

# Exploring the Philosophical Values in the Rejang Tribe Traditional Law

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**Abstract.** Philosophical values are used as role models for the community in regulating behavior in Rejang's life. For the Rejang tribe, customary law is a guide in regulating their behavior. The purpose of this study is to explore philosophical values in terms of analytic philosophy of language. The method is qualitative method by exploring and describing the philosophical values of Rejang customary law. Data were collected using listening technique, free to engage in conversation, notes taking, and recording. Data processing include data provision, analysis phase, and data display. The results show that Rejang customary law has philosophical values that are useful in regulating life. These values are (a) problems solving, through pecoak bekaping 'kalau pecah, pasang kaping'. (b) The value of responsibility, expressed in tangent menetok, baeu mbusung 'tangan memotong, bahu membusung'. (c) personality, which is stated jibeak mbin sifet lalang bidin dalen 'jangan ambil sifat ilalang di jalan'.

**Keywords:** Philosophical Values; Customary Law; Rejang

## 1 Introduction

Indonesia has a rich variety of cultures, many of which have not been revealed yet especially from a philosophical point of view, though the philosophical values contained in the culture are quite interesting and no less important than the Western philosophical values derived from the thoughts of the characters [1]. As a pluralism-based state, the existence of indigenous and tribal peoples who live and develop and have their own legal systems, in other words the law applies in Indonesia not only state law but also customary law and religious law [2]. Many countries have indigenous cultures manifested in the forms of Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expressions [3]. In line with the principle of customary law include as local wisdom, it is a way of life and science as well as various life strategies in the form of activities undertaken by local communities in addressing various problems in daily basis [4]. Therefore, indigenous peoples place customary law as a 'means' to maintain customary values so that they remain sustainable and can be implemented in harmony with the times [5]. Although customary law as a means and instrument for upholding customary values, it turns out to face various obstacles in its implementation [6]. One who still maintains customary law is the Rejang community in Bengkulu Province.

The Rejang community in the Bengkulu Region highly respects and obeys the customs and customary law of Rejang as a reflection of the norms of life for the people who occupy the territory of the customary law unit in Bengkulu Province. Customs and customary law are local wisdom they must preserve, develop, and obey [7] explained that the recording of the customs and social culture of the community can be a reflection of the character of the community. Meanwhile, Hartono said similar to psychology, sociology and philosophy, human anthropology also want to understand the man and the phenomena [8]. In line with this, Ahimsa Putra [9] explains that elements of past culture are no longer seen as remnants of the old culture, but as actual cultural elements because they have certain functions. Although the community has changed, the traditions and customs still exist [10].

The nature of custom and customary law itself is cosmic and totalitarian. This makes the manifestation of balancing, harmonizing, between humans and nature [11]. It contains philosophical values that contain deep moral teachings. Philosophical values are values that contain moral teachings about how to act and behave in life, and are used as principles or standards in the life of a person or group based on their level of importance [12]. It becomes a way of life for them about the life they aspire to and becomes the basic principle in life. It becomes a way of life for them about the life they aspire to and becomes the basic principle in life. In line with [13] symbols are used to realize also existing local wisdom in society. It is said further [13] symbols used in reflecting cultural meaning.

The Rejang people call their area Taneak Tanai, the residence of the Rejang tribe, 'Tanah Rejang'. Land or nature for the Rejang tribe is very important in life. Nature with all its characteristics has taught them the importance of egalitarian values (togetherness). They put these egalitarian values into their customary fatwa (order issued by the leader) which are sourced from nature. Nature with all of its characteristics is the guide in managing social life. The traditional sayings or proverbs that they put in the customary fatwa are full of philosophical values that come from nature. Along with the flow of globalization marked by the 4.0 revolution, it is feared that it will influence the mindset of the millennial generation of the Rejang tribe, resulting in a shift in cultural values, customs, mindsets, and perspectives in doing and acting in society. Although the Regional Government of Rejang Lebong Regency has issued Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2018 [14] Article 15 letter C, concerning "Enforcement of Jang's Customary Law in the Rejang Lebong Regency", it is still feared that the younger generation of the Rejang tribe does not understand the meaning and philosophical values implied in the customary law of Rejang. As it states that customary law communities are obliged to preserve and implement customary law and the nobility of its customary values.

The basic symptom experienced by the Rejang community today is very fast socio-cultural changes. Socio-cultural changes occur because of cultural shifts between countries. Cultural contact is defined as a meeting between new values and old values that dominate and influence each other at the surface structure level, namely attitudes and behavior patterns, as well as at the deep structure level, namely changes in value systems, views of life, philosophy, and belief [15]. This means that changes in a society occur because of the wave of modernization and globalization that have introduced new values in the traditional environment of the Rejang Society. Apadurai [16] illustrates that changes in value occur due to the influence of (1) movement of people (ethnoscape), (2) information media (mediascape), (3) technology brought or that can be seen (technoscape), (4) the flow of capital ownership (financescape), and ideologies (ideoscapes) both brought, informed, and can be adopted. This situation has very basic consequences for the life and efforts to maintain the purity of the local customs and cultural values of Rejang Lebong.

Based on the problems above, the philosophical values contained in the traditional teachings and customary law of Rejang must be re-instilled in the younger generation. This is intended to preserve the values of local wisdom possessed by the Rejang tribe through their traditional adage which is full of philosophical values. This research tries to reveal how the philosophical view of the Rejang law towards nature is, and the philosophical values contained in the traditional teachings and customary law of Rejang. Based on these research questions, this study aims to reveal the philosophical views of the Rejang laws towards nature; and express the philosophical values contained in the customs and customary law of Rejang. This research is expected to be able to reveal the Rejang traditional view of nature and the philosophical values that have been taught by the ancestors of the Rejang tribe can be expressed for the sake of preserving the values of local wisdom of the Rejang tribe. This research can also be a reference for future researchers in exploring the traditional values of the Rejang tribe from other aspects.

Research on the Rejang tribe and their customary law is not the latest research. There have been studies conducted by experts and researchers one of them is the research conducted by Silvia Devi's [17] entitled "*Orang Rejang dan Hukum Adatnya: Tafsiran atas Kelpeak hukum Adat Ngen Ca'o Kutei Jang Kabupaten Rejanglebong*". In this study, the researchers concluded that jenang kutei or judges in Rejanglebong Regency have a very important role in solving problems in the community. This problem is not only experienced by certain tribes, but all those who mingle with the Rejang people. The implications of the application of customary law with the role of jenang kutei can be seen from the existence of harmony in the community. Every problem should be resolved in a peaceful manner, so as not to cause resentment among members of the community. Another research is the research conducted by Ramadhanty, Sarwit Sarwono, and Agus Joko Purwadi on "'Nyambei dalam Bimbang Pernikahan Pada Etnik Rejang". Ramadhanty, Sarwit, and Agus [18] in their research concluded that in interpreting sambei, one must first understand the ethnography of the community that owns sambei in order to get the right meaning. In addition, various kinds of sambei almost have the same words or even the same line of sentences, but due to different contexts and situations, their meanings are also different.

This research is different from previous research because the researcher wants to explore the philosophical values of Rejang customary law in terms of the philosophy of language, the researcher's has never found any similar research conducted by other researchers or experts, therefore, this research needs to be done to explore the philosophical values contained in customary law of the Rejang people. Moral values are values related to the behavior of human life based on the understanding that they are bound by a necessity to achieve the good based on the values and norms that apply in their environment [19]. Poespoprodjo [20] defines morality and morality as the quality of human actions that indicate whether the act is right or wrong, good or bad. As one of the ethnic groups in Indonesia, the Rejang tribe has long been known as one of the tribes who obey their customary rules. They have made nature a guide in their lives (just like the Minangkabau tribe in West Sumatra).

They see nature with all its elements always consists of four, such as the sun, moon, earth, and stars. There is east, west, north, and south. All the different elements of nature are interconnected but not bound, dispute, but do not eliminate. They live with their own dynamics [21]. They put nature with all its dynamics into traditional expressions and they use it as a guide in every aspect of their lives. They have read nature in all its dynamics. For example, the Rejang tribe has made nature as a teacher, long before Indonesia's independence, when they wanted to farm. They make the growing season for crops, as a guide to go hunting for these animals. Determining when to start farming by referring to natural objects such as

the color of the sky, seeing the stars and the behavior of river fish or the fall of certain wood tree leaves. Likewise in the manufacture of traditional houses, they also use nature as a guide for their lives [22].

All the natural provisions that they put into the traditional expression have quite high philosophical values. The traditional expressions contained in the form of a series of words contain symbols or deep meanings, because in essence language is a symbol system that has meaning [23]. In line with the opinion of previous experts, [2] states that words are generally symbols, but any marker of an object, sound, figure, and so on can be symbolic. While the main task of philosophy is to answer the meaning of the symbols that appear in this universe. On the other hand, language is a medium to reveal all the secrets of these symbols [24]. This system of meaningful language symbols is the object of philosophical study, namely the analytic philosophy of language.

Analytical philosophy of language or philosophy of language is one of the branches of philosophy that explains various kinds of problems, philosophical concepts, and philosophical questions through language analysis or analysis of the use of expressions, including customary expressions [23]. As Mustansyir's opinion as quoted by Hidayat [24] says that the philosophy of language is an in-depth investigation of the language used in philosophy. The philosophy of language is a method of thinking deeply (radically), logically, and generally about the nature of language, namely the language used in philosophy [24].

Meanwhile, Khoyin [25] says that the philosophy of language is divided into two senses, namely (a) philosophers' concern for language for analysis and answering philosophical problems and concepts; and (b) the philosopher's concern for language as a source of material, namely revealing the nature of language so that it becomes a paradigm for the sustainability of environmental schools and theories. In the twentieth century, the development of the philosophy of language was known, namely when philosophers realized that many problems and new philosophical concepts could be explained through language analysis, due to language as a vital tool in philosophy [26]. To analyze the data of this research, the researcher uses the theory of philosophy of language or analytic philosophy of language.

## **2 Methodology**

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method, where the researcher describes the philosophical values contained in the customary teachings and customary law of the Rejang tribe, in terms of the analytic philosophy of language or the philosophy of language. There are three strategic stages that the researcher went through at the implementation stage of this research, namely the data availability stage, data analysis, and data analysis results. Sudaryanto [27]. At the stage of data availability, data was collected using the listening method, the basic technique in the form of tapping techniques [28]. It is said to be tapping because listening is realized by tapping the use of language by informants and the use of language contained in the book of Sejarah, Adat, Budaya, Bahasa, dan Aksara as primary data [29]. This technique is followed by an advanced technique in the form of a free listening technique involving conversation, notes, and recording. Furthermore, the classification of data is based on the criteria for philosophical values contained in the traditional expressions of the Rejang tribe.

The use of this technique is due to the role of the researcher as an observer of the language spoken by the informant. The researcher only listened to the language used by the informant, the researcher was not involved in this. In addition, researchers also act as instruments in

research. The data was recorded on the previously provided HVS paper sheet. The information submitted by the informant, related to the philosophical values contained in the customary law of Rejang, is recorded on the data card.

At the data analysis stage, the data were analyzed using the extralingual equivalent method, which is a data analysis method carried out by linking and comparing language problems with things outside of language [28]. Followed by data reduction and triangulation techniques. This reduction technique aims to explore in depth, group, direct, discard data that is not needed, and collect data, so that it is hoped that conclusions can be drawn maximally and verified [30]. The last stage of the implementation of this research is the presentation of the results of data analysis. At the stage of presenting the results of data analysis, data is presented using an informal method, namely the method of presenting the results of data analysis using ordinary words, including the use of technical terminology[31].

### **3 Results and Discussion**

#### **3.1 Results of the Philosophical Values in Customary Law of Rejang**

Based on the data that the about the philosophical values contained in the customs and customary law of Rejang which they called the “Kelpeak Ukum Adat Ngen Riyan Ca'o Kutei Jang and after the analysis, the researchers were able to describe the philosophical values contained in the Rejang customary law is in accordance with the purpose of this study, as shown below.

#### **Philosophical Values in Rejang Customary Teachings and Customary Law**

Customs and customary law for the Rejang people are the basis of law and order in life. It not only regulates the relationship of individuals but also regulates relationships in social life. Another term is called the norm. In this study, ten norms in the teachings of Rejang Lebong law are discussed, as shown in the description below:

##### **a) Problem Solving**

In terms of problem solving, the Rejang tribe has made nature a lesson for their lives. This is reflected in their traditional expression, namely bebanea inde benuo ‘pokok batang rotan manau’. This customary expression gives a hint to the Rejang tribe that in solving a problem, the root of the problem must first be found so as not to harm one party, because the problem is like tali jala be tutun inde jalei. They make rattan as an expression in their customs because of their views on rattan that grows vines. Because of its propagating nature, at the end of the rattan plant a tangled rattan stem is found, look for the base to find the cause of the tangle.

Still in problem solving, the Rejang tribe has local wisdom as a result of immersing nature, through the phrase pecoak bekaping ‘kalau pecah, pasang kaping’. Pecoak in the Rejang language means 'cracked' or 'broken' for objects that have handles, such as machetes or knives. While bekaping means 'to have a hood' attached. Kaping is a rope made of rattan that can be used to attach broken or damaged handles to machetes or knives. This expression suggests to the Rejang tribe those who knows about a problem that can divide the life of the Rejang community, it can be discussed, so that what was cracked can be reunited.

In line with the above expression, in terms of solving the problem of the Rejang customary expression as a result of immersing natural phenomena, it teaches that if there is a problem, the *sumbing*, *betitip 'sumpil/sumbing ditempa'*. If there are problems in the family, the family is no longer harmonious, then the 'Penempa' or the party who must solve the problem is the parents. Furthermore, in solving a problem, the Rejang people also have teachings as a result of their observations of nature, namely *bepatet bekenek*, *bejenjang tu'un 'berjenjang naik, berjenjang turun'*. This traditional teaching teaches the Rejang people in solving a problem that they must follow the rules that have been outlined, starting from the lowest level to the highest level, and the decision is also conveyed from the highest level to the lowest level.

b) Responsibility

Like other ethnic groups, the Rejang tribe also has a high sense of responsibility. Expressed in their traditional teachings *tangen menetok*, *baeu mbusung 'tangan memotong, bahu membusung'*. This customary expression teaches them that if any member of the Rejang tribe commits an act/mistake, then they must dare to be responsible for all the consequences or risks caused by their actions.

c) Personality

The ancestors of the Rejang tribe taught their citizens that everyone has a personality, not someone else's personality. They put that teaching into their traditional expression which says that the philosophy of *jibeak mbin sifet lalang bidin dalen 'jangan ambil sifat ilalang di jalan'*. When there is a gust of wind, it will move in the direction. When the wind blows from the west, the grass will move to the east, and when the wind blows from the east, it will move to the west. Weeds are a symbol of people who have no personality.

d) Acculturation

Acculturation is a social process that arises when a human group is exposed to elements of a foreign culture. These elements are gradually accepted and processed into their own culture without causing the loss of the personality of the original culture. These acculturation values they put into words *neak ipe bumei nelat, diba lenget jenunjung 'di mana bumi dipijak, di situ langit dijunjung'*. Customary teachings teach them that they must be able to follow, implement, and respect and prioritize the customs of the community in which they live, then carry out the customs that they brought from their area of origin.

e) Humble

Rejang traditional teachings teach them that every Rejang person must have a humble nature. Customary teachings teach them not to act like parrots who can talk but do not understand what they are talking about. They put this teaching into the traditional expression of *tiung bergalo faith* with the cry of 'parrots of courageous faith'. Parrots in the Rejang language are called *tiung bergalo iman bergageak 'beo iman bergagah'*. Parrots can be taught to speak but he does not understand what he is saying. The Rejang tradition forbids its people to have traits such as parrots or birds of faith, which proudly show their ability to speak, but they do not understand what they are saying.

f) Accuracy

Based on the results of immersing nature, a customary expression was born which teaches that every Rejang person must have an attitude of accuracy or prudence. They express this attitude of patience in their traditional expression which says *semetak buk neak gelpung, gelpung coa tupeak buk coa putus* 'menarik rambut di tepung, tepung tidak tumpah rambut tidak putus'. That is, the problem can be resolved properly, without harming one of the conflicting parties.

g) Honesty

The Rejang tribe teaches its people to be honest. This they put into a traditional expression which says *beneak mbeak temambeak, lengan mbeak mapei* 'yang berat jangan ditambah, yang ringan jangan diabaikan'. This expression means that every person who violates the law must be given sanctions according to the level of guilt. respectively, neither added nor subtracted.

h) Justice

Through their observations of nature, customary teachings were born that teach every citizen to always act fairly through the traditional expression *mbeak mayeak kiyeu dipoa mengindai* 'jangan mencondongkan kayu di seberang mengarah kita'. This customary expression means don't take our share too big. Be fair in life.

i) Do not Justify a mistake

The Rejang tradition teaches its people not to defend the wrong. Through reading literacy (nature), the ancestors of the Rejang tribe gave birth to the traditional expression *mbeak temgak saman ceak* 'janganlah menegakkan benang basah'. This customary expression teaches someone who has been entrusted to be a leader, jenang, or customary leader, not to try to find justification in justifying a mistake.

j) Sincerity

Furthermore, the traditional teachings of Rejang teach them to be sincere about a problem. This customary expression teaches them if there is a dispute between brothers and sisters so as not to prolong the problem, and the other party should not interfere in the troubled family affairs. Let them do their own thing because they are like a feather tangle, a beak that will fix it again.

### 3.2 Discussion

Customary law is an unwritten rule that grows and develops in a society and regulates a community group to act or behave in accordance with the provisions contained in the customary law. Those who are bound by the provisions of the customary law are referred to as customary law communities, namely a collection of people who are bound by the customary law order as common citizens because of the similarity of residence or the basis of descent. Even though the provisions contained in customary law are not in written form, the people

who are bound by customary law still obey them. In it there are philosophical values that are loaded with moral values which of course are also loaded with educational values.

### Rejang's Indigenous View of Nature

Nature for the Rejang people is not only a place for them to live and make a living, but nature for them has become a way of life with its four elements. The four elements of nature need each other. It takes fire to heat water, and it takes water to put out a fire, and it takes air to start a fire. All the opposing elements of nature live in their respective dynamics. These natural elements are full of philosophical values, and they express this in their traditional expression, *alam bekemang ijei gueu* 'alam berkembang jadi guru'. The expression is guided by the community of speakers [32].

## 4 Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the data, it can be concluded that the Rejang tribe, like other ethnic groups in Indonesia, has used nature as a guide in their lives since ancient times. Nature with all its characteristics, they use as a guide in navigating social life, which they then pour in the form of customary expressions, proverbs, *alam bekemang ijei gueu* 'alam berkembang jadi guru'. Their cosmocentric understanding of natural philosophy is not intended as an objective knowledge of nature itself, but they use nature as an analogue in shaping values and behavior in social life.

The implementation of the concept of *alam bekemang ijei gueu* is not only manifested in the form of attention and use of nature as a source of knowledge and civilization, but is also reflected in their language behavior. This can be seen from the use of symbols or natural phenomena that they put into their traditional expressions. The use of symbols originating from natural phenomena has become commonplace in the culture of the Rejang tribe. We can see this in the traditional expression of *beak temgak saman ceak* 'janganlah menegakkan benang basah'.

This view of nature has given birth to traditional teachings that teach them to: (a) be able to find the best way to solve a problem. This is reflected in their traditional expression, namely *bebanea inde benuo* 'pokok batang rotan manau'; (b) have a sense of responsibility; (c) have personality values; (d) have the value of togetherness, (e) have the value of being humble, (f) have the value of acculturation or being able to adapt to the environment; (g) accuracy or thoroughness; (h) has the value of honesty; (i) has a justify value; and (j) have sincerity value.

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