

SEIZING LOCAL WISDOM: LOOKING CLOSER INTO JAVANESE FOLKLORE THROUGH JAMASAN KERIS RITUAL

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Abstract

The myriad of folklores in Indonesia is a vast area to study. Jamasan Keris ritual as one of the embodiment of Javanese folklore, however, still invites many questions in accordance with the local values. Therefore, this paper tries to disclose the research result executed in two villages, Margomulyo and Karangtengah, in Ngawi regency of which Jamasan Keris held as sacred ritual. Jamasan Keris in these areas is selected as the object of the study for it serves Javanese traditional values. Moreover, ethnography approach is used in this study to get accurate result based on the knowledge of the informants who are Javanists. Direct field observation, at the same time, is conducted to highlight the required data. From the result of this scholarly work, it can be inferred that the values of Jamasan Keris ritual consists of two factors: (1) how Javanese involving in folk culture give spiritual meaning to the existed tradition, and (2) how Javanese deep philosophies encourage the traditional people to keep on preserving their culture. To sum up, the long-living spiritual meaning behind tradition and philosophical content in ritual are the underpinning of local wisdom.

Keywords: Javanese folklore, Jamasan Keris ritual, traditional values, Javanists, local wisdom

1. INTRODUCTION

As a country with hundreds of ethnic groups, Indonesia has abundance of local traditions which spreads throughout the island of *Nusantara* – Indonesian archipelago – wherein each group occupies. The existence of the ethnic group in particular area colors local tradition covering belief, custom, and knowledge and shapes a set of the convention which is called as lore. The lore was perpetuated by ethnic groups acknowledging it and handing it over generations. Sims and Stephen (2005: 8) labeled the product of this continuous preservation effort as folklore because it is informally learned by the masses of common people, to distinct it from the elite people's high culture.

Since the folks learn it informally, of course, there are certain elements that are different from the standard established in high culture. Folks could learn it from the written artifacts, from their predecessors, or even self-taught examples. The essential would not disappear although it seems deviating because "folklore regards the concept of conservatism and dynamism" (Toelken, 1996: 37-38). This kind of phenomenon can be found in aspects of

folklore, including ritual performed by folks. It is worth to say that the spirit of folklore is lived by folks who consider them as meaningful activities for a certain ethnic group of a certain region, so as Javanese people who mostly live in Central and East Java. As the spread of tradition goes in a spider web, the ritual is the same yet it is more purposeful than custom. The ritual brings together the traditional values, belief, and attitudes existing in a certain culture. Accordingly, there are some rituals held by Javanese as an effort in preserving the heritage inherited from their ancestors such as Javanese communal ceremonies, individual ceremonies, not to mention rites of passages that all need ceremony (Jv: *Slametan*). Such traditions are maintained along with the belief of Javanese teachings or Javanism (Jv: *Kejawen*) as local values followed by natives believing it, Javanists. The local values which function as an ethical and moral guide are an important point in building a way of life in such wise and it is attributed to local wisdom.

Borrowing Sartini's thought (2004: 111), local wisdom refers to local idea, knowledge, and value which represents a way of life manifested in daily activities to fulfill a spiritual need. While viewing from anthropology

perspective, Geertz (1983: 75) confirmed that this local knowledge forms a relatively organized body of thought based on the immediacy of experience. Since the conception of local wisdom inherently bond to knowledge and experience, it can be integrated with culture. As such, any ritual executed by any ethnic group is inseparable from cultural activities. Honigmann proposed that “culture is the whole concept which is manifested in three systems: ideas, activities, and artefacts” (1959, cited in Wibisana 2010: 20). By understanding this excerpt, it can be inferred that the relief was all ideas of culture that existed back at that time.

Similarly, the discourse about *Keris* creates the whole new sub-culture of Javanese culture, as Harsrinuksmo stated, “beyond its esoteric and exoteric aspects, the world of *Keris* has certain customs, rules, norms, manners, and ethics which is directly connected to the particular tradition” (2008: 49). He often refers the discussion as *Keris* culture, in which its exoteric discourse makes reference to the physical appearance of the *Keris* itself and its esoteric world covers the spiritual belief about its magical power that is beheld. Seeing from the past historical journey, the emergence of *Keris* culture was influenced much by the expansion of Majapahit Empire territory throughout *Nusantara*. *Keris* culture, including how people appreciate and take care of it, was introduced widely to the extent of South Thailand area and Malay Peninsula. As a result, there are some variations and modifications of the *Keris* that, even today, can be found in those areas.

As a cultural artifact, *Keris* not only has an attractive exoteric appearance (Figure 1), but also the esoteric feature. It is “knowledge of what people cannot catch visually which relates to the concept of *Keris* supernatural power” (Harsrinuksmo, 2008: 158). In terms of esoteric reason, it covers the belief that certain *Keris* could benefit the owner’s good fortune from its merit, magical power, effect, or the tutelary spirit. For cultural matter, traditional Javanese people appreciate it by conducting safekeeping periodically. *Keris*, together with other various kinds of heirloom, requires preservation, encompassing physical and spiritual aspects of the *Keris*. On the exoteric level, the ritual recognized as *Jamasan Keris* is intended to prevent the *Keris* from rust. *Jamasan Keris*

ritual, along with its intention of maintaining the particular esoteric influence of a *Keris*, becomes a manifestation of folklore in traditional Javanese community, especially Javanists.



Figure 1. Attractive exoteric appearance of *Keris*.

Generally, rituals which are performed by traditional Javanese folk have bonded closely with local wisdom. However, these kinds of rituals frequently lead to misunderstanding, even wrong interpretation. That is why the research done aims to discover local wisdom from Javanese folklore through in-depth observation on *Jamasan Keris*. By describing the deeper point of view of the *Jamasan Keris* performers, the result of this research hopefully not only will open to the outsiders’ wiser comprehension about the ritual but also widen the knowledge about *Keris* culture.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

As suggested by Spradley and Mc.Curdy (2012), basically, ethnography study underscores the context of one particular data that is attempted to be revealed often lies below the culture-bearers’ conscious level. Therefore, the research executed emphasizes on fieldwork to uncover how the performers of *Jamasan Keris* ritual see their world. Direct observation is intended to seek out the insiders’ viewpoint towards their own cultural issues. The data collected are particularly required to appear and interpreted in the best context of the subjects communicating through it. Additionally, this method is used to lessen the possibilities of providing misleading exegesis on how *Jamasan Keris* ritual functions and becomes significant to the subjects performing it.

Jamasan Keris in Ngawi is chosen as the object of the study since it contains a lot of traditional values as the embodiment of local wisdom to explore. Ngawi is located on the border of Central and East Java which still consists of many rural areas. The regions of where the observation focused on, namely Margomulyo village and Karangtengah village are far from modernization touch. For this reason, the people living in these areas can be considered as the folk who still carries out their lore as the representation of Javanese traditional culture. This assumption theoretically supports the concept of traditional values proposed by Robbins (2015). Traditional values as the reference to the standards and values which were embraced by most inhabitants from its earliest beginnings and throughout the majority of its history are believed by many to strengthen the existence of one particular group, even individual so that they are able to keep on validating the culture they own. Though *Jamasan Keris* observed is classified as a sacred ritual, this ritual obviously purposes to confirm that the performers want to show their individual power.

To dig out the values of *Jamasan Keris* ritual, data are taken directly from fieldwork following the reality as genuine as possible. Firstly, doing direct participation by joining the procession of *Jamasan Keris* ritual on October 26, 2014, and October 18, 2015. The dates of the ritual determined by the performers based on Javanese calendar – *Suro*. In order to derive accurate documentation, step by step of the ritual succession, from the beginning to the end is scrutinized. Secondly, observing the insider's world by holding an interview with three informants at a different time. They are (1) a local leader (Jv. *Sesepuh*) in Margomulyo village who has been executing *Jamasan Keris* ritual individually for more than 30 years. (2) A performer (Jv. *Pejamas*) of *Jamasan Keris* ritual living in Karangtengah village, and (3) A spiritual leader of a traditional martial arts association in Ngawi who has deep knowledge about the concept of Javanism. Therefore, they can be classified as Javanists. To validate the data of field research, the interview is re-executed on December 13, 2015. Since ethnography study puts its attention mainly on the perspective driven by the culture bearers, the theory of folklore together with the concept of the sacred ritual area used to figure out the

underlying message of *Jamasan Keris* ritual and also how this tradition fulfills the aspects of folk culture.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A kind of ritual that is held by people of Javanese ethnic group and contains a high value of Javanism is *Jamasan Pusaka*, the ritual of cleansing the heirloom. It is mostly done every *Suro* – the best month based on Javanese Calendar, started from the first date. And one ritual that is familiar to be conducted in *Suro* is *Jamasan Keris* or cleansing the *Keris*.

The study on the steps of *Jamasan Keris* ritual and its elements that follow is conducted in Ngawi, where in some rural areas there are people own *Keris* daggers and treat the *Keris* well even if they do not learn it directly from the widely recognized culture. This concept is manifested by the spiritual leader of Margomulyo village by respecting *Keris*, specifically as a part of the owner's priceless soul (Jv. *Tosan aji ... jiwa. Iku gak angger sepele, seperti pisau tak nggo iris-iris*, interview: October 25, 2014). Accordingly, besides to investigate how the ritual matters practiced, the study also endeavors to seek how the values, beliefs, and attitudes enclosed in local wisdom work for Javanese.

3.1. *Jamasan Keris* Ritual: An Expression of Folklore

Keris is the cultural product of which UNESCO proclaimed it as Indonesian intangible heritage of humanity on November 25, 2005. This cultural heritage is a product of metal handiwork that once was used as a traditional weapon. By the time, the function of the *Keris* has changed from the weapon used to attack enemies into the valuable thing that elevates people's pride when they attach it on their traditional attire.

In so far as the description affirms, *Keris* is deemed as something sacred since there is a rich spirituality and the mythology of Javanese culture that explains how supernatural power or energy developed around the *Keris*. The magical power within *Keris* is believed to be able to increase the owner's power, help the owner avoids illness, and protect the owner from misfortune and black magic. It is also supposed that the *Keris* can give riches and prosperity to the owner (Yuliandini, 2002). As a

result, *Keris* needs safekeeping, known as *Jamasan Keris*, that can be performed by the owners or people who expert in the field of preservation. Interestingly, the ritual done by the folks, who attempt to do safekeeping as best as they can, is a unique social phenomenon because many of them learn it individually.

This phenomenon happens because folklore conveys ideas, values, and traditions creatively, even when it is not overtly artistic. These ideas are oftentimes created by and for people in the local contexts as opposed to the materials created by governments, schools or other institutions. There are surely some intentions carried within folklore which are informally learned and become an unofficial part of the everyday experience which then embodied as ritual. Dealing with these reasons, actually ritual is inseparable from folklore because ritual is more than just performance or custom. It is repeated, patterned, and more purposeful because of the utilization of symbols. That is why, according to Myerhoff (1977: 200), each folklore type provided in the ritual usually carries its own meaning and purpose based on traditional ideas, values and beliefs. Furthermore, Sims and Stephens (2005: 96) confirmed that as an outward expression, ritual obviously plays an important role to make the values, beliefs and attitudes, which are frequently hidden, concrete and visible.

Folklore is an active part of human existence and expression in everyday life. Folklore is alive and developing in our lifetimes as the civilization dynamically changes overtime. "It is not a relic of the past, as many people believe, but an expression of present-day issues" (Bronner, 2007: 54). Furthermore, the concept given by Schwartz and Holtorf (1999: 10) indicates that folklore can be exerted as a tool to remind a civilization of the former generation's accepted patterns of behavior. The reliability of the past depends on how the giving meaning processes are generated down to the next generation.

Representing Javanese folklore, *Jamasan Keris* covers the four functions of folklore proposed by Bascom (1954); educating, escaping accepted limitations of present culture, maintaining cultural identity, and validating existing cultural norms. In fact, *Jamasan Keris* ritual conveys many influential life teachings. The conceptual interpretation is not only limited to the guidance on how to preserve the

valuable relic but also on how to keep someone's spirituality in harmony either with God or with society. Not only does the cultural preservation imply Javanese philosophy like 'beautifying the beauty of universe, social relationship, qualified individual' (Jv. *memayu hayuning bawono, bebrayan, lan pribadhi*) either for the performers of the *Jamasan Keris* ritual or the *Keris*' owners, but it simultaneously brings about the lesson of giving value to them. The function of *Keris*, which nowadays has become a compliment of traditional costume that can raise the wearer's dignity, encompasses its physical beauty and enlightening the aura of the owner. It is in line with a Javanese old saying known as *Ajining raga ana busana* which asserts that "someone's physical dignity can be appraised from the 'uniform' they wear" (Sumodiningrat and Wulandari, 2014: 24). However, although *Keris* is meant to attract people's attention, the way to attach it never bereaves the Javanese ethic. *Keris* is attached on the back of someone's attire to show that the wearers respect others by not showing it off to the surroundings (Figure 2). With regard to 'respect', Suseno (1993, cited in Herminingrum, 2014: 49) stated that ethically Javanese hold the idea of respect to avoid open conflict. Implementing this concept in the right time and the right place is considered as an honor attitude because morally one who respects others signifies that he applies Javanese philosophy of 'living in harmony'.



Figure 2. Javanese ethic in putting *Keris* as a compliment.

Jamasan Keris ritual provides a situation where the performer can express their own values and beliefs freely when, in fact, the interdiction from other dominant culture is excessive. Endraswara exemplified, that "in some regions, the prohibition is oftentimes

being manifested in the form of fictitious stories” (2008: 128). As such, the sense of clash in beliefs equals to the prohibition that exists in certain society, yet the local adherents of Javanism keep on upholding the sacred tradition of cleansing the heirloom, despite any judgments. Ultimately, the performance of *Jamasan Keris* ritual plays a role as a medium for escapism from the limitation given.

Folklore can be exerted as a means to remind a civilization of the former generation’s accepted patterns of behavior. In Javanese culture, *Jamasan Keris* tradition becomes greatly important since it transfers the proper comprehension of preserving the relic. As the interview held on October 25, 2014, the local leader of Ngawi said that *Keris* and its preservation process plays as a symbol of Javanese culture. The knowledge, together with the understanding of the importance of *Keris* preservation, was passed down by his grandfather so that he can hand it over to his next generation as well. Although he learns to practice *Jamasan Keris* ritual by self-taught, he does believe that preserving *Keris* is spiritual responsibility. When the owner of the *Keris* does not respect his *Keris*, he is likely to abandon Javanese tradition because it represents self-esteem. It implies an identity that Javanese adherents highly respects cultural heritages and their ancestors well as Endraswara juxtaposed the sense of seeking “out for the salvation in life through mystic and defenselessness” (2013: 45). The Javanese who neglect this sense are regarded as the betrayers of their own culture. This idea obviously uncovers how *Jamasan Keris* ritual as one of Javanese folklore can be used to maintain cultural identity.

Within Javanese culture, multiform examples of folk ideas are being expressed through cultural traditions. The folklore helps the members of the ethnic group validating its culture since “folklore is the active and creative aspect of tradition, and that change is important in the creation of folklore (Bronner, 1992: 4). By understanding this sense, it is overt that the on-going tradition, like *Jamasan Keris* ritual, possesses a dominant role in legitimating the existed practices. The interview with the local leader in Ngawi executed on October 25, 2014, underlies that today *Keris* does not function as a weapon anymore, only as a compliment of Javanese traditional costume. Its preservation

indirectly contributes to an endeavor of perpetuating the culture of Javanese ethnic group.

3.2. *Jamasan Keris* Ritual: An Embodiment of Local Wisdom

Keris culture has become a pride for Javanese ethnic group. The performer, in the interview on December 13, 2015, asserted that *Keris* is the identity of Javanese in which if it is extinct, the Javanese ethnic group will be extinct, too. Javanese cultural identity is partly determined on how well they treat *Keris*. There is a certain obligation for Javanists to synergize their effort in preserving the cultural heritage. It is in line with Bascom’s thought on folklore. As a means of applying social pressure and exercising social control, folklore is employed against individuals who attempt to deviate from social conventions with which they are fully familiar (1954: 346). Thus, the sense of doing cultural preservation for Javanese adherents, either it is in the form of tradition or simply the reflection of their attitudes has become one norm that needs to be reinforced over time to embody the accepted patterns of behavior in Javanese culture.

In general, people see the ritual not only as another realization of mainstream religion but also an effort to make belief visible. Thus, people regard ritual as a sacred activity. Moreover, sacred rituals are associated with nearly every group that has a belief about spiritual or supernatural worlds or phenomena. Myth, which is another manifestation of ritual (Propp, 1997: 109), also supports one belief to be conducted in the form of ritual. The belief helps the performers to get the expected outcome from the ritual and sense the power of the activity. Such ritual usually takes place in the presence of a group or even in less public place.

Since many people perceive ritual as closely related to something superstitious or supernatural, it is important to understand the concept of belief which underlies the performance of such rituals. O’Connor (1995) argued that the term ‘belief’ refers to both the things believed in and the act of believing. Beyond whether the belief is accepted or not, the supernatural phenomenon is debatable and intriguing to observe either from the perspective of cultural studies or religion. To accomplish

what is believed by the Javanists, *Jamasan Keris* in Ngawi, is executed periodically as a sacred ritual to encompass physical and spiritual aspects.

In terms of the definition of Javanism which refers to “an ethic and a style of life that is inspired by Javanist thinking” (Mudler, 2005: 17), many of the traditional Javanese still hold the belief that there is supernatural power that should be preserved, so that they will not lose the good fortune (Jv: *Tuah*) of the *Keris*. The ritual has eventually become a self-realization of the Javanists towards their spiritual belief in the most efficacious way. As a result, they do *Jamasan Keris* ritual not merely for keeping the physical appearance of the *Keris* but preserving the supernatural energy within the *Keris* as well. If it is said that values, beliefs, and attitudes covered in local wisdom are often hidden, the exploration of local wisdom in *Jamasan Keris* in this research is done by tracing the steps of the ritual procession, the equipment, and the offerings used in the ritual. In the frame of folk culture, *Jamasan Keris* observed in Ngawi is unofficial one. It is carried out publicly only privately.

Jamasan Keris ritual is held once a year every *Suro* in which Javanese adherents consider it as the holy month where blessings are disseminated by God. They benefit the month to incorporate themselves with many realizations of sacral tradition (Jv: *Laku*) aiming to beseech composure and purify their inner reality. In accordance, the ritual of cleansing the *Keris* can also act as a medium for the introspective process of the performer.

By cleansing the *Keris* wholeheartedly, the performer recalls for anything one has done within a year, setting *Suro* as the first month in traditional Javanese calendar. The special intention of doing introspection is so that someone can achieve something he wishes to be true, and the right time is in every first night of *Suro*.

The spiritual leader from Karangtengah village made clear of this viewpoint by saying: dilihat dari sudut Jawa, malem satu karena di malem satu ini kalo instropeksi kita benar dan angen-angen kita sendiri sempat mandeg artinya itu tumuju kang digayuh. Artinya tertuju pada apa yang dituju (Interview: July 9, 2015). In the same way, the local leader in the interview on 25 October 2015 agreed on the concept of the ritual conducted on *Suro* month

as a reflection of self-purification. Because on the days within *Suro* month cleansing a *Keris* from everything means purifying human's soul. By inferring this notion, it is understood that the most advisable time to execute any kind of sacred rituals, like *Jamasan Keris*, is in the first night in *Suro*. It is the best time to encourage the Javanese to meticulously commit the sacred ritual. Ideas, values and beliefs covered in *Jamasan Keris* ritual become a unity of moral-ethical guidance for Javanese which is then acknowledged as local wisdom.

As a tradition, Javanists believe that *Jamasan Keris* ritual can be influential to their life since it employs the concept of *Memayu Hayuning Bawono* meaning ‘beautifying the beauty of universe’, at the same time. It is a traditional Javanese philosophy that advice people to maintain the harmony among the creatures of God. It is not limited to living things, like human and nature, or the inanimate objects but also the invisible spirits exist side by side with mankind, as Endraswara asserted that “all creatures are the component of life that must be preserved and saved in order to create the harmony in life” (2014: 53). Therefore, *Keris*, as a legacy which is made of natural substances is necessary for the execution of safekeeping ritual. The feature of nature is represented by the appearance of the *Keris* itself, for instance: the hilt is made of sandalwood, the sheath is made of hardwood and the blade is certainly the combination of best steel and iron. The inanimate objects are portrayed in the belief of preservation for *Keris* esoteric. The existence of Supreme-being also inspires both the performer and the spiritual leader of *Jamasan Keris* ritual to always remember the existence of the Almighty in everyday life. Thus, the harmony transpires during the process of *Jamasan Keris* ritual: the people aware of the importance of keeping the cultural inheritance alive by removing the rust and interacting with the supernatural energy within *Keris*, together with the process of re-inspiring the Almighty God.

Another deep philosophy that motivates traditional Javanese's ardor in holding the ritual is the message documented within the precept of *Memayu Hayuning Pribadi* which literally means beautifying the beauty of an individual. This guidance leads people “to improve their physical and spiritual quality of individuality to be a qualified human-being either it is reached

through formal or informal activity” (Sumodiningrat and Wulandari, 2014: 253). When physical development relates to any ability that people seize to survive in life, spiritual improvement is more of personal conducts and devotion towards their belief. Spiritually, people can commit certain rituals, like fasting, asceticism and do sacred ritual, to alleviate their moral virtue. One of the informants admits that *Jamasan Keris* ritual can be regarded as a medium to get closer to the God. He proposed that “with the virtue in our heart and soul, *Jamasan Keris* ritual can be used as a medium to go in the direction of Hyang Widhi” (Interview: July 9, 2015). *Jamasan Keris* ritual is regarded as a medium to upgrade human’s internal goodness since its sacredness reminds them to keep on maintaining the eminent demeanor with God and preceding generation’s cultural heritage.

Bearing this in mind, there is a Javanese tenet regarding the idea of valuing mandate conferred by the former generation. The Javanese wise words, *rumangsa melu andarbeni, wajib melu angrukebi* meaning a thought of having, an obligation to preserve, stresses on the thoughtfulness of young generation towards the legacy existed. Sumodiningrat and Wulandari agreed that “the sense of belonging needs to be invested in youth’s mind so that they can actively involve themselves in the cultural preservation” (2014: 353). The awareness towards local wisdom and cultural opulence creates societies that are cognizant of their complex history and identity. In the same way, the members of Javanese ethnic group consider the tradition of *Keris* safekeeping as something symbolic that is handed over generations as the local leader expounded his idea about the on-going tradition (Interview: October 25, 2014). As a result, the meaningful tradition of safekeeping the *Keris*, being assessed as both lore and process, is continued using certain repetition to perpetuate the values existed within Javanese ethnic group.

In Javanese culture, offerings (Jv: *sesaji*) symbolize an expression of initiating the spiritual negotiation with the invisible sphere. Offerings refer to any symbolic objects provided in the beginning of the ritual as an actualization of thought, desire, and sense of the performer to get closer to God (Endraswara, 2014: 247). Eventually, the list of offerings is really varied from one place to another and also

one subject to another. The application and interpretation are based on their own personal experience and belief. Most principally, the prayer and intention of the performer become vital in the use of offerings since it includes how the performer gives meaning and interprets the symbolic elements he provides. In *Jamasan Keris* ritual executed by on October 26, 2014, the performer used two kinds of offerings: flowers and drinks.

The offerings of *Kembang Siraman*, flowers of the bathing ceremony, have an intention of organizing the soul and body of the *Keris* owner in the most peaceful condition (Jv: *noto jiwo rogo*). It is a set of different flowers in which each of them has its own different representation. Firstly, red and white roses represent the creating process of blood and bone (Figure 3). Every single human is born with these two elements which mean valuing the birth of human life is as noble as giving thanks to God for a living. Secondly, white champaca (Figure 4) appears to tie the relation between the *Keris* and its owner. The harmony between the owner and his heirloom is necessarily created so that the esoteric feature of the *Keris*, which is manifested into good lucks, can directly affect the life of the owner. Thirdly, ylang-ylang (Figure 5) has a role in elaborating the responsibility between mankind in order to build a good bond with each other. It is the same with the Javanese principle of *Memayu Hayuning Bebrayan*; beautifying the beauty of social interaction whereas “people are placed in a context which is guided by customary law and somehow it is everyone’s duty to keep on maintaining the harmony within the society” (Sumodiningrat and Wulandari, 2014: 252). Lastly, betel leaves with internode (Jv: *godong suruh temu ros*) (Figure 6) symbolize a meeting point of the mystical sphere with the real universe. Definitely, it is highly rare to find the betel leaf having its nodes arise from the same spot, since then, the object is used as the representation of miracle in life which implies a conviction that anything is likely to happen in life. In short, it can be inferred that difficulty can be overcome by tightening human relation wisely. Philosophically, it designates to build the Javanese concept of ‘living in harmony’.



Figure 3. *Kembang siraman*,



Figure 4. White champaca,



Figure 5. Ylang-ylang,



Figure 6. Internoded betel leaves.

Coffee, tea, and water are utilized as the complement of the ritual. The assumption of these offerings is that the extract of the beverage is believed as the realization of manners presented for the forefathers (Jv: *sesuguh marang leluhur*). Furthermore, these drinks symbolize the appearance of three colors: red, black, and yellow. Each of them has their own elaboration of meanings. Red which is represented by tea symbolizes bravery. In this performance, it relates to the braveness of the subject to keep on preserving the Javanese culture since the tradition is basically sacred, risky, and requires the performer to commit many kinds of conduct, such as fasting and doing asceticism. The next color, black, is symbolized by coffee. It means eternity in which, in this performance, it can purge the undesirable characteristic of *Keris*' esoteric aspect, like black magic. The last one is yellow, meaning majesty. This color is represented by water with the intention of fulfilling the objectives for mind and soul until it is clean and pure – reaching the most majestic condition of human being.

If Beatty affirmed (2004: 159) that Javanism underlines “ways of thinking about meaning approaches to learning, ethics, and various notions of man’s relation to God”; the values of this idea have to be recognized and experienced before the Javanese can understand and use it properly. So far, the understanding of local wisdom and how moral-ethical guidance applied in Javanese folklore can be found in *Jamasan Keris* ritual.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Despite covering many traditional values, *Keris* and its safekeeping ritual which is known as *Jamasan Keris*, held by traditional Javanese or Javanists as a lore, frequently escapes from the scientific observation. Values, beliefs, and the attitudes of Javanese folk toward *Keris* are very influential for the comprehension of the existing local wisdom because it officiates to prevent the controversy over traditional ritual which frequently emerges in society. To a certain extent, every moral-ethical value manifested in Javanese folklore through *Jamasan Keris* ritual can be considered as Javanists great effort to perpetuate cultural identity and to bequeath *Keris* culture to the future generations in the context of the mosaic of Indonesian culture.

The elaboration of the *Jamasan Keris* in this research reinforces a comprehension that any elements within the execution of this sacred ritual could have different interpretation and convention, even on the most illogical things. Eventually, it totally depends on how the subjects – the owner and the performer involved in the ritual – give meaning to it which, of course, based on the belief they are convinced about.

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