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Tlotok as a Cultural Pedagogical Space: Ethical and Moral Practices of the Tengger Community Based on the *Telu Tok* Concept

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Abstract

Given the limited existing studies on the symbolic elements in the ritual practices of the Tengger community—particularly those related to ethical and moral values in everyday life—this study aims to examine (i) how the *tlotok* leaf reflects the ethical and moral values of the Tengger community; and (ii) how the *tlotok* leaf serves as a space for cultural pedagogy in the transmission of the sustainable ethical values of the Tengger community. This study employs a qualitative approach using Clifford Geertz's interpretive ethnographic perspective. Research data were collected through observation and semi-structured interviews with traditional leaders. Data analysis was conducted through three main stages: (i) data reduction; (ii) data presentation; and (iii) conclusion drawing. The research findings reveal two key insights. First, the *tlotok* leaf embodies the ethics and moral values of the Tengger community through the concept of "*telu tok*," reflected in the teachings of *Tri Kaya Parisudha*: thinking well, speaking well, and acting well. These principles manifest in the awareness of preserving nature, the practice of mindful speech, and acts of mutual cooperation in social life and the performance of traditional ceremonies. Second, the practice of the *tlotok* leaf serves as a space for cultural pedagogy in the transmission of the Tengger community's values of sustainable ethics. These values are learned through participation in social activities and rituals, thereby becoming embedded in everyday practices and passed down to subsequent generations. These findings suggest that cultural practices serve both as traditions and as mechanisms for the formation and transmission of ethical and moral values in the social life of the Tengger community.

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INTRODUCTION

The Tengger people are known as one of the indigenous communities that continue to preserve their traditions amid rapid social change (Taniardi, 2013). They live in the Bromo-Tengger-Semeru region, which is characterized by mountains and a cool climate. The Tengger identity is also evident in how they interpret the relationship between humans, nature, and ancestors. The Tenggerese people live an orderly lifestyle. This is due to deeply ingrained cultural values. Respect for elders, cooperative practices, and polite speech are essential elements of daily life. Major rituals such as Yadnya Kasada and the Karo Ceremony demonstrate how the Tengger people maintain ancestral rituals (Rohmah, 2018). These traditions function as both spiritual practices and a means of fostering social cohesion.

The cultural life of the Tengger people has attracted considerable attention from researchers. Studies of Tengger culture have yielded numerous perspectives that illustrate the orderly way of life they lead. The belief system they adhere to serves as a way to understand themselves, nature, and their ancestors. Their calendar system is not merely a means of calculating time, but also serves as a guide for activities such as ceremonies and rituals (Mistianah et al., 2024). The values they uphold, such as mutual cooperation, polite speech, friendliness, good manners, and respect for elders and/or ancestors, show that social and spiritual aspects reinforce one another.

These studies illustrate that Tengger culture does not simply exist as a static tradition, but rather as a living value system implemented in daily life. Furthermore, this system fosters social harmony that provides direction for the Tengger community in interpreting their lives (Sukmawan & Putra, 2023). In this regard, studying Tengger culture is crucial for everyone. This is because Tengger culture involves more than just understanding ancestral heritage, but also understanding how a community forms its identity through symbols, values, and life practices. Therefore, efforts to understand Tengger culture do not merely involve describing rituals, but also aim to understand the way of life and mindset of its people (Khusni et al., 2025). Consequently, the Tengger people's awareness of the need to preserve traditions is embedded in them from childhood, giving rise to a structured worldview that enables them to work together to fulfill customary obligations and religious matters.

Previous studies of Tengger culture have focused more on major ceremonies on major ceremonies (Adam & Liana, 2020; Pangestu & Sukarman, 2022). Tengger society (Bahrudin, 2022; Anggraeni, 2022). Character education (Ulum, 2016; Raharjo et al., 2023). The symbols found in Tengger culture that hold philosophical

meanings have been discussed only to a limited extent. Based on previous studies, the symbolic elements associated with certain ritual objects have not been discussed in depth. One such element is the *tlotok* leaf, which features in various ritual practices of the Tengger community. Studies on the *tlotok* leaf have been conducted by (Sukmawan et al., 2018; Sukmawan et al., 2020; Sukmawan et al., 2022).

Previous research that focused on natural elements in rituals was conducted by Rumina & Arta (2025), who examined the philosophical significance of the *sambabelum* leaf in Kaharingan Hindu wedding ceremonies. Subsequently, Septiani et al. (2025) examined a similar topic, focusing on exploring and describing the symbolic meaning of betel leaves in the traditions and ceremonies of the Batak people, inventorying the forms of use of betel leaves as traditional Batak medicine and the local knowledge associated with it, explaining the relationship between cultural values and the use of traditional betel leaf medicine without discussing in depth the aspects of cultivation, morphological distribution outside the Batak region, or further laboratory testing of chemical content. Furthermore, Harahap & Pulungan (2024) also studied the same thing, focusing on describing the ritual process of the Marpanggang tradition as a form of local wisdom inherited from the ancestors and exclusively possessed by the people of Siunjam Village. In the Marpanggang tradition, there is a symbolic meaning to the ingredients used, one of which is *bulung pisang* (banana leaves).

A number of previous studies have examined the symbolism of leaves in various cultural traditions, such as the *sambabelum* leaf, the betel leaf, and the *bulung pisang* (banana leaf). These studies indicate that leaves play a symbolic role in ritual practices and the social life of communities. However, research specifically examining the *tlotok* leaf within the cultural context of the Tengger community is still rare. This indicates a potential area for further research. To bridge this gap, this study approaches the tlotok leaf not as a standalone symbol, but as part of social practices that embody ethical and moral meanings. The interpretive ethnographic perspective of Clifford Geertz is employed to understand culture as a living practice of meaning within the community's experience. Moreover, the symbolic interactionism approach of George Herbert Mead is employed to explain how ethical and moral meanings are shaped through social interaction. Finally, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus is utilized to understand how these values become embedded through habituation in everyday life.

Therefore, this study aims to examine (i) how the *tlotok* leaf reflects the ethics and morals of the Tengger community; and (ii) how the *tlotok* leaf serves as a space for cultural pedagogical space in the transmission of the Tengger community's values of ethical sustainability.

Academically, this study expands the discourse on symbols in culture by positioning them as both a means of explaining meaning and an active part of social practices that shape societal ethics and morals. By integrating the perspectives of interpretive ethnography, symbolic interactionism, and the concept of habitus, this study also provides a conceptual contribution to explaining how values are understood, internalized, and reproduced in everyday life. Practically, this study provides insight into the importance of local cultural practices as a form of cultural pedagogy that plays a role in character formation and the sustainability of a society's ethical and moral values.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach based on an interpretive ethnographic perspective (Geertz, 2017). This approach aims to obtain a narrative overview of various activities and their impacts (Fadli, 2021). This leads to the assumption that cultural meaning does not stand alone as a static text, but rather exists in the lived practices and collective experiences of a community. The study of the *tlotok* leaf does not focus solely on tracing its symbolism, but also on how that symbolism is experienced, practiced, and transmitted within the ritual context of the Tengger community. This research also draws on Mead's (2015) perspective of symbolic interactionism to understand how the ethical and moral meanings attached to the *tlotok* leaf are formed through the social interactions of the Tengger community. In addition, this study also employs Bourdieu's (2020) habitus concept to explain how the values of thinking well, speaking well, and acting well associated with the practice of the *tlotok* leaf are formed through repeated social practices until they become part of the Tengger community's mindset, attitudes, and actions.

This study was conducted in the villages of Ngadiwono and Tosari. The research took place from November 2025 to January 2026. Research data were obtained through observation and interviews with informants. Interviews were conducted to gather information that could not be captured through observation, specifically regarding collective memory, local knowledge, and interpretations of the symbols and traditions they practice (Sudikan in Hasanah & Sukmawan, 2021). The criteria for selecting informants are determined by several indicators, namely: (i) holding a structural or functional position within customary practices; (ii) being directly involved in the performance of rituals related to the use of the *tlotok* leaf; (iii) having ongoing experience in customary activities; and (iv) having earned social recognition from the community as an individual who understands the ritual's symbolic value and meaning. The research data is also supported by

relevant literature, such as works on the *Tri Kaya Parisudha* concept and cultural pedagogy.

The research instrument in this study is the researcher, who serves as the key instrument by directly observing, interviewing, and interpreting the data with sensitivity to the context of the *tlotok* leaf. Then, supported by semi-structured interview guidelines to explore the meaning of the *tlotok* leaf and its connection to the practices of thinking well, speaking well, and acting well in daily life. The observation sheet was then used to record the use of the *tlotok* leaf in traditional ceremonies and the accompanying social dynamics. The documentation tools included audio recorders, field notes, and visual documentation.

The data analysis technique was conducted through three main steps. First, data reduction: selecting and focusing data from observations, interviews, and documentation that directly related to the practice of the *tlotok* leaf in rituals, the social life of the Tengger community, and the inheritance of values. Second, data presentation: findings were arranged systematically based on themes, such as the use of the *tlotok* leaf in rituals, the ethical and moral meanings they contain, their role in social interactions, and the transmission of values between generations. Third, drawing conclusions: formulating the meaning of the *tlotok* leaf based on the identified patterns, and then relating it to the theoretical framework used. In addition, the findings were interpreted within the framework of cultural pedagogy to examine how the *tlotok* leaf functions as a medium for character formation.

The credibility of the data in this study was ensured through several techniques. First, methodological triangulation was conducted by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation to verify the consistency of the information obtained. Second, source triangulation was performed by comparing information across informants to ensure the consistency and credibility of the research data. Third, the researcher conducted member checking by reconfirming the interview results with the informants to ensure that the meaning captured by the researcher aligned with the intended message. Additionally, the researcher's direct involvement in the social and ritual contexts of the community allowed for a deeper understanding of the observed practices, thereby minimizing interpretive errors. These efforts were conducted to maintain the validity of the data so that they remain consistent, accountable, and appropriate to the research context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presented research findings regarding the *tlotok* leaf in Tengger society. The *tlotok* leaf is understood as a symbol in ceremonial activities that reflects the ethical and moral values upheld by the Tengger people in their daily

lives through thinking well, speaking well, and acting well. A detailed explanation of these findings is provided in the following section.

The Tlotok Leaf Symbolizes the Ethics and Morals of the Tengger Community

The word "tlotok" in the *tlotok* leaf comes from the word "telu tok," meaning "there are only three", which later become the three principles that form the foundation of life. The three principles are: thinking well, speaking well, and acting well. These three principles should not be understood separately, but rather as a unit that is correlated with each other and must be applied in a balanced manner in daily life. Through the symbolism of the *tlotok* leaf, the Tengger people are reminded that an orderly life stems from a person's ability to control themselves, particularly in their thoughts, especially in their way of thinking before progressing to speech and action. The meaning of the *tlotok* leaf itself—thinking well, speaking well, and acting well—is reflected in one of the Hinduism teachings, namely *Tri Kaya Parisudha*.



Figure 1. *Tlotok* Leaves

Tri Kaya Parisudha comes from the word *Tri*, meaning 'three', *Kaya*, meaning 'action', and *Parisudha*, meaning 'pure or holy'. *Tri Kaya Parisudha* refers to the three foundations of behavior that must be purified, namely thoughts (*manacika*), speech (*wacika*), and actions (*kayika*) (Somawati & Made, 2019). These three aspects of human behavior can guide individuals in determining which behaviors are appropriate and which are not. If thoughts, words, and actions are grounded in goodness, then the resulting behavior will also be good. By reinforcing the values of *Tri Kaya Parisudha*, humans are expected to discern and use technology wisely, as well as to maintain harmony between modern progress and religious values and noble cultural traditions (Widyartha, 2025).

Purity of Thought (*Manacika Parisudha*) is a teaching that emphasizes the importance of maintaining the purity and clarity of the mind as the primary foundation of human behavior (Arini & Permana, 2021). In Hindu teachings, the mind is viewed as the center of consciousness that determines the direction of a person's words and actions. Thoughts filled with good intentions foster a positive attitude, whereas thoughts dominated by hatred, envy, or prejudice can lead to behavior that is harmful to oneself and others. Therefore, controlling the mind is the first step in forming a harmonious way of life. *"If we think positively, we won't get sick, as illness usually stems from our thoughts."* (Interview with RP on February 4, 2026).

The state of mind plays a crucial role in human health. A mind filled with positive thoughts can maintain a person's sense of well-being. In this context, illness is not merely understood as a physical condition, but also as a result of poorly controlled thoughts, such as excessive anxiety, emotional distress, and fear of certain things. It is believed that a mind filled with anxiety can weaken the immune system, making the body more prone to illness (Yulianto, 2015). On the other hand, when someone is able to keep a positive mindset, their body will be in good health. This is what underscores the importance of controlling thoughts as part of the effort to maintain health and harmony in life.

Based on the explanation above, purity of thought (*Manacika Parisudha*) functions as an individual ethical principle that serves as a foundation for social harmony. A pure mind fosters mutual respect. Thus, purity of thought is the starting point for building an ethical and meaningful life.

Purity of Speech (*Wacika Parisudha*) teaches the importance of maintaining purity of speech as an expression of positive thoughts (Somawati & Made, 2019). In social life, words play a significant role in building or even destroying social relationships. Words spoken without careful consideration can hurt others' feelings. For example, they can lead to conflicts that ultimately undermine established social structures. For this reason, the teachings of Wacika Parisudha emphasize mindfulness in the use of language and speech. *"Why should we speak kindly? Because we cannot live in this world without the existence of others."* (Interview with RP on February 4, 2026).

Human life is inherently social, so one person inevitably needs another. Kind words can foster healthy and strong social bonds. Humans cannot live on their own without the help, support, and presence of others. This is why the way people speak plays an important role in maintaining these bonds. Kind words foster a sense of mutual appreciation and respect, while harsh words can lead to conflicts that weaken social bonds (Ridha et al., 2024). Therefore, being mindful of

one's words is crucial in social life as it can strengthen interpersonal relationships, thus creating harmony and peace in life.

Based on the above explanation, the purity of speech (*Wacika Parisudha*) emphasizes the importance of being mindful of one's words in daily life. Kind and respectful speech plays a significant role in fostering harmonious relationships among people. With mindful use of words, people will feel valued and respected, which strengthens social bonds. Conversely, not being mindful of one's words can lead to resentment that ultimately results in conflict among people. This will lead to the fragmentation of long-established social bonds. *Wacika Parisudha* embodies the ethical responsibility of humans as social beings who live side by side and depend on one another in community life.

Purity of Action (Kayika Parisudha) emphasizes the importance of purity of action as a tangible manifestation of good thoughts and speech. In Hindu teachings, actions are seen as the ultimate manifestation of the values a person believes in. Good thoughts and speech lose their meaning if they are not translated into concrete action. That is why *Kayika Parisudha* emphasizes consistency between what is thought, spoken, and done. *"If our actions make that person sad, just imagine how we would feel if the roles were reversed."* (Interview with RP on February 4, 2026).

Everyone should reflect on their actions by imagining how they themselves would feel if they were in the same situation. This shows that actions should not be taken unilaterally without considering others' feelings. When someone is able to see the consequences of their wrongdoing from another perspective, they will be more careful in the future. This awareness is crucial so that every action taken will not hurt other people's feelings.

Based on the explanation above, the purity of action (*Kayika Parisudha*) emphasizes that human actions must always be grounded in ethical awareness. Every action has consequences for oneself and others. It is important to consider every action beforehand, so one will not be driven solely by lust and personal interests (Arini & Permana, 2021). Through this, people are encouraged to put the values of goodness into practice in their daily lives, particularly within social relationships.

In the *Entas-Entas* Ceremony, the teachings of *Tri Kaya Parisudha* are reflected in the use of *tlotok* leaves as a base for the slaughtered goat.



Figure 2. *Tlotok* Leaves as a Goat Base in the *Entas-Entas* Ceremony

The clean base for the goat aligns with the meaning of the *tlotok* leaf itself, which means to think well, speak well, and act well. *"The base for the goat functions as a vessel. It must be clean, symbolizing the need to think well, speak well, and act well."* (Interview with BLK on January 20, 2026). This serves as a reminder that before performing a ritual, one must first organize oneself. The symbolic cleanliness of the *tlotok* leaf base is inseparable from the ethical and moral purity of the performer. Therefore, the ritual teaches the proper procedures for offering and also instills the awareness that humans themselves are vessels of values. The quality of these vessels is determined by the harmony between thoughts, speech, and actions in daily life.

Although the teachings of *Tri Kaya Parisudha* originate from Hinduism, the values they embody extend beyond the theological identity of a single religion. In the practice of the diverse life of the Tengger community, the principle of thinking well, speaking well, and acting well is practiced by everyone, regardless of their religious background. This indicates that *telu tok* has evolved into a collective ethic that goes beyond the formal boundaries of religion. These values exist as shared social guidelines, not as an exclusive doctrine. Thus, the values rooted in Hindu teachings are actualized in the social life of a community that is open and values diversity.

In the purity of thought (*Manacika Parisudha*), Hindus maintain inner clarity before performing rituals and offering sacrifices. *"Usually, when (the event) is about to enter the ritual stage, people usually participate in the ritual. Those who take part in the ritual usually think positively and should not dwell on negative thoughts."* (Interview with RP on February 4, 2026).

Before the ritual begins, the Tengger people prepare the ceremonial items and cultivate a state of inner peace. A clear mind is considered essential for the ritual to proceed solemnly and in accordance with the traditional values they uphold. This suggests that participation in rituals emphasizes physical presence and self-control to think positively. Additionally, this also means that rituals in Tengger society incorporate an ethical dimension that governs how people should behave before and during the ceremony.

In the purity of speech (*Wacika Parisudha*), the practice of minding one's words is also evident across religions. *"If you don't want to be gossiped about, don't gossip about other people."* (Interview with RP on February 4, 2026). The prohibition against gossiping or speaking ill of others serves as a way to avoid conflict and protect others' reputations. This attitude emphasizes that what one does to others will ultimately come back to oneself. This message applies to everyone, regardless of religious or belief differences. Its primary goal is to maintain harmony in our shared lives. Speaking mindfully is part of the effort to maintain harmonious relationships, so that people feel respected by each other.

In the purity of action (*Kayika Parisudha*), this ethical principle also finds manifestation in collective social action. *"Good deeds are when we help each other. For example, if a neighbor is building a house, we help out by working together."* (Interview with RP on February 4, 2026*).*

Helping a neighbor build a house serves as an example of how the value of caring is taught through mutual cooperation. The Tengger community demonstrates kindness by stepping in and offering their help in building the house. This illustrates that relationships within the community are built on a sense of togetherness and shared responsibility. Furthermore, this spirit of mutual assistance is not limited by differences in religion or belief, so everyone is welcome to help. The main goal is to build a sense of togetherness among the community. This ensures that social bonds between communities are maintained, ensuring that relationships remain harmonious.

This social reality indicates that *Tri Kaya Parisudha* in the life of the Tengger society is not understood as a sign of religious exclusivity, but rather as a space for encountering values that can be accepted together. *Telu tok* developed into a collective ethical guideline that connects people with different belief backgrounds

within a harmonious moral framework. Although the basic concept originates from Hindu teachings, the practice has become so widespread in social dynamics that it is now embraced as a shared communal ethic. The *tlotok* leaf does not merely represent a religious symbol, but reflects the process of interfaith moral integration that is manifested in the daily lives of the Tengger people.

In general, the teachings of Tri Kaya Parisudha emphasize that the ethics and morals of human life must be built through harmony between thoughts, speech, and actions as an inseparable unity (Singer, 2015). *Manacika Parisudha* teaches how important it is to keep the mind pure and clear, for it is the mind that determines the direction of a person's words and actions. *Wacika Parisudha* emphasizes the importance of mindfulness in speech. The goal is for every word spoken to bring peace to a person's heart and maintain harmony in social relationships. *Kayika Parisudha* guides people to put the values of kindness into practice. The goal is for every action taken to bring joy to others, thereby maintaining social bonds. These three teachings complement each other, forming a complete ethical foundation for life. It is hoped that humans will develop a conceptual understanding of goodness and apply it in their everyday lives.

In Tengger society, the *tlotok* leaf is seen as a symbol representing the ethical and moral values that serve as a guide for communal life. This symbol is consistent with the principle of thinking well, speaking well, and acting well, as reflected in the teachings of *Tri Kaya Parisudha*. From the perspective of symbolic interactionism, the meaning of a symbol is not fixed but rather formed through the process of social interaction that occurs within society (Mead as cited in Derung, 2017). In other words, the values embodied in these symbols are produced through conversations, advice, and shared experiences in everyday life. Of course, this is also aligned with the "self" concept, which is formed through relationships with "the generalized other", namely, awareness of society's views of oneself (Mead as cited in Effendi et al., 2024). This is mentioned in an interview excerpt stating that when people participate in a series of rituals, they are reminded to keep their thoughts positive and not to dwell on negative things. This kind of thing helps the community develop a shared understanding that maintaining a positive mindset is an essential part of the attitude that must be possessed when involved in traditional activities or social life.

This moral lesson is also reinforced through social interactions that emphasize the importance of being mindful of one's words and actions. This is reflected in an interview excerpt stating that if someone does not want to be gossiped about, they should refrain from gossiping about others. This statement indicates an effort to raise awareness so that each individual can control their speech in daily life. In addition, the value of doing good is also seen in the

community's tradition of helping one another, such as in the interview excerpt which states that they help each other out when a neighbor is building a house. In this way, the values of thinking well, speaking well, and acting well are conveyed through words or advice and practiced directly in social life. This process is a continuously ongoing one, ensuring that the ethical and moral values symbolized by the *tlotok* leaf are understood together and maintained within Tengger society.

The concept of *telu tok* as expressed in Tri Kaya Parisudha also suggests that symbols function dynamically. In every practice, the meaning of thinking well, speaking well, and acting well is continually reinforced through concrete actions. Symbols are not merely indicators of tradition, but spaces for dialogue between individuals and communities (Charon as cited in Effendi et al., 2024). Through participatory involvement, ethical and moral values do not remain merely as a normative legacy, but are continually renewed in everyday social interactions. Thus, symbolic interactionism helps explain that the ethics of the Tengger community are not simply a system of teachings, but rather the result of an interactional process that continuously shapes and sustains collective ethical and moral consciousness.

The Practice of The Tlotok *Leaf as a Cultural Pedagogical Space in the Inheritance of Sustainable Ethical Values of the Tengger Community*

In Tengger society, the practice of the *tlotok* leaf is interpreted as a symbolic element within ritual practice, allowing it to function as a natural space for cultural learning. The ethical values of sustainability embodied within it are taught through both formal education and transmission through direct involvement, observation, and collective experience (Putra & Putri, 2025). This process indicates that culture functions as a dynamic pedagogical medium. Children and young people are not regarded as passive listeners, but rather as active participants in meaningful social practices.

> *"Just like the* Entas-Entas *ceremony, which requires firewood, we have made it clear here that whoever cuts down one tree must plant five. So, that is how we show our respect for nature. We do not just cut down trees without planting new ones. Do not let that happen. That is usually what crosses their minds. They think like this: 'Now I have to plant a tree. What is the point? It is for my children and grandchildren in the future.' Because for ritual ceremonies, we need firewood."* (Interview with RP on February 4, 2026).

In terms of thinking well, there is a collective awareness that any logging for ceremonial purposes—such as the *Entas-Entas* ritual—must be balanced with the responsibility of replanting. This is demonstrated by the principle that for every

one tree that is cut down, five must be planted. The goal is to preserve the wood so that it can be used by future generations. That action demonstrates a mindset that takes long-term impacts into account. If logging is not balanced by reforestation, the timber supply will eventually run out. Certainly, it would be difficult for the Tengger community to hold ceremonies that require wood as part of their rituals.

The statement above is also supported by the following interview excerpt. *"If you want to cut down a tree, you have to plant one first."* (Interview with RE on December 13, 2025). The principle of planting before cutting has long been a principle in Tengger society, especially when the wood from the tree will be used for the *Entas-Entas* ceremony. Therefore, before a tree is cut down for its wood, there must be a conscious effort to plant a new tree first. This demonstrates a positive mindset, as it reflects an awareness of the long-term consequences of one's actions. In addition to focusing on ceremonial needs, the Tengger people also consider the availability of wood for other future needs (Illiyyin et al., 2019). In this way, the act of planting becomes a manifestation of thinking well that is rooted in a sense of responsibility toward nature and an awareness of the need to preserve traditions. With this mindset, every decision to use wood is always made after careful consideration so that the balance between ceremonial needs and environmental sustainability is maintained.

This way of thinking is continuously passed down to the next generation to ensure the preservation of the wood, which plays a vital role in ceremonial rituals. This tradition is passed down through verbal guidance and direct instruction in the field. This is what has led to the realization that preserving nature is not merely a duty, but rather a matter of self-awareness (Therik & Lino, 2021). If nature, including wood, continues to be preserved through reforestation, then the supply of wood for ceremonial purposes will remain secure. Surely, the Tengger people will have no concerns about the availability of wood, as it is guaranteed to be constantly available. Therefore, the preservation of wood reflects a connection between ecological awareness and the sustainability of cultural practices and social life within the Tengger community.

> *"If there are people gathered together and someone is talking about another person, to keep our minds from being influenced by that conversation, it is better for us to leave. That way, our minds will not get caught up in what that person is saying."* (Interview with RP on February 4, 2026).

The aspect of speaking well is demonstrated by the awareness to refrain from participating in unpleasant conversations. If, while in a group, a conversation turns to speaking ill of others, it is best to leave the gathering. This is done to

ensure that one's speech remains appropriate, so that no words spoken cause harm or hurt others' feelings. By being mindful of one's words, social harmony is maintained. This is because individuals are able to refrain from saying things that could lead to prejudice and conflict in the future.

Attitudes like this are ingrained in the next generation through advice and real-life examples in everyday life. Through such advice, parents remind their children not to engage in conversations that speak ill of others. They are also taught to watch their words in every social interaction. Through real-life examples, children see firsthand how their parents are mindful of their words in everyday life. It is through this that children learn through both words and actions. This process continues until speaking kindly becomes second nature to them in their daily lives. This suggests that language functions not only as a tool for communication but also as a means of character formation (Mariam et al., 2024). Certainly, this allows children to learn that social harmony is built through careful choice of words, so that no one's feelings are hurt.

> *"For example, if a neighbor is building a house, we will help them. And during the Entas-Entas ceremony, which requires a lot of manpower, we usually help each other out. This has been deeply ingrained in Ngadiwono society for a long time. Because many people say, if you do not help with someone else's ceremony, later when you have your own ceremony, that person will not help you."* (Interview with RP on February 4, 2026).

The aspect of acting well is demonstrated through concrete actions such as working together when a neighbor is building a house and during the Entas-Entas ceremony, which requires a great deal of manpower. In this regard, the Tengger community's commitment to helping one another has been deeply ingrained for a long time. Of course, this must be accompanied by a sense of personal responsibility. If you want to be helped, you must help others first. This pattern fosters reciprocal, mutually reinforcing relationships within the community. Everyone understands that communal life cannot exist without cooperation. This habit of mutual assistance is continually practiced in various daily affairs and traditional activities, fostering a sense of social responsibility as part of the community's character.

The value of doing good through mutual cooperation is also continuously passed on to the next generation. Children and adolescents gain an understanding of the importance of helping others through guidance and direct participation in everyday life. Parents can encourage them to participate and help, even if it is just in small ways. However, this fosters an awareness that everyone has a responsibility to their social environment. Children and adolescents can learn that even the

smallest gesture of presence and assistance can be meaningful to others (Tan, 2021). Such values of acting well are learned through repeated speech and actions in everyday life, therefore becoming internalized and transmitted to the next generations.

When viewed through the lens of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus, the series of practices that emerge in Tengger society suggests that ethical values of sustainability are shaped through a process of habituation that continues in social life. Habitus refers to patterns of thought, attitudes and actions that are formed from repeated social experiences, which then become embedded into behavioral tendencies that are considered normal by society (Mangihut as cited in Amanah & Istingadah, 2025). In this context, the habit of thinking well toward nature, speaking well to others, and acting well through mutual cooperation is shaped through written rules and daily practices that are consistently carried out and passed down throughout communal life.

The practice of the *tlotok* leaf can be understood as a cultural pedagogical space where ethical values of sustainability are learned in the lives within Tengger society. The practice of the *tlotok* leaf here refers to its ethical meaning, which centers on the principles of thinking well, speaking well, and acting well. The aspect of thinking well is evident in the community's awareness of planting trees before cutting them down, especially if the wood will be used as firewood in the *Entas-Entas* ceremony. The aspect of speaking well is evident in refraining from engaging in conversations that lead to negative remarks about others. The aspect of acting well is evident in acts of community cooperation, such as when neighbors help one another build a house or assist with the *Entas-Entas* ceremony, which requires a great deal of manpower. These practices are repeatedly carried out in social life, ensuring that these values are deeply ingrained in individuals, particularly among the younger generation. Ethical values related to sustainability are formed through ongoing habits in the daily lives of communities (Simbolon et al., 2025).

This mechanism reveals that the practice of the *tlotok* leaf does not merely reproduce values, but shapes the formation of dispositions that operate implicitly within social actions. For instance, the custom of planting trees before cutting them down is interpreted as compliance with ecological norms and also as a form of internalization of a worldview that has been structured within the collective experience of the community. Such actions no longer require external legitimization because they have become part of the logic of practice that is accepted as a matter of course. A similar pattern is evident in the practice of speaking well and in participation in ceremonies and community cooperation.

These are not performed in response to formal rules, but rather as spontaneous tendencies of action that emerge in specific social situations. In this context, normative consciousness does not operate in isolation; habitus also functions as a dispositional framework that guides perceptions and actions without the need for explicit reflection. Therefore, the involvement of the younger generation in these practices indicates that the learning process occurs simultaneously with the formation of ways of thinking, speaking, and acting that align with the existing social structure.

Within this framework, the space of cultural pedagogy serves as both a site for the transmission of values and an arena for the formation of habitus itself. The learning process, which takes place through direct engagement in the practice of the *tlotok* leaf, enables individuals not merely to understand values cognitively, but to experience them repeatedly through concrete actions. This is where habitus operates: when the values of thinking well, speaking well, and acting well are no longer positioned as explicitly taught doctrines, but rather as dispositions formed through continuously repeated social experiences. In other words, the practice of the *tlotok* leaf, as a space of cultural pedagogy, plays a role in transforming values into automatic tendencies of action that are not consciously recognized. This process indicates that the transmission of values in the Tengger community does not stop at the transmission itself, but continues into the formation of patterns of thought, speech, and action that are collectively reproduced in everyday life.

This habituation process indicates that the *tlotok* leaf practice serves as a natural cultural pedagogical space within Tengger society. The values of thinking well, speaking well, and acting well are taught through formal education and direct participation in various social and traditional activities. Younger generations learn by observing, following, and practicing the actions of their parents and the community around them. This repetitive process makes ethical values of sustainability an integrated part of how we think, speak, and act in our daily lives (Manap et al., 2025).

This situation indicates that the values upheld by the Tengger community have been shaped through social experiences that have continued over time. The practice of planting trees before cutting them down, being mindful of one's words and helping others in social activities and traditional ceremonies are all practices that are consistently carried out collectively. Through this repetition, the ethical values of sustainability are gradually ingrained in individuals, then become part of the customs considered normal by society (Amanah & Istingadah, 2025). Thus, the practice of the *tlotok* leaf becomes a medium for the sustainable reproduction of cultural traditions and ethical values in the lives of the Tengger community.

CONCLUSION

This research yielded two conclusions. First, the *tlotok* leaf illustrates the ethics and morals of the Tengger community through the concept of *telu tok*, reflected in the *Tri Kaya Parisudha* teachings, namely thinking well, speaking well, and acting well. The aspect of thinking well is reflected in the community's awareness of the need to preserve nature, as demonstrated by their custom of planting trees before cutting down wood used as firewood in the *Entas-Entas* ceremony. The aspect of speaking well is evident in the act of watching one's words by refraining from engaging in conversations that negatively impact others. Meanwhile, the aspect of acting well is seen in concrete actions such as mutual cooperation when a neighbor is building a house or in helping to carry out traditional ceremonies that require a lot of manpower. Through this practice, the *tlotok* leaf is understood as a ritual symbol that represents the ethical and moral principles enacted in the everyday lives of the Tengger people.

Second, the *tlotok* leaf practice serves as a cultural pedagogical space for transmitting the ethical values of sustainability within the Tengger community. The values of thinking well, speaking well, and acting well are taught through verbal advice and learned through direct involvement in various social activities and traditional rituals. The younger generation acquires this understanding by observing, following, and practicing the actions of their parents and other community members in their daily lives. Through a continuous process of involvement and habituation, these ethical values are gradually ingrained in individuals and become part of the Tengger community's way of life. Thus, the practice of the *tlotok* leaf plays a role in preserving cultural traditions and serves as an important means of transmitting ethical and moral values from one generation to the next, ensuring that these values remain intact within the Tengger community.

These findings emphasize that cultural meaning is not static, but is constructed, negotiated, and reproduced through repetitive social practices in everyday life. In this context, the *tlotok* leaf functions as both a symbol and a medium that connects values, actions, and habits within a cohesive social practice. Theoretically, this study reveals that the formation of ethical and moral values occurs through processes of social interaction and habit formation that are continuously repeated in the collective life of a community. Practically, these findings highlight the importance of preserving cultural practices as contextual and participatory learning spaces for instilling ethical and moral values. Therefore, future research is recommended to examine other symbolic practices within different cultural contexts or to expand the focus on the dynamics of value change within society.

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