



## The Meaning of Communication Symbols in the *Nyadran* and Carnival Ceremonies of the *Bregodo* Troops as an Implementation of the Yogyakarta City Cultural Village

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**Abstract.** Yogyakarta City's cultural villages possess significant potential for preserving local traditions and culture. The *Nyadran* Ceremony and the *Bregodo* Troop Carnival are exemplary traditions rich in symbolic meaning and cultural communication. Miliran Village, situated in Muja Muju Village (*Kelurahan* Muja Muju in Indonesian), Umbulharjo Sub-district, Yogyakarta City, is a pioneering cultural village. This community annually celebrates the *Nyadran* ceremony during the lunar months of Ruwah or Sya'ban. The ceremony in Miliran features a parade of *Gunungan*, which are conical containers filled with sticky rice and apem cakes, accompanied by *Bregodo* troops. This research aims to examine the communicative symbols embedded within these two traditions as a manifestation of Yogyakarta City's cultural village concept. Employing a qualitative ethnographic approach, data will be collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The anticipated outcome of this research is publication in the international proceedings of Universitas Respati Yogyakarta.

**Keywords:** Nyadran, Communication Symbol, Bregodo Troop Carnival, Yogyakarta Culture, Cultural Communication

### INTRODUCTION

The birth of the city of Yogyakarta began through a rich historical journey, namely from the existence of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom in the 18th century. Prince Mangkubumi established the Sultanate of Yogyakarta after a succession conflict in Mataram. Through this kingdom, the city of Yogyakarta was built and developed into a city of culture. Where with the royal system, culture is always maintained and preserved. The kingdom is often referred to as the palace, which means it is the place of a ruler who rules in an area. The Yogyakarta Palace has a very important role in laying the foundation of life through culture and also in developing culture to all its people.

The palace is the center of tradition and culture not only in the city of Yogyakarta but throughout Java as well as a symbol of power and wisdom that carries deep meaning in Javanese cultural heritage. The palace also plays a key role in traditional arts, such as dance, music, and puppetry, where the palace periodically holds performances. Various traditional ceremonies and cultural celebrations, including Grebeg Maulud, Grebeg Syawal, and Kirab Agung, are held regularly around the palace. This not only maintains tradition, but also shows the rich culture of Yogyakarta to the public.

The Yogyakarta Palace is one of the main tourist attractions in the city. Tourist visits contribute greatly to the promotion of the city's rich culture and history. Through its programs, the palace contributes to the preservation of the Javanese language and Javanese customs. This is important in maintaining the cultural identity of the community.

The palace collaborates with local communities, including cultural institutions and artist groups, as well as villages in Yogyakarta to support arts and cultural activities in the city.

The Provincial Government of the Special Region of Yogyakarta through the Decree of the Governor of the Special Region of Yogyakarta Governor Regulation number 36 of 2014 concerning Cultural Village / Village, that Cultural Village / Village is a village or village that actualizes, develops, and conserves the wealth of cultural potential that is visible in customs and traditions, arts, traditional games, language, literature, script, crafts, culinary, traditional medicine, spatial planning, and cultural heritage.

Culture cannot be separated from tourism, both culture and tourism must go hand in hand and synergize with each other, "The culture of Yogya City can be reflected in the culture of its people in various aspects of their lives such as clean culture, orderly culture, friendly and professional". One of the traditions that is still preserved today is the Nyadran Ceremony and Kirab Pasukan Bregodo. These two traditions are an integral part of the Cultural Village of Yogyakarta City, which represents the noble values and identity of the people of Yogyakarta.

According to Yanu Endar Prasetyo [1] Nyadran or Sadranan is a tradition carried out by Javanese people which is carried out in the month of Sya'ban (Hijriyah Calendar) or Ruwah (Javanese Calendar) to express gratitude which is done collectively by visiting the graves or graves of ancestors in a village or village. In this Nyadran ceremony, people usually make Tumpeng Nasi Gurih or Nasi Uduk with chicken ingkung, sticky rice, compote and apem. The Yogyakarta Provincial Government through the Culture Office provides assistance and guidance as well as financial support to various villages in the city of Yogyakarta, one of which is Miliran village. The Sadranan ceremony in Miliran village is packaged quite lively, because in the Nyadran ceremony, all elements of society are involved, even in its implementation by holding grebeg gunung from apem and sticky rice kolak which is paraded around the village with the escort of "Bregodo" troops from Miliran Village Hall to a ceremony site. At the ceremony place, the gunung is handed over from the village head to Mr. Lurah Muja Muju and then handed over to Mr. Mantri Pamong Praja Kemantren Umbulharjo Yogyakarta. The next series of ceremonies are all the dishes in the form of tumpeng gunung and all its appendages are prayed for first through five religious leaders, Christian, Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic. All the dishes are then distributed to all residents in Miliran village.

The hope of the Yogyakarta Government through this Nyadran activity is that there are positive things that can be produced, including togetherness, togetherness and cohesiveness of all Miliran villagers, because in this Nyadran ceremony it involves 4 Rukun Warga (RW) areas which have very diverse religions so that through this Nyadran ceremony the kinship of the community is increasing. From the background of this problem, the question arises what are the meanings of communication symbols contained in the Nyadran ceremony and Kirab Pasukan Bregodo? And how the meaning of these communication symbols for the people of Miliran village can be implemented in the cultural village of Yogyakarta.

This research aims to examine the meaning of communication symbols in the two traditions and their implementation as a cultural village of Yogyakarta City. The results of this research are expected to provide benefits in the form of increased understanding of the meaning of communication symbols in the Nyadran Ceremony and Kirab Pasukan Bregodo, enriching knowledge about Yogyakarta culture and the values contained in it, contributing to the development of Kampung Budaya Yogyakarta City as an educational

cultural tourism destination.

This research is focused on the communication symbols contained in the Nyadran Ceremony and Kirab Pasukan Bregodo in Kampung Budaya Yogyakarta city. This research does not discuss communication symbols in other traditions in Yogyakarta. This research is in line with the Strategic Plan (Renstra) of Universitas Respati Yogyakarta (UNRIYO) which focuses on the development of local culture and traditions. The results of this research are expected to provide input for the development of Universitas Respati Yogyakarta (UNRIYO) programs and activities in supporting Kampung Budaya Yogyakarta City.

Al Aliyah, Abadi, and Dharma's research [2] on communication rites in the Nyadran tradition in Sawohan Village Sidoarjo, East Java found that Nyadran not only functions as a form of gratitude from fishermen for the abundant catch of kupang every year, but also can be used as a means of cultural transformation in the younger generation and improve communication relations between villages in coastal Sidoarjo. Likewise, the results of Alviana's research, and Wijayani [3] that the implementation of the clean village gempol tradition as a symbol of cultural communication to strengthen and establish friendship or strengthen solidarity between villagers in addition to gratitude to Allah SWT for the favors given in reaping abundant harvests.

Meanwhile, Budyanto [4] in his research entitled The Meaning of Communication Symbols in the Nyadran Gunung Traditional Ceremony in Silurah Village, Wonotunggal District, Batang Regency provides an overview of how the meaning of communication symbols in the Nyadran Gunung traditional ceremony in Silurah Village contains communication meaning. The symbol of the Nyadran gunung traditional ceremony has a divine meaning which is largely religious, mutual cooperation in togetherness and simplicity. Nyadran gunung in Silurah Village is interpreted as a thanksgiving because the harvest for a year has been fulfilled, apart from that Nyadran gunung is also interpreted as a disaster repelling ceremony that hopes to be kept away from the threat of plague. Apart from preserving the heritage of the ancestors as predecessors, the Nyadran Gunung Ranggakusumo traditional ceremony is an obligation that must be held every year.

Some of the previous research above shows that the Nyadran tradition is a tradition full of cultural communication symbols, but the research did not use an ethnographic approach to explore the meaning of existing traditional symbols. So that in this study taken by researchers is different because researchers use an ethnographic approach in exploring the meaning of communication symbols from a cultural tradition, namely the Nyadran ceremony and the parade of Bregodo troops in Miliran Village as an implementation of the cultural village of Yogyakarta.

## **METHODS**

The method used in this research is a qualitative research method with an ethnographic or ethnomethodological approach that has the aim of describing the cultural characteristics contained in an individual or group of people who are members of a cultural community group [5]. The distinctive features of this ethnographic field research method are its holistic-integrative nature, rich description and qualitative analysis in order to obtain the native's point of view. Ethnography is often applied to collect empirical data about human societies and cultures. The purpose of using ethnographic methods is to understand a way of life through the eyes of the owner of the culture, by trying to

understand his point of view, his relationship to life, and get his perception of his world. Data collection is done through participant observation, interviews.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Findings

The results of this study reveal some important findings related to the meaning of communication symbols in the Nyadran ceremony and Kirab Pasukan Bregodo as the implementation of the cultural village of Yogyakarta. The results of in-depth interviews and observations using ethnographic methods reveal several key points as follows:

#### 1. Nyadran Ceremony Organization

Before the official organization, Nyadran activities in Yogyakarta were carried out in an unorganized manner. People conducted the ceremony independently or individually, meaning that each family conducted their own activities at the tomb, without central coordination, which resulted in variations in implementation and symbolic meanings that may not be uniform. However, with the efforts to make Yogyakarta a Cultural Village, Nyadran ceremonies are starting to be better organized to create uniformity and a deeper understanding of the symbols used\

As an interview with the Head of Miliran Village, Aji Prasetya, stated that the Nyadran ceremony has become a tradition that has been carried out for generations. “If it is usually done individually in the family, in 2024 the Nyadran ceremony is carried out together in one Miliran village,” (Srigati, B., personal communication, July 2, 2024).



FIGURE 1. Nyadran Tradition in Miliran Village is Organized

#### 2. Symbol of Nyadran Ceremony and Kirab Pasukan Bregodo

The Nyadran ceremony uses two mountains as the main symbol. The first gunung contains apem which has a meaning as a request for forgiveness to God. Apem in this context symbolizes the purity and humility of the community in apologizing for all the mistakes that have been made. The second gunung contains tumpeng, which symbolizes prayers and requests for salvation to God. Tumpeng as a traditional Indonesian culinary form that is often used in various ceremonies, symbolizes the hope and request for protection and blessings from God.



**FIGURE 2.** Gunungan at Nyadran and Kirab Ceremony

## **B. Discussion**

### **1. Strengthening Cultural Identity**

Symbols in Nyadran ceremony have an important role in strengthening the cultural identity of Yogyakarta. With *gunungan apem* and *tumpeng*, the people of Yogyakarta reaffirm the traditional and spiritual values that are an integral part of their culture. *Gunungan apem* and *tumpeng* are not just symbols of food, but also carry deep meanings that reflect human relationships with God and the surrounding environment.

### **2. Implementation of Cultural Village**

The organization of Nyadran and Kirab Pasukan Bregodo ceremonies as part of the Cultural Village of Yogyakarta City shows a real effort in preserving and promoting local culture. With better organization, this ceremony is not only an annual ritual carried out by the community, but also an attractive cultural attraction for tourists. This has a positive impact on the local economy and strengthens Yogyakarta's cultural identity as a city rich in tradition and local wisdom.

### **3. Symbolic Meaning and Communication**

Symbols in the Nyadran ceremony function as a strong communication tool between the community and God as well as between members of the community itself. *Gunungan apem* and *tumpeng* carry moral and spiritual messages that are passed on from generation to generation. Through these symbols, values such as asking for forgiveness, humility, and hope for salvation can be passed on to the next generation. In addition, these symbols also communicate Yogyakarta's cultural identity to the outside world, showcasing the city's rich culture.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The conclusion of this research shows that Nyadran ceremony in Yogyakarta City has an important role in strengthening cultural identity, preserving traditions, and symbolic communication. Symbols such as *gunungan apem* and *tumpeng* not only emphasize the traditional and spiritual values of the people of Yogyakarta, but also become a means to strengthen the relationship with God and the surrounding environment. The implementation of Kampung Budaya through Nyadran and Kirab Pasukan Bregodo ceremonies has successfully promoted local culture while attracting tourists, which has a positive impact on the local economy. The symbols in these ceremonies serve as a means of communication between generations, conveying deep moral and spiritual messages, and showcasing the richness of Yogyakarta's culture to the outside world.

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