



***Keduk Beji* Tradition: The Roots of Implementing Deep Ecology
Environmental Ethics in Tawun Village**

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Abstract

To preserve the environment and culture, the people of Tawun Village in Ngawi Regency routinely carry out the *Keduk Beji* tradition once a year. This tradition is an annual ritual to clean Sendang Tawun, which aims to maintain ecological balance and prevent the emergence of disasters or plagues. The routine of the Tawun community in carrying out this tradition is based on the oral tradition of “the legend of Sendang Tawun” regarding the origin of Tawun Village. The existence of a tradition that is closely related to the environment has a significant impact on the ecological balance in Tawun Village. This study aims to (1) describe the correlation between *Keduk Beji* tradition and the legend of Sendang Tawun, (2) describe the procession of the *Keduk Beji* tradition, and (3) describe the implementation of deep ecology environmental ethics in the *Keduk Beji* tradition. This research is qualitative research with the object of study being the *Keduk Beji* oral tradition carried out in Tawun Village, Ngawi Regency. The method used in this study is ethnography, which provides a comprehensive understanding of the impact of implementing the *Keduk Beji* tradition. Data collection techniques are done through interviews, observations, and documentation studies. The study results show that the Tawun community applies environmental ethics (principles of deep ecology), which are guided by the values inherited from their ancestors. This study distinguishes between empirical reality in the form of cultural practices of the community in the *Keduk Beji* tradition and ideal values contained in the principles of deep ecology as a reference in environmental conservation.

Keywords: *oral tradition; keduk beji; environmental ethics; deep ecology*

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, environmental issues often occur all over the world. It is important to understand that environmental problems are not just technical issues. Environmental problems are issues of ethics, morality, and human behavior. (Keraf, 2010). The global crisis currently affecting humanity is a global

moral issue. Natural disasters or environmental damage that befall humanity are a result of human behavior that is exploitative (Gufron & A. Hambali, 2022). One concrete example is the melting of the Arctic caused by global warming. This arises from human exploitative behavior, which continuously involves burning fossil fuels. The

problem stems from a perspective that considers humans as the center of the universe and that only humans hold value, while the universe and its contents are merely tools for satisfying and complementing human needs (Keraf, 2010). That perspective ultimately gives rise to an exploitative nature without regard for nature, as humans are the only ones with value. (Keraf, 2010).

The most important thing for humans to do as one of the elements of the ecosystem on this earth is to adapt (Abdoellah, 2017). Without nature and other creatures, humans cannot survive, as humans are one of the entities in this universe that need and are needed (Keraf, 2010). According to Arne Naess (Keraf, 2010), the environmental crisis can be addressed through a radical and fundamental change in how humans view and behave towards nature. Instilling environmental ethics that can guide humanity to interact positively with nature is necessary. The moral demands that apply in social communities are also applicable in biotic and ecological communities (Keraf, 2010).

A sense of responsibility is needed to provide a sufficient measure for humans to utilize their surroundings. Thus, humans have a moral obligation and responsibility toward all life in this universe. (Nurkamilah, 2018). Through environmental ethics, humans are expected to instill a love for the environment and strive to preserve it. Because fundamentally, among all living organisms and physical factors, they can shape their environment (Barlian, 2020).

Tawun Village still cultivates traditional wisdom that races towards environmental ethics in this modern era. This traditional wisdom refers to all forms of knowledge, beliefs, understanding, or insight, as well as the ethics that guide the Tawun community in living within their ecological community (Keraf, 2010). All of that traditional wisdom is experienced, practiced, taught, and passed down from one generation to the next, thereby shaping the behavior patterns of the community. Tawun Village has a 'Sendang Tawun' legend, marking the beginning of the *Keduk Beji* tradition. This legend emerged in the year 1500, specifically during the Pajang Kingdom, containing an oral tale passed down through generations about the naming of Tawun Village and the emergence of the water source in Sendang Tawun.

This legend has been preserved orally from generation to generation, as it contains values and local wisdom that reflect the community's perspective on nature and the relationship between humans and nature. In addition, this legend serves as an identity and characteristic that can strengthen the sense of togetherness and family among the people of Tawun Village. This culture is not only inherited as knowledge or wealth, but should also be internalized and its values applied. This cultural practice continues to occur annually in the form of the *Keduk Beji* tradition.

This tradition consists of various activities focused on environmental preservation wrapped in a culture. Some of the activities include cleaning the village, springs,

and the surrounding areas (Fitriani et al., 2022). Not only to preserve local culture, but each cultural activity is accompanied by activities that focus on environmental care and preservation, which have been implemented since the birth of this tradition. This aims to reduce the potential for environmental issues. Thus, it can be concluded that the birth of the *Keduk Beji* tradition is influenced by cultural factors and ecological factors (Poerwanto, 2000).

'*Keduk Beji*' comes from the Javanese language, where '*Keduk*' means cleaning and deepening water channels, while '*Beji*' is the name of the spring where the water source is located. This spring also serves as irrigation for the farmers' housing and rice fields. *Keduk Beji* is held at Sendang Beji, which is located in the village of Tawun. The tradition is participated in by the entire community of Tawun and is watched by thousands of surrounding residents. Because it is located in Tawun Village, the spring is called Sendang Tawun. It is said that the community believes this tradition must be carried out every year to maintain ecological balance and ward off disasters. The community's belief in these myths continues to grow, shaping the mindset and behavior of the Tawun community about the surrounding ecological community.

Humans' mindsets and behavior patterns towards the environment have their guidelines, which are known as environmental ethics. There are three theories of environmental ethics, namely anthropocentrism, biosentrism, and ecocentrism (Kerap, 2010). This ethics is used

as a reference for humans to adapt to the environment. The theory of anthropocentrism considers that humans are the center of the universe and only humans have value over themselves. Meanwhile, the universe and everything in it are complementary to supporting human life. Therefore, humans need to practice ethics and morality only within the scope of social communities.

Unlike the theories of biocentrism and ecocentrism, these two theories consider that humans are not the only beings with value. Biocentrism views that all living beings have intrinsic value, so ethics and morality also apply to biotic communities. The theory of ecocentrism is an extension of biocentrism, which holds that all elements in the universe have value, whether biotic or abiotic. All elements in the universe are meaningful and have a reciprocal relationship with one another. Therefore, ecocentrism theory considers that ethics and morality must be applied across the entire community, whether social, biotic, or abiotic. Thus, ecological balance will be achieved (Kerap, 2010).

The Tawun community has beliefs and traditions regarding the equality of elements throughout the universe. Humans, animals, plants, and water have significant meanings for humans. This can be seen in the spiritual beliefs of the Tawun community regarding myths related to the *Keduk Beji* tradition. Among these myths are those related to the instruments used in the tradition, water sources, sacred springs, and sanctified animals. Through the belief of the Tawun community in that myth, the community

consciously respects the existence of every element in this universe. This proves that the Tawun community adheres to one of the principles of environmental ethics: respect for nature. In this regard, the Tawun community respects fellow living beings and acknowledges that all living beings and organisms in this universe have the same status. Thus, it can be concluded that the Tawun community also implements environmental ethics, particularly regarding the first principle of ecocentrism, called *Deep Ecology*.

According to Naess, in *Deep Ecology*, there are five principles of the environmental movement. These five principles include: 1) the recognition that all organisms and living beings have equal status and thus equal dignity; 2) non-anthropocentrism; 3) self-realization of one's potential to be beneficial to nature; 4) recognition and appreciation of ecological diversity and complexity; and 5) the need for a change in politics towards ecopolitics. These five principles are the foundation of the environmental movement carried out by *Deep Ecology* of Arne Naess. This research discusses how the Tawun community implements the principles of the Deep Ecology environmental movement through the *Keduk Beji* tradition. In addition, this study also explores how the oral tradition of "*Legend of Sendang Tawun*" shapes the mindset of the Tawun community to continue preserving the *Keduk Beji* tradition.

Purba has conducted research on oral traditions (Purba et al., n.d.) from the National Research and Innovation Agency titled "*Tiba Pinah*", the Ritual of Rejecting

Calamity of the Bajau People in Tojo Una-Una Regency, Central Sulawesi, which aims to understand the process of implementing the *Tiba Pinah* tradition held in Tojo Una-Una Regency, Central Sulawesi. The oral tradition of Bakaua was also researched by Pramayoza (Pramayoza, 2022) under the title "*Dramaturgy of Bakaua in Minangkabau Society: A Study of the Ritual of Rejecting Calamity from the Perspective of Victor Turner*". This study discusses the rituals, meanings, and symbols of the *Bakaua* ritual implementation. A similar study on oral traditions regarding Tolak Bala was also conducted by Madriani (Madriani, 2021), titled "*Living Theology of the Tolak Bala Bepapas Tradition in the Community of Parit Setia Village, Jawai District, Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan*". This study examines Islam as it exists in the Parit Setia community, aiming to understand the meaning of the *tolak bala Bepapas* tradition, the community's theological understanding of the *tolak bala Bepapas* tradition, and the Islamic values contained within this tradition.

Research on environmental ethics titled "*Ecophilosophy 'Deep Ecology' Ecocentric Perspective on Deep Ecology Ethics*" conducted by Sarah, Yuli, and Hambali (Sarah & Yuli A. Hambali, 2023). This study discusses the ecocentric perspective on deep ecology. Syuhadah also conducted a similar study (Syuhadah, 2024) In her thesis, she discusses environmental ethics in the Forest Semah tradition of the *Sakai* Tribe in Kesumbo Ampai Bathin Solapan. The research focuses on uncovering the position and function of traditions for the local community.

Environmental ethics theory is also discussed in the study by Putra and Wahyuni (Putra, 2021). The study discusses the importance of implementing environmental ethics and ecological concepts in the *tumpek wariga* ceremony. Research on the *Keduk Beji* tradition can be found in the Journal of Historia, by Habsari (Habsari, 2018). In 2018, a socio-religious study was used to analyze theoretical monotheism in the *Keduk Beji* ritual in Ngawi Regency. The article explains the origins of the ritual, the ritual process, the philosophical meaning of the ritual, and the impacts of the ritual from sociological and religious aspects.

The research on the *Keduk Beji* tradition that has been conducted discusses the functions of the *kenduri mantra*, the symbolic meanings of the traditional processions, socio-religious studies, and the existence of the tradition itself. Unlike previous studies, this research explains how the Tawun community applies environmental ethics (*deep ecology*), guided by the values inherited from their ancestors through the *Keduk Beji* tradition. The basis of this research is the concern of the Tawun community for the environment. Therefore, ecological balance can be created, and environmental issues in Tawun Village can be reduced. This is because deep ecology not only focuses on solving short-term problems but also seeks the root of the issues to find a solution (Satmaidi, 2015). Research results show that the Tawun community applies Naess's five principles of the deep ecology movement. This implementation is reflected in the *Keduk Beji* tradition, which is

carried out by the Tawun community with great solemnity. Spiritual beliefs, respect, and recognition of the equality of value among all elements of nature are the foundation for the annual celebration of the *Keduk Beji* tradition.

Based on the background above, this research aims to (1) describe the correlation between the *Keduk Beji* tradition and the legend of Sendang Tawun, (2) describe the process of implementing the *Keduk Beji* tradition, and (3) describe the implementation of environmental ethics in the community of Tawun Village. Research on Deep Ecology environmental ethics within this tradition is expected to broaden the public's perspective on the importance of maintaining ecological balance to reduce the environmental issues that have recently been under global scrutiny.

METHOD

This research is an ethnographic study focusing on the *Keduk Beji* tradition practiced by the Tawun community. Ethnography is a research model that focuses on the perspectives of the community regarding a phenomenon, with the object of this research being the *Keduk Beji* tradition (Manan, 2021). The research conducted in Tawun Village, Ngawi Regency, uses qualitative research to study objects naturally, focusing on meaning and guided by facts.

The approach was carried out qualitatively and descriptively, presenting cultural data in detail to understand the cultural phenomena in the *Keduk Beji* tradition. The data in this research is divided into primary and secondary. Primary data consists of interview results with informants and field

observations of the ritual location. Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained from video observations of the ritual execution taken by the Tawun village authorities. This data triangulation aims to ensure that the data obtained from informants is valid.

Researchers employed Spradley's informant selection technique (Sugiyono, 2018) To obtain rich and valid data. The criteria for informants who can provide valid and in-depth information include individuals directly involved in the culture (cultural actors), who can express their views, have the time and willingness for interviews, possess knowledge about the *Keduk Beji* tradition, and are willing to cooperate with the researchers. This technique of informant selection begins with the selection of key informants, who, in this research, are the Secretary of Tawun Village, Mr. Lanjar.

The technique for determining the second informant is snowball sampling, where key informants recommend other individuals with relevant understanding and insights. During the interview with the first informant, Mr. Lanjar recommended Mr. Patut, who is the key figure in implementing the *Keduk Beji* ritual. The researcher conducted unstructured interviews with both informants about the *Keduk Beji* tradition while observing at Sendang Tawun.

The researcher used observation, note-taking, and recording techniques during the interview to ensure that the data collected was well-documented and accurate. The data required for this research is descriptive, consisting of what the sources convey verbally

and in writing. The collected data includes legends that underpin the tradition, preparations leading to the implementation of the *Keduk Beji* tradition, the media used in the tradition, the people involved in the process, and the urgency of carrying out the ritual. Through interviews and video observation of the ritual implementation, the researcher could observe the sequence of traditions, cultural activities, and values within the *Keduk Beji* tradition.

The data analysis technique used after data collection in this research is data reduction, where the researcher reads the data as a whole to condense and categorize it. The second step in the analysis of this research is presenting the data in the form of a description (Sarosa, 2021). The theory used as a reference in this research is Naess's deep ecology environmental ethics theory, which proves that the *Keduk Beji* tradition is one form of implementing environmental ethics and impacts the ecological balance in Tawun Village.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Correlation of the *Keduk Beji* Tradition and the Legend of Sendang Tawun

The essence of the existence of Sendang Tawun is a water source formed by the ascetic practices (Fitriani et al., 2022) This gave rise to a tradition in the community, namely the *Keduk Beji* tradition, which is carried out by the Tawun people every year. Rooted in this event, a form of literature, or more specifically, oral literature, the legend of Sendang Tawun was spread and passed down orally. This legend became known in the 15th century

during the Pajang kingdom. This event marked the starting point for the regular cleaning of the sendang, which is one of the important processes in the *Keduk Beji* ritual today.

At that time, two travelers were Ki Ageng Mentawun and Nyi Ageng Ketawang. They fled from the conflict of the Majapahit kingdom until they eventually found a nameless village. They decided to name the village 'Desa Tawun', taken from the last name of Ki Ageng Mentawun. The couple disguised themselves as ordinary farmers like the locals, cultivating secondary crops such as rice, corn, sweet potatoes, cassava, and soybeans. After living in the village for some time, they were blessed with two sons, Prabu Hascaryo and Raden Ludrojoyo. When Prabu Hascaryo came of age, he was invited by his uncle, Polowito, to the Pajang kingdom.

Unlike Ki Ageng Mentawun's first son, Raden Ludrojoyo had a passion for farming. At that time, the people of Tawun were experiencing difficulties due to a water shortage and drought in their fields. Raden Ludrojoyo asked permission from his parents to meditate at Sendang Beji, located in Tawun. Raden Ludrojoyo meditated to plead with God to grant the people of Tawun ease in obtaining irrigation water for their fields.

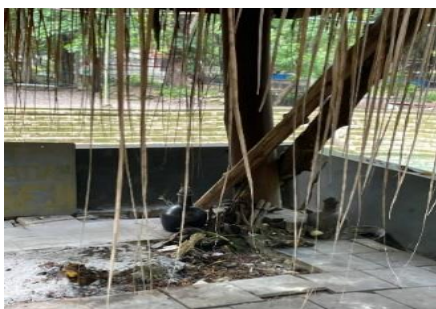


Figure 1. Place of Meditation

After obtaining permission, Raden Ludrojoyo performed a meditation that started on Thursday *Kliwon* and continued until Tuesday *Kliwon*. While meditating on Tuesday *Kliwon* at 11:00 PM WIB, Raden Ludrojoyo heard a voice directing him to meditate facing south. The voice used Javanese, which in Indonesian means, '*Child, move your meditation to the north, then you can sit cross-legged and meditate facing south*' as the voice faded away, there were three loud explosions that sounded like a volcanic eruption, even though the area was not mountainous. The sound was so loud that it woke the residents from their sleep, and they rushed towards the source of the sound, which was suspected to be from Sendang Tawun. When they arrived at Sendang Tawun, the people who had previously witnessed Raden Ludrojoyo meditating were astonished because he suddenly disappeared (*mukso*).



Figure 2. Sendang Tawun

The residents began to walk towards Sendang Tawun to confirm the presence of Raden Ludrojoyo. However, before they could search, they were astonished by a huge water source at Sendang Tawun. The residents and the parents of Raden Ludrojoyo tried to cover the source with stones, so that the water would

not flow too heavily. Additionally, there were soft-shelled turtles (*bulus*), snakehead fish (*khutuk*), and catfish (*wader*) in the spring. All the residents hurried to search for the presence of Raden Ludrojoyo in the spring and its surroundings. Even though they did not find him for days, the locals continued to assist in the search efforts until Tuesday *Kliwon*.

The residents drained the water from the spring until it was clean and hoped to find Raden Ludrojoyo, but the results were nil. Raden Ludrojoyo has not been found to this day. The people of Tawun Village are grateful to have an extraordinary water source. However, they are also sad because they cannot find Raden Ludrojoyo as a tribute. To remember Ludrojoyo's sacrifices for the plight of farmers, a village cleaning and spring cleaning is held once a year in Tawun Village.

The cleaning of the spring and its surrounding area initially was an effort by the people of Tawun Village to seek the presence of Raden Ludrojoyo. Although this effort did not yield results, the people of Tawun continue to clean the spring regularly. The spiritual beliefs and respect of the community have turned this spring-cleaning process into a ceremony as part of an ancestral tradition known as *Keduk Beji*.

Thus, it can be concluded that the *Keduk Beji* tradition strongly correlates with the Sendang Tawun legend. The Sendang Tawun legend is the root of the history, spirituality, and existential reasons for implementing the *Keduk Beji* tradition. The legend about the origin of Sendang Tawun provides a historical foundation and sacredness, as there is a belief that Raden Ludrojoyo mysteriously vanished

and that a water source appeared suddenly. Furthermore, Sendang Tawun is not only known as a site with a water source but also as a sacred site that must be respected. Additionally, this legend transfers values to preserve the continuity of the *Keduk Beji* tradition from generation to generation.

***Keduk Beji* Traditional Ceremony**

Keduk Beji comes from the Javanese language, where '*Keduk*' means to deepen a water channel and '*Beji*' means a natural water source. In line with this tradition's naming, one of the processes in the *Keduk Beji* ritual is diving into the water source to deepen and clarify it. The initial purpose of this tradition was to honor the departure of Raden Ludrojoyo. However, this tradition has also been seen as a way to maintain ecosystem balance and prevent disasters. To this day, the people of Tawun strongly believe in the mystical aspects of Sendang Tawun. The community also believes the *Keduk Beji* tradition must be carried out annually. If not performed for one year, the community will face disasters like epidemics or death.

The Tawun community believes in the existence of God Almighty, but also believes that humans live alongside invisible beings in this world. The Tawun community has the *Keduk Beji* tradition as a ritual to ward off calamities passed down from generation to generation since the 15th century by all the people of Tawun Village. They consider the implementation of the *Keduk Beji* ritual mandatory every year, to avoid the bad things that have happened in the past. Although this

tradition is a cultural ceremony only attended by the Tawun community, many tourists witness the ritual procession, amounting to around 6000 visitors from various regions. The community is enthusiastic about witnessing the traditional ceremony in this modern era. A free program for visitors on that day also supports this.



Figure 3. Implementation of the *Keduk Beji* Tradition

The selection of the day to carry out this tradition is not arbitrary. However, it is done on auspicious days according to the Javanese calendar, and the Javanese auspicious days are believed to be good falls precisely on the *ringkel wuku* and *godhong*, specifically on Thursday *Kliwon* and Tuesday *Kliwon*. This is also related to the day of the *tapa* (a form of asceticism) performed by Raden Ludrojoyo, which is from Thursday *Kliwon* to Tuesday *Kliwon*. The day selection for this tradition is determined through deliberation among village elders and village officials. The time required to prepare for the ritual is about one month. Before the *Keduk Beji* tradition begins, the entire community of Tawun cleans the entire village area to welcome the day of the tradition.

The activity is called village cleaning, with a philosophical aim to cleanse the village of dirt and bad things. The implementation of

village cleaning takes place on the Sunday before the *Keduk Beji* traditional ceremony. In addition to the village cleaning, in the week leading up to the ritual and on the day of the ritual, the community and village officials prepare offerings needed for the ritual. The offerings and equipment that need to be prepared are *Cok Bakal sesaji* (containing eggs, rice, salt, kencur, red chili, shallots, garlic, fermented shrimp paste, betel leaves, and incense), colorful flowers (*kembang warna-warni*) and *telon* flowers (*kembang telon*), roasted chicken, nine pieces of *golong*, a *tumpeng* with vegetables and side dishes (up to 2 meters high), green king bananas, *menthek* bananas, and *kluthuk* bananas (one bunch each), five-color porridge (white, red, yellow, black, and green), *jadah*, *dawet*, sticky rice (*ketan*), and *juruh*, *badek* (a fermented liquid from white sticky rice), agricultural products (harvest from the community), and *kendit kambing* (which has a full white circle under its belly).



Figure 4. *Sesaji Kambing Kendit*

The implementation of the *Keduk Beji* tradition begins on Thursday *Kliwon*, starting with a *selamatan* and a pilgrimage to the graves of Ki Ageng Mentawun and Nyi Ageng Ketawang near the Tawun spring. This pilgrimage aims to pray for the ancestors of the

Tawun community and offer prayers to God Almighty for protection and safety. Then, on the second day, Friday *Legi*, the community pilgrimage to the general graves to hold a joint prayer. The objective of this tradition is to pray for the ancestors in the village of Tawun. The community is directed to bring a roasted chicken and two *encek* containing rice, bananas, and *jadah*. This food is needed for the *kenduren* or *selamatan* at the general grave site. During this *kenduren*, there is a session of joint prayers, communal eating, and cleaning of the area of the general grave.

The third day of the Keduk Beji tradition continues on Monday *Wage*, as Saturday *Pahing* and Sunday *Pon* are considered less auspicious days according to Javanese beliefs. On the third day, activities begin in the morning with the creation of *gunungan*, often referred to as *gugur gunung*, which is carried out in the courtyard of Sendang Tawun. The *gugur gunung* is made by *kuli kenceng* and assisted by several village officials. *Kuli kenceng* is a term for those who work (on rice fields) but do not receive wages in a hereditary manner. In this tradition, they are tasked with making *gunungan* and *badek*, which will be used in the *Keduk Beji* ritual. *Kuli Kenceng* makes three *gunungan* for three locations: the male and female *gunungan* next to the spring, and the tallest *gunungan* in the center.

The central *gunungan* contains rice, side dishes, and a bunch of *sesaji* (which includes *jadah*, *rangginan*, *tape*, and bananas). The materials needed to create this mountain offering consist of banana trunks or fronds,

bamboo, young coconut leaves, and the harvest from the farmers. The *juru silem* is the key figure in carrying out the *Keduk Beji* ritual, which has been passed down from his ancestors to conduct a dive into the water source of Sendang Tawun. In addition, the *juru silem* is also responsible for preparing offerings with the women at the village head's house. Furthermore, on the third day at 5:00 PM, a celebratory gathering is held to ask for smooth proceedings with the village head, residents, and *juru silem*. Residents are invited to bathe together until Tuesday.

In the evening, the activities continued, followed by a ritual in the village that ended with traditional games (*uyon-uyon*), dances (*gambyongan*), and *gamelan* music. The day of the ritual began at 4:00 AM, with offerings and a special goat prepared from the head of the village's house. The goat was taken to the spring for bathing and swung three times towards the south and north, accompanied by *gamelan* music. After that, the goat was lifted again for the slaughter process. Before being slaughtered, the goat's belly was opened to insert coconut *sambal* inside. After perfectly placing the coconut *sambal*, the goat's belly was sewn back up and slaughtered. The process of slaughtering this goat is also accompanied by *gamelan* music. This offering of the goat is made with the hope that the source of the curse (*beji*) will not claim any more lives. The activities continue cooperatively to clean the area around the springs. It is said that this cleaning is considered quite sacred, because if it is not cleaned perfectly, the person concerned will

experience itching for 40 days and cannot be treated.

At 11:00 AM WIB, the ritual specialist was adorned and prepared to dive. At noon WIB, the ritual specialist sat near the spring facing the offerings and ensured their completeness. Next, he was fanned and accompanied by *gamelan* music, as the ritual specialist began the ceremony by entering the water source in the spring. This water source is shaped like a cave underwater, with the bottom approximately six meters below the ground surface. The ritual specialist dived (*juru silem*) for some time to clean the area of the water source and recited the first prayer to God for blessings, and then the second prayer was directed to the inhabitants of the source. After that, the ritual specialist placed offerings at the bottom of the source. The offerings consisted of *badek* water placed in a small jug. The *badek* water was placed at the center of the water source to purify and clarify the water flowing. If it is felt that the spring water is clear enough, the diver (*juru silem*) will rise to the surface.



Figure 5. *Beji* Source Diving

During the water source cleaning, the community carries *ambeng* from the east parade to the west past the spring. The *ambeng* consists of *encek* (a ceremonial box made from

banana leaves) filled with rice and *sesaji*, which have been prepared at the village head's house. After that, the community members cleaning the water source scramble for the prepared offerings. The activity continues with a dance session called *kecetan*, performed by two men who hit each other with branches. Both must dance with an open heart and strive not to get angry, even if they feel pain. This dance is also accompanied by Javanese *gamelan* music. The next session is *gugur gunung*, a scramble for food or harvest prepared as a mountain. Legend believes that if the rice prepared in the *gunungan* runs out, it signifies a forthcoming food shortage. However, to this day, the rice has always remained the same each year, which signifies no food shortage.

After that, a prayer together or *selamatan* is held to pray for the safety and well-being of the entire Tawun community. All residents bring *encek* to be eaten together. The series of *Keduk Beji* traditions is concluded in the evening with a *gambyongan* event accompanied by *gamelan* music at the village head's house. The community's belief regarding their obligation to perform this tradition is still firm. This is one way to avoid epidemics or outbreaks, as many healthy people suddenly passed away. Additionally, they believe this tradition can maintain harmony among residents and preserve ecological balance.

Implementation of Deep Ecology Environmental Ethics in the *Keduk Beji* Tradition

Implementing environmental ethics, particularly deep ecology, is the first step in addressing recent environmental issues.

Environmental cases such as pollution and damage are primarily rooted in the lack of human concern for the environment and irresponsible behavior (Keraf, 2010). Such behavioral patterns grow from a consumptive nature, which is rooted in anthropocentric ethics that consider humans the center of the universe. Anthropocentrism views nature and all its contents as means for human self-satisfaction, leading to a belief that one has the right to exploit nature without regard for the consequences of one's actions. This is because, within anthropocentric ethics, it is considered strange if plants, animals, and the surrounding environment hold the same rights as humans. This perspective then gives rise to an exploitative mindset and behavior, as it views nature and its contents as having no intrinsic value.

According to Keraf (2010), ecocentrism, especially deep ecology, invites humans to abandon anthropocentrism and return to traditional wisdom. The urgency of ecocentrism theory is to encourage modern humans to revert to the ethics of indigenous peoples close to nature. The *Keduk Beji* tradition carried out by the Tawun community over generations is one implementation of environmental ethics, particularly deep ecology. This is reflected in the real ecological practices carried out by the Tawun community, such as cleaning water sources, springs, and the surrounding area. This is supported by the Tawun community's spiritual belief in respecting animals and trees and prohibiting environmental damage. These ecological practices align with deep ecology

theory, which focuses on the equality of values among humans, biotic communities, and abiotic elements. The *Keduk Beji* tradition is concrete evidence that the Tawun community has developed a mindset and behavior that reflects the importance of implementing ethics towards nature. Essentially, humans not only live in social communities but also ecological communities. In addition to social communities, humans need all elements of the universe to live and develop as individuals. All living beings must have a positive reciprocal relationship with their environment.

The fundamental aspect of environmental ethics is the shared awareness of the relationship between humans, nature, and their interplay from a spiritual perspective. Rooted in the Legend of Sendang Tawun, the community believes that humans must take preventive measures by maintaining the balance of nature to prevent drought, water shortages, and pandemics. Therefore, the *Keduk Beji* tradition is carried out annually in collaboration with activities that support environmental preservation, one of which is cleaning the village and water sources. In a spirit of cooperation, the community comes together to clean the village, clean the water sources, and perform collective prayers to prevent environmental issues.

The annual implementation of the *Keduk Beji* tradition shows that a mindset and behavior pattern regarding ethics in the ecological community have been established within the Tawun community. According to Skinner (Permatasari & Wijaya, 2018) Stimuli shape human behavior, just like the Tawun

community, which is accustomed to seeing, hearing, and participating in this tradition, becoming habitual due to observation and social reinforcement. This indicates that the *Keduk Beji* tradition is observed and studied as a social behavior. This pattern is preserved as ethics and morality, then grows into a culture within the society. This can be reinforced by perspectives on the relationship between humans and nature and their relation to religious and spiritual perspectives.

The Tawun community is aware that nature and humans have a reciprocal relationship. A shared perspective builds the belief that inappropriate behavior or attitudes can bring disaster. The spiritual beliefs that grow in the village of Tawun serve as the philosophical and symbolic foundation for the continuity of the *Keduk Beji* tradition, making cultural activities meaningful and fostering the emotional involvement of the local community. One of the spiritual perspectives believed by the Tawun community is that the *Keduk Beji* tradition must be carried out every year to avoid disaster. This belief is considered to positively impact the sustainability of the *Keduk Beji* tradition inherited from ancestors. This belief also helps maintain ecological balance, as the series of activities within this tradition is closely linked to the environment, such as cleaning water sources and sacred springs.

Secondly, the *Keduk Beji* tradition must be carried out on a day that falls on an auspicious *ringkel*. This shows that the community believes in the connection between humans and nature, spirits, and ancestors to

reduce the risk of disasters or natural calamities. Thirdly, offering *kambing kendit* in the *Keduk Beji* ritual is mandatory. The spiritual belief in this supports the smoothness of the *Keduk Beji* procession and reduces the risk of unwanted occurrences. Fourthly, the water sources and *sendang* must be completely clean after the *sendang* cleaning. This focus is not only on the smoothness of the ritual procession but also on the ecological impact. Most water supply in residents' homes and rice fields comes from water sources and Tawun *sendang*, making cleanliness a primary focus in the *sendang* cleaning process.

Fifth, it is forbidden to take turtles or their eggs. The spiritual belief surrounding this positively impacts the conservation of turtle habitats. Sixth, it is forbidden to bathe in the spring except on the day of the tradition. This belief positively affects the environment, as it helps protect the spring from pollution through spiritual behavior control. Moreover, the water sources and springs are directly related to the water system of the Tawun community. Seventh, having bad intentions when visiting the Tawun spring area is forbidden. The established spiritual belief regarding this certainly positively impacts the environment, as humans realize that nature responds to human intentions. Thus, humans will be more responsible for their actions, for example, planting one tree seedling after cutting down a tree in the spring area.

It can be concluded that the Tawun community has implemented principles of environmental ethics, as a manifestation of the awareness that humans are not only limited to

social communities but also their ecological environment. These principles can essentially serve as a guideline for humans in behaving and taking stances related to nature and everything in it. The application of environmental ethics principles according to Keraf (Keraf, 2010) It is, first, an attitude of respect towards nature. Humans must value nature, as nature inherently has value in itself. Humans need to nurture, care for, protect, and preserve nature and its resources, just as the Tawun community also maintains water cleanliness, as well as the preservation of turtles and plants.

Second, the principle of responsibility. Humans are responsible for the preservation of nature. Therefore, humans are required to be wise in utilizing nature and to protect it from damage. This is related to the spiritual beliefs of the Tawun community, which holds that all elements in the universe have value, and some of them are even sacred to ensure their preservation, third, cosmic solidarity. Humans are an integral part of nature, so humans can feel what other creatures feel. Therefore, humans need to save the environment and take action to prevent pollution. This is reflected in the routine activities of the Tawun community, such as village cleaning and the *Keduk Beji* tradition, which are carried out to maintain the environment.

Fourth, the principle of love and care for nature. Humans need to have a sense of love and concern for nature, as fellow members of the ecological community. All have value and are entitled to protection

(Keraf, 2010). Spiritual belief in the sacredness of turtles and water sources in the *sendang* is one manifestation of love for the environment. In addition, the Tawun community believes that humans do not have the right to exploit nature at will. Humans must preserve, conserve, and utilize nature.

Fifth, the principle of "*No harm*". Humans must be aware of the limits of nature's usage, so as not to harm nature. This relates to the fourth principle, as compassion will evoke an awareness that nature has its rights. Therefore, the Tawun community believes that humans, as rational beings, must take responsibility for their actions towards nature. When they utilize water from a water source, they are obliged to maintain the cleanliness and sustainability of that source. Sixth, the principle of living simply and in harmony with nature. Humans must be aware of a simple yet high-quality lifestyle to avoid harming nature. The Tawun community holds a spiritual belief that excessive exploitation of natural resources will lead to misfortune.

Seventh, the principle of justice. Humans must behave reasonably towards other beings to positively impact the preservation of the environment. In this regard, humans need to establish policies for natural resource management. In addition to focusing on the cleanliness and preservation of the tawun spring, the *Keduk Beji* tradition practiced by the Tawun community also considers the cleanliness of the graveyard and other village areas. Thus, the environment's cleanliness and preservation beyond the spring's scope is also maintained—Eighth, the

principle of democracy. Humans have the same rights to advocate for interests in the field of the environment, participate in shaping environmental policies, and have the right to access information. Therefore, the Tawun community provides free open access for tourists who wish to visit during the *Keduk Beji* tradition. Hopefully, this can provide insight and knowledge about the importance of conserving and preserving the environment and local culture.

Ninth, moral integrity. This principle requires public officials to have a firm and moral stance in securing public interests in the environmental domain. This is reflected in the efforts of village and regional governments that support and facilitate the implementation of the *Keduk Beji* tradition to preserve culture and the environment as hoped. The Tawun community has already applied environmental ethics, primarily based on the ethical reference of *Deep Ecology* by Arne Naess.

Five principles serve as a reference for *Deep Ecology* in carrying out its actions to save the environment. These five principles include 1) biospheric egalitarianism, in principle, which is the recognition that all organisms and living beings in this world have the same status and dignity. This recognition also relates to the equal rights to live and develop in the universe. In line with this, the Tawun community also instills the same mindset and behavior toward their surroundings. Everyone has equal rights and recognition, thus their existence cannot be ignored. The tradition of *Keduk Beji* makes the Tawun community accustomed to cleaning all parts of the village. As a result, the

environment becomes clean and comfortable, and water sources and drainage are well maintained. Thus, the trees grow lushly, and fish and turtles breed well in the waterways in front of residents' homes. No floods or droughts exist because the trees are not cut down indiscriminately.

The habit of the Tawun community in preserving the environment does not solely stem from awareness and love for the environment. This habit also grows from the beliefs of the local people about things that have a mystical aspect. For instance, one of the respondents in this study (Mr. Lanjar) experienced this when he was working in the rice fields and accidentally disposed of leftover pesticide in the water channel. Mr. Lanjar felt guilty because he remembered that turtles and small fish lived in that water channel. After the incident, Mr. Lanjar experienced a series of misfortunes. In the afternoon, his child suddenly had a high fever, and his relative fainted. At night, Mr. Lanjar also dreamed of being visited by turtles and a school of fish, who spoke to him as if reprimanding him for his wrongdoing. The next day, Mr. Lanjar saw small fish floating dead in the water channel where he discarded the pesticide.

This event is related to the local community's beliefs about the sanctified turtles and wader fish, which are prohibited from being taken or killed. This belief has then shaped the mindset and behavior patterns of the Tawun community, which recognizes and acknowledges the existence of other beings. Beings other than humans also have value, regardless of human interests in them. This

awareness of the equality of living beings has created environmental harmony in the village of Tawun. Thus, the Tawun community is proven to adhere to the first principle of *Deep Ecology* environmental ethics.

Next, 2) the principle of non-anthropocentrism, which states that humans are part of nature. The anthropocentric view considers humans the center of the universe; thus, humans can exploit nature according to their desires. This belief fosters an exploitative nature within humanity, ultimately leading to environmental crises. This principle emphasizes that humans are integral to nature and cannot be separated. Because, in essence, humans and nature have a close reciprocal relationship. This principle applies to the Tawun community, specifically in their mystical beliefs about turtles and their eggs. The Tawun people believe that anything excessive will have negative consequences. Similarly, taking turtles or eggs in excess leads the community to believe that the person involved will not live long. Through the growing beliefs and mindset regarding this matter, the Tawun community is accustomed to utilizing nature sufficiently and providing care to ensure its preservation.

In the *Keduk Beji* tradition, the community works together to clean the water source at Sendang Tawun. This water source used to be the primary irrigation source for the rice fields in the village of Tawun. Although many residents have switched to using water from the PDAM, the community believes that cleaning the beji source is essential to ensure that the people of Tawun will not lack clean

water. The people of Tawun also believe that all elements in the universe have equal value. Therefore, humans must be aware of the need to care for their surrounding environment. Furthermore, the principle of self-realization requires humans to adapt and realize themselves according to their potential. In this principle, self-realization is focused on the potential of the individual or fellow humans and on collaborating with nature. Humans must realize they can become whole beings because they exist in fundamental unity with nature and interact positively. In this case, the Tawun community proves that they cannot live as whole humans without positive relations with nature.

Implementing the *Keduk Beji* tradition, which is carried out regularly every year, proves that the Tawun community strives to maintain the positive relationships established since ancient times. These positive relationships are built through each procession of the *Keduk Beji* tradition, which always leads to environmental improvement and preservation. Activities like cleaning water sources and all parts of the village manifest the Tawun community's movement to build positive relationships with nature. This tradition is not suddenly held; it has been practiced for hundreds of years. This tradition also embodies the belief that positive interactions humans send to nature will elicit positive reactions; furthermore, it is based on the principle of recognition and appreciation of diversity and ecological complexity in a symbiotic relationship. This principle emphasizes that ecological diversity and

complexity must be maintained because every creature needs each other. The symbiotic relationships and coexistence in diversity emphasized in this principle are also practiced by the Tawun community, which preserves the diversity of animals and plants living in Tawun Village.

The Tawun community also limits the utilization of existing resources, so as not to cause extinction. One example can be seen in preserving fish and turtles, which continue to breed in the Tawun spring and residential areas. The last principle, 5) the principle of political change towards ecopolitics. In this case, the ethics of *deep ecology hold hope that politics will support environmental preservation more* and reduce excessive consumptive behavior. The Tawun village government fully supports the implementation of the *Keduk Beji* tradition and prioritizes this tradition over other activities. This is also supported by the Tawun community, which collectively gathers funds and harvests to support the smooth running of the *Keduk Beji* tradition. The Ngawi Regency government also fully supports the implementation of this tradition, as it focuses on environmental preservation and culture. The regent and the deputy regent also provide support by their presence at the Sendang Tawun during the annual ritual. The local government also allocates funds, through the Disporapar, to support the smooth execution of each process in the *Keduk Beji* tradition. The enthusiasm of the Ngawi community can also be seen in the number of spectators during the *Keduk Beji* tradition, which is always attended by approximately 6,000 spectators each time.

It is hoped that the support from the government and the community for the *Keduk Beji* tradition will also raise awareness to support other activities related to environmental preservation.

The points above show that the Tawun community has implemented the principles of the Deep Ecology environmental ethics movement. The activities found in the *Keduk Beji* tradition provide evidence of the implementation of environmental ethics by the Tawun Village community. *Deep Ecology* strives to preserve nature and address environmental issues at their roots. Unlike anthropocentrism, which considers humans the center of the universe, this ethics prioritizes human interests over other matters. Meanwhile, biocentrism resembles *Deep Ecology* in that it views humans and nature as having equal value. The scope of moral ethics distinguishes the *Keduk Beji* tradition as part of the deep ecology movement rather than biocentrism. While bioscentrism considers that moral ethics only encompasses biotic communities, *Deep Ecology* believes that moral ethics also applies to the entire ecological community, including both living and non-living beings.

The *Keduk Beji* tradition not only focuses on living beings but also on inanimate objects such as water sources. This is because the community realizes that living and non-living things have a reciprocal relationship. Humans do not have superiority over nature, nor vice versa (Dewi et al., 2024). Therefore, ethical morality needs to be enforced across the entire ecological community, not only

among fellow humans or living beings but throughout the entire ecological order. Positive interactions built throughout the ecological community will surely foster positive relationships that can create harmony among communities.

CONCLUSION

The *Keduk Beji* tradition, which has been practiced by the Tawun community for generations, is one manifestation of the implementation of environmental ethics, particularly deep ecology. This ethic arises from the common mindset of the community regarding the urgency of performing the *Keduk Beji* ritual for ecological balance. This way of thinking and behavior that has developed since the 15th century serves as the foundation for implementing deep ecology environmental ethics. Not only focusing on phenomena and their impacts, the Tawun community seeks the root of a problem and finds solutions for prevention. The *Keduk Beji* tradition can be considered a solution or preventive measure for environmental issues in Tawun Village. The implementation of this tradition consists of activities that foster positive behavior towards nature, especially during the stages of cleaning the village, cleaning the spring, and praying together.

As the basis for the implementation of environmental ethics, the Tawun community has adopted the principles of deep ecology, which consist of five principles, including 1) biospheric principle; 2) non-anthropocentrism principle; 3) self-realization principle; 4) recognition and appreciation of the diversity of ecological complexity in symbiotic

relationships; and 5) principle of change in politics towards ecopolitics. The Tawun community has a shared perspective that humans are an integral part of nature and have a responsibility for ecological sustainability and balance. Humans have a moral responsibility toward the entire ecological community (Ohoiwutun, 2020). Thus, it can be concluded that the mindset and behaviors supporting the implementation of environmental ethics have been ingrained since the beginning of the *Keduk Beji* tradition, specifically in the 15th century among the Tawun community.

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