

## CHAPTER IV

### DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the researcher tries to answer the research questions, namely, the kinds of offering and their symbolic meanings. The main source of information comes from interviews and observation on the *slametan* ritual performed by Supangat. He works as a mechanic and lives in Sedang Guwo Selatan. The *slametan* ritual was done on December 15, 2018 in Sendang Guwo Selatan Rt 05 Rw 10, Semarang. The ritual held in Sendang Guwo in the eastern part of Semarang. The ritual began at 6 o'clock in the morning.

However, before writing about the kinds of offerings and their meaning, it is necessary to give a brief information on the process of *slametan*. Below, the researcher describes the process of the *slametan*. The researcher realizes that the process of the *slametan* is not part of the researcher's study but the researcher feels that it is necessary to put the discussion of *sesajen* later on in the broader frame of *slametan*. The main process of *sesajen* is as follow:

#### 1. Gathering people

The first process of *slametan* is to gather people to attend it. People who were invited to the *slametan* ritual were family members, neighbors, friends, and the builders.

## 2. Opening *Slametan*

*Slametan* ritual began with the owner of the new house (Mr. Supangat) asking the leader of *slametan* ritual to start. The leader of the *slametan* ritual was a *Kyai*. His name is Mr. Subagyo. The *kyai* is a person who is considered as having the wisdom of an elder. The ritual will not begin before the leader comes. After the leader came and the other participants were ready, the owner of a new house asking the leader to start *slametan* ritual for building a new house. The offerings were already placed in the center of the people who were sitting in circle.

## 3. Opening prayer

The *kyai* started the ritual with a prayer asking God to give safety to the owner of the new house. The prayer was delivered in Javanese language. While the *kyai* was praying, other participants were silent.

## 4. Praying together

The *kyai*'s prayer was continued by praying together. The leader asked the participant to pray *Al-fatihah* (a prayer in Islam) together. The point of the prayer was asking salvation from God. All *slametan*'s participants said a prayer in Moslem's way.

## 5. Placing the offerings

After all the prayer was done, the owner of a new house started to dismantle *ingkung* (roasted rooster) into some pieces. The meat then was put

on *bancaan*, the food alms to be eaten together. The one who places the offerings must be the owner of a new house who is helped by the builder. The owner of a new house hoped the offerings can provide safety to his life. After all the prayers, the owner started to put some *sesajen* on the rooftop assisted by friends and neighbors and some other *sesajen* were buried in center of the new house.

The steps above more or less are done by people who are holding *slametan* ritual for building a new house. As always, a person holding *slametan* provides *sesajen* or offerings as a main requirement of this ritual. The *sesajen*, the offerings, will presented in the next section, while their meanings are explained afterwards.

#### 4.1 The *Sesajen* or The Offerings

Based on my observation, there are fifteen kind of the offerings used in *slametan* ritual for building a new house. The offerings are divided into three: the offerings that will be buried in the center of a new house, the offerings were placed on the top of a new house, and the offerings shared to the participants of *slametan* ritual. Buried offerings are: jug, rice, three variants of flower, and egg. The offerings placed on the top of a new building are a bunch banana, a bundle of paddy, reeds, *desmodium pulchellum*, national flag, scarf, breadnut leaf, sugar cane, a pair of coconut, and young coconut leaves. The offerings shared to the participants of *slametan* ritual is *ingkung* (roasted rooster). Mr. Po



offerings provided. As shown by the study by Sari (2014), a gold nail is provided by those who can afford it.

The same offerings are *gedang rojo* (*musa sapientum*), *tebu* (*sugar cane*), and *janur* (young coconut leaves). Then, there are several similar offerings, not exactly the same but basically the same offerings. They are *klopo sak tangkep* (a pair of coconuts), *selendang* (long scarf), *kendi* (jug), and rice. Other offerings are totally different. They are *alang-alang* (reeds), *tanduran opo-opo*, *godong kluwih* (breadnut leaves), golden nail and egg. There is a similar offering but it is put in different place. The offering is rice. In Sari's study (2014), a cup of rice is placed on the top of the building, while in the researcher's study, the rice is buried in the ground. The writer also found out that the same offerings bear different symbolic meaning. For example, sugar cane, banana, national flag, coconut, paddy, and roasted rooster. The writer will explain their different meaning in the next section.

#### **4.2 Symbolic Meanings of *Sesajen*, the Offerings**

In this part, the researcher explains the meaning of each *sesajen* provided by Mr. Supangat's family. Similar to the discussions on the kinds of *sesajen*, the offerings, in 4.1., in this part the researcher also compares his informants' explanation of the *sesajen*'s meaning with Putri's and Frida's explanations.

#### 4.2.1 *Gedang Rojo (musa sapientum/lit. King Banana)*

Based on the observation, Mr. Supangat used *musa sapientum* or pisang raja in Indonesian language as the *sesajen*. *Pisang* is banana while *rojo* literally means king. During the interview, the informant (Mr. Po) mentioned that banana is the main part of the offerings used in the *slametan* ritual for building a new house. Banana has many variants, but according to Mr. Po there is no special type of banana required in the ritual. Mr. Po said that every banana has the same meaning in the *slametan* ritual for building a new house. It depends on the owner of the house. The owner of the house is free to choose the banana.



**Figure 2** A bunch of *gedang rojo (musa sapientum)*

*“Gedang kuwi maknane pepadang. Dadi supoyo sing nduwe omah di paring pepadang ing urip. Sak tundun kuwi maknane rejeki ne akeh lan bertumpuk-tumpuk. Kuwi maknane gedang.”* [Banana means enlightenment. Hopefully, the owner of a new house gains enlightenment in his life. A bunch means

fortune. Hopefully, the owner gains a bunch of fortunes. That's the meaning of banana] (Mr. Po, interviewed on December 14<sup>th</sup> 2018)

Based on the interview, the researcher concludes that by using banana the owner of a new house expects to get a bright life in the future. Banana should be a bunch to guarantee a lot of fortunes.

The previous research also used banana as part of the offerings. Putri (2015) and Sari (2014) found that banana used in *slametan* ritual for building a new house should be *gedang rojo (musa sapientum)*. The symbolic meaning of *gedang rojo* is the fulfillment of expectation of prayer (Sari, 2014). Based on her informant's statement, Sari concluded that by using *gedang rojo*, the owner of a new house hopes to get what they want in life.

#### **4.2.2 Tebu (sugar cane)**

*Slametan* ritual for building Mr. Supangat's new house used sugar cane as part of the offerings. Mr. Po, the informant, mentioned that there are two types of sugar cane, they are *tebu wulung* (yellow sugar cane) and *tebu ireng* (black sugar cane). According to Mr. Po, the owner of a new house is free to choose which one that will be part of the offerings. Sugar cane will be placed on the top of the middle pillar of a new house.



**Figure 3 Tebu (Sugar Cane)**

Sugar cane has a symbolic meaning. Mr. Po and Mr. Hartono have the same explanation about sugar cane.

“*Nah nek tebu kuwi maknane antebing kalbu nang. Kuwi maknane tebu neng acara slametan.*” [On the sugar cane, it means strong will, kid. That is the meaning of sugarcane in the *slametan* ritual] (Mr. Hartono, interviewed on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2018). Based on the explanation by Mr. Hartono, the researcher found that in building a new house the owner must have strong will and must not have doubt in reaching his objective.

Previous researchers also mentioned sugar cane as part of the offerings. There are two different explanations between two researchers (Putri and Sari). According to Putri (2015), her informant explains that sugar cane has a sweet taste so that it symbolizes the happiness and joy in life. Meanwhile Sari (2014) has a different explanation. She writes that sugar cane symbolizes safety. Sugar cane’s leaves which are willowy are seen as a guardian from all natural disaster.

Putting sugar cane as an offering contains the hope of the owner of a new house for safety in life.

#### **4.2.3 *Janur* (young coconut leaves)**

Based on the observation, the researcher found *janur*, young coconut leaves in the ritual. A sugar cane is tied with young coconut leaves.



**Figure 4 *Janur* (Young Coconut Leaves)**

With regard to sugar cane, Mr. Po explains that some Javanese ritual used young coconut leaves. It has the same meaning in other rituals. By young coconut leaves, the owner of a new house hopes that the family will get happiness in life because the color yellow means happiness. Previous research done by Putri (2015) also points out the same meaning.

#### **4.2.4 *Klopo sak tangkep* (a pair of coconuts)**

Mr. Supangat as the owner of a new house used a pair of coconut as the offering. A pair of coconut was hung on the top of the house with the other offerings. There are some variants of coconut in Java, but Mr. Po, the informant,

said that the owner of the house is free to choose the variant of coconut to use in the ritual. The point is, Mr. Po stated, the coconut should be in pair.



**Figure 5 Klopo sak tangkep (a pair of coconuts)**

*“Ono meneh sesajen e kuwi klopo sak tangkep, klopo kuwi arane cengkir. Maknane cengkir kuwi kenceng ing pikir. Soale bangun omah kan yo kudu nganggo dipikir. Cengkir loro kuwi ibarat sak pasang jodoh. Bapak ibuk ngencengke piker ben sak tujuan neng urip”*. [There is another *sesajen*, a pair of coconuts, the coconut is the young one called *cengkir*. The meaning of *cengkir* is *kenceng* (firm) in *pikir* (mind). Because building a new house needs thinking. A pair of coconut means a couple. The husband and the wife must both have firm mind to reach the purpose of their lives.] (Mr. Po, interviewed on December 14<sup>th</sup> 2018).

From the explanation above, the researcher concludes that the meaning of a pair of coconuts is the hope from the owner of the house to be able to achieve the purpose of their lives by putting their minds together as a family. Mr. Po also

added that by putting their minds together, it is hoped that there is no quarrel in the family. In addition, the meaning of a pair of coconut can also be asking for peace. A pair of coconut represents the idea that the family who live in a new house has one purpose in life.

Two previous researchers also mention coconut as part of the offerings in their reports. Based on Putri (2015), *slametan* ritual for building a new house in Boyolali uses young coconut that has yellow color. She explains that yellow color symbolizes happiness so that by using young coconut the owner and his family who live in the new house will gain happiness. A bit different finding is presented by Sari (2014) who found that old coconut is used in *slametan* ritual for building a new house in Sidoarjo. Sari writes that old coconut has symbolic meaning of prosperity for the family who live in the new house.

#### **4.2.5 National flag**

Based on the observation, Mr. Supangat's family used the national flag as part of the offerings. The national flag was tied in one of the upper corner.



**Figure 6 National flag**

The meaning of national flag is commonly associated with nationalism. However, in this ritual the national flag has a bit different meaning. It is acknowledged that Indonesian flag consists of two colors: red and white. Mr. Po defined the color red as bravery. He said that bravery means dare to build a new house and face all the consequences that may come. As on the color white, Mr. Po stated that white color represents virtue for the owner of a new house. It is hoped that the two colors in the national flag will bring goodness for the owner of the new house.

Indonesia national flag is also found in *slametan* ceremony in Sidoarjo studied by Sari (2014). She explained that the symbolic meaning of the national flag is that the owner of the new house hopes the builders can finish building the house quickly.

#### 4.2.6 *Selendang* (long scarf)

Javanese people call a piece of scarf like a long scarf as *selendang*. Based on the observation a *selendang* will be tied on the center top of a new house. Mr. Po informed that the color of the *selendang* is free: there is no rule what color should the *selendang* have. The main point is the *selendang* must be tied on the center top of a new house.



**Figure 7** *Selendang* (long scarf)

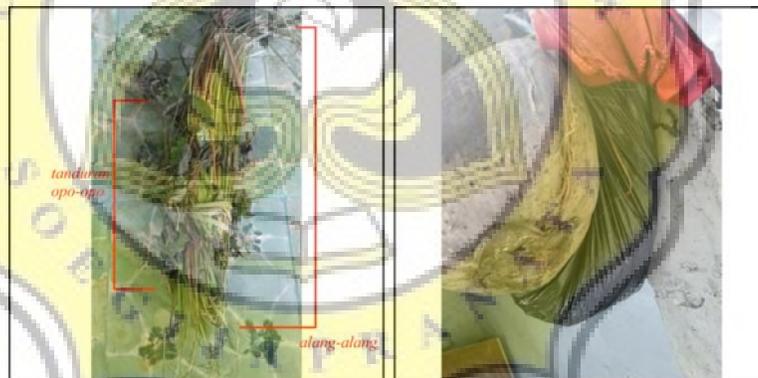
Mr. Po explained that *selendang* symbolizes a bond between one person to another person. That is the reason the *selendang* must be tied on the top of the new house, which is to keep the family relation in harmony. Furthermore, Mr. Po mentioned other meaning *selendang*, which is to ask for the safety of the grandchildren.

Although *selendang* cannot be found in two other researchers (Putri, 2014: Sari, 2015), similar items are found. In Sidoarjo, Sari mentioned *kain kafan* (white cloth made of cotton) with Islam prayer inscription in it. Sari said

that the white cloth inscribed with Islam prayer symbolizes the hope of the new house' owner to get protection from God. Meanwhile, in Boyolali, *slametan* for building a new house used *jarik* (Javanese garments). Putri explained that *jarik* contains the hope that the owner of the new house could save (money) for the grandchildren.

#### 4.2.7 *Alang-alang* and *tanduran opo-opo* (reeds and *desmodium pulchellum*)

Based on the observation, Mr. Supangat used *alang-alang* (reeds) and *tanduran opo-opo* (*desmodium pulchellum*) tied up into one bunch. These plants will be placed on the top of the new house.



**Figure 8** *Alang-alang* and *tanduran opo-opo* wrapped in plastic

*Ono meneh godong alang-alang karo tanduran opo-opo. Kuwi mengko di deleh neng nduwur maknane kanggo sesuwunan. Alang-alang iku ben orak ono alangan pas bangun omah lan pas omah wes dadi, makane godng alang-alang mesti gatuke karo tanduran opo-opo kuwi maknane ben ora ono alangan opo-*

*opo*. [Other offerings are reeds and *desmodium pulchellum*. They will be placed on the top as a wish. By putting reeds, it is wished that there will be no trouble while building the new house and even after the new house is ready. The meaning of reeds matches with the meaning of *desmodium pulchellum* which contains a wish to evade trouble] (Mr. Po, interviewed on December 14<sup>th</sup> 2018)

Based on Mr. Po's statements, the researcher inferred that the aim of *alang-alang* and *tanduran opo-opo* is to ask for protection. The owner of the new house hopes to be kept away from any troubles that might come whenever they are.

#### **4.2.8 Godong Kluwih (breadnut leaf)**

Breadnut leaf or what Javanese people name *godong kluwih* is part of the offerings. Based on the observation, the researcher found that *godong kluwih* is placed on the top of the new house together with *alang-alang* and *tanduran opo-opo*.



**Figure 9 Godong kluwih (breadnut leaf)**

*Terus alang-alang karo tanduran opo-opo kuwi mau di blebet karo godong kluwih. Maknane godong kluwih kuwi supoyo sing nduwe omah di paring kaluwihan ing sandang, pangan, papan.*

[And then reeds and the *desmodium pulchellum* are wrapped in breadnut leaf. The reason for using breadnut leaf is that the owner of the new house is expected to get more fortune in terms of clothes, food, and house] (Mr. Po, interviewed on December 14<sup>th</sup> 2018)

Based on the interview, breadnut leaf contains the wish to get more fortune. The owner of a new house hopes by offering breadnut leaf; the family gets more in fortune.

#### **4.2.9 A bundle of *pari* (rice plant)**

According to the observation in *slametan* ritual represented by Mr. Supangat's family, a bundle of paddy is part of the offerings. The bundle is placed on the top of the new house.



**Figure 10 A bundle of *pari* (rice)**

*Maknane pari ki yo ben tentrem, ayem keluargane. Di paringi slamet awal tekan akhir soale pari kuwi sumbering kekuatan, keslametan lan kesehatan.*

[The meaning of rice is that the family can get comfort and security. Getting safety from beginning to the end because rice is source of power, safety, and health] (Mr. Po, interviewed on December 14<sup>th</sup> 2018)

In short, the explanation shows that rice in the *slametan* ritual is a symbol of the owner's request for the safety of his family so that the family can be comfortable and secured.

In the researches done by Sari (2014) and Putri (2015), they also found a bundle of rice plant. However, the bundle of rice is interpreted differently. Putri (2015) explained that a bundle of rice plant in Boyolali symbolizes the strength of life. Sari (2014) explained that a bundle of rice plant in Sidoarjo symbolizes a gratitude toward of the owner's hard work so that he could make a good house.

#### 4.2.10 Kendi (jug)



**Figure 11 Kendi (jug)**

Based on the observation, the owner of the new house put jugs among the offerings. Inside the jugs are *kembang setaman* (three variants of flower), rice, and egg. They are buried in the center of a new house. The first item is flower which is called *kembang setaman*. *Kembang* literally means flower while *setaman* means various. It is called *kembang setaman* because the flower consists of three variants: white rose, red rose, and jasmine.



**Figure 12 *Kembang setaman* (three variants of flower)**

*Kembang setaman kuwi mengko katut dikubur neng jero kendi kanggo tolak balak, di pendem pas neng tengah-tengah omah. Maksute kembang setaman kuwi yo kanggo Ibu Pertiwi ben diayomi.* [The three variants of flower will be buried along with the jug in the center of the house to cast-off bad luck. The three variants of flower are meant to ask for Mother Earth's protection] (Mr. Po, interviewed on December 14<sup>th</sup> 2018)

From the explanation, the researcher found that *the* flowers contain the hope from the owner of the new house to get protection from the Mother Earth: that the house will be kept away from disaster.

Putri (2015) also found three types of flower in the offerings. She explained that the three variants of flower are interpreted based on the smell. The three variants of flower have good smell. She said that the owner of the new house hopes that the good smell in the flower can also bring a good vibe to the neighborhood.



**Figure 13 Egg**

The second item put in the jug is egg. Egg in the *slametan* ritual is the symbol of family. According to the informants, the egg contains the hope that the owner of the new house has more concern on the family: to keep the family strong.



**Figure 14 Rice**

Finally, the third item put in the jug is rice. Mr. Po mentioned that rice is similar to the Goddess Sri. Goddess Sri in the Javanese folk belief is the God of (land) fertility (“Legenda Dewi Sri, Dewi Kesuburan di Bumi,” 2017). The

idea of land fertility here is associated with health by the informants, “*Beras kan kuwi lambange Dewi Sri nang. Nah beras kuwi maknane ben waras. Sing nduwe omah di paring kesehatan terus.* [Rice is the symbol of Goddess Sri. The meaning of rice is to keep healthy. The owner of the new house is expected to be forever healthy] (Mr. Po, interviewed on December 14<sup>th</sup> 2018).



**Figure 15 Burried jug**

The reason for using jug as the place for *kembang setaman*, egg, and rice is the shape of the jug. The jug is shaped like an earth. The owner of the new house hopes that his house will be safe from disaster. (Mr. Po, interviewed on December 14<sup>th</sup> 2018)

#### **4.2.11 *Ingkung* (roasted rooster)**

Based on the observation in Mr. Supangat's, *Ingkung* (roasted rooster) which is also part of the *sesajen*, the offerings will be given to the participants of the *slametan* before placing other items of *sesajen* to the top of the house or burying them in the ground.



**Figure 16 *Inkung* (rooster)**

*Inkung mesti ono neng acara slametan ngadekke omah. Inkung kuwi pitik Jago, artine jejer ing satriyo. Lha ingkung kuwi mau di pothel-pothel terus di bagi sing rawuh neng acara kuwi mau supoyo katut jiwa kasatriyane. Makane acara slametan ngono kudu wong lanang sing mimpin. [Inkung is always a part of slametan ritual for building a new house. Inkung must be a rooster, the meaning is a hero. Then *ingkung* is cut into some pieces and given to the attendees of the slametan so they can have the spirit of a hero too. It is why the leader of slametan ritual should be a man.] (Mr. Po, interviewed on December 14<sup>th</sup> 2018).*

In short, *ingkung* contains the hope that the owner of the new house, the head of the family, can be brave like a hero.

*Inkung* (roasted rooster) is also found by Putri (2015) and Sari (2014). Putri (2015) mentioned that in Boyolali *ingkung* is used as the symbol of purity. The owner of the new house and the attendees in *slametan* ritual hope to be

purified by getting the *ingkung*.. Sari (2014) explained further. According to Sari, *ingkung* is a symbol of purity, because everyone was born pure. *Inkung* also symbolizes the submission to God.

