

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Javanese people is an ethnic in Indonesia that still respects the folk culture's tradition inherited by their ancestors. Each tradition implemented by the Javanese people has a purpose to be achieved well by taking into account the experiences received from birth, marriage, and until death. Because the Javanese people consider that the folk culture's traditions are sacred because they originate from a certain intention and purpose, the form and procedures of a ceremony should be not be practiced carelessly, but instead calculated carefully, where this includes the careful calculation of the special day of a certain Javanese ceremony.

According to Bayuadhy "the count of days in Javanese calendar" is making use of the five days, commonly called the *Pasaran* days of *Legi*, *Pahing*, *Pon*, *Wage*, and *Kliwon*" (2015, p. 29). All days are good, but according to the Javanese belief, certain days determine the good or bad moments of life. For that reason, the Javanese people has its own count or *Petungan* related to the *Pasaran* day. In calculating the day, the Javanese people combine the *Pasaran* day with the normal day (Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday). The calculation of the normal day and *Pasaran* day becomes what the Javanese refer to the *Neptu*.

Each *Neptu* day has a different value and characteristic, which is believed to affect the fate of and character of a person (Kistanto, 2016, p. 292). The knowledge regarding the calculation of the day or *Petungan* is important, because most of the Javanese people assume that every human destiny depends on

Petungan (Bayuadhy, 2015, p. 110). *Petungan dina* is usually conducted for activities which will be implemented to run things in life more smoothly.

The calculation of the day or *Petungan dina* by using *neptu* is believed to be a representation of a moment or event of life that has been determined by God. By doing the calculation of the day, the Javanese people show their attempt to adjust their deed with the destiny that has been made by God. This means that the *neptu* day for the Javanese people is a sacred day, therefore, there is a warning to respect the *neptu* by following what is considered right by tradition. The *neptu* for an event called *slametan* for the first time in someone's life is also special because for Javanese people this commemoration is equated with the first special day for a baby, commonly called *Selapanan*, which comes from the derivative meaning of the word *Selapan*, which is 35 days. In the book *050 Fakta Jawa*, it is stated that *neptu* deals with the 5 days of the Javanese *pasaran*, which are *Legi, Pahing, Pon, Wage, and Kliwon* (Dukut et al, 2018, p. 02)

According to Austiyana "the *slametan selapanan* is aimed to announce that a single woman has become a mother and asks for acceptance of her status into her new society" (2004, p. 49). Usually, the older Javanese generation would prepare a certain procession to organize the *slametan selapanan* for the baby of the new mother. As a material for research, therefore, the first traditional ceremony experienced by the Javanese people is interesting to write about.

The writer is an Indonesian who comes from a Javanese family. The writer's family who lives in Semarang practices Javanese tradition. Although her family has adhered to the Catholic religion, they still celebrate some important Javanese events and traditions, such as the *selapanan* ceremony.

Based on the belief the Javanese people, who implemented the *Selapanan* ceremony, the baby's life will be safe from obstacles because it has the blessings by God and the community. *Selapanan* is important not only for the mother and the baby, but also for the safeguard of all members of the family. For convenience sampling, the location of the research is in the writer's local area, which is in RW 02 of Kinibalu, Semarang. Through a snowball sampling of the 30 households in RW 02, the writer manages to have some key informants for her research data.

1.2. FIELD OF THE STUDY

The field of the study is folklore, which attends to the importance of maintaining the preservation of a certain area's folk culture.

1.3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is the procession of Javanese people's *selapanan* ceremony in Kinibalu, RW 02, Semarang.

1.4. PROBLEM FORMULATION

The research questions for this research is formulated as follows:

1. What is the background of *Selapanan* tradition based on the Javanese *Petungan*?
2. What are the processions for *selapanan* ceremony practiced in Kinibalu, RW 02, Semarang?

1.5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives are as follows:

1. To describe the background of the Javanese *petungan* as a basis for holding the *selapanan* ceremony.
3. To identify the processions for the *selapanan* ceremony practiced in Kinibalu, RW 02, Semarang.

1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The results of this study are expected to provide information on *selapanan* tradition, which based itself on *Petungan* to choose the appropriate day of holding the ceremony. This study is particularly significant for students enrolled in the Introduction to Folklore classroom, as it gives an example of how to carry out a research on the folk culture of the Javanese *selapanan*. The findings would become a significant contribution for the improved knowledge of *selapanan* ceremony in Java.

1.7. DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.7.1. Javanese

“The Javanese are Indonesia's largest ethnic group and the world's third-largest Muslim ethnic group, following Arabs and Bengalis, *wong Djawa* or *tijang Djawi* are the names that the Javanese use to refer to themselves.”

(Encyclopedia, 1996)

1.7.2 Slametan

Kistanto says that “*Slametan* is the Javanese version of what is perhaps the world’s most common religious ritual, the communal feast, and, as almost everywhere, it symbolizes the mystic and social unity of those participating in it.” (2016, p. 292).

1.7.3 Javanese Calendar

A Javanese calendar is the same as any other calendar, which indicates the years, months, dates, days of a certain period of time. In Javanese calendar besides the seven days (Sunday to Saturday), there are the 5 *Pasaran* days of *Kliwon, Legi, Pahing, Pon* and *Wage* (Negoro, 1999).

1.7.4 RT/RW

RT/RW are the lowest community strata in Indonesia’s government. *RW* or *Rukun Warga* is group of citizens made up of a number of *RT* or *Rukun Tetangga*. In one *RW* there are usually 7-15 *RTs*. Each *RT* consist of 18-30 household.

