

# **Palm Tree as Supporting the Green Economy of Kabaena Communities, Southeast Sulawesi in the Oral Tradition “The Origin of Palm Tree in Kabaena”.**

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**Abstract.** The idea of a green economy has become a massive movement in various parts of the world. Green economy brings prosperity while remaining environmentally aware and reducing environmental crises. This study reveals the role of oral tradition as a medium for conveying cultural messages and reveals the green economy activities of the Kabaena community which make palm trees the main commodity. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method using literary anthropology and green economy approaches in exploring the economic activities of palm tree management in the oral tradition. The data is the story "The Origin of Palm Trees in Kabaena" in Moronene Folklore. To strengthen the data analysis, in-depth interviews and literature reviews were also conducted. The results show that oral tradition acts as a medium for conveying cultural messages and the Kabaena community has practiced a green economy of palm trees as the main commodity in their production activities.

**Keywords:** oral tradition, Kabaena, palm tree, green economy

## **1 Introduction**

The concern of mankind at the gate of the 21st century shows the main tendency to side with the continuity of a beautiful and harmonious natural life in the midst of the rush of development it organizes. Economic activities intended for the advancement of an area are given ethical and moral responsibility to care about the existence of forests and the like so that the environment remains green and sustainable. The green economy is a fundamental philosophy to become a base for economic activity that relies on the benefit of the environment itself. Between economic progress and the sustainability of green environmental ecosystems are interrelated and decisive to each other. The planet Earth inhabited by humans is ultimately determined not only by the economy as commander-in-chief, but also by environmental and social factors. Anthropocentrism that makes

humans the center of nature is considered to contribute to the exploitation of natural resources themselves. Looking back on the role of human beings in relationships with the use of nature, especially in relation to the economy, making nature a human partner that must be taken into account its sustainability along with human existence itself.

Discourse related to the green economy stems from the adverse effects of economic systems that damage the environment. In fact, the green economy is one of the discussions in the G20 Summit which will be held in Bali on November 15-16. [1]. This shows that an environmentally friendly economic system is an important issue that must be realized immediately. According to a UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) source in a report titled *Towards Green Economy*, it is stated that a green economy is an economy that can improve welfare and social justice. Green economy wants to eliminate the negative impact of economic growth on the environment and the scarcity of natural resources[2].

From this definition, it can be concluded that a green economy is indispensable for an environmentally friendly economic system for human survival and overall welfare for society. According to Rahmi, the role of the green economy includes minimizing the degradation of the quality of the surrounding environment, improving a low-carbon economy, safe to use and providing a healthy environment, increasing renewable natural resources, and minimizing environmental risks and reducing ecological assets. [3]. Further, she mentioned that the benefits of a green economy are: protecting nature or the environment and preventing the growth of pollution from various aspects, restoring economic prosperity, planning for sustainable development welfare with a green economy and eradicating poverty, as well as sustainable consumption and production. [3].

One example of green economic practices is the planting and utilization of palm trees in the Kabaena region, Bombana Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province, Indonesia which is represented in the oral tradition of Asal Mula Pohon Enau (the Origin of the Enau Tree). The implementation of a green economy in the community, its birth is not just given in the modern century. Indeed, it has taken root in the pulse of people's lives, particularly traditional societies, in relation to the economic activities they carry out, particularly in agriculture. Moreover, in a society that still firmly believes in its local wisdom incarnated in its oral tradition, economic activity and oral tradition influence each other. The practice of the green economy in certain societies, however, comes from the call of wisdom derived from its oral tradition

Research on the practice of the green economy in relation to oral traditions is still not widely carried out. The research that has existed so far has focused on oral traditions in relation to the protection of nature and the binding of nature preservation. Kushidayati's writing, for example, elevate the role of oral traditions that are published in an intergenerational manner that has the power to protect the area of dozens of ancient teak forests and ancient eating contained in forest areas. [4]. In addition to Kushidayati, there is Danerek's research that reveals the role of oral traditions and the Palue indigenous community [5]. This paper is different because it tries to emphasize how enau or palm trees play a role in protecting nature from damage in relation to the green economy.

Based on the background above, discussing the economic activities of the people of Bombana Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province, especially in Kabaena, Southeast Sulawesi in the

management of palm trees supported by the cultural message of oral traditions, is interesting. Kabaena, an archipelago region of Bombana County, Southeast Sulawesi has strong oral tradition roots. The oral traditions of such societies are not born from cultural emptiness, but are twisted with the surrounding socio-cultural realities. In fact, the cultivation and management of the palm tree as a commodity for the production of palm sugar, cannot be separated from the oral tradition of Asal Mula Pohon Enau (the origin of the enau tree) itself that the people believe in.

## **2 Literature Review**

Oral traditions are messages that are passed down from one generation to the next as a source of knowledge. The inheritance of such messages can be fairy tales, rhymes, mantras, and folklore. Danandjaja defines oral tradition as a part of culture that is spread and passed down through generations traditionally among members of society in different versions. The delivery can be in oral form or accompanied by examples of deeds and reminder tools [6].

According to Hutomo, oral tradition includes several things, namely (1) in the form of oral literature, (2) in the form of traditional technology, and (3) in the form of folk knowledge outside the centers of palaces and metropolitan cities, (4) in the form of elements of religion and folk beliefs outside the formal boundaries of major religions, (5) in the form of folk arts outside the centers of palaces and metropolitan cities, and (6) in the form of customary law [7]. Furthermore, Pudentia provides an understanding of the nature of orality as follows:

Oral tradition includes everything related to literature, language, history, biography, and various other knowledge and types of art that are conveyed by word of mouth. Thus, oral traditions not only include folklore, puzzles, proverbs, folk songs, mythology, and legends as people generally suspect, but also relate to cultural cognitive systems, such as history, law, and medicine. Oral tradition is any discourse that is spoken / delivered for generations including oral and acting and is also interpreted as a system of discourse that is not in character. Oral traditions are not only owned by oral people. The implications of spoken words in oral-written pairs are different from spoken-spoken ones. The first oral (oracy) contains the meaning of voiced literacy, while the second oral (orality) contains the intention of the ability to speak in a voiced manner. Literacy in a society of character is often interpreted as the result of an unlearned society, something that has not been written, something that is considered rudimentary/mature, and is often judged by the criteria of literacy [8].

In short, the essence of oral tradition according to Pudentia is all discourse, knowledge and cultural systems that are conveyed by word of mouth orally, whether acting or not acting. Meanwhile, according to Sibarani, oral tradition is one of the variants of culture that is rich in value that can be used as a source of education. Cultural values contained in oral traditions are messages as a source of knowledge or education like the next generation [9]. That is, oral traditions contain cultural values and messages as a source of knowledge.

Somewhat different from the above opinion, Vansina mentioned that oral tradition is a verbal message or utterance that is conveyed from generation to generation orally, spoken, sung, and conveyed using a musical instrument [10]. From this definition, Vansina added that musical instruments can be used in the speech of oral tradition.

Related to culture, humans as social beings and living in society have habits and traditions (oral) that are full of moral messages. Human beings have a culture that produces values as common property by their society. Every society has values that are tied to the social system functioning as a guide for life and regulating the order of life in society [11].

According to Koentjaraningrat cultural values are the first level of ideal or customary culture, the most abstract layer and broad scope. A system of cultural values consists of conceptions that live in the realm of the mind as a large part of the citizens of society regarding things that they should consider very valuable in life. Cultural values are grouped based on five categories of human relations, namely (1) cultural values in man's relationship with God, (2) cultural values in man's relationship with nature, (3) cultural values in man's relationship with society, (4) cultural values in human relations with other humans, and cultural values in man's relationship with himself [12].

The study of cultural messages and values in oral traditions is carried out with the approach of literary anthropology. According to Ratna, the birth of the anthropological approach is based on three main things, namely both literature and anthropology consider language as an important object, both disciplines concern the relevance of human culture, and secondly disciplines also concern oral traditions, especially folklore and myths [13].

The study of literary anthropology is a research of literary works that emphasizes the cultural heritage of the past. In addition to the literary anthropology approach, this study uses a green economy approach to explore the economic activities of enau tree management in oral traditions. Therefore, researchers analyze cultural messages in the form of ethnographic exposure associated with the green economy. Endraswara further stated that the analysis of literary anthropology should reveal the following, among others, as follows.

- 1) The repetitive habits of the past are still practiced in a literary image. The ancestral custom of doing *semedi* (isolate oneself), saying *pantun*, saying mantras, and the like became the focus of research.
- 2) Researchers will uncover the roots of a tradition or subculture as well as the beliefs of a writer reflected in literary works. In this connection, traditional themes passed down from generation to generation will be of particular concern.
- 3) Research can also be directed at the aspects of connoisseurs of ethnographic literature, why they are so devout in carrying out the messages present in literary works. For example, why the Javanese obey to run the *pepali* contained in *Pepali Ki Ageng Sela*.
- 4) Researchers also need to pay attention to how the process of inheritance of traditional literature over time.
- 5) Research is directed at the ethnographic or cultural elements of the society that surround the literary work.

- 6) It is necessary to conduct research on the symbols of mythology and the mindset of the people of its admirers. Suppose researchers can research the myth of *Kanjeng Ratu Kidul* which is famous until now [14].

In the statement of Nigel Rapport (2012) literary anthropology can be understood as an exploration of different types of genre expressions that have a specificity to history, cultural evaluation, and social institutions [15]. Literary anthropology is used to explore the existence of oral traditions aimed at understanding human life in the culture that surrounds it. Literary anthropology emphasizes the understanding of literary works in relation to socio-cultural elements of culture [16]. The creation of literary works in this case the oral tradition as a product of the culture of the past is inseparable from its supporting society. Through this oral tradition, local knowledge, customs, and cultural messages are reflected by the supporting community. As a cultural heritage of the past, oral traditions act as conveyers of the cultural message of the community. The process of delivering messages is passed down orally from the past generation to the present [17]. The cultural message is a form of legacy to the next generation in seeing cultural issues in relevance to the current situation.

### **3 Method**

This research uses qualitative descriptive methods with literary anthropological approaches and green economy to explore cultural messages in the story "The Origin of the Palm Tree in Kabaena" and green economic activities in the management of enau trees in Moronene community, Southeast Sulawesi. The sources of data for this study include informants and written sources. The informants involved in this study were two people who were cultural figures of the Moronene community and youth figures of Kabaena, Southeast Sulawesi. Meanwhile, written sources in the form of Moronene folklore entitled "Asal Mula Pohon Enau di Kabaena (The Origin of the Palm Tree in Kabaena)" in the Moronene Folklore book published by Kantor Bahasa Sulawesi Tenggara in 2016 [18]. Data collection was carried out with literature studies and interviews. Literature studies were conducted with the reading of literature related to oral traditions, the culture of the Moronene people, and the green economy, while in-depth interviews were conducted with people who understood the culture of the Moronene people well, especially related to internal economic activity, namely the production of palm sugar in Kabaena, Bombana Regency, Southeast Sulawesi. Data analysis is carried out in several stages, namely: classifying data related to oral traditions and green economy activities; analyze data according to research topics, namely cultural messages in the story of the Origin of the Palm Tree in Kabaena and green economic activity in the management of enau of Moronene community; and summing up the results of data analysis.

### **4 Findings and Discussion**

Oral tradition has its own role as a medium for conveying cultural messages, especially in the Kabaena and Moronene communities in Bombana Regency, Southeast Sulawesi. Through its oral

traditions, people's collective memories are stored as a source of knowledge, even becoming a base for the economic practices of their people. It is an interesting review of how the Kabaena people, Southeast Sulawesi have practiced the green economy of enau trees as the main commodity in their production activities. Between oral traditions whose presence is determined by the memory of its people for generations and the economic good practices that rest on the production of palm sugar, it is interesting to elaborate further in the following sections.

#### **4.1 The Role of Oral Tradition as Messengers of the Community's Culture**

##### **4.1.1 Message of Culture in the relationship between man and God**

###### **Believe in God (in this case believe in supernatural things)**

In ancient times people have not embraced and discovered the concept of religion. They still adhere to the belief system of animism and dynamism. To believe is to assume and believe that something really exists (KBBI) [19]. Believing in God they show by believing in spirits and supernatural things. This belief system is practiced through certain rituals and spells.

One night, Warema's father had a dream about meeting his son. In the dream, Warema instructed his father to shake and hit the fruits that came out of the tree on Warema's grave every morning and afternoon while reciting a mantra... (CRM, p.86) [18]. *(Pada suatu malam, ayah Warema bermimpi bertemu dengan anaknya. Dalam mimpi tersebut Warema berpesan kepada ayahnya agar setiap pagi dan sore buah yang keluar dari pohon di pusara Warema digoyang-goyang dan dipukul-pukul sambil membaca mantra...).*

Based on the quote, people used to cast spells for specific purposes. Putri Warema advised her father to shake the fruitful enau tree in the morning and evening while casting spells. The mantra has more or less meaning *Kau meninturu, sehingga menetes senantiasa. Kau binsiu, agar dia manis. Kau bindaro, agar tidak putus tetesannya, agar lancar alirannya agar banyak airnya.*<sup>1</sup> This is done so that the harvested palm berries are in good condition and plentiful, as well as the resulting water is sweet and abundant.

##### **4.1.2 Message of Culture in relationship with each other**

###### **Be kind and fair**

The value of kindness is a value that refers to a good attitude that can be shown through friendliness, generosity, and concern for others and oneself. Being kind often requires diversity and strength, as it involves a willingness to give attention to others. Kindness can be said to be one of the most

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<sup>1</sup> Spells translated by Amih Halik, a culture practitioner of Moronene via phone interview on September 30, 2022

precious things in the world. In this case, all cultural elements and religious values in the world respect the existing values of goodness. By being kind, every human being and other living things on earth can live quietly and peacefully.

Meanwhile, fair means equal weight, unbiased, impartial (KBBI) [19]. The meaning of fair is synonymous with the meaning of placing something according to its portion. While justice is impartiality done by a person in deciding a thing or issue. Implicitly a fair stance was exercised by Putri Warema by not choosing a single young man's proposal that came so as not to cause division.

The beauty of Princess Warema is well-known throughout the land. The number of suitors who have proposed to her is uncountable, causing difficulty for Princess Warema and her family in choosing who to accept. Moreover, the suitors who come are skilled knights in the battlefield. The King and Princess Warema realize that if one of the knights is accepted, the others will be disappointed and heartbroken. This could lead to civil war (CRM, p.85) [18]. *(Kecantikan Putri Warema tersohor sampai ke ujung negeri. Pemuda yang melamar sudah tidak terbilang jumlahnya sehingga Putri Warema dan keluarganya kesulitan untuk menentukan siapa yang akan dipilih. Apalagi pemuda-pemuda yang datang adalah para kesatria yang jago di medan perang. Raja dan Putri Warema menyadari bahwa jika ada salah satu di antara kesatria yang diterima lamarannya, kesatria yang lainnya akan kecewa dan sakit hati. Hal ini dapat mengakibatkan terjadinya perang saudara).*

Putri Warema was a beautiful king's daughter. Her beauty is famous to the end of the country. Many young men from among the knights came to apply. However, the king and the princess had difficulty making a choice. From the narrative, it can be understood that Putri Warema's decision not to accept one of the men who came to propose to her on the grounds that she did not want to disappoint the knights who also came to propose to her, shows the existence of a good attitude. Putri Warema's good attitude is that there is affection for others, namely the men who come to propose to her so as not to cause feelings of disappointment and heartache towards young people who are not accepted by her proposal. In addition, she did not want a major calamity or a war.

Faced with this difficult problem, Putri Warema takes the attitude of sacrificing herself by committing suicide. For her, suicide is the best and fairest way to protect his neighborhood community. In the story, the attitude of killing can be understood as an act of fairness and respect. By suicide, all the problems of herself and the problems of others are finished. She treats others in a good way, that is, respects and puts them in the same position so that it does not cause feelings of disappointment, feelings of shame and feelings of heartache. Putri Warema didn't want a war just because she was fighting over her. Therefore, she decided to commit suicide by drinking poison for the sake of justice and the common good. With this fair attitude and good actions, one's relationship with others will become more harmonious.

### **Brave to take decision**

Brave means being confident in the face of danger, difficulty or not being afraid (trepidation, wry) (KBBI) [19]. While the decision means the result of unequivocal problem solving. Dare to make

decisions means being confident and not afraid to take decisive solutions to problems. This was done by Putri Warema when facing many young men who came to propose to her. Not wanting to hurt and disappoint the young men, she made a valiant decision.

The King and Princess Warema realize that if one of the knights is accepted, the others will be disappointed and heartbroken. This could lead to civil war. To avoid a bigger tragedy, Princess Warema decides to commit suicide by drinking poison (CRM, p.85) [18]. *(Raja dan Putri Warema menyadari bahwa jika ada salah satu di antara kesatria yang diterima lamarannya, kesatria yang lainnya akan kecewa dan sakit hati. Hal ini dapat mengakibatkan terjadinya perang saudara. Untuk menghindari terjadinya musibah yang lebih besar, Putri Warema memutuskan bunuh diri dengan cara minum racun).*

Putri Warema decides to commit suicide by drinking poison. This she did in order to avoid calamity and civil war due to rejecting the proposals of the young knights. This action was very courageous in making decisions because Putri Warema sacrificed her life for the common good. Although suicide is not a commendable act, she does not want to disappoint and cause the heartache of many people who compete for it.

#### **Being person who benefits people around**

There is a saying that the best human being is the one that can benefit others. Presumably that is the saying applied by the character of Putri Warema in the story *Asal Mula Pohon Enau di Kabaena* (The Origin of the Enau Tree in Kabaena). She didn't want to disappoint and hurt many people. She wants to leave something that can benefit many people. Being a human being who benefits many people or society is commendable. In life, sometimes a person wants to be a respected person. This attitude will actually not give life happiness. However, being someone who benefits anyone around us is the real happiness.

One way to be a useful person for many is to make ourselves a person who can inspire others. Being a useful person is one of the characteristics that everyone should have. A person benefits others, not just seeks benefits from people or takes advantage of others. People who interact with ourselves, or do charity by doing good to our fellow living beings, we prioritize in certain situations and conditions. Our willingness to benefit others can be done by, among other things, giving property to others, imparting knowledge to others, as well as giving our energy to others. Just like Putri Warema did, before she died, Princess Warema advised her parents.

"One day I will leave a memento that will belong to everyone, both from the Anakia and Limbo communities. If I pass away, do not bury me in a public cemetery, but bury me in the yard of the house. If new plants grow, take good care of them" (CRM, p.85) [18]. *(Suatu saat saya akan meninggalkan tanda mata yang akan menjadi milik semua orang, baik dari kalangan anakia maupun kalangan limbo. Jika saya wafat, jangan makamkan saya di tempat pemakaman umum tapi makamkanlah saya di pekarangan rumah. Jika tumbuh tanaman baru, peliharalah tanaman itu dengan baik).*



Putri Warema's message can be understood as a moral message that will later become a role model for the surrounding community. The quote 'will leave an eye mark that will belong to everyone' represents that Putri Warema wants to be a human being who benefits everyone in all circles, both *anakia* and *limbo* circles. She wants to contribute by giving everything she has in the form of property and knowledge to the community so that it is more useful. She knows that society needs everything, both material and knowledge. It is illustrated in the quote 'if a new plant grows in her center, she asks that the plant be well maintained'. The quote represents that Putri Warema has knowledge that must be shared with the community, namely caring for and managing plants (palm) well. She knows that these plants can provide a livelihood for the community if they are properly cared for and managed.

Putri Warema's desire to become person who benefits society was realized. It is illustrated in the quote, 'after four years, the plant actually grew on its. A palm tree thrives'. Palm tree is a plant that has various benefits for people's lives. Palm trees can be used for a variety of purposes, ranging from the trunk, leaves (sticks), flowers (sap), and seeds. The event of the emergence of the palm tree above the womb of Putri Warema makes the story *Asal Mula Pohon Enau di Kabaena* (The Origin of the Palm Tree in Kabaena) a mythological story that has a meaning and role in the history of local knowledge of the Kabaena people in terms of managing the palm tree as a livelihood and becoming a tradition. Local knowledge, customs, and cultural messages conveyed through oral traditions are embraced by the supporting community (Kabaena). Thus, it can be understood that oral tradition plays the role of conveying the cultural message of the people.

#### **4.1.3 Message of Culture in relationship between man and nature**

##### **Planting and caring for palm tree**

The palm tree (*Arenga pinnata*) is also called sugar palm. This plant can grow well and the yield can be abundant in areas where the soil is fertile, especially in areas with an altitude between 500-800 meters above sea level. One of the palm families has many benefits so it is popular as a versatile plant, after the coconut tree because almost all parts of the palm tree can be used.

Palm trees are very important for the environment. Palm trees have an ecological function as a preservative for natural resources, especially soil. The fiber roots of the palm tree are very sturdy, deep, and strong so that they have an important function for restraining soil erosion. In addition, palm roots also have the ability to bind water. In addition to these functions, the palm tree also has an economic function for people's lives. Thus, the community can carry out activities to maintain palm tree plants as environmental guardians and manage palm trees that can produce various daily necessities of life.

That tree can be used for various necessities. Its stick used for broom, its flower for sugar palm fruit, and etc. Its slash can produce sweet taste water. The water then collected and when Princess Warema birthday is coming, the water distributed to all men who ever came to proposed (CRM, p.86) [18].

(Pohon tersebut bisa digunakan untuk berbagai keperluan, seperti lidinya untuk sapu, bunganya untuk kolang-kaling, dan sebagainya. Dari tebasan itu keluarlah air yang rasanya manis. Air yang keluar tersebut pun ditampung dan ketika peringatan hari ulang tahun Putri Warema, air itu dibagi-bagikan kepada semua pemuda yang dulu pernah datang melamar).

The plant that grows above Princess Warema's tomb is known as the palm tree. The palm tree thrives and has many benefits for the surrounding community. Palm tree is a plant with a myriad of benefits. This is because almost all parts of this plant can be used. The part of the coir that lines the tree can be used as *ijuk* (fiber). A good fiber is obtained before the age of the old tree or before the flowers appear around the age of eight years. Fiber from the palm tree can be used as a broom material, increasing the volume of *konde*, as a building material for stone adhesive, for filtering turbid water to make it clean, and a wave repellent by the sea.

Soft stems of palm tree on the inside and the outside can also be used. Its hard stem can be used as a board and hoe handle. Elongated split and pith-discarded stems can be used as gutters or drains. Soft stems can be ground to be processed in order to produce sago. The pith part can be taken from starch juice to make food, especially as an ingredient for vermicelli. The leaf part, as well as *nipah* and *rumbia*, can be used as material or roof of the house. The tops of the leaves that are still budding (*janur*) can be used as cigarette leaves or what is known as *kawung* leaves.

Peeled palm fruit is called *kolang-kaling*, often used as a mixture of iced fruit and compote. *Kolang-kaling* is efficacious to facilitate digestion, suppress appetite so as to prevent obesity, treat arthritis, and prevent osteoporosis because it contains calcium. Palm tree sap can be used to remedy hives. Palm tree lead water or called sap can be used as an ingredient in palm sugar. In addition, sap is used to enrich the taste of food and as an ingredient in making vinegar acid. The silenced sap will become *tuak* (fermented palm wine). *Tuak* drink from sap has been known to people in various regions for a long time [20].

Departing from the various functions and benefits of the palm tree, planting and caring for the palm tree is very important to support the green economy. This turned out to have been done by our predecessors (ancestors). Planting and maintaining palm trees by our ancestors is represented in the oral tradition of the mythological story *Asal Mula Pohon Enau di Kabaena* (The Origin of the Palm Tree in Kabaena). In this case, the main character Putri Warema acts as a medium for conveying the cultural message of her supporting community.

### **How to take advantage of nature**

Human beings were created with many advantages, including the intellect of the mind to survive. One way to survive is to take advantage of nature, namely planting trees. Trees that have many uses will greatly help human survival. Trees that have many benefits include the palm tree.

“If new plant grows, take good care of it”. Soon after, Princess Warema passed away. Syahdan. After 40 days have passed, a new plant grows on Princess Warema’s grave.

This plant later known as Palm tree and it flourishes. After a year, this tree already had leaves and palm fibers (CRM, p. 85-86) [18].

*(Jika tumbuh tanaman baru, peliharalah tanaman itu dengan baik". Tidak lama kemudian Putri Warema pun meninggal dunia. Syahdan, setelah empat puluh hari berlalu, tumbuhlah tanaman baru di atas pusara Putri Warema yang selanjutnya dikenal dengan pohon enau. Pohon tersebut tumbuh dengan subur. Setelah setahun berselang, pohon tersebut sudah berdaun dan berijuk).*

Before she passed away, Putri Warema advised her parents to take care of the plants that grew on her tomb. The plant turned out to be a palm tree. Because it is well cared for, the tree thrives characterized by the growth of leaves and coxing. In fact, the tree can be used for various purposes, such as utensils (brooms, boards), food (sago, kolang-kaling, palm sugar), drinks (juice, vinegar acid), to health (facilitates digestion, prevents obesity and osteoporosis, the sap is for itching medicine).

With reason and knowledge, man is able to plant and cultivate plants, including the palm tree. Planting palm trees starts from the seedlings of the palm tree, which is the seed of the fruit. Palm fruit seeds are sown on a mixed soil medium from compost or cages, sand, and soil. The soil medium of the field is plowed so that it becomes loose and free from weeds and garbage. Enau tree seedlings are put in a hole then re-covered with earth and watered moderately. Palm trees are usually planted with a monoculture and intercropping system, which is to plant two types of trees on one field. Plants suitable for the intercropping system are protective type plants or legumines and kettles or string beans.

While pests that commonly attack palm trees, include rhinoceros beetles, sago beetles, grasshoppers, ferrets, and grasshoppers. The disease that affects the palm tree is yellow spot. How to control pests and diseases on palm trees by cutting off diseased leaves or eradicating pests and spraying pesticides on the affected plants. The harvest period of the palm tree takes a period of eight to ten years. After passing the age of 14, the palm tree will die by itself. If this cultivated plant is properly cared for and processed, the profits obtained will be abundant. Therefore, the palm tree is nicknamed green gold [21].

Palm tree, ecologically serves as a preservative of natural resources, especially soil. Palm trees that grow wildly on hillsides and have strong fiber roots, can support (hold) lonsors. Palm trees can grow in large numbers and take large roots, allowing these plants to store new springs. The palm tree is also resistant to fire, if it burns, it will grow again. Based on these quotes and explanations, there is a cultural message that the ancestors taught the next generation to take advantage of nature in this case planting palm trees that are rich in benefits.

#### **4.2 Practice of green economy of palm tree in Bombana, Southeast Sulawesi**

Palm trees are very important for the environment. Palm trees have an ecological function as a preservative for natural resources, especially soil. The fiber roots of the palm tree are very sturdy,

deep, and strong so that they have an important function for restraining soil erosion. In addition, palm roots also have the ability to bind water. In addition to these functions, the palm tree also has an economic function for people's lives. Thus, the community can carry out activities to maintain palm tree plants as environmental guardians and manage palm trees that can produce various daily necessities of life.

Palm tree, ecologically serves as a preservative of natural resources, especially soil. Palm trees that grow wildly on hillsides and have strong fiber roots, can hold landslides. Palm trees can grow in large numbers and take large roots, allowing these plants to store new springs. The palm tree is also resistant to fire, if the tree burns, it will grow again.

From an economic aspect, the palm tree has many benefits for people's lives. Palm has flowers, fruits, leaves, and stems that can be utilized. The flowers that grow on the enau tree can be cut and tapped sap (*nira*) to be used as a drink (*tuak*=fermented palm wine) and used as brown sugar (palm sugar). Young palm fruits can be managed and consumed as canned fruit. The leaves and fronds of the enau tree also have benefits, namely that the leaves can be used as firewood, while the *ijuk* (fiber) in the fronds can be used as a filter for turbid water, and as the basic material for brushes, brooms, and mines. The trunk of the palm tree has starch or flour inside. Palm flour is rich in protein, carbohydrates, and various vitamins so that it can be consumed regularly.

#### **4.2.1 The spread of the growth of palm tree**

The people of Kabaena, Bombana District, Southeast Sulawesi have practiced a green economy in the form of palm sugar production tapped from palm trees as a major commodity. According to Anton Ferdinan, the tradition of processing sap into palm sugar, has been going on for quite a long time, crossing generation after generation in Kabaena.<sup>2</sup>

The location of palm trees grows almost throughout the Kabaena region, in every sub-district. This makes it the main commodity of residents in the realm of agriculture. Enau trees are located in the forests of Kabaena that grew hundreds of years ago. Palm trees that breed in each sub-district, make the natural environment there maintained greenery and sustainability.<sup>3</sup>

On average, Kabaena is still green in the environment, especially in the palm oil growing gardens and processing areas. In addition, since generations, the Kabaena people have known the division of location and ownership of palm trees with the term *rawa* or location of cultivation/growth of palms. If there are people who have already tapped in the area, no one should come to claim or intercept it anymore. If *rawa* is a personal possession, then the *kaindea* belongs to a group or

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<sup>2</sup> Anton Ferdinan is a cultural figures and local officials of Moronene, Bombana County. He made frequent visits to Kabaena, including to palm sugar processing gardens. Phone interview on October 24, 2022

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

communal that is usually owned by a large family. The sequence, starting from the *kaindea* and then going down to *rawa*.<sup>4</sup>

#### **4.2.2 Between grow naturally and cultivated**

The palm tree for the Kabaena people is likened to the tree of life. This is inseparable from its origins as an oral tradition which later became a tree that was present in real terms in the community. All elements of the enau or palm tree can be used by the community such as lidi, ijuk, leaves, stems, fruits, to sap. In the soil, enau roots can withstand landslides as well as being home to water. In addition, the regeneration of the enau tree continues to be maintained which lasts naturally.<sup>5</sup>

This is reinforced by the view of Sahrul, a Kabaena youth leader regarding the existence of palm trees that are used as a source of brown sugar production for the community which is the main choice of residents in their agricultural realm.

Actually, what society is now tapping, no one is cultivated. All grow naturally. There was one time the Bombana District Agriculture Office did a greening/rejuvenation of palm oil around 2007, but I don't know what the results will be. In Tangkeno, especially naturally grown, it can be said to be almost 100%. So the result now is not cultivation. The palm that is tapped and then maintained is true. This means that it grows naturally and is maintained by residents in their gardens.<sup>6</sup>

#### **4.2.3 Friendly technology and green vision**

Palm trees are about 5-6 years old to be ready to be tapped which just produce *manggar* or *mayang* in which there is sap. Tapping can be done once a month, so that the level of productivity is also able to support the economic life of the farming community. The tapping process is also by cleaning the *mayang* and then opening the skin, then ready to be harvested. On average per day can produce five liters of sap.

The palm farmers used special hammers and machetes to slice the machete. The sap storage container is made of bamboo which is large the size of an adult's thigh. The bamboo consists of several segments, which are hung to hold the sap. The hard palm sugar is then wrapped using dried banana duan. The ties use ropes from plants which in Moronene called *lanu*.

Currently, palm sugar processing has begun to use semimodern technology. The method of managing palm oil has begun to change because it has been produced on a large scale. This also results in an increase in the community's economy from the palm oil itself. Although there is semimodern production with a lot of production, the traditional production of the people in the

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<sup>4</sup> Sahrul is a youth leader of Kabaena. Phone interview on October 24, 2022

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*

garden, still continues. Between modernism and traditionality, processing supports each other and gives living space in green economic activities, the end of which is the improvement of a better standard of living of the community.

The green vision of palm sugar production is very much strengthened in Kabaena. The forest garden in Kabaena is green because the management location is around the river or not far from the river. This is because farmers need water for washing sugar molds from coconut shells. Bantea is not far from the enau trees that are still lush in the area. Arena sugar farmers need a grove of trees to build a bantea. Enau trees are also not far from the riverbank. This is a disobedience to the environment. The river is maintained because the forest is sustainable. The community is wise to maintain the forest as a source of spring water for rivers that support the palm sugar production process.<sup>7</sup>

The Lakambula river which located in Kabaena, Southeast Sulawesi has a tributary that passes through the village where the activity of tapping residents is carried out. The river passes through three sub-districts, namely Kabaena Tengah, Kabaena Induk, and Kabaena Barat. There are two villages in Kabaena Induk where many residents tap on the banks of the Lakambula river. Thus, there is a strong and important relationship between the existence of the river, the existence of the enau tree, and the arean sugar production activity itself which is carried out in a very long time.

#### **4.2.4 The Process of palm sap production**

*Nira* (sap), sweet liquid from *mayang* of palm, is taken every morning and towards the evening. Sap is then processed in a garden not far from the palm tree. The processing system is traditional. The raw material for burning is from wood. Once processing requires a lot of wood. That is, citizens have the ecological awareness to maintain wood as a production fuel. The processing site is called a *bantea* or hut, which takes 3 to 4 hours. The process of picking up firewood uses a cutting system for selecting trees that are not massive so that there is no fatal environmental impact. He is still in the corridors of local wisdom. Thus, there is also a dryness of the surrounding water because the wood is taken only for the need to burn. A tree that is cut down, used until it runs out until the smallest twig.<sup>8</sup>

The palm sugar production process takes place in a small house of residents which is carried out in a garden not far from palm trees. Small houses are approximately 4x3 or 3x3 in size. Here, all means of production are stored such as pans, molds, sieves, and other supporting adhesions. The wrapping process can be carried out at the production site or also brought to the house. Palm sugar is wrapped using dried banana leaves.

Furthermore, the sap will be cooked into palm sugar which is initially preceded by an extraction process consisting of a mixture of jackfruit stem flakes and lime which usually comes from burnt

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<sup>7</sup> Sahrul is a youth leader of Kabaena. Phone interview on October 24, 2022.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

clams. Between jackfruit stem flakes and clam lime are mixed into bamboo sap storage as a natural preservation, environmentally friendly, and to produce quality sap.

#### **4.2.5 The selling of palm sugar**

Part of the palm sugar production in Kabaena, Southeast Sulawesi is its sales. This is an important contribution of palm sugar production to the green economy. After the sap is made into palm sugar, it is usually sold to become the production of processed derivatives for baking ingredients, for other foodstuffs. In fact, nowadays palm sugar metamorphoses into ant sugar or brown sugar which is widely sold in malls and stores to become a consumption and ingredient for tea as a substitute for white sugar. Kabaena palm sugar above 95% is sold to Baubau. Likewise coconut sugar from Kabaena is sold in Baubau and Muna, produced by the Kabaena people. Its sales are counted in the number of tons shipped.<sup>9</sup>

After that production, the decisive thing in its sustainability is its sales. One of the biggest sales reasons for the sale to Baubau is because the Buton people have a *haroa* tradition, which is the celebration of Islamic holidays in Buton. In practice, one of the peculiarities of *haroa* is the serving of Buton specialties whose ingredient is brown sugar from Kabaena. *Haroa* is organized not only by religious institutions, but also by households or family families. The more frequent *haroa* held, the more use of Kabaena palm sugar. This means that the domino effect of palm sugar production touches various community reports, from Kabaena in Bombana Regency, to the entire Buton region. In addition, palm sugar that arrived in Baubau, some of which was also resold to Kendari, Muna, and Maluku.<sup>10</sup>

An old mother named Wa Dulu is a seller in Baubau. She has been selling Kabaena palm sugar for decades saying that Kabaena palm sugar is favored by buyers because it is larger in size, considered by buyers to be genuine, and the sweet taste is also original. He bought Kabaena palm sugar at Baubau port, two to four of them once bought. In one tile there are ten packets of sugar. The sales he got helped his family's economy. The advantage of Kabaena palm sugar over other brown sugar is being used for the basic ingredients of all kinds of confectionery, it is also a medicine. This is inseparable from the source of Kabaena sugar directly from enau or palm. Consuming Kabaena palm sugar can cure certain diseases. Another advantage of Kabaena arean sugar is its larger size than palm sugar produced by other regions. Although the price is more expensive than other palm sugar, many buyers like it precisely because of its larger size.

#### **4.2.6 From palm sugar to various food**

Palm sugar is not limited to being sold as palm sugar, as it was originally. It has become a basic ingredient for the production of other foodstuffs such as coconut sugar and ant sugar. Uniquely, the

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<sup>9</sup> Anton Ferdinan is a cultural figure of Moronene.

<sup>10</sup> As conveyed by Sahrul, a youth leader of Kabaena.

coconut sugar, the wrapper is made of corn leaves so that it is more environmentally friendly. This means that it also drives the green economy because it does not use synthetic materials that can pollute the natural environment. If in other areas nira can be used as a local liquor, then in Kabaena, people do not use it for similar things. Nira is really only used as a basic ingredient for brown sugar, as well as an ingredient for the manufacture of various types of cakes, sweeteners, and even medicines. Especially for coconut sugar, the main ingredient is palm sugar, then mixed with grated coconut, and glutinous rice. That means, the production of coconut sugar also encourages the production of other foods such as glutinous rice and shredded coconut.

With the ant sugar industry, it accommodates palm sugar produced by the Kabaena people. Currently, there are two see ant sugar products, the Arenka and Golato brands. Both brands have encouraged the potential production of palm sugar by the community, which is then traded in malls and stores widely. This ant sugar becomes a sweetener for drinks, cake mixes, and other foodstuffs. It is quite clean and of a certain production standard. The filtering process is carried out several so that the result is quite hygienic.<sup>11</sup>

The manufacture of coconut sugar, mostly done by different people, not palm sugar farmers. This is because the energy required is large enough to produce coconut sugar. Coconut sugar processors buy half-cooked liquid sugar which is then processed again as the basic ingredient for making it. Thus, pure palm sugar has encouraged other workers to make coconut sugar, as proof that the green economy is helping to encourage various walks of life in economic turmoil.

#### **4.2.7 From family economy to children education**

The production of palm sugar in Kabaena, Southeast Sulawesi has succeeded in encouraging people's economic life well. The production of arena sugar that has been going on for a very long time has become the main source of livelihood of the Kabaena people and is passed down for generations to every generation. Anton Ferdinan, a Moronene cultural figure, gave a special explanation on this subject.

If we interview parents or seniors, they will be convinced that the economic support for the school is the production of palm sugar. This means that palm sugar production is one of the mainstay commodities and is the sole fulcrum of hope to be able to get economic value that is used for the economic needs of their children's families and schools.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, the green economy practices of the Kabaena people that make palm sugar production their main commodity have contributed greatly, not only to the economy itself, but also to the sustainability of education across generations. This phenomenon can also be said that through the production of palm sugar, development in Kabaena can be carried out from the agriculture carried out by the people. Anton assessed that the production of palm sugar is carried out in almost all of

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<sup>11</sup> Anton Ferdinan, a cultural figure of Moronene.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*



one village in every sub-district on Kabaena Island. Residents who do not process it can only be counted fingers.

Sahrul said that there is a long relationship between buying and selling palm sugar from Kabaena to Baubau, which has a huge impact on the economy and education. The Kabaena youth leader reported that his father was a Kabaena-Baubau sugar trader. He was a collector of palm sugar purchased from home manufacturer Kabaena. Sahrul then attended elementary school to complete his undergraduate studies where 100% of the cost came from buying and selling palm sugar from his parents.<sup>13</sup>

## 5 Conclusion

The Kabaena community in Bombana Regency, Southeast Sulawesi has an oral tradition regarding *Asal Mula Pohon Enau in Kabaena* (the Origin of the Palm Tree) which comes from the tomb of Putri Warema, a king's daughter in Tangkeno, Kabaena. The mythological story received its historical affirmation at the level of community reality, namely the growth and development of enau or palm trees in the forests and gardens of residents, which were then managed to become a source of palm sugar commodities.

The utilization of the palm tree as an economic commodity stands on local wisdom derived from its oral tradition. The more the economy of the citizens increases and the more prosperous the life built from the production of palm sugar, the more people appreciate the oral traditions that become the link between knowledge and the ability to move the wheels of the green economy. The cultural message came from the oral tradition, affirms the mandate of a harmonious life in three dimensions, namely in man's relationship with God, in man's relationship with others, and in man's relationship with nature. Thus, man's practice of exploring nature, is no longer in human consciousness as the only center, but one of the other centers, namely nature and God. It is in this kind of consciousness, which is possible thanks to the role of oral tradition, that the practice of green economy has been going on for a long time, crossing generations of the Kabaena people, Southeast Sulawesi themselves.

Best practices of the green economy, taking place from upstream of planting to downstream of the community's economy, namely from the distribution of palm tree growth and development in forests and gardens, juxtaposition of natural growth and cultivation, the use of friendly technology and green vision, the production process of sap, the sale of palm sugar across districts, the transformation of palm sugar into other foods, the impact on the family economy, and its role in children's education.

This research then reveals the role of oral tradition as a medium for conveying cultural messages and reveals the green economic activities of the Kabaena people who make palm trees as their commodity pillars. There is a strong correlation between the role of oral traditions, the preservation

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<sup>13</sup> Sahrul, a youth leader of Moronene.

of forests and enau trees, and the long-standing practice of the green economy, throughout the life of the Kabaena people, Southeast Sulawesi themselves.

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