

***Dadung* Feast Rite As A Cultural Expression in Legok Herang Village, Kuningan District**

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the tradition of the *Dadung* Party in Legokherang village, Kuningan Regency, West Java. A tradition that expresses gratitude to God for the harvest and the entity maintaining the relationship between living creatures and nature. The research method used is qualitative with a dance anthropology approach which is elaborated with choreographic concepts. This research shows that the *Dadung* Party is an integral part of community life and has been passed down from generation to generation. It also has connections to the Islamic beliefs propagated by the *Wali Songo*. This ritual involves various stages, such as worship, *Rajah Pamunah*, and entertainment and ritual equipment that must be adhered to by community participants. This tradition is a preserved cultural heritage and functions as a balance to modern culture. The noble philosophical values contained in the dance at the *Dadung* Party although this dance does not have fixed movements, the emphasis on expression as a manifestation of feelings is very important. Local cultural continuity is a dynamic part of society, and external cultural influences must be adapted to the worldview and local culture.

Keywords: *Dadung Party*, *Hajat Bumi*, *Seren Taun*, Dance Anthropology, Legokherang, Kuningan

INTRODUCTION

Culture as identity is a form of expression and a whole set of ideas built on the basis of institutions that make society a social creature (Halid, 2022). Plural cultures always give rise to customs, which become unique for society, so that cultural differences become local and inherent identity (Suryandari, 2017). Cultural entities that are communal in nature are the result of works of art that are recursively maintained, these works are part of a regime that revolving within the foundations of society (Kusuma, 2022)

The communal work which is the identity of its wealth also refers to the community groups living in the Legokherang area, Kuningan Regency,

West Java. The dances in the *Dadung* Party as a traditional cultural product are part of preservation efforts as a work of community communal identity. Based on the symptoms that appear on the surface, the decline of the arts can be addressed together as a form of mutual cooperation so that the progress and development of community culture can be in line (Suketri, 2023). Facilitating and providing a place for traditional arts in the onslaught of modernization has an impact on the survival of local cultural values as a valuable heritage that must be maintained and preserved as a cultural work entity (Fauzan, 2017). By preserving traditional art, these efforts can also be realized in every institution at the *dadung* party ceremony.

Traditional art practices that persist in society are a form of continuity of cultural works passed down from generation to generation (Fikriyah, 2023). Around the 18th century, the village of Legokherang was led by the village head, Kuwu, which was the identity of the village leader who had a role in empowering the community (Setiawan, 2021). Village history has recorded that the role of *Kuwu* was initiated by Suradipa as the seventh descendant who served in the years 1820-1850 in Legokherang village, from the descendants of *Kuwu* Angkin Jiwa Laksana which was inherited by the descendants of Gunung Jawa Ciwaru (Daris, in Legokherang sub-district records, was permitted to be quoted on November 28, 2022). These heirs continue to carry out the traditional practices of their ancestors, one of the traditions inherited from Sundanese ancestors which is still carried out in Legokherang Kuningan village to this day is the *Dadung* Party or *Ombyok Dadung*.

This tradition is a cultural work that contains community ritual institutions to maintain the balance between nature and humans, entities of gratitude and ceremonies for removing pests from rice plants so that crops and livestock receive abundant and blessings (Subiantoro, 2017; Hasybullah, 2019; Indratno, 2020; Adisaputri, 2022; Rohaedi, 2023). The essence of community rituals contained in the *Dadung* Party ceremony is part of the collective integrity of the community which aims to maintain the values of mutual cooperation.

The *Dadung* Party is held as a form of gratitude and aims to be a fertility rite for agriculture and livestock. Ceremonies and rituals are carried out in the morning once a year to welcome the rainy season and give thanks after the harvest is reaped (Royani, 2017). This typology developed among farming communities in the *Sunda* region

as communities who believe in *Ratu Galuh* (Aulia, 2021). The local community's belief in *Ratu Galuh* as the protector of animals and who is also believed to be the queen of the inner herdsman, is closely related to the typology of society which builds a search system as cultivators (Darajat, 2021). *Dadung* is used as a rope that is tied around the necks of livestock and also as props in the *Dadung* Party dance and as a symbol which aims to ignite the enthusiasm of free-range slaves in activities in the fields (Nuryaman, 2018). The sacredness of *Dadung* has become an immanent part of Sundanese society (Fatimah, 2019). This aims to maintain a balance between the macro and micro cosmos regarding human life and nature.

Researching the rituals in the *Dadung* Party ceremony which are still maintained by the community as collective cultural integrity, this has become an affinity and awareness to continue to know more deeply about the recursive rituals involved in society which contain local values, which is an embodiment of building togetherness and cohesiveness (Brata, 2016; Hidayat, 2021). Evidence which digged up in Legokherang village, Kuningan district, West Java, to the form of institutions in the *Dadung* Party ritual, becomes an entity that builds cultural elements and becomes a strong foundation for the continuity of cultural work in the era of globalization.

METHOD

This research uses qualitative methods, to collect evidence in more depth on the object as a totality. Pertti Alasuutari in the book *Researching Culture: Qualitative Method and Culture Studies* (Alasuutari, 1995) states that qualitative analysis encourages factual evidence findings which must be explained by researchers and then interpreted (Soedarsono, 1999, p. 34). This is absolutely necessary in research on the *Dadung* Party in Legokherang Village. The

dance anthropology approach emphasizes multi-layered art research, information that is examined directly with the aim of obtaining evidence regarding the validity of data in the field (Meilina, 2022).

The scientific discipline that can be elaborated on in this research is the choreographic approach, this is used to look at the composition, structure and content of the dances used in the *Dadung* party in Legokherang Village (Shaesa, 2021). The research stage began with interviews with resource persons, followed by studying cultural works as a form of expression in the *Dadung* Party ritual directly. Next, documentation is carried out in the form of photos and videos. This part is the researcher's experience as a participant observer who is directly involved in the research. The research was carried out in two stages, namely the initial stage in February and the second stage in October 2023. The research evidence obtained was then processed and combined with the results of relevant literature studies from books, journals and the internet.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The continuation of the Tradition of *Dadung* Party is a form of achievement that must be carried out by the traditional apparatus pioneered by *Kuwu*, so that traditional cultural works become part of community life that can continue dynamically in the social environment (Ajim, 2023). The tradition of the *Dadung* Party has been continued for generations and has become one of the arts and culture icons of Kuningan Regency.

The *Dadung* feast is a tradition of *budak angon*, which means the actions of livestock herders, the grazing carried out by these teenagers is a symbol of the continuity of this leadership and tradition (Hanifa, 2019; Nurhuda, 2023). The tradition, which became known around 1818, was transmitted by *Kuwu* Angkin Jiwa Laksana

in the form of *Kaulinan barudak* (a game for teenagers) so that they could use their free time in shepherding. Angkin also presented a set of *gamelan salendro*, *gamelan pelog* Cirebon and property *Dadung/tambang* (Interview with H. Dahlan, October 27, 2023).

The manifestation of the institutions that are embodied in the *Kaulinan budak angon* is an entity of gratitude for the local village residents, the majority of whom earn their livelihood from the agricultural sector and a form of appreciation for the cattle and buffalo that have worked to help cultivate the fields and provide manure for the farmers.

Dadung, which is made from hibiscus bark fiber has the function to tie buffalo or cows and is also used as props in the *Dadung* Party rites. The 9 meters length is a manifestation of the village apparatus which consists of 9 people. The *Jalak Pengkor* dance repertoire is a dance that is also performed in this rite and this dance is a form of creativity from Angkin Jiwa Laksana. The gamelan music that accompanies the singing of kangsreng and waledan was created by Sunan Gunung Djati as Wali Songo at that time. The fusion of beliefs in the traditional rites of the *Dadung* Party truly has a vision in its development, preserving agricultural traditions and the values of spreading Islam. The arts and culture rites that are widely used by Wali Songo are a form of approach so that the beliefs that are spread can be integrated into the institutions of society (Putriana, 2021).

The *Dadung* Party is always held once a year during the katiga (dry) period before the rainy season. As time progressed, the *Dadung* Party was changed to August 18, which was combined with the celebration of the Independence Day. The *Dadung* Party rite which was carried out at the village hall was initially accompanied by

gamelan renteng and then replaced with *dogdog*, this instrument is a set of sounds that symbolizes gratitude for the harvest (Nastiti, 2020). then ended with the use of *gamelan pelog* or *salendro* during the Wali Songo era. This ceremony has several stages, namely: worship service, *Rajah Pamunah*, (*Tulak Allah* or *Qulhu Sungsang*), and entertainment, namely *tayuban*. The service ceremony enshrines *Dadung*, and begins if all the requirements have been met, including: collecting *Dadung sepuh* or *Dadung* heirloom, namely the largest *Dadung* (sacred *Dadung*) as well as *Dadung* for shepherds as well as offerings consisting of *parawanten*, *rurujakan* and market snacks (Interview with H. Dahlan, October 28, 2023).

At the *Dadung* Party event, there are several things that need to be paid attention to by all participants and the public who want to see this event. As in the following table:

Num	Provisions of the day and animals	Provision of tools and ritus equipment
1	The traditional <i>Hajat Bumi Dadung</i> party is held only on Saturday <i>Pahing</i> and The traditional <i>Hajat Bumi</i> day of the <i>Dadung</i> party is held only on Saturday <i>pahing</i> and the <i>Dadung</i> party on Sunday <i>puhun</i> .	All participants and the community were dressed in traditional clothes or adapted to Sundanese traditional clothing. All participants and the community are dressed in traditional Sundanese clothing, preferably the traditional Sundanese <i>buhun</i> equipped with free-r equipment.
2	The only animals used in the ritual are buffalo and chicken	the clothing of specially invited guests or regional officials conforms to traditional Sundanese clothing
3	all agricultural and livestock equipment is not used on the day of the ritual because it is being <i>dirajah</i>	the clothes of guests from neigh boring villages and other guests who are not special guests or regional officials dress modestly

- 4 *Dadung* party personnel are only permitted for genuine Legokherang descendants except special technical personnel

Table 1. Requirements for the Day, Animals and Traditional Provisions and Ritual Equipment for the *Dadung* Party. (Source: Retnawati, 2023)

Dadung Ritual

When the ceremonial institutions have been completed, the ceremonial elders burn incense and recite mantras, and then *Dadung* is collected and placed in a large black box. In this ritual, the gamelan accompaniment must continue to be played as sacredness and a condition for accompanying the ceremony. The incense is billowed and the mantra is recited:

*Allah kaula pangampura
Parukuyan rat gumilang
Asepna si kendi wulang
Ka gigir ka para nabi
Ka handap ka ambu ka rama
Nu calik tungtung
di kamar
Kadaharan
tungtung kukus
Sakedap kanu
kagungan*



Figure 1. *Rajah Dadung* Ritual. (Source: Daris, 2006)

After reciting the mantra, the shepherds' *Dadungs* were taken by their respective owners. Meanwhile, the sacred *Dadung* is placed on a tray and carried by the *ronggeng* while dancing. The *Dadung* was then given to the village head and handed over to *Raksabumi* to be given to the ceremonial elders. The *Dadung* scroll is opened, one end is held by the head of the ceremony and the other end is held by the head of the RT. The ceremony elders then chanted the *Rajah pamunah* hymn followed by the recitation of *Allah's tulak*.

After that, *Dadung* is then danced by the village head accompanied by village officials and *ronggeng* accompanied by the song "*Ayang Ayang Gung*". Once finished, *Dadung* is then put back in and the event continues with *tayuban*. The dancers were shepherds and local people who attended the ceremony, all of whom danced until the morning and ended at around 04.00 in the morning. All the institutions contained in this dance are the embodiment of humans as social creatures, who interact with each other, work together and maintain the values of mutual cooperation (Winarni, 2012, p. 45; Chaedar, 2022).

***Dadung* Party in Legokherang Village**

The *Dadung* Party was initially held by only one community, but since Legokherang became Padage Village around 1843, this cultural work has continued and emerged as a tradition attached to Legokherang village until now (Interview with Daris, October 28, 2023).



Figure 2. Procession of harvest results at the *Dadung* Party (Source: Daris, 2006)

Continuity of the *Dadung* Party in Legokherang is a form of communal tradition passed down from generation to generation originating from the Sundanese *wiwitan* belief (Wulandari, 2019). As an inherited tradition, this art continues to be popularized, including the village head Hasan War'i with the nickname Eyang Kuwu Gardu who served from 1950 to 1965. Kuwu's contribution had a positive impact on the continuity of the *Dadung* Party in Legokherang village.

Many arts and culture experts have researched and given significance to the fact that *Dadung* Party does not mean excitement or euphoria but rather an entity of gratitude for all His grace and gifts. Meanwhile, as we all know, *Dadung* is a binding tool, if everything wants to be strong and united then it uses a binding tool. Likewise, the meaning of *Dadung* here is a binding tool for the unity and unity of the Legokherang Village community in particular, which is led by village officials. Because the length of the heirloom *Dadung* called *Dadung* Kosara was the first *Dadung* made by Mr. Mena to tie slaughtered buffalo, it was 9 meters long, reflecting the number of village officials at that time, which was nine people (Interview with Daris, October 28, 2023).

Ibing as a Means of Entertainment at the *Dadung* Party

The *Dadung party* is not only a *ritual* but also has elements that function as entertainment dances. This dance is intended for all *budak angon* who dedicate their lives to herding. So to relieve fatigue, village officials held entertainment in the form of *tayub* art, accompanied by *laras pelog* which is a social identity and *ronggeng* as a symbol of interaction which is an attraction for social creatures (Jatnika, 2023).

Budak angon are required to bring their shepherd's equipment in the form of a *Dadung*, *whip*, *kolotok*, *caping/sattuy cetok* and accompanied by a *dongdang* (palanquin) as a place to store *tumpeng* rice and agricultural products. The party depicts a sense of togetherness, joy and a form of gratitude to the creator.



Figure 3.
Ibing *Dadung* Testament.
(Source: Daris, 2006)



Figure 4.
Ngibing of Budak Angon
(Source: Daris, 2006)

***Dadung* Party as a Balancer for Modern Culture**

Mr. Daris stated that the *Dadung* Party is a sustainable entity and a balance to new cultures. This cultural work lived in ancient times and survives until now (Interview on date October 28, 2023). The *Dadung* Party is able to survive because all the groups that

have emotional ties collectively continue to make the *Dadung* Party their cultural heritage. The community in Legokherang village, from young people to elders, took part in initiating the existence of this rite until it merged with the institutions of belief between Sundanese *wiwitan* and Islam (Sujati, 2019). Traditional art which continues to be maintained out of love and becomes the local integrity of the region, becomes the power to stay alive in the onslaught of modern culture. The *Dadung* Party, which has a noble philosophy, is an attraction, a supernatural gem. Dance and music have become symbols to embody noble values for people who have cultural works (Daris, interview on October 28, 2023). This understanding is also strengthened by Pabbajah (2020) that culture is able to survive because it can relate dialectically and dynamically so that cultural works can continue to be effective in the social environment of society.

According to Mr. Daris (interview on October 28, 2023) he revealed that the dance at the *Dadung* Party has no standard movements, the dance movements are natural according to the dancer's feelings and desires. A research lecturer from ASTI Bandung once proposed that the dance movements be arranged in a structured manner, but this proposal was not approved. Basically, traditions embedded in society when it comes to philosophy are difficult to change. Mr. Daris's view as the head of the association is that this dance does not emphasize the technical elements of choreography but rather emphasizes expression as a form of feeling. Even though the dancers express themselves with different dance movements, this argument is actually built on the basis of improvisation and abstract exploration of the body (Sari, 2023).

This emphasis is based on the dancer's desire and ability to express the feelings and expressions of the *Dadung* Party ritual. Traditional dances are usually sacred in nature and are characterized by dancers carrying *Dadung* while spinning in a circle. *Dadung* that has been tattooed has become a symbol of joy for farmers and livestock breeders whose wishes have been approved by local elders and the village government.

The survival of local culture is a dynamic part of society, the manifestation of local cultural works must be understood so that it can survive in global flows (Lubis, 2014, p. 4). For researchers, this must be able to be examined like the Wali Songo who were able to integrate into community institutions, especially in Legokherang village. This phenomenon is the same case, because every society that builds collectivity in culture, ideology must be explored so that local genius similarities merge to form a concept that refers to the attitudes and contributions of local communities as an answer and responsibility for a cultural meeting (Mulder in Ida Ayu Tresnawati, 2016). This section proves that external cultural influences are not accepted as they should be, but negotiations are carried out first so that they are in line with the way of life and culture that exists in the area.

CONCLUSION

The *Dadung* Party is an arts and culture tradition carried out by the people of Legokherang Village in Kuningan Regency, West Java as a form of expression of gratitude for the harvest and blessings. This ritual involves expressive dance and takes the form of agricultural and livestock fertility rituals, and is related to the Islamic beliefs spread by the Wali Songo.

The *Dadung* Party is held every year with certain stages, has customary provisions and ritual equipment that must be taken

into account, and is part of a cultural heritage that is recursively maintained by the community supporting its culture. Even though the dance in the *Dadung* Party does not have standard movements, the emphasis on expression as a form of feeling is very important because this dance is organic in ritual-based performing arts. The continuity of local culture is a dynamic part of society, and the influence of external culture must be adjusted to the outlook on life and culture that exists at the level of Legokherang Kuningan.

The traditional rites in the *Dadung* Party become an entity of community sensitivity to preserve these cultural works both for residents at the level of brass in West Java so that they remain the nation's cultural identity. The development of increasingly modern times is inevitable, this form of preservation has become a hope that started from Mr. Daris as Chairman of the *Dadung* Party Association and the Legokherang Village *Dadung* Party down to the smallest community institutions.

Protecting this traditional art so that children and grandchildren and native descendants of Legokherang Village can continue to experience the institutions of the *Dadung* Party in the midst of modernization. Research on the *Dadung* Party which can be carried out on an ongoing basis can also be carried out so that the existence of community cultural works can be of significant benefit to researchers and the academic world in the future.

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- Alimudin, umur 52 years old, Cilebak Village, Legok Herang District, Kuningan Regency

List of Resources

- Daris, 53 years old, scribe, JCilebak Village, Legok Herang District, Kuningan Regency
- Dahlan, 91 years old, Farmer, Cilebak Village Road, Legok Herang District, Kuningan Regency
- Ranta, 71 years old, Cilebak Village, Legok Herang District, Kuningan Regency
- Surdianto, 40 years old, Village Official, Cilebak Village, Legok Herang District, Kuningan Regency