



CATHARSIS 11 (3) 2022  
309-318

p-ISSN 2252-6900 I e-ISSN 2502-4531

**Catharsis: Journal of Arts Education**

<http://journal.unnes.ac.id/sju/index.php/chatarsis>



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## **Educational Messages on the Teng-tengan Tradition of Kaliwungu People in the Context of Coastal Cultural Communication**

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Received 30 August 2021, Accepted 01 November 2022, Published 23 December 2022

### **Abstrack**

Teng-tengan is a tradition from the Kaliwungu community in Kendal Regency. Teng-tengan tradition takes the form of a lantern and appears to celebrate birthday of Prophet Muhammad every year. (1) How is the form of the teng-tengan tradition of Kaliwungu community, Kendal Regency? (2) How are the messages integrated in the teng-tengan tradition of Kaliwungu community, Kendal Regency? (3) How educational messages are communicated through teng-tengan tradition for the people of Kaliwungu, Kendal Regency. With interdisciplinary studies, the research method and approach were qualitative. According to the findings of the first study, the teng-tengan tradition form was a lantern made up of a pentagonal star, a ship, a moon, a crescent star, and, more recently, the shape of the cartoon character of Spongebob. Second, the educational messages embedded in teng-tengan tradition include spiritual, moral, social, and unity messages. Third, educational messages were communicated through teng-tengan tradition through presentation activities, festivals, and teng-tengan parades.

**Keywords:** teng-tengan tradition, educational messages, coastal culture

**DOI :** <https://doi.org/10.15294/catharsis.v11i3.65616>

## INTRODUCTION

The diversity of styles and art forms in Indonesian culture is well known. The diversity of artistic expression in Indonesia is created and developed in response to the country's various natural environment conditions and the country's historical development.

The formation of artistic traditions varies by region, as does the basis for their formation. Foreign art has a significant impact in this case. Islamic art has had the most influence on the formation of this tradition of all the foreign arts.

Islam, as a religion and culture, gives its own color and breath to works of art that can be distinguished from those produced in other Islamic countries (Yudoseputro, 2000: iii).

Syncretism has emerged in Java since the arrival of Islam. The mandala model of education, which is transformed into Islamic teachings at Islamic boarding schools, is used to spread this religion. The pesantren curriculum includes not only the doctrines of the Koran and Hadith, but also tasawuf, or Javanese local wisdom (Endraswara, 2015:23). Kyai, along with his pesantren and students, adds a lot of vibrancy to the social life structure of coastal communities. The teachings of the Kyai conveyed to the community have implications for socializing habits and social order, as well as the community's karma or ethics in the environment surrounding the Islamic boarding school.

Kaliwungu District is one of the areas on the north coast that is dense with pesantren nuances. Kendal Regency, Central Java Province, is home to the Kaliwungu District. Kendal Regency, according to Central Bureau of Statistics data, consists of 9 villages, 33 hamlets, 68 RWs, and 288 RTs, with a population of 63,498 in 2019. According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics for Kendal Regency, there will be 22 Islamic boarding schools in Kaliwungu District in

2020, with a total of 5,219 students (<https://kendalkab.bps.go.id>).

As the author mentioned earlier, coastal communities, like pesantren communities and Kaliwungu, have distinct tradition. Every year on the 12<sup>th</sup> of Rabiul Awal, the city of Santri observes a unique tradition to commemorate the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW or Maulid Nabi. In honor of this occasion, the Kaliwungu people practice a traditional custom of hanging objects known as teng-tengan in front of their houses.

The Teng-tengah tradition is a three-dimensional traditional art form of the Kaliwungu community. This Teng-tengah tradition only appears during the mauludan period, that is, from the 1<sup>st</sup> of Rabiul Awal until the end of the Hijri calendar month. Teng-tengan, which has visual aesthetic value, is displayed in front of residents' houses as decorative lights and is preserved as a tradition that emerged in society to celebrate the birthday of the bearer of light and God's teachings of truth. The teng-tengan is a lantern in the shape of a pentagonal star, crescent moon, ship, mosque, and, more recently, cartoon characters that are popular and frequently appear on television. Teng-teng were originally lit with oil lamps (senthir). The community begins to gather in the courtyard of the Kaliwungu Al-Muttaqin Great Mosque on the night of the 12<sup>th</sup> of Rabiul Awal and then jointly carry out a walking parade around Kaliwungu through the main streets by chanting sholawat and carrying teng-tengan with various forms as attributes paraded in the parade.

The researcher is interested in researching educational messages in the Teng-tengan tradition of the Kaliwungu community, Kendal Regency, in the context of coastal cultural communication, based on the description above. The following issues were thoroughly examined: (1) What is the form of Teng-tengan tradition from the Kaliwungu community in Kendal Regency? (2) How are messages integrated in the Teng-tengan tradition of the Kaliwungu community in

Kendal Regency? (3) How are educational messages communicated through the Teng-tengan traditions of the Kaliwungu community in Kendal Regency?

## METHODS

This study applied qualitative methods and approaches based on a data review. According to Sugiyono (2014: 292), the author uses qualitative methods because the problems are not yet clear, holistic, complex, dynamic, and full of meaning, making it impossible for data on social situations to be captured by quantitative research methods using instruments such as tests, questionnaires, guidelines, and interviews.

The preceding description is relevant to the current conditions at the research site for this Teng-tengan tradition, namely Kaliwungu. Furthermore, the researcher intended to gain a thorough understanding of the social situation in the Kaliwungu community, as well as to identify patterns, hypotheses, and theories relevant to things that could be studied in the Teng-tengan tradition.

So, in order to collect the data or information needed about the Teng-tengan tradition of Kaliwungu community, the researcher met and dealt with the informants right away, both from the location, individuals/groups of craftsmen, the form of their handicrafts, and the events that occurred while conducting the research. Following the collection of information and data, the researcher described the data, which was then processed in the discussion analysis procedure.

This study took an interdisciplinary approach, looking at a problem from various scientific perspectives. The discipline of aesthetics was used to investigate research on *"Educational Messages on the Teng-tengan Tradition of Kaliwungu People in the Context of Coastal Cultural Communication"* specifically the theory of Clive Bell, semiotic theory of Roland Barthes, social theory of Spillman, and educational theory.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Visual Form Analysis of the Teng-Tengan Tradition at Kaliwungu Community in Kendal Regency

Teng-tengan tradition is a traditional three-dimensional work of art that appears during the commemoration of birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, which occurs in the Hijri calendar month of Rabiul Awal. This Teng-tengan tradition is a legacy from the Kaliwungu community in Kendal Regency's ancestors. According to the writer's interviews with informants, the Teng-tengan tradition is a lantern made of bamboo and colorful oil paper in various shapes.

The researcher focused this research location on three villages, namely Krajan Kulon Village, Kutoharjo Village, and Nolakerto Village, because the Teng-tengan tradition is still widely used by the community as one of the attributes in commemorating the Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in these areas.

According to Abdul Fatah (2022), an informant from Tridasari Village, Krajan Kulon Village, the teng-tengan is a lantern that was originally powered by a *senthir* (oil lamp). The teng-tengan tradition is passed down from the kyai and their students to the surrounding community. The initial form of the teng-tengan is a star, which contains the philosophy that when the Prophet Muhammad SAW was born, stars fell from the sky, and stars are a light like the Prophet Muhammad's birth, which is believed to be a shining light for mankind.

The people of Kaliwungu expressed their joy at commemorating the birth of Rasulullah SAW by marching around the city, particularly around the Al-Muttaqin Mosque, a large mosque in Kaliwungu square that was a legacy of Kyai Asy'ari, also known as the title of Kyai Guru, a cleric who was a teacher of clerics in Kaliwungu.

Muhammad Nahrowi (2020), a community leader from Tridasari Village, Krajan Kulon Village, Kaliwungu District,

revealed that the Teng-tengan tradition is a lantern displayed in front of Kaliwungu residents' houses as a form of respect and to enliven the birth month of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, who taught the true path of Islam. Stars and ships are examples of Teng-tengan tradition forms, according to him. He also stated that yellow is dominant or appears frequently in the center of the pentagonal star shape, the sun, and Spongebob. According to him, the yellow color is associated with sunlight, indicating bright conditions. Yellow represents brightness, joy, festivity, and wit. Aside from that, the dominant green color appears on the ship's shape and, according to him, represents fertility, freshness, and faith. There is also red, which represents bravery, white, which represents purity and peace, and blue, which represents loyalty and peace.

After analyzing the data from the interview results, the form of Teng-tengan tradition from the Kaliwungu community is good visually in the form of pentagonal stars, ships, sun, moon, crescent, and Spongebob cartoon characters as well as fine visual elements of color- the color or other elements that construct the Teng-tengan tradition object, it can be concluded that Teng-tengan tradition is a significant form. This is consistent with aesthetic theory of Clive Bell regarding the significant form described by the researcher.



**Figure 1.** Teng-tengan tradition at Kaliwungu  
(Source: private document, 2021)

### **Integrated Educational Messages in the Teng-tengan Tradition of Kaliwungu Community, Kendal Regency.**

Ahmad Ronald (2022) from Punden, Kutoharjo Village revealed that the shape of a pentagonal star is a symbol of light and also serves as a reminder of the Prophet Muhammad's birth, which was accompanied by many stars that fell to earth. The message that can be derived from the shape of this pentagonal star is that the birth of the Prophet Muhammad SAW has provided illumination for mankind with his noble teachings in the form of Islam as a guide to the right path, whereas the shape of the moon symbolizes light and peace, with the same message as the pentagonal star shape. The ship's shape represents coastal communities that make a living by fishing in the sea using ships, and it conveys the message that the Kaliwungu people value and protect the sea as a source of livelihood.

In general, the research findings obtained through interviews with informants from various regions and professions can be summarized as follows: The shape of a pentagonal star represents the five pillars of Islam, which are the creed, prayer, fasting, zakat, and pilgrimage, as well as the light that illuminates. The sun shape represents light that illuminates and warms, the moon shape represents light, peace, and Islam, especially in the shape of the crescent moon, and the ship shape represents coastal communities and as a form of transformation from people who do not know Islam to people who know and practice Islamic teachings delivered by the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

In analyzing the meaning of each form of Teng-tengan tradition from the Kaliwungu community, Kendal Regency, in this case there were certain messages in the meaning, especially messages related to education or educational messages, the researcher applied semiotic theory of Roland Barthes.

The authors describe the relevance to what has been said above, as well as the educational messages that were integrated in

the Teng-tengan tradition of the Kaliwungu community, Kendal Regency, as follows:

First, teng-tengan with pentagonal star shape. At the most basic level, researcher can convert each marker in the image into the most precise concepts possible, such as the shape of a pentagonal star. All of this results in a set of signs (denotation) on the first layer with a literal meaning: a pentagonal star. This image has meaning at the next level (connotation or mythical level): this star symbol represents the spiritual light that God emits to every human being. The pentagonal star symbol also represents the light that illuminates the country's foundation (<https://kumparan.com>). The five angles of the star represent the five pillars of Islam (<https://dalamislam.com>). Furthermore, the pentagonal star is a symbol of light as well as a reminder that the Prophet Muhammad's birth was accompanied by many stars that fell to earth. The message conveyed by the shape of this pentagonal star is that the Prophet Muhammad SAW's birth has provided light for mankind through his noble teachings in the form of Islam as a guide to the path of truth.

Second, teng-tengan with ship shape. All of this results in a set of signs (denotation) on the first layer with a literal meaning: the shape of a ship. This image has meaning at the next level (connotation or myth level): it is a symbol of the journey of life, the process of civilization, as well as a symbol of strength and defense against the tides of time (<https://sangpencerah.id>). Furthermore, the ship's shape represents coastal communities and is a type of transformation from people who do not know Islam to people who know and practice the teachings of Islam brought by the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

Third, teng-tengan with moon shape. The moon, according to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), is a natural satellite that circles the earth and appears to shine at night due to the reflection of the sun's rays (<https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id>). At the first level, researcher can convert each marker in the image into as precise concepts as possible,

namely the shape of the moon. All of this adds up to a set of markings (denotation) on the first layer that have a literal meaning: a round moon shape. At the next level (connotation or myth), this image means that the moon is used by humans in Islam as a tool to help determine the day. If the shape of the month changes, it indicates that the month in the calendar system has changed (<https://dalamislam.com>). In addition to the above-mentioned meanings, the moon also represents light, beauty, and peace, with the message it contains in the form of this month reminding us that the birth of the Prophet Muhammad SAW provided light for mankind through his noble teachings in the form of Islam as a guide to the path of truth.

Fourth, teng-tengan with crescent moon shape. At the first level, researcher can convert each marker in the image into the most precise concepts possible, namely the crescent moon shape. All of this adds up to a set of markings (denotation) on the first layer that have a literal meaning: a crescent shape. This image has meaning at the next level (connotation or mythical level): the crescent moon is interpreted as a symbol of a repressive heart toward divine light (Wahab, 2011). The crescent shape is also associated with light, peace, and Islam.

Fifth, teng-tengan with sun's shape. The sun, according to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), is a star that is the center of the solar system, emitting heat and light to the earth and other planets that revolve around it, with the majority of its content being hydrogen and helium (<https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id>). At the first level, researcher can convert each marker in the image into as precise concepts as possible, such as the shape of the sun, which has the visual form of a circle with many sharp angles. All of this adds up to a set of signs (denotation) on the first layer with a literal meaning: a sun shape. This image has a meaning at the next level (connotation or myth level): to illuminate (enlighten) the hearts of mankind through Islamic teachings

based on the Qur'an and sunnah. Furthermore, the sun symbolizes the hope of creating a society that is faithful, virtuous, honest, fair, respects and loves fellow humans, and performs good deeds (<https://kumparan.com>).

The markers point to a specific set of signs or ideological fragments, namely the Islamic religion, at the connotation level of the five forms of teng-tengan discussed above.

Sixth, teng-tengan with Spongebob shape. Spongebob is a sea sponge with a fun, innocent, and passionate personality, according to the article that the researcher cited from <https://id.wikipedia.org>. He is a species of animal in The SpongeBob Musical, specifically *Aplysina fistularis*, a yellow tubular sponge found in open water. Because the character's shape is a square, the name "Spongebob Squarepants" was chosen as a family name. At the first level, researcher can convert each marker in the image into as precise concepts as possible, such as the shape of a sponge, which is the "weirdest animal," and this Spongebob character wearing brown pants is designed to be a childish character who is cute and optimistic. All of this adds up to a set of signatures (denotation) on the first layer with literal meaning: a Spongebob Squarepants shape characterized by being square, having sponge holes, and being yellow in color, is a cheerful and hardworking character. SpongeBob has never seen an image just to gain sympathy from others, according to the meaning that can be drawn from this character. In fact, he frequently acts stupid.

#### **Analysis of Educational Message Communication Using Teng-tengan Tradition**

Spillman in Sunyoto Usman (2012: 90-92) explains that there are at least three types of cultural functions and roles in social life.

First, consider culture as a characteristic of groups, communities, or societies (a feature of entire groups and societies). Tenganan art is thought to have the power to connect people to groups, communities, or communities with

which they are affiliated, specifically the Kaliwungu community in Kendal Regency, which distinguishes it from other communities. There are very complex ideas within this Teng-tengan tradition that are used as a guide by members of the Kaliwungu community about what should be known and what things should be socialized to other people. Teng-tengan tradition provides identity in this context and has the power to compel members of the Kaliwungu community to act in accordance with the educational messages it contains.

Second, culture as a social expression (a separate realm of human expression). Culture can take the form of art, which consists of beautiful creative works that are the result of creation or human intelligence, processed according to certain abilities and goals, as in Teng-tengan tradition. In this context, Teng-tengan tradition serves as a tool for members of the Kaliwungu community in Kendal Regency to master or adapt to their surroundings, among other things.

Culture as an expression of social life (a separate realm of human expression) can be used to develop an analysis, particularly of cultural change. Previously considered inappropriate for others to know social values and beliefs may now be considered normal. Norms and habits that were previously enforced and had coercive power may now be considered normal and no longer require compliance. However, not all aspects of culture change simultaneously.

Third, culture serves as a means of conveying meaning (as meaning-making). Teng-tengan tradition as a result of culture is not placed solely as a characteristic or identity of groups, communities, and people in Kaliwungu, Kendal Regency in this context. However, it is more related to meaning-making processes at various levels of social location and interests. The emphasis is on comprehending the process of meaning, comprehending the differences in meaning, and comprehending the impact of the meaning of the Teng-tengan tradition on social life.

Thus, it is believed that the various forms of values and educational messages integrated in the Kaliwungu community's Teng-tengan tradition do not appear or occur suddenly, but are intertwined with a number of things that are interlinked and covered with various meanings.

Given that Kaliwungu is a santri city with many Islamic boarding schools managed by kyai with influence in the surrounding environment and a coastal culture, the role of the pesantren in communicating educational messages integrated into the Teng-tengan tradition is critical. Of course, a fatwa issued by the kyai to his students and distributed to the surrounding community to display the centerpiece of each Prophet Muhammad's Birthday commemoration will elicit a positive response and enthusiasm from the community, allowing the process of communicating these educational messages to run smoothly and without conflict.

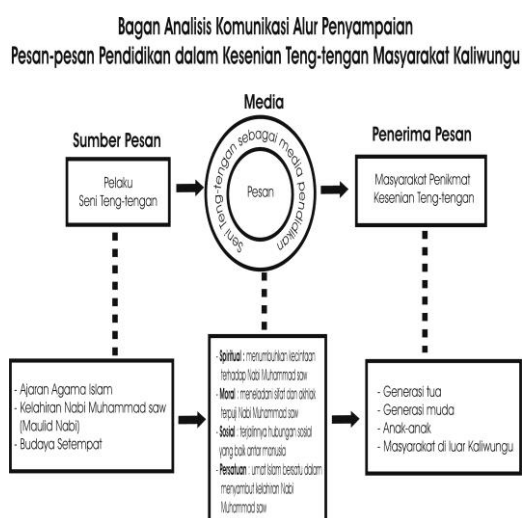
The close relationship between the pesantren and its surrounding community, which continues to this day in many ways, has allowed pesantren to survive not only because of their ability to make adjustments and readjustments, as seen above. But also because of its existential character, which Nurcholish Madjid refers to as an institution that is not only synonymous with Islamic meaning, but also with Indonesian authenticity (indigenous). Islamic boarding schools emerge and develop as an indigenous institution from the sociological experiences of the surrounding community. In other words, Islamic boarding schools have an inextricably linked relationship with their surrounding community. This is evident not only in the context of the establishment of a pesantren in a specific environment, but also in the maintenance of the pesantren itself through the provision of endowments, sadaqah, grants, and so on. Pesantren, on the other hand, generally repay their environmental community in a variety of ways, including not only educational and religious services, but also social, cultural, and economic guidance

for the surrounding community. In this last context, pesantren and their kiyas serve as what Clifford Geertz refers to as "cultural brokers" in the broadest sense (Azra, 2003: 108).

In this context, it is possible to conclude from the descriptions above that there is a process of communicating educational messages through art intermediaries, specifically the Teng-tengan tradition of the Kaliwungu community in Kendal Regency. The theory of education through art, also known as education through art.

This was relevant to statement from Richard Junior Kapoyos (2020) that arts education is also incorporated into an instrument approach. Herbert Read (1970) (in Soehardjo, 2012, see also: Rohidi, 2014, see also: Triyanto, 2017) education through art is referred to. The approach through art is implemented in public schools as a means of developing individual potential in order to prepare for the future. In other words, art education emphasizes process over results; the goal is not to train students to be experts in the arts (artists, musicians, dancers, and performers), but rather to create situations that foster sensational experiences for imagination and expression in the form of appreciation and creativity. As a result, art is used as a means to achieve educational goals in general, rather than for the sake of art itself. Meanwhile, Pamadhi (2012: 31) quotes Herbert Read (1970) with the principle of art-based education, defining art as: (1) a value system in teaching and learning (2) as a method or way of teaching (3) as a means of educating and training skills and life skills (4) as a work that can be studied and used to express ideas and train imagination abilities.

The chart below will provide a clearer picture of the communication analysis of the flow of conveying educational messages in the Kaliwungu community, Kendal Regency, as described by the researcher.



**Figure 2.** Chart of communication analysis for the delivery of educational messages (Source: Dwi Syaiful Bakhri, 2023)

## CONCLUSION

The previous discussion can be summarized as follows. Teng-tengan tradition began with pentagonal stars and ships, then evolved into new forms such as the moon, crescent, sun, and Spongebob cartoon characters. Based on an examination of the visual form and visual elements that comprise the Teng-tengan tradition object, the conclusion is that Teng-tengan tradition is a significant form because it contains a distinct feeling that fits, causing the object to elicit emotions. A special or distinct feeling appears only when dealing with a significant form that is relevant to the theory of Clive Bell.

Second, behind the meaning in every form of Teng-tengan tradition, there is a universal meaning in common, namely in the form of educational messages including spiritual, moral, social, and unity, and based on an analysis of semiotic theory from Roland Barthes, at the connotation level of each tengengan art form. Third, the delivery of integrated educational messages in Teng-tengan tradition through several matters relevant to the theory of Spillman, namely that there are three kinds of functions and roles of

culture in social life, namely (1) culture as a characteristic of groups, communities, or society, (2) culture as a function of culture in social life, and (3) culture as a function of culture in social life (a feature of entire groups and societies). (2) Culture as a form of social expression (a distinct realm of human expression), and (3) culture serves as a means of meaning (as meaning-making).

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