

# The Value of Character Education in The Ruwahan Tradition at Jajar District Surakarta City

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## Abstract

Character education is hoped can form student strong character. The value of character education can be instilled in students through various things, one of which is through the Ruwahan Tradition which occurs in the Jajar sub-district, Surakarta city. The Ruwahan tradition is a tradition resulting from a mixture of Islamic culture and Hindu-Buddhist culture which aims to pray for ancestors. This research aims to describe the value of character education contained in the Ruwahan Tradition in the Jajar sub-district, Surakarta city. The method used in the research is descriptive qualitative. The data source that the researchers used was a phenomenon that occurred during the implementation of the Ruwahan Tradition in the Jajar sub-district, Surakarta city. Data collection techniques use in-depth interviews and direct observation. Data analysis uses interactive analysis. The results of this research show character education values in the implementation of the Ruwahan Tradition in Jajar Village, Surakarta, including: religious, mutual cooperation, nationalist, and integrity.

**Keywords:** character education, culture, ruwahan traditions.

## 1. Introduction

Educating children to have strong positive characters cannot be separated from the role of parents, teachers, and society. Character education requires intervention and habituation consistently, integrated and carried out with full awareness by the relevant parties (Faiz, 2021). Tsoraya explained that character education is the process of training children to develop values, attitudes, morals, ethics, personality, and good behavior in individuals whose goal is to form individuals who have goodness in morals, ethics, integrity, empathy, responsibility, honesty, discipline, and respect and appreciate other individuals (Ependi et al., 2023). Based on Permendikbud Number 20 of 2018 article 1 that Strengthening Character Education is an educational movement under the responsibility of educational units to strengthen the character of students through harmonization of heart, feeling, thinking, and sports with the involvement and cooperation between educational units, families, and communities as part of the National Mental Revolution Movement.

Character education in students can be instilled in many ways, one of which is through tradition. Indonesia has many traditions inherited from its ancestors. Tradition is a form of culture in the form of activities that are considered good and become guidelines that cannot be changed or removed (Simanjuntak, 2016). Such as the implementation of the Ruwahan Tradition in the Jajar sub-district of Surakarta city. Ruwahan is a ritual performed in the month of Ruwah which according to Javanese calculations is the month before Ramadan. The Ruwahan

ritual is often associated with death, because those who are still alive visit the graves of their ancestors and pray for their souls (Giri, 2010: 89). The Ruwahan tradition is one of the results of a mixture of Islamic, Hindu-Buddhist cultures, with a tendency towards mysticism and pre-Hindu elements (Adib & Saddhono, 2018). In line with this opinion, Ruwahan is a religious ritual carried out by three religions at once, namely Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam (Umam, 2021: 227). The Ruwahan tradition may be seen by some people as not in accordance with Islamic teachings. However, on the other hand, the Ruwahan tradition is seen as local wisdom in terms of its noble values and not only seeing it as a matter of right or wrong, but much more importantly seeing goodness (Rahmaniar et al., 2020: 113-125).

The Ruwahan Tradition is a tradition carried out before the month of Ramadan, namely the month of Ruwah in the Javanese calendar system. Many also say that the Ruwahan Tradition is a tradition to welcome the month of Ramadan. Indana, et al. (2019) explained that the Ruwahan Tradition in the Jepara area, precisely in the Ngendut hamlet, is different from other areas. Ruwahan here is a tradition similar to village alms which is carried out after a large harvest. This tradition is considered as an expression of gratitude to God, especially to the village danyang (baureksa) for the harvest and health they get.

The Ruwahan tradition is not only found in Java. The Ruwahan tradition is also carried out in Palembang, as stated by Niswah (2018: 69-86) in his article, that the Ruwahan carried out by the Malay community of Palembang is a form of cultural acculturation with Javanese culture. The Malay community of Palembang carries out Ruwahan with religious study activities and hajatan or eating together. The purpose of this implementation for the Malay community of Palembang is to pray for ancestors who have passed away and to get closer to Allah SWT. There is another tradition similar to Ruwahan, namely the Aroha Lumatau Dati ceremony tradition in the Hena Lima (Negeri Lima) community located on Ambon Island, Leihitu District, Central Maluku Regency, Maluku Province. Aroha is a religious tradition carried out in the form of building solidarity relationships among the Lumatau Dati clan. This Aroha ritual ceremony is carried out as a form of respect for their ancestors (Soulissa, 2018). Other traditions similar to the Ruwahan tradition include the Suru Maca Tradition, which is a tradition of the Islamic community of Pakkabba village in Takalar district, South Sulawesi province to welcome the arrival of the month of Ramadan. This tradition is not only enjoyed by local people, but also by immigrant communities of different ethnicities and religions (Rahman, 2020).

The Jajar community, especially in RT 3 RW 8, lives side by side closely. There are 150 heads of families with various origins and most of them come from villages. Village communities are considered to have a high sense of care and sympathy compared to city communities. However, there is no scientific evidence regarding this view (Wijayati and Wahid, 2016). This sense of care and sympathy is what causes close relationships between communities and is also one of the driving factors for the Ruwahan Tradition to continue to be carried out. The implementation of the Ruwahan Tradition in the Jajar sub-district is divided into several activities, including environmental cleaning activities, Ruwahan religious studies, and grave pilgrimages or nyadran. The Ruwahan Tradition is carried out in the middle to the end of the month of Ruwah on the Javanese calendar. In the middle of the month of Ruwah, the community begins the Ruwahan Tradition with cleaning activities, both cleaning their own home environment and the surrounding environment.

After cleaning, the community carries out preparations for the Ruwahan recitation. Preparations for Ruwahan recitation include rewang (cooking together) which is attended by women and preparation of the recitation area which is carried out by men. This rewang activity is carried out to prepare dishes for neighbors and for serving after the recitation event. In the evening, after carrying out the Isha prayer, the residents gathered at the house of the resident who was holding the Ruwahan recitation. The recitation is carried out in turns at the homes of residents who want the Ruwahan recitation at home. The date of the recitation is also adjusted to other neighbors so that they do not coincide.

After the Ruwahan recitation, residents visit family graves. This grave visit is carried out between the Ruwahan recitation day and the end of the Ruwah month before entering the month of Ramadan. Grave pilgrimage or nyadran ritual has three values. The first is the value of worship which aims to worship Allah. The second is the value of mu'amalah which aims so that Muslims and their fellow human beings do not discriminate against each other and the third is the value of silaturahmi so that brotherhood is not broken and is harmonious (Rosydiana, 2023). The prayers recited during the grave pilgrimage are for the safety of ancestors in the grave. As in the article written by Purwanti (2014: 54) that in the villages of Gamping Kidul and Geblagan Yogyakarta, the prayers recited during nyadran are in the form of sholawat with the chanting of songs that are a combination of Arabic and Javanese.

The values contained in the Ruwahan Tradition are expected to be used as learning for the younger generation and the general public. A good assessment of the Ruwahan Tradition makes this tradition sustainable and remembered by many people. Starting from this, this study was conducted to determine the values of character education contained in the Ruwahan Tradition so that it can be used for the application of life in society.

## **2. Research Methods**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method, in order to reveal various phenomena in the Ruwahan Tradition that contains character education values in the Jajar sub-district in the form of narrative sentences. This study uses a phenomenological approach that attempts to collect data in the form of various phenomena in society and is interpreted as part of human life (Rorong, 2020: 3). Cultural phenomena are actually truths that occur in a society (Endraswara, 2006: 6). The things highlighted in this study are the existence of character education values that occur in the Ruwahan Tradition in Jajar which is a phenomenon that is carried out from generation to generation by the community here. This study focuses on residents of the Jajar sub-district, Surakarta city, especially in community groups that still carry out the Ruwahan Tradition from generation to generation.

To obtain data, a data collection method is needed which includes: (1) In-depth interviews, so as to get more detailed or in-depth answers. Interview activities were carried out with community leaders, families who still practice the Ruwahan Tradition and several local residents; (2) Direct observation, in this way it can be expected to see the Ruwahan Tradition taking place directly. Through this observation, researchers will know the habits and patterns of interaction of Jajar residents in their daily lives, especially those containing character education values. So it can be expected that the data obtained from this observation will be more complete; (3) Literature study, namely textbooks and articles related to the Ruwahan Tradition.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

The Ruwahan Tradition is a tradition to pray for ancestors. The implementation of the Ruwahan Tradition in Jajar takes place after the 15th of the month of Ruwah or in the middle of the month (*nifsyu sya'ban*). The Ruwahan activity consists of a series of events, namely cleaning the environment, traveling religious studies, and ending with *nyadran/nyekar* activities before entering the Big month or the month of Ramadan. The Ruwahan study is said to be traveling because it is carried out alternately in the homes of residents who wish. The following is an explanation of the character education values contained in the Ruwahan Tradition.

### **3.1. Religiosity**

Jajar Village is geographically located in the westernmost part of Surakarta City and borders directly with Sukoharjo and Karanganyar Regencies. Therefore, Jajar Village, especially in terms of population composition, is a migrant community that is predominantly Muslim. The Ruwahan Tradition is essentially a worship activity to carry out the commands of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala. Starting from the initial activity of the Ruwahan Tradition, namely cleaning oneself and the environment so that the implementation of joint prayers runs smoothly. Because for a Muslim, cleanliness is part of faith. In the next procession, namely sharing food with neighbors, is a manifestation of alms to others. The next event is the implementation of joint prayers led by a local religious figure. The prayers that are read include the *Al-Fatihah* letter, the *Yasin* letter, and prayers that are said for ancestors to be calm and comfortable in the grave. This joint prayer process is carried out in the homes of each resident. Next is the *nyekar/nyadran* procession, namely the grave pilgrimage procession. Grave pilgrimages existed before Islam came, Rasulullah Muhammad *sallallaahu alaihi wasallam* once prohibited his people from visiting graves, but as time went by, grave pilgrimages were allowed again in order to make Muslims remember death.

### **3.2. Mutual Cooperation**

The spirit of mutual cooperation during the implementation of the Ruwahan Tradition occurs when cooking together (*rewangan*). The word '*rewang*' comes from Javanese which means friend. In this case, the community helps each other to make the work easier. In addition to cooking together, mutual cooperation activities are also reflected in village cleaning activities, but now it is more focused on cleaning each house and the house of the host where the Ruwahan recitation event will be held. The purpose of the house cleaning activity is to purify the place where worship or recitation will be held. The value of mutual cooperation also occurs in house and environmental cleaning activities. Residents voluntarily clean the surrounding environment to prepare for the implementation of the Ruwahan recitation as well as preparations to welcome the month of Ramadan. The process of preparing the residents' houses that will be occupied for the implementation of the Ruwahan recitation is also carried out together. Starting from cleaning the place, preparing seats, and providing lighting for the implementation of the Ruwahan recitation.

### **3.3. Nationalism**

The traditions that have developed in society since the time of our ancestors are truly a reinforcement of Indonesian ideology and play a role in maintaining the strength of the nation. Nationalism is a sense of love or pride for one's homeland and nation (Wisnarni & Putra, 2022). Nationalism in the Jajar community is reflected in their actions which from ancient times and from generation to generation continue to preserve the Ruwahan Tradition. The loyalty of the community to the Ruwahan Tradition cannot be separated from the core of the Ruwahan activity, namely praying for parents, siblings, and ancestors who have preceded them. Another form of nationalism in the Ruwahan Tradition is when the community has tolerance for living together in an environment. Putting aside personal life a little and going into society to continue to preserve the Ruwahan Tradition is a form of sacrifice for the common good. This nationalistic attitude is a driving force for the Indonesian nation to remain united and peaceful.

### **3.4. Integrity**

The Ruwahan Tradition strengthens the integrity of the nation. Integrity is an attitude that refers to the consistency between actions and values, principles, and speech (Mahardi, 2015). The integrity of the Jajar people can be seen from the sustainability of the Ruwahan Tradition to this day. The implementation of the Ruwahan Tradition is still carried out well because of the consistency of its people. In addition, the form of integrity of the people in the Ruwahan Tradition is praying for the deceased family with full faith and with a sincere heart. This positive attitude of the Jajar people supports the Ruwahan Tradition to remain sustainable amidst the changing times.

## **4. Conclusion**

The Ruwahan tradition is still preserved amidst the changing times. The Ruwahan tradition has character education values that we can emulate. These values include religious, mutual cooperation, nationalism, and integrity. Character education values can be provisions for the younger generation to have a strong and quality character.

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