



Singing Quiet from Salak Mountain, West Java : Conservation Base on Local Belief and Ritual Tradition

LIPI

Mohammad Fethi Royyani and Eko Baroto Walujo
Research Center for Biology-LIPI

Background

Mount Salak is one of the conservation areas in West Java that has significant value as a protection of biodiversity and also as a water catchment area.

Ceremony tradition performed by the society becomes a declaration or a celebration of the myth they had. In the ceremony of mythical tradition, it was made that it is as if real. This made it subtle from the actual one.



Girijaya Village

The study was conducted in the village of Girijaya, Cidadu district, Sukabumi. The village was chosen because it is the closest village from Salak National Park. In addition, the people of Girijaya village are still looking for and strengthen the roots of the Sundanese tradition. The strong Sundanese tradition in this village is marked by the existence of Girijaya Padepokan lead by Abah Ru'yat who had strong influence in the society.

Ritual tradition and classical culture of Sunda are often held in the village each year. Even though it is a nuanced tradition, the people who live in this village are still running the normative teachings of the Islam religion such as praying, fasting, charity, and so forth.



Mythology

Most of the people believe that in mount Salak, God save the secret of life. It is a human duty to nurture and discover the secret. Salak Mountain is a sacred place where people should respect it, because in it there is a secret of the origin of life for humans, especially for Sundanese society.

For Sundanese society, including the community of Girijaya, the plant has its own meaning. For them plants are not something that exists by themselves but rather something that are "created". Plants have a spiritual value and are associated with the Creator. With this assumption, all plants are basically useful, only human beings that do not understand the benefits. They divided the plant into two classes; toxic and non-toxic.

The forest in mount Salak and the mountain itself has an important value for the society in the village of Girijaya in shaping their identities. The peak of mount Salak, high but tranquil, keeps natural hints to guide human for the goodness of their lives. The mystery of mount Salak is the mystery of life.

Religion and Ritual Tradition

The ritual tradition is essentially a human need to survive in a region. This ritual is in accordance with the environmental conditions because it is a result of the interaction of humans and nature. Ritual as a text can be read and construed from the view of our interests, of course with the rules of reading and rigorous research.



Ritual Tradition and Conservation

From the reading of the ritual traditions made in the village of Girijaya, we conclude that the ritual traditions have conservation significance because it contains a moral message and a call to do well and to respect the nature. In addition, the ritual tradition is also an expression of gratitude for the gift of God through the abundance of agricultural produce.

The humbling sings in the tranquility of the mountain performed by the people of the village of Girijaya is not only to quench the spiritual thirst but also has a close bonding with the nature. From the sings were created a sustainable uses of natural resources. As long as there are the beautiful sings, the nature will be kept well.