

Sundanese Culture-based Ecoliteracy

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Abstract—An understanding of ecology or the environment has been implanted since centuries ago in the traditions of the Sundanese community, among others, traditional expressions that were recorded in the tradition of ancient text writing. This finding show that Sundanese ancestors have a high concern with environmental sustainability and its balance. This paper examines information dissemination and understanding of environmental interactions based on local culture, especially Sundanese culture. Through the description of oral expressions, it will lead to the environmental tradition of literacy in which it has been carried out for generations along with the values contained. The findings reveal that inspirational community, especially the millennial, emulates and contributes to maintain the ecosystem based on local wisdom.

Keywords—*ecoliteracy; Sundanese culture; traditional expression*

I. INTRODUCTION

Since National Literacy Movement launched (*Gerakan Literasi Nasional*, GLN), the enthusiasm of literacy tradition in society has become highly substantial. It can even be assumed to influence almost all aspects of life. This fact is very captivating, as it not only encourages literacy in certain fields, but it can also improve people's English life skills [1].

Literacy domain continues to develop in the community. There are stipulated in six types of basic literacy recommended by Word Economic Forum (WEF) i.e. reading and writing literacy, numerical literacy, science literacy, financial literacy, digital literacy, and cultural and citizenship literacy [2]. In addition, there is other kind of literacy, even accompanied by research and producing reference books, i.e. media literacy [3], literature literacy [4], ecoliteracy [5], and literacy and financial inclusion [6].

The movement of these types of literacy appears to coincide with current modern symptoms in the community, because its popularity has just emerged in the present era, for example, digital literacy, there is also a movement to re-establish or re-literate, because this literary activity has actually emerged centuries ago, like the other five types of literacy recommended by the WEF, which have been practiced by Sundanese people since the 16th century AD. These were recorded in the ancient Sundanese manuscripts titled *Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian* written in 1518 ADs.

One life sector included in the literacy activities is the environment. Hence, the term of ecoliteracy is emerged. This

term refers to the level of literacy or concern with all aspects of the environment. In this regard, various ethnic groups in Indonesia have the order in maintaining and preserving the environment, which then they were inherited it from generation to generation. These orders have become collective memories, of which are recorded in traditional expressions. In Sundanese society, these oral expressions include *babasan* and *paribasa*. Thus, the expression can be used as a foundation as well as a tool to increase understanding and concern (literacy) of the environment (environmental literacy).

The expression contained a summary of Sundanese ancestral messages that cover religion, moral, social, work ethic, education, economics, law, environment, etc. In this study, only the expressions connected to the environment will be discussed and allied to a re-understanding of the connotations contained.

II. METHOD

Library research methods are used to invent traditional Sundanese expressions containing environmental messages. The data sources were taken from idiom's books, including the works of Tatang Sumarsono (2001), Ajip Rosidi (2005), and Yayat Sudaryat (2016). Traditional expressions that have been inventoried are then analyzed and elaborated using descriptive methods.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Ecoliteracy requires awareness of attitudes and actions both individually and communally to protect and preserve the environment. Campaigns or awareness of these issues can be obtained through linguistic messages in the form of traditional expressions. In other words, these cultural elements can be used as a basis for implanting an understanding of environmental problems.

Environmental arrangements by the Sundanese i.e. forests, have been carried out since the old time of the ancestors, whose remnants are still preserved, among others, Baduy traditional village in Banten, Kampung Naga in Tasikmalaya, and Kuta Village in Ciamis.

By using local expressions, traditional village forest areas are divided into three parts i.e. *leuweung titipan*, *leuweung tutupan*, and *leuweung garapan* [7]. Forest areas that should not be disturbed at all and must be protected as they are considered as entrusted or mandated by *Gusti Nu Maha Suci*

(God) and inheritance from ancestors, i.e. *leuweung titipan*, also called *leuweung larangan*, *leuweung sirah cai*, or *leuweung kolot*. This forest area is usually located on a mountain top so that it is categorized as a conservation forest.

The forest area which may occasionally be harvested on some forced condition is called *leuweung tutupan*. This area is a reserve area, which may be used only for customary purposes, or may be used by local communities, and permitted only for the purpose of non-timber harvesting such as rattan, sap, honey, fruits, tubers, medicines, and similar things. Any logging tree in *leuweung tutupan* must be replaced immediately with a new tree. This area is usually located in the central part of the mountain and is categorized as a protected forest.

The forest area that can be cultivated for farming and the like is called *leuweung garapan*, *leuweung lembur*, *leuweung sampalan* or *leuweung baladaheun*. This area is usually flatter contour because it is located at the foot of the mountain and it is categorized as productive forest.

In addition, Danaatmadja has studied layout planning in Sundanese region with various expressions that suggest the land topography or land morphology associated with an attempt to protect or maintain land called *gunung-kaian* [8]. This expression contains the suggestion that the mountain area should be planted with trees and made it forested. This is quite reasonable because if the mountain slopes are deforested, natural disasters or damage simply will happen. *Gawir-Awian* (cliffs planted with bamboo), this expression is a suggestion to look after the cliffs or sloping areas by planting bamboo trees. Bamboo is classified as a plant that can strengthen and glue the soil.

Cinyusu-rumateun (springs to be preserved), this expression contains a suggestion to maintain *cinyusu* as a source of life, both for humans and other ecosystems. Therefore, if *cinyusu* is properly cared for, then water supply will always be available.

Walungan-rumateun (river to be preserved), this expression is an advice to maintain the river and its current flow, cleanliness and its greenery. It is intended that the river should function properly, rather than causing disasters.

Situ-pulasaraeun (the lake should be maintained), as a rain water reservoir and infiltration water absorbent, the presence of lakes is very important in controlling floods. That is why one way to deal with the annual floods in Dayeuh Kolot is by making man-made lakes. Therefore, the lake should always be preserved.

Lembur-uruseun (the village should be well managed), a suggestion that the village environment should be well organized in accordance with the rules to make the community feel at home and comfortable.

Basisir-jagaean (well protected beach), an advice to protect the beach and its environment in addition to tourist objects, the beach is also a life source for fishermen. Therefore, the beach must be properly maintained.

Sampalan-kebonan (empty soil for farming), this recommendation is not only intended for the beauty of the environment, but also to utilize the empty land for farming.

Dataran-sawah (utilizing flat soil for rice fields), this recommendation is to exploit flat soil rice fields for human lifesource.

Legok-balongan (changing a concave soil to a pond), this expression is a suggestion for fishery products, by making a pond.

Lebak-caian (Changing a low place for water storage), this expression is a suggestion to use lower land as a shelter for water supply for the dry season.

Pasir-talunan (using a hilly soil for agroforestry), this expression is a suggestion to use hilly soil for perennial plantations such as coffee, tea or quinine.

The above expressions are suggestion to preserve the surrounding environment and an also to earn living that both of them will provide great benefits.

The other forms of understanding and other environmental awareness have also been uttered in song lyrics or *kawih*, including in Mang Koko works.

Cinta Nusa

*Indonésia gemah ripah loh jinawi
alam éndah héjo lémbok sugih mukti
subur tutuwuhan, beunghar pepelakan
daun héjo ngémploh karaharjan lemah cai*

*Kakayon tumuwuh subur pajangkung-jangkung
petétan ngawujud sirung pagulung-gulung
piraku rék réla, piraku rék téga
alam nu ngémploh héjo pinarengan ngarangrangan
teu kariksa*

*Tutuwuhan nutup alas bandawasa
tatangkalan nutup gunung ngambah reuma
peryogi dijaga, iraha diriksa
kakayon mangpaat sumber kahirupan bangsa*

*Mamala tanah ngupluk nungtun gimir ketir
bahaya gunung urug padataran banjir
rempug pada tukuh samakta gagarap
nagara tanah ngeblak dialakan tatangkalan
héjo ngémploh*

The above lyrics tell us about the prosperous Indonesian nature, /*Indonesia gemah ripah loh jinawi*/ furnished by its green and serene nature, /*alam éndah héjo lémbok sugih mukti*/, all kinds of plants grow to provide welfare for this land

inhabitant, /subur tutuwuhan, beunghar pepelakan/ daun héjo ngémploh karaharjan lemah cai.

The second verse tells us the story of trees that grow towering and sprouting sprung up that should be kept and preserved.

The third verse tells of various plants or trees that adorn the forest, mountains and moor. All of that is a source of life for all people. Therefore, it must be kept and preserved; otherwise, it will bring natural disasters, landslides, flood, etc.

From the above lyrics, it is quite clear that the understanding of the environment has actually been implanted in Sundanese society for a long time. It is the young generation has to be responsible to maintain environmental sustainability.

IV. CONCLUSION

Internalization of local cultural values has been going on for centuries through everyday life appreciation and practice. These values have become a collective memory of the community and are recorded in the present, among others, traditional expressions and song lyrics. These expressions contain messages of various aspects of life, including about the environment, which are expected to contribute in nurturing the awareness and understanding of environmental issues.

Besides its rooted in the local culture, the movement of environmental literacy (ecoliteration) which based on local culture (*babasan, paribasa, and kawih* lyrics) seen as a more grounded attempt, as it is very close to people everyday life. Various everyday lives common expressions were then emphasized through its manifestation in concrete actions, such as by keeping up cleanliness, reforestation, and preserving the

ecosystem in general. Thus, environmental awareness will grow and develop naturally and spontaneously.

By using local culture as a foundation in providing the understanding and awareness of the environment, besides, re-actualizing and revitalizing the elements of local culture it is also important to articulate it in daily life in accordance with time's demands. Besides using local culture as a foundation in providing the understanding and awareness of the environment, re-actualizing and revitalizing the elements of local culture it is also important to be articulated in daily life in accordance with time's demands.

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