



Kembar Mayang Tradition in Javanese Wedding Ceremony in Dusun VI, Nagur Village, Tanjung Beringin District, Serdang Bedagai Regency

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ABSTRACT

This research employs qualitative methods with an anthropological approach to understand the significance of the *Kembar Mayang* tradition in Javanese weddings. The anthropological approach investigates human societies and behaviors, focusing on cultural practices and their meanings. Data collection was conducted through a combination of library research, field observations, and interviews with relevant sources to ensure the validity of the information and comprehensive documentation. The study reveals that Javanese people view marriage as sacred, filled with rituals imbued with prayers for a harmonious domestic life. One prominent tradition in Javanese weddings is *Kembar Mayang*, symbolizing the union of two hearts into one, reflecting shared goals for a peaceful and blessed household. The *Kembar Mayang* ritual, made of flowers and leaves, embodies important cultural values and is essential in traditional Javanese wedding ceremonies.

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INTRODUCTION

In Javanese society, numerous traditional rituals are known, including those performed in various forms. Some of these traditions have been passed down for centuries and have become embedded in the lives of people from all walks of life, one of which is marriage. Marriage is considered sacred because its execution is filled with traditions that symbolize prayers for the couple to always receive good things in their marital journey (Nita & Kusianti, 2020).

One unique tradition in Javanese weddings is the *Kembar Mayang* tradition. *Kembar Mayang* is a symbol made of flowers inserted from young coconut leaves and serves to provide guidance and advice to the newlyweds in their new life. *Kembar Mayang* has long been a tradition among the Javanese during wedding celebrations and is often used at receptions. This tradition involves using mayang decorations carried by a man and woman from each side of the couple after the egg-breaking ceremony. *Kembar Mayang* has symbolic meanings and contains important cultural values for the Javanese community, holding deep significance in every element of its arrangement (Fitri et al., 2023).

Nagur Village, located in Tanjung Beringin District, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra, has various traditions, including the Javanese tradition of *Kembar Mayang*. Despite Nagur Village being outside Java, the Javanese tradition is still practiced and preserved by the local community, especially in Nagur Village (Orchita et al., 2022). Javanese weddings in Nagur Village still follow traditional Javanese customs because most of the villagers are Javanese. Thus, activities such as engagement, marriage contracts, and wedding ceremonies involving family and local community members are rich in rituals, each step carrying deep symbolic meanings, one of which is the *Kembar Mayang* ceremony, a tradition passed down from Javanese ancestors and continued by future generations (Nasution et al., 2023).

Kembar Mayang has its components, including many materials used to create it, such as banana trunks, young coconut leaves, banyan leaves, bowl-shaped leaves, croton leaves, and areca flowers. These materials are chosen specifically for their special meanings for the Javanese community in Nagur Village, as well as for other regions that might use similar or different materials with different meanings (Hasibuan et al., 2023).

The meaning contained in the *Kembar Mayang* procession holds philosophical significance. "Kembar" means "same" in Indonesian, and "mayang" means "heart." Therefore, *Kembar Mayang* signifies uniting two different hearts into one, having the same purpose. The banana trunk symbolizes responsibility and the duty to teach righteous deeds



according to Islamic teachings to the family. Young coconut leaves signify the arrival of divine light, symbolizing inner and outer brightness, and blessing and safety in life and the hereafter. The husband is the leader in his household and should prioritize his family. Bowl-shaped leaves symbolize the household as a place to fill each other's needs. The young areca flower, still in its stem, symbolizes the blooming of the areca flower that leads the couple to a new life in society, with great hopes that they can serve the community (Setiawan & Handayani, [2020](#)).

Kembar Mayang, also known as *megar mayang* or *gagar mayang*, represents the blooming of the areca flower, meaning humans can experience a new life within themselves and fulfill their duties. *Mayang gagar* is used to mark the death of a girl or boy or someone who has never been legally married. In Indonesian wedding ceremonies, the term "*Kembar Mayang*" is often used. The way the ceremony is conducted varies by location; traditional wedding customs are usually followed differently. *Kembar Mayang* is made from two sheets of coconut leaves of the same shape and size (Anggraini & Sani, [2022](#)).

Islam views marriage as a means to fulfill Allah's will to create a lawful household and produce children who will contribute to society. In this context, Islamic scholars highlight several goals and wisdoms of marriage, with the primary one being that marriage is prescribed for humans. Marriage has many wisdoms and benefits; besides aiming to preserve good offspring, it teaches the soul to be gentler and loving, and the emotions of both genders will unite. Due to differences in preferences, feelings, capacity for love, and other characteristics (Fanjalu & Rukmini, [2022](#)).

The Javanese community conducts complex ceremonies in various ways. These include *Nontoni* (observing the conditions of both parties), *Meminang* (proposal), *Peningset* (the exchange of goods and wedding rings), *Seserahan* (gift-giving to the bride's family, which may include goods or money), *Pingitan* (where the bride is not allowed to leave the house or meet the groom), and *Tarub* (preparing for the wedding feast). *Midodareni* is a traditional ritual for the bride conducted before the marriage contract, while *Panggih* is the meeting of the bride and groom. In the *Kembar Mayang* tradition, *Injak Telur*, and *Sikepan Sindur*, the bride's father carries both the bride and groom. During *Pangkuan*, *Kacar Kucur*, the groom fills a container brought by the bride with yellow rice and a bag of coins based on the calculation of the bride's *weton* (Javanese birth calculation). *Suap*, known as *dulang-dulangan*, symbolizes filial piety to the parents, and *Sungkeman* involves the couple seeking blessings from their elders (Wati & Dora, [2023](#)).

To provide a comparative framework relevant to the study's title and its novelty value, the following previous research studies are presented: (1) Research by Sylvia and Dora explores the origins, philosophical meanings, and preservation of the "*Kembar Mayang*" tradition in Javanese weddings in Sukasari Village, involving the wedding procession and symbolic materials used (Sylvia & Dora, [2023](#)); (2) Research by Saputri reveals the inclusion and symbolic meanings of *Kembar Mayang* in the *temu manten* procession of Javanese wedding ceremonies, where decorated young coconut leaves with flowers and foliage are used as main elements (Saputri, [2022](#)); (3) Syafridayanti et al. conclude that the Javanese traditional wedding ceremony, symbolizing prayers for protection from misfortune, is crucial for the community, especially the younger generation in Langsa City, to ensure this tradition remains preserved and does not disappear due to modernization (Syafridayanti et al., [2022](#)).

This study offers novelty by focusing on a specific local context that has not been extensively explored in previous research. Most studies on the *Kembar Mayang* tradition concentrate on Central Java and Yogyakarta, whereas this research expands the geographical scope by highlighting the preservation and adaptation of this tradition in North Sumatra. Additionally, this study delves into specific aspects of the symbolism and integration process of *Kembar Mayang* in Javanese wedding ceremonies in this location, contributing new insights to the literature by showcasing how this tradition interacts with other local cultures and remains relevant in the modern context. Thus, this article enriches our understanding of the diversity and dynamics of the *Kembar Mayang* tradition across various regions in Indonesia.

METHOD

This research uses an anthropological approach combined with qualitative methods to understand the *Kembar Mayang* tradition in Javanese wedding ceremonies in Dusun VI, Nagur Village. The anthropological approach was chosen to understand how the local community, with all its cultural and social aspects, interacts and preserves this tradition. This study also examines how people adapt to their social and cultural environments based on experience and education, not just inherited patterns (Diandra, [2021](#)). In this research, the researcher aims to interpret social phenomena by emphasizing the reality of the local community rather than existing theories.

Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and document studies. Snowball sampling was used to select relevant informants, while method triangulation ensured the validity of the collected data. Observations were made to directly witness the wedding ceremonies, while in-depth interviews were conducted with traditional leaders, the bride and groom, and local residents to obtain rich and in-depth perspectives. The collected data were then analyzed inductively to identify patterns and meanings that emerged from the studied phenomena (Bakhri & Hanubun, 2019). Data analysis emphasized deep interpretation of the symbolism of *Kembar Mayang* and how this tradition is maintained in modern society, providing new insights into the sustainability of traditional customs amidst social change.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The Javanese ethnic group is one of the many ethnic groups with customs and cultures in Indonesia. Its supporters continue to uphold various Javanese rituals and traditions as part of their ancestral cultural heritage. Customs are complex social standards valued by those who follow them as essential for harmonious coexistence. The traditional Javanese flower arrangement known as "*Kembar Mayang*" has a long history. Known as Kalpataru and depicted in the reliefs of Prambanan Temple, its form resembles the heavenly tree. In the context of the Kraton, the earliest known *Kembar Mayang* was created in Yogyakarta in 1906 under the rule of Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono VII (Sukirno et al., 2022).

Traditional Indonesian rituals have long used the term *Kembar Mayang*. Although the purpose and objectives of the rituals are the same, not all regions perform them the same way. For example, Yogyakarta and Solo have different customs in traditional weddings; likewise, the form, content, and meaning of *Kembar Mayang* vary depending on the region, and North Sumatra has its own customs. *Kembar Mayang*, specifically in Nagur Village, Tanjung Beringin District, Serdang Bedagai Regency (Batubara et al., 2022).

Kembar Mayang symbolizes the blooming areca flower, representing adults who have risen again and gained piety. *Gagar Mayang* refers to the death of a young person who has reached marriageable age or become a bride or groom. *Kembar Mayang* is not made for brides or grooms who are not male or female, such as widows marrying widowers. However, *Kembar Mayang* is still created as a sign of the death of one of the prospective brides or grooms, even if one of them has never been married, for example, a man marrying a widow or vice versa. The term *gagar mayang* is also used in funeral ceremonies for a girl or boy or someone who has never been married (Sylvia & Dora, 2023).

Implementation of the *Kembar Mayang* Tradition in Javanese Wedding Ceremony in Dusun VI, Nagur Village, Tanjung Beringin District, Serdang Bedagai Regency

In the process of a Javanese wedding that wants to use traditional Javanese customs and the *Kembar Mayang*, when approaching the wedding event, the host or the person organizing the event usually holds a meeting with village elders, dukun manten, and the person making the *Kembar Mayang*. This meeting is conducted to convey the purpose and ask for help in making and officiating the wedding using the Javanese custom concept to prepare everything needed for the wedding. The meeting is usually conducted by the parents of the bride visiting the house of the village elders, dukun manten, and the person making the *Kembar Mayang* (Interview with Idari Yani, July 20, 2023).

In making the *Kembar Mayang*, the creators must first perform a solemn and careful ritual. They are only allowed to speak at crucial moments and are forbidden from doing inappropriate actions during the process (Interview with Siti Ramsiyah, July 20, 2023). The ritual includes performing the five daily prayers, ablution before touching the materials, using the best-selected materials, making the *Kembar Mayang* during free time without other tasks, completing it in one go without delay, and creating it in a clean and appropriate location. The *Kembar Mayang* is made at the bride's house at night after the feast, ensuring a conducive and sacred atmosphere to maintain the tradition and philosophical meaning (Daryanti & Nurjannah, 2021).

Implementation of the *Kembar Mayang* Redemption Ceremony

The *panggih* or *daup petok* ceremony, or the meeting event, is held after the couple is officially married religiously and involves the parents of both parties. In traditional Javanese wedding ceremonies using the *Kembar Mayang* tradition, certain preparations must be made before the *Kembar Mayang* redemption ceremony begins:

Midodareni Night

Midodareni night is the night before the wedding day. This event involves the family or close friends of the bride, where the bride wears body scrubs and is treated like a queen. The Javanese people believe that on Midodareni night, angels descend to visit and bless the bride so that she can be as beautiful as an angel and like a queen in the kingdom on the wedding day (Interview with Siti Ramsiyah, July 20, 2023).

Ijab Qabul

Ijab qabul is a contract between two parties, the groom and the bride. *Ijab* is the offering from the first party, while *qabul* is the acceptance from the second party. This process can be held in a mosque, KUA (Office of Religious Affairs), or the bride's house. The groom pronounces the *ijab qabul* in front of the bride's guardian, witnesses, and the marriage officiant (Interview with Siti Ramsiyah, July 20, 2023).



Figure 1. *Ijab Qabul* (Source: Personal Document, March 3, 2023)

Preparation of the Bride

Before the reception begins, the bride is beautified to perform the *panggih* meeting ceremony in traditional Javanese attire. After being dressed up, the bride is escorted by her parents to prepare for the *Kembar Mayang* redemption ceremony (Interview with Siti Ramsiyah, July 20, 2023).

Kembar Mayang Redemption Ceremony

Before the *Kembar Mayang* redemption ceremony begins, several preparations must be made, including bringing out the *Kembar Mayang* from the bride's house, one carried by a man and the other by a woman. The dukun manten prepares a long cloth or jarik spread wide for the meeting of the bride and groom (Interview with Siti Ramsiyah, July 20, 2023). The purpose of this ritual is to obtain ease in making the *Kembar Mayang* and to pray for the couple to have a harmonious household and receive blessings in life and the hereafter. As stated by the informant:

- 1) Before making the *Kembar Mayang*, the creator must perform a ritual, including the five daily prayers, ablution, starting with salawat and kalamullah, to seek Allah's help in making the *Kembar Mayang* and receive His blessings (Interview with Siti Ramsiyah, July 20, 2023).
- 2) The *Kembar Mayang* making process begins with reciting the shahada to seek protection during the process and to receive the approval of the Almighty so that the couple always receives goodness from the Almighty in their household (Interview with Siti Ratna, July 20, 2023).
- 3) After the *Kembar Mayang* is completed, it is placed on batik cloth, prayers are recited, and the head of the *Kembar Mayang* maker performs the *ijab qabul* to the host organizing the event (Interview with Fitriyah, July 20, 2023).

Kembar Mayang Tradition Procedure

The *Kembar Mayang* tradition in Javanese wedding ceremonies in Dusun VI, Nagur Village, involves several stages rich in symbolic meaning. First is the *Temu Manten* procession, where the groom and bride meet in the middle after walking from opposite directions. They meet on a cloth or jarik that has been laid out, and the groom greets the bride, who responds. This process symbolizes a plea to the Almighty to protect their marriage from evil spirits and to become a peaceful and respectful family (Interview with Ibu Siti Ramsiyah, July 20, 2023). Next is the *Lempar Gantal* procession, where the couple throws betel leaves tied with thread at each other as a symbol of exchanging love and affection (Interview with Ibu Siti Ramsiyah, July 20, 2023).

Then, the *Injak Endok* procession, where the groom steps on an egg placed under the cloth, and the bride washes her husband's feet. The egg, representing a protected seed within its shell, symbolizes the couple's readiness to build a household and have children. This procession must use a village chicken egg as it represents the beginning of a pure life (Inggrid et al., 2023).

The next stage is the *Kembar Mayang* exchange, where the *Kembar Mayang* brought by the groom is given to the bride and vice versa. The groom and bride then stand together with the *Kembar Mayang* on their left and right sides. The *Kembar Mayang*, consisting of decorations made of young coconut leaves or janur attached to banana trunks, symbolizes the couple's transition into a new life filled with piety and devotion (Saprini & Nasution, 2022).

Following this is the *Tabur Duet Logam* procession, where the couple scatters coins from a jar that children then collect. This symbolizes that in gaining wealth, the couple must share with family and those in need (Interview with Ibu Siti Ramsiyah, July 20, 2023). Afterward, the *Gendongan* procession, where after exchanging *Kembar Mayang*, the couple is united and carried with cloth by the bride's father. While carrying the jar, they circle the place of the egg three times while reciting salawat. This signifies that the father has given his blessing and released his daughter to the groom, who has been blessed to guide his daughter to the righteous path and receive blessings from Allah the Most Compassionate and Merciful (Interview with Ibu Siti Ramsiyah, July 20, 2023).

The next procession is *Dhuwit Sholawat*, where the groom and bride carry the jar around and ask for money from those around them, including their parents, family, and others (Interview with Ibu Siti Ramsiyah, July 20, 2023). Then comes the *Sikepan Sindur* procession, where the couple is carried by the bride's father while the mother guides them from behind. The sindur cloth is spread over the couple's bodies as they walk to the wedding platform with their parents. This symbolizes the parents' hope that the couple remains harmonious and close, and that the bride's father has united them (Saputri, 2022).

The *Dulang-dulangan Sego Punar* procession involves the couple feeding each other from a small tray, symbolizing living harmoniously, helping each other, and caring for each other in their household (Interview with Siti Ramsiyah, July 20, 2023). *Sungkeman* is a procession where the couple seeks blessings from their parents or guardians as a sign of devotion and to receive their blessing for their new life (Interview with Siti Ramsiyah, July 20, 2023). Finally, the *Tepuk Tepung Tawar* procession, where relatives and parents sprinkle flowers and rice over the couple's heads as a form of gratitude and blessing (Interview with Siti Ramsiyah, July 20, 2023).

The Meaning of the *Kembar Mayang* Tradition in Wedding Ceremonies in Dusun VI, Nagur Village, Tanjung Beringin District, Serdang Bedagai Regency

The *Kembar Mayang* tradition in Javanese wedding ceremonies in Dusun VI, Nagur Village, Tanjung Beringin District, Serdang Bedagai Regency, carries significant meaning. The banyan tree represents a place of shelter and the third principle of Pancasila, symbolizing longevity and strong roots, indicating resilience. The word "*ringin*" derives from the Arabic "*ro'in*," meaning leader. In the household, the husband is the leader who must prioritize his family. The lush banyan tree with its shady leaves illustrates that a husband must provide peace and coolness in the household (Interview with Siti Ramsiyah, July 20, 2023). The banyan tree also symbolizes protection and a comfortable, pleasant place, meaning that husband and wife must create a comfortable and protective environment in their home. The large trunk but small flowers of the banyan tree signify that although someone may have a high position, they must remain humble (Ambarwati & Mustika, 2018).

The lesson from the banana tree is that it does not die before producing offspring, meaning that humans must fulfill their responsibilities before dying and teach righteous deeds according to Islamic teachings. The raja banana tree

is often used to make *Kembar Mayang*, symbolizing a king who must protect his people. For the bride, the banana tree means to remain humble and not arrogant (Interview with Siti Ratna, July 20, 2023).

Janur, the young coconut leaf, is yellow. The word "janur" derives from two words: "jan," meaning human, and "nur," meaning light, signifying that humans have light from Allah. Janur symbolizes that humans come from light, radiating happiness in the household. Janur signifies the arrival of divine light, illuminating inside and out, bringing blessings and safety in life and the hereafter. The yellow color of janur symbolizes a sincere heart accepting everything (Interview with Siti Ratna, July 20, 2023).

Godong Puring or croton leaves are usually planted in cemeteries because they are believed to symbolize a plea for forgiveness from Allah. In making *Kembar Mayang*, the Javanese consider croton leaves as a sign of devotion to God, entrusting all household issues to Him for quick resolution, bringing coolness (*adem*), peace (*ayem*), and tranquility (*tentrem*) to the family. The colorful croton leaves represent the rainbow that colors our lives (Interview with Siti Ramsiyah, July 20, 2023). Croton leaves mean that in the household, if there is a conflict, the husband and wife must be able to control their ego and anger, both in family life and in society (Supriyati et al., [2017](#)).

The andong plant is famous for its antibacterial properties and can be used as medicine. In *Kembar Mayang*, andong comes from "an-dungo," meaning prayer. As newlyweds, we must often pray to Allah for blessings for our children and grandchildren, and for our family to become *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* in this world and the hereafter (Interview with Siti Ramsiyah, July 20, 2023).

The young areca flower, still in its stem, symbolizes the blooming areca flower, leading the couple to a new life in society with hopes they can serve the community (Interview with Siti Ramsiyah, July 20, 2023). The banana tree bears fruit only once, just as marriage is intended to be once in a lifetime, and life is only lived once. Therefore, make the most of your life and be beneficial to others (Interview with Siti Ramsiyah, July 20, 2023). Bowl-shaped leaves resemble a small bowl or plate used as a container. This means that in marriage, husband and wife complement each other and perfect each other (Interview with Siti Ramsiyah, July 20, 2023).

Functions of *Kembar Mayang*

Religious Function

The religious function of *Kembar Mayang* in Javanese wedding traditions in Dusun VI, Nagur Village, is as a symbol of devotion to Allah SWT and the purity of the bride. Offering to Allah SWT is invisible but felt in its blessings. Marriage in Islam is a sacred bond between a man and a woman who love each other, witnessed by a guardian and recognized by the state as a legitimate relationship both religiously and in the eyes of Allah. Marriage perfects religion (Islam) and keeps away from adultery and other prohibitions (Adib, [2022](#)).

Marriage is a sacred bond and lifelong commitment between a man and a woman witnessed by witnesses and Allah SWT. In Javanese tradition, the purity of the bride is symbolized by janur, which for the Javanese represents elegance for women and strength for men, symbolizing harmony and nobility in building a household after marriage (Interview with Fitriyah, July 20, 2023). The purpose of marriage is to create a happy family, both materially and non-materially. A happy, everlasting family can be achieved if there is harmony and balance in the rights and duties between husband and wife, each with their respective roles. Therefore, a wedding considered sacred also serves as the beginning of a new chapter for the couple, necessitating a ceremony with symbolic elements representing the purity of the couple (Pertiwi et al., [2022](#)).

Social Function

According to the Indonesian Dictionary, social pertains to society and considers public interests. Therefore, social can be understood as something related to society. In social interaction, there are key components that humans, as social beings, cannot live without. Similarly, in every human activity, social interaction is necessary (Syafriyanti et al., [2022](#)).

Humans create places or groups to interact, discuss, and connect with others. Like the Javanese wedding tradition that uses *Kembar Mayang* in Dusun VI, Nagur Village, Tanjung Beringin District, Serdang Bedagai Regency, which is a medium for social interaction from the preparation process to the execution of the wedding ceremony. Thus, the making of *Kembar Mayang* in the Javanese wedding tradition in Dusun VI, Nagur Village, Tanjung Beringin District,

Serdang Bedagai Regency, also has a social function as a medium for community interaction, including *jro mangku*, *sarati banten*, *kembar mayang* makers, *dukun manten*, the host organizing the wedding, and young people carrying *Kembar Mayang*. From the preparation request from the host, involving mutual agreement on the use of *kembar mayang*, to the execution of making and redeeming *Kembar Mayang* by the makers and *dukun manten*, all collaborate (Interview with Fitriyah, July 20, 2023).

Aesthetic Function

The aesthetics of *Kembar Mayang* differ from those of other objects, seen in each component or part within it. In making *Kembar Mayang*, each component has its aesthetic/beauty function, and it is often difficult for others to replicate exactly because each region has its characteristics in creating their work (Interview with Fitriyah, July 20, 2023).

For example, in the Javanese wedding tradition using *Kembar Mayang* in Dusun VI, Nagur Village, Tanjung Beringin District, Serdang Bedagai Regency, it has aesthetic functions, namely: (1) used as room decoration after the Temu Manten event; (2) used as decoration for the room. The placement for decoration also differs from the previous use because the community still strongly believes that *Kembar Mayang* is a symbol of the descent of deities; (3) used as a wedding stage decoration, creating a beautiful and luxurious impression when viewed from different perspectives (Interview with Siti Ratna, July 20, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research shows that the *Kembar Mayang* procession in Javanese wedding ceremonies has profound philosophical meanings, namely uniting two different hearts into one goal. The *Kembar Mayang* symbol, also known as "Megar Mayang" or "Gagar Mayang," symbolizes the blooming areca flower, which means leading to a new life and achieving piety. Additionally, janur as the main material for making *Kembar Mayang* has spiritual significance, that humans come from divine light bringing blessings and safety in household life. *Kembar Mayang* also has religious, social, and aesthetic functions, bringing blessings to the couple in their worldly and hereafter lives. The limitation of this study lies in its scope, limited to one specific village and the qualitative methods used, which may not reflect the variation and adaptation of the *Kembar Mayang* tradition in other regions. Furthermore, this study is limited to interviews and observations as data collection techniques, which can be influenced by the subjectivity of informants and researchers. Further research with broader coverage and more diverse methods is needed to enrich the understanding of the *Kembar Mayang* tradition in the broader context of Javanese culture.

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