

The Dhammadesana Strategy of Buddhist Puppet Ki Eko Prasetyo

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Abstract

This paper discusses the strategy of implementing Dhammadesana or lectures in Buddhism using wayang media presented by Ki Eko Prasetyo. Wayang as one of the objects and performances of cultural arts in several regions in Indonesia such as in Java and Bali has become a distinctive identity that cannot be separated from Indonesia. The use of this puppet in spreading religious teachings has been used as an alternative chosen by various groups, one of which is what was done by Ki Eko Prasetyo as one of the figures who spread religious teachings through wayang media and uploaded to social media Youtube. The research method used is qualitative research using virtual ethnography. The data used is primary data from Ki Eko Prasetyo's puppet show on Youtube and secondary data that supports the discussion comes from literary sources. The results of this paper indicate that as a strategy in delivering Dhamma to Buddhists, the wayang Ki Eko Prasetyo can be a solution that is able to accommodate Dhamma messages. But of course, the delivery of the Dhamma message from Ki Eko Prasetyo's wayang performance needs to always be considered by Buddhists when receiving the Dhamma message. The use of words in the performance must be clearly chosen in order to avoid misinterpretation of the audience of the Ki Eko Prasetyo puppet show.

Keywords

Buddha; communication;
dhammadesana; wayang ki eko
prasetyo



I. Introduction

The human need for belief is very important because various warnings and religious teachings and their consequences that come from deep thinking and looking deeply at the experiences of others lead to beliefs to encourage humans to behave such as moving away from negative things for the good so that human life is stable. both at the personal and human level as a whole. Religious belief is the most common form of deep and influential belief in human conscience and society where some groups use it for their personal interests and it is a way for common good, truth and success (Noor, 2014). This establishes patterns of behavior and encourages open religious expression through open rituals and practices, which are key elements in the construction of human behavior through religion. Religion is generally associated with formal institutions as well as personal beliefs that are part of the

religiosity that shapes human life (Javanmard, 2013). Thus, religious direction through religion is important to build human life to lead to personal goals or common goals that are beneficial and positive with one another. Religion is vividly brought out as a major theme and it seems to have a stronger influence on how the people (Eskandari, 2020). Religion has the potential to be used as a tool to achieve political power in a nation, which may lead to inter-religious and inter-religious conflict itself (Nuruddin, 2019). The state is obliged to realize harmony in social and state life, guaranteeing harmony between religions and between adherents of religion, guaranteeing the freedom of everyone to have a religion and social freedom in social life (Fadrusiana, 2019).

The spread of religious teachings and religiosity is an effort and a means in shaping the construction of behavior in society. The formation of behavioral construction that occurs in society as an effort for human development and human rights together strengthens and helps ensure the welfare and dignity of human beings. The idea of human development establishes the need for education, better working conditions, and more options for individuals to make their ideas compatible with human rights (Uchenna, 1970). The spread of religious teachings is not limited and can be transformed in various forms according to needs and even human desires. In a sociological understanding of the role of the media in the spread of religion, it is important to emphasize that both traditional and modern media do not only present or report on religious issues. This media also changes the ideas and authority of religious institutions and changes the way people interact with each other when dealing with religious issues, so that the distribution of religious messages can be conveyed to each human being to reprocess their understanding. For example in some schools of belief that were previously considered superstitious and denounced as low culture which later changed with the increasing presence of forms of belief that have increased the legitimacy of 'superstition' and challenged the cultural prestige of society which was institutionalized through religious processions (Mirko, 2017).

In Indonesia, the process of spreading religion occurs through various delivery media initiated by various parties to impart their main teachings to the younger generation. The spread of religious teachings is generally done through the same method, namely by giving religious lectures. This lecture is then transformed into the use of media that is tailored to the target audience. The use of media in religious studies lectures and teaching moves academics and religious leaders to go beyond the use of the media itself into a specific reflection on religious studies on how media can be used to mediate phenomena that need to be propagated and more often based on different social and cultural contexts (Roth, 2017). The link between these two contexts often occurs in countries with a strong culture, such as in Indonesia. Through the various cultures possessed by the Indonesian people, it is not uncommon for the spread of religious teachings and religiosity to be combined into various forms of cultural elements that adapt to identity and belief in society.

One form of media for internalizing the values of religious teachings adapted to Indonesian culture is using wayang media. Wayang as one of the objects and performances of cultural arts in several regions in Indonesia such as in Java and Bali has become a distinctive identity that cannot be separated from Indonesia. The use of this puppet in providing story plays as a way of internalizing religious values has been used as an alternative chosen by various groups, one of which is what was done by Ki Eko Prasetyo through wayang media and uploaded to social media Youtube. This paper will discuss the strategies that can be applied in the media of wayang performances carried out by Ki Eko Prasetyo in spreading religious teachings and can be used as one of the Dhammadesana methods to spread the teachings of Buddhism.

II. Review of Literature

The existence of wayang culture as an object cultural identity reflects various events or personifications of important religious and royal figures in the past. The existence of this wayang culture encourages the propagator of religious teachings to adapt to the characteristics of Indonesian society in the past, which was thick with culture and customs. According to his previous research (Awalin, 2018), it was explained that the wayang performing arts that developed in Indonesia (especially in the Java region) is a form of traditional performing arts that is able to survive and adapt to all aspects of its changes in various eras. The form of transformation and development of the art of wayang then adjusts paradigmatically when the people of the archipelago make cultural contact with other nations. An example of this phenomenon is marked by the entry of Indian culture through Hinduism in the archipelago which makes wayang continues to grow. Puppet culture by taking stories from the Mahabharata and Ramayana which tells about important figures who spread Hindu Dharma teachings such as Rama, Panca Pandavas, and so on.

Then the research of Nuraisyah (2021) also explains the forms of acculturation of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam in the art of wayang performance. The purpose of this article is to analyze the results of Hindu-Buddhist acculturation in wayang performing arts and the results of Islamic acculturation in wayang performing arts. The method used in writing this article is a literature study which is used as a data source. The result of writing this article is in the form of acculturation, which means it is a combination of two different cultures that does not eliminate elements from the old culture. This article discusses acculturation in wayang performing arts. Puppets are puppets played by a puppeteer. Wayang has undergone acculturation based on its era, where at first wayang was considered a shadow of ancestral spirits so that wayang performances were often performed by the ancestors. Then after the Hindu-Buddhist religion came, wayang was used as a medium for spreading Buddhism by including stories from the Mahabharata and Ramayana. After the Hindu-Buddhist influence faded, the nine saints also carried out the spread of religion and Islamic teachings. The guardians cultivate the values of Islamic teachings with wayang. During the Islamic period there was a change in the form of wayang from before because the previous form of wayang was contrary to Islamic teachings so that wayang was changed into a form that did not resemble humans.

2.1 Dhammadesana

The implementation and description of something that is done in a certain context can be transformed as an encouragement for the speech partner to act according to what the speaker says and take steps according to what the speaker says. If this is linked in a social context, one form of communication is through religious lectures. Lecture is the expression or delivery of thoughts in the form of words by someone in front of many people or listeners who talk about something, knowledge, and so on. More specifically, in the context of Buddhism, religious lectures are called dhammadesana. Spreading the Dhamma is said to be the highest gift. There are three kinds of Dana: Amisadāna (material fund), Abhayadāna (fearless fund, life), and Dhammadāna (teaching fund, knowledge) (Purnomo, 2021).

By listening to Dhamma lectures, or commonly known as dhammadesana, at least one can increase one's religious knowledge. Actually, religious behavior can be shown in various ways, according to the teachings he adheres to, for example performing worship rituals at home, or at the monastery, or simply adding religious insight by reading religious references related to Dhamma through the home. Another behavior that can be applied related to good Buddhist behavior is to listen to the Dhamma. This does not have to be done in a monastery, but can be done anywhere because with the development of technology, Dhamma talks can

be recorded and distributed through software. Listening to Dhamma lectures will of course be very beneficial for Buddhists, especially to increase knowledge about religious learning and change the behavior of daily life (Paramita, 2018).

2.2 Wayang Ki Eko Prasetyo

Puppet show is one form of cultural arts activities originating from Indonesia. Puppet shows are usually held on certain days or anniversaries, such as in art festivals and so on. Puppet show is one type of activity that involves elements of traditional literature and interestingly it is still popular and plays a role in socializing society until now. Wayang stories are referred to as literature or traditional stories because they have been the property of the nation for a long time and have been passed down from generation to generation, especially orally, especially in Javanese society. Wayang has grown and developed in Javanese society since prehistoric times, but in its later development, it is also known, owned, and developed by various ethnic groups with various other regional languages and literatures. Given that the history of wayang has been so long, but until now wayang and wayang performances are still interesting, it raises a curious problem about the cause. Wayang must contain something extraordinary when we look at the content of meaning, wayang stories are full of high moral teachings that can awaken people's understanding and enthusiasm to live their lives (Nurgiyantoro, 2011).

The development of the current era is very rapid and requires everything to be transformed into digital technology-based renewal. No exception for arts and cultural performances, wayang is one of the objects of cultural heritage that is affected by technological advances. Various puppet shows are currently being transformed by utilizing social media in their performances. One example is what was done by Ki Eko Prasetyo, whose Youtube channel is called "Eko Prasetyo Official". Ki Eko Prasetyo on his Youtube channel shows wayang art performances that play various story plays that are played in an art venue. Ki Eko Prasetyo presented various story plays with characters taken from Ancient Javanese mythology, such as the stories of Ramayana, Bharatayuda, and others who were believed to be important figures. The story that is delivered is also accompanied by the moral values contained in it to bring the audience to understand what is meant by the story that is told.

III. Research Method

The method used in compiling this scientific article is a virtual ethnographic study. The methodological approach of virtual ethnography is a new development or transformation of the form of research methods using ethnography. Ethnography has been expanded and reformulated through new proposals such as virtual ethnography using digital media via the Internet, link ethnography, network ethnography, cyber ethnography, etc. that are in cyberspace or cyberspace. Scholars formulate and discuss the transformation of this ethnographic form with each maintaining its own dialogue with the established ethnographic tradition and formulating its relationship to this phenomenon in different ways. There are those who think that virtual ethnography involves a distinctive methodological approach and those who think that researching the Internet ethnographically forces us to reflect on the assumptions and basic concepts of ethnography that are used in discussing issues relating to new socio-cultural phenomena (Hune, 2000).

Therefore, ethnography can be used to develop an enriched sense of the meaning of the technology and culture that enables it and is made possible by it. The use of this method takes the starting point of dialogue with theoretical projections about the importance of the Internet, using it as a predictable problem for the ethnography of the Internet used. Many

ethnographers who use the internet later admit that previous ethnographic methods need to be overhauled in order to address certain needs, so that they can analyze cost constraints, developments in research problems, and even research locations. In research cases such as this one, virtual ethnography can be used to capture the meaning conveyed through the use of wayang performed by Ki Eko Prasetyo in internalizing Buddhist values with Dhammadesana.

The type of data used in this study uses primary data from Ki Eko Prasetyo's Youtube account and secondary data from literature sources such as books, journals, and other scientific articles. The data collection technique used is a documentation technique by collecting primary and secondary data which is then analyzed to be presented in the research discussion. The analysis of the data used goes through the stages of data verification, data presentation, to the implementation of the evaluation of the implementation of data use in the discussion.

IV. Discussion

The elaboration of religion through religious lectures is one of the methods used by religious leaders in internalizing religious values to other individuals. This religious lecture activity is used as a strategy in introducing religious teachings and efforts so that individuals feel that these religious teachings are in accordance with themselves. The spread of religion through lectures in Buddhism itself is known as Dhammadesana which explains the teachings of Dhamma in Buddha. The spread of the teachings of Buddhism which was started by the Buddha to be continued throughout the ages through Buddhist religious leaders whose aim is for the happiness and harmony of all living beings. Dhammadesana can be implemented through various strategies, such as dissemination using interesting media, must be able to be close and friendly with individuals, the material presented is relevant, and also the speaker is able to set an example based on the material provided. The spread of this Dhamma teaching also needs to be flexible and can be disseminated via audio cassettes, books, CDs and the internet. Not only that, communication media such as radio, television, and the internet can be used to spread the teachings of Dhamma from Buddhism (Wijaya, 2009).

The use of digital technology today is unavoidable. Technology has a far-reaching influence on our daily interactions and communications. For some people, the internet is no longer secondary, but has become a primary need. This then becomes one of the reasons why the dissemination of information and entertainment such as Ki Eko Prasetyo can be an alternative choice to reach the public. Digital-based media is a digital format of journalistic products that were previously analog-based. News can be produced, distributed and consumed digitally with the latest Information and Communication Technology. This is a new business opportunity that creates information needs for audiences in the internet era. Communication strategy is an interactional phenomenon, and that communication strategy is formed as a joint effort between two interlocutors to agree on meaning in situations where the necessary structure of meaning is not shared. The main characteristic of the communication strategy is the negotiation of agreement about meaning. That is, if both parties communicate, they must have an agreement on the meaning of the topic of concern. If both parties have different interpretations regarding the same object, it will cause distortion of information. The communication model emphasizes the aspect of how the message is received and can be obtained by the recipient of the message from communication (Priowidodo, 2021).

Wayang as a performance is a form of communicating cultural messages. The existence of the context of intercultural communication carried out by the puppeteer in this wayang performance is due to a communication process between individuals of different cultures. In other words, communication and culture are like two sides of a coin that are inseparable and influence each other. Puppets become a medium of communication for the puppeteer to

convey messages. The puppeteer ultimately has a role in delivering the message that is given, because wayang is not only a show. Wayang has a purpose as a learning guide related to the order (grip) for each audience. So that the communication pattern developed is directed. The puppeteer has an important role in delivering messages verbally and non-verbally, which will be conveyed to the audience. The dalang's role is to give moral messages, social criticism, religious messages, and other messages of kindness. In the example of Ki Eko Prasetyo's wayang performance, as a puppeteer who has an important role in the performance, Ki Eko Prasetyo always conveys verbal language using Old Javanese and Sanskrit which gives moral messages of life. In every wayang performance, Ki Eko Prasetyo gives moral messages at the end of the story to give a message of kindness to the audience.

In the implementation of the Dhammadesana, it is of course very important to remember that the speaker of the lecture is carrying out one of the important functions of language, which is to maintain social relations among the actors of speech acts. This factor is one of the main functions of using language to communicate. When someone talks to other people, they are not just saying words, but trying to achieve something meaning through those spoken words. If this is associated with linguistic studies, it can be related to the existence of sociolinguistics. A sociolinguist refrains from drawing conclusions about society and in the same way a sociologist prefers to ignore any discoveries related to language. Undoubtedly, there are differences between sociolinguistics and sociology of language, but the main difference is basically the emphasis.

The wayang performances performed by Ki Eko Prasetyo through the story plays depicted the dialogue between good and evil. This show teaches lessons on ethical behavior, speech, and attitude in Javanese culture. Javanese language ethics, both the language used in the dialogue of wayang performances and more broadly in society, are called *udanegara* as ethical teachings in the dialogue between wayang. The expression of harmony in face-to-face dialogue in wayang performances occurs when the characters in the wayang want to express something in response to something said by the interlocutor. Expressions of approval, sympathy, empathy, and support can be considered for a person's response. To harmonize one's response with that of another's, the speaker may choose different types of words and speech acts. But of course in the case of Ki Eko Prasetyo's wayang performance, expression analysis cannot be done because the audience only stares through their respective screens from different distances (not directly on the spot). This indirect communication certainly brings challenges for Ki Eko Prasetyo's wayang show to be able to internalize the values of Dhamma teachings to the audience of the show through Youtube media. The implications that arise will of course be very diverse, so a strategy is needed to encourage the effectiveness of indirect communication so that the message conveyed can be accepted by the audience.

As a strategy in delivering Dhamma to Buddhists, Ki Eko Prasetyo's wayang can be a solution that is able to accommodate Dhamma messages. But of course this is something that Buddhists need to keep in mind when receiving the Dhamma message. As in the wayang performance entitled "Wayang Kulit Solid play Tri Purnamasidhi II" which explains important events in Buddhism (the birth of Prince Sidharta, the ascetic Sidharta attaining Buddhahood, and Buddha Gotama Parinibbana) when commemorating the Tri-Holy Vesak Day. This Dhamma message conveyed gives us a recollection of important events that occurred during Gotama's life and spread the Dhamma. We are invited to remember through events and story plays that occur in it. Not only that, in Ki Eko Prasetyo's wayang performance with the title "Borobudur Puppet play Raja Mandhata" there is a Dhamma message conveyed from the play. The message is as follows:

"Satemene kabagyan iku ora merga manungsa bisa nguja hawa nuruti karep. Jalaran karep iku yen dituruti bakal mulur tanpa winates. Kabagyan iku bakal teka yen rasamu rumangsa marem lan cukup marang apa kang kok sandhing"

Translated into Indonesian has the following meanings:

“Actually, happiness is not because someone can fulfill all desires. Because the desire will always be present and continue to exist without wanting to be limited. Happiness will come when there is gratitude and enough for what is already there.”

The strategy for delivering the teachings of Dhamma in Ki Eko Prasetyo's wayang, of course, must be considered so that it is in accordance with the delivery of the meaning of the words conveyed. Each language is a collection of many dialects. Dialect is related to variations, which can be regional, namely based on the place, region or area where the user lives. Variations can also be social, i.e. based on social status or user class. Dialect also refers to a variety of language originating from a group of users who are relatively in number, living in one particular place, region or region. Based on this, the delivery used by the wayang Ki Eko Prasetyo uses an Old Javanese dialect that adapts to the story play being played. In addition, the use of language variations can also be used for puppet performances. The use of this variation is characterized by the social relationship between the listener and the speaker, which is seen from the point of view of formality. The same idea can be expressed in different styles depending on the social relationship between the listener and the speaker (SU Nisa, 2019).

However, in terms of language use there is certainly a lot of room for interpretation and distortion of the meaning of words, especially if the words are not easy to understand. The meaning of the word needs to be given to words so that they are easy to understand, so that factors can influence how someone will attribute this meaning. In the pragmatic realm, there is a term called implicature or something that is involved in conversation. This implicature or indirectness can be interpreted as something logical from the conclusion of a conversation or statement, as well as the background where there is a condition of knowing each other between the speaker and the listener in a certain context. This implicature opens a space of interpretation for the parties involved in the communication, so that it does not have an absolute relationship with the realized speech. If it is related to the context of Ki Eko Prasetyo's wayang performance, of course, we can find various Old Javanese terms that refer to strong Hindu religious teachings. This certainly provides opportunities for different interpretations in understanding the context of the meaning conveyed. For that, the strategy that needs to be done is of course to provide language translations on Ki Eko Prasetyo's Youtube platform by paying attention to the meaning of the language conveyed by Ki Eko Prasetyo in his performance.

V. Conclusion

Wayang as one of the objects and performances of cultural arts in several regions in Indonesia such as in Java and Bali has become a distinctive identity that cannot be separated from Indonesia. The use of this puppet in spreading religious teachings has been used as an alternative chosen by various groups, one of which is what was done by Ki Eko Prasetyo as one of the figures who spread religious teachings through wayang media and uploaded to social media Youtube. The wayang performances performed by Ki Eko Prasetyo through the story plays depicted the dialogue between good and evil. This show teaches lessons on ethical behavior, speech, and attitude in Javanese culture. Javanese language ethics, both the language used in the dialogue of wayang performances and the wider community.

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in accordance with the delivery of the meaning of the words conveyed. Each language is a collection of many dialects and language variations. In particular, Ki Eko Prasetyo's wayang performances, which use Old Javanese language and are displayed through social media, open up a very wide space for personal interpretation. For this reason, it is necessary to have a strategy to straighten the meaning contained, such as the use of language translation in Ki Eko Prasetyo's Youtube video display.

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