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Tungguk tembakau traditional ceremony in Boyolali Regency: Cultural values and simbolic meanings

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ABSTRACT

Tungguk Tembakau is a traditional ceremony marking the beginning of the tobacco harvest in Senden Village, Boyolali, as an expression of gratitude to God. Although it is carried out regularly, a deep understanding of its value and symbolic meaning has begun to fade among the community. This study aims to explore the cultural values and symbolic meanings of the Tungguk Tembakau tradition. Using qualitative methods, this study integrates James Spradley's ethnographic approach and Roland Barthes' semiotics. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with purposively selected informants (traditional leaders, village officials, farmers), and documentation. Data analysis was conducted through two systematic approaches: first, ethnographic analysis (domain, taxonomy, components, and cultural themes) to reveal value orientations; second, semiotic analysis through a two-stage system of signification (denotation and connotation/myth) to dissect ritual artifacts. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources and methods. The results of the study reveal four cultural value orientations: (1) The relationship between humans and God as an expression of gratitude; (2) The relationship between humans and nature, reflecting agricultural cosmology and ecological dependence; (3) Interpersonal relationships through mutual solidarity; and (4) The relationship between humans and time through respect for ancestors. Semiotically, each procession is a symbolic language. The picking of 16 tobacco leaves symbolizes obedience to the cosmic order, while the parade functions as a ritual to ward off evil spirits. Various forms of gunungan and tamping offerings connote prosperity, soil fertility, and collective hopes for a smooth seasonal transition. This study concludes that Tungguk Tembakau is a complex symbolic system that strengthens cultural identity and maintains harmony between spirituality and the social order of agrarian communities.

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Introduction

Indonesia has long been recognized globally as a uniquely multicultural country, characterized by diverse ethnic groups, tribes, religions, habits, and cultural richness (Nursilah et al., 2024). This diversity encourages public awareness to actively bridge cultural gaps and combat bias in order to realize a harmonious multicultural society (Anggawirya et al., 2023). Therefore, understanding the internalization of diverse cultural values becomes crucial in strengthening national identity and character (Maimun et al., 2020; Ismi et al., 2025). As a rich archipelagic nation, Indonesia possesses traditions that function as a tool of strengthening relationships, maintaining environmental balance, and preserving local wisdom values

(Syahputra et al., 2025). Thus, the richness of Nusantara traditions serves as the foundation of national character as well as a reflection of local culture that must continue to be understood and preserved.

Tradition is an integral part of culture that encompasses the life of Indonesian people. According to Koentjaraningrat (2016), culture has three forms: the ideological system as an abstract form, the activity system through actions, and the artifact system representing the physical form of culture. These three forms are inherent in people's daily life. Tradition is the form of culture as a system of human activities in this context (Wiediharto et al., 2020).

Indonesia, as a multicultural country, places tradition as a vital instrument in maintaining social stability and ecological balance (Qomariyah et al., 2024). Various studies show that traditions in Java are not merely ceremonies, but have protective and integrative functions. For example, the *Ruwat* Desa tradition in Lumajang (Hakiki, 2022) and *Ter-Ater* in Pamekasan (Holis & Silvia, 2024) proving that local rituals function as a mechanism for warding off evil and strengthening religious social cohesion. This is in line with the view that tradition is a manifestation of gratitude and a marker of the cycle of life that maintains harmony between humans, nature, and God (Tathmainnul et al., 2024; Rahmawati & Aliyah, 2022). Theoretically, the repetition of this ritual strengthens the collective identity that forms the foundation of national character amid diversity (Burdam et al., 2022; Dinda et al., 2023).

However, the existence of traditions today faces serious challenges due to cultural disruption. The phenomena of modernization and global cultural infiltration have triggered the marginalization of local wisdom (Salsabilla et al., 2024). The tangible impact of this shift is a significant decline in youth participation, as reflected in the fading of *Ujub* oral literature (Zulfa & Mulyaningtyas, 2025), *Nyadran* tradition (Fadyah & Imron, 2024), until *Parno Adat* (Sandrika et al., 2022). Conceptually, this condition signifies a threat to the deconstruction of the values of the archipelago's heritage, which risks the loss of national identity pride (Jannah et al., 2025; Adiwijaya et al., 2023). Therefore, it is necessary to document and analyze traditions that still survive, such as Tungguk Tembakau, in order to revitalize the understanding of symbolic meanings that have begun to erode over time.

Facing the threat of abandoned traditions, various efforts must be immediately undertaken by different parties to socialize the importance of traditional ceremonies in Indonesia (Agung, 2023). These efforts have inspired new ideas from cultural experts to preserve cultural heritage as a characteristic embedded in society's life cycle (Yudiana et al., 2023). In this context, the Tungguk Tembakau ceremony in Senden Village, Selo District, Boyolali, becomes one of the crucial traditions that must be documented and preserved as a real manifestation of local culture.

The Tungguk Tembakau ceremony is an annual tradition in Selo District, along with the Memetri Tuk Babon ritual, village cleansing ceremonies, and *sedekah gunung*. This traditional ceremony expresses gratitude for the tobacco harvest as well as prayers and hopes for future harvests (Adela et al., 2022). The implementation of the Tungguk Tembakau ceremony serves as a means to highlight the importance of environmental sustainability and smooth farming processes, reflecting the people's respect for and dependence on nature and its resources. This unique and iconic tradition was once practiced individually but has been collectively celebrated since 2016, making it an attraction for both domestic and international tourists.

The current phenomenon of technological and informational disruption allows for differing interpretations of cultural values embedded within local culture (Sarkowi et al., 2024). These changes may erode traditional understanding due to new interpretations passed down from generation to generation. This occurs because there is insufficient comprehensive documentation regarding the interpretations of values contained in these traditions, resulting in the gradual loss of symbolic meaning as time and social changes progress (Permadi et al., 2024).

Several previous studies have examined the Tungguk Tembakau Ceremony. The first study, conducted by Rakhmawati et al. (2024) analyzed this ceremony using Teun Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis to uncover Javanese cultural values and heritage. The findings show that the Tungguk Tembakau ceremony contains several sub-themes that generate different titles and meanings based on the macro, superstructure, and micro-structure of Van Dijk's model. The next study Lisdiana et al. (2022), focuses on efforts to preserve the Tungguk Tembakau ceremony carried out by the village government through budgeting policies and cultural organizations. These efforts include allocating funds for cultural activities through the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget, establishing organizations dedicated to cultural, artistic, and traditional affairs, and forming committees involving youth groups and local people for each annual ceremony. These policies aim to ensure that all cultural forms in Senden Village are maintained and preserved. Meanwhile, Hendro et al. (2021) examined efforts to maintain the tradition's existence through social media utilization.

Although previous studies have discussed preservation efforts, discourse, and policy, a critical gap remains. Earlier research has not specifically and deeply explored the cultural values and symbolic

meanings embedded within each element of the Tungguk Tembakau ceremony using a comprehensive approach. The absence of deep interpretation of symbolic meanings makes traditional knowledge vulnerable to erosion over generations.

Therefore, the novelty of this study is strongly emphasized. This study combines Ethnographic Study to uncover contextual cultural values and Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory to analyze the symbolic meanings behind the ritual and artifacts. This combination enables a more holistic and in-depth data exploration that has not been specifically undertaken in previous research.

Based on the urgency of preserving traditions and the identified gaps in studies, this research aims to comprehensively reveal and analyze two main dimensions in the Tungguk Tembakau traditional ceremony in Senden Village, Boyolali Regency, namely cultural values and symbolic meanings. To achieve in-depth analytical validity, this study operates two different but complementary theoretical frameworks. The first research object concerning cultural values is analyzed using James Spradley's ethnographic strategy, which focuses on discovering cultural themes through taxonomic and component analysis to understand the knowledge system and social behavior of the tobacco farming community. Meanwhile, the second research object related to symbolic meaning is dissected through Roland Barthes' semiotic approach. This approach is used to deconstruct artifacts and ritual processes through a two-stage system of signification, namely the denotative level to interpret the physical form of signs and the connotative level to reveal the myths and ideologies behind these symbols. With this clear separation of theoretical and methodological frameworks, the study is expected to provide a holistic picture of Tungguk Tembakau as a structured cultural phenomenon.

Practically, this study has significant implications. The results of the ethnographic and semiotic analyses are expected to serve as a comprehensive documentation basis and concrete reference for local governments, cultural experts, and local people in formulating preservation strategies, promoting cultural values, and developing tourism based on local culture.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach by integrating James Spradley's ethnographic strategy to reveal cultural values and Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis to dissect symbolic eating. Ethnography according to Spradley (2007), is the process of describing and interpreting a community with a primary focus on meaning, actions, and ways of life. Meanwhile, Barthes' semiotics is a discipline that studies sign systems and how humans assign meaning to objects (Kurniawan, 2001). This research was conducted in Senden Village, Selo Subdistrict, Boyolali Regency, which is geographically located at an altitude of 1,200-1,500 meters above sea level between Mount Merapi and Mount Merbabu. The research area map is presented in Figure 1.

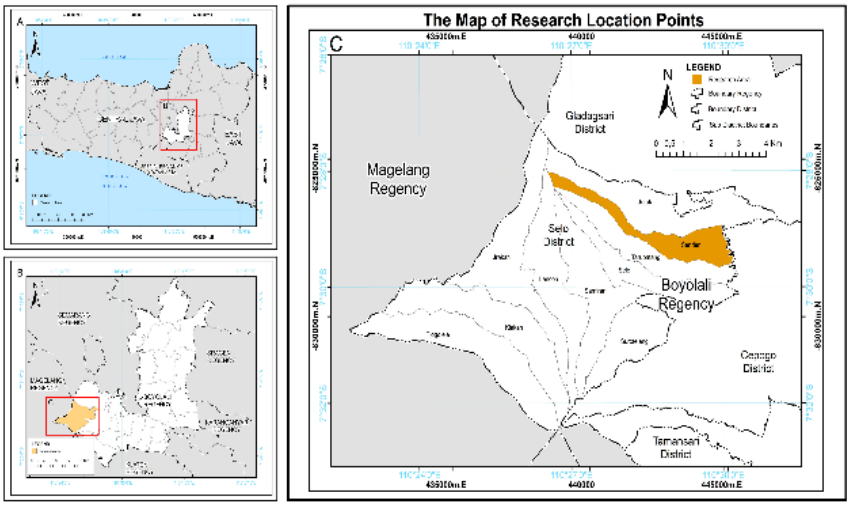

Fig. 1. Map of the Senden Village Area

The data in this study includes primary data sourced from ritual actions, ceremonial artifacts (such as gunungan and offerings), and informants' oral narratives, supported by secondary data in the form of photographs, videos, and village historical archives. The main data source is the Tungguk Tembakau traditional ceremony in Senden Village, Selo District, Boyolali Regency (see Fig. 1), with key informants

selected through purposive sampling, including cultural experts, traditional leaders, village officials, and tobacco farmers who have knowledge authority over the tradition.

Data collection techniques were carried out holistically through three methods: (1) moderate participant observation, in which researchers were directly involved in a series of ceremonies to record patterns of behavior and social interaction among the community; (2) in-depth ethnographic interviews to explore informants' interpretations of inherited values; and (3) documentation studies to reinforce visual analysis of ritual artifacts. To ensure data validity, researchers applied method triangulation by comparing observational data with interviews, as well as source triangulation by cross-checking information among various informants to ensure the credibility and validity of findings before further interpretation.

In accordance with the different analytical requirements for the two objects of study, data analysis techniques in this study were carried out through two systematic approaches in order to maintain methodological coherence. First, to analyze cultural values, the researcher used Spradley's ethnographic data analysis stages, which include: (a) domain analysis to identify broad categories in rituals; (b) taxonomic analysis to organize value domains into orientations of human relationships with God, nature, others, and time; (c) component analysis to find contrasts or specific characteristics between ritual elements; and (d) cultural theme analysis to formulate noble values that integrate all elements of tradition as a collective identity. Second, to dissect the symbolic meaning of ritual artifacts, Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis is used through a two-stage system of signification, namely the denotative level to describe the physical form of the sign objectively, and the connotative and mythical levels to reveal the sociocultural meaning, hopes, and ideological beliefs attached to the symbol. The integration of these two analytical procedures ensures that every aspect of the Tungguk Tembakau ceremony is examined in depth with accurate and transparent theoretical instruments.

Results and Discussion

The cultural Value of the Tungguk Tembakau Traditional Ceremony

1. Human's Relationship with God

This value reflects the belief that there is a higher power governing human life God. God serves as a central figure to whom individuals are spiritually bound to and upon whom they depend in their actions (Efendi et al., 2024). In the implementation of the Tungguk Tembakau traditional ceremony, the people of Senden Village place God at the center of their prayers, seeking blessings and expressing gratitude for the tobacco harvest. The prayer session during the ceremony is presented in Figure 2.

Fig. 2. Prayer Session

The spiritual meaning of this traditional ceremony is directly recognized by the locals. One of the farmers explained the main purpose of the ritual.

> "The Tungguk Tembakau ceremony is a celebration ritual for farmers, as an expression of gratitude as well as a means of seeking blessings." (Tradition *bearer*, 35 years old).

A solemn atmosphere engulfed the communal prayer session, which forms a part of the traditional ceremony. This ritual serves as a tangible expression of the vertical relationship between humans and God as the ultimate source of blessings. The prayers are offered as an expression of gratitude for the harvest and as a wish for a smooth and successful tobacco harvest in the following season.

2. Human's Relationship with Nature

The relationship between humans and nature is symbolized through offerings, as a form of returning or expressing gratitude for the corps that have been given (Rakhman et al., 2024). This value is vividly reflected throughout the entire procession of the traditional ceremony, particularly through the parade of *gunungan* (mountain shaped) offerings made of tobacco leaves and agricultural products. These symbolize the gratitude of the Senden Village locals for their abundant harvests. The *gunungan* represents human's relationship with nature during the ceremony is shown in Figure 3.

A B

Fig. 3. A Tobacco *Gunungan* and B Crops *Gunungan*

The meaning of human's relationship with nature is directly expressed by the villagers, in which the *gunungan* serves as a symbol of gratitude.

> 'The offerings in the form of gunungan made from agricultural products and tobacco represent our gratitude to the earth and nature that have provided us with abundance. We believe that if we respect nature, it will, in return, bless us with good harvests." (Cultural expert, 73 years old).

Indirectly, this ritual represents an acknowledgment that humans are deeply dependent on nature as the source of life. More than merely a celebration, the ceremony is a plea for continuous fertility and sustainable harvests. This clearly demonstrates that the farmers do not perceive nature as an object to be exploited but as an entity that must be respected.

3. Human's Relationship with Each Others

Human's relationship with each other in this traditional ceremony is characterized by social solidarity, which is expressed through communal rituals based on the blessings of nature (Woersok & Nanuru, 2024). This value is clearly manifested in the spirit of *gotong royong* (communal work) as locals collectively carry the *gunungan*. The togetherness of the locals during this procession is presented in Figure 4.

A B

Fig. 4. A and B The Community Worked Together to Carry the *Gunungan* Parade

This value is what forms the core of the *gunungan* parade procession, symbolizing the relationship between humans. The relationship is clearly reflected in the activity of carrying the *gunungan* together without the use of vehicles. Such collective action strongly demonstrates the locals' spirit of cooperation and solidarity.

This traditional ceremony serves as a medium for the locals to unite, celebrate, and reaffirm social bonds among locals. The success of the tobacco harvest is regarded as the result of collective hard work rather than an individual achievement. Thus, the entire procession emphasizes the importance of social solidarity in achieving shared prosperity. The transformation from an individual practice to a collective ritual signifies a shift toward reinforcing communal solidarity, as expressed in the following statement.

> "In the past, this tradition was carried out in each household individually. But now it has become an annual locals' tradition. That's why we make the gunungan as an offering, created and carried together." (Tradition bearer, 43 years old).

4. Human's Relationship with Time

This value is reflected in the spiritual pilgrimage ritual conducted at the *petilasan* (relic site) of Gunungsari. The place, considered sacred and believed to be an ancestral grave in Senden Village, serves as the first destination of the ceremonial procession. The journey represents an act of respect toward the ancestors. The locals believe that the blessings and prayers of their ancestors are essential to ensure the smooth execution of the ceremony and the success of agricultural activities in both the present and the future. The *petilasan* of Gunungsari, which manifests human's relationship with time, is presented in Figure 5.

A **B**

Fig. 5. A The Gunungsari *Petilasan* and B The Ritual of Placing Tobacco Leaves on the Graves of Syeh Kerto Muhammad

The spiritual significance of this journey was emphasized by the Head of Senden Village, who explained the role of the Gunungsari *Petilasan* as a bridge between the present and the past.

> "The cavalcade must visit the Gunungsari grave, which is the resting place of our ancestors a place where we ask for their prayers and blessings." (Public official, 60 years old)

This implicitly reflects a linear perception of time, in which the past, present, and future are interconnected and influence one another (Rusidi et al., 2025). Through this tradition, local culture is not only preserved but also passed down through generations, upholding noble values and safeguarding the cultural identity of the Senden Village residents.

After describing the cultural values embedded in the *Tungguk Tembakau* traditional ceremony in Senden Village, the following discussion focuses on the symbolic meanings of each ritual element. These meanings function as a language that reflects locals' spiritual beliefs, hopes, and views. This analysis reveals the messages behind key ceremonial objects such as the *gunungan*, offerings (*sesaji*), and pilgrimage processions. This shows that every action and object in the ceremony holds deep meaning that goes beyond simply preserving tradition.

Symbolic Meaning in the Implementation of the Traditional Ceremony

As stated by the cultural expert of Senden Village, the determination of the date for holding the Tungguk Tembakau traditional ceremony is based on the *Primbon Jawa* (Javanese calendar system). This view aligns with Harto (2021) who explains that the Javanese calculation system interprets the good and bad aspects of specific days, dates, months, years, seasons (*pranata mangsa*), and weeks (*wuku*) through symbols and characteristics. Furthermore, Arfianti et al. (2022), Sunarya et al. (2025), and Mufida & Wijayanti (2025) notes that *primbon* represents Javanese local culture that serves as a guide for daily life.

In Javanese tradition, choosing the right day is considered crucial, as it is believed to influence the success or failure outcome of an event. Based on this belief, the *juru kunci* (spiritual guardian) of the Gunungsari *Petilasan* uses the *Primbon Jawa* calculations to determine the auspicious day, particularly for conducting the traditional ceremonies and the symbolic tobacco leaf plucking procession.

The spiritual significance of the chosen day is calculated based on elements of the traditional Javanese calendar. For example, the detailed *Primbon Jawa* calculation for holding the ceremony on Wednesday, 13 August, 2025 is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Usage Details of the Javanese Primbon in Determining the Implementation of the Tungguk Tembakau Traditional Ceremony

Calendar Reference	***Calculation Details***
Date	Wednesday,13 Agustus 2025
Hijri Calendar	19 Safar 1447 H
Javanese Calendar	18 Sapar 1959 Dal
Weton (Javanese Birth Day)	Wednesday Pahing
Neptu (Numerical Value)	16
Wuku (Cycle Week)	Wayang

This Javanese *Primbon* calculation serves a crucial dual role. The *Weton* of Wednesday *Pahing* is chosen to determine the date for the entire series of the traditional ceremony. Meanwhile, the *Neptu* value of 16 derived from that *Weton* is specifically used to calculate the number of tobacco leaves to be symbolically plucked. This emphasizes that every ritual act is based on deep traditional calculations, believed to bring blessings and ensure a smooth tobacco harvest.

> "We believe that using the Javanese calculation system in the implementation of this traditional ceremony will contribute to the success of the event." (Cultural expert, 73 years old)

The Symbolic Meaning of the Traditional Ceremony Processions

The analysis of symbolic meaning in the Tungguk Tembakau ceremony was conducted by dissecting the sign system at each stage of the procession through the lens of Roland Barthes' semiotics.

Offerings Collection

The event begins with the procession of collecting *sesaji* (offerings), carried out by the locals at one of the residents' homes. Among these *sesaji (*offerings) is the *Tumpeng Agung* (a large cone-shaped rice dish), which serves as one of the main ceremonial offerings in the traditional ceremony. The *Tumpeng Agung* used in the ceremony is shown in Figure 6.

A **B**

Fig. 6. A and B Preparing Offerings at Residents' Homes

During the offering collection procession, denotatively, residents can be seen gathering traditional ceremonial offerings at a central point. However, connotatively, these artifacts represent the natural world being returned to the community as a symbol of prosperity. The myth that is built in this early stage is the belief that offerings collected collectively will attract positive energy from the collective subconscious of the community to welcome the sacred harvest season.

Cultural Parade *(Arak-arakan)*

The *kirab budaya* or cultural parade is one of the most anticipated highlights of the ceremony. During this procession, the locals of Senden Village work together to carry the *gunungan* and *sesaji* that have been

prepared before. The *gunungan* and *tumpeng sesaji* are paraded around the village, accompanied by traditional music and dance. The procession involves all representatives of the eleven hamlets (*dukuh*) of Senden Village. The parade route begins from the east of the *Petilasan* (sacred site) and ends at the *Petilasan* area itself. This symbolizes that the parade is a part of the spiritual pilgrimage ritual. The parade procession is shown in Figure 7.

A B

Fig. 7. A and B The Community Held a Parade *(Arak-arakan)* of *Gunungan*

Denotatively, the parade is a journey of residents carrying mountains to Petilasan Gunungsari. Connotatively, the act of carrying burdens together symbolizes the unity of the residents of Senden Village in maintaining social order. At the mythical level, this procession functions as a ritual to ward off evil or cleanse the village on a macrocosmic level, namely the mass movement along the village route is believed to be able to ward off negative entities that can threaten the fertility of tobacco crops.

> "This parade not only symbolizes our unity but also serves as a spiritual cleansing ritual to repel pests and avert misfortune." (Cultural expert, 73 years old)

Communal Prayer

The prayer procession is one of the most sacred core elements of this traditional ceremony. It is not merely a routine recitation of prayers, but a spiritual act that is deeply meaningful to the community. Figure 8 shows the communal prayer procession led by local religious leaders.

Fig. 8. Prayer

Denotatively, communal prayer involves the solemn recitation of hymns. Connotatively, the gesture of raising one's hands symbolizes the position of kawula (servants) who are submissive before Gusti (God). The associated myth suggests that a successful harvest is not merely the result of technical work, but rather a transcendental blessing from a divine power.

Incense Burning

The next core procession of this ceremony uses the *tamping sesaji* for a prayer ritual conducted in the courtyard of the Gunungsari *petilasan.* This procession is done by eleven spiritual guards (*juru kunci*) as a form of respect as well for seeking the blessings of nature, ancestors, and Dewi Sri with the hope of abundant tobacco harvest.

> "So, there are eleven hamlets in Senden Village. Every hamlet has a spiritual guard (juru kunci) or otherwise called the cultural practitioner. In this procession, all of them joined in the incense burning ritual in the courtyard of Gunungsari petilasan." (Public official, 54 years old)

The incense burning ritual conducted by the spiritual guards in the courtyard of the *petilasan* is shown in Figure 9.

A B

Fig. 9. A Collection of Offerings *Tamping Sesaji* and B Burning of *Kemenyan* on the Offering Tray by 11 Key Holders

Denotatively, the burning of incense by 11 key holders sitting cross-legged creates a quiet and sacred atmosphere in the courtyard of the tomb. Connotatively, the sitting position and use of fire symbolize human humility and spiritual "enlightenment." According to myth, the incense smoke acts as a bridge of communication with the goddess Sri and the spirits of ancestors.

Symbolic Tobacco Picking

The highlight of the entire series of events is the symbolic tobacco-picking ceremony. In this procession, symbolic picking is performed by the guardian of the Gunungsari spiritual guardian (*juru kunci*) along with local government officials. This act marks the beginning of the tobacco harvest season. The cultural guardian or traditional leader explains that the number of leaves picked is determined according to the Javanese Primbon calculation, symbolizing harmony between human actions and cosmic order. This symbolic act serves as a spiritual invocation for abundant and blessed harvests. The symbolic picking ceremony is shown in Figure 10.

A B

Fig. 10. A Symbolic Tobacco Picking by Local Officials and B Symbolic Pinning a Tobacco *Gunungan*

The symbolic picking of sixteen tobacco leaves takes place in a local farmer's field located not far from the Gunungsari sacred site.

> "The number of leaves picked symbolically must correspond to the neptu value of the day. If the neptu is sixteen, then sixteen tobacco leaves must be picked. This has been a tradition since the time of our ancestors, serving as a symbol of prayer for an abundant harvest." (Cultural expert, 73 years old)

The symbolic picking activity is denotatively the physical picking of tobacco leaves according to the Javanese Primbon neptu calculation. Connotatively, the number 16 symbolizes absolute obedience to the

cosmic order of the ancestors. The prevailing myth believes that the precision of this number determines the validity of the ritual. If the number of leaves is not correct, then the blessing from the supernatural realm is considered incomplete, which risks crop failure in the future.

The Fight for *Tumpeng* and *Gunungan*

The series of events concluded with a procession to compete for the *tumpeng* and *gunungan* that had been paraded earlier. The procession to compete for the *gunungan* is shown in Figure 11.

A B

Fig. 11. A The Locals' Fighting Over the Tobacco *Gunungan* and B The Locals' Fighting Over the Crops *Gunungan*

The community actively participates in competing for the mountain of offerings that are part of the traditional ceremony. This procession symbolizes the community's joy and enthusiasm in welcoming the harvest season. In addition, the community believes that the produce from the mountain will bring blessings.

> "Most of the locals keep or plant the items they managed to obtain whether tobacco leaves or vegetables in their gardens, as they believe these will bring blessings." (Traditional bearer, 35 years old)

Denotatively, it appears to be a physical interaction between masses fighting over food. However, connotatively, this action symbolizes the hard work and struggle that farmers must endure in order to obtain blessings. The symbolic meaning of this offering culminates in the myth of "ngalap berkah" (seeking blessings), in which objects from the gunungan, whether tobacco or vegetables, are believed to have magical powers or luck that can bring prosperity if replanted or stored at home. Through this analysis, it is evident that Tungguk Tembakau is not merely an agricultural celebration, but a symbolic language that integrates Javanese spirituality with the sociocultural reality of the farmers of Senden Village, creating a strong cultural fortress amid the tide of modernization.

Symbolic Meaning of Offerings in the Ceremony

Every offering (*sesaji*) present in the ceremony procession is made of natural products or harvests of Senden Village residents. The offerings consist of tobacco *gunungan*, crops *gunungan*, *tumpeng gunungan, purakan tumpeng,* and *tamping sesaji*. The description of each element used in the offerings is as the Figure 12.

A B

Fig. 12. A Residents Work Together to Carry Tobacco *Gunungan* and B Tobacco *Gunungan*

Denotatively, tobacco *gunungan* is a pile of tobacco leaves arranged to the shape of a cone or mountain. This arrangement is made with a structure made of bamboo, covered in the harvested tobacco leaves. Connotatively, tobacco *gunungan* is a symbol of fertility of Mount Merbabu's land that provides abundance crops. Therefore, tobacco is called "the green gold" due to its importance in becoming the main source of the locals' income. Locals believe in the myth of Dewi Sri, a Goddess of fertility in Javanese mythology, who protects the crops in Senden Village. Therefore, this *gunungan* is offered to pay respect and as a form of seeking blessings to Dewi Sri for abundant crops and successful harvest can be seen in Figure 14.

A B

Fig. 14. Residents Work Together to Carry of Crops *Gunungan* and B Crops *Gunungan*

Denotatively, the crops *gunungan* is a pile of various crops such as vegetables, fruits, and secondary crops arranged in the form of a cone or mountain. This arrangement is made of the residents' harvest. Connotatively, it is made as a representation of crop abundance in Senden Village. This *gunungan* is a symbol of prosperity and fertility of Mount Merbabu's land. According to the myth, the highest *gunungan* in the ceremony is mostly seen as the most sacred place. The crop offerings in the form of *gunungan* shows people's devotion and respect for nature. Since the resources for human life are taken from the mountain, the residents should also preserve and take care of the mountain and everything within it can be seen in Figure 15.

A B C 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Fig. 15. A & B The Great Tumpeng *(Tumpeng Agung)* and C The Feast *(Purakan):* 1 Boiled Egg, 2 Fried Noodles, 3 Kerupuk, 4 Crackers, 5 *Tempe Bacem*, 6 *Ayam Ingkung*, 7 *Urap*, 8 *Terik Tahu*

Denotatively, the great *tumpeng* is rice formed in the shape of a cone to mimic a mountain. This rice is presented with a variety of side dishes as a "*purakan*" or a feast in the ritual of fighting over *gunungan*, such as *ayam ingkung* (Javanese whole-chicken dish), boiled egg, *tempe bacem* (Javanese braised tempeh), *urap* (traditional salad dish), *terik tahu* (tofu with *terik* sauce), *kering* (glazed friend tempeh), and fried noodles. Connotatively, the tall cone shape symbolizes a mountain, a place for the ancestors to rest as per Javanese beliefs. This shape also symbolizes the vertical relationship between human and God. The top of the *gunungan* represents the great God Almighty. Meanwhile, the variety of side dishes represents the universe and everything within it. Senden Village residents believe a myth of how the Great *Tumpeng* is used as a media to avoid misfortune and bad luck. During the ritual, after the prayers are done, this *tumpeng* will be

divided and people will fight over them. Whoever gets a part of them is belived to receive luck and protection.

In the main procession of this traditional ceremony, eleven spiritual guardians (*juru kunci*) from eleven hamlets of Senden Village are present bearing a bamboo tray (*tamping*) filled with offerings. These offerings are dedicated for Dewi Sri, which will later be placed on the residents' fields. The goal of this ritual is to seek for the field guardian's blessings for a successful crop growth with abundant harvest. The image of *tamping sesaji* (offerings in bamboo trays) is shown in Figure 16.

Fig. 16. A & B *Tamping Sesaji* Offerings Carried by 11 Key Holders and C The Contents of the Offering Tray Include: 1 *Kinang*, 2 *Tebu Wulung*, 3 *Gecok Ayam*, 4 Mixed Flower Bath, 5 Plantain, 6 Cigarette, 7 Coconut Leaves

Denotatively, *tamping sesaji* is a tray filled with various offerings such as *kinang* (betel leaf with spices), black sugarcane, *gecok ayam* (shredded chicken dish), *bunga setaman* (mixed flowers bath), *pisang raja* (latundan banana), cigarettes, and young coconut leaf. Connotatively, everything on the *tamping* has symbolic meanings to reflect locals' philosophical values. *Kinang* symbolizes bond and respect. Black sugarcone symbolizes sacredness. *Gecok ayam* symbolizes the wish of prosperity and abundance. *Bunga setaman* symbolizes the fragrance of one's name, which means honoring one with a good reputation. *Pisang raja* symbolizes leadership. On the other hand, the cigarette is a representation of offering for the ancestors and the young coconut leaf represents hope for the successful *Tungguk Tembakau* ritual in the protection of God. According to the myth believed by Senden Village residents, *tamping sesaji* functions as a spiritual bridge or a communication medium between humans and spiritual beings including the ancestors' spirit, Gods, and other spiritual entities who are believed to protect the fields.

> "We present this tamping sesaji with offerings that the ancestors liked. Through this offering, we ask of their blessings for a smooth ritual and a success for the following harvest." (Cultural expert, 73 years old)

The findings of cultural values and symbolic meanings within the *Tungguk Tembakau* traditional ceremony in Senden Village, Boyolali Regency have shown the combination of local culture and Javanese view in conducting a traditional ceremony. The analysis of cultural value using Clyde Kluchohn's structure could specifically identify how the *Tungguk Tembakau* ceremony is not a mere annual tradition but also a form of acculturation between humans' relationship with God, nature, each other, and time.

The relationship between humans and God is shown through deep verbal communication including prayer ritual and collective expression of gratitude. Rituals like prayers and offerings become the manifestation of how dependent people are with the Divine powers for protection, prosperity, and abundant tobacco harvest. The relationship with nature shows that Senden Village residents do not think of Mount Merbabu as an object of exploitation. Quite the opposite, nature is seen as an entity whose sustainability must be protected and respected. Tobacco, which is called the "green gold" for being locals' main source of income, and their belief towards Dewi Sri show the deep existence of agricultural cosmology. *Gunungan* parade in this ceremony represents the concept of *manunggaling kawula gusti* (of one's soul to become one with God's) in the context of humans relationship with nature which is shown in the effort made by Senden Village residents to be in harmony with nature.

The *Tungguk Tembakau* ceremony is proven to be a social bonding event as shown in the parade procession. The *gunungan* parade carried by the residents without using any vehicle is a symbolic action that collectively represents people's identity built on *gotong royong* or a sense of togetherness. Therefore, within the modern context, this ceremony has an important role as a cultural fortress to preserve solidarity.

The pilgrim to Gunungsari *petilasan* reflects Senden people's views on how time, as a series of spiritual, past time, current time, and the future, is always connected to one another. This belief is supported by the

usage of *Primbon Jawa* or Javanese calendar to pick a proper day, showing how time has a spiritual dimension outside of the Common Era.

Every element in the *Tungguk Tembakau* ceremony has its own deep symbolic meaning, functioning as the non-verbal language to represent the beliefs of hope and the view held by Senden Village people. As a whole, this traditional ceremony is a living cultural artifact rich in findings. One of them is the myths which are closely tied to people's lives. In harmony with Takwim (2021) this shows that myths are human expressions of something mysterious that has become a part of local culture. Traditions and myths in this traditional ceremony have become a part of an intangible cultural heritage in local culturel (Anggraini, 2023).

This ritual is not a mere celebration to commemorate the beginning of tobacco harvest season but also deeply reflecting Senden people's view, rephrasing the relationship between humans and God, harmony with nature, solidarity between locals, and a form of respect for the ancestors. With this, the *Tungguk Tembakau* traditional ceremony has a vital role as an identity and guarantor of the cultural sustainability for Boyolali residents.

Conclusion

The Tungguk Tembakau traditional ceremony in Senden Village, Boyolali, has proven to be more than just an agrarian ceremony; it is a complex symbolic system that integrates spirituality with the social order of the farming community. An analysis based on Clyde Kluckhohn's cultural value orientation theory shows that this tradition encompasses four fundamental dimensions: a transcendental relationship with God through gratitude, ecological harmony with nature, collective solidarity among humans, and temporal continuity with time through respect for ancestors. Through the lens of Roland Barthes' semiotics, each ritual element, from the offering tray to the gunungan, functions as a non-verbal language that carries denotative, connotative, and mythical messages about hopes for prosperity and metaphysical protection. This study contributes academically to enriching the ethnographic and semiotic literature on local wisdom in the Merapi-Merbabu foothills. Practically, these findings imply the importance of documenting symbolic meanings as a basis for local government and cultural activists in formulating strategies for preserving intangible cultural heritage and developing community-based tourism. However, this study has limitations, particularly in its limited focus on one village, so that generalizing the findings to similar traditions in other areas of Boyolali needs to be done with caution. In addition, limited access to primary literature on the early history of the Gunungsari petilasan poses a challenge in exploring the historical lineage of the myth. Therefore, future studies are advised to use a comparative approach between regions or virtual ethnographic methods to capture the shift in the symbolic meaning of Tungguk Tembakau in the era of digitalization.

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