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The philosophical values of *Rimpu* traditional clothing of Bimanese people in West Nusa Tenggara

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Abstract. This study aims to describe the philosophical value of *Rimpu* traditional clothing, the culture of Bimanese people in West Nusa Tenggara including (1) the history of the existence of *Rimpu*, and (2) the function of wearing *Rimpu*, particularly for the Bimanese people. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method and the instrument in this research is the researcher. To strengthen this research, the researcher employed observation, interview, and documentation as the guideline. The object of this research is the *Rimpu* tradition in Bima. Data validation was performed using referential adequacy and observational persistence. The data analysis technique employed in this research is descriptive qualitative consisting of several stages of data collection, data presentation, and conclusion. Based on the research results, the philosophical values of *Rimpu* traditional clothing as the culture of Bimanese people in West Nusa Tenggara are (1) as the regulation for women to cover their 'awrah emerged after the spread of Islamic teaching in Bima, women started to cover their 'awrah by wearing a woven sarong called *Rimpu*, and (2) it functions as a religious identity, combines the local and typical Bimanese culture, protects women when interacting with the opposite sex during the colonial period, and also against a bad environment.

Keywords. Culture, *Rimpu*, Bima

1. Introduction

Life in prehistoric times in social units that were relatively separate from one another has provided great opportunities for the growth of a culture with its characteristics. The uniqueness of each of these cultures gets momentum for consolidation when the community concerned has entered a sedentary life (permanent and is no longer moving), and in this mode of life develops more complex concepts of leadership and community order. With this development, the identity of each culture is characterized by more complex uniqueness, regarding the various components or elements of the culture that also develops diversity, both related to social functions and technical functions (Edi, 2006 : 328).

Culture is a view that aims to make life easier by "teaching" people how to adapt to their environment. It plays a role in improving the way group members of a culture adapt to a particular ecology and this involves the knowledge people need so that they can play an active role in their social environment (Larry, 2010 : 28).

One of the forms of culture is local wisdom that can be defined as a local cultural wealth that contains life policies; a view of life that accommodates policies and life wisdom (Kemdikbud, 2016). On another view, according to Akhmar and Syarifudin (2007), local wisdom is the values or behavior of local communities in interacting wisely with the environment in which they live. It is the values that apply to society and also a “spiritual asset” that teaches people how to behave and act. Therefore, although local wisdom is the result of past cultural products, it should continue to be used as a guide for the life of the Indonesian people.

A particular area will be known by other regions or tribes because of its cultural wisdom which makes it different from the others. As the culture raised and interpreted the people’s life, from the various local cultures that exist in Indonesia, such as in Aceh, Sumatra, Bali, and areas throughout Indonesia, all of them have their distinctive characteristics. Likewise, the local culture is also still preserved in the land of Bima, West Nusa Tenggara.

One of the cultures that are still preserved by the Bima people in Bima’s ancestral land is the *Rimpu* tradition. *Rimpu* is wearing a sarong by wrapping it around the head where only the wearer’s face is visible using the sarong. The sarong that is usually used is the *nggolo sarong* or what is commonly called *tembe nggoli*.

2. Research Method

The type of research used in this study is descriptive qualitative. The research was conducted in Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara. The object of this research is the culture of *Rimpu* tradition in Bima, West Nusa Tenggara.

The research procedure consists of observation, interview, and documentation. The type of research data contains words and actions, written data sources, and documentation in the form of photographs. Words and actions were obtained through observation and interviews which are a combination of seeing, listening, and asking questions. Sources of written data were obtained from reading sources such as books, magazines, archives, and official documents. Documentation data is used to complement the data obtained from interviews and observations so that the data obtained is valid and complete.

Data collection was carried out using observation, interview, and documentation techniques. In qualitative research, the research instrument is the researcher as a human instrument.

The data analysis process begins by examining all available data from observations, interviews, and documentation. The analysis is to describe, interpret, and describe the data systematically. In analyzing the data collected during the research, the researcher used several steps in analyzing the data including data collection, data presentation, and drawing conclusion or verification.

3. *Tembe Nggoli*

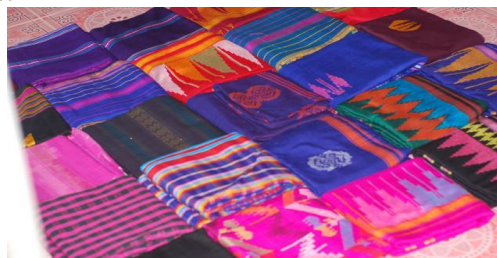


Figure 1. *Sarong Nggoli*, the symbol of social status for the people of Bima, West Nusa Tenggara (Source: kumparan.com)

Tembe nggoli is a woven cloth typical of Bima and Dompu, West Nusa Tenggara. The fabric, which is made of cotton yarn, has a variety of bright colors, and has a distinctive pattern of handwoven gloves. For the Mbojo people, this *tembe nggoli* weaving is a cultural heritage that has been preserved until now. Most of the women of the Mbojo tribe still adhere to the tradition of weaving *tembe nggoli* sarong, which has been passed down from generation to generation. The weaving technique is also unique, namely using the traditional *gedogan* loom which is used by the weaver in a sitting position.

Furthermore, the *Rimpu* tradition is one of the cultural results of the Bimanese people. Generally, women use *rimpu* to cover their 'awrah as Islamic teachings teach that every woman who has reached adulthood must cover her 'awrah in front of someone who is not her mahram. In Bima, this is manifested by wearing *sarimpu* as a form of obedience to God the Almighty.

4. *Rimpu*



Figure 2. *Rimpu*, Muslim Women Clothing of Mbojo Tribe, Bima, West Nusa Tenggara (Source: Alif.ID)

The word *rimpu* comes from the Bima language which means a head covering with a sarong so that *rimpu* has the meaning of a Bima Muslim women dress covering the head and entire body using a typical Bima sarong. The use of the term veil or head covering is also used in several nations that embrace the religion of Islam, described by Nasaruddin Umar as the term *cadar* 'veil' in Iran comes from the Persian language, *chador* which means tent. In the Iranian tradition, the veil means an all-around piece of clothing that covers a woman from head to toe. Meanwhile, in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh it is known as *purdah* which comes from the Indo-Pakistani language, *pardeh*, which means curtain. Moreover, the term *charshaf* is better known in Turkey, and *milayat* in Libya, as well as *kudung* or *kerudung* 'headscarf' for the regions of Indonesia, Southern Thailand, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam (Milani, 1992).

5. The History of *Rimpu* Appearance



Figure 3. *Rimpu* clothing dominated the 379th anniversary of the Bima cultural parade.

Before Bimanese people used *rimpu* to cover their 'awrah or before Islam entered Bima, the community had embraced several local religions (also called as customary religion), which Bimanese people knew *makamba* (dynamism). *Makamba* means believing in objects that have

supernatural powers, and which affect everyday life. Another belief is *makimbi* (animism) which means that people believe in supernatural spirits. Apart from these two local beliefs, some Bimanese people have embraced Hinduism (polytheism), a religion that believes in many gods (Coretanzone, 2017).

Indonesian people, especially the people of Bima, have been familiar with clothing since preliterate times. At that time, people made clothes with all kinds of materials and tools such as animal skin, bark, and so on. With the development of safety and technology, people are starting to be able to process clothing from cotton which can then become yarn and processed into clothes. Clothing is mostly made by weaving and then passed on to the offspring. In the land of Bima, the most typical is *tembe nggoli*, or woven sarong with many motifs and shapes. Usually, *Tembe nggoli* is used as a covering for the 'awrah of women from head to toe and is popularly known as *rimpu*.

Rimpu was first introduced as clothing for Muslim women in Bima in the 17th century after the entry of Islam which was marked by the change of the kingdom to an Islamic sultanate (Rahman, 2000). Rahman further said that Islamic teaching entered Bima on 15 Rabiul Awal 1050 H or July 5, 1640 AD. Two scholars from Sumatra (Dato ri Bandang and Dato ri Tiro) were sent by the Gowa Sultanate to spread Islam in Bima (*Dou Mbojo*). At that time, almost all women in Bima Sultanate were still wearing clothes inherited from their ancestors with makeshift clothes to cover their limbs, so the two scholars introduced them to how to dress following Islamic demands. Since Islam was introduced, Bima's traditional sarong has been used to cover the 'awrah and is known as *rimpu*. The popularity of the *Rimpu* tradition in the early days was because at that time people did not know the sewing machine to join the cloth or fabric to make everyday clothes. At that time, they only knew the woven sarong, the basic material of which was cotton which was processed into yarn and then woven into sarongs.

The tradition of *rimpu* has thickened since the transition of the Bima kingdom to the Bima sultanate. After being influenced by Islamic teachings, the Sultan began instructing Bima women to cover their 'awrah when leaving the house. The *rimpu* tradition existence, according to Ismail, cannot be separated from government efforts, especially during the reign of Sultan Nuruddin, the Bimanese people started to trade Bima's traditional sarong which was known as a selling commodity in the archipelago around the 18th century. *Dou Mbojo* used the abundant cotton plant to be used as woven fabric and was sold well in China. The sarong is also worn by local women (*rimpu*) both when they are at home and when going outside the house. The tradition of *rimpu* during the Dutch colonial rule helped women to maintain their honor. Thus, this *rimpu* tradition is now not only known in this area with the motto *Maja Labo Dahu* but has begun to become the culture and identity of women in Bima and also Dompu.

6. The Benefits of *Rimpu*



Figure 4. *Rimpu Mpida* (left) and Ordinary *Rimpu* (right)

The culture of *rimpu* has been known since Islam entered the land of Bima brought by religious leaders from Makassar. *Rimpu* tradition is the result of the culture or habits of Bima women, this tradition has existed since the Sultanate and the Islamic kingdom were founded in the land of Bima. *Rimpu* tradition is in line with the atmosphere of the life of the Muslim people in Bima who obey Islamic regulations. *Rimpu* has two types in terms of how it was worn, i.e. ordinary *rimpu* and *rimpu mpida*. Ordinary *Rimpu* is to wear the sarong to cover the head and part of the body, and only the face is visible. Whereas *rimpu mpida* is to wear the sarong to cover the head and face to part of the body, and only the eyes and nose are visible.

Tembe nggoli is a symbol of *rimpu* as it has several distinctive features compared to other sarongs. The specialty of *tembe nggoli*, among others, is warm, smooth, and soft, does not wrinkle easily, and the color of the woven fabric is resistant (does not easily fade). Currently, *tembe nggoli* has been produced in various patterns and motifs. Some are ordinary - for everyday use, and some are special, which are only used on certain occasions.

Rimpu has multi-functions in responding to the times. First, *rimpu* as a religious identity. Second, *rimpu* is a combination of local culture and characteristics of Bimanese culture. Third, as a protector of women in interacting with the opposite sex during the colonial period. Fourth, it serves as protection against a bad environment (Aulia, 2013 : 1).

One reflection of the Bimanese people's local culture that is now held and passed down is manifested in the *rimpu* tradition. *Rimpu* tradition does not contradict the teachings stated in the Al-Qur'an. The similarity is found in the parts of the women's 'awrah that must be covered with clothes that stretch out over the body, without questioning the types and kinds of clothes used to cover.

In ancient times, Bimanese women proudly wore *rimpu* to show the public that they could weave and the cloth they used was their work. The disclosure of women's 'awrah in the past is considered a disgrace. Whoever is a man, whether intentionally or not seeing their 'awrah, is obliged to marry the. Even when only their calves were disclosed, women in ancient times felt ashamed and immediately asked for marriage as they considered it an abuse (disgrace) against women (Rahman, 2000).

7. Conclusion

The regulations for women to cover their 'awrah emerged after the entry of Islamic teachings in Bima had triggered closing their 'awrah by using a woven sarong woven known as *Rimpu*. *Rimpu* is divided into two ways of wearing, i.e. ordinary *rimpu* and *rimpu mpida*. Ordinary *Rimpu* is to wear the sarong to cover the head and part of the body, and only the face is visible. Whereas *rimpu mpida* is to wear the sarong to cover the head and face to part of the body, and only the eyes and nose are visible. *Rimpu* has a function in its use; it serves as a religious identity, as a combination of local culture and characteristics of Bimanese culture, as a protector of women in interacting with the opposite sex during the colonial period, and also as a protection against a bad environment.

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