

Oral Tradition in Preserving the Natural Environment in Kampung Adat Dukuh, Ciroyom Village, Cikelet Subdistrict, Garut District

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Life in kampung adat is always interesting to study. Not only it has different culture than what is fostered by the community in general, kampung adat also has local wisdom that is ardently upheld by its community. One example is an oral tradition in Kampung Adat Dukuh, Ciroyom Village, Cikelet Subdistrict, Garut District, which is known as Uga Mandeling. The oral tradition contains local wisdom in preserving the natural environment. This study aims to further explore Uga Mandeling oral tradition and the extent to which it affects the life of the community. This study applied a historical method with four stages, namely heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography, to analyze Uga Mandeling in Kampung Adat Dukuh. The results show that, in addition to maintaining the natural environment, Uga Mandeling also contains an appeal to lead a harmonious life with other communities as well as the government. This study is expected to contribute to the relevant literature, particularly related to Kampung Adat Dukuh.

Keywords: Kampung Adat Dukuh, oral tradition, Uga Mandeling

Tradisi Lisan dalam Melestarikan Lingkungan Alam di Kampung Adat Dukuh, Desa Ciroyom, Kecamatan Cikelet, Kabupaten Garut

Kehidupan sebuah kampung adat memang selalu menarik untuk dikaji. Bukan hanya karena budayanya berbeda dengan masyarakat pada umumnya, jauh lebih dalam lagi kampung adat mengandung nilai-nilai kearifan lokal yang dipegang erat oleh masyarakat penganutnya. Salah satunya ialah tradisi lisan di Kampung Adat Dukuh, Desa Ciroyom Kecamatan Cikelet, Kabupaten Garut, yang dikenal dengan sebutan Uga Mandeling. Tradisi lisan tersebut mengandung kearifan lokal dalam memelihara lingkungan alam. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk membedah lebih dalam lagi mengenai Tradisi Lisan Uga Mandeling dan sejauh apa pengaruhnya di tengah kehidupan masyarakat. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ialah metode sejarah yang memiliki empat tahapan yaitu heuristik, kritik, interpretasi dan historiografi. Metode tersebut diharapkan dapat menjadi pisau bedah yang membantu penulis dalam mengkaji mengenai tradisi lisan Uga Mandeling di Kampung Adat Dukuh. Hasil dari penelitian ini menjelaskan bahwa selain berisi tentang himbauan dalam memelihara lingkungan alam, Uga Mandeling juga berisi untuk menjaga keharmonisan hidup dengan masyarakat lain dan juga pemerintah. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat menambah khasanah ilmu pengetahuan khususnya yang terkait dengan Kampung Adat Dukuh.

Kata kunci: Kampung Adat Dukuh, tradisi lisan, Uga Mandeling

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INTRODUCTION

Culture is generally projected into the past and vice versa. In understanding the meaning of tradition, however, such notion is actually contradictory. Tradition should be interpreted as something that is progressing over time instead of unmoving, round, or circular. The existing culture in the community is the result of a considerably long and dynamic journey of time. This culture has been preserved from generation to generation to the present time as cultural heritage.

Cultural heritage can be divided into two forms, namely tangible and intangible. Tangible cultural heritage is generally well defined due to its visible form, yet more efforts from the community are required to maintain the existence of culture belonging to the intangible category. However, tangible culture is not arbitrarily identified merely from its form. It also contains a myriad of information implicitly describing the life and knowledge developing in its time.

Intangible cultural heritage is generally related to human activities, such as habits, rites, ceremonies, and custom. In other words, intangible culture depends on the memory and willingness of the community to maintain its existence. Thus, intangible culture faces quite a challenge in the midst of the times and technology that requires people to constantly adapt. It is undeniable that the development of science also leads to demythologization, causing the community to abandon some of their traditions, habits, and even sacred rites. For example, demythologization appears to provide a new and more rational interpretation of *kapamalian* in Sundanese community, in which people once prevented their children from endangering or harming themselves and others by using the word "*pamali*". However, amidst the current development, intangible culture seems to have a wide space in the midst of adat village communities who tend to preserve the cultural heritage of their ancestors. One example of intangible culture strongly attached to adat village community is oral tradition. Oral tradition has a great effect on the life of adat village community. Therefore, oral tradition is an interesting topic to be explored further.

There are several kampung adat (a customary (adat) administrative unit below village) spread in West Java, the biggest of which is Kampung Dukuh in Ciroyom Village, Cikelet Subdistrict, Garut District. The culture fostered in kampung adat generally has an abundance of local wisdom, including oral

tradition. Uga Mandeling is an oral tradition known in Kampung Dukuh. This study will discuss the extent to which Uga Mandeling influences the lives of the people of Kampung Dukuh and regulates the people to respect the nature in particular.

This study aims to provide information regarding Uga Mandeling oral tradition in Kampung Dukuh. It is also part of cultural preservation in the form of scientific documentation. As stated by Hastuti (2013), cultural preservation is divided into two forms, namely by directly visiting the location of the culture (culture experience) and by establishing an information center about the culture that can be functionalized in various forms (culture knowledge) (Hastuti and et al, 2013). This scientific documentation is part of such cultural preservation.

The source used in this study is the manuscript in which Uga Mandeling oral tradition is written. As widely known, sources are pivotal in studies. Sources are divided into written sources and oral sources. The frequently used written sources in studies are manuscripts and texts. The old manuscripts of Nusantara contain not only information about past events, but also the tradition of writing and drawing illustrations. Most illustrations are unique and distinctive to the identity of the people of Nusantara. Furthermore, the existence of texts as written tradition also reflects the prominent thinking culture and achievements in the field of art at that time (Adisasmito, 2018).

However, recent conventional studies encounter a challenge in which numerous past events are not well documented in sufficiently authentic written sources. Oral sources present a novelty in this matter. By using an effective and right criticism process, the authors employed oral sources as other credible sources in addition to written sources.

Known oral sources in studies are divided into oral history and oral tradition. Oral history can simply be understood as selected historical events stored in the memory of each individual (Dienaputra, 2006). This study will further discuss oral tradition instead of oral history.

The term oral tradition is derived from two words, namely tradition and oral. Tradition comes from the Latin word *tradition*, a noun formed from the verb *traderere* or *trader* which means to transmit, convey, and secure. As a noun, *tradition* means a habit inherited from one generation to another over a long period of time that it is attached to the culture of one community group (Sibrani, 2015). In other

words, tradition is related to the distribution of habits that are part of the culture of a community.

Meanwhile, oral tradition is defined as a delivery process through oral media consisting of verbal elements and is conveyed from generation to generation. Thus, oral tradition is not merely limited to verbal elements (partly verbal) but also non-verbal elements. Verbal oral tradition includes chant, folklore, puzzles, rhymes, prayers, and singing folk games. Meanwhile, non-verbal oral tradition includes architectural processes, traditional medicine, dance performances, weaving, folk games, and traditional farming ([Sibrani, 2015](#)).

Oral tradition is also regulated in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 5 of 2017, article 5. According to the article, oral tradition is inheritance passed down from generation to generation by the community, including oral history, fairy tales, pantun, and folklore. Oral tradition is cultural wealth that can preserve local wisdom supposing the community applies them as norm and function in social life ([Hestiyana, 2015](#)). However, oral tradition currently remains marginalized and seen as merely a thing of the past even though it can be a potential and cultural strength to shape and build national identity.

According to Utomo, oral tradition can be a medium for social science education in the community. Two aspects are highlighted: first, it is in line with the human nature as *educandum* creatures who can be educated and receive education from an early age. Second, oral tradition can be a process of transmitting entertaining social values, education, reminiscences, solidarity, togetherness, social control, protest and social criticism functions, and religious functions ([Utomo et al., 2017](#)).

On the other hand, two drawbacks are observed in terms of the language as the medium to introduce oral tradition. First, it is inclined to change easily since individuals as the informants can add or reduce the information contained. Second, it is difficult to be used as justification of historical evidence due to high subjectivity. It frequently renders the story told distorted and deviating. Deviation may be caused by the narrator, the nature of the story, and the conditions under which the story is told. Despite a similar background, the characters and the motif of the story may differ ([Heryana, 2016](#)).

Oral tradition can also be identified as folklore, particularly verbal folklore and partly verbal folklore ([Dienaputra, 2006](#)). Verbal folklore has purely a verbal form whose genre includes (a) folk

speech such as accents, nicknames, traditional ranks and royal titles; (b) traditional expressions such as proverbs, sayings, and bywords; (c) traditional questions such as puzzles; (d) folk poetry such as pantun, gurindam, and syair; (e) folk prose stories such as myths, legends, and fairy tales, and (f) folk songs.

Partly verbal folklore has a combination of verbal and non-verbal elements. Folk beliefs, for example, which "modern" people frequently call superstition, consist of verbal statements in addition to gestures considered to have supernatural meanings, such as the sign of the cross for Catholics to protect an individual from ghost disturbances, or certain objects or gemstones for self-protection or good luck.

Non-verbal folklore has a non-verbal form, despite the verbal method of creating it. It is divided into two sub-groups, namely material and immaterial. Material folklores are folk architecture (adat house, rice barns, etc.), folk crafts, clothing and jewelry, folk foods and beverages, and traditional medicines. Meanwhile, immaterial folklores are traditional gestures, sound signals for communication (*kentongan* in Java or drums in Africa), and folk music.

Based on the above explanation, it is concluded that this study discusses oral tradition related to verbal folklore, namely Uga Mandeling as a proverb, a saying or can also be referred to as a traditional expression.

METHOD

This study employed the historical method consisting of four stages, namely heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography. Heuristics aims to find and collect sources. Criticism seeks to critically examine the obtained sources. Interpretation is required to interpret the sources and obtain objective facts. Lastly, historiography assembles the facts obtained into a historical story ([Kuntowijoyo, 1999](#): 100-102).

In the heuristics stage, the authors used primary, secondary, and tertiary sources, namely books, scientific works, journals, newspaper articles, magazines, and several digital sources. The authors obtained a myriad of information particularly from journals and articles.

The authors conducted heuristics in several libraries including the National Library in Jalan Salemba Raya No. 28A, Jakarta as well as the Library of the

Faculty of Cultural Sciences of Unpad. In this stage, the authors collected sources by interviewing respondents using the method of oral history. Furthermore, the authors visited the location of the study, namely Kampung Adat Dukuh, Ciroyom Village, Cikelet Subdistrict, Garut District. Oral history has three features, namely oral literature, general knowledge of history, and personal memory. The latest has an important position due to its high value of authenticity that directly helps in reconstructing .

Continuing with the second stage of the historical research method, the authors carried out external and internal criticism of the sources obtained and corroborated one source with another to determine the credibility. Regarding verbal sources, namely interviews, the authors also considered the age and mental health of the informants.

The third stage is interpretation. Interpretation in the historical method is divided into analysis and synthesis. The results of interpretation of the aforementioned various sources were combined into a writing in the last stage, namely historiography.

These four stages of the historical method are expected to assist the authors in exploring the information required in the study. This method also helps the authors focus only on the selected topic in this study.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Kampung Dukuh

Kampung Dukuh is located in Ciroyom Village, Cikelet Subdistrict, at an altitude of 390 m above sea level. It is approximately 100 km from the capital of Garut District, reachable by public transportation to Cikelet (the first 80 km) and another public transportation from Cikelet to Cijambe Village. A distance of 8 km from Cijambe T-junction to Kampung Dukuh can be covered by motorcycle taxi or on foot. Due to the road condition, only specific cars can pass and stop at Pamenekan, an intersection to Kampung Dukuh. Kampung Dukuh can be reached from Pamenekan on foot through a 500-m path lined with shrubs and teak trees ([The Office of Culture and Tourism of Garut District, 2015](#), p. 149). Despite the concerning distance, the availability of public transportation to Kampung Dukuh will be able to open access for local and domestic tourists. Traditional assets with wisdom values should be respected, preserved, and even utilized to study traditional architecture and explore custom to develop national identity that will further strengthen the cultural resilience of the nation ([The Office of](#)

[Culture and Tourism of Garut District, 2015](#), pp. 152-153).



Figure 1. The Map of Dukuh Adat Village (Dukuh 40 Umpi) (Source: <https://www.google.com/maps>, accessed on April 16, 2021)

Kampung Dukuh has an area of 5 hectares with an air temperature of 26° (moderate) despite its location on the south coast, presumably because of the dense forest in the north of the village. Perched on the slopes of Mount Dukuh, this kampung is sufficiently remote from other villages. This fact does not hinder communication as road facilities are available, albeit in poor condition. Kampung Dukuh borders Kampung Palasari, Karang Sari Village to the north; Kampung Cibalagung, Cijambe Village to the south; Kampung Nangela, Karang Sari Village to the east; and Kampung Ciawi, Ciroyom Village to the west ([The Office of Culture and Tourism of Garut District, 2015](#), pp. 149-150).

Kampung Dukuh, similar to other kampung adat, firmly adheres to the custom and traditions of its ancestors. The residents adopt a simple lifestyle far from luxury as their ancestors did from generation to generation. Therefore, this kampung has no electricity and electronic equipment such as radio and television.

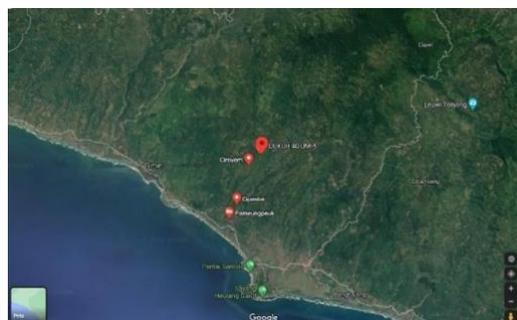


Figure 2. The Satellite Map of Kampung Adat Dukuh (Dukuh 40 UMPI) (Source: <https://www.google.com/maps>, accessed on April 16, 2021)

Kampung Adat Dukuh has a striking difference from other kampung adat, noticeable even from a

distance. The houses in Kampung Dukuh are built in a significantly distinctive shape and traditional style. All face west with thatch or palm fiber roofs and *palupuh* floors. The residents are prohibited from storing luxury goods. Even a bed is not allowed. Thus, they sleep on a mat. ([Darpan & Suhardiman, 2017](#), p. 98).

Kampung Dukuh is a clustered residential unit consisting of several tens of houses arranged in rows on sloping land. Each level has a row of houses stretching from west to east. The houses are built quite close to each other, with paths between them. Kampung Adat Dukuh is situated near to water sources, namely Cipasarangan river and Cimangke river. Therefore, the area has a good level of soil fertility. Establishing villages adjacent to water sources is one of the philosophies upheld by most Sundanese people in West Java, also known as *lemah cai*.

Dukuh Hamlet consists of 2 residential areas, namely Dukuh Luar (*Dukuh Landeuh* = Bottom) and Dukuh Dalam (*Dukuh Tonggoh* = Above), as well as sacred land (*Taneuh Karomah*) where a sacred cemetery (*Makam Karomah*) is located. ([The Office of Culture and Tourism of Garut District, 2015](#), p. 151). As stated by Kustaningrum (2013), the cemetery is positioned on higher land in the north of the village, implicitly showing the hierarchy of *luhur handap* based on the level of importance .

Since its establishment, Kampung Dukuh has survived 4 fire. The first fire occurred in 1949 during Dutch military aggression II, in which the residents deliberately burned their kampung to the ground for fear of it falling into the hands of the invaders. The second fire was set by the government during the Darul Islam/Islamic Armed Forces of Indonesia (DI/TII) Rebellion whose mastermind is Kartosuwiryo to prevent the DI/TII from using Kampung Adat Dukuh with its fertile soil as their base ([The Office of Tourism and Culture of Garut District, 2015](#), pp. 150-151).

Meanwhile, the fire happened in 2006 and 2011 destroyed all houses in Dukuh Dalam (44 buildings, including two mosques and a madrasa) and nine houses in Dukuh Luar. Unlike the previous fire, the 2006 and 2011 fire was purely caused by the carelessness and negligence of a resident in Dukuh Dalam when turning on the stove. It was fortunate that the two incidents took no casualties. As a consequence, a concern was raised regarding houses built with flammable materials. It also led to the decline in the number of residents of Kampung Dukuh Dalam, from initially amounted to 40 houses

to merely 26 houses in 2013. A great number of residents chose to move to Kampung Dukuh Luar or even to another village for fear of another fire in the future ([Muzzayanah, 2013](#), p. 91). Nevertheless, Kampung Dukuh Dalam has been rebuilt and still maintained its ancestral culture.

The people of Kampung Dukuh are homogeneous, leading an isolated life from the hustle and bustle of other cities and villages. According to the current surviving tradition, the people of Kampung Dukuh strictly adhere to *kasauran karuhun* (ancestral advices). These advices recommend a simple life as well as courtesy, to avoid excessive lifestyle and worldly pleasures and to abide by the principle of togetherness. In addition to these advices, they also comply with the pertaining taboos, allowing daily habit and patterns in Kampung Dukuh to be maintained. Furthermore, *kuncen* (caretaker) as a non-formal leader is considered as a protector of custom with highly influential authority ([The Office of Culture and Tourism of Garut District, 2015](#), p. 152).

On average, houses in Kampung Dukuh are divided into *tepas* (front porch); *pawon* (kitchen); and *goah* (warehouse). The houses are stilt houses with long roofs, raised on stilts standing on *tatapakan*. Each usually has a pit to store firewood or serve as cattle pens.

Tatapakan is the lowest part of the house made of whole natural stone to protect the stilts from termites. The stilts, also known as *tihang*, are made of wood or bamboo to frame the house. The *palupuh* floor is made of bamboo slabs, *bilik* (wall) is made of diagonally woven bamboo stalks, while *panto* (door) is made of *Ki Hyang* wooden slabs or boards. In addition, Bungbulang cayur, cempaka, or albasiah wood is also used for frames and windows.

As it is higher than the ground level, each house in Kampung Dukuh has a single flight staircase made of wood or bamboo called *Golodok* connecting the yard with the front of the house. It is also commonly used as a seat. Meanwhile, *suhunan* (roof) is the top part of the house made of thatch or palm fibers. Today, most of the houses use thatch or *eurih* (coated with palm fibers). Observed from the typology, the roof is identified as *suhunan lolompong*, which is a long roof consisting of two planes separated by *bubungan* (a roof ridge).

Based on the story, the name Dukuh is taken from the Sundanese language which means *kukuh*, *patuh*, *teguh* (strong, obedient, and tenacious) in defending what is theirs or in carrying out the traditions of their

ancestors. According to the narrative by Mr Uluk Lukman (2007), the *kuncen* of Kampung Dukuh Dalam, the word dukuh comes from the word *padukuhan* or *dukuh = calik = to sit*. Thus, *padukuhan = pangcalikan* signifies a residential area ([The Office of Culture and Tourism of Garut District, 2015](#), p. 150).

The notable ancestor of the community of Kampung Adat Dukuh is Sheikh Abdul Jalil, a chief of Sumedang during the reign of Regent Rangka Gempol II in the 17th century. Sheikh Abdul Jalil resigned from his leadership due to his disagreement with the policies issued by Regent Rangka Gempol II that frequently did not heed sharia (Islamic legal system). Sheikh Abdul Jalil founded Kampung Dukuh and his descendants live there as an adat community ever since. ([The Office of Culture and Tourism of Garut District, 2015](#), p. 150).

Sheikh Abdul Jalil is a Javanese man who had taken religious education in Mecca since childhood until adulthood. According to Mr Uluk, Sheikh Abdul Jalil returned to Java bringing Zamzam water and soil from Mecca. He agreed to become penghulu of Sumedang District on a condition that *dalem* (regent) in power at that time, Rangka Gempol, would not violate Islamic teachings and wanted to unite with the people ([Muzzayanah, 2013](#), p. 87).

Referring to the history, two envoys from the Sultanate of Banten came to Sumedang when Sheikh Abdul Jalil went to Mecca for the Hajj. The envoy conveyed the message of the Sultan of Banten for Regent of Sumedang to submit to Banten instead of Mataram. The request was rejected by Rangka Gempol and the envoys were expelled from Sumedang. However, Rangka Gempol was concerned about an attack from Banten due to his refusal. Thus, he ordered that the envoys were killed before their return to Banten ([Darpan & Suhardiman, 2017](#), p. 99).

It was kept a secret specifically from Sheikh Abdul Jalil. Upon his return from Mecca, the Sheikh suspected nothing regarding the relationship between Banten and Sumedang. However, the news of the killing eventually reached the Sheikh. As a penghulu dealing with religious affairs, the Sheikh became extremely upset and angry and condemned the malicious act of Rangka Gempol. The Sheikh renounced his position and left Sumedang for the South Garut region. In the end, the Sheikh established a settlement which is now known as Kampung Dukuh ([Darpan & Suhardiman, 2017](#), p. 99).

Sheikh Abdul Jalil taught his children and grandchildren to live a simple life and adhere to Islamic teachings. His descendants still obey his teachings up to the present day. The Sheikh was buried in Dukuh Village and his tomb is significantly sacred, forbidden to be visited except on Saturdays. Moreover, it is also forbidden to cut down the lush forest encompassing the tomb. ([Darpan & Suhardiman, 2017](#): 99).

Subsequent to the death of Sheikh Abdul Jalil, the people of Kampung Dukuh Dalam have been led by a traditional leader called *kuncen*. No specific rules are imposed in the selection of *kuncen*, however the position should be held by a man. According to Mr Uluk, the selection is a series of divine secrets as a journey process ([Muzzayanah, 2013](#), p. 87).

It is undeniable that global development has influenced the condition of a community, including the area where it lives. In the case of Kampung Adat Dukuh, two responses are found. First, maintaining the authenticity of the values that have been passed down from generation to generation by isolating themselves. Second, adapting the new development to the cultural values. Kampung Dukuh is divided into two areas, namely Kampung Dukuh Dalam and Kampung Dukuh Luar. Both areas are interconnected, yet they provide “boundaries” for the sacred area. ([Sriwardani, 2020](#)).

The oral tradition in Kampung Adat Dukuh remains well preserved and passed down from generation to generation. It is evident in the eco-friendly life habits of the community who construct their building from natural materials such as wood, bamboo, and stone and relying on natural products to support their life. The oral tradition firmly upheld in Kampung Adat Dukuh is Uga Mandeling. As previously discussed, oral tradition is an ancestral heritage that contains local wisdom, policies, and life philosophies expressed in chant, proverbs, *petitih*, performances, and traditional ceremonies.

1. Tradition that is passed down from generation to generation (from ancestors) that remains implemented by the community;
2. Assessment or assumption that the existing methods are the best and most correct.
3. Oral tradition or oral folklore;
4. Written tradition of written folklore; (Danandjaja, 1994)

This tradition has become a mandate passed down from *karuhun* (ancestors). In addition, Kampung Adat Dukuh also has three *pacaduan* (bans), namely *pacaduan kampung* (kampung ban) that regulates the shape and content of the house, *pacaduan makom* (cemetery ban) that regulate the procedures for pilgrimages to the sacred tomb, and *pacaduan leuweung* (forest ban) that regulates the maintenance and preservation of forests in the vicinity of the sacred tomb ([Darpan & Suhardiman, 2017](#), pp. 98-99).

The Oral Tradition of Uga Mandeling in Kampung Adat Dukuh

Uga Mandeling, written in Pegon, can also be referred to as the science of Dukuh. Mandeling is usually related to the nature. Pegon is Arabic script used to write Javanese language, a product of Arab acculturation with the indigenous people that is influenced by the rapid development of Islam in the 13th century in Nusantara other than Jawi. Pegon is derived from the Javanese language *pego*, which means cannot pronounce clearly, as numerous Javanese words are written in Arabic and thus sounds strange when pronounced. Historiography using Arabic pegon is believed to have been conducted for generations by the community of traditional Islam as a product of scientific acculturation with the Middle Eastern culture. As the people of Kampung Dukuh are devout Muslims, it is not surprising that the manuscripts in Kampung Dukuh are also written in Pegon. The content of Uga Mandeling reads as follows:

“Dukuh matuh dayeuh maneuh,
nya bumi sarangka eling,
sarangka bumi cahaya,
Janget meunang ngagugula,
Nya taneuh meunang nyucikeun
kyai saur nadati, mas demang panalang sastra
ulah weruh tanpa guru
guru silam ing manusa, manusa dinu sawawa
gunung lindung panglindungan
gunung beber pangbeberan

parahu itu parahu, parahu itu pangeran,
pangeran sabudeureuna,
mikaweruh kupanemu, dikamudi iman suci,
dilayaran tingkah selam, dibosehan ku marifat
kaluhur ku ashadu, ngilik-nglik para mukti,
ngilo-ngilo para pulo, nengteang para muara,
nutata larang jeng basa,
anceg panceg dimuara larang jati”

(Interview with Kuncen of Kampung Adat Dukuh on March 19, 2021)

The rough translation is as follows:

“Dukuh obeys the call of the city,
the earth is a nest of consciousness,
a nest of light,
which is preserved,
The land has been purified
Kyai Saur Nadati, the head of the village
sorting the literature
Do not be a know-it-all individual without a
teacher
human teacher from the past, human of Java
A protected mountain offers protection
A stretching mountain provides revelation

A boat is a boat, a boat is the Creator,
a God of all,
knowledgeable by learning, guided by holy
faith,
sailing in search of experience, enveloped in
ma'rifa
to the top and ashadu, observing mukti,
exploring the islands, looking for estuaries,
regulating prohibitions and language,
staying consistent with the rules”

Uga Mandeling is *elmu hirup* (knowledge of life) for *seuweu putu* (children and grandchildren) of Kampung Dukuh in particular and all of us in general. Dukuh means the world where efforts/processes or *sarangka* (vessels) are directed towards a true place on the Earth of Light, at which we will arrive supposing we obey the rules of the Creator in our life.

“*Ulah weruh tanpa guru, guru silam ing manusa*” in the second paragraph means that knowledge will not be present without a teacher. The human teacher from the past, human of Java can be interpreted as ancestors. In conclusion, knowledge is inherited from the ancestors. “*Gunung lindung panglindungan, gunung beber pangbeberan*” means that a protected mountain offers protection while a stretching mountain provides an explanation or learning. The mountain in this regard is the nature. This sentence describes learning in relation to the nature that is inherited from the ancestors or previous humans. This explanation matches the location of Kampung Adat Dukuh in the inland of Garut, far from urban settlements. In addition, the daily life of the residents who depend on the nature is in agreement with the advices to coexist with the nature provided by their ancestors.

To meet their basic needs of life, the people of Kampung Dukuh generally rely on the nature. They use various kinds of plants as food, medicine, aromatics, perfumes, fuel, and others. The plants in Kampung Adat Dukuh are either cultivated by the

community themselves or growing naturally on the community land (yards, paddy fields, fields, gardens, and roadsides) and the forest. The majority of the residents works as farmers and grow rice in the paddy fields and fields. Other commodities include long beans, bananas, and cassava. The community also grows vegetables such as water spinach and cucumbers. Meanwhile, fruit trees such as papaya, mango, pomegranate, and coconut are commonly grown in gardens and the vicinity of the residential area. The people of Kampung Adat Dukuh also rely on nature for cooking since they cook using *tungku/hawu* (a traditional stove). They collect firewood from dry twigs and snags unsuitable for building materials. They also perform simple traditional medicine using plants based on the ancestral knowledge passed down from generation to generation. The practice is also not standardized with the right dose, but the essence is to process plants to be used for treatment.

The next sentence in Uga Mandeling is “*parahu itu parahu, parahu itu pangeran, pangeran sabudeureuna*”. *Parahu* in this regard is a means of transportation that carry people to various places. The next verse “*parahu itu pangeran, Pangeran sabundeurana*” indicates that we have to remember the teachings of the Creator wherever we go because Allah SWT is everywhere or omnipresent. People should maintain not only their relationship with God, but also with their fellow human beings, by doing good deeds and sharing with one another. In regard to this, Kampung Adat Dukuh has a quite noble culture, in which they share their produce prior to harvesting their gardens, paddy fields, fields, or livestock. They consider it a taboo to harvest and enjoy their produce before donating a portion to the adat house and the nearest government office. The harvest donated to the adat house will be processed for the residents of Kampung Dukuh Dalam in need ([Muzzayanah, 2013](#), p. 91).

The interpretation of the next sentence, “*mikaweruh kupanemu, dikamudi iman suci, dilayanan tingkah selam, dibosehan ku marifat*”, is to increase knowledge by learning, guided by holy faith, applied with good behavior, and encompassed with ma’rifa. The community of Kampung Adat Dukuh has implemented various adjustments in the face of the development of times, but the community also continues to strive to maintain cultural values that contain purity and piety in adat rules. This is reflected in the unwritten rules abided by the local community including not trading in kampung, not using electricity and electronic goods, not being a Civil Servant, not building houses luxuriously, maintaining cultural values through education, and

passing down culture ([Rosaly, 2019](#), pp. 73-74). These rules are enforced to maintain harmony in the life of the community as well as the importance of the community in carrying out worship to Allah SWT.

The last sentence, namely “*kaluhur ku ashadu, ngilik-nglik para mukti, ngilo-ngilo para pulo, nengteang para muara, nutata larang jeng basa, anceg panceg dimuara larang jati*”, implies that the ancestors obediently pay attention to evidence and search for reliable sources in regulating prohibitions and speeches as well as remain consistent with the rules. This sentence is the key meaning of the oral history in Uga Mandeling, proving that the community of Kampung Dukuh has several ancestral advices and sayings passed down from generation to generation, consisting of rules and prohibitions continuously obeyed by the community. These sayings include the following:

“*Dukuh, kukuh, pengkuh, patuh, piwuruk sepuh. Moal unggut kalinuan moal gedag kaanginan moal kalindih ku jaman.*” The saying expresses the strength, obedience, and tenacity of Kampung Dukuh in preserving the teachings of the ancestors amid the current development. This saying clarifies that the community should abide by the teachings of their ancestors and not be influenced and carried away by the currents of bad times.

Kampung Adat Dukuh also has a siloka (Sundanese proverb) which reads “*Sing waspada euy jaga bener eleh ku salah, nu bener jadi salah nu salah jadi bener tapi urang bisa kudu nyumput buni dinu caang*”. It teaches people to be constantly vigilant and righteous, to not justify the wrong and blame the right, and be able to take shelter in a hidden but bright place.

Other siloka are “*Dukuh bakal ngadeg aturan*” and “*Dukuh bakal ngahiji jeng pamarentah*” (Interview with *kuncen* on March 19, 2021). They mean people can adapt and adjust. The people of Kampung Adat Dukuh can always adapt by complying with all applicable government regulations, yet, in return, the government should not intrude into the existing custom in Kampung Adat Dukuh.

Overall, oral tradition in general contains advice that promotes goodness, as found in several tribal cultures in Indonesia. For example, the Sundanese people has an oral tradition summarized in the term “*kapamalian*” that contains various prohibitions or taboos. Observed and interpreted further, these prohibitions and taboos are preventive rather than frightening, protecting the community from actions

that can harm themselves and others. Thus, the existence of oral tradition is constantly preserved as a reminder that our ancestors share and convey their experiences to be valuable lessons for their children and grandchildren.



Figure 3. Together with *kuncen* of Kampung Adat Dukuh (Dressed in black Pangsi (Sundanese shirt) and sarong) (Source: Image taken on March 19, 2021)

CONCLUSION

Uga Mandeling as an oral tradition has an important role in the life of the people of Kampung Dukuh. Uga Mandeling serves not only as local wisdom that is part of the culture, but also as a guideline for the life of the community.

The simple life of the people of Kampung Dukuh, isolated from the life of the outside community, indicates that they have cultural boundaries that not everyone can enter. However, it does not necessarily mean that they close access to the outside world. As stated in Uga Mandeling, the community constantly adapts to the global development and complies with government regulations. Another local wisdom is also reflected in the habit and daily life of the community, shown in the absence of electricity in their daily life and their reliance on the nature for their buildings. These are part of protecting the nature and also specified in Uga Mandeling that teaches to seek knowledge without harming the environment. It makes the community a good friend of the nature. In conclusion, the oral tradition of Uga Mandeling is truly adhered to in the daily life and habit of the community of Kampung Adat Dukuh.

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List of Informants

Mama Uluk (March, 2021), *Kuncen* Kampung Adat Dukuh, interviewed on March 19, 2021 at Bumi Adat Kampung Dukuh Dalam.

Iip (March, 2021), a resident of Kampung Dukuh, interviewed on March 19-20, 2021 at his home in Kampung Dukuh Luar.

Yayan (March, 2021), Head of the Art of Flying, interviewed on March 20, 2021 at his home in Kampung Dukuh Luar.