

THE VALUE OF ECOLOGICAL PRESERVATION ON THE MYTH OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE GREAT MOSQUE OF DEMAK

1st Muhajir¹, 2nd Suyitno², 3rd Sumarwati³

muhajir81@student.uns.ac.id¹, suyitno52@staff.uns.ac.id², sumarwati@staff.uns.ac.id³

Universitas Sebelas Maret¹, Universitas Sebelas Maret², Universitas Sebelas Maret³

Abstract. Demak is an important part of the North Coast of Central Java. The regency has a long history. The city retains traces of this history in the form of ideas, activities and artifacts. The artifacts are evident in the presence of the Great Mosque of Demak and the Kadilangu Tomb. This research presents local wisdom on the myths surrounding the construction of the Great Mosque of Demak in relation to environmental resilience. The environment is a very important issue in the Demak region considering that environmental damage due to land subsidence and abrasion is happening massively in this region. The purpose of this research is to find the value of ecological resilience in the myth of the construction of the Great Mosque of Demak. This research is a qualitative research. This research method is data collection by searching for information in reference books, observation, and field interviews to collect the necessary data. The results of this study indicate that there is local wisdom in the value of ecological preservation in the myth of the construction of the Great Mosque of Demak. For the first myth of the myth of the story, the first is about the goa kreo monkey. This story shows the harmonious relationship between humans and nature. Second, the story of Sunan Kalijaga during the construction of the Great Mosque of Demak, his consideration to use soko tatal was environmental considerations. Third, the story of orong-orong.

Keywords: local wisdom, myth.

INTRODUCTION

Often with the development of technology, industrialization, environmental damage also occurs. Industrialization requires large areas of land, lots of energy, sufficient water and indirectly impacts environmental damage. The consequences of this development include water and air pollution, land subsidence, and so on. The further consequences are a decline in air quality, a decline in water quality, a decline in soil quality, a decline in food quality which will later have consequences for humans. Development through technology which was originally created for the efficiency of human life has negative consequences for humans themselves.

This needs to be addressed so that it doesn't get worse. The first step that needs to be taken is to raise environmental awareness by thinking about development that considers or considers environmental factors. Second, there is the need to look for local treasures for environmental resilience. These local treasures can be in the form of folklore, local knowledge from local rules. The reason why this local wisdom is used because it is closer to the community is because it is easier to integrate with the local community because they have known and understood it for a long time. The second reason is a form of pride that the locality also has something to answer current problems.

The expectations for this research can be formulated into two. The first is short-term hope, namely the documentation of local knowledge or local wisdom related to environmental resilience. The long-term hope is that an attitude of love for the environment will be cultivated and that environmental factors will be considered in the making of legislation and all policies.

Environmental issues are very important to research because they relate to humans and their future. Environmental problems are human problems themselves. As we know, environmental problems are caused by natural mechanisms such as volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. In such environmental problems, the local wisdom found is to detect the problem at an early stage so that

people can find a way out so that there are not many victims. Even though there is modern technology, local knowledge has proven to contribute a lot to rescue, especially during earthquake disasters. Local knowledge is found in philology, history and anthropology. Local Indonesian people, according to research on three tribes in Indonesia, namely Sumatra, Java and Bali, carry out triangular communication to find out the signs of disaster, namely communication between humans, nature and God. (Fakhriati Fakhriati, 2023).

The second is environmental problems that are impacted by human activities such as cutting down trees which results in flooding, ground water extraction which results in a decrease in land levels. Our society is a society that is integrated with the environment. They make the environment their brothers. They consider the environment part of themselves. This can be seen from society's treatment of the environment. It is society's treatment of the environment that will be examined in this research. The community's treatment of the environment is seen through the folklore, especially the myths surrounding the construction of the Great Mosque of Demak.

Research with the theme of utilizing local wisdom in environmental management has been carried out previously, including research entitled Application of local wisdom in handling waste in coastal settlements as an effort to minimize waste production.(Idawarni Asmal, 2023). This article presents the wisdom of coastal communities in managing their waste. Garbage is a problem for coastal communities. Waste is sent from upstream via river flows. Wet waste produces leachate that has an unpleasant odor. This water also has an impact on marine biota, while solid waste such as plastic takes up quite a lot of space, therefore the volume of waste must be reduced. Local wisdom offers a solution, wet waste can be used as livestock feed, while dry waste can be burned at certain times so that it does not pollute the environment.

The environment is also related to how society provides its food. Food is a basic human need whose fulfillment takes into account the balance of nature or not. There is research entitled Traditional ecological knowledge on the slope of Mount Lawu, Indonesia: all about non-rice food security(Sumarwati, 2022). This research found non-rice food security on the slopes of Tawangmangu, Central Java. There are three results of this research, the first is the inheritance of traditional knowledge about ecology through folklore. Second, people's philosophy can be seen from their view of God and spirits, good spirits are asked to provide protection, while evil spirits are asked to stay away. Third, related to sustainability by maintaining non-rice commodities, prohibiting cutting down trees in the Lawu forest, maintaining the Pringodani cave, preserving traditional house architecture.

Local wisdom regarding folklore and myths in Demak Regency has not been well documented. As an object of research, not many researchers have done it, especially those specifically about the environment. Currently, Demak is experiencing a quite serious environmental crisis, namely the loss of part of its territory, namely in Sayung District, which has been affected by sea water abrasion. Areas that were previously villages and rice fields have turned into oceans or areas inundated by sea water. As a result, many villages were abandoned by their inhabitants.(Safuan, 2021).

The abrasion also occurred due to land subsidence in the area. Land subsidence is caused by the contour of the land which is still young and because of the large number of industries that have been established. Industry builds heavy buildings and also sucks up a lot of groundwater. As a result, the land sinks.(Demak, 2021).Regarding local wisdom in Demak Regency, only a few studies have been carried out, the first is a thesis entitled "Identification and analysis of local wisdom as a source of social studies learning at junior high school level (Studies at SMP N 2 Demak)",(Sari, 2019). The classification of local wisdom in Demak Regency is general local wisdom that is already known to the public, such as the Great Mosque of Demak, the Great Grebeg. Furthermore, the meaning carried out is also not specifically related to the environment as carried out in this research.

Demak's local wisdom research on the Great Grebeg is entitled "The Great Grebeg Tradition in the Demak Regency Community (Comparative Study of Cultural Values in the Sunan Kalijaga Era and the Modern Era)"(Affaf Azmul, 2020). This research compares the function of the large grebeg in the Sunan Kalijaga era which was for preaching and the current era which is more complex, such as economics, tourism, etc.

Research on the local wisdom of Demak was also carried out with the title "Local Wisdom of the Architecture of the Demakan Mosque Local Wisdom on the Architecture of the Demakan

Mosque" (Kusyanto, 2020). This research presents a description of each part of the Great Mosque of Demak.

Of the three studies presented above, in terms of content and quantity, there is still very little research related to local wisdom in Demak Regency. The choice of region, namely Demak Regency, has strong reasons. Demak is a district that has a history of the early Javanese Islamic kingdoms. As a former kingdom, it certainly has many legacies. It is this legacy that needs to be explored and brought to light to provide solutions to current problems. Previous research was limited to mosques and Grebeg Besar. The research that will be carried out wants to look at the story surrounding the construction of the Great Mosque from an environmental perspective.

Local wisdom contained in folklore has indeed occurred in Indonesian language books, but the variations are limited. The stories that usually appear are Malin Kundang, Tangkupan Perahu, Roro Jonggrang, Rawa Pening, Sangkuriang. However, there are still many other stories that need to be told.

If this research is not carried out, the potential for developing discourse about local wisdom in Demak Regency, especially regarding the environment, will be hampered and the opportunity to utilize local wisdom as a solution to environmental problems will not be realized.

The formulation of the research problem is, first, to classify the local wisdom of folklore surrounding the construction of the Great Mosque of Demak which is environmentally sustainable. Second, look for the philosophical meaning of local wisdom. The purpose of this research is, what is the local wisdom of environmental resilience, folklore surrounding the construction of the Great Mosque of Demak. Second, what is the philosophical meaning of folklore surrounding the construction of the Great Mosque of Demak.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method in the initial stage was to look for local wisdom from folklore surrounding the construction of the Great Mosque of Demak through reading books and interviews with related parties. From this local wisdom, those that specifically talk about the environment are selected. The final stage is to find the philosophical meaning related to the environment.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Environmental resilience can be interpreted as a community's ability to defend its environment from damage so that the environment remains habitable. As has been stated in the background, the threat of environmental damage comes from various corners, especially industrialization. The environment needs to be preserved in order to provide comfort as a place to live today and in the future.

The theory that discussing the environment is ecocriticism. Ecocriticism consists of two words, namely ecology and criticism. Ecology means the relationship between living things such as humans, nature and plants. Meanwhile, criticism is an assessment. So ecocriticism is an assessment of works and policies based on their support for the environment. (Harsono, 2008). Harsono conveys the Boconian natural credo that knowledge is victory over nature. Humans conquer nature to overcome their own lives.

This view needs to be changed by replacing the words conquering nature with maintaining nature, so that between humans and nature there is one important thing, namely 'maintenance'. This maintenance in the context of this research is called environmental resilience. Garrard (2004) in (Ikhwan, 2020) said that the discussion of ecocriticism is about pollution, wilderness, disasters, places to live, animals and the earth. Environmental preservation in local wisdom can be seen in terms of its form, methods, and the philosophy behind it.

There are many values that can be taken from folklore. Society stores its wisdom through folklore. Danandjaja (1994) includes folklore as one type of folklore among other types of folklore such as poetry, singing, and others. Recognizing a story cannot be separated from also recognizing

the folk or community who owns the story. By recognizing the community that owns it, we can find out that the story falls into the category of myth, legend or fairy tale. (Danandjaja, 1994).

In cultural context, folklore has a function. These four functions of folklore were written by (Bascom, 1954). The first function is folklore as a projection of people's dreams. Listening to folklore will reveal what people are thinking and what people are dreaming of. So, if a leader wants to hear the real voice of the people, which is the gossip of society, then the leader must go down and listen secretly to the stories circulating in society. Because subordinate reports are very likely to be manipulated, or the media has also been filtered so that it does not reflect the true reality.

Second, folklore functions to validate culture. Apart from being a command, law, folklore is also a guide like a myth. In Indonesian culture there is a culture of taboos or prohibitions, there are recommendations, and the like. For example, you are not allowed to hold a wedding during the month of Asyuro, you are not allowed to eat at the door, in the past you were not allowed to eat before the head of the household, namely the father, you were not allowed to have in-laws on gheblak days, days when parents died and the like. A prohibition is a kind of rule that cannot be violated even without knowing the rationale.

Third, the function of folklore is to educate. Education is a relatively permanent change in behavior. In the past, education through folklore was done by scaring people. Stories about giants in Africa are used to discipline children. The way folk tales educate is not just by scaring them but by inviting children to think philosophically. Fourth, the function of folklore is to ensure that community values are in accordance with the norms that apply in society. If there are members of society who deviate, then folklore carries out its function. If there are new immigrants from other backgrounds, they must adapt to the lifestyle that exists in that community.

Wrong One value of folklore or folklore is its ability to maintain the balance of nature. Nature is a source of life and an element of culture for humans. For this reason, nature conservation must be maintained. The Malay community has Tunjung Ajar Melayu Riau which is about disaster mitigation. (Eddy Noviana, 2023). Through their oral traditions and the ability to read natural signs, they are able to read disasters that will occur, with this the community makes preparations, works together so that casualties can be minimized. The ability to read natural conditions and also work together is local wisdom. (Fakhriati, 2023).

Myth is something related to the past, ancient and traditional. Myths also describe everyday life. The function of myth is the same as symbols, rites, sayings, so that it shows certain cosmos situations. Eliade 2002; 3 in (Sartini, 2014). Because society has a past, they have their own myths. Likewise with the people of Demak, they have myths related to their historical journey. Protecting nature is protecting the ecosystem because ecosystems are related to one another. It is an inseparable cycle. Protecting nature is also protecting the air we breathe, protecting the living places for biota in the sea, land and air. Damaging it also damages the air you breathe. (Suriyansyah Murhaini, 2021).

Referring to Ahimsa (2009) local wisdom is local knowledge, local knowledge is based on place. In local wisdom there is traditional wisdom and contemporary wisdom. Traditional wisdom refers to tradition, while up-to-date wisdom can be produced by new communities in solving the problems of everyday life. Traditional local wisdom exists in Sayung Demak. There was a village inhabited by only five families. They live among mangrove forests. They guard the grave of their ancestor, namely Sheikh Muzakir. Syaih Muzakir forbade his children and grandchildren from catching storks so that storks lived side by side with humans. (Nina Sulistyowati, 2023). The latest local wisdom about nature also exists in Guntur District, Demak Regency. People breed owls. This is done as a solution to control rats that attack rice plants. This pattern was successful and developed over the years and imitated by other regions. (Syamsuddin Nur Majid, 2020).

1.1 Ecology in the story of the founding of the Great Mosque of Demak (1)

The Great Mosque of Demak is a mosque located in the center of Demak Regency, a district that has early Islamic history. In terms of architecture, the mosque has characteristics that differentiate it from other mosques. This mosque has three steps. There are three steps that link it to the religious buildings of the religion that lived in the previous society, namely Hinduism. Some other unique things are, for example, the mosque's veranda is the portico of the Majapahit kingdom, the door has a picture of a dragon which according to the story is a picture of lightning drawn by Ki Ageng Selo whose tomb is in Grobogan Regency, on the priest there is a picture of a turtle animal. The four main pillars of the mosque have the

names of the four guardians written on them, which according to the story, these pillars were initiated by the guardians. The mosque in the form of objects in its parts is accompanied by cheerful stories. Until now, the Great Mosque of Demak is still a place for pilgrims to visit from various cities in Indonesia. Apart from visiting the mosque left by the saints, they also made a pilgrimage to the tombs of the Demak kings which are behind the mosque.

1.2 The story of Kreo Cave (2)

Story about the mosque is not only about the parts of the mosque building as mentioned above, but also when the mosque was about to be built. This research takes data from the perspective of Sunan Kalijaga's story because of the large amount of data available. The story about the construction of the Great Mosque of Demak begins with the process of searching for wood carried out by Sunan Kalijaga. Sunan Kalijaga's journey in looking for wood as material for building mosques developed into many stories and became the origins of various places. A fairly legendary story is the process of moving teak wood from the forest to the river. According to the story, in the process of moving wood from the forest to the river, Sunan Kalijaga encountered problems. Four monkeys came to help and thanks to the monkeys' services the wood was successfully moved. The monkey received a new gift or task, namely ngreho, which means guarding and caring for a cave that is used for Sunan Kalijaga's rest. It is from the word Ngreh or ngrekso that the word kreo comes. So Kreo Cave is a cave that was entrusted by Sunan Kalijaga to these monkeys. Until now, Kreo Cave is still preserved and monkeys still live there, once a year a ceremony is held to honor this event.

From this incident, we can see the relationship between humans, in this case Sunan Kalijaga, and nature, in this case monkeys. One party does not exploit the other. Trees that are cut down are not immediately cut down, they must be cut or asked for permission first. Before being asked if this teak tree was willing, at first it didn't want to, so this tree moved from place to place. The place where this teak tree moved is called the jatingaleh area in Indonesian, moving teak.



Figura. 1: Monkeys take ceremonial food (Source, detik.com).

Kreo Cave is located in Gunungpati District, Semarang City, from the city center using a motorized vehicle to get there takes around fifteen minutes. From Demak Regency via motorized vehicle it takes one hour. Semarang and Demak have a close relationship. There are many places in Semarang City which according to folklore were named by Sunan Kalijaga, such as Jati Ngaleh, Genuk, Banyumanik, etc. In the places around this cave, Kara live freely. Sometimes they live in groves of trees, but also often appear around caves. This place is now an attractive natural tourist spot. People come from various regions to enjoy the funny behavior of the monkeys, as well as the view of the mountains and the Jatibarang

reservoir. Thus, if nature synergizes with each other, they can support each other. The monkeys are allowed to survive and have an impact on the arrival of tourists in the area.

Making Kreo Cave a tourist spot and holding a rewanda offering ceremony is a way to preserve nature so that it remains sustainable. Offerings means offering while rewanda means ape or monkey. This tradition is usually held once a year every month of Shawwal. The components of the offering are mountains containing fruit and vegetables, foods that monkeys can eat. The community expressed their gratitude to the monkeys by holding ceremonies and giving offerings because of the monkeys' services in helping Sunan Kalijaga. Sunan Kalijaga is a figure who is highly respected by society as a propagator of Islam. Until now, his grave is visited by many people. The ceremony is also a reminiscence and provides a reminder that this event occurred. This was demonstrated by the presence of a teak wood replica that was raised during the ceremony.



Figura. 2:
Atmosphere of the Rewanda Offering Ceremony (Source, IDX channel).

1.3 The Story About Soko Tatal

One of the stories surrounding the founding of the Great Mosque of Demak is the story of Soko Tatal. This story is quite famous and is a characteristic of Sunan Kalijaga's sainthood. Soko means main pillar, while tatal means wood remains. It is said that one of Sunan Kalijaga's tasks in building the Great Mosque of Demak was to provide the main pillar. The Great Mosque of Demak, according to legend, is a mosque founded by saints from Java. Wali is more easily defined as a person who has more knowledge about the Islamic religion than the general public. These saints gathered and carried out various tasks to build a large mosque in the middle of a country that had just been founded, namely Demak.

Time The establishment of the mosque was agreed upon taking into account many things. When the time came, one main pillar was not yet available and that was the Sunan Kalijaga section. Finally, Sunan Kalijaga collected the remaining wood to assemble it into one complete pole. These poles are not like wooden poles because they are arranged neatly and wrapped in wood so that the outside looks neat. Lessons that, what can be taken from this event is about recycling. Something that is left over is not necessarily useless. If we are creative, leftover items can have comparable use value to new items. Not cutting down trees anymore and minimizing the use of whole wood is a love for the environment. Story about Soko Tatal which teaches about minimizing tree felling and prioritizing creativity by utilizing leftover items that can be used as inspiration for the current

generation to protect the environment. Currently, Sunan Kalijaga's Soko Tatal can still be seen at the Demak Grand Mosque Museum.



Figura 3: Soko Tatal seen from above. (Source: Kampung Ilmu YouTube channel).



Figura 4: The main pillar of the Great Demak Mosque which is now in the museum (Source: Wikimedia Commons).

1.4 Stories about people

The story about the construction of the Great Mosque of Demak still continues and what is quite famous is the story about the people. Orong-orong is an insect-like animal. Orong-orong in Indonesian is earth dog. Bugs eat roots, worms or other insects. Meanwhile, insect predators are birds, chickens, mice, foxes. During the construction of the Great Mosque of Demak, it was said that while carrying out construction, Sunan Kalijaga accidentally took action which resulted in a man's neck breaking so that his head was separated from his body. Because of his compassionate nature, Sunan Kalijaga took pieces of teak wood and put the heads and bodies of the snakes together so they were joined together again. Finally the people lived again.

This story was told by ancient storytellers to illustrate how powerful Sunan Kalijaga was, a lover of Allah who could bring dead animals to life with Allah's permission. But there is another interpretation of the story. For example, there is an interpretation that the head is a symbol of the mind, while the lower body contains the heart. Mind and heart must be balanced and complementary, so mind and heart must always be connected. These two things in humans are used to consider making decisions.

However, if we interpret it in terms of environmental sustainability, what Sunan Kalijaga did by connecting the necks of the snakes was a symbol of his love for the environment. People are part of the system. A system is linked between one thing and another because when one is disconnected it will have an impact on the others. For example, when the birds that prey on scorpions run out because they are caught by humans, the result is that the number of scorpions will become abundant. If the number of people is abundant, it will also have an impact on other ecosystems.

No	Story	Philosophical meaning related to environmental resilience
1	Kreo Cave Monkeys	Love for nature
2	Soko scroll	Don't cut down trees, use leftovers creatively.
3	People's stories	Maintaining the ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

From the description above, it can be concluded that the folklore surrounding the construction of the Great Mosque of Demak has local wisdom about environmental resilience. The story about the Kreo Cave monkeys has the wisdom to love the environment. If nature and humans work together, positive things will emerge. The two stories about Soko Tatal give a message to consider cutting down trees. Apart from that, this story gives a message about recycling or using leftover items. Leftover items will have the same high value if we are creative. Third, the story about the people teaches a lesson about love for animals and protecting the ecosystem. Meanwhile, the preservation of the story is carried out by holding ceremonies in Gunungpati to preserve Kreo Cave and creating a museum to house the soko tatal.

References

- Affaf Azmul, MY (2020, October 28). Grebeg Besar Grebeg tradition in the community of Demak district (Comparative Study of Cultural Values of the Sunan Kalijaga Era and the Modern Era). Unissula Student Scientific Conference (KIMU) 3, p. 206.
- Bascom, W.R. (1954). Four Functions of Folklore. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 333-249.
- Bobro, M. (2006). Folktales and Philosophy for Children. *Analytical Teaching*, 80-88.
- Danandjaja, J. (1994). *Indonesian Folklore The science of gossip, hearsay, etc.* Jakarta: PT Pustaka Utama Grafiti Publisher.
- Demak, K. (2021, August 09). Contours of Young Land and Industrial Areas, Causes of Land Subsidence in Demak. Retrieved October 30, 2023, from KominfoKabDemak: <https://dinkominfo.demakkab.go.id/berita/detail/kontur-tanah-muda-dan-kawasan-industri-besar-penurunan-tanah-di-demak>
- Eddy Noviana, HF (2023). Understanding 'Tunjung Ajar Melayu Riau': Integrating local knowledge into environmental conservation and disaster education. *Heliyon*.
- Fakhriati. (2023). Making peace with disaster: A study of earthquake disaster communication. *Progress in Disaster Science*, 1-8.
- Fakhriati Fakhriati, DN (2023). Making peace with disaster: A study of earthquake disaster communication through manuscripts and oral traditions. *Progress in Disaster Science*, 1-8.
- Harsono, S. (2008). Environment, Ecocriticism: Environmentally Insightful Literary Criticism. *Literary Studies*, 32.
- Idawarni Asmal, MA (2023). Application of local wisdom in handling waste in coastal settlements as an effort to minimize waste production. *Environmental and Sustainability Indicators*.
- Ikhwan, AK (2020). Children's Relations to the Environment in Children's Novels by Children: Greg Gerrard's Ecocritical Study. *Bapala*, 1-10.

Muhajir¹ Suyitno² Sumarwati³

The Value Of Ecological Preservation On The Myth Of The Construction Of The Great Mosque Of Demak

Kusyanto, M. (2020). Local Wisdom of Demakan Mosque Architecture. TALENTA Conference Series, 83-91.