

## THE SACRED SITE: THE CONSERVATION BASED ON THE LOCAL PEOPLE IN TENGGER COMMUNITY AND ITS POTENTIAL AS ECOTOURISM ACTIVITIES

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**ABSTRACT.** Tengger is one of the Java sub-tribes that has a belief system in the form of a life view called Kejawen. Kejawen's life is a view that is considered holistic in looking at the environment. The traditional wisdom of the Tengger community in the management of natural resources is one of the living and sustainable local wisdom in Indonesia. One of the local wisdom associated with environmental management is the existence of sacred areas as a part of environmental conservation. This research was conducted in Ngadas Village, Poncokusumo District, Malang Regency. The purpose of this study is to study the types of areas that are sacred by the Tengger community and the factors behind the existence of the area as a part of the conservation-based ecotourism. This research was conducted by interviewing the key person of the traditional leader. The interview materials in questions include the types of sacred places and the reason behind the area is sacred. The research results showed that the form of preservation of certain sacred areas has a unique ecosystem and shows the historical ties. The areas considered by the Ngadas community as sacred sites have indigenous values such as Pedanyangan, Sanggar Agung, Mbah Sedek tombs, Punden Kutungan, the mount of Bromo, the mount of Semeru, Savanna land and Bromo caldera and other sacred sites. The sacred place is highly respected by the Tengger people. Norms and values in Tengger culture incorporate with the respect for the sacred places. The existence of these sacred areas can be used as a part of environmental conservation-based ecotourism.

*Keywords:* Pedanyangan, Bromo, ecotourism, environment, biodiversity

JEL Classification: P32, Q01, Z32

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### INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the countries that have a high index of biodiversity (State Ministry of Environment, 2001), so-called a mega-biodiversity country (Rhee et al., 2004). This biodiversity is not only at the species level but also in the genetic level (State Ministry of Environment, 2001). Although Indonesia has only 1.3% of the world's land areas, Indonesia contributes global biodiversity in the amount of 25% fish species, 16-17% of bird species, 16% of reptile and amphibian species, 11% of plants, and 10% of mammals. Setyawati

(2013) even states that Indonesian plant genera occupy the highest position for the biodiversity of butterflies, parrots, palms and some (Rhee et al., 2004). The ecosystem in Indonesia is also diverse. There are 40 kinds of ecosystems that are still original. The diversity of these ecosystems is due to the different natural conditions among island or place within an island.

In addition to having high biodiversity, Indonesia also has a high diversity in terms of ethnic, religious, racial and intergroup. Primordial heterogeneity also reflects cultural diversity. Cultural diversity and its indigenous knowledge are useful for developing and managing the natural environment with the concept of conservation. Local wisdom is a community effort based on experience, needs, understanding, and knowledge

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about the hereditary environment, passed down from generation to generation. This mechanism is possible contrary to modern knowledge because local wisdom is customarily based on the philosophical, social or environmental framework.

Local wisdom related to environmental management can be an essential part of conservation efforts. The society is usually easier to adopt something that has been known, besides, because local wisdom can be tailored to the characteristics of culture. One of the conservation approaches based on the local wisdom is the community values on the environment. Local sense enriches and strengthens life in the village and provides ecotourism potential (Nugroho and Negara, 2015) and the economic welfare of the village (Nugroho et al., 2016). This is an implementation of the concept of social capital as an essential economic capital of ecotourism services that contain elements of education (Baksh et al., 2013)

Tengger is one of the Java sub-tribes that has a belief system in the form of a life view called *Kejawen*. *Kejawen's* view of life is a view that is considered holistic in view of the environment (Sukenti, 2002). One of the aspects of the life of *Kejawen* is *memayu hayuning bawono* and *sangkan paraning dumadi*. *Memayu hayuning bawono* means to keep the beauty of the world and its contents. While *sangkan paraning dumadi* means from anywhere and for what in term of human life existence. In this *Kejawen* view, nature presented a system consisting of creators, universes and supernatural realms. Human beings and the creatures are seen as a part of the system or content, while the natural habitat functions as a container or place (Sukenti, 2002).

The traditional wisdom of the Tengger community in the management of natural resources is one of the indigenous peoples who still sustain the living of local value and wisdom in Indonesia. In order to the local knowledge still exist, it needs to identify and describe how local cultural treasures exist. It is hoped that each region has complete documentation of local culture and its conservation values. It will become baseline in formulating a national state law and policy of natural resource management in the framework of sustainable tourism development.

The purpose of this study is to describe the existence of sacred areas of Ngadas village as a part of environmental conservation and potential for ecotourism development. The development of this technology can encourage people to create various technological innovations that can convey information quickly, precisely and accurately so that the interpersonal communication is easier to do. During this time the problem often faced by people in rural areas due to the lack of new and appropriate information. Information from the Internet serves as the first step to solve the problem which is then followed up with other activities (Anonymous, 2014). Extension workers, farmers, and stakeholders can learn to use necessary information technology on the internet.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research was conducted in Ngadas Village, Poncokusumo District, Malang Regency (Figure 1). Ngadas is located in the conservation area of Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park (TN-BTS) and is also the oldest enclave zone in TN-BTS. Ngadas village is geographically located on the coordinates of -7.9831 and 112.9088. This village is administratively divided into two hamlets, namely Ngadas and Jarak Ijo. Ngadas village has undulating topography to steep hills with an altitude of 1000-2200 m above the sea level. The area size of Ngadas Village is 384 hectares. The air temperature ranges from 13 to 20 °C.

This research was done by a semi-structured interview with a key person who includes a traditional leader called *dukun* and local figures. The interview materials in question included the types of sacred places and the basic reasons for determining the area sacred. The sacred sites were then documented and described.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The traditional wisdom of the Tengger community in the management of natural resources is built on four main pillars. The pillars included (i) ritual system related to life cycle, (ii) land tenure and tenure system, (iii) forest management system and water resources, and (iv) food crop agriculture system. There is a ritualized system that is actualized in various forms which are followed by various adherents of the religion of Islam,

Hinduism, and Buddhism. This phenomenon is unique and rarely encountered in the belief systems in other communities outside the Tengger community (Noor et al., 2010).

Ngadas is one of the villages that have traditional wisdom in the institutional management of the environment which is inherited through the learning process and life habituation process. The Ngadas community views nature comprehensively.

Nature is a part of human life. People see that whoever hurt nature means hurting himself. The norms and values of Tengger indigenous people's life view have implications for their ability in managing the natural environment based on the local wisdom growing and developing in the society. The various forms of norms and value systems in the view of life become a alive force for the Tenggerese people in managing their lives.



**Figure 1.** Map of Ngadas Village (googlemap)

The internalization of these values evidence reality of local wisdom that is treated and inherited as noble values. This capability is increasingly meaningful when the many of social changes that are taking place in the society do not shift fundamentally to the current local wisdom. The change can even strengthen the local sense of the community. This is evidenced by the independence of socio-economic life of Tengger society, through the ability of environmental management of the environment in a sustainable manner. Ecological conditions around the settlements, or in the moor and within the forest are maintained (Suyono, 2009) and produce an optimal crop and

horticultural productivity (Nugroho and Negara, 2015).

The society's view of nature in the Ngadas community is strongly influenced by the life philosophy of Javanese society to raise *hayune bawono* or preserve the world. The implementation of this philosophy in various areas varies according to the beliefs of culture, customs, and knowledge gained from interaction with the environment. In the village of Ngadas, this form of preservation in the forming of certain areas that have a unique ecosystem or have historical ties. The areas that are considered by the Ngadas community as a

sacred location or have its private value are as follows:

### 1. *Pedanyangan*

*Pedanyangan* is a local name area that is regarded as sacred by the surrounding community. *Pedanyangan* is a residence site of *danyang-danyang* (a subtle creature of the village protector). The origin of the word of *danyang* itself comes from the word *hyang* which means ancestor. The *pedanyangan* can also be interpreted as a place to reside ancestors in order to maintain the village. The shape of the usual vagrants of old temples or tombs, hidden water sources, large banyan trees (*Ficus* sp.) or areas of the distinctive natural landscape. In some places, *pedanyangan* also called *punden* (Figure 2). Ngadas *pedanyangan*

village has a form of a collection of large trees such as mountain pine (*Casuarina junghuhniana* Miq.), and *danglu* or *ki rain* (*Engelhardia spicata* Blume.) The tree, in which there is a stylish Europe building which is former relics (*petilasan*) of Raden Panji Wulung.

The form of the *pedanyangan* usually temple or old tomb, a hidden spring, a collection of large trees such as banyan (*Ficus* sp.) or areas that have a special natural landscape. In some places, the *pedanyangan* also called *punden*. In the village of Ngadas, *pedanyangan* has a form of a collection of large trees such as mountain pine (*Casuarina junghuhniana* Miq.) and *danglu* or *ki hujan* Tree (*Engelhardia spicata* Blume.), in which there is a heritage European-style building of Raden Panji Wulung, a figure of antiquity.



**Figure 2.** *Pedanyangan* (left) and *Punden Kutungan* (right) of Ngadas Village

The *pedanyangan* is the place where the ancestral spirits of the people of Ngadas Village. The people put offerings inside the cottage, pray to seek blessings for the villagers to be safe and safe in their bodies, or when they have intentions or wishes, especially when one is to celebrate. Below position of the *pedanyangan*, there is a water source. It is possible that the vegetation present in the *pedanyangan* is a protective spring there. The Ngadas community uses this water for daily needs. Because under the *pedanyangan* there are springs that also called *danyang banyu*.

For the people of Ngadas Village, *pedanyangan* is a place where the spirits of the ancestors exist. The people put the offerings in the hut of pride, pray for the blessing and the salvation of body and soul. The people who are having an intent or desire, pray for it to run smoothly and wish fulfilled. On the place under the *pedanyangan*, there is a water spring. The existence of vegetation around the *pedanyangan* is a protective water spring. The Ngadas community uses this water for daily needs. Since the position of the water source is under the *pedanyangan*, the spring is also called as *banyu danyang* (*danyang* spring)

The management concept of *Pedanyangan* in Ngadas village is equal with forest management, where wild or planted vegetation must be preserved and protected from destruction. This results in all the vegetation from the past until now remain intact and sustainable and form a complete stratification. Dead branches or trees are left in the area of *pedanyangan* and should not be removed from the area. *Pedanyangan* in Ngadas village is managed by the traditional custom stakeholders.

The existence of *pedanyangan* is essentially a form of local knowledge wisdom to local communities to protect certain areas that may have important value and related to spiritual and sacred sites. The local wisdom of the community towards *pedanyangan* is actually a form of conservation based on the experience and knowledge passed down from generation to generation. This mechanism is contrary to modern knowledge because it has different philosophical, missionary or objective views than local wisdom (Noor et al., 2003).

The values of beliefs, customs, and local knowledge are necessary elements in formulating local wisdom in community. All of those are the unity of the system underlying the social order, to ensure the sustenance of systematic biodiversity in a long time. Given this, the values of beliefs, customs, and local knowledge should be the basis of state policy, including in the management of conservation areas. In other words, custom institutions can position themselves as an institution in the component of determining a policy in conservation approach (Dariah and Tony, 2008).

Developing conservation techniques based on the local wisdom can be an option. Society is ordinarily easier to adopt something that already known. Therefore, developing local intelligence can provide the guarantee and benefits of optimal natural resource management (Dariah and Tony, 2008)..

## 2. High Hermitage (*Sanggar Agung*)

The *Sanggar Agung* is one of the places that also sacred by the Ngadas community. The reason for the sanctuary of this place is the same as the existence of *pedanyangan*, where the *Sanggar Agung* also has spirits of the village protector. The location of the *sanggar* is in the village at the

highest position compared to the settlement of the Ngadas villagers.

The word *sanggar* comes from the *sangga* which means to be supported above. In the *Sanggar Agung*, there is also a small building which is regularly used as a place of meditation. The vegetation around *Sanggar Agung* is dominated by the Mountain Pine (*Casuarina junghuhniana* Miq). Nowadays, under the studio have been built monasteries, such as Buddhist prayer places. However, the existence of the studio remains the property of the entire community of Ngadas Village.

## 3. Tomb of Mbah Sedek

Mbah Sedek (grandpa Sedek) is one of the first community leaders who helped to build Ngadas Village. He came from the Mataram Kingdom and was buried in Ngadas Village. The tomb is often visited by people on certain days who expect blessing and salvation in their life. They come and pray that their wishes can go smoothly and come true. This tomb is also frequently visited by people from outside Ngadas, especially before the month of Ramadan.

## 4. *Punden Kutungan*

*Punden kutungan* is an area near Bromo Caldera which is sanctioned by Ngadas people and considered as the entrance to mount of Bromo. *Punden Kutungan* is a stone punden building where the Kipres tree grows (*Thuja orientalis*) on it (Figure 2). Visitors who want to enter the Bromo caldera region are encouraged to give coins in the punden. According to the community, the money is aimed to keep the Bromo caldera region safe.

In the beliefs of Tengger people, According to Ambayoen (2006), *Punden Kutungan* is a gathering place of the spirits before being worshiped in the entas-entas ceremonies. People who want their wish come true ordinarily pray in this place. It has become the belief and custom of Tengger people to go to sacred sites if they have intentions to be answered fast..

## 5. Mount of Bromo

Mount of Bromo has been known as a very popular tourist destination around the world. Mount of Bromo has a beautiful natural panorama, with a height of 2392 meters above sea level, and

surrounded by caldera with a diameter of about 8 km (Figure 3). Crater of the mount of Bromo is named Candra Dimuka. Candra means defect and upfront mean in front or in advance. This is because if viewed from the front of the mount will look flawed or look uneven. The mount has a midline of 800 meters (north to south direction) and 600 meters (east to west direction). Mount of Bromo is a volcano that is still active, and every year always remove the smoke from inside the crater. While the danger area of the mount in the distance with radius 4 km from the center of the crater.

In the mythology of Java, Candra Dimuka crater is a crater in heaven (*kayangan*). In general, the name Candra Dimuka often used as the name of the crater not only by the Tengger community but also other communities in Java, such as people in Mount Lawu Magetan regency, East Java. Bromo is the mount that is considered the most sacred by the people of Tengger. The mountain is considered

the qibla of Tengger society. The name of Mount Bromo takes its name from the main deity of the Hindu religion namely Lord Brahma. Every year Tengger people held a ceremony Kasada on this mountain. The Tengger people considered the Bromo as a manifestation of one of Tengger people's ancestor, Raden Kusumo.

Historically, the mount of Bromo and other mountains around the Tengger Caldera are formed from the eruption of Mount Tengger. Mount Tengger is estimated to have a height of about 4000 meters above sea level and is considered the largest and highest mountain in its time. As it erupts, the eruption of tengger mountain creates a sea of sand which at that time filled with water. In subsequent developments, emerged several magma streams in the middle of the caldera and formed new mountains such as mount of Bromo, mount of Widodaren, mount of Watangan, mount of Batok (Figure 4) and mount of Kursi.



**Figure 3.** Crater (left) and savanna land (right) of Bromo mount

## 6. Savanna Land

One of the beauties of the mount of Bromo is located in the area of the former caldera. The caldera with an area of approximately 200 sq km has various characteristics. The caldera on the north side of Bromo mountain is more dominated by the dry sand sea, due to the influence of sulfur fumes eruption. While the southern side caldera is further away from the effect of the eruption, it has a greener vegetation. Vegetation of this shrub is similar to savanna in subtropical countries. The

hilarious vegetation and hilly topography create beautiful scenery. Some people call this savanna-like Teletubbies hill (Figure 3).

The people of Tengger regard this savanna region as a sacred site. People passing through this savanna are advised to be careful in saying. It gives a moral message that everyone should keep his words for positive and useful things. In this savanna, there is a belief that every word can become a reality. Someone who talks wants to rain, then soon there will be rain.

## 7. Mount of Semeru

Mount of Semeru is the highest volcano in Java Island. Mount of Semeru has a height of 3.676 meters (Figure 4). Mount of Semeru administratively covers in Malang and Lumajang Regency area. Mount of Semeru crater is called by the name Jonggring Saloko (Jonggring means tilting and saloka means White). This is because when the mount is viewed from a distance, this crater has a sloping slope and white.

Mount of Semeru is a mount that is considered the most sacred by the people of Tengger. Mount of Semeru is considered a manifestation of one of Tengger people's as the grandmother of Demak Diningrat. People who are on this mountain are advised to say and behave in a positive and beneficial manner. Negative things should be avoided because it can cause dangerous or bad luck to the person.



**Figure 4.** Mount of Semeru (left) and Batok (right)

The mount of Semeru is also considered a little Himalayan mountain in India. According to the legend, the mount of Semeru was moved from India to Java by the gods. To bring the mountain to Java Island, Lord of Vishnu transformed into a giant tortoise carrying the mountain on his back. Meanwhile, God of Brahma incarnated a long snake that wrapped itself around the mountain and turtle body so that the mountain could be safely transported. When it reached Java, this fallen mountain scattered created Mount Penanggungan, located in the northwest of the mount of Semeru (Whitten et al., 1999).

## 8. Other Sacred Sites

The mountains and other places around Bromo and Semeru mount are also considered sacred by the people of Tengger. That is the mourning place of the gods, the grave of the saint, or the relic of the deceased, who is highly respected by the people of Tengger or the surrounding community. Norms and values embedded or inherited by the gods or figures become the guidance of life that

contains the rules of life balance and message of nature and environmental conservation

### **Sacred Areas and Ecotourism**

The values of beliefs, customs, and local knowledge are essential elements in formulating local wisdom in society. All of them are the unity of the system underlying the social order, to ensure the sustenance of the systematic biodiversity in a long time. Considering that these values of beliefs, customs, and local knowledge should be the basis of government policy, including in the management of conservation areas, customary institutions can position themselves as an institution in the component of determining a policy in a conservation approach.

Pedanyangan as a sacred area based on environmental conservation is an asset in support of the existence of Ngadas as one of the tourist villages. The presence of pedanyangan can be applied as learning to visitors about the concept of nature and culture conservation. The presence of pedanyangan can correspond with the

management of other agroecosystems in the village area.

Pedanyangan as a kind of conservation activities can be used as a tourist attraction area, especially ecotourism. According to Nugroho and Negara (2015), ecotourism is a tourism activity that contains educational elements and is packed professionally, which considers the cultural heritage, participation, and welfare of local people as well as efforts to conserve natural resources and environment.

**Table 1.** Several sacred places at surrounding area of Bromo

No	Sacred area	Place of mourning <sup>1</sup>
1	Gunung Ringgit	Tumenggung Kliwung
2	Midangan	SintoWiji
3	Siti Kuning	Baru Klinting
4	Sumber Semanik	Rawit
5	Jinahan	Jiting Jinah
6	Gunung Pranten	Ical
7	Gunung Lingga	Prabu Siwah
8	Gunung Gendera	Cokro Aminoto
9	Gunung Penanjakan	Tumenggung Klinter
10	Gunung Cemoro Lawang	Tunggul Wulung
11	Selo Balang	Bagus Waris
12	Selo Wungkuk	Dukun
13	Poten	Pernoto
14	Bajangan	Perniti
15	Gunung Tunggukan	Tunggul Ametung
16	Gunung Batok	Masigit
17	Gunung Widodaren	Puspa Gentong Sari
18	Gunung Guyangan	Teku
19	Sumber Pakis.	DadungKawuk
20	Pusung Nglingker	Demeling
21	Wonongkoro	Sindu Jaya
22	Gunung Pundak Lembuk	Sapu Jagat dan
23	Gunung Rujak	Tempat bersemayam Ki Jenggot

<sup>1</sup> it is stated in the local name

Utilization of cultural assets in the development of tourism activities has a strong institutional foundation, as mentioned in the Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 33 of 2009 on Guidelines for Ecotourism Development in the Region. In Chapter III, Article 9 states that the utilization of ecotourism can be arranged by individuals, institution, or local government. Ecotourism utilization by local government can cooperate with other local government by the provisions of the legislation. The cooperation is prioritized to provide convenience to individuals and institution for supporting ecotourism activities (Nugroho, 2010).

According to Nugroho and Negara (2015), norms and values in the local culture can be

learned in the concern of developing science and conservation skills to tourists. Tengger culture can provide enrichment with knowledge of humanity, sociology, anthropology, climatology, botany, or zoology. The research needs can be facilitated The Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park to build conservation vision.

Ecotourism services in the Tengger region rely on interpretation, namely the ability of mastery and narrating attractions with learning approaches. The local people have been able to guide the psychomotor experience of sacred areas to visitors. They are very knowledgeable about the legends and events around the sacred areas.

The Ngadas Village has many sacred places. The places include Pedanyangan, Sanggar Agung, Mbah Sedek tomb, Punden Putungan, the mount of Bromo, the mount of Semeru, Savana and other Mountains around Bromo Caldera. The people of Tengger highly respect the sacred place. Norms and values in Tengger culture incorporate with respect for the sacred places.

These sacred places provide knowledge about nature and environment conservation. The preservation of Tenggerese culture including respect for sacred sites gives a lot about the implementation of Tengger people life that is oriented towards balance and nature conservation. The protection of certain sacred spaces also have a unique ecosystem and show historical ties. The Ngadas community views areas suppose to sacred sites have indigenous values.

Sacred places in the village of Tengger or in the vicinity of the mount of Bromo has become a well-known ecotourism object. The population is capable of performing functions as a tour guide and with the ability of interpretation. They explain the conservation practices of life and local values that are obeyed.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The Ngadas Village has many sacred places. The places include *Pedanyangan*, *Sanggar Agung*, *Mbah Sedek* tomb, *Punden Kutungan*, the mount of Bromo, the mount of Semeru, Savana and other The people of Tengger highly respect the sacred places. Norms and values in Tengger culture incorporate with respect for the sacred places.

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