

THE SAPARAN RITUAL IN CANDIREJO TOURISM VILLAGE

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Abstract

Saparan is a ritual which is held annually in every *Safar* month. *Saparan* ritual is celebrated in many areas in Central Java. One of the villages that celebrates this ritual is Candirejo village, in Borobudur Sub-District. This paper discusses the process of the ritual in Candirejo, which includes the time, the place, the doers, the sequence of the procession, the myth, the offerings and its meaning, the functions and the purposes of the ritual. The writer did field research and library research to collect the ritual details. The results reveal that *Saparan* ritual in Candirejo village usually lasts in 3 days. Many activities are carried out during the *Saparan* ritual celebration, such as: cleaning the village together, *sedekahan*, *kenduri*, *tumpengan*, *pengajian*, *gebyar rebana*, traditional dance performed like *Jathilan*, *Ndayak'an* and *Pentul-Tembem* dance, and the ritual is closed by the puppet show. Every activity in the *Saparan* ritual is always accompanied with the offerings that consist of some foods and other things as symbols that describe the relationship between humans and God. The purposes of the *Saparan* ritual are a way to refuse all kinds of disaster and a way to thank God for having given them the harvest and prosperity. Besides, the functions of the ritual are as the effort to keep the tradition to introduce it to the young generation and to keep the togetherness of all villagers in Candirejo village.

Keywords: *Saparan*, ritual, process, offering, Candirejo

Introduction

Indonesia is also well-known for its cultural activities. Almost every area in Indonesia has its own culture which is unique and reflects its identity. Daily languages, clothes, the traditions, and various kinds of cultural activities are different from one area to another. Those differences are richness and pride part of Indonesia that beautifies the country.

One of the traditional cultures in Indonesia, especially in Central Java, is *Saparan*. *Saparan* is a ritual that describes a relationship between God, nature, and human beings. The name of *Saparan* comes from the word *Safar*, the second month of Javanese calendar or Islamic year. *Saparan* is identical with village cleaning activity that called *Perti Desa*. The villagers clean their

village together. After the village cleaning activity, it is followed by food festival which is called *sedekahan* and puppet show.

The purpose of *Saparan* ritual is to thank God for having given them the wealth, especially in farming harvest. In addition, it is also a ritual to ask God to grant them safety and wealth for the following year. Therefore, the puppet show will use one of the tittles, like *Sri Ulih* or *Dewi Sri Boyong*, *Tumurune Wiji Dukut Sewu*, *Sri Sadana*, *Petruk Mbangun Kayangan* and *Udan Mintuno* which are connected with the purpose of *Saparan* ritual itself. Those tittles have almost the same story, all describe farming situation in *Amarta* kingdom (one of kingdom in the puppet story). *Sri* is a goddess in the puppet story. She is a very kind person. She is a symbol of successful farming.

Saparan is held in such areas as Yogyakarta, East Java and Central Java. In Gamping, Sleman, Yogyakarta it is known as *Saparan Bekakak*, in Wonolelo as *Saparan Ki Ageng Wonolelo*, in Klaten as *Yakowiyyu* and in Candirejo as *Saparan Candirejo*.

In Central Java, one of the villages that still maintain the tradition of *Saparan* ritual is Candirejo village in Borobudur. In this village *Saparan* is held yearly. When it is not held, the villagers believe that there will be something unexpected to happen. That is the myth that the villagers believe. Although *Saparan* is held yearly in Candirejo village, there are still many people who do not know about the ritual. Therefore, the writer wanted to discuss more about *Saparan* ritual. The writer tried to find out: 1) the history, myth, functions and purposes of *Saparan* ritual in Candirejo village; 2) the process and the sequence of *Saparan* ritual in Candirejo village held; 3) the meaning of the offerings used in *Saparan* ritual; and 4) the uniqueness of *Saparan* ritual in Candirejo village.

Method

To get the primary data, the writer did field research by interviewing the staff in Candirejo Village office and an elderly who knew the process and the meaning of the offerings. Library research was done to get secondary data to support the primary data.

Discussion

Ritual and Symbols

A ritual is a form of prescribed and elaborated behavior and occurs both as the spontaneous inventions of the individual as a culture trait. Rituals may be prescribed by the traditions of a community, including a religious community. Rituals are characterized by formalism, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance, sacral symbolism and performance.

Javanese community is a religious community. The most part of them still does the ritual. There are many kind of ritual still exist among the great community such as; the celebration of bad luck and bad fate refusal for extraordinary children called *Ruwatan* ritual, traditional ritual for woman's pregnancy called *Mitoni* ritual, the baby birthday at seven months called *Tedak Sinten* and *Saparan* ritual. Every ritual has its own meaning, purpose and function. Besides, it is also has its own symbols. Every symbols used in the ritual has each meaning.

In the *Saparan* ritual, people use many offerings to complete the procession. Every kind of offerings used is a symbol that contains meanings and values. The symbols will describe the philosophy in human life.

The Profile of Candirejo Village

Candirejo Village is located in Borobudur Sub-district, Magelang Regency of Central Java Province. There are 20 villages in Borobudur Sun-district, but Candirejo is the only one village which still keeps the tradition of *Saparan* ritual. It is one of the villages located at the foot of Menoreh hills. The distance is around 3 km to Borobudur Temple in the south-west. There are about 2500 villagers who live in Candirejo village. They spread in 11 community units. Mostly, they are farmers and the rest are fishers, merchants, civil servants, construction workers, etc. The residences of Candirejo Village are dominantly Javanese. Hence, they are still keeping and regarding the culture and tradition of Javanese. Their culture and tradition become one of the daily life activities which are very potential as a tourism attraction.

Candirejo Village also has potential natural resources to support the development of tourism activities. Therefore, in 1999 Candirejo Village was chosen as a pilot project for Guided Village Tourism (*Desa Binaan Wisata*) by the local Government. In 2003, there was an official announcement for Candirejo Tourism Village from the Minister of Culture and Tourism, *Bapak I Gede Ardika*. Candirejo Tourism Village serves a kind of tourism which is the object of the tourism are about how the local people life and how they do the daily activities. The most attraction point is about the originality of local people's life style in the village with their culture and tradition which is it will be totally different with how the visitors', especially for foreigner. It is also supported by the most part of the villagers who have a passion and contribution for developing and promoting the village. Besides, Candirejo is the only one village in Borobudur sub district which still maintain the *Saparan* ritual.

The Procession, Offerings and Uniqueness of Saparan Ritual in Candirejo Village

The History of *Saparan* Ritual in Candirejo Village



Saparan ritual is assimilating between Javanese culture, Hinduism and Islamic culture. Based on the interview with the former head village in Candirejo, Slamet Tugiyanto, *Saparan* ritual was held in Candirejo village from the ancient of Mataram Kingdom and still held year by year until now. *Saparan* was held every *Safar* month in the Javanese calendar system. *Memetri Bumi Bapa Ngangkoso* (take care of the earth and the space) is the point of *Saparan* ritual activities in Candirejo village. *Saparan* ritual has been part of traditions for the villagers in Candirejo Village. It is affected by the myth about *Saparan* itself. Besides, the residences of Candirejo village which almost Javanese people still keep the tradition and make it as their belief that they have to do. Hence, it is a conscious of every villagers when the *Safar* month come then they will prepare all the things used in *Saparan* ritual.

Actually, some other places like in Gamping, Sleman, Yogyakarta, in Klaten and Wonolelo also do the *Saparan* ritual. Yet, the procession of the ritual in Candirejo is different from the ones conducted in Gamping, Klaten and Wonolelo. The differences are the history, the process, the myth, the offerings and the activities, but the main purpose and function is almost same in every area, as a way to thank God for the welfare.

From the interview with the staff in Candirejo Village office, the writer founds a completely information about *Saparan* ritual in Candirejo Village. The information included the time and schedule of ritual, the things used in the ritual, the participant of the ritual and the purpose of the ritual. In addition, the data are also supported by the pictures from the Candirejo Village's collection and also from the writer's observation.

The Myth of *Saparan* Ritual in Candirejo Village

Based on the interview with the former head village in Candirejo, Bapak Slamet Tugiyanto, he told the myth story about *Saparan* ritual in Candirejo village. Once, when the head village named Niti Pawiro decided not carried out the *Saparan* ritual, his wife had nightmare. It happened long time ago, in a few days after the *Safar* month finished.

In her nightmare she met *Petruk*, one of the *Punokawan* figures in Puppets world. *Petruk* said if the villagers did not carried out the *Saparan* ritual, he would *ludes kelor* (killed) all the head village family in a mystic way. After that, she was sick. Finally, after discussion with the staff and the villagers, the head village decided to carry out the *Saparan* ritual although the *Safar* month is already finished. Unbelievable, in the next morning after the *Saparan* ritual held, she was cured.

Since that moment, the *Saparan* ritual is carrying out every year, until now. The myth about *Saparan* ritual was formed from the story above, then carried and believed by the villagers until now.

Time of *Saparan* Ritual Procession in Candirejo Village

Saparan ritual is held in *Safar* month, the second month after *Muharram* in Islamic Calendar system. In Candirejo village, there is no certain date to hold the *Saparan* ritual. Usually, the time is a result of the discussion between head village, the staff and the elders figure. Hence, it can be held in the beginning, in the middle, or in the last of *Safar* month. It will take a few days to hold all the step of *Saparan* ritual in Candirejo village. Usually it starts in early morning and will end on late night every day.

First step to start the procession, the head village gave an announcement to the staff and every hamlet about the time, the schedule, what the villagers had to do and what they had to bring for the ritual. There was a few days discussion to discuss all the things connected to *Saparan* ritual preparation. After the announcement, the villagers would automatically follow all the rules with sincerity.

The Functions of *Saparan* Ritual

Saparan ritual has several functions especially for the villagers in Candirejo village. Firstly, it is kind of an effort to keep the tradition and culture and introduce them to the young generation. Secondly, it is a moment to keep the togetherness from all the part of Candirejo villagers. It is showed by the villagers when they were prepared all the things used in the ritual together. It is also kind of refreshing event for them because there will be a lot of entertaining activities during the ritual. Besides, the official staffs of Candirejo village make this ritual as a moment to introduce the existence of Candirejo Tourism Village with all the activities to outsides, especially travel agents.

The Purposes of *Saparan* Ritual in Candirejo Village

Beside have various functions; *Saparan* ritual also has some purpose. *Saparan* ritual was considered by the villagers as a way to thank God for having given them the wealth, especially in farming harvest. In addition, it is also a ritual to ask God to grant them safety and wealth for the following year. Besides, it is also to carry the whole village as a communication moment between human and nature, in achieving some benefits of human living. Lastly, it is an honor as an effort to protect the head village to create a comfortable atmosphere in the village.

The Procession and The Sequence of *Saparan* Ritual

The procession of *Saparan* ritual in Candirejo Village will last for 2 to 4 days. The numbers of the day to hold the ritual will be different every year based on the budget and the organizer, still without leaving the main purpose. The procession is usually divided into several parts. The activities done are different from one day to another. For *Saparan* ritual in 2012, the activities in day 1 include: *bersih desa*, *ikror do'a slametan*, *kenduri* and *pengajian istighosah*. The activities in day 2 include: *gebyar rebana* and traditional dance performance. The activities in day 3 include: *tumpengan*, ceremonial event, *Pentul-Tembem* dance performance

and leather puppet show. The day's number to hold the *Saparan* procession would be different every year. It based on the amount of the activities in *Saparan* ritual and the budget available. Therefore it could take 2 days, 3 days or 4 days. But normally it takes 3 days. In 2012, the *Saparan* was carried out on 27 until 29 of December. The complete activities were explained as follows:

Day 1

Bersih Desa and Berseh

On the first day of *Saparan* ritual procession started with *setral dusun* or *bersih desa*. *Bersih* means clean and *desa* means village. So *bersih desa* means clean the village together. All the villagers started to clean their surrounding environment like houses, yards, roads in front of their house and the gutters. After they were done, they went to the cemetery to *berseh* (cleaning) and *nyekar* (flowering) their family's cemetery. *Bersih desa* and *berseh* activities have meaning to facing the ritual procession, to create a good condition, clear situation, clean body and soul, comfortable and also to honoring the ancestors with expectation that the whole ritual event would running well. All the activities were done in the morning.

Ikror Do'a Slametan

After *bersih desa*, it was followed with *Ikror Do'a Slametan*. *Ikror* is saying, *do'a* is praying and *slametan* is kind of disaster refusal moment. It was kind of the opening praying before the ritual going to the next step. This step is done by the entire staff village and also the villagers. They are gathered in the house of the head village. They were praying together and follow the *Modin* who lead this activity. *Modin* is a figure who trustworthy by a community to lead every praying moment. Usually, *modin* is selected by the villagers based on his skill and knowledge about religion. After praying together, it would follow by opening speech of *Saparan* Ritual by the head village.

Kenduri

Next step is *kenduri*. *Kenduri* is kind of food festival. All the villagers came to the head of hamlet's house because this session was placed in every hamlet. They would bring their own food and submit it to the same place, usually in the kitchen. The food they brought included rice, chicken, tofu, tempe, potato and noodle. Activity in this session is almost same with the activities before it, praying together. The difference is only about the content of the praying. They were praying in specific purpose, for example they praying for their family's ancestors. After that, at the end of the event, they would get their foods again which have been transferred one and others. This event was leading by *Modin* in every hamlet.

Pengajian Istighozah

The last activity in day one was *pengajian istighozah*. *Pengajian* here is Islamic learning moment, the way to implant the religion values by someone who mastering and knowledgeable about Islam which called *Kyai* or Preacher.

Meantime, *istighozah* means asking help. So *pengajian istighozah* is Islamic learning moment that has purpose as a way to lost all kind of disaster. This session was held in outside place, in front of village hall and was attended by the villagers who were Muslim. *Pengajian Istighozah* was also attended by some people from outside the village. It was for general, so everyone can come and follow the session.

Day 2

Gebyar Rebana

On the second day of *Saparan* ritual procession started with *gebyar rebana* event. *Gebyar rebana* is singing together, especially Islamic songs and involving by *rebana* music. The musician and singer were the young men and women from the village. *Rebana* is a drum in round shape, made of short cylinder wood which attached with leather in one side. It can create a sound with knock the leather side. It was an expression of praised to the God for everything happens in their live. It took place on an open stage.

Traditional Dance Performances

After *Gebyar Rebana* finish, it was followed by performance of the traditional dance. There are two kind of traditional dance in Candirejo village, *jathilan* and *dayakan*. *Jathilan* is a traditional dance using a *jaran kepang* (the miniatur of horse made of bamboo) and performed by the group of people, *ndayakan* is a traditional dance using crown made of chicken or duck feathers. Several hamlets have their own style of *jathilan*, such as *jathilan Sangen*, *jathilan Kerekan* and *jathilan Brangkal*. Yet, there was only one style of *ndayakan*. The group of every hamlet performed respectively. The dance performances were done on an open stage in front of village office.

Day 3

Tumpengan

The third day was the last day of the *Saparan* ritual procession. It started with *tumpeng* procession. The procession moved slowly through the streets and some people brought the *tumpeng*. This procession started from *sendang kapit kuburan* or river between two cemeteries which is called *sendang bunder* or Round River in Brangkal, and went to the parking area and open stage in front of Candirejo Tourism Village office. At the same time, the *Modin* lead the entire participant to praying (*ngidung*) along the street. This procession was followed by the head village and his wife, all the staff of Candirejo village and their wife, the entire local guide, all the artist and also all the charioteer.

Ceremonial Event

The next step in this day was a ceremonial event. There were a lot of speech from the special invited guests such as Governor, Regent and Camat. After that, the head village would give his speech and received seedlings as a donation, in a

symbolic way, from the Governor. The things of the donation would be different every year. It was kind of respect from the Government to the local tradition ritual. It was took place on an open stage.

Pentul-Tembem Dance Performance

After the ceremonial event, it would follow by *Pentul-Tembem* dancing performance by the Elementary and the Senior High School students in Candirejo Tourism Village. *Pentul-Tembem* dance is a dance which is the dancers wearing black and white uniform. Black color is describing bad things, and white color describing good things. After that, it followed by *Jathilan* performed from Butuh, one of the hamlets in Candirejo village.

Leather Puppet Show

The last steps on the third day of *Saparan* Ritual procession in Candirejo village was leather puppet show. Before the show began, there would be a speech from the head village as a closing ceremony. It was took place in front of the village office.

The Offerings and Its Meaning in *Saparan* Ritual

Offering are needed in almost every traditional ritual. It is requirement to completeness the ritual process. It is used as a symbol to describe the life philosophy. Every steps of *Saparan* ritual will need the different offerings as follows:

1. *Tumpeng*. *Tumpeng* is a cone of white rice. It is rice in a cone shape which cooked with extract coconut. It is serving with other kind of foods such as *ingkung ayam jago* (a cooked of a whole cock), any vegetables and fruits. The cone shape is describing Himalaya Mountain and the top of Suroloyo as the holy place for divinities. But after Wali Songo come, the meaning is changed into Islam belief which is say that the cone rice shape means kind of a reverence to the Prophet Muhammad. *Inkung ayam jago* itself means a kind of total abdication the body to the God.
2. *Golong Milang Dusun*. It is consists of 11 kinds of *nasi golong*. *Nasi golong* is white rice with few vegetables and meal. It is covered with banana leave. The number of 11 itself is describing the sum of the hamlets in Candirejo village.
3. *Larakan* is consists of *pala kependhem*, *pala gumantung* and *pala kesempar*. These are kind of farming harvest, *pala kependem* is farming harvest which buried, such as cassava, ginger; *pala gumantung* is farming harvest which hang up on the trees, such as papaya, banana; *pala kesempar* is farming harvest which is on the surface of the soil, such as cucumber and rice. *Larakan* means kind of wishes to make all the harvest more advantages.

4. *Golongan Kencana*. *Golongan Kencana* is *golong ketan* with egg in the bottom and also upper the *ketan rice*. It has the similar shape with *nasi golong*, but this is *ketan rice*. *Ketan rice* is stickier than white rice as usual. This food is cooked without salt. At the first time, it means a kind of reverence for Dewi Pertiwi. Then, it is changed to reverence for Dewi Siti Fatimah (the Prophet Muhammad's daughter) which is called Dewi Siti Pertimah by the villagers in Candirejo Village. The last meaning is based on the Islam belief.
5. *Nasi ambeng*. *Nasi ambeng* is white rice; serve with other component to complete the offering, such as *perkedel* (fried potatoes), *ikan asin goreng* (fried salty fish), *rempeyek* (nut crackers), *urap* (mix of several vegetables with coconut), sweet noodle and chicken *opor* (chicken with yellow soup). *Nasi ambeng* is serving in *tedo* (a big plate made of bamboo), and every component will placed in *takir* (a small open box made of banana leave). *Nasi ambeng* serve by the entire of family member. It is kind of reverence to the leader who stay first in each community units, and also kind of wishes to the ancestors.
6. *Kenduri*. In *kenduri*, every person will bring their food consists of white rice, a piece of fried chicken, sweet noodle, potatoes, fried *tahu* and fried *tempe*.
7. *Jajan pasar*. *Jajan pasar* is many kind of snack bought in the market; consist of *apem* (soft and sweet taste, made of flour, water, with fermentation and it has many colors and covered with banana leave), *moto kebo* (made of *ketan rice flour*, fill in with sweet coconut grater, and covered with banana leave), *cethil* (made of extract cassava), *ketan kincau* (consist of red *ketan rice*, a few of white *ketan rice*, *cethil*, coconut grater and a few of thick brown sugar as a sweetener) and *kerupuk* (crackers). It is as symbolized a wishes from the farmer and merchant to get their luck in every moment and also safeness.
8. A couple of a *tabonan* coconut (a whole coconut with the skin). The *couple* is describing a live that always has a couple thing such as live-died, happy-sad, night-noon, etc. Beside, coconut itself has the meaning as a lives' philosophy which describe that every part of the coconut have its meaning and useful.
9. *Pisang Raja satu gedel* (two groups of Raja Banana). It has the meaning of a corporate between God and human being. Live *temurun* and *ingkung panggang ayam*. *Temurun* is a baby chicken and *ingkung ayam panggang* is roasted chicken. It has the purpose to remind us about life and die.
10. *Kendhi Pratala*. *Kendhi* is made of soil, round shape and flat in the bottom. The function of *kendhi pratala* is a place for air kehidupan or *live water*. It means that we will not stay alive without water in the earth.
11. *Jenang abang putih*. *Jenang* is a liquid food made of flour. *Jenang putih* is *jenang* in white color and *jenang abang* is *jenang* in brown color. *Jenang putih* is made of pure flour with a few salt, hence it taste plain and a little salty. *Jenang abang* is made of pure flour with brown sugar, and it tasted sweet.

12. *Empluk* which called *cupu manik asta gina*. It is a small place to take *senthir* (traditional lamp using wick and karosene to have fire as the light). There is a few rice and local chicken egg inside the *Empluk*. It describing as a save place to take the harvest, especially rice, (in Java is called *Pedarigan*), and local chicken egg is describing a germ of live.
13. *Dupa*. *Dupa* is a matter that rising a smoke when it burned and has a characteristic smell. It will involve a desire and wishes to the God.

At the end of the ritual process, all the offerings will give to the villagers.

The Uniqueness of *Saparan* Ritual

There were some unique things or moments during the procession of the ritual.

The Doers

Saparan ritual in Candirejo tourism village is done by all the villagers. Elders' people, young people and children were happy to celebrate this ritual. They were respected to all the session of the ritual.

Besides, there was a unique story about the doers of the ritual. Based on the story, there were not only human as the doers of this ritual but also ghosts. Ghost is the ancestral spirits. People believed that they came and followed all the session and watch the entire entertaining programed in the *Saparan* ritual.

Then, another uniqueness is the sincerely from all the villagers to follow the ritual with their own budget. Every people make *ambeng* rice and brought it to the hamlet house, a place that the food festival or *kenduri* held.

The Offerings

Almost every ritual has many offerings. In *Saparan* ritual there are a lot of offerings consist of traditional snack, farming harvest and many others things. The unique is the used of the life animal as the offering and the couple of coconut. The villagers used life animal as a symbol of live and died animal as symbol of die.

The Activities

- Bersih Desa

Activity of *bersih desa* becomes unique because the villagers not only clean the road, the surrounding environment and the cemetery, but they also clean their heart from bad things, their mind from negative thinking and their soul from the sins.

- Leather Puppet Show



As a closing session of the *Saparan* ritual, leather puppet show become unique because it must use certain title that connected to the purpose of the ritual.

The story told, once, when the leather puppet show performed, the *Dalang* (people who conduct the leather puppet show) collapsed. The elder's people said, that was because the title of the leather puppet did not connected with the purpose of the ritual and using wrong title. They believe, that was a kind of protest from the ghosts, who also watching the performed, by entering the body of the *Dalang*. The elder's people suggest to changing the title and after that the *Dalang* is coming back and continuing the show with a different title.

- The Preparation Process

Before the ritual began, all the villagers started to prepare all the things used in the ritual. They prepared together with *undha usuk* or furnish one another. They did not get any help from outside people, include the budget. They thought when they gave the offerings sincerely, they would receive a gorgeous feedback from the God.

- The History

Based on the history, there are two kinds of ascendancy in the *Saparan* ritual in Candirejo village. When it was began, in ancient Mataram Kingdom, all the processions are affected by Hinduism believe. After the Wali Songo (an Islamic Preacher) came to the village, all the procession changed to Islamic way.

Conclusion

In Candirejo village, *Saparan* ritual holds annually. It is hold based on the myth that believed by the villagers. The procession of the ritual will take a few days based on the budget and the activities. In 2012, *Saparan* ritual takes 3 days.

Saparan hold in every Safar month in Javanese calendar system. The ritual started with *bersih desa* and followed by *ikror do'a slametan*, *kenduri* and *pengajian istighozah*. On the second day there were *gebyar rebana* event and traditional dances performance. On the third day, it started with *tumpengan* and followed by ceremonial event, *Pentul-Tembem* dance performance and the last activities was the leather puppet show. Offerings was needed in every steps of the ritual to complete it and used as symbols of living philosophy.

This ritual has certain functions and purposes for the villagers and for all the visitors in general. One of the functions is to keep the togetherness from all the part of Candirejo villagers. It is considering to the place, preparation and participant. The ritual holds in one big place, which is all the villagers as the participant and they also make the preparation together. Then, the main purpose of the ritual is to take care of the earth and the space as a kind of thanks to the God for the wealth, especially in farming harvest.

Besides, it also has a unique things and unique moments during the procession. Several things that unique are the offerings and the doers. Then several moments that unique are the activities.

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