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Revitalization of the Bedhaya Amertha Nagari Dance in the Arak Tumpeng Panca Thuk Ritual Pakel Village Bareng District Jombang

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Abstrak

This studi aims to analyze the revitalization process and significance of the Bedhaya Amertha Nagari dance as a key element in the re-enactment of the Arak Tumpeng Panca Thung Ritual in pakel Village, Jombang. The Panca Thuk Ritual, a sacred tradition focusing on the unification of the village's five spiring sources (Panca Thuk), had been dormant for more than two decades. Philologically, this dance (also known as bedhaya Majakirana) was reconstructed through the study of oral tets and the memories of local elders, focusing on the restoration of its authentic choreography, costumes, and karawitan (gamelan) accompaniment. Anthropologically, this revitalization was driven by a collective initiative to preserve cultural heritage and strengthen the community's sense of belonging. The Bedhaya Amertha Nagari philosophy (water of life/immortality for the village) and becomes the peak of the spiritual supplication, representing the unity of natural resources for prosperity and fertility, particulary in the contet of praying for rain. The findings indicate that this revitalization successfully reintegrated spiritual and social values into the community's contemporary life. This process not only revived an artistic heritage but also strengthened the social cohesion and ecological awareness of the community regarding the importance of preserving water sources.

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INTRODUCTION

Among the many existing traditions, there is one ritual called the Arak Tumpeng Panca Thuk ritual in Pakel Village, Bareng District, which is particularly interesting to study. This ritual is part of the traditional bersih desa (village cleansing) ceremony, which historically had stopped for approximately 30 years before finally being revived. The main procession is the parade (arak-arakan or kirab) of the tumpeng (cone-shaped rice) and agricultural produce, accompanied by traditional dances and the unification of water from five springs (panca thuk) located in the village.

The Arak Tumpeng Panca Thuk ritual is performed by the people of Pakel Village as a form of expressing gratitude, prayer, and a means of strengthening togetherness among residents. This ritual does not only display cultural symbols in the form of tumpeng and offerings, but also contains philosophical values related to the relationship between humans and God, nature, and fellow beings (Purnamasari et al., 2021). The procession of the Arak Tumpeng Panca Thuk ritual consists of several main stages: (1) Parade or Kirab, (2) Ciprak Jemparing Dance, Remo Dance, Kabariyah Dance, Dance Mojo Kirana, (3) Panca Thuk, which is the unification of five springs, (4) Amertha Nagari Dance, Mayong Dance, Dewanggo Dance, Sablah-Sablah Dance, (5) prayer, Murak Tumpeng (cutting/sharing the tumpeng), and communal eating.

One of the stages in this ritual is the Bedhaya Amerta Nagari dance. The Bedhaya Amertha Nagari dance is rooted in a tradition backgrounded by the existence of the Panca Thuk tradition in Pakel Village, Bareng District, Jombang Regency, East Java. The loss of a Bedhaya dance that Pakel Village once possessed became the main source of inspiration. Sudarmaji, a village elder and the Head of Pakel Village, explained that the Panca Thuk ceremony is a procession of unifying water from five springs in the hamlets of Jemparing, Curah Paras, Curah Rejo, Pakel, and Wiyu. The water from each hamlet is stored in an kendhi (earthenware jug) for about a month, then unified and released into Sendang Panguripan, the largest spring in Curah Paras. The Arak Tumpeng Panca Thuk procession is interpreted as a tribute to the source of life and a symbol of community unity. This tradition is believed to have existed since the Majapahit era and has been inherited through generations (Sudarmaji, interview 09 November 2025).

In the series of the Panca Thuk Ritual events, there is a Bedhaya Maja Kirana offering dance as a ritual dance. However, this dance does not originate from Pakel Village but is an outside work used in the ritual. Previously, Pakel Village had its own distinctive Bedhaya-shaped dance that was lost, and until now there has been no documentation or writing about the Bedhaya Amertha Nagari dance, leading to an imaginative reconstruction by the choreographer.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in the study titled "Revitalization of the Bedhaya Amertha Nagari dance in the Arak Tumpeng Panca Thuk Ritual of Pakel Village, Bareng District, Jombang Regency" is qualitative research. This research utilizes a qualitative approach with an ethnographic method (Sari et al., 2023). The qualitative research method is a scientific procedure that emphasizes quality and produces descriptive data in the form of words or notes, focusing on the meaning, values, and understanding of a natural phenomenon (Slamet, 2018:39). It is expected that with the qualitative research method, the author can collect data through observation, interviews, and literature studies, so that the data can be processed for analysis and presented accurately.

This research uses a qualitative ethnographic approach. The ethnographic approach was chosen to provide a deep description (thick description) regarding the function, symbolic meaning, and cultural practice of the Bedhaya Amertha Nagari dance within the context of the Arak Tumpeng Panca Thuk Ritual. The type of research is a descriptive case study, focusing the analysis on the process of

revitalization and the rediscovery of cultural values in Pakel Village, Jombang.

The research location is focused on Pakel Village, Bareng District, Jombang Regency. This village was selected due to its consistent execution of the Arak Tumpeng Panca Thuk ritual. The subjects or informants of this study are individuals directly involved and possessing in-depth knowledge of the ritual, including customary figures and village elders, ritual performers, and dancers.

To obtain rich and comprehensive data, this study employed three primary techniques:

1. Participant Observation: The researcher directly engaged in the entire ritual series, from preparation and the arak-arakan procession to the communal meal. Through this observation, the researcher meticulously documented every movement, social interaction, and emotional expression occurring in the field.
2. In-Depth Interviews: Interviews are defined as meetings between two or more people to exchange and obtain various information through questions and answers, which can then be formalized around a specific topic (Sugiyono, 2012: 72). Interviews were conducted with key informants to thoroughly explore their understanding of the ritual's meaning, its historical origin (asal-usul), and any changes that may have occurred over time. These interviews were semi-structured, allowing informants the freedom to narrate their experiences expansively.

Documentation Study: Data collection involved examining written documents, photographs, or videos related to the ritual, sourced from both village archives and mass media. This technique was utilized to complement the data gathered from observation and interviews, as well as to verify historical information.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Form of Bedhaya Amertha Nagari Dance

To analyze the formal structure of the Bedhaya Amertha Nagari Dance, we employ the theorectical framework provided by Slamet MD in his book Melihat Tari (Viewing Dance). The constituent elements of dance often referred to as the science of dance formation include movement, rhythm, expression or emotion (rasa), costume, performance space, and the dancer (Slamet 2016: 40).

A. Movement

Movement in dance is not realistic action but rather a movement that has been given an expressive and aesthetic form (Hidayat, 2020). The Bedhaya Amertha Nagari dance features simple movements, as the choreographer grounded trhe creaction process in traditional movements by collecting existing dance vocabularies (sekaran) and incorporating and exploration of water movements, there by creating an impression of flow and expressiveness. The Bedhaya Amertha Nagari dance also presents the symbolic figure of Dewi Gangga, who is viewed as the goddess bringing fertility and life-giving water. Bedhaya Amertha Nagari is presented as a group dance consisting of seven dancers. The presence of these seven dancers represents spiritual forces that provide guidance and assistance to the community in maintaining harmony between humanity and nature, much like water serves as the life source that connets the five hamlets within Pakel Village.

B. Makeup and costume

Makeup is an artistic element that serves as a crucial support in a performance. It is highly perceptible to the audience, as makeup allows viewers to discern the character being portrayed, although it is also used simply to enhance appearance (Ali Ibrahim & Rahmah, 2019). Furthermore, according to Hadi (2007: 79-80), makeup and costume are

essential in dance performance, not merely for completing the visual staging, but rather because they are indispensable components that enhance the aesthetic quality of the performance. The makeup used in the Bedhaya Amertha Nagari dance is a bold style. In outdoor performances where dancers are exposed to direct sunlight, sharp and defined makeup is necessary to ensure that facial expressions remain visible to the audience from a distance. Furthermore, bold makeup conveys an impression of authority and sacredness.



Figure 1. Makeup Dancer (Source : Bedhaya Amerta Nagari, 09 November 2025)

According to (Sujana, 2015), the costumes (busana) utilized in a dance must be appropriate for the choreographic requirements. The costume forms an integral unit, contributing significantly to the overall aesthetic value of the dance. Furthermore, the function of costume is to support the theme, highlight the character, or clarify the role within the dance or dance drama presentation. Similarly, the accessories worn carry specific symbolic meaning.

The specific costuming elements for the Bedhaya Amertha Nagari dance are detailed as follows:

1. Dodot Alit (Small Ceremonial Cloth): The dodot alit used features the sidoasih motif, which symbolizes fertile and prosperous life.

2. Kain Samparan (Skirt Cloth): The kain samparan is blue, signifying coolness and the clarity of water. The trailing samparan cloth creates a visual effect resembling a flowing river when the dancers flick or sweep the fabric.

3. Blue Sash or Sampur (Selendang): A blue sampur is utilized, bearing the *gendologiri* motif.

4. Blue Arm Cloth: A blue cloth is worn on the arms, functioning as an embellishment and a modification of the traditional *klat bahu* (shoulder ornamentation).

5. Slepe (Belt): The use of red on the belt or slepe provides a dynamic contrast. Red symbolize the courage and self-confidence of the community in facing life's challenges.

6. Totok (Torso Ornament): A gold-colored totok is worn over the torso area.

7. Gelung Gedhe (Large Hair Bun): a large traditional bun mae using pandan leaves. The use of pandan provides a natural, fragrant aroma.

8. Head Ornaments: These include a hair comb (*sirkam*), three *cundhuk mentul* (trembling flower ornaments), two roses, a *panetep* (forehead decoration), and a string of jasmine (roncean melati).

9. Jewelry: The use of gold-colored jewelry, including necklaces, bracelets, earrings (*giwang*), and ear ornaments (*sumping*), conveys a sense of glamour and signifies majesty/grandeur (keagungan)



Figure 2. Costume Dancer (Source : Bedhaya Amertha Nagari, 09 November 2025)

A. Stage arrangement

Stage arrangement is essential in any performance. According to (Puspitasari, 2016) and (Fitriah & Lutfiati, 2014), every performance inherently requires a stage or a specific venue for the presentation. There are various types of performance venues, including arenas, proscenium stages, open-air stages (central stages), and closed or frontal stages. The venue used for the Bedhaya Amertha Nagari dance performance is an open-air or outdoor stage located near Sendang Amertha. An open-air stage, also known in performing arts terminology as an open proscenium stage (open stage), is a performance area that frequently utilizes a natural background. The Sendang (natural spring) is no longer merely a background, it is an integral part of the performance itself. As the dancers move to present the dance, a dialogue unfolds between human motion and the stillness of nature. The backdrop of trees and the surrounding ambient sound provide acoustic and visual dimensions that cannot be replicated on a closed proscenium stage.

B. Lighting

Lighting refers to the arrangement of light or illumination during a performance (Elina et al., 2018). According to the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (KBBI), light is defined as radiance or brightness such as that from the sun, lamps, or the moon that enables the eyes to perceive the images of objects. Sunlight produces white light consisting of a spectrum of electromagnetic rays, including gamma rays, X-rays, ultraviolet rays, visible light, microwaves, radio waves, infrared rays, and radiation energy classified by sequential wavelengths (Arya Tangkas, 2020). Because the Arak Tumpeng Panca Thuk ritual is held from morning until noon, the performance of the Bedhaya Amertha Nagari dance does not utilize artificial lighting. Consistent with the KBBI definition of light as sunlight, this dance relies on natural light. The use of sunlight creates colors that are honest and clear. The spectrum of sunlight hitting the dancers gold accessories creates a natural shimmer that shifts dynamically with the sun's movement. This enhances a sense of realism and groundedness, illustrating how the dance is an authentic part of the universe's natural cycle (from morning to afternoon) rather than a simulation created by artificial light.



Pictures 3. Lighting Bedhaya Amertha Nagari
(Source : Bedhaya Amertha Nagari, 09 November 2025)

C. Musical Accompaniment

According to (Irawati & Dewi Astini, 2022), a comprehensive power is the means, a recording of feeling is the artistic goal, while technical skill is the material. As we know, performing arts is a form of art whose expression can be enjoyed by the audience through the senses of sight or hearing therefore, a performing arts presentation must be truly organized and packaged so that it can be enjoyed by everyone across various circle (Irawati, 2017). The musical accompaniment in the Bedhaya Amertha Nagari dance is presented via MIDI however, it still presents an atmosphere that feels sacred. In this Bedhaya, the music serves as both a regulator of movement tempo and builder of atmosphere. The calm yet constant rhythm reflects the unending flow of water, drawing the audience into a contemplative state. The musical accompaniment for the Brdhaya Amerrtha Nagari dance utilizes the Gamelan Laras Pelog Pathet 5.

Revitalization of Bedhaya Amertha Nagari Dance in The Arak Tumpeng Panca Thuk Ritual

The discussion of revitalization is outlined using the theory of dance revitalization by Sri Rochana Widyastutieningrum. According to Sri Rochana Widyastutieningrum, revitalization is an important concept in the preservation an development of traditional arts so that they remain relevant and sustainable amidst changing times. Revitalization is carried out as an effort to develop a dance through several activities, including excavation, recontruction, reinterpretation, and reactualization od the dance, which basically aim to revive, preserve, actualize, and make a dance more valuable (Sri Rochana Widyastutieningrum, 2012).

A. Excavation

Pakel Village's existence is rooted in the glory of the royal city of Jemparing, a territory of the Majapahit Kingdom renowned for its formidable Majapahit warriors. Cupu Jemparing during the Majapahit era now constitutes part of Pakel Village. To date, Pakel functions independently as a village with a long history, comprising five hamlets: Jemparing, Curah Paras, Wiyu, Pakel, and Curah Rejo. It is in Pakel Village that the customary tradition, the Arak Tumpeng Panca Thuk Ritual, is found, though it had been dormant for approximately 30 years. The ritual serves as an expression of the village's gratitude for the water sources found in the five hamlets, which continue to flow consistently.

In the series of the Arak Tumpeng Panca Thuk Ritual events, the Bedhaya Maja Kirana dance is presented as an offering dance, though it is not indigenous to Pakel Village. Previously, Pakel Village possessed its own Bedhaya-form presentation that was lost the Bedhaya Amertha Nagari dance.

B. Recontruction

The creator or choreographer of the Bedhaya Amertha Nagari dance, Ervinta Dyah Pancarini, sought to perform an imaginative reconstruction due to the lack of documentation or written records regarding the dance. This condition emphasizes the vital role of the creator in not only preserving but also revitalizing tradition through the creation of a dance work rooted in the ritual values of Pakel Village. This effort is based on the Mutrani concept, a creative method that re-explores existing data to revive the spirit and local cultural identity. The creator ensures that every element—ranging from the exploration of water movements and traditional movements to the symbolism of the number seven (pitu)—has a strong logical and academic foundation to realize a group dance that reflects the harmony, unity, and respect of the Pakel Village community toward the source of life.

To realize this imaginative reconstruction, the Bedhaya Amertha Nagari dance is divided into three scenes that depict the spiritual journey of the Pakel Village community in guarding the source of life. Each of the three scenes possesses a specific atmosphere, meaning, and character poured into the work's flow:

First Scene, Begins with kapang-kapang movements and ogekan lambung with a mysterious nuance, symbolizing the flow of water and the beginning of life. This is followed by srisig and then sembahan as a form of respect to the sendang (spring), followed by water-collection movements that reflect togetherness and mutual cooperation (gotong royong).

Second Scene, Displays the process of storing and unifying the water. Slow movements accompanied by tembang (song) depict the Arak Tumpeng Panca Thuk Ritual as a symbol of unity and purity.

Third Scene, Illustrates the larung (floating offering) procession in a sacred atmosphere, ending with a lively kapang-kapang exit, marking gratitude and harmony between humans and nature.

C. Reinterpretation

The Arak Tumpeng Panca Thuk Ritual serves as the philosophical substance of the Bedhaya Amertha Nagari

dance, which carries a religious theme. The meaning of this dance is an expression of respect and gratitude toward the source of life and a symbol of community unity, manifested through the procession of unifying water from five springs. Amertha (water) is elevated as the primary symbol of fertility, life, and unity. The presence of the figure of Dewi Gangga as the goddess of water and bringer of fertility further strengthens this concept.

Seven dancers were chosen to represent spiritual power: five dancers depict the five water sources present in each hamlet, while the other two dancers symbolize nature and humanity.

D. Reactualization

At this stage, the work is actualized after undergoing reconstruction and reinterpretation. The Bedhaya Amertha Nagari dance is performed on an open stage without the use of artificial lighting because the Arak Tumpeng Panca Thuk Ritual is not held at night. Under natural light—specifically the radiance of the sun—the Bedhaya Amertha Nagari dance is presented in dodot attire, featuring blue samparan cloth and a blue selendang (shawl). The jewelry worn, such as bracelets, earrings, sumping (ear ornaments), necklaces, cundhuk mentul (trembling hairpins), and sirkam (hair combs), provides a glamorous impression. Within this Arak Tumpeng Panca Thuk Ritual, the event serves as a medium to introduce the artwork to the wider community in an attractive package, while simultaneously ensuring the process of cultural inheritance (regeneration) through training.

CONCLUSION

This research examines the revitalization efforts of the Bedhaya Amertha Nagari Dance as a core component within the annual Panca Thuk Ritual (the unification of five springs) in Pakel Village, Jombang Regency. This revitalization was initiated to maintain the authenticity and spiritual function of the dance amidst the currents of modernization.

The Bedhaya Amertha Nagari Dance is proven to have a dual function: it serves as a sacred ritual medium soliciting safety and natural fertility (within the Panca Thuk Ritual) and as a symbol of the cultural identity of the Pakel Village community. This revitalization successfully restored the dance's position as the primary spiritual and aesthetic ritual within the Panca Thuk ceremony, a role that was previously in danger of fading.

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