

The Existence of Crocodile Bread at the Betawi Community Wedding's Offerings in Christian Education Perspective

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Abstract

The use of crocodile bread is very important as part of the offerings at the Betawi traditional wedding ceremony. The 'Seserahan' event is a series that must exist at the wedding where the groom is the giver of material to the bride with a symbolic meaning. In general, the Betawi people believe that the crocodile is an animal with a symbol of loyalty. This article attempts to describe the existence of crocodile bread in a series of 'Seserahan' at Betawi weddings. Crocodile bread is seen as a symbol of the loyalty of the two parties who agreed to build a household and this principle is believed to this day. The study of the existence of crocodile bread in the Betawi people's wedding ceremony, which is viewed from the perspective of Christian education, is expected to provide enlightenment for those who want to observe this local wisdom so that they can add cultural insight. By using a descriptive approach, it is hoped that this study will provide the information needed when discussing the existence of this crocodile bread. Christian education conveys educative information so that people can understand the existence of crocodile bread responsibly based on Christian values.

Keywords: *Crocodile Bread, Seserahan Event, Christian Education.*



A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a big country with great cultural wealth. This country has a variety of cultures and forms groups called ethnic groups which reach more than 740 ethnic groups spread throughout Indonesia from Sabang to Merauke (Alo, 2005; Herryani et al., 2016; Siregar & Yahaya, 2022). As one of the big countries in the world, Indonesia has a diversity that can be seen from the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, races, and religions (Amin, 1995; Heriyanto, 2022; Handayani et al., 2021). The uniqueness of each culture is reflected in the customs and habits that are carried out in society. One of the many tribes in Indonesia is the Betawi community, the majority of whom live in the Jakarta area and its surroundings.

Betawi people are people who really respect the customs inherited from their ancestors (Lestari, 2020). One of the customs that continues to this day is the offerings in marriage. 'Seserahan' is an important wedding tradition because it means proof of the groom's responsibility in the household (Sukaesih et al., 2022; Ramadansyah & Damayanti (2021). According to Kartika (2022) and Fariza et al. (2022), the groom-to-be came to the woman's house together to bring a variety of Betawi specialties, such as fruit, among the special foods, there was crocodile bread. One of the offerings that must be present at the time of application is crocodile bread which is symbolized as a

symbol of fidelity in the marriage bond. Of course, the bride and groom are expected to be loyal to each other like a crocodile who only mates once in a lifetime (Purbasari, 20110; Hariyanto, 2022). This tradition has been going on for a long time from one generation to the next, both individually and in community groups.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the past, crocodile bread was known not for its bread but for its crocodile. Previously using materials from wood, coconut leaves, coconut fiber or other materials that can be formed into crocodiles. Then the crocodile is displayed in front of the house which indicates that the woman has been married to a man (Alfiri, 2015). Crocodile bread, for the Betawi people, is a typical Betawi bread that often appears at weddings. The model is shaped like a crocodile, which has a tail, body, head, teeth, and tail and crocodile bread, which is a typical crocodile-shaped bread with a length of 50 cm and sometimes even up to one meter. Crocodiles are animals that are loyal to their partners where male crocodiles will only marry one female crocodile. This is what makes the Betawi people make crocodiles as a symbol of culture and loyalty, thus crocodile bread is often given as offerings at wedding ceremonies.

Abdul Chaer (2015), in his book *Folklore Betawi*, states that a pair of crocodile buns and a crocodile bun while carrying a child according to the belief of the Betawi people, crocodile bread is a symbol of loyalty in the household. The Betawi people believe that the crocodile is a clean animal, only has one partner, and loves children and family, therefore crocodile bread must be included in the offerings. The etymological term of 'Seserahan' is derived from the word surrender which means to surrender (Poerwadarminta, 2015) and get the affix '-an' to surrender, which is something that is handed over. Seserahan is a ceremony of handing over items as a sign of love to the family of the prospective groom to the prospective bride. These items are also often referred to as peningset. This symbolizes that there is already an affectionate bond between the prospective groom and the prospective bride (Gitosaprojo, 2010; Rahmawati, 2017).

For the Betawi people, 'Seserahan' is a symbolic form in marriage, which has become a tradition and habit as a sign of responsibility and readiness for the groom to convince the prospective in-laws that they are ready to provide a living physically and spiritually for the bride and groom (Siregar, 2021; Dezury & Auliya, 2022). Betawi humanist, Yahya Andi explained that the offering is a gift from the groom to the bride and has a symbolic meaning consisting of a dowry in the form of pineapple betel, crocodile bread, shie crates, jung, kekudang, pesalin and steps (Saputra, 2000). It can be concluded that for the Betawi people, crocodile bread is a symbol of loyalty in marriage ties, therefore crocodile bread is one of the gifts that must be present at the time of offering. They believe that marriage is something sacred and must be done only once, like crocodiles who only mate once in a lifetime.

It is undeniable that Christian education is present amid the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, languages, and traditions that exist in society. Christian education cannot stand idly by but must be able to educate and socialize not be

antipathetic to other cultures without ignoring Christian values. Lawrence O. Richards states that Christian Education seeks to support the growth process; that is, the believer's gradual growth into Christ and manifests his character more and more per Christ's characters (Richard, 2021). In line with this, Jackie L. Smallbones emphasized that Christian Education seeks to help someone to come to know Christ and live and live in Him and even helps them understand what Christianity means in this world (Smallbones, 2015), Christian education based on the Bible as the Word of God must be able to enlighten believers in knowing Christ as a person who is an example in it (Jura, 2020). Thus, Christian education must be a pioneer that can communicate the gospel of Christ's truth to believers so that they have knowledge of Christ, and understand Christian values which ultimately experience change and belief in faith in Christ as believers.

C. METHOD

The study in this paper is qualitative thus, to support the results of the study used descriptive qualitative methods, where researchers want to describe phenomena and problems that occur in the field as they are to get facts (Sugiyono, 2015). Qualitative research is methods for exploring and understanding the meanings that several individuals or groups of people ascribe to social or humanitarian issues (Crasswell, 2012).

Researchers collect and process qualitative data that is described. Qualitative methods are part of the knowledge process, which is considered a social product and, also a social process. Knowledge as a process has at least three basic principles, namely empiricism which is based on facts and data, and objectivity and control (Singleton, 1998). In this study, the author describes the existence of crocodile bread at the wedding ceremony of the Betawi people from a Christian education perspective.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Like other communities in general, Betawi people also have their traditions in their lives. Specifically related to marriage; Betawi people have their cultural pride, one of which is crocodile bread. The use of crocodile bread in the tradition of offerings at Betawi weddings is a staple. It can be said that in every wedding ceremony that carries Betawi customs, you must never leave crocodile bread (Aliffiati, 2021). The Betawi people have placed crocodile bread as an inseparable part of the Betawi people's traditions.

1. The Meaning of Crocodile Bread in the Betawi Wedding Ceremony

For the Betawi people, crocodiles have their own cultural values, and various images that have limits; have placed crocodile bread in a separate place in Betawi culture. Even though crocodile bread has a good place in Betawi culture, various kinds of negative rhetoric arise against crocodiles. Apart from being a wild animal, it is persistent, strong, patient, and loyal to its partner, for the Betawi people, the white crocodile (*Crocodylus*) is a sacred animal (Sihotang, 2020).

According to Rosmadewi, the white crocodile is a mystical animal that is held up as a river watchman which is considered sacred to the Betawi people; and the use of a pair of crocodile bread is a good sign in marriage which is used as a symbol of spiritual power that will later protect the bride and groom (Rosmadewi, 2012). In line with this, Yahya Andi, a Betawi humanist, explained that crocodile bread is a mandatory delivery in this offering because the Betawi people believe the crocodile is a symbol of life that lives in springs around the Betawi people's residence. Aside from being a source of life for crocodiles, they are also animals that are loyal to their partners, so crocodiles are used as cultural symbols of the Betawi people in the hope that the groom will always be loyal to his partner, therefore in the ceremony, the groom is required to bring a pair of crocodile bread (Aliffiyim, 2021).

In carrying out the wedding ceremony, a pair of crocodile buns must be present in the offering of crocodile bread made in different sizes. The larger size is a male crocodile while the smaller size is a female crocodile carrying a baby crocodile on her back, this illustrates the end of the bachelor period (Saputra, 2008). Usually, the bread which has a length of about 50 centimeters is brought by the groom at the offering ceremony. In addition to crocodile bread, the groom also gave a dowry, jewelry, cloth, kebaya, slippers, beauty tools, and some household utensils. Of the number of items handed over, crocodile bread occupies the most important position. We could say it's mandatory by law. Because this bread has its meaning for Betawi residents, namely as an expression of the loyalty of a married couple to live as long as possible (Aliffiyati, 2021).

2. The Existence of Crocodile Bread in the Betawi Community Wedding Ceremony and the Perspective of Christian Education

It seems that Wilkerson's opinion is more appropriate in the context of the existence of crocodile bread at the wedding ceremony of the Betawi people. The church must provide good references in this regard. That is why the church as an institution responsible for Christian Education efforts cannot stand idly by. It must be able to educate the congregation so that it does not lead to an exclusive attitude. The church must be able to create harmony in fostering harmony and continue to guide the congregation so that it maintains Christian values. If it is limited to the offering ceremony by paying attention to the ceremonial aspect alone, then the existence of crocodile bread at the Betawi people's wedding ceremony is acceptable (Bergant, 2002).

Likewise, Norman Wright, emphasized that couples who want to get married should love, understand, complement, serve, receive, and give each other (Wright, 2008). It can be concluded that if a person has decided to marry, he must be ready to build a household, to love one another, to support one another, to provide for one another, and to commit to being loyal to their partner.

For the Betawi people, marriage is something that is important for the bride and groom with both sides of their extended family. The wedding will be carried out in a special and meaningful way; so that whatever the implementation of the Betawi

wedding is simple, it is endeavored to hold the wedding as lively as possible. The existence of crocodile bread in the Betawi community's wedding offering tradition can be viewed from the perspective of the Christian faith. Whether this can be accepted or rejected, depends on the perspective that emerges from the beliefs of the Christian faith. In this regard, Chamber and Haskarlianus explain that there are two views among church members; the first, it turns out that there are still many who think that culture must be abandoned and even removed. Furthermore, it is said that on the other hand there are also those who consider culture from God so that culture can be equated with God's word because it must be preserved and accepted (Chamber, 2015).

From the second point of view, Arie de Kuiper said that the danger of synchronism would be a threat if the gospel was adapted to the culture even for the sake of the authenticity of the culture the gospel was sacrificed (Kuiper, 2010). For the Chamber, the tendency of many people to accept customs blindly, without critically examining the meaning and purpose of the ceremony from the perspective of God's word and the impact of worshiping God. On the other hand, Wilkerson emphasized that the church should be able to build a positive attitude towards the existing diversity so that it can enrich the Christian faith and bring the unity of the congregation to ultimately create an attitude of mutual respect (Wilkerson, 1970). The three opinions above need to be addressed wisely.

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E. CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of crocodile bread in Betawi society has been going on for generations and is even a preserved tradition. For the Betawi people, a pair of crocodile bread in the delivery of offerings at the wedding ceremony is a symbol of life and fidelity, it is hoped that the groom will faithfully provide a living for his partner. The crocodile's loyalty to his partner is because crocodiles only marry once in a lifetime. Culture is a part of human life which is a gift from God that cannot be buried or ignored but must be preserved. Thus, Christian education should actively be able to answer, socialize, educate and communicate cultural diversity by placing customs as part of the life of the congregation without ignoring the essence of the teaching of the Christian faith itself.

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