

## THE MEANING OF “NGIDANG NGOBENG” TRADITION IN PALEMBANG CITY

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**Abstract.** Ngidang Ngobeng comes from the word "ngidang" which means sitting cross-legged on the floor and "ngobeng" which means attendant. Ngidang is the tradition of serving food, while Ngobeng is a special officer to assist guests in the Ngidang Ngobeng tradition. This Ngidang Ngobeng activity has become a hereditary tradition in Palembang City and is part of the culture of the Palembang people. The tradition of ngidang ngobeng has begun to fade among the community, especially in the younger generation, in Palembang City today, the tradition of ngidang ngobeng is gradually being eroded by changes in lifestyle and modernization. Palembang people who live in urban areas tend to be more practical and busy so the ngidang ngobeng tradition is less routinely carried out than it used to be. This can threaten the continuity and preservation of this valuable cultural tradition. Therefore, this research aims to find out the meaning of the ngidang ngobeng tradition in Palembang City. This research uses descriptive qualitative methods with data collection techniques of observation, interviews, and documentation. The theory used uses Phenomenological Theory. The result is that the Ngidang Ngobeng tradition has the meaning of cooperation, honoring guests, togetherness, fostering intimacy, connecting communication between communities, having an Islamic nature, and fostering a sense of social in the process of implementing the Ngidang Ngobeng tradition. Ngobeng tradition is a tradition of Palembang people in living togetherness which is often found at meal events such as weddings, akikah, and other big events.

**Keywords:** meaning of tradition; ngidang ngobeng; Palembang

### I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has a vast archipelago, making Indonesia have a lot of diversity in each region. Diversity itself is a culture that is preserved and maintained from generation to generation as an illustration of Indonesia's wealth and is the basis for capital, development and development of national culture. Various regions in Indonesia certainly have cultures and traditions that are formed and inherited from generation to generation [1]–[3]. Developing national culture itself means preserving, maintaining, utilizing, presenting, enriching, disseminating and improving the quality and usefulness of culture [4], [5]. Meaning is the intention of the speaker, the influence of language units, in understanding human perception or behavior, the relationship in terms of similarities or dissimilarities between languages and outside languages, or between speech and all the things it refers to, or how to use language symbols [6]–[8]. Meaning is an inseparable part and cannot appear by itself because meaning comes from the relationships between elements inside and outside itself and becomes a unity in a tradition [9], [10]. The Ngidang Ngobeng activity has become a tradition passed down from generation to generation in the city of Palembang and is part of the culture of the Palembang people. The Ngidang Ngobeng activity is for gathering and friendship between Palembang residents. Although the Ngidang

Ngobeng activity is still carried out by some people in the city of Palembang, in reality this activity is increasingly taking place, especially in urban areas. This is due to the increasing lack of open land that can be used to carry out this activity as well as changes in people's lifestyles which prioritize practicality and speed. However, efforts to preserve the Ngidang Ngobeng activity are still being made by several parties by promoting this activity as Palembang's cultural heritage that is worth preserving. The tradition of ngang ngobeng also has a symbolic meaning. Pandan mats used as food mats symbolize unity and togetherness [11]–[13]. Pandan mats are a symbol of handicrafts and natural beauty in the Palembang area. Through this tradition, the people of Palembang also try to maintain and preserve the culture and traditions of their ancestors [14], [15].

Ngidang Ngobeng comes from the words "ngidang" which means sitting cross-legged on the floor and "ngobeng" which means officer. Ngidang is tasked with serving food, while Ngobeng is a special officer to help guests in the Ngidang Ngobeng tradition [16]. The Ngobeng tradition is a tradition of the Palembang people in experiencing togetherness which is often found at food events such as weddings, akikah and other large events. The tradition of ngang ngobeng is one of the typical eating activities in the city of Palembang. This activity is carried out by bringing a mat or woven bamboo to sit cross-legged on the floor. After that,

the people of Palembang will eat typical dishes such as pempek, model, tekwan, celor noodles, laksan, and so on that have been prepared.

Ngidang Tradition (Study of Changes and Shifts in Ngidang Traditions in the Community of Kelurahan 30 Ilir Palembang) The first research entitled, "Tradition Ngidang (Study of Changes and Shifts in Ngidang Traditions in the Community of Subdistrict 30 Ilir Palembang)" by [4]. The aim of this research is to describe the causes of the shift in the Ngidang Tradition in the 30 Ilir sub-district of Palembang. This research method is descriptive qualitative with primary data sources consisting of: Ngidang implementers, the 30 Ilir community, traditional heads, religious leaders. and secondary sources consist of library studies, documentation and journals. The conclusion of this research is that the Ngidang tradition is a tradition of the Palembang Malay community that has existed in Palembang since the time of the Palembang Darussalam sultanate with an Islamic style, in honoring guests at weddings, or kedurian. The Ngidang tradition is a tradition that contains many Islamic values, including: the value of togetherness, the value of politeness, and respect for elders. Apart from containing many Islamic values, the Ngidang tradition is also a sunnah taught by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. However, with the development of the times, the influx of culture from outside and factors such as economics, environment, heredity and modernization factors have resulted in these traditions being displaced by western culture, known as buffets or French, resulting in people losing their uniqueness in entertaining guests in the form of serving food. Hanging out. The changes and shifts that occur have had negative and positive impacts, including negative impacts: Weak intensity of community interaction, relationships between communities are not strong, resulting in the loss of local culture or traditions owned by the community as a characteristic of the Palembang Malay community.

The Existence of Ngidang as a Typical Palembang Eating Tradition in the 21st Century The second research entitled, "The Existence of Ngidang as a Typical Palembang Eating Tradition in the 21st Century" by [13]. The aim of this research is to determine the existence of the ngobeng ngobeng tradition in Palembang City. The research method is a historical method and the data collected is analyzed using a sociological approach with the data presented obtained by field observation, interviews and literature review. The conclusion is that the tradition of serving Palembang style food, known as ngidang, has developed since the time of the Palembang Darussalam sultanate. Where this tradition is used to glorify invited guests at weddings, alms or durian events. In essence, in this ngidang tradition there are many noble values contained, including: togetherness, politeness, and respect for elders. However, this tradition began to experience a shift towards the 90s because in Indonesia in general many people began to use French or buffet style food serving.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in qualitative research methods is scientific data collection with the aim of interpreting

phenomena that occur where the researcher is the key instrument, sampling of data sources is carried out purposively and spontaneously, the collection technique is triangulation (combination), data analysis is inductive/qualitative, and the results of qualitative research emphasize meaning rather than generalization [17]–[19].

The phenomenological method approach. Phenomenological theory is looking for answers about the meaning of a phenomenon, basically the two main things that are the focus in phenomenological research are textural description and structural description. Textural description is what the research subject experiences about a phenomenon, factual data, and things that happen empirically. Structural description is how the subject experiences and interprets his experience [20]. This aspect concerns opinions, judgments, meanings, feelings, hopes, and other subjective responses from research subjects related to their experiences.

Textural Description, in the textural description the researcher interviewed one of the native people of the city of Palembang and also one of the lecturers at Bina Darma University, Palembang, namely Mr. Nasir MM, M.Kom. who has directly experienced the implementation of the ngidang ngobeng tradition at home, according to Pak Nasir the ngidang ngobeng tradition has the meaning of mutual cooperation, honoring guests, togetherness, fostering closeness, connecting communication between communities, has an Islamic nature, and fosters a sense of sociality in the process of implementing the Ngidang Ngobeng tradition. The implementation of the ngidang ngobeng tradition also has phenomena that occur in it, starting from mutual cooperation, the meaning of 8 people on 1 tray which has its own meaning, the meaning of the traditional equipment and the procedures for carrying it out. During the implementation of the ngidang ngobeng tradition, Pak Nasir as the host has carried out several events and even participated in events in this ngidang ngobeng tradition, the feelings experienced when following this tradition make the phenomenon of this meaning really happen, mutual cooperation and cooperation create each people communicate with each other, experience a deep sense of togetherness and can feel the values contained in the implementation of the ngidang ngobeng tradition.

Structural Description, researchers interviewed according to procedures that produced data experienced by the subject, namely Mr. Kemas Ari Panji M.Sc. as a historian and also as a lecturer at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang. Factual data in the form of meanings that occur during the implementation of the ngidang ngobeng tradition, such as the meaning of each piece of equipment, the meaning of sitting cross-legged. The subject also explained his opinion regarding the ngidang ngobeng tradition which is now more difficult to implement because the location where ngidang ngobeng is carried out is now more difficult to find, thus making it difficult for the community to implement the ngidang ngobeng tradition. Subjects also assessed and made comparisons between the tradition of ngidang ngobeng and what is now often used, namely the French/buffet method. Subjects assessed that using the French/buffet method was more wasteful and wasteful in providing food. Compared to

the implementation of ngidang ngobeng which is clear and already counted in 1 tray there are several iwak that have been provided, the subject explains this comparison very clearly compared to the French method which sometimes often takes more than 2 types of iwak but is not finished/unfinished, which makes the dish very It is wasteful when not eaten compared to ngidang which has a clear calculation. However, the French method has a good impression with progress and developments nowadays, people prefer simple and practical methods. The subject also believes that nowadays one of the smaller house models means that the ngidang tradition is rarely carried out, because the ngidang tradition requires a large location during the ceremony. Here the subject gives hope that in the future this tradition will continue to be carried out even in the face of shortages in whatever aspect the subject provides a solution for example in the case of a lack of capacity/small house, the organizer of the ngobeng ngobeng/host can ask the left and right neighbors for permission to use it. the house is used as a place to hang out, inviting neighbors to hold a cooking day 1 day before the event to save costs compared to ordering catering.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### *History of the Origin of the Ngidang Ngobeng Tradition*

The traditions of Ngidang and Ngobeng are two activities in one. This tradition has been around for a long time and is a tradition native to the city of Palembang, Ngidang Ngobeng is a mutual cooperation tradition of serving food from the stage (cooking/serving place) to the house/serving location using a relay technique or hand-holding from the end of the Ngobeng officer to the end of the Ngidang officer. The origin of 'ngidang ngobeng' is closely related to culture and traditions which place great emphasis on the importance of social and family values. The values of togetherness and unity reflected in ngobeng singing are still an inseparable part of cultural heritage. The tradition of eating together in a warm and friendly atmosphere has always been an important part of this culture. Ngidang ngobeng is a gathering moment between friends, neighbors or relatives who want to unite. This custom is a main aspect of the culture of the Palembang people and has a symbolic meaning in maintaining identity.

#### *Ngidang Ngobeng Tradition Tools*

Sheets or bedspreads in the ngidang ngobeng tradition in the city of Palembang are often used to serve food to guests. This is a traditional method used to display typical Palembang dishes such as pempek, tekwan, model, and others. Functioning as a base for a place to eat, the so-called bed sheets have colors and various distinctive motifs that reflect the aesthetics of Palembang culture. The tray is the second technique in preparation which functions as a container for placing the rice. The tray acts as a container where typical Palembang dishes are placed and served to guests during the ngidang ngobeng event. Dulang is one of the traditional serving utensils used in the ngidang ngobeng tradition to carry dishes from the kitchen to the serving location. In the tradition of ngobeng ngobeng in Palembang, plates also have an important role. Plates are the main utensil used to place and

serve dishes to guests. Each dish is placed on a suitable plate, arranging the plates is an important part in preparing ngidang ngobeng, the plates are arranged in a circle and across each other.

Arabic glasses are used to serve drinks, especially tea, to guests. It is an ideal vessel for serving tea, as it generally has a tall, slim and elegant shape. Apart from that, the hand washing pot (wash basin) may not be an element that is often associated with the ngobeng ngobeng tradition. However, handwashing pitchers are an important element in some more formal dining traditions and larger dining establishments. A handwashing jug is a container used for washing hands before and after eating, this can be part of certain customs or traditions in a dining culture and it is also an important part of maintaining cleanliness while eating.

#### *The meaning of the Ngidang Ngobeng tradition*

The Ngidang Ngobeng tradition has the meaning of mutual cooperation, honoring guests, togetherness, fostering closeness, connecting communication between communities, having an Islamic nature, and fostering a sense of sociality in the process of implementing the Ngidang Ngobeng tradition. Then the meaning of gotong royong can be taken from the word "Ngidang" which means the officer/host who serves food to the invited guests by working together with the "Ngobeng" officer which means the officer who delivers food from the stage to the house/event location. The tools and procedures for the process of implementing the Ngidang Ngobeng tradition must first be known by the officers, both the arrangement and the meanings contained in the presentation of Ngidang and Ngobeng, then in implementing the Ngidang Ngobeng tradition, each equipment has a meaning, characteristics and values. what is typical in it, along with the meaning of the equipment and the meaning of the process from the Ngidang Ngobeng tradition.

First, the Tray/Tray which functions as a container for rice and a container for delivering iwak. Iwak does not mean the name of fish as it is known but rather as a side dish when serving ngidang. The rice you are carrying should not be lifted in front of your chest but should be lifted to the side parallel to your shoulders, which means that the rice remains hygienic and is not exposed to the breath of the officer carrying the tray. Trays made from natural materials such as wood or rattan can also be a symbol of natural beauty and respect for natural resources. The color of the tray/tray is divided into 3 kinds of colors which have certain meanings, such as gold which represents glory, black which means other nature and mangosteen red which means honesty. The meaning of these 3 colors has meaning for the city of Palembang, whose region is rich and prosperous, good and honest, and believes in the spirits of ancestors or ancestors. Dulang are often decorated with traditional motifs or decorative arts that reflect Palembang's cultural heritage. Using a tray is a way to respect and give special attention to guests who come. The host carefully arranges the dish on a tray and respectfully serves it to the guest. This reflects hospitality and respect for the guests present. The tray also functions as a practical container for preparing and serving dishes. This is a place where food is carefully prepared before being served to guests. As a

preparation container, the tray has an important role in the success of ngobeng ngobeng. Dulang is often used as a symbol of identity and pride for the people of Palembang and with these meanings, dulang in the tradition of ngidang ngobeng in Palembang becomes more than just a container for dishes. Dulang is a symbol of culture, generosity, simplicity, and unity. Trays are an important part of a lively and memorable ngobeng experience.

Second, plates which function as containers for iwak and come in various sizes and have their own meanings. Large plates are meant for dinner plates for invited guests, medium sized plates are meant for serving side dishes/iwak such as malbi, chicken, curry, eggs, fish and small sized plates are meant for serving pulur (complements) such as chili sauce, crackers/kelempang, pickles, and dessert fruits banana, pineapple and watermelon. In some cases, dishes served on plates may contain innovations in traditional cuisine. The plate is a place to create, combine and serve new dishes, it reflects creativity in maintaining tradition while enriching the culinary experience. A plate is a container in which shared dishes are served. The use of plates in the ngidang ngobeng tradition reflects the importance of unity and cooperation in Palembang culture. The plates used often have beautiful and artistic designs. This reflects the value of art and beauty in the ngidang ngobeng tradition. The use of plates in the ngidang ngobeng tradition is a symbol of happiness and friendliness. Plates are not only tools for serving food, but also symbols that depict social, cultural and humanitarian values that are valued in society. Third, this tradition is an inseparable part of the cultural heritage of the Palembang people and has a deep symbolic meaning in preserving local identity and wisdom. The symbolic meaning of eight people circular and facing each other symbolizes that it consists of eight cardinal points and nine trunks of the ninth day. Sembilan Batang, the ninth day, is symbolized by the nine tributaries of the Musi River in Palembang City. Batang Hari Sembilan is a river-based culture, this culture is an agricultural culture that is in harmony with nature. This river culture can be shown from the thought patterns of the native people who line the banks of the river. The term Batanghari Sembilan is a term for the nine tributaries of the Musi River, namely Klingi, Bliti, Lakitan, Rawas, Rupit, Lematang, Leko, Ogan, and Komerang where the Musi River is the parent of the Batanghari Sembilan. Batanghari Sembilan in the language of the Semende people means "Nature of Many Rivers". Batanghari is also a term for musical rhythms with a single guitar strum that expresses a culture with romantic, meloncholic and naturalistic nuances. It is called a single guitar because the musical instrument used is just an ordinary guitar. The reason it has the same meaning as 9 stalks of the ninth day is because it symbolizes the meaning of a mixture of 8 iwak, pulp and vegetables in the tray with 1 rice being the middle point. Fourth, the meaning of serving iwak, pulp and vegetables. In the Ngidang Ngobeng tradition, the arrangement of the iwak on a sheet also has its own meaning, which extends to the rules for good and correct eating etiquette. The following is the arrangement of iwak, pulp and vegetables.

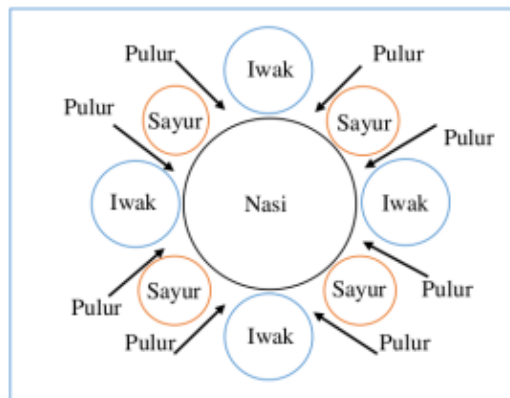


Figure 2. Illustration of the arrangement of serving iwak, pulp and vegetables (source : researcher 2024)

The meaning of serving the Ngidang Ngobeng tradition is why iwak, pulp and vegetables are placed criss-crossed/divided into several sides so that each person in one tray shares equally and cannot cross each other or cross each other unless the person opposite offers the dish directly, the reason You are not allowed to cross because it is "pamali" or prohibited to do so.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the discussion regarding the meaning of the Ngidang Ngobeng tradition in Palembang City, the following conclusions are drawn: 1) The meaning of the Ngidang Ngobeng tradition has the meaning of mutual cooperation, honoring guests, togetherness, fostering closeness, connecting communication between communities, having an Islamic nature, and fostering a sense of social in the process of implementing the Ngidang Ngobeng tradition. Then the meaning of gotong royong can be taken from the word "Ngidang" which means the officer/host who serves food to the invited guests by working together with the "Ngobeng" officer which means the officer who delivers food from the stage to the house/event location. 2) In today's developments, people are used to simple and practical comfort. The Ngidang Ngobeng tradition is too complicated and requires a large location in the house, which has led to many people using the buffet method in modern times. The arrival of the buffet method makes serving easier and doesn't take up much space because ancient houses were large and spacious, whereas nowadays many houses are small. making it difficult for people to use the Ngidang Ngobeng tradition which is synonymous with a large serving area. 3) With the current era of modernization, local culture has disappeared as a characteristic of the people of the city of Palembang with the presence of western culture, namely buffets/French, which has made local culture little by little lost as time goes by, causing over time people to forget the traditional process of ngobeng. 4) Economic factors influence changes in the Ngidang Ngobeng tradition, because people consider this tradition to require large costs starting from buying and



renting ngidang equipment, requiring a lot of labor and a large space to accommodate guests.

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