kelud is a customary ritual held in the crater of Mount Kelud. This traditional Javanese cultural ceremony is being held every month Suro (Javanese calendar). This ritual is taken place in the Sugihwaras Village, Ngancar District, Kediri. This research uses qualitative method. Qualitative method is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral data of the people observed. The data in this research are the result of interview with informant and act of ceremony performer. Larung sesaji means to reject the oath of Lembu Suro deceived Goddess Kilisuci. “Yoh, Kediri mbesuk bakal pethuk piwalesku sing makaping-kaping, yaiku Kediri bakal dadi kali, Blitar dadi latar, lan Tulungagung dadi kedung “ furthermore this sacred ritual performed as a form of gratitude to the God as a ruler, and also to reverence to the ruler of Mount Kelud. Larung sesaji Kelud as cultural preservation has spiritual values, as well as tourism asset so it can improve the economy of the local communities.*

**Keywords:** *function and values, Ritual of Larung Sesaji, community of Kelud*

**Abstrak.** *Larung Sesaji Kelud adalah sebuah ritual adat yang ada kawah Gunung Kelud. Upacara adat ini diadakan setiap bulan Suro (penanggalan Jawa). Ritual sesaji ini digelar di Desa Sugihwaras, Kecamatan Ngancar, Kabupaten Kediri. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Metode kualitatif adalah prosedur penelitian yang menghasilkan data deskriptif berupa data tertulis atau lisan orang yang diobservasi. Data dalam penelitian ini adalah hasil wawancara dengan informan dan pelaku pelaksana upacara. Larung Sesaji dimaksudkan untuk menolak bala sumpah Lembu Suro yang ditipu Dewi Kilisuci. “Yoh, Kediri mbesuk bakal pethuk piwalesku sing makaping-kaping, yaiku Kediri bakal dadi kali, Blitar dadi latar, lan Tulungagung dadi kedung “ ~Lembu Sura~ selain itu ritual suci ini sebagai bentuk rasa syukur kepada tuhan penguasa, dan juga bentuk rasa hormat pada penguasa Gunung Kelud. Ritual Larung Sesaji Kelud sebagai pelestarian budaya, mempunyai nilai-nilai spiritual, serta sebagai aset pariwisata sehingga meningkatkan perekonomian masyarakat sekitar.*

**Kata kunci:** *fungsi dan nilai, Ritual Larung Sesaji, masyarakat Kelud*

## INTRODUCTION

Traditional rituals are parts of the community's life, especially for Javanese culture which is famous as “*klenik*” or mystical culture. That culture is not separated by the rituals that must be done to communicate with the creatures in another world or mystic. It same with ritual of *Larung Sesaji* which exist in the community of around mount kelud. This ritual is a heritage of ancestors believed by the people of around mount Kelud to escape from the tantrums of this volcano.

Some theories and definitions of culture will be explain in this chapter, Soemardjan and Soemardi (in Soekanto, 2007) formulate, culture as all the work, taste and creation of society. The work of society produces technology and material culture or physical culture (material culture) needed by humans to control the natural surroundings so that the strength and results can be devoted to the needs of society.

The purpose of *ritual* is still attached to the community, though the developed society, the norms and the values of life are learned through education, both formally and nonformally, whereas in traditional societies there is a socialization tool called traditional ceremony, which is a social activity involving citizens in the effort to achieve Common safety goals (Soepanto 2011: 5).

Various activities of the work, taste and creations of the society is called a culture. Including of ritual *Larung Sesaji Kelud* is a culture that is done by the community around Mount Kelud. Referring to the phenomenon of the volcano. In the implementation of traditional ceremonies required *ubo rampen* or *sesaji*. *Sesaji* is the actualization of the mind, desire, and feelings of people to get closer to God. *Sesaji* are also a symbolic discourse that is used as a means of spiritual ‘negotiation’ to the spiritual magic. The purpose of this ritual is to save the people from the bad magic. By feeding symbolically to the spirits, it

is hoped that the spirit will be benign, and willing to help human life (Endraswara, 2003: 195).

Rini (2014) found the Tradition of *Larung Sesaji* was closely related to the preservation of the environment and the fulfillment of the religious needs of local communities. By performing of *Larung Sesaji*, the community gained inner peace and the nature is maintained well to avoid disaster.

Mount Kelud is one of the most active volcanoes in Indonesia. Kelud has last eruption on February 13, 2014. Mount Kelud is one of the volcanoes which has a traditional ceremony because the people's trust is still very strong against supernatural powers. One of the activities in the custom is a ritual. Ritual is a technique, the way to make our habitual activities become holly. Rituals create and care for myths, social and religious customs. Ritual can be personal or group, its form can be prayer, dance, and drama. Rituals are usually performed in certain special place that believed to give a blessing to them. Ritual of Mount Kelud is an annual ceremony which is celebrated by the community around Mount Kelud. This event is celebrated every month *Suro* in Javanese calendar.

Based on the explanation above, whether the ritual just as a bar of reinforcements or it has values and other functions? This formulation became the basic research of this study. This research has cultural communication knowledge which has values and functions from ritual *Larung Sesaji Kelud*. The impact of this activities are not a hindrance from the mystical ritual but there are also non-mystical or in the field of social economy in society.

The purpose of this study is to describe the perception of the community around Mount Kelud in the *Ritual Sesaji* of Mount Kelud. Community has its own peculiarities in giving the meaning of that ritual.

## METHODS

This research uses qualitative method. Qualitative method is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral data of the people observed. Based on the philosophy of rationalism that a valid science is obtained from intellectual understanding and the ability to argue logically. In empirical reality is a single reality not interpreted from the perspective (Muhadjir, 2000: 83-84).

The data in this research are the result of interview with informant and act of perpetrator of ceremony. At traditional ritual ceremony happens. Collecting data in this study through in-depth interviews and observations In Sugihwaras Village, Ngancar Districts, Kediri, East Java.

The researcher's informant is a person who is used to provide information about the situation and condition of the research background (Moleong 2000:97). Informants are people who really know the problems to be researched. In this research there are two informants, they are:

- (1) Key informants, are people who really understand the problems to be researched. While the key informants in this research are village head of Sugihwaras and the elder of Sugihwaras. Both of them are the most understand people about ceremonial ritual of *Larung Sesaji*.
- (2) Non key informants, are people who are deemed to know the problems to be researched, they are the villagers of sugihwaras who participated in the ritual *Larung Sesaji* ceremony.

Instruments of data collection are the form of interview guides, recording devices, cameras and notebook.

Through qualitative methods, it allows researchers to organize, criticize, and clarify interesting data. Thus, this qualitative research leads researchers to gain unexpected findings and build new theoretical frameworks (Endraswara, 2003: 14-15).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mount *Kelud* is a strato volcano which is the most dangerous mountain in East Java. Mount Kelud is considered 'nurturing' the people of Kediri and Blitar. Mount Kelud is like mountains in Java Island in general, close to the local wisdom and belief. Kelud, in Java is cleaning something from dust or sweeping. Kelud can also be interpreted as a tool to clean something.

Local people believe that every *Kelud* eruption has a natural effort to clean up the negative elements of human life and also as a means of re-synergy between nature and humans. The relationship between community and Mount Kelud is also manifested through folklore. Starting from the myth of *Lembu Suro* versus *Dewi Kilisuci*

*"Yoh, Kediri mbesuk bakal pethuk piwalesku sing makaping-kaping, yaiku Kediri bakal dadi kali, Blitar dadi latar, lan Tulungagung dadi kedung"*  
~Lembu Sura~ ( The famous Javanese myths in the Kelud community about the promise of Lembu Suro to Blitar, Tulungagung and Kediri areas against to the betrayal of Dewi Kilisuci)

The above sentence is "sepatan" or curse which pronounced by *Lembu Suro*, a legendary figure that characterizes the history of Kediri in East Java. As well as the history of Majapahit Kingdom. According to local legend, Mount Kelud caused by the betrayal of a princess named *Dewi Kilisuci* between two loves of kings who compete to marry her, they are *Lembu Suro* and *Mahesa Suro*. *Dewi Kilisuci* is the daughter of *Jenggolo Manik*. Because of her beauty both of two kings fighting over to compete her, both of *Lembu Suro* and *Mahesa Suro* are not normally human being, because of the ones human-headed bulls is *Lembu Suro* and the other human-headed buffalo is *mahesa Suro*.

*Dewi Kilisuci* who refuse to accept

their applications end up making difficult competition, which makes two wells on the top of Mount Kelud which one of well has a sweet smell while the other well has smelled fishy and the contest should be realized only in a one night.

Both of *Lembu Suro* and *Mahesa Suro* have supernatural power, this competition is willing to work overnight and both of them are become the winner. The wins of two kings were not liked by *Dewi Kilisuci*, until finally *Dewi Kilisuci* has another requirement that two kings had to prove that the two wells are fragrant and sweet and both of them should go into the pit which they have made.

With the additional conditions, the two kings agreed and they both went into the wells which are very deep. Once they have arrived at the well, *Dewi Kilisuci* ordered the troops to offset them immediately with piled of rocks that resulted the death of *Lembu Suro* and *Mahesa Suro*. However, before the King of *Lembu Suro* dead, he swore with a curse: “Well, tomorrow Kediri’s people will be rewarded of me. Kediri will be a river, Tulungagung will be a lake, and Blitar will be a land.”

Based on the legend and boast of the King of *Lembu Sura* above, the people of around *Kelud* area make his own reject the oath deliberately, the goal is to appease the anger of *lembu Sura* that will destroy the surrounding area through eruption and lava’s kelud mountain. Each village has its own procession or ceremony, such as, there are preparing *sesaji*, some of them carry out *kenduri (selamatan)* and others, which is held on every *sura* month.

Kinds of rejecting oath are held by the Community of *Sugihwaras* Village, *Ngancar* district, *Kediri* Regency. The village is located on the west side of Kelud Mountain, holds a Traditional Ceremony called “Kelung Sesaji Gunung Kelud”, which is implemented by the local community as a form of gratitude for his protection from the oath of *Lembu Sura* that the local people believed.

Traditional ceremony activities have been held every year for each generations in the *Sura* month. This ceremony is held until now, with participants who come from various societies.

Because local people believe that Mount *Kelud* is a meeting place of the spirits of Java-Bali. This is marked by the number of Balinese and surrounding people who participate in offering *Sesaji* on Mount *Kelud*.

### **Ritual Ceremony of *Sesaji Kelud* on the Community around Kelud**

*Sesaji Kelud* culture is held every month *suro*, the society believed that a mountain is something sacred place, especially people around Mount Kelud. People around the slopes of Mount Kelud also believe that Mount Kelud is a sacred place. It appears that every once a year precisely on the Moon *Suro* (month in Javanese calendar), people around the slopes held a ceremony or ritual *Larung Sesaji* performed in the crater of Mount Kelud. According to the community around Kelud, the ritual is held every 1 a year exactly on the Moon *Suro*. It is the fact of the balance between nature and humans on earth.

Based on the explanation of the people who perform the ritual, it can be concluded that nature as a place of center community activities in the social, cultural, economic, and so on, which can be categorized as human activities. *Sesaji Kelud* is facilities or media between humans and nature which has good relationship and they have *Larung Sesaji* as a gratitude.

There are many kinds of forms for human repayment with nature, depending on how the customs of the people who live in it. As for example that happened in Mount Kelud it is a form of repayment with nature, they have done *Larung Sesaji* at the crater of Mount Kelud.

*Larung Sesaji* in the crater of Mount Kelud, which bewitched is the result of

human activities performed on earth or nature. For example, if in the community of Mount Kelud, they bewitched in the form of agricultural products. Various things brought in this sacred ritual, for example rice, vegetables, dishes, and fruits. In ritual of *Larung Sesaji*, local people usually bring two types of cone-shape rice, namely cone-shape white rice and yellow rice (*tumpeng nasi putih* and *tumpeng nasi kuning*). *Tumpeng* is completed with various dishes, such as eggs, tofu, tempeh, urap (boiled vegetables), grated chilli sauce of coconut and much more. Interestingly, all *sesaji* are decorated and arranged in such a way that it looks beautiful.

*Sesaji* in the ritual ceremony are as follows. 1) *Buceng kuat*, 2) *lodho sego gurih*, 3) *buceng kendit*, 4) *sego punar*, 5) *buceng towo*, 6) *keleman*, 7) *market snack*, 8) *jenang reno pitu*, 9) *setaman flower*, 10) *comb, powder, mirror*, 11) *cok bakal*, and 12) *ubo rampen*.

First, *buceng kuat*. *Buceng kuat* is a *buceng* which the top consist of glutinous rice. *Buceng* is a symbol of strength. The meaning of *buceng kuat* is the community of *Kelud* ask for safety, strength in life.

Second, *lodho sego gurih* also called *sekul suci ulam sari* is *sesaji* which addressed to the Prophet Muhammad *sallahu 'alaihi wasallam*. The use of this *sesaji* is a hope for getting directions from the Prophet in order to be permitted by God.

Third, *buceng kendit* is a *buceng* which circled yellow rice in the middle. This *Buceng* is a symbol of the relationship between the inhabitants of *Kelud* with the South Sea.

Fourth, *sego punar* or yellow rice is cooked rice with a little turmeric so the colour became clean and yellow. *Sego punar* is a symbol of cleanliness. The meaning of yellow rice is to clean something that is not good. *Sego punar* consists of *sambal goreng*, *srundeng*, *lodho*.

Fifth, *buceng towo* is a *buceng*

made from ordinary rice, but the top is also glutinous rice like a *buceng kuat*. *Buceng towo* is a symbol of immunity. Derived from the word *towo* / bargaining which means immune.

Sixth, *keleman* is a safety symbol in farming. The use of *keleman* to prevent the plants from disturbing pests and to inform the farmer guards. *Keleman* consist of two kinds, the *polo gemandul* and *polo pemdem*s which steamed. *Polo gemandul* is a long bean, boiled banana, and *waluh*. *Polo pemdem*s are peanuts, arrowroot, sweet potato, *ganyong*, *gothe*, *uwi*, *cassava*.

Seventh, the market snack is a symbol of the crowd. The purpose of using a market snack is an expectation that visitors of *Mount Kelud* tourism is as crowded as the market.

Eighth, *jenang reno pitu* also called *jenang suro* is a *jenang* in the form of peanuts, soybeans, *koro* and other types of beans that amount to seven kinds. This *jenang* also amounts to seven colors namely white, black, blue, pink / red, orange, brown and gray.

Ninth, *kembang setaman* consist of water, *kenanga* flowers, roses, *kantil* flowers, *banyan* leaves, *andong*, *puring*, buds of small banana trees, *mayang*, and *jambe* leaves.

Tenth, *comb, powder, and mirror* addressed to the female inhabitants of *Kelud* mountain. she is *Nyai Gadung Melati*.

Eleventh, *cok bakal* is the symbol of the seed of the *dhanyang's* earth, which is a inhabitant that controls the earth. *Cok bakal* consist of flowers *telon*, eggs, seasoning kitchen, *janur*, matches, *Gudang Garam* cigarettes, *kobot*, betel, money, black glutinous rice, small pitchers.

Twelve, *ubo rampen* for *sesaji* consist of *dupa ratus*, *gondo* fragrant, incense, flowers, *jerami*, opium. *Ubo rampen* is a tool used as a means to deliver *sesaji* to the intended inhabitant. It is also a symbol for the surrender of *sesaji* and to

summon spirits who will be given *sesaji*. *Larung Sesaji* is offering promotion to the Mount *Kelud* which experienced a decrease in the number of tourists after the eruption that occurred in February 2014,

All food were brought by the citizens collected in the middle. They sat around it and listen to the customary leaders reciting prayers. After praying, they will scramble for taking *tumpang* in the form of traditional food, products of earth, vegetables and fruit.

The embodiment of the traditional ceremony is planned and arranged in advance (Poerwadarminta 1986) which not only solves human problems but also possesses the values that build a civilization. Thus always change in line with the wheel of civilization itself, and has significance in human culture that gives a certain value throughout the course of human history (Sachari 1985). Cultural values that can be picked for exemplified inherited by the ritual of *Larung Sesaji Kelud*.

### **Functions and Values of Ritual *Larung Sesaji Kelud* Ceremony as Cultural Preservation**

The term conservation in general can be defined as a business or activity to care for, protect and develop conservation objects that have value to be preserved. So far it has not been a standard definition that is mutually agreed upon. Various terms and terms of preservation try to be expressed by urban experts in looking at the problems that arise based on their own concepts and perceptions.

Pontoh (1992: 36), suggests that the initial concept of preservation is conservation, which is the effort to preserve and protect and simultaneously utilize the resources of a place with adaptation to new functions, without eliminating the meaning of cultural life.

Ritual activity of *Larung Sesaji Kelud* is trying to preserve the culture of the people around kelud. A variety of

activities that show custom rituals that they believe. Ritual cultures of *Larung Sesaji Kelud* is a heritage of their ancestors and already part of community life on the slopes of Kelud Mountain. These ritual involve many kinds of elements of their village include youth. That is to instill the younger generation to care for the culture and ritual of *Larung Sesaji Kelud*.

Budihardjo (1994: 22), preservation efforts means maintaining traditional architectural and traditional environments exactly like the original state. Due to the stellar nature of preservation, conservation efforts require a dynamic conservation approach, not only of the building but also its environment (conservation areas) and even historical cities (towns). With the conservation approach, various activities can be done, assessing the inventory of historic and colonial traditional buildings, restoration efforts (restoration), rehabilitation, reconstruction, until the revitalization that is giving new breath of life.

Keraf (2002) explain that local wisdom is any form of knowledge, belief, understanding or insight and habits that guide behavior in life within the ecological community. All forms of local wisdom are lived, practiced, taught and passed down from generation to generation as well as shaping human behavior patterns towards fellow human beings, both natural and occult (mystic).

The ritual ceremony of *Larung Sesaji Kelud* begin with traditional dance performances, after that *sesaji* are brought by the dancers and given to the elders. Traditional ceremony is one form of cultural expression, contains many values that can be emulated and internalized by the next generation. In essence of value system is the central position of the cultural structure of a society, and the value system is a phenomenon and the basic problem of human life, because the value system is a device structure in human life both individually and socially.

### Functions and Values of Ritual *Larung Sesaji Kelud* as Spiritual

The ceremony of *Larung Sesaji* involved the elders' village who had performed rituals the night before. The elders' village lead the ceremony of *larung sesaji*. The *sesaji* were prepared according to the number of elders' village. The contents of *sesaji* such as certain flowers (*bunga setaman*), eggs, rolled cigarettes (*rokok lintingan*), and a number of other objects that are placed in the banana leaf.

The next procession has a symbolic meaning that is the burning of *uborampen*, followed by a moment of silence. *Ubo rampen* were burned by Mbah Ronggo. The meaning which consist is that *ubo rampen* only burned by the caretaker who trusted *suguh* there. The next procession is a moment of silence by holding *ubo rampen* that has been burned, followed by stomping hands to the ground three times. This procession means communication with the supernatural nature of the inhabitants of Mount Kelud. The next procession is *ujub* by Mbah Ronggo. The procession means *masrahne* or convey.

Islam implies that the people who follow this ritual of *Larung Sesaji* still remember that the main purpose in prayer is to ask God while the ritual *Larung Sesaji* is only as a means to honor the existence of gosh (makhluk halus) that must be respected. While the *Larung Sesaji* are given as a symbol of respect to the figure of the targeted beings. In addition, *Larung Sesaji* are also a means of giving alms to people who follow the lesson of the Prophet Muhammad delivered by Sunan Kalijaga. According to that explanation, Hadisutrisno (2009: 154) states that *sesaji* that previously had the intention to worship to the gosh changed by Sunan Kalijaga so that become the procedure of giving alms to the poor, close neighbors, relatives, family and others.

The next procession is to compete *sesaji* that have been prayed for. The people who attended the ceremony

believed that *Sesaji* which had been prayed contained many blessings. They all scramble to get the blessing of the foods. Elderly clothing and customary stakeholders in *larung Sesaji* ceremony are black. This is to honor the residents of Mount Kelud who likes black costumes. The black clothes used by elders one of them is beskap equipped with buttons 'benik' on the left and right. 'Benik' has a meaning that the Javanese person performs all actions in any cases *becike diniknik*, calculated carefully. What to do should not be destroyed by others (Hadisutrisno, 2009: 87). The use of *udeng* also has an implied meaning that the elders who perform rituals more *mudheng* or understand about life and ritual ceremony of *larung sesaji*.

### Function and Values of Ritual *Larung Sesaji* Ceremony as Tourism Assets

The definition of "Cultural Tourism" or "Culture Tour" which exist, it is not easy to determine which of the definitions is the most appropriate to use, especially when associated with Indonesian tourism. Before looking at the relationship between the words "tourism" and "culture", it helps us examine each of these words first.

The word "tourism" according to *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* is related to travel for recreation; travel; tourism. *Larung sesaji* ceremony can be categorized as a local tourism that is tourism activities which scope is limited to certain places only.

While the 'culture' comes from the Sanskrit language *buddhayah*, which is the plural form of *buddhi* (mind or intellect) is defined as matters relating to the mind, and the human mind. In English, 'culture' is called culture, which comes from the Latin word *colere*, the meaning is processing or working.

*Larung Sesaji* is an alternative tourism, Maman (2008) alternative tourism is a process of developing a form of fair tourism activities between

different communities. The objective of this alternative tourism is the solidarity network of some communities and the equality with the various parties concerned.

Tourism practices, which seeing culture (as well as nature), primarily as a source of commodities, have an unfavorable impact. Positive impacts that can be felt immediately in terms of economic benefits, but in fact they are only short-term benefits. The perceived later is the bad impact, which is on the expression and existence of the culture that the source of the commodity.

Wardana and Widodo's research (2016) found tourist attraction to Sarangan lake like accessibility, facility, attraction, service and good promotion. The dominant interesting factor of tourists visit to Telaga Sarangan is the attraction owned by the manager.

The fact is the significant number of visitors who come to see the ceremony, not only the entire community but those Visitors in addition to following their ceremony came to witness of natural beauty. The number of visitors who come to attend or witness the traditional ceremony indirectly a domestic and foreign tourists. This conditions would increase the income for the local community because there were sale and purchase transaction goods or merchandise. A number of other events also held, such as documentary movie of post-eruption Kelud, UMKM exhibitions, and other events

According to Pitana and Diarta (2009: 184) a tourist destination visited by tourists can be viewed as a temporary consumer. They come to the area for a period of time, use the resources and facilities and usually spend much money on various purposes, then they leaved the place to return home or country. If tourists who come to these destinations spend a lot of money to buy various purposes during the holidays, it cannot be denied that it will have an impact to the economic life of the area, either directly or indirectly.

The economic impact it generates can be both positive and negative.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of the *Sesaji* ritual ceremony is to ask God for salvation so that the people of Sugihwaras and surrounding villages are given safety, for example if there is a disaster it does not get any victims. The ceremony also asks the blessing for the farming community to be given a satisfactory result. Because of the most livelihoods of Sugihwaras villagers are gardening. Besides this sacred ritual as a form of gratitude to the god as the ruler, and also a form of respect to the ruler of Mount Kelud. Ritual of *Sesaji* Kelud is as cultural preservation, has spiritual values, as well as tourism assets so it can improve the economy of the surrounding community.

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