

GEGENI TRADITION IN THE CULTURE OF THE TENGGER TRIBE

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Abstract This research aims to describe the *Gegeni* tradition found in the Tengger tribe community, East Java. This research is important to carry out because research on the *Gegeni* tradition found in the Tengger tribe community has never been carried out. This research utilizes descriptive qualitative methods as the basis for the research methodology. The data in this research was obtained through interview techniques, observation and literature study. Based on research, it was found that *Gegeni* is not only a tradition that has long existed in the Tengger tribe community, but is also a marker of the community's friendly character.

Keywords: *Gegeni*, Tengger tribe, local culture

INTRODUCTION

Local cultural research plays a crucial role in the development of cultural science for several important reasons. First, local cultures are incredibly diverse, reflecting a wide range of historical, geographical, and social influences. Studying local cultures allows cultural scientists to explore this diversity in-depth, providing a wealth of data and insights that enrich the overall understanding of human culture (Sutarto, 2004; Koentjaraningrat, 2009; Tjahyadi, Wafa, & Zamroni, 2019; Budiarto, 2020).

Second, local cultural research provides essential context for understanding broader cultural phenomena. By examining the specific historical, environmental, and social factors that shape a particular culture, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of how and why cultures develop and change over time. Third, many local cultures are at risk of disappearing due to globalization, urbanization, and other factors. Local cultural research plays a vital role in documenting and preserving these unique cultural traditions, languages, and practices, helping to safeguard cultural diversity (Sutarto, 2004; Koentjaraningrat, 2009; Tjahyadi, Wafa, & Zamroni, 2019; Budiarto, 2020).

Apart from the three reasons above, local cultural research is also important. It is because local research allows cultural scientists to engage in meaningful comparative analysis. By studying multiple local cultures, researchers can identify commonalities and differences, leading to the development of theories and frameworks that can be applied more broadly. Second, local cultural research often involves collaboration with local communities. This engagement fosters trust, mutual learning, and a more ethical approach to research, ensuring that the perspectives and voices of the people being studied are respected and (Sutarto, 2004; Koentjaraningrat, 2009; Tjahyadi, Wafa, & Zamroni, 2019; Budiarto, 2020).

Third, findings from local cultural research can inform policies related to cultural preservation, education, and development. Understanding the specific needs and challenges faced by local communities is crucial for designing effective strategies that support cultural sustainability and growth. Fourth, local research generates empirical data that can be used to test and refine cultural theories. It provides real-world evidence to support or challenge existing hypotheses, contributing to the advancement of the field (Sutarto, 2004; Koentjaraningrat, 2009; Tjahyadi, Wafa, & Zamroni, 2019; Budiarto, 2020). So, in summary, local cultural research is essential for the development of cultural science because it deepens our understanding of the complexity and diversity of human cultures, provides critical context, and helps preserve and protect cultural heritage. It also has practical applications and promotes ethical research practices through community involvement.

This research aims to describe the *Gegeni* tradition found in the Tengger tribe community, East Java. The Tengger tribe, also known as the Tenggerese, is an indigenous ethnic group that primarily inhabits the Tengger Massif, a volcanic region in East Java, Indonesia. They are well-known for their unique culture, religion, and their close association with the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park, which encompasses several active volcanoes, including Mount Bromo, Mount Semeru, and Mount Batok (Sutarto, 2006; Jadid et al., 2020; Hasanah, & Sukmawan, 2021; Putri, Noven, Nurcahyati, Irfan, Septiasari, Batoro, & Setyawan, 2022).

One of the most distinctive aspects of the Tenggerese culture is their religious beliefs. They practice a form of Hinduism that combines elements of traditional Javanese animism with Hindu rituals. The Tenggerese believe that their ancestors were descended from the ancient Majapahit Empire, and they worship the god Hyang Widi Wasa along with their ancestors. One of the most significant religious events for the Tenggerese is the annual Yadnya Kasada festival, also known as the Kasada ceremony. During this event, which typically takes place at Mount Bromo's caldera, Tenggerese villagers offer various offerings to the gods and spirits by throwing them into the volcano's crater. This ritual is meant to seek protection and blessings from the deities, and it's a spectacle that attracts tourists and researchers interested in the Tenggerese culture (Sutarto, 2006; Jadid et al., 2020; Hasanah, & Sukmawan, 2021; Putri, Noven, Nurcahyati, Irfan, Septiasari, Batoro, & Setyawan, 2022).

Beside that, the Tenggerese people also have a unique language called Tenggerese, although many of them also speak Bahasa Indonesia, the national language of Indonesia. Their traditional way of life includes farming and agriculture, and they are known for cultivating crops like potatoes, vegetables, and fruits in the fertile volcanic soil of the Tengger Massif. In recent years, tourism has also become an important source of income for some Tenggerese communities due to the popularity of the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park among travelers. Overall, the Tengger tribe is a distinct cultural group in Indonesia, known for their unique blend of Hinduism, their connection to volcanoes, and their traditional way of life in the highlands of East Java (Sutarto, 2006; Jadid et al., 2020; Hasanah, & Sukmawan, 2021; Putri, Noven, Nurcahyati, Irfan, Septiasari, Batoro, & Setyawan, 2022).

METHOD

The method used in this research is a descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive qualitative is a research method that utilizes qualitative data which is analyzed and described descriptively (Denzin et al., 2018; Tjahyadi et al., 2019; Tjahyadi, Andayani, et al., 2020). The primary data for this research is verbal data obtained from interviews with sources. The interview in the research was conducted with one of the native residents of Wonokerso Village. The data obtained from field observations and literature studies related to the research topic are understood as secondary data which can help in understanding primary data. Observations or observations are carried out to obtain an overview of the research object being studied. Observation activities were carried out twice, namely on December 2 2021 and December 5 2021 in Wonokerso Village by the Research Team, coordinated by the Head of the Research Team.

Analysis of the data was carried out by following the analysis procedures contained in Herbert Blumer's Symbolic Interactionism theory. The stages in data analysis include: 1) reading in depth the transcription of the interview results as prime data, 2) analyzing the meaning of the verbal data contained in the transcription of the interview results based on the concepts of mind, self and society contained in the theory of Symbolic Interactionism , and 3) draw conclusions on the analysis that has been carried out. In this research, the results of the analysis that has been carried out are presented using informal techniques. This is because in this research, the results of the analysis are presented using ordinary words. The aim of using this technique is so that the description of the research results can be prepared well and precisely.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Gegeni Tradition

The Tengger tribe is a tribe that occupies the slopes of Mount Bromo and is famous for its strong customs, traditions and culture. One of them is the *Gegeni* tradition, "*Gegeni*" comes from the word "*Geni*" in Javanese which means "Fire". This tradition is an activity of the Tengger tribe people who live around the slopes of Mount Bromo to warm their bodies due to the cold temperature conditions of the area. However, it is different from the Wonokerso perch which makes the *Gegeni* tradition different from usual. In the Tengger community of Wonokerso Village, the *gegeni* tradition is very unique because it is used as a means of welcoming guests. So guests who come to the homes of the Tengger people in Wonokerso Village will be immediately welcomed and directed to sit in front of the "*gegeni*" in the form of a fireplace. This is as seen in the picture below:



Figure 1. fireplace for Gegeni
(Source: researcher)

Based on the photo above, it appears that the fireplace used in the gegeni tradition is a traditional fireplace. The stove uses firewood as fuel for ignition. This is as seen in the photo below:



Figure 2. The use of firewood in Gegeni stoves.
(Source: researcher)

The term stove usually referred to by the Tengger people is "*Pawon*" which means a hearth, but it has a sacred meaning, since the "*pawon*" itself is not just made, but there is a slametan ritual and the time to determine the day of making it is calculated by the shaman or traditional leader of the Tengger tribe. This exists because according to the Tengger people's belief that "*Pawon*" is the place where the spirits of their ancestors reside, which are called "*nini towo* and "*kiki towo*". Apart from that, "*Pawon*" also means traditional kitchen which is located at the back in Javanese.

Apart from functioning as a means of warming the body, *Pawon* can also function as a place to cook. In Wonokerso village itself, "*Pawon*" is a property that every house in

Wonokerso must have. This is because the *pawon* is sacred, so it is believed by the Tengger people that the *pawon* is the origin of life where the food which is the source of human life is made in the *pawon* and the warmth of the body so that it is not cold is also an effort to keep the body healthy and not sick because of the cold, so it is 100% the home of the Tengger people Wonokerso has *pawon*.

However, due to the development of the times and modern technology, the people of Wonokerso have started to have 2 *pawon*, one of which is at the back of the house as a means of cooking, and the other is a modern *pawon* which is mostly located in the middle of the house, namely the family room as a place to welcome guests and chat while warming the body, accompanied by typical food made from Wonokerso agricultural products, namely tubers, one of which is potatoes, and warm drinks such as coffee or tea.

In the Tengger Wonokerso *gegeni* tradition there are also rules that make its sacredness even more pronounced. When someone visits their house, the people of Tengger Wonokerso really need good etiquette when they are near *pawon*. When visiting, someone will be given advice about the *gegeni* rules, such as not being allowed to sit opposite the *pawon*'s mouth. So sitting when *gegeni* is on the right and left side of the *pawon*.

Apart from that, *gegeni* also has sacred value. This value can be seen in the aim of this tradition which aims to honor the ancestral spirits who reside in Wonokerso village. Basically, the meaning of sacred symbolizes purity or being considered holy. The *Gegeni* tradition in Wonokerso is considered sacred because it has a symbol of the rules when in the *pawon* when doing *gegeni*.

The rules made include not being able to sit directly in front of the *pawon*'s mouth and not being able to step over firewood when you want to move. Then you are not allowed to touch the cormorant (rice cooking utensil) while cooking rice. People who intentionally or unintentionally touch the cormorant must carry out a small salvation to atone for the sin by cooking the rice again accompanied by offerings placed on the *pawon*. If there is no salvation and the person continues to eat the rice, it is suspected that the person who eats the rice will die. The word "ndak ilok" is a reason for the Wonokerso community to urge them not to violate these rules. This requires it to be done with the aim of respecting the ancestral spirits who reside there. The people of Wonokerso, who are predominantly Hindu, adhere to this belief in order to avoid and be saved from disaster.

CONCLUSION (Cambria 11 Capital Bold, Space 1,15) (no numbering)

The *gegeni* tradition in Tengger Wonokerso is said to be unique because it is used as a means to welcome guests. Guests who come to the homes of the Tengger Wonokerso community will be immediately welcomed and directed to the *pawon* and carry out *gegeni* and be given food treats such as various processed potatoes along with kotok chili sauce. The term stove usually referred to by the Tengger people is "Pawon" which means a hearth, but it has a sacred meaning, since the "pawon" itself is not just made, but there is a slametan ritual and the time to determine the day of making it is calculated by the shaman or traditional leader of the Tengger tribe. This exists because according to the belief of the Tengger people that "Pawon" is the abode of the spirits of their ancestors called "nini towo and kiki towo".

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