

THE ELEMENTS OF CULTURE VALUES ON MALAY TRADITIONAL FOOD WRAPPING: KETUPAT

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ABSTRACT

Most of the traditional food wrapping is made from various natural materials. Ketupat is one of the traditional foods in Malaysia and in the Malay Archipelago. It is wrapped coconut leaves called 'janur'. The origin of the Ketupat or Kupat is from Java, Indonesia. The migration of peoples in the Malay Archipelago has made the Ketupat with many similarities in terms of its use. The tradition of making the Ketupat started a few generations ago and became mandatory in certain ceremonies as a main meal. This activity is considered as a culture since it has been passed down through generations and has become a symbol to identify the community. Ketupat requires technical skills to weave its container, besides have its physical attractive characteristics and significant aesthetic values in shapes, lines, patterns and colors. Ketupat also has different symbolic meanings and has become beliefs in daily life. The effect of modern packaging has hit the tradition and threatens the art of weaving the Ketupat. Therefore, although we are in the mainstream of development but we must preserve the elements of culture values on Malay traditional food wrapping (Ketupat).

Key words : Ketupat, Art of Wrapping, Symbolic Meaning, Aesthetics, Heritage, Identity and Culture Value.

Introduction

Art activities among communities in the Malay Archipelago have been recognized worldwide as being very unique and interesting. In this community activity that contains the elements of art are produced through carving, weaving, carpentry, architecture and so on. This art has been fundamental to the culture of their lives for centuries. With this activity, the identity of the community is more visible and attractive to outsiders. According to Marzita Putih, et al, (2007), in the community, the arts are divided into two categories: Performing Arts (dance, song, stage performances such as makyong, wayang kulit, ghazal, tambourine, kuda kepang) and Visual Arts (sculpture, art architecture, decorative arts, crafts, and weaving).

Handicraft is a work of art created to be used, but composed by incorporating elements of art to form a beautiful and interesting outlook. Handicraft creation requires expertise and efficiency. According to Siti Zainon Ismail (1986), handicraft creation process requires the power of aesthetics in order to provide a beautiful and interesting design. Malay artwork has its own identity, which also shows a combination of various local elements and influences from abroad. Carving and weaving are part of the traditional art and cannot be separated from the culture and way of life of the Malays. In fact, the art of weaving is part of the Malay life. Thus, art and culture as part of the life and identity of the country that needs to be protected from the effects of globalization, A Ghafar Ahmad (2004). According to Abdullah A. Badawi (2007), arts, culture and heritage must be preserved from extinction. Noor Nikman Salleh (2009) said that the National Cultural Policy 1971 has outlined that national culture should be based on the culture of the Malays. Meanwhile, the Akta Warisan Kebangsaan (2005) suggests that the study or research of the documentation relating to the elements of culture is very important because it will rebuild a national identity so that it can be maintained, otherwise it will be lost in the course of modernization. Arts and crafts such as weaving mats or baskets have similarities in production processes such as in making rice cake (ketupat) which requires the skill to weave and fold, but only differ in terms of their usage. Therefore foods such as ketupat also can distinguish and identify the community of other races.

The influence of modern ketupat wrapped in plastic material and changed the polar Malays settlements in Malaysia, will affect the younger generation to learn how to wrap traditional foods. This research is to provide

knowledge about the art, its symbolic meaning, and values contained behind this practice as a culture that has been passed down for over a long period of time. If not preserved, the nation would lose its cultural identity.

The Issue

Since the 1990s, the influence of modern ketupat wrapped in plastic material has taken place in the community. Modern ketupat is easier and faster to prepare. The Malay population now lives in the housing estates. There is no space to plant trees that can be used as traditional packaging materials such as banana trees or coconut trees. This will affect the younger generation to learn from their parents about how to wrap traditional foods and to know the culture elements behind it. This situation is expected to impact the traditional ketupat weaving especially to the next generation.

Limitation of the Study

The study took a sample of the ketupat as one of the traditional Malay cakes in the archipelago as a subject matter in this study. Therefore, the culture elements which are trying to find out are only focused on this subject matter as a sample survey among traditional Malay cakes/kuih.

Significance of Study

The study is to ascertain how many members in the family, especially the younger generation know how to wrap or still practice traditional food weaving such as ketupat. It should be taught and the knowledge of weaving and the culture elements behind it will be transferred to the new generation. If not preserved, the nation would lose its cultural identity.

Objectives of the Research

To investigate the factors that contributes to the loss of cultural values on Malay traditional food wrapping.

To find out the culture's elements behind the Malay traditional food packaging.

Hypothesis

There are a lot of elements on culture value in Malay traditional food packaging which exist and are applied in the daily life of the Malay society. However, the current Malay generation does not realize it and technology has replaced the traditional part of the Malay traditional food packaging. This research will have to find out the potential elements to discover the loss of culture values in the Malay community.

Background

Packaging History

Around 10,000 years ago, packaging of foods was made from natural ingredients and they were applied and modified from animal skins, stems and leaves of trees. Packaging was generally divided into two different eras; modern and traditional packaging. Modern packaging usually includes packaging for consumer goods. Gardon, L. R. (2005), states that packaging has been translated as a socio-scientific discipline operating in the community to ensure the smooth delivery of goods to customers. It occurs with the advent of technology, paper and printing industry in the 19th century. Bill, S. (2007) provides that the packaging in pre-modernization era began in 1945. Based on Groth, C. (2006), this is the beginning time line for packaging using modern materials. It continues until now when packaging technology is more innovative in terms of using of materials, functions, and design.

The Significance of Traditional Packaging

The way of life of a society or culture is becoming an identity to a nation. Usually it is simply and clearly identified by the color, dress, language, behavior, foods, customs and economic activities of a race. Abdullah A Badawi (2007) has reminded the people to defend the nation's cultural and artistic identity of Malaysia/Malay so as not to drown in the global cultural flows. He said, "Development in order to prosper the country cannot run from maintaining the unique identity of the nation of this country is easily recognizable." Food can also distinguish a society of other people. It will be the identity of a community. The identity of a society will usually be inherited and has been the pride of the community, Marzita Puteh et al (2007).

Japanese Traditional Food Packaging/Wrapping

History has shown that the Japanese are very famous for their traditional packaging using packing materials of natural elements and has the beauty of art. Some foods are packed in a durable manner and can be bought by tourists as souvenirs. According to Yuriko Saito (2007), the Japanese have a clear history and background on the philosophy of food packaging. The Japanese traditional packaging can be considered as a form of art because it features unique design in various forms such as baskets, boxes, wrapping paper, which are still used in everyday life. Hideyuki Oka (2008) explained that the Japanese use rice straw, bamboo, paper and leaves as wrapping materials. They provide onigiri, rice balls, wrapped in bamboo leaf. Bamboo fronds are substances of natural resources that have become popular packaging materials in Japan. It has become a symbol of freshness, because of the aroma of bamboo will seep into the food inside.

Malay Traditional Food Packaging/Wrapping

The Malays as well as Japanese society is famous for their cuisine, especially cakes (kuih) or food cooked and served by using a wrapper of natural materials that can be found around the house. (Retrieved from: AbsoluteAstronomy.com, 2009)

The Malays are also rich in various kinds of traditional packaging. According to Nik Hassan Suhaimi (2005), the Malays in Peninsular Malaysia is said to be derived from a variety of ethnic hill in the archipelago. He divided the Malays into some ethnic groups factions, (for example: Aceh, Bugis, Minangkabau, Minang, Banjar, Pattani or Java). Therefore, each ethnic group has its own culinary arts tradition and the identity of privileges for each group.

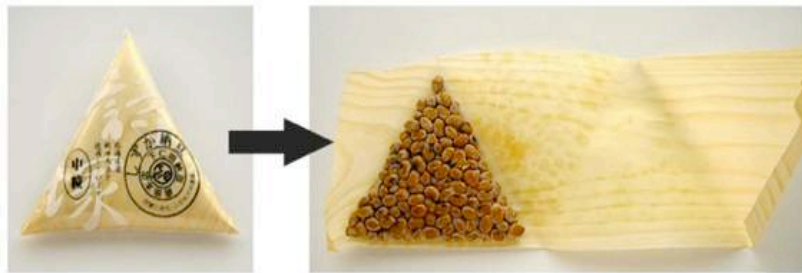
The interesting aspect about the Malay kuih in the archipelago is in the types of leaves which are used for wrapping food. The leaves are: Lepat wrapped in banana leaves, ketupat palas wrapped in palas leaves, dodol and lempok wrapped with upeh pinang, where tapai also can be wrap either with baharu leaves, ketapang leaves, keladi leaves, banana leaves or rubber tree leaves. Kuih tepung pelita can be wrapped using pandan leaves or banana leaves, while ketupat sate, otak-otak and belebat are packaged in different ways using coconut leaves

However, among these materials, banana leaves is very famous and most widely used as wrapping for some Malay foods and cakes. For example, pulut panggang, tepung bungkus, lepat, kuih koci, tepung pelita, tapai, nasi lemak, use banana leaves as a wrapper. Uniquely, each type of kuih has a distinctive way of wrapping

methods and techniques, even in using materials from the same wrapping material which is banana leaves. However, more unique is the Ketupat which uses coconut leaves and have to go through the process of weaving to create a cone or sheath. This uniqueness requires skills that not everyone has, especially this generation.



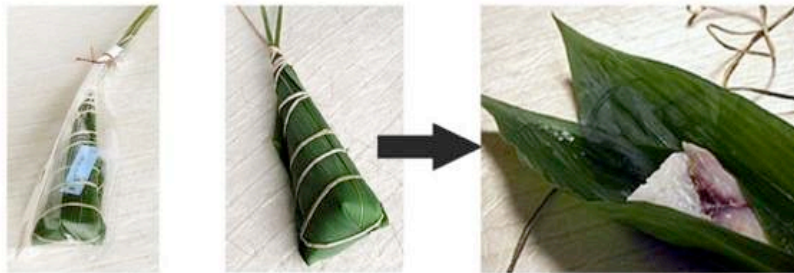
Figure 1 : Various traditional Malay cakes (kuih) wrapped in banana leaves



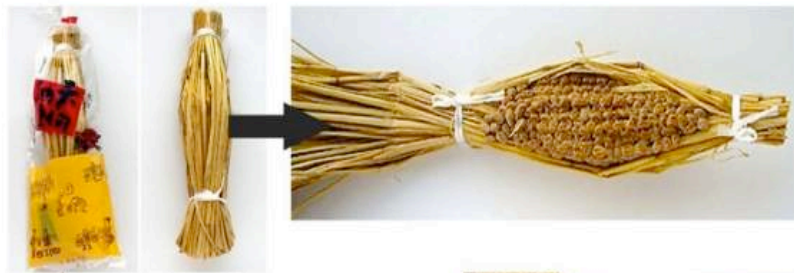
Natto



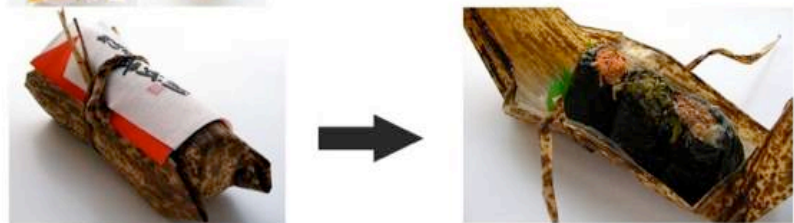
Asa-dango



Chimaki Sushi



Natto- straw



Onigiri

Figure 2: Traditional Japanese foods wrapped by various natural materials

Statements of Problem

The Influence of Modern Packaging

Since the 1990s, the influence of modern Ketupat wrapped in plastic material has taken in the community. Modern ketupat is easier and faster to prepare. This situation is expected to impact traditional ketupat weaving especially to the next generation. The same applies to kuih tapai, nasi lemak and kuih tepung pelita, which are now wrapped with plastic and PVC containers. Nowadays, plastic packaging has taken over the functions of traditional packaging. With plastic packaging, the aroma and natural smell of packaging materials are missing. There is no longer the taste of the original fragrance of food packaging materials. If the situation continues, people will lose their skills on how to wrap these traditional foods.

The Problem of Waste Disposal

The use of plastic materials is not easy to rot or decompose and will contribute to environmental degradation. Waste of plastic material is not environmentally friendly and it takes a long time to decompose and disintegrate. As a result, Malaysia is burdened by the cost of managing solid waste disposal and if not managed well, this will cause environmental pollution.

Chemicals/Pesticides

Plastic materials used for packaging foods can cause adverse effects to the human body. According to the

Consumers Association of Penang (CAP) S. M. Mohamed Idris (2006), the results of a study by the Institute of Materials Science and Technology, Princeton, USA, revealed that plastic material when at a level of heat will secrete polyethylene (VOC), a type of chemical that can destroy the human hormone that also causes cancer. Similar results were also obtained by Rahmat Awang (2006), from a survey conducted by several scientists from the National Poison Centre (Pusat Racun Negara), Universiti Sains Malaysia, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

Population and Development

Rapid development of the Malaysian economic over the last fifty years has changed the polar settlements in Malaysia. Most of the Malay population now lives in housing estates in suburbs and cities, Wan Hashim Wan Teh (1998). These areas do not have enough space to plant trees that can be used as traditional packaging materials such as banana trees or coconut trees. It is different with people who are still living in villages where traditional packaging materials can be found surrounding their homes. Consequently, those who live in housing estates have limited opportunities to cook and they only choose foods that do not require such packaging materials. To get traditional packaging materials, they have to go to the market. This situation makes them choose to cook foods that do not use wrapping from leaves. Over time, the younger generation will not learn from their parents how to wrap traditional food. With this situation, if this tradition of weaving will not be passed to the new generation, it will be lost to modernity, Hashim Hj. Musa (2005), Hasanah (2008).



Figure 3 : Plastic packagings took over traditional packaging.

The History of Ketupat

Ketupat is a traditional food made from rice and wrapped in coconut leaves, known as Janur. Ketupat is very popular on the eve of Hari Raya Aidil Fitri or Hari Raya Aidil Adha. The tradition of making the ketupat started when Islam first came to Java. (Retrieved from: [www.aceh Forum Community](http://www.acehforum.com))

The Origin of Ketupat

In history, the Sunan Kalijaga is the first to introduce ketupat in the Java community. He civilized to make ketupat twice referred to as Bakda i.e during the celebration of Eid al-Fitr is called "Bakda Lebaran" and "Bakda Kupat" is one week after the day of Eid (after fasting six days in Shawwal). On the day called Bakda Kupat, in Java almost every house weaves the ketupat. After they have finished cooking, kupat (ketupat) is sent to the home of relatives, starting with the oldest first, as a symbol of unity. (Retrieved from: www.aCeh Forum Community)

According to Agus Wibowo (2008), the tradition of making ketupat was started by KG PAA Mangkunegara I, who was known as the Pangeran Sambernyawa. At that time, after the Eid prayer, a meeting was held between the King and the *penggawa* (chief of districts) and the soldiers simultaneously in the *balai istana*. All *penggawa* and soldiers, with the orderly together perform a *sungkem* (a way to seek for apologies) to the king and queen.

The history of making ketupat, according to M Yusril Anwar Al Jafary (2008), is said to be derived from the traditions of the community Wali Songo, it was an attempt to incorporate Islamic elements in the tradition of making the ketupat. This is because in ancient times,

Ketupat in the Malay Archipelago

Ketupat has traditionally been made and eaten in the Malay Archipelago when celebrating Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. The festival is incomplete without the ketupat. Practically every home prepares this delicacy. As the entire geography of the islands of Malay Archipelago is planted with coconut trees, it is very easy to get the leaves 'janur' the young leaves, which are used as cladding for woven the ketupat. The nature of the Malay Archipelago, there are similarities in the history of the tradition in making the ketupat. In Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Sabah and Sarawak and most of the Indonesian archipelago it was known as 'ketupat'. In some places in Indonesia, ketupat is referred to as 'kupas' or 'ketupek' mainly by tribal Java. .

In Indonesia, ketupat is sometimes boiled with coconut milk for added flavor. In the Philippines, the Moros in Kapampangan called ketupat as 'Patupat', 'Puso' in the Cebuano area and 'Ta'mu' in the Tausug. Leaves (young coconut leaf) are named *Arecaceae*.

In Malaysia, ketupat is usually divided into two categories, namely ketupat nasi (normal rice) and ketupat pulut (sticky rice). Ketupat rice is rectangular shape using rice as its contents are wrapped with coconut leaf, while ketupat pulut (use sticky rice) a diamond-shaped, wrapped with palas leaves, usually referred as ketupat palas.

Type of Ketupat

Generally, ketupat is a typical of Southeast Asian dish made from rice. Rice is inserted into the woven coconut leaves and boiled or steamed to cook. Ketupat is most prevalent when it comes to the festive season, when Muslims celebrate the end of the fasting month. Ketupat is also often served with satay. Among the people in Java, ketupat is often hung over the entrance to the house as a symbol of saving things. In Bali, ketupat is often presented as serving in a religious ceremony. Among the types of ketupat are:

Ketupek Katan Kapau

This Ketupat Katan is small sized and cooked with coconut milk in a bamboo cylinder. During cooking, coconut milk is left to concentrate once and blended into the ketupat. Ketupat katan can be eaten during afternoon tea, but can also be eaten with spicy dishes, such as curry or stew (*rendang*).

Ketupat Glabed

Kupas Glabed is very famous in Tegal, Indonesia. Kupas Glabed is a ketupat that is eaten with thick gravy yellow. Ketupat is cut into pieces, put inside it some fried tempeh, and smothered with gravy glabed. For more spice sambal is added. On it cracker noodles made from cassava flour and sprinkled with fried onions. As a side dish, Kupas Glabed is always eaten with satay chicken or shellfish.

Ketupat Betawi (Bebanci)

The most typical dish and unique feature is the ketupat bebanci by the Betawi community. This ketupat is not made for sale even though it is very unique and delicious. As the name implies, ketupat Bebanci is cook with the main elements of the ketupat. This ketupat is eaten with

Ketupat Blegong (tegal)

Kupat Blengong (Kupat Glabedeaten with Blengong meat, is the result of interbreeding species of ducks and geese).

Ketupat Bongko (tegal)

Kupat Bongkois is ketupat with vegetable tempeh that has been acidified.

Ketupat Cabuk Rambak (solo)

Cabuk Rambak is rice ketupat sliced lemon-lime, and sprinkled with sesame sauce mixed with a little grated coconut. Sauces taste very special indeed. This dish is served with rice crackers called kara.

Ketupat/lontongSayur

Usually vegetables lontong sayur is served with thick gravy add in some glass noodles (su'un), boiled eggs and sprinkled with fried onions.

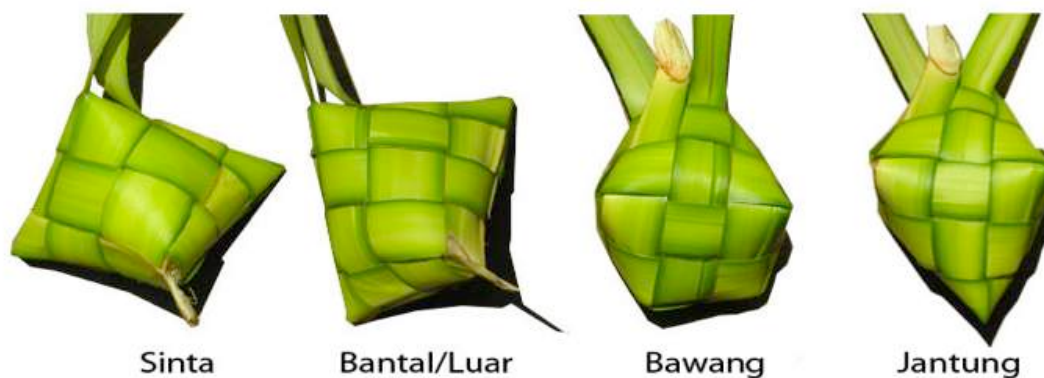


Figure 4 : Different types of ketupatwoven using young coconut leaves

How to Wave Ketupat

To make the ketupat, especially weaving techniques, requires creativity and skill of its own in order to produce woven cladding of 'janur' which has artistic value. Not everyone knows how to make ketupat and to be able to make, one has to learn to weave.

Materials to Make

- Janur (coconut leaves); which has been cleaned and select the bright yellow color.
- Cutting tools; to separate the coconut leaf from the stems.

General Way to Make Ketupat

- Choose good quality rice, wash upclean. Soak the rice for 3 hours with clean water. Drain, Mix with a little kapur makan. If the rice is unclean, ketupat will be perishable.

- Fill cladding ketupat with rice until 3/4 full.
- When boiled, the ketupat must be submerged in boiling water altogether. If water reduces boiling water is added. The duration for cooking ketupat is between 4 to 6 hours.
- After cooking, lift the ketupat and hang it up to dry.

The Art Elements in Ketupat

The Meaning of Art

Art can also be interpreted as meaning or sense abilities to create a painting, sculpture, calligraphy and it was so beautiful to look at. According to Oxford Dictionary (1989), Art is: The production of something beautiful; skill or ability in such work; Works such as paintings or sculptures produced by skills. Ibn. Khaldun states, "art is truth, beauty and goodness in which it is contains the characteristics of aesthetics, ethics and logic." Aristotle believes that art is an imitation or

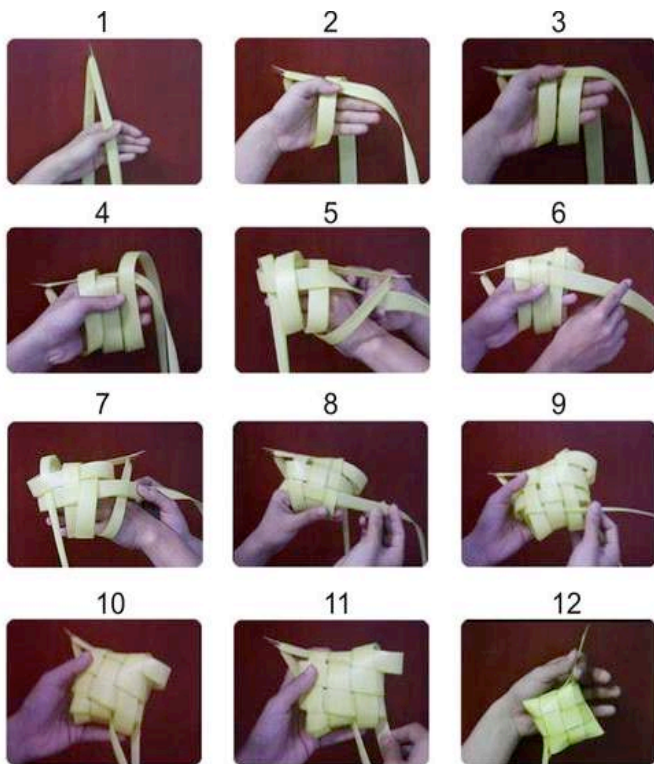


Figure 5 : Retrieved from: arjunafirdausi.blogspot

The basic elements of art are translated by the results during the process weaving a ketupat as the objects of art, which are; form, shape, finish line, texture, space and color.

The Form/Shape (bentuk)

Form within the meaning of the language, it means waking up (shape) or physical form (form). Build (shape) is a kind of plain shape, as seen by the eye, just to mention it is round, square, ornamental, irregular and so on. Physical form is the kind that looks and feels because of the element of (value) of these objects, such as a closet. Chest is exists in a space and is not just a rectangular box, but has its value and function. Three-dimensional shape bounded by space that surrounds and forms that include pyramids, prisms, cones, cone, and cylinder.

Irregular shape cubes and square, either in two or three dimensions affect static, stable, and formal. When the shape loomed up, it seems so great and stable.

replication process of the world, life, people, meaning the display or new ideas on an existing design. Plato also believes that art is an imitation of nature (Art's imitation natural). Meanwhile, Schopenhauer thinks that art is an attempt to create new forms of fun. Everyone loves the art of music, although music is the most abstract art.

Elements of Art

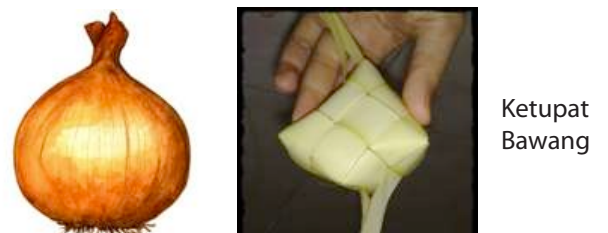
To make ketupat, especially the case, needs creative power to produce cladding woven coconut that has artistic value. Indeed, not everyone is good at making the ketupat and to be able to create there is a need to learn how to weave. Viewed in terms of its shape, the ketupat is said to have characteristics that make up the perfection of its art and, thus the value of the ketupat works into the art and culture of a society.

From the creativity of someone weaving janur for cladding made of ketupat, it is known names ketupat include: ketupat raya, ketupat sate, ketupat jantung, ketupat berlian (diamond), ketupat bawang, ketupat duduk, ketupat bantal, ketupat sinta, ketupat jago, ketupat luwar, ketupat sido lungguh, ketupat khodok, ketupat bata and others. It is not clear the origin of the name of ketupat, but usually these names connected with the shape of the ketupat.



Ketupat Bantal

Round or spherical shape of the curve affects dynamic and moving (movement).



Ketupat Bawang

Tapered triangular shape affects active, energetic, sharp, and pointing direction.



Ketupat Intan / Jantung

Figure 6 : Retrieved from: shvoong.com

The Lines (garisan)

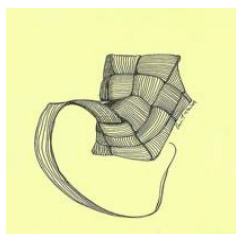
These few lines of dots are contiguous or which have a certain distance. Lines play a very important role in creating the appearance, shape, fabric, movements, tones and pattern. Lines also play an important role in showing one's feelings in a work.



Lines have elongated nature and have a certain direction. Although it has an element of thickness, the nature of the most prominent is the length dimension. Of shape, line distinguished by straight lines, curved lines and broken lines (zigzag). Ruler also has a specific character depending on the media, techniques, and place making.

The Interwoven (jalinan)

Interwoven intends effects found in an object's surface. Interwoven is divided into two sections: Interwoven touch and looks.



The Texture (tekstur)

The texture in art means karakter, nature, or the value of a surface material that looks and or touched. Usually in the form of a smooth texture, rough, bumpy, slippery and so on. Of course the texture of wood, stone, ceramic and paper have differing values.



There are two holes on the texture, namely:

- i. Realistic Texture, where the surface of an object when seen and touched have the same characteristics.
- ii. Virtual Texture, the surface of an object that looks similar to the characteristics of the object when touched.

The Colors (warna)

Color plays an important role in creating atmosphere. Various artists can show one's feelings while using the types of color in his art work.

According to Chai Wuang Shen (2010), color is the most important element in the visual arts field. Colors are divided into:

- The basic colors - red, blue and yellow
- Secondary colors - mix two shades of basic colors into the third color.
- Tertiary colors - a mix of revenue to the three colors.
- Monochrome color - the color is mixed with white and black to dark color desired control.
- Natural color - black and white, the result of the effect of light and silhouette.

The Symbolic Meaning in Ketupat

The Symbolic Meaning

Despite the tradition of weaving coconut leaves, there are philosophies contained therein. According to M Yusril Anwar Al Jafary (2008), a ketupat or a traditional Javanese 'Kupatan' is not just a traditional day of Eid by serving ketupat, but has many profound meanings behind its use for various occasions in the life of society, ranging from methods and materials to make it, to how to eat it. It is the symbolic meaning of these various aspects.

Meaning from the Name

Ketupat in the Java language is called Kupat, that is, the tradition of the ketupat-consuming outside (after) the day of eid, which is usually called Ketupat Raya, or referred to as an outside Kupat tradition. Kupat comes from Pat or Lepat (offense) and "outside" which means outside, or freed or released, with the hope that people who eat a ketupat means they are independent and free from offense. With the public expected to forgive sins of everyone with the symbolism of ketupat consuming.

From one source, the ketupat from kerotoboso (language abbreviation) of said Ngaku Lepat that means admitting mistakes. The tradition of making and consuming ketupat is expected to make us admit our mistakes so that helps us to forgive the mistakes of others as well. This means, there will be another sin dissolved.

Ketupat or Kupat in Java language as "Java dhosok" also means "ngaku lepat". In this case contains the order that someone immediately admits his guilt when making mistakes. The action "ngaku lepat" has become a habit or tradition on the first day of Shawwal, i.e by providing ketupat and the other dishes in the homes on the day of Eid, so-called ketupat lebaran. All this shows the same symbol: confession to the Almighty God and to their fellow human beings.

Ketupat from the language of Sunda is also called as kupat, means that someone who doesn't like to ngupat (gossip), which is bad-mouthing other people, because this would arouse the anger of others. In this sense one can be reminded to refrain from actions that ngupat.

Along with the above meanings and the dates of Shawwal, Kupat is "Java dhosok" from "laku papat" (four measures). The culture of serving ketupat on 1st of Shawwal gives the meaning that humans have to take 4 actions which: lebaran, luberan, leburan and laburan.

Eid, means "completion". It is intended that the first day of Shawwal is the sign of the completion of fasting; then 1st of Shawwal is commonly referred to as the holiday. On the day of Eid Muslims are required to eat, and not to fast anymore.

Luberan means overflow, like water from a jar, so abundant contents are spilled over. It is a symbol that gives the order to give some of one's wealth to the poor, that is, charity with such sincerity spills / overflow water from the jar. This can be seen in the Islamic tradition that is, giving sedekah or zakat fitrah on 1st of Shawwal.

Leburan, in line with the meaning of ngaku "lepat", i.e confess and apologize to each other in Javanese culture, the implementation of Leburan on 1st Shawwal with speeches of apology from a lower social status person to a person of higher social status, or from child to parent, that is, greeting "mugi segeda lebur ing dinten menika". It means that all mistakes before this can be removed and excused on that day.

Laburan, labur (whitewash) is material to whiten the walls. In this case, as a symbol that gives meaning to take care of yourself physically and spiritually. So after implementing the leburan (forgiving each other), Muslims are advised to keep a good attitude and actions, to reflect good manners too.

Thus the meaning contained in the ketupat served where anyone who eats it considers about the meaning and the message contained in it

Meaning from the Form/Shape

Ketupat shape represents perfection. This relates to the victory of Muslims after a month of fasting and the victory against lust.

The angular shape of the ketupat can be defined by the Java community as the embodiment of kiblat papat limo pancer. It is meaning kiblat papat limo pancer as the balance of nature: 4 diagonal directions, namely, East, South, West, and North. However, all these directions are around a center (kiblat). When one of them is missing, the balance of nature will be lost. Such was the man in his/her life; he/she goes in any direction, but not to forget God Almighty.

Kiblat papat limo pancer can also be defined as 4 types of human passions in the tradition of: amarah, aluamah, supiah, dan mutmainah. Anger is an emotional desire, lust aluamah to satisfy hunger, lust supiah is to have something beautiful or good, and the lust for mutmainah force yourself. The four passions are four things that we need to maintain during fasting, so by eating ketupat symbolizes that we have been able to resist temptations.

Meaning from the Making Process

Ketupat is a food with rice contents in it, packed using janur or coconut leaves which are yellowish in color. The tradition began with the weaving the packaging or casing. The casing is made usually before Eid and made usually by women. Making a ketupat in a group

is enlivened on the Day of Eid, and demonstrates familiarity among the community. One way to cook rice cake is by boiling it in coconut milk, or, if the ketupat is boiled in plain water, it will be served with food which is cooked with coconut milk. This makes the privilege of the ketupat, as a special food, as well signifies the relationship between communities and the social interaction between families and residents during the process of preparing the ketupat.

Meaning from the Yellow Janur (Young Coconut Leaves)

Janur a name in Javanese dhosok culture (true nur), short for "Jatining nur" or be construed as a voice of conscience (a pure heart). The yellow janur or coconut leaves are a symbol of refused reinforcements. At the Kraton Surakarta, is one of the accessories required to be used, in the form of long yellow cloth. The fabric is called Samir. Samir is a repellent reinforcement, so the janur is the symbol of the samir.

Meaning from Rice

Rice as a symbol of prosperity, rice is considered as a prayer that we will all be given the abundance of prosperity after fasting. Rice proved to be a symbol of a lustful world, so that the ketupat symbol of lustful the world that may be covered by conscience (the intent of the leaf). This means every human being has desires, but desires it may be controlled or restrained by conscience. In this vein, if a man cannot control the desires of his world, then someone will reveal the nature of the ego and the actions it does reflect the sheer lust. This means that the light of God shining reduced from the human's heart. One should be able to fight his lust so as to achieve self-control.

Meaning from Coconut Milk

Coconut milk, or in the Java language is santen, synonymous with the sound of the word ngapunten which means apologize. A famous poem that mentions the ketupat and coconut milk is:

Mangan kupat nganggo santen,
Menawi lepat, nyuwun pangapunten
(Eating ketupat with coconut milk,
If there any mistake please forgive)

Meaning from Weaving Process

Two strands of coconut (young coconut leaves) woven into a ketupat symbolize the bond of human life married couple, of two souls into one. Two strands of woven coconut weaved painstakingly to become casing of ketupat. This situation is akin to how difficult it is to maintain harmony of households. Ketupat is not difficult if you want to eat just by taking a knife and then cut it and can continue to eat. This situation is akin to human life that is hard to be married but if you want a divorce is very simple as splitting the ketupat. Ketupat also symbolizes various human afflictions, which are visible from the complexity of weaving the ketupat casing.

Meaning from Colors

Ketupat reflects the cleanliness and purity of heart after praying for forgiveness. That is translated through the white color of the rice as well as the color white coconut milk. Meanwhile the yellowish green leaf color gives meaning of freshness, serenity and gentleness of nature created by God.

Meaning from the Way it is Serves

Aside from eating a ketupat in the morning of Eid with family, there punjungan event, that is, delivering of ready-cooked meals at night or early morning to your relatives' houses, starting with the oldest brother's house first. This gives meaning in the Java community, indigenous punjungan which means to give respect and appreciation to older relatives and this makes a family relationship.

Meaning from Customs and Beliefs

Ketupat is also used as a supplement in the human life cycle, for example, for the purpose of four months old baby in the womb. The types of ketupat used in this ceremony to celebrate are ketupat jago, ketupat sinta, ketupat sido lungguh and ketupat luwar the following meanings:

Four types of Ketupat are used, in line with the pregnancy period of four months.

Ketupat Jago - Contains the intention that the baby to be born a male isto be a champion (hero), that is, have the character of a knight and have high status.

Ketupat Sinta - Sinta is a symbol of a beautiful woman and virtuous. In this connection, if child born is a female, she will have beauty and be virtuous.

Ketupat Sido Lungguh - There is a belief that the four-month pregnancy Almighty God breathed spirit into the baby, thus the baby of four months gestation in the womb is perfect outwardly and inwardly, meaning a human who has been given body and soul elements by God Almighty .

Ketupat Luwar - Ketupat Luwar means will be given release. This symbol gives the message that the baby can be borne easily and safely. This symbol also gives the message "ngeluwari ujar", ie fulfilled the expectation. This means the pregnancy is the achievement of the expectations of parents who want a child through the process of pregnancy.

(Retrieved from: Tim Koordinasi Siaran Direktorat Jenderal Kebudayaan, 1995)

Conclusion

The findings have shown that only 20% of households who know how to weave ketupat. This means that in a family with a total of 6 family members, on the average only 2 persons know how to weave ketupat. Among parents who know how to weave ketupat, is only 10% of them. The remaining 10% is among the children who represent the younger generation. The study also shows about 3% of the Malay community know about the symbolic meaning and philosophy behind the art of weaving as a traditional food cake. However, not all practiced these symbols in their daily life as had been practiced by previous generations.

This situation gives the impression that the importance of research done on the ketupat as traditional food philosophy, as a cultural practice can create something of artistic value, and also as a symbol of cultural expressions that have meaning and good practice. It turned out so far, that the public needs to be cultivated again so that they understand the meaning behind cultural activities and social around them that has a meaning that can be used in everyday life. The ketupat should be promoted in an initiative to improve the country's cultural heritage so that it becomes part of the national culture.

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