

Cultural Wisdom in the Legend of *Paya Terbang*: Exploring Oral Literature from North Aceh

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Abstrak. *Instilling literary values in children is crucial, especially during their formative years of growth and development. These values, when cultivated from an early age, have the potential to become deeply ingrained and guide children's behavior in the future. As a nation renowned for its eastern culture, Indonesia faces the challenge of preserving its cultural identity amidst the rapid currents of globalization. The increasing dominance of foreign cultures threatens the sustainability of local cultural heritage, including folklore and legends, which are rich in meaning and moral lessons. To ensure the resilience of local culture, efforts must be made to preserve and promote traditional narratives, such as the legend of Paya Terbang in North Aceh Regency. This study aims to identify and describe the values embedded in the legend of Paya Terbang. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, data were collected using listening and recording techniques, with the primary data source being the legend itself, obtained through interviews with informants. The findings reveal that the legend of Paya Terbang encapsulates religious, social, and moral values, which are relevant for cultural preservation and the transmission of ethical principles to future generations.*

Keywords: *values, legends, oral literature*

1. Introduction

Indonesian culture and traditions are very diverse. Folk legends passed down from generation to generation are a very valuable cultural heritage. In addition to its function of noble teaching values and providing entertainment to its listeners, folklore has become an important tool for introducing the richness of Indonesian culture to the world.

Folk legends are a reflection of the noble values prevailing in a society. The values of folk legends are passed down from one generation to the next. One of the famous folk legends in Indonesia is the legend of Sangkuriang. The young generation is the nation's next generation. If these values are instilled in children from childhood, they will stick with them strongly. Along with the development of increasingly modern times, this value is increasingly fading, especially among students. This is quite worrying. One of the efforts that can be made is to embed these values in the hearts of students through folklore (legends) that are close to their environment.

Folk stories or folk legends are an important part of oral literature and have a great influence on people's lives. spoken orally from mouth to mouth (oral literature) and passed down from generation to generation. According to Asriani (2021), "Legends are folklores that are considered to have happened. The characters are not gods, but ordinary people or certain objects such as rocks, animals, rivers, lakes, buildings, and and similar that have demigod abilities and are therefore considered magical and sacred. The characters are also packed with certain events related to events or incidents that have occurred in a certain place with a mixture of historical facts and myths".

The folk legend studied is the Paya Terbang folk legend in North Aceh Regency. The selection of this folk legend was based on the consideration that this legend is

believed to have good values to be taught to the younger generation. Currently, advances in digital technology are increasingly embedded in the lives of Indonesian people. There is great concern that this progress will change the values that apply in society, especially in Aceh. Given that Indonesia is a country known for its Eastern culture, it is crucial to cultivate the values contained in these legends so that they become lessons in everyday life.

Folk legends have many values that can be used to convey messages to other people and teach these values to the younger generation. In ancient times, parents often used folk legends to advise and educate their children. However, as time goes by, these folk legends are less developed. The current young generation looks unfamiliar and doesn't want to know about folk legends, especially local legends. They generally don't want to listen to their parents' stories anymore. This is due to the increasingly rapid development of technology, such as television, mobile phones, and the internet which are very easy to access.

Unlike ancient times, folk tales are passed down from parents to children by telling them when they sleep or relax. Undoubtedly, folk tales will leave memories and influence in their lives. This is because folk legends contain many moral teachings such as character, which are very relevant to everyday life. Myths, legends, and fairy tales are three categories of folklore. Legends are folk tales that are thought to have happened in the past. Legends are religious. Broadly speaking, legends can be classified into four types, namely (1) religious legends, (2) supernatural legends, (3) personal legends, and (4) place legends (local legends) (Asriani, 2021).

Legends are worldly (secular), usually legends are also characterized by the following characteristics: (a) the events that occur are usually portrayed by ordinary people, but sometimes the characters have extraordinary qualities and are often supported by supernatural beings; (b) the place where events occurred in the world as we know it today; (c) the time when the event occurred is not that long ago; and (d) is often seen as collective history (folk history) or is generally believed to be 'people's history'.

Another thing that is most basic in legends is the existence of physical evidence that can be observed with the naked eye, especially concerning local legends. Usually, this evidence is related to nature, such as rocks, beaches, villages, rice fields, forests, oceans, and so on. The existence of this physical evidence further strengthens the local community's belief that the legend is a historical event. However, this history has often experienced deviations because it developed in oral tradition (Asriani, 2023). Usually, the values contained in a literary work (legend) are as follows:

a. Moral Values

Nurgiyantoro (2013) states that morals in stories are usually described as practical moral lessons that readers learn after reading the story. So that every human being can become a unique and dignified individual in this world, the values of moral education must be instilled in every human's good behavior following religious, legal, and societal norms.

b. Religious Values

The word "religion" refers to the bonds or rules and obligations that must be obeyed and carried out by its adherents. This statement says that one way humans feel happy is by accepting God's bond. However, religion is a relationship between humans and God that provides calm and happiness.

c. Social Values

Social values regulate norms, and human relationships as social creatures and groups, and determine how a person behaves and thinks in society. Everyone wants something good, hoped for, and valuable so that it can differentiate good from bad, and become a reference for society's actions. These social values guide human actions. This value can be in the form of rewards, punishments, praise, etc.

d. Culture Values

Cultural values (Koentjaraningrat, 2009) are one of the most abstract and broad cultural value systems and are the most abstract and broad layer of custom. Cultural values are also considered very important and are always used as a guideline for a society. Cultural values consist of five relationship categories: values in human relationships with nature, values in human relationships with society, values in human relationships with other people and fellow humans, and values in human relationships with themselves. Alone.

e. Aesthetic Values

Aesthetics can be defined as beauty or everything beautiful. The main aim of creating literary works is to consider aesthetic value because literature is an aesthetic object that can provide an aesthetic experience to its readers (Nurgiyantoro, 2013).

2. Methods

This research aims to describe the values contained in the Paya Terbang legend in North Aceh Regency. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method. Qualitative descriptive is a method used to analyze and describe data to describe the state of the object under study which is the center of research attention. According to Sugiyono (2017), "Qualitative research is a research method used to examine the conditions of natural objects, and the researcher himself is the key instrument". Data collection tools in this research are interviews, documentation, observation, and literature study. The data that has been collected is then processed and analyzed using the following steps:

- a. Data reduction: Data reduction is defined as a selection process, focusing attention on simplification, abstraction, and rough transformation of data that emerged from written notes in the field.
- b. Data presentation: Presentation of data by compiling the information that has been collected and then describing the data.
- c. Concluding/verification

In qualitative research, the data analysis process is carried out after the researcher collects data in the field and leaves the field. After all the necessary data was collected, the researcher carried out steps to analyze the data. The efforts made by researchers are as follows: (1) read the text of the Paya Terbang legend in Acehnese; (2) translated the initial data in Acehnese into Indonesian; (3) analyzed the values contained in the legend of Paya Terbang based on theory and expert opinion; (4) compile research results obtained in the field; and (5) concluded the overall research results.

3. Results and Discussion

Paya Terbang is one of the villages in Samudera District, Aceh Utara Regency. This legend is still correlated with the legend of *Raja Bakoy*. Once upon a time, there was a king named Raja Bakoy. King Bakoy had a daughter. The king's wife was seriously ill. Then the king's wife (empress) asked the king to marry a woman who could wear the ring

he gave. Until one day the king's consort died. Not long after the empress died, the king began looking for a new wife who could wear the ring that had been willed by his empress. King Bakoy is looking for a woman who can wear the ring his late wife gave him. King Bakoy looked everywhere for a woman who could wear the ring. But not a single woman could wear the ring. Finally, the king returned to the palace empty-handed and called his beloved daughter to wear the ring. It turns out that the ring fits perfectly on her daughter's ring finger. But his daughter couldn't become the king's consort. After that, the king went to meet all the scholars around his kingdom so that he could marry his biological child. Meanwhile, customs and religion do not allow him to marry his biological daughter. Some of the clerics had been killed by the king because they opposed his wishes to marry his daughter. Finally, the king heard the news that there was a cleric in Simpang Paya Itek, then the king took his daughter and told the cleric that he had been given a will by the late empress to marry a woman who could wear the ring he had given her. Only his biological daughter can wear the ring. Then the cleric asked the king, have you ever asked other clerics? The king answered that he did, but he couldn't. Then the Paya Terbang cleric said, OK, come back here tomorrow with the ring and other necessities. Then King Bakoy returned to the palace. In the evening, after evening prayers, Teungku Paya Flying prayed to Allah so that he would not be wrong before Allah, thanks to Allah's grace the land in the Islamic boarding school flew. Where it flew is still a mystery. However, until now there is a *Paya Terbang* village in Samudera District in Aceh Utara Regency.

Values in the Legend of *Paya Terbang*

a. Religious Values

The religious value in the Paya Terbang legend can be seen when Teungku Paya Terbang begs Allah to prevent him from doing bad things. So in an instant, the Islamic boarding school flew away. The following is an excerpt from the text: *"In the evening, after evening prayers, Teungku Paya Flying prayed to Allah so that he would not be wrong before Allah, thanks to Allah's grace the land in the Islamic boarding school flew. Where it flew is still a mystery"*.

b. Social Values

Social value is also found in this legend. This value was seen when the king looked for a new queen consort. As soon as the empress died, the king immediately carried out the queen's mandate to find another wife. Fragments of the text can be seen based on the following quotation: *"Not long after the empress died, the king began looking for a new wife who could wear the ring that had been willed by his empress. King Bakoy is looking for a woman who can wear the ring his late wife gave him. King Bakoy looked everywhere for a woman who could wear the ring. But not a single woman could wear the ring"*.

c. Moral Values

Moral values are also depicted in this legend. This was clearly illustrated when the king carried out his wife's mandate to marry someone who could wear the ring he gave. However, none of them were suitable, except for his biological daughter. The king also intended to marry his daughter. So the king looked for all kinds of ways. This clearly shows that the king lacked morals because he wanted to violate religious law. The following is an excerpt from the text: *"After that, the king went to meet all the scholars around his kingdom so that he could marry his biological child. Meanwhile, customs and religion do not allow him to marry his biological daughter. Some of the clerics had been killed by the king because they opposed his wishes to marry his daughter"*.

Based on the values found in the legend of the Paya Terbang people, namely religious values, social values, and moral values. First, religious values concern humans' relationship with the Creator. Second, social values concern human relationships with other humans. Third, moral values concern human relationships with the surrounding environment. If the religious, social, and moral values of the Acehese people are reflected in folk legends, if they are connected to today's society, there will certainly be a shift in values. Values that remain constant and do not change are religious. For the people of Aceh, the law that comes from God is non-negotiable because it is absolute even though he is a king.

Meanwhile, based on the story above, it is clear that living in this world we cannot live alone. Humans need other people. This was seen when King Bakoy died for his queen. Without waiting long, the king immediately looked for a successor. Because of its nature, humans cannot live without the help of others. Moral values are also found in the legend of Paya Terbang. This was seen when the king was given a mandate by his late wife before the empress died. The king could marry only a woman who could wear the ring given by the empress. This king is very trustworthy. He went there and danced according to the empress's wishes. Because of this trust, the king finally wanted to violate religious rules, namely wanting to marry his daughter. However, actions or mandates do not have to be followed if they conflict with religious values.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research results above, it can be concluded that the values contained in the *Paya Terbang* legend are values such as religious, social, and moral. The legendary story of *Paya Terbang* instructs readers that it is okay to trust as long as you don't violate God's law as King Bakoy did. Because the act of wanting to marry his daughter is an act that is not good both in society and in sharia law. To maintain the cultural heritage that has been passed down by our ancestors, it is very important to preserve these folk stories (legends). By preserving folk stories (legends), we can maintain our own cultural identity, and folk stories can also become a cultural tourist attraction that attracts tourists from within and outside the country.

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