

# Philanthropic and Ecological Values in Merti Desa Tambakbayan Tradition of Tambakboyo Village, Tawang Sari District, Sukoharjo Regency

DT Ardianto<sup>1</sup> and S Mataram<sup>2</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Lecturer of Visual Communication Design Departement, Faculty of Art and Design, University of Sebelas Maret, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Lecturer of Visual Communication Design Departement, Faculty of Art and Design, University of Sebelas Maret, Indonesia

E-mail: [denytri@staff.uns.ac.id](mailto:denytri@staff.uns.ac.id)

## ABSTRACT

The Javanese tradition is manifested in various forms, one of which is Merti Desa Tambakbayan tradition in Tambakboyo Village, Tawang Sari District, Sukoharjo Regency. This annual tradition is a heritage to maintain culture and environmental balance. This study seeks to describe the philanthropic and ecological values in the Merti Desa Tambakbayan tradition. This research is a case study with objects of study in the forms of traditional events. The data sources are the Merti Desa Tambakbayan tradition events, documents, and interview results with informants. The obtained field facts show the existence of philanthropic and ecological attitudes in the community such as eating together and exchanging meals, as well as mutual cooperation activities to clean up the environment around the village regardless of social status. These attitudes are essentials, especially when several society members are experiencing economic difficulties due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

## INTRODUCTION

The Javanese people have various kinds of local wisdom in the form of community traditions. One of these traditions is Merti Desa Tambakbayan tradition in Tambakboyo Village, Tawang Sari District, Sukoharjo Regency, Central Java. The Tambakbayan tradition is an annual ritual ceremony that is held to pray for safety or repel any danger that might come. This is done so that the village remains safe, peaceful, and free from all disturbances, both those mystical and non-mystical ones. In addition, this tradition is also a way to express gratitude to God who has given an abundance of sustenance and prosperity to the community, as well as to honor the ancestors so that they are always at the villagers' side.

The Merti Desa Tambakbayan tradition is not merely a ceremonial tradition of a village community that is held without any purpose. This tradition has positive values of the local wisdom. The local wisdom values in the Merti Desa Tambakbayan tradition are the value of caring for the environment (ecology), the value of compassion for others (philanthropy), the noble value of the Javanese culture, religious values, and the value of social humanism. These values are interesting to study because they are in direct contact with the community and are manifested in traditional activities. Therefore, the author sought to identify and describe the implementation of philanthropic values and ecological values of the Merti Desa Tambakbayan tradition in Tawang Sari District, Sukoharjo Regency, Central Java Province.



## CONCLUSION

Merti Desa Tambakbayan tradition is a form of the local community wisdom of the Tambakboyo Village, Tawang Sari District, Sukoharjo Regency. This wisdom is manifested in the form of annual ritual ceremony to pray for safety and protection from any dangers that may come. This tradition also aims to keep the village safe and peaceful, and avoid any disturbances, both mystical and non-mystical ones. The Merti Desa Tambakbayan tradition has two dimensions of good value for the community, namely the value of ecological intelligence and philanthropic spirit in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic. These two values are implemented in the concept of maintaining personal hygiene and conscience, cleanliness of the living environment, and cleanliness of the natural ancestral graves of the village pepunden. This tradition also fosters the spirit to share among the community members, either in the form of daily basic needs, agricultural food products, or other material assistance through active and comprehensive community programs. The implementation of ecological and philanthropic values originating from the community is strongly meaningful in the current era of the Covid-19 pandemic.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Ecological and Philanthropic Values of Tambakbayan Tradition in the Pandemic Era

The first value in the Merti Desa Tambakbayan tradition is ecological value. This value can be seen from the series of events arranged in such a way by the traditional leaders and the event committees. This traditional activity begins with community service activities to clean up the environment in Tambakboyo Village which is usually carried out on Sunday morning to afternoon. The activities carried out are cleaning tree branches and garbage that obstruct the village roads, to then be collected and burned. This activity is a form of solidarity in protecting the environment where the villagers live. Cleaning up all forms of garbage can also mean that the whole community has a solid determination to keep their homes clean and to get rid of all forms of evil that exist in Tambakboyo Village.

Another activity in the Merti Desa Tambakbayan tradition is cleaning the burial places in Tambakboyo Village. The activity of cleaning the cemetery is done to keep its environment clean, tidy, and far from scary image. This activity also means that the people of Tambakboyo Village have a unified thought and idea to protect and respect their ancestors.

The highlight of Tambakbayan activity is visiting and taking care of a large stone (punden) and a large banyan tree in the middle of Tambakboyo village. This is done as an expression of gratitude to the Creator who has provided a good and comfortable environment for the Tambakboyo Villagers to live in. In addition, the celebration and environmental maintenance in the punden area is also an offering to the ancestral heritage in the form of pepunden, a large stone named "Kyai Guna Wijaya". The people of Tambakboyo respect this traditional ceremony and carry it out annually from generation to generation. People who carry out the Merti Desa Tambakbayan tradition believe in the wisdom behind the existence of large stone pepunden. The community also considers that God sends blessings to their village through the large stone pepunden to protect and preserve the surrounding nature. This tradition is also considered a means to maintain the security, prosperity and tranquility of the community that are in accordance with the divinity, unity, and togetherness principles.

These are the reason why Merti Desa Tambakbayan tradition in Sukoharjo or any similar traditions in other regions deserve to be maintained and preserved from generation to generation. These kinds of tradition are effective in maintaining human relations with the natural environment. Moreover, in this era of pandemic, maintaining environmental cleanliness and body hygiene is an essential effort to avoid the covid-19 virus.

The second value of the Merti Desa Tambakbayan tradition is the philanthropic value among the community members of Tambakboyo Village, Tawang Sari District, Sukoharjo Regency. This sense of love for others can be seen from the ritual activity series. On the day of the traditional commemoration, there is a ritual where people share regional specialties and local agricultural products. In addition, there is a procession of watching a Tayub Dance performance which is attended by all levels of the community members. From regional officials to the grassroots community, all get together in the village pendhapa (hall). Some other agendas in this event are feasting together and social activities in the form of giving charity for the elderly and other community members who deserve the donation. The traditions of utilizing natural resources and the spirit of sharing are good reflections that become the identity of a community order (Mbate, 2013: 418).

The activities of sharing and implementing philanthropic values in the society are not only found in the traditional rituals of Merti Desa Tambakbayan. This year, the community also carried out social service activities in the time of COVID-19 pandemic. This is evident from the efforts of the village government in making strategic policies that have philanthropic values to ensure the survival of the community during the current pandemic. Collective intelligence that emerges from a tradition will result in a society that cares for each other and has a high spirit of sharing (Goleman, 2012). This can be seen from the various programs that provide assistance in the form of basic needs to the community. In addition, all community components also play an active role in the Jogo Tonggo (neighbor care) program, a movement to provide food for neighbors who are self-isolating due to COVID-19.

