

How People Perceived Heirlooms as Sources of Environmental Values: Magic's Frazer Theory on The *Jamasan* Ritual

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Abstract

The magical side of the *jamasan* ritual is often put aside to save the impression of the *jamasan* ritual as a result of the label of syncretism between Java and Islam. Because instead of being considered a 'religious ritual', *jamasan* is part of Javanese culture which is separated from their beliefs. However, academics need to pay attention to another part of the *jamasan* process to extract how this ritual holds various environmental values that shape the mindset and identity of the community. This research aims to explain how (1) the magical side of the *Jamasan* ritual can build a 'logical' rhetoric of Javanese beliefs. In addition, (2) how the belief in the sanctified objects as heirlooms has implications for the transfer of values of respect for the environment in which the Javanese live. This research takes a case study of the *Jamasan* Kiai Ngaliman Ritual in the Nganjuk Regency, using James George Frazer's magical theory approach and ethnographic methods for data collection. As a result, awareness of the people's attachment to their ancestors through heirlooms becomes a medium for how they 'communicate' with the surrounding nature. This awareness is reminiscent of their location in the mountains, which relies on good natural conditions for agriculture, plantations, stable soil and water intake, and avoidance covid virus and other natural disasters. This attachment to ancestors is valuable in maintaining the stability of social cohesion to understand the surrounding nature.

Keywords: *Jamasan*, Magic, Heirlooms, Environmentalism Values

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INTRODUCTION

Heirlooms serve to objectify memories and history. In societies constantly dealing with changing social conditions, heirlooms maintain the stability and continuity of group identity based on ancestry. Heirlooms can survive in two ways, through storytelling and their use in rituals.¹ Stories about heirlooms enhance sentimental values that are then embedded in clan history and carry meaning from one generation to the next.

The most ubiquitous and treated heirloom in Javanese culture is the keris. Each keris is an unbroken link that links generations with the community's founders, who are believed to have mystical abilities. In the succession of generations, keris is a constant element; equipped with its distinctive markings, it embodies the clan's ancestors. From this perspective, keris is not personal property, but an ancestral object with at least more than ordinary value inherited as family heirlooms. Javanese people keep a family heirloom that includes lances, gongs, puppets, and keris. Once a year, on Friday Kliwon or Tuesday Kliwon in the month of Suro, these objects are cared for by all members of the community who are also relatives.

The noble families held the ceremony where the empu acted as officiant, and the reigning prince and all other princes were present and honoring the process of ritual. However, Javanese outside the royal circle also attach great importance to "feeding" of the heirlooms and never neglect them. They express the heirlooms' deepest respect; they take the sacred objects out of the chests in which they are kept and open the covers that encase them. Offerings are made; incense is burned. The weapon's steel is rubbed with lime juice and then arsenic until the color becomes dull; once dry, the blades are oiled. Even the liquid used to clean them is considered so precious that it is collected and also considered a sacred heirloom.² This process of cleaning is called by *jamasan*.

Although the keris or other heirlooms are valued as symbols of the kinship community, the individual aspect of the clan symbol is present in keris, mainly.

¹ Carolyn Folkman Curasi, Eric J. Arnould, and Linda L. Price, "Ritual Desire and Ritual Development: An Examination of Family Heirlooms in Contemporary North American," in *Contemporary Consumption Rituals: A Research Anthology*, 1st ed. (Psychology Press, 2003), 237–65.

² Dr W H Rassers, "On The Javanese *Keris*," in *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* (BRILL, 1940), 501–82.

Mysteriously, keris is believed to be the absolute equivalent of its owner, whether Keris is his brother or his other self. For example, the Javanese believe the groom can use keris to take his place at the wedding ceremony. If, for some reason, the groom cannot appear before the panghulu on the day set for the wedding, it is sufficient to send his keris. For the Javanese, the keris is his guiding spirit; through this object, he participates in his divine ancestor.

In Javanese society, preserving heirlooms includes the ritual of cleaning heirlooms coupled with cultural festivals. Surakarta Palace organizes Kirab Kiai Slamet, where royal heirlooms are removed from storage and paraded around the city.³ The lowering and washing of the hood covering the tomb of Sunan Kudus and the washing of his relic, *keris*, is also an annual ritual of the Kudus Muslim community.⁴ The washing of heirlooms in the form of gongs (*bende*), a Javanese musical instrument, was also found in Tegal.⁵, Gong Kiai Pradah Blitar.⁶ and Gong Kyai Djimat and Keris Kyai Sekar in Grobogan. The washing of heirlooms in the form of weapons called '*jamasan*,' is also found in many cities in Java, such as *Jamasan* Pusaka Suroloyo in Yogyakarta.⁷ and the *Jamasan* of *keris* and spear heirlooms in Ponorogo Regency.⁸ *Jamasan* of weapons and chariots in Pematang Regency.⁹ Almost all *jamasan* rituals are held on 1 Suro, the new year of the Javanese calendar.

³ Fardan Mahmudatul Imamah, "Seeking for Berkah: The Celebration of Kiai Slamet," *Kawalu: Journal of Local Culture* 4, no. 1 (June 30, 2017): 85, <https://doi.org/10.32678/kawalu.v4i1.778>.

⁴ Ulin Nuha, "Tradisi Ritual Buka Luwur (Sebuah Media Nilai-Nilai Islam Dan Sosial Masyarakat Kudus)," *Jurnal SMaRT Studi Masyarakat, Religi Dan Tradisi* 2, no. 1 (2016): 55–65.

⁵ Luthfi Rahman et al., "Revisiting Ritual and Ancestral Practice: Belief and Belonging within the *Jamasan Bende* Tradition in Bumijawa Tegal, Central Java," *Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 30, no. 1 (May 31, 2022): 103–24, <https://doi.org/10.21580/ws.30.1.13067>.

⁶ Muspita Devi and Dita Hendriani, "Tradisi Siraman Gong Kyai Padah dan Keterkaitan dengan Perekonomian Masyarakat Kelurahan Kalipang Kecamatan Sutojayan Kabupaten Blitar," *Jurnal Widya Citra* 2, no. 2 (2021): 10–22.

⁷ Sarbini Sarbini and Indri Shaila Hapsari, "Strategi Pelestarian Tradisi *Jamasan* Pusaka Suroloyo Sebagai Aset Budaya. Tradisional Di Kulon Progo Yogyakarta," *Kepariwisataan: Jurnal Ilmiah* 14, no. 03 (September 30, 2020): 185–94, <https://doi.org/10.47256/kepariwisataan.v14i03.64>.

⁸ Kabul Priambadi and Abraham Nurcahyo, "Tradisi *Jamasan* Pusaka Di Desa Baosan Kidul Kabupaten Ponorogo (Kajian Nilai Budaya Dan Sumber Pembelajaran Sejarah)," *AGASTYA: JURNAL SEJARAH DAN PEMBELAJARANNYA* 8, no. 2 (July 20, 2018): 211, <https://doi.org/10.25273/ajsp.v8i2.2678>.

⁹ Afliasi Ilafi, "Tradisi *Jamasan* Pusaka Dan Kereta Kencana Di Kabupaten Malang," *Pangadereng* 6, no. 1 (2020): 73–86.

Most researchers refer to the *Jamasan* ritual as an example of the successful acculturation of Islamic teachings and Javanese culture.¹⁰ In addition, the *jamasan* ritual is also considered to have much meaning as a source of local wisdom values.¹¹ Others also criticize it as a symbol of patriarchy in Javanese culture due to the lack of representation of women in rituals or the prohibition of women's presence in the ritual.¹²

The *Jamasan* ritual has obstacles in the face of modernism and religious privatization. Haedar Nashir explains that in the process of re-Islamization, Muslim societies began to refer to pious Muslims, in terms of belief, knowledge, and practice. The decline of animist beliefs also characterizes such a process - as represented by amulets, heirlooms, and shamanism - which are popular among the *abangan* community.¹³ The term '*abangan*,' as used by Haedar Nashir, refers to Geertz's (1985) definition that identifies them as a group of Muslims with many mystical and supernatural practices in their daily lives. Another characteristic of the *abangan* community is the belief in objects like sacred heirlooms/amulets containing supernatural powers that can help or protect people.

Of all these studies, few explain the relationship between *jamasan*, which functions as a ritual containing magical powers and as an effort to maintain a family identity as descendants of heirloom owners in Javanese communities in certain areas. Of all these studies, few explain the relationship between *jamasan*, which functions as a ritual containing magical powers and as an effort to maintain a family identity as descendants of heirloom owners in Javanese communities in certain areas. The magical side of the *jamasan* ritual is often put aside to save the impression of the *jamasan* ritual

¹⁰ Priambadi and Nurcahyo, "Tradisi Jamasan Pusaka Di Desa Baosan Kidul Kabupaten Ponorogo (Kajian Nilai Budaya Dan Sumber Pembelajaran Sejarah)"; Rahman et al., "Revisiting Ritual and Ancestral Practice"; Sarbini and Hapsari, "Strategi Pelestarian Tradisi Jamasan Pusaka Suroloyo Sebagai Aset Budaya. Tradisional Di Kulon Progo Yogyakarta."

¹¹ Sri Herminingrum and Gilang Majid, "Seizing Local Wisdom: Looking Closer Into Javanese Folklore Through Jamasan Keris Ritual," *International Journal of Social and Local Economic Governance* 2, no. 1 (April 1, 2016): 40–48, <https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.ijleg.2016.002.01.5>.

¹² Emi Nur Hidayatuz Zuhroh and Ahmad Nurholis, "Feminism Analysis Of The Tradition Of The Jamasan Pusaka Tombak Kanjeng Kyai Upas In Tulungagung Regency," *Islamuna: Jurnal Studi Islam* 9, no. 1 (June 30, 2022): 41–62, <https://doi.org/10.19105/islamuna.v9i1.6181>.

¹³ Haedar Nashir and Mutohharun Jinan, "Re-Islamisation: The Conversion of Subculture from Abangan Into Santri in Surakarta," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 8, no. 1 (July 2, 2018): 1, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v8i1.1-28>.

as a result of the label of syncretism between Java and Islam. Because instead of being considered a 'religious ritual', *jamasan* is part of Javanese culture which is separated from their beliefs. Therefore, some researchers prioritize the *jamasan* ritual as 'cultural preservation' or a meeting point between Islam and Java in a positive perspective.

However, academics need to pay attention to another part of the *jamasan* process to extract how this ritual holds various environmental values that shape the mindset and identity of the community. This research aims to explain how (1) the magical side of the *Jamasan* ritual can build a 'logical' rhetoric of Javanese beliefs. In addition, (2) how the belief in the sanctified objects as heirlooms has implications for the transfer of values of respect for the environment in which the Javanese live.

Most studies on Javanese rituals lead to the analysis of cultural symbols,¹⁴ its ability to maintain social structures,¹⁵ and explanations of community beliefs in certain rituals.¹⁶ Research on how rituals affect ecological conditions in Javanese society is not much, but that does not mean it does not exist at all. If the scope of research is expanded, some interesting research will be found, not only the function of rituals to control human greed by utilizing taboo principles,¹⁷ but it is also how the Javanese worldview understands nature

Those researches prove that cultural interpretations of ecological issues and how to deal with them are essential. The worldview study is very important in ecological issues to filter and interpret information related to ecological systems more

¹⁴ Laura Andri and Rahma Wulan S., "Meaning and Function of Sea Alms Ceremony for Coastal Communities Banyutowo Dukuhseti Pati," ed. B. Warsito, Sudarno, and T. Triadi Putranto, *E3S Web of Conferences* 202 (2020): 07025, <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202020207025>; Hery Prasetyo et al., "Sustaining Cultural Legitimation through the Theatrics of Power in the Gong Kyai Pradah Ritual," *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies* 15, no. 1 (2020): 29–43, <https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-008X/CGP/v15i01/29-43>.

¹⁵ Utari Listiyani and Amirudin Amirudin, "Atur Pasrah and Panampi in Javanese Wedding Ceremony as a Way to Preserve Harmonious Social Environment," ed. B. Warsito, Sudarno, and T. Triadi Putranto, *E3S Web of Conferences* 202 (2020): 07013, <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202020207013>; Thomas Schweizer, Elmar Klemm, and Margarete Schweizer, "Ritual as Action in a Javanese Community: A Network Perspective on Ritual and Social Structure *," *Social Networks* 15, no. 1 (March 1993): 19–48, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-8733\(93\)90020-L](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-8733(93)90020-L).

¹⁶ Agus Maimun, Agus Indiyanto, and M. Mujab, "Educating Islamic Values Through Wiwitan Tradition," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 14, no. 2 (December 1, 2020): 359, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2020.14.2.359-386>; Judith Schlehe, "Contesting Javanese Traditions: The Popularisation of Rituals between Religion and Tourism," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 45, no. 131 (January 2, 2017): 3–23, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2016.1219494>.

¹⁷ Northcott, God, and Gaia.

effectively.¹⁸ Worldviews embedded in ritual practices can promote pro-environmental behavior.¹⁹ A growing body of research on scholars of religion examines religious responses to contemporary environmental issues.²⁰

This research uses James George Frazer's magical theory approach. Magic became part of the conceptual toolkit of anthropology and the history of religion in the late 19th and early 20th centuries developed by James George Frazer. The theory has received much criticism for its reliance on the concept of 'spirit' introduced earlier by Taylor (Wood, 1982). In addition, the magic theory is built on the assumption that, at that time, humans did not understand science as modern humans do. Thus, magic is considered the beginning of human knowledge to understand 'natural law' in two ways, which Frazer called *imitative/sympathetic magic* and *contagious magic*.²¹

Imitative magic is magic that attempts to control the universe by imitating desired events, such as stabbing an enemy's image to injure him or performing ritual dances that mimic the growth of food to obtain a bountiful harvest. Magic is based on the belief that similar actions produce similar results. Second, *contagious magic* is the principle of contagious magic states that one's energy can be transferred through objects. If an Empu makes a *keris*, some of his energy will stay in the *keris* and can be transferred to the next person who touches it. In this process, the *keris*'s life force is like a contagion.

¹⁸ Joel S. Brown, "Ngongas and Ecology: On Having a Worldview," *Oikos* 94, no. 1 (July 2001): 6–16, <https://doi.org/10.1034/j.1600-0706.2001.11309.x>; Vimala Kunchambo, Christina Kwai Choi Lee, and Jan Brace-Govan, "Cultivating Nature Identity and Ecological Worldviews: A Pathway to Alter the Prevailing Dominant Social Paradigm," *Journal of Macromarketing* 41, no. 3 (September 2021): 484–505, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0276146721997540>.

¹⁹ Barbara Jane Davy, "A Rationale for the Study of Unconscious Motivations of Climate Change, and How Ritual Practices Can Promote Pro-Environmental Behaviour," *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology*, November 26, 2021, 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685357-20211001>; Apurba Kerishna Deb, "Surrender to Nature?: Worldviews and Rituals of the Small-Scale Coastal Fishers of Bangladesh," *Marine Policy* 92 (June 2018): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2018.01.010>; Ronald L. Grimes, "Ritual Theory and the Environment," *The Sociological Review* 51, no. 2_suppl (October 2003): 31–45, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2004.00449.x>.

²⁰ Mary Evelyn Tucker, "Worldviews and Ecology: The Interaction of Cosmology and Cultivation," in *Nature Across Cultures*, ed. Helaine Selin, vol. 4, *Science Across Cultures: The History of Non-Western Science* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2003), 115–27, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-0149-5_6.

²¹ Robert A. Yelle, "Rhetorics of Law and Ritual: A Semiotic Comparison of the Law of Talion and Sympathetic Magic," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 69, no. 3 (2001): 627–47.

According to Frazer, magic implies that impersonal laws govern the world rather than the power of spirits or gods. Magic acts according to the laws of cause and effect.²²

This research chose the *Jamasan Kyai Ngaliman* heirloom ritual in Nganjuk Regency, held on August 15, 2021. *Jamasan Pusaka Kyai Ngaliman* is a ritual that has received a lot of media and academic attention.²³ Six *keris* heirlooms are believed to be the legacy of the village founder, namely *Kyai Bondan*, *Kyai Kembar*, *Kyai Jogotruno*, *Kyai Betik*, *Kyai Raden Panji*, and *Nyai Dukun*. All the *kerises* are kept in the heirloom building near the Ngaliman Mosque, which is not far from the tomb of the heirloom owner, *Ki Ageng Ngaliman*, in Ngliman Village, Sawahan District, Nganjuk Regency. The *jamasan* is held annually during the month of Suro in Ngliman village. In the findings at the beginning of the research, in the context of the pandemic, the people of Ngliman Village explained that they believe that to achieve a peaceful life by avoiding disease and having abundant harvests, they must carry out the *jamasan* ceremony.

METHOD

This research on the Kyai Ngaliman heirloom ritual is qualitative research with a phenomenological approach and participatory observation. The data collection methods in this study used three research instruments: interviews, observation, and documentation. The researcher chose the semi-structured interview method so that the researcher could improvise in the data collection process. The researcher's involvement in this ritual is as a participant during the ritual. Primary data come from interviews and observation documentation, while secondary data is obtained from previous studies and news in the mass media and social media.

Four key consultant interviews were selected based on their level of involvement and knowledge of the ritual process. First, the head of the Ngliman Village. Second, The caretaker of the tomb. Third, a local official in Ngliman Village is also the caretaker of the heirloom building. According to his confession, he received a *wangsit* to become the leader of the *jamasan* ritual. Fourth, an elder who is considered by the community

²² Jesper Sørensen, "Magic," in *The International Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, ed. Hilary Callan, 1st ed. (Wiley, 2018), 1–6, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118924396.wbiea1756>.

²³ Anida Hasniah Habieb and Dita Hendriani, "Tradisi Jamasan Pusaka di Desa Ngaliman Kecamatan Sawahan Kabupaten Nganjuk (Kajian Nilai Sosial Budaya)," *Jurnal Widya Citra* 3, no. 1 (2022): 30–35.

to be very familiar with traditional ceremonies in Java. The research was conducted from August to November 2021. All interviews and observations were transcribed verbatim, then classified according to the coding built based on the theory used.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Ngaliman Village and Kiai Ngaliman

The *Jamasan* ritual of Kyai Ngaliman's heirloom is held in Ngliman Village, Sawahan Subdistrict, Nganjuk Regency. Administratively, Ngliman Village is one of 264 villages in Nganjuk Regency, located on Mount Wilis in the southern Sawahan District of Nganjuk Regency. Ngliman village is on a plateau at 1,300 meters above sea level, with an air temperature of approximately 17 Celsius. The village has a calm and beautiful air quality that significantly affects the sacred impression of the *jamasan* ritual. The rural area is filled with rose gardens that spread a fragrant aroma as if the area has a powerful natural force. The people of Ngliman Village firmly believe in ancestral myths and customary rules.

Most people in Ngliman Village work in agriculture and plantations, ranging from rose gardens, cloves, oranges, and even durians, and very few of them grow rice. The Ngliman community is a self-sufficient group with independence in meeting its economic needs. When this research was conducted in 2021, Indonesia was experiencing the covid-19 pandemic. However, only a few Ngliman residents were affected because their work was only in their village environment, so they only interacted a little with the outside world. In 2019, the population of Ngliman Village reached 3,913 people, with the majority of the population being Muslim.

Time and Place of the Jamasan Ritual

The *jamasan* is always held every Suro month. The implementation time must be on Friday Wage according to the Javanese calendar. If there is no *Jumat (Friday) Wage* in Bulon Suro, it will be replaced by *Senin Wage* (Monday). The caretaker explained that every eight years, *Jumat Wage* is not found in the calendar in the month of Suro, but there is only *Senin Wage* in the calendar. If the residents do not perform the *jamasan*, then calamities will befall Ngliman Village, whether in natural disasters or disease

outbreaks. The *jamasan* is held at the Ngliman Village Head Office, where all villagers participate. In addition, people from outside the area also participate in the ceremony. People participate in the *jamasan* ceremony without any restrictions on age, gender, or religion.

Ritual Process of Jamasan Kyai Ngaliman

Before the ritual is performed, people prepare food for '*selamatan*.' Each food prepared has a meaning as part of the practice requirements of the ritual. The food includes *nasi uduk*, *pisang raja*, *pisang pulut*, *ayam cemani* and '*jajan pasar*'. *Nasi uduk* is also called *nasi wudhu* because people should take ablution to cook rice. *Pisang Raja* is meant to make their wishes heard by God and the forces of nature. *Pisang pulut* is believed to ward off danger. *Ayam cemani* is believed to ward off evil forces around Ngliman Village. *Jajan pasar* symbolizes prosperity. Residents believe that these foods bring blessings.

The following preparation is to provide water that will be used for *jamasan*. The water used comes from the spring of Ki Demang Ngaliman's tomb. The water is believed to be able to cure diseases and grant wishes that are prayed for by the water drinker. Water can only be taken by men because, according to the myth, Ki Demang Ngaliman is not pleased if a woman is in his resting place.

Jamasan is held for two days. Before the ritual begins, Ki Demang Ngaliman's heirlooms are paraded through the streets of Ngliman Village. The caretaker and all village officials pray together in the heirloom building. Umbrellas have been prepared to protect the six heirlooms from the sun.

During the procession, the entire community must turn off the lights. The lights must not be turned on before the heirloom passes through their village. There are several requirements to determine the person who will carry the heirloom. The caretaker of Gedong Wetan explained:

"Lak seng jamasi kbusus, ya lembaga adat, pokoe boten sukor tiang. Kasarane tiang seng dereng mantu bubak (first mantu) boten angsal. Niku pon sangkeng pinisepuh rumiyen, danton niru. Coro mbah-mbah sien niku kedah dilakoni, lak boten dilakoni nggeh enten akibate..."

Only some people can become traditional leaders and tame heirlooms. People do not dare if they have not gotten the *wangsit* (messages from ancestors delivered in dreams). Only selected people can become customary leaders and tame heirlooms. If

following the applicable rules, people who violate the rules will get good luck. These rules have existed since the time of their ancestors, so they are strictly obeyed by the local population.



Image 1 : Heritage procession on August 15, 2021

(Source: Researcher's documentation)

The person performing the *jamasan* must also have married the first child. The heirloom bearers are also prohibited from eating during the trip; they are only allowed to drink. These conditions must be carried out so that no natural disasters occur in their area, such as landslides.

The core *jamasan* ritual is washing the six heirlooms of Ki Demang Ngaliman. Before the washing, the heirlooms will be paraded to the grave of Ki Demang Ngaliman, accompanied by the Prophet's *sholawat*. A prayer will be held together in the cemetery for Ki Demang Ngaliman. There is water there that the community believes has the blessings of Kyai Ngaliman. After the prayer, the heirlooms will be washed and paraded back to Ngliman Village Hall.



**Image 2 : *Jamasan* core August 16, 2021
(Source: Researcher's documentation)**

The procession of *jamasan* also requires several materials, including *warangan* (to clean one of the surfaces of the heirloom, which is indeed made of iron), *maron* (a round container formed of soil to put *Jamasan* water), incense or incense, shroud as a new wrapper for the heirloom, lime, flowers consisting of roses, jasmine, memories, kanthil, and sugar cane, kembar mayang, perfume.

After the *jamasan* core is performed, many people leave their family heirlooms to be washed by the elders. They believe the water used to wash the core heirlooms has extraordinary power for their respective heirlooms. In addition, residents also fight over it to water their rice fields or fields. The water is believed to fertilize their land.

The ritual is followed by a shadow puppet show, a mandatory requirement that another performance cannot replace. One of the elders said:

“wayange iku cuman damel syarat. Duko sakjam, duko rongjam pokoe wayangang. Niku netepi adat, niku nakboten ngoten nggeh enten bala’. Dadi syarate kedah dilampahi. Ditanggapne jaranan nggeh boten purun. Asale boten purun niko, corone ditanggapne niku pemaine nggeh enten seng meninggal. Wayange dilaksanakne siang biasane dalu. Dadi ba’do dijamasi mengke ditanggapne wayang mengke kaleh syukuran. Niku adat boten kengeng diowahi, pon tradisi kaet sien,,,”

He explained that a requirement, such as staging puppets, must be fulfilled. This wayang is part of nature's request to the Ngliman community and cannot be replaced with anything. One day the puppet show was replaced with *jaranan*, and one of the performers got sick and eventually died. That is one of the consequences if the requirements are not carried out or replaced with something else.

Due to pandemic conditions, the puppet show is held from around two until five afternoon. Residents said the puppet show would be held for one night if not during the pandemic.

Public Belief in the Jamasan Kyai Ngliman Ritual

For the people of Ngliman Village, the *jamasan* kyai Ngaliman heirloom tradition is a hereditary tradition or a custom that has existed since ancient times. Residents must carry it out as a form of respect for their ancestors. In addition, the *jamasan* also believed the ways they communicate with the natural or supernatural forces around them to realize their hopes, such as asking for fertility and safety. The head of the village cadre revealed that:

“Itu kepercayaan. Mitose orang Ngliman, ya bukannya musyrik diantara percaya ndak percaya, tapi nyatanya semua Ngliman itu percaya itu gemah ripah loh jinawi, kales ing sambikolo. Walaupun ada virus corona Ngliman ya alhamdulillah bebas masih di ayomi sama mbah wali Ngaliman itu. Makannya adat seperti jamasan, seperti selamatan itu Ngliman pasti rutin,,,,,”

He explained that Ngliman residents strongly believe their land becomes fertile and free from danger when performing the ritual. As is currently happening, when the coronavirus is attacking the whole world, it is strange that in Ngliman Village, residents have never been affected by the virus. Therefore, Ngliman residents always routinely perform *jamasan* and *selamatan* rituals.

In addition, this ritual is also to maintain the cleanliness and durability of the Kyai Ngaliman heirloom. The Ngliman community considers that the tradition of *jamasan* has become a part of their lives. They do not even dare to change the rules that have existed for a long time. They believe bad things will happen to the village if they leave the ceremony. Meanwhile, if they follow the ceremony tradition, they will get extraordinary benefits and blessings. The caretaker of the heirloom building expressed his belief:

“Nggeh sebenarnya gitu mbak, malah kalau saya sendiri terkadang saya minum, kalau bagi orang-orang yang belum memahami itu terkadang menjadikan timbulnya suatu penyakit. Tapi bagi kulo niku ibarate saya jadikan sebagai kekuatan jiwa raga. Karena istilahnya namane iku juga saya anggap seperti leluhurnya saja. Dadose bagi kulo, mengandung suatu aura kekuatan atau kekebalan istilahnya seperti itu. Ya dapat hikmah juga,”

He recounted that he drank the water left over from the heirloom bath, even though many thought it could cause illness. However, for the caretaker of the heirloom building, the water is a source of strength for the swamp soul because the water contains the strength or immunity to face bad things.

Caretakers understand that everyone has different beliefs. If their trust is wholehearted, they believe nothing will happen to them. On the other hand, if they do not trust him enough, they will be hit by some misfortune. So, complete trust is necessary, so trust will encourage people to do it sincerely and sincerely.

According to the *Jamasan* Kyai Ngaliman heirloom ritual leader, this ritual also unites people from various elements in Ngliman Village. He explains:

“Ya sebenarnya gitu, kalau ditatanane atau aturane eyang Ngliman itu menurut saya itu menyatukan seluruh elemen dari unsur apapun. Itu menjadikan suatu namanya kesatuan dan persatuan. Tapi bagi yang nggak pahami itu sudah lain lagi. Tidak hanya dari kalangan masyarakat muslim saja, semua masyarakat berkecimpung. Dalam arti ya agama islam atau kepercayaan lainnya. Ya cumak kalau yang sudah mengetahui itu semua sudah dirangkum menjadi satu istilahnya. Babasane coro kokono dicekel kabeh mbak, dadi coro pungkasan lah intine. Semua itu dibagi menjadi satu dan kalau sudah memahami itu menjadi senjata pamungkas,,,,”

He explained that the tradition is based on the rules made by his ancestor, Kyai Ngaliman. The annual event will unite residents who, in their daily lives, have been separated by social status, busy work, and other things that cause meetings between residents to decrease in intensity. Therefore, the ritual of *Jamasan* Pusaka Kyai Ngaliman will remind them of their ancestral origins, that they are brothers and sisters. This ritual can reach all of Kyai Ngaliman's children to maintain the clan's existence through rituals that will transmit ancestral messages.

How People Perceived Heirlooms as Sources of Environmental Values

The values embedded in a ritual receive less attention than the ritual process and the belief in the power of the ritual. Nonetheless, based on some of the interviews, there are interesting experiences that, if drawn further, show ancestral messages about environmental values as a message in maintaining the survival of a particular kinship community in the location where they live based on a certain geographical location. The *jamasan* ceremony is one of the rituals found in many parts of Java, so people participate not only to be present to honor and to see the ritual process but also to be

part of cleaning family heirlooms. This opportunity includes other small families who wish to clean their heirlooms while cleaning the main ancestral ones. This is as explained by the interviewee, the head of the community activist:

“Upacara jamasan itu sejak dulu ada, tapi untuk kader mengikuti mungkin baru 10 tahunan dari 2011. Kalau yang duluan ndak ada arak-arakan, kader, RT, diundang pakek baju adat dulu ndak ada ya Cuma jamasan semua yang punya pusaka keris. Kan orang sini banyak yang punya keris dibawa ke sana terus diwarangi. Diwarangi ya dijamasi itu. Setelah jamasan itu ya boleh, setelah yang intinya itu”

The interviewee explained that in the past, the inner community carried out the ritual of cleaning heirlooms privately, but now it is accompanied by a communal celebration. Thus, community groups formed by government structures also participate in the organization. In addition, the participating communities wear traditional clothing and make parades to enliven the *jamasan* ritual.

As explained earlier, the community believes the leftover *jamasan* water is sacred, both for immunity purposes and the belief in how they do farming. It is difficult to explain the chemical content in the leftover *jamasan* water, which many people fear is a dangerous liquid. However, as the previous interviewee admitted, belief in *jamasan* water precedes their judgment rather than scientific opinion. This belief applies not only to how people 'consumes' the leftover *jamasan* water but also to how they treat it for themselves and the sources of their lives, such as rice and another foodplant. Like the interviewee's story, a juru kunci added the following explanation.:

“Nek jaman rumiyen tasek usum pantun teng mriki dereng enten cengeh niku sami golek. Sakniki nggeh tasek kroyokan. Niku ibarate coro nanem pantun niku dipendetne toyane disokne tong tolak. an niku aman, homo boten puron. Nek sakniki nggeh damel, ngobati, nyemprot cengeh. Panggab tasek digunakne.”

Interviewees recounted that when many people were still growing cloves, they fought over the remaining *jamasan* water. Farmers used the water to prevent pests from damaging their crops. The custom is still valid today. This experience shows the close relationship between the function of rituals and how people's perceptions of them relate to how people treat the surrounding environment, including rice fields and plantations, as part of their life sources. The sequence of logic refers to how people connect their belief in the mystical power of ancestors still stored in heirlooms, which are not only directly connected to other heirlooms in small families, the physical self,

but also other non-human environments, which are an important part of life, such as plantations, agriculture, and other livelihoods.

Another interviewee, a local housewife, added:

“Orang Ngliman keroyokan air bekasnya jamas pusaka itu tadi kan dipercaya berkhasiat untuk menyuburkan tanah terus kali ing sambikolo bebas dari segala penyakit macam tanaman balak, untuk tanaman. Biasanya airnya itu setelah keroyokan air itu kan dibawa pulang dituang di sawah, ladang. Biasanya terus cengkehnya itu buahnya banyak, seandainya padi ndak banyak hamanya, bebas dari hama. Itu kepercayaan. Mitose orang Ngliman, ya bukannya musyrik diantara percaya ndak percaya, tapi nyatanya semua Ngliman itu percaya itu gemah ripah loh jinawi, kaes ing sambikolo. Walaupun ada virus corona Ngliman ya alhamdulillah bebas masih di ayomi sama mbah wali Ngaliman itu. Makannya adat seperti jamasan, seperti selaman itu Ngliman pasti rutin.”

She emphasized the same thing as the previous interviewee: the Ngliman people believe that the water used for *jamasan* can fertilize the soil, avoiding various diseases that attack plants. People bring home the water from the *jamasan* and then pour it into their rice fields. This action is part of the community's beliefs, and although some say it is an act of syirik, people of Ngliman believe that their lands are fertile and free from 'sambikolo'. Among these 'sambikolo' is coronavirus disease. Interviewees believe that the small number of covid patients in the village is related to their belief and persistence in conducting rituals so that the ancestors and the universe help to protect the lives of the Ngliman people. Other sources also emphasized that Coronavirus firmly warns people to adhere to their ancestral traditions.

The connection explains how rituals affect people's perceptions of the environment and how they connect ethics towards ancestral customs with what befalls them, whether natural disasters or 'pageblug' diseases. Some of the people who attend the *jamasan* Kiai Ngliman ritual believe that disasters such as covid disease that are afflicting the community at that time are the result of the current generation abandoning the tradition, so that they lose their identity as Javanese, as explained by the following source, the caretaker of the heirloom building:

“Ya terkadang musibah atau bencana-bencana seperti penyakit. Karena adanya seperti kayak corona seperti ini, sebenarnya manusia sekarang sudah meninggalkan suatu adat yang dabulu gitu mbak. Adat dabulu ditinggalkan kayak-kayak ndak dipakek. Biasane wong jowo lali jawane mbak, akhire ya terjadi dampaknya seperti ini situasinya”

The explanation emphasizes that the *jamasan* ritual is a tradition that not only has values of respect for ancestral traditions and identity as Javanese. However, the

awareness of tradition has concrete consequences for the environment that allow infectious diseases to occur. Older residents believe that the *jamasan* ritual must be preserved to avoid getting their ancestors' anger, which is presented in the form of natural disasters. With this way of thinking, the interviewees connect how the surrounding environment represents the presence of ancestors who are considered alive and have 'power' that can affect the current environmental conditions of the population. The entity of ancestors and the environment has a connection that impacts the sustainability of life.

The tradition of Kiai Ngaliman's *jamasan* ritual is a series of festivals, ceremonies, prayers, traditional clothing, and messages transferred from ancestors to be understood and practised by descendants. Adat also includes ethics and manners, as the following quote from an interview with an informant shows:

“Tapi menurut pengamatan saya, saya dapat wangsit itu memang untuk merubah yang mungkin dulu hilang itu bisa kembali, contohnya suatu tata karma. Mungkin kita membawa pusaka gimana caranya, apa kita harus begini begini. Etika itu yang utama mbak, kalau etikanya sudah hilang manusia tidak mungkin hidup yang mempunyai jalan mulus. Itu menurut pengamatan saya. Dalam logikanya orang-orang ya sudah menjunjung tinggi, sudah tiap tahun dijamasi, tapi kan ndak cumak itu tok. Dalam etika pun juga harus ada.”

Based on the results of these interviews, Ngliman residents' perceptions of the *jamasan* ritual indirectly also have an implicative relationship between ancestors, the natural environment, and human life. The values of the relationship between the three are seen in the values of (1) the continuation of the *jamasan* tradition as the duty of descendants and a form of connection between divine ancestors, nature, and humans, (2) belief in the part of divine ancestors that also provides benefits to human livelihoods, such as food crops and livelihoods, (3) loyalty to customs and ethics towards ancestors and the natural is important to maintain. It must be preserved as the main condition for humans to have a smooth life journey.

Discussion

The community has a belief in the tradition of washing heirlooms. Javanese people liken heirlooms to a house in which there are inhabitants. If the house is not cleaned, the inhabitants will be angry with the owner. In addition, Javanese people believe their ancestors can survive wild animals and evil forces thanks to the ritual of

keeping and caring for an heirloom.²⁴ One type of heirloom that is the object of the *jamasan* ritual is the keris.

From a historical perspective, *keris* production and its evolution occurred during the Hindu-Buddhist era, culminating in the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms of Java, Bali, and southern Sumatra. The major powers in the region included Pajajaran, Majapahit, Demak, Pajang, and Mataram. In the historical records of Pajajaran, there are many references to prominent empu/iron smiths who produced some of the most famous *keris*, which still exist today (Hamzuri, 1984:4-7). Not only were *keris* at that time highly valued and even worshipped as sacred objects with spiritual powers but the *keris* makers themselves were also considered part of the elite of Javanese-Hindu society, along with nobles and priests. The *keris* is a personal heirloom weapon attached to its owner unless passed on to his children and grandchildren. With all its attributes, the *keris* is one of the markers of the owner's identity.

Jamasan is a belief that contains elements of 'magic' in Frazer's definition. It is essential to distinguish the notion of 'magic' here from 'sorcery' as theologians understand it. Thus, this discussion of magic and the *jamasan* ritual does not become a theological study that refers to shirk. 'Magic' in this study is an anthropological term to explain how people think in dealing with the world around them.

The magic theory explains two ways of getting nature to follow human will. If a human wants to wish for nature around them, they must understand nature and gain its sympathy. This understanding borrows Taylor's concept of 'spirit,' where nature is interpreted as not inanimate objects but living spirits. However, in contrast to how Taylor uses 'spirit' in the theory of how primitive humans are religious, Frazer emphasizes how humans communicate with nature with the principle of cause and effect. If nature is satisfied with what humans do to them, then nature will easily grant the wishes of humans. This goal is what the principle of the law of nature as the imitate and contagious magic would mean (Ackerman, 1975).

In this research, the two types of magic are not restricted. For example, nature is not only understood as plants, mountains, and rivers. The universe includes deceased

²⁴ Muhammad Kerisnawan et al., "Ritual Sakral Penyucian Benda Pusaka, Nyangku," *Cinematology: Journal Anthology of Film and Television Studies* 2, no. 1 (2022): 112–21.

ancestors, whose power is believed to impact the natural environment in which humans live.

In Frazer's theory, several concepts are connected to build Frazer's argumentation on how 'magic' is performed. First, as explained earlier, there are two types of magic: imitative and contagious. In the *jamasan* ritual, the imitative magic is shown in several ways. First is the selection of food for *jamasan*. Each food is a symbol of things that are expected and things that are avoided. Prosperity is symbolized in market snacks, and *cemani* chicken is symbolized as a sign of *bala'*.

In the ritual ceremony of *Jamasan Kyai Ngaliman's* heirloom, the purpose of this magic is in the power of Ki Demang Ngaliman's heirloom. The community believes that the fertility and security they enjoy comes from the power of the heirloom. So they sacralize and respect the heirloom. So, for the community to continue getting fertility of the land and security of living condition, they routinely carry out *jamasan* ritual ceremonies yearly. From this great belief comes the doctrine that they will get scary consequences if they do not perform the ritual ceremony.

In achieving the goals of this law of nature principle, it has two ways, imitation, and contact. The first principle can be called similarity, and the second is called the law of contagion or contact. In this case, imitation of the Kyai Ngaliman heirloom ritual can be visualized in the prayers offered during the ritual. The prayer is to avoid disease and *pageblug*; the prayer also contains the same meaning as what the world is currently experiencing (covid pandemic). So the prayer will also automatically attract sympathy from the *forces* that exist in nature.

The following principle is contact or contagion. In the Kyai Upas *jamasan* ritual ceremony, the Kyai Ngaliman heirloom is sacred. When the heirloom is washed using water, the water will automatically be considered 'sacred' because there has been direct contact with the heirloom. The community will flock to get the water used for the *jamasan* because it is considered to bring blessings and fertility to their land; for people who are sick, the water is believed to cure their illness. This process is how the contact principle works in the Kyai Ngaliman *jamasan* ritual.

Based on Frazer's concept of practice. Frazer proposes four means: magician, spell, taboo, and ritual. In the Kyai Ngaliman heirloom ritual, someone must lead the

ritual or understand the spiritual knowledge of the ritual. This person is known as the traditional leader of the community.

The community considers this traditional leader to be able to communicate with the forces around the heirloom or who have been protecting the Ngliman community. Therefore, the customary leader is trusted to lead the ritual of this heirloom *jamasan*. In determining this customary leader, it is not from just anyone, but those who have previously been given *wangsit* or orders through dreams. In Frazer's concept of practice, the traditional leader is considered a magician because he has more knowledge and understands things related to forces beyond human reason.

Some mantras must be chanted so that their purpose is heard and achieved by the power they intend in the ritual ceremony of the Kyai Ngaliman heirloom *jamasan*. Mantras are one of the local cultures that have existed since ancient times until now and are part of the local wisdom of the Javanese people. Because mantras are considered sentences that contain sacredness and sanctity, they must be uttered by people and at a predetermined time during the *jamasan*. The surrounding community assumes that a mantra contains the power to protect them. The mantra here in Frazer's concept is called a spell, some people will name it prayer. Because to achieve the goal in a ritual, they need a bridge so that the goal can be reached or heard by the forces they mean.

In addition to the mantra in the Kyai Ngaliman heirloom *jamasan* ceremony, there must be restrictions set regarding ethics towards heirlooms. The heirloom is considered sacred and elder, so one is forbidden to walk behind the heirloom. The heirloom is likened to someone so great that the community dramatically respects it. The heirloom is a replacement for the owner of the heirloom. In addition, the person carrying the heirloom is forbidden to eat or speak harshly, which aims to honor the heirloom. These prohibitions in Frazer's concept are called taboos.

Based on Frazer's concepts, the *jamasan* ritual is explained as transferring the source of sacredness; in this case, the keris and all other heirlooms are believed to be part of the divine ancestor. The transfer is through the medium of water used in the *jamasan* process. Because this water is part of the sacred, it is channeled in various ways connected to humans, either directly by drinking, used to fertilize the land, to protect plants, and other media. This process connects three entities, the ancestors, the

environment, and humans. The connection is established through beliefs, values implied in ritual symbols, elders' teachings to younger generations through prayers, and communal celebratory events to maintain social cohesiveness.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the observed ritual intricately demonstrates a profound awareness among the people of their profound connection to their ancestors through the cherished heirlooms. This connection serves as a conduit for a unique form of 'communication' with the encompassing natural world. This symbiotic relationship between ancestral attachment and the environment is particularly resonant due to their geographical location amidst the mountains, where the harmonious interplay of favorable ecological conditions, essential for agriculture, plantations, soil and water stability, as well as protection against external factors like the COVID virus and other potential natural adversities, underpins their livelihoods.

Remarkably, the attachment to their ancestors not only preserves cultural heritage but also plays a pivotal role in upholding social cohesion and nurturing an enhanced comprehension of the ambient environment. Contrary to any negative connotations, this ritualistic homage to their ancestors through heirlooms showcases their remarkable capacity to perpetuate tradition and fortify their social identity, inextricably linked to their perceptual framework of the surrounding landscape.

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