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Philosophical Texts: Character Education for Minangkabau Women

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Abstract: This study focuses on the concept of ideal women according to Minangkabau philosophy. The criteria of the ideal women can be found in proverbs containing implicit meaning related to ethical values, namely the view about women's ideal morality. The interpretation can be comprehended from its function and purposes as a concept of moral and character education for the Minangkabau young generation. The study toward the character education for Minangkabau women is based on the interpretation meaning from the concept of Minangkabau ideal women became the basis fine art creative idea resulting in the icon of personal expression. This artwork was materialized into the painting symbolic expression/abstraction by borrowing the traditional idiom "*Tangkuluak (Tekuluk)*" a kind of *Bundo Kanduang's* formal outfit in the form of headgear as the traditional symbol of Minangkabau custom. The creation of this symbolic expression painting aims to preserve Minangkabau aesthetics through the materialization of paintings that takes the specific theme, *Bundo Kanduang* as the ideal woman of Minangkabau people. This study used a qualitative method presented in the form of descriptive analysis. Data were collected through interviews and observation. They had emic characteristics performed in the Centre of Minangkabau Cultural Information (in Indonesia called PDIKM) in Padangpanjang and Adityawarman Museum in Padang, West Sumatra. Meanwhile, ethic research was conducted with qualitative method, namely studying the theoretical claim and interpreting the meaning of proverbs about the nobility of *Bundo Kanduang*.

Keywords: Ethical value; *bundo kanduang*; Minangkabau; character education.

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INTRODUCTION

Understanding meanings related to environment has been part of cultural aspects of place (W. H. W. Ismail, 2012). A person's perceptions of what entails human quality of life or well-being are shaped by the communities' customs and traditions (Bourke & McGee, 2012; Masri et al., 2015). Social and cultural values are extremely contextual, intertwined with the community's way of life which constitute their unique customs, traditions, belief and philosophy; in which

their spiritual faith or religion are the fundamental determinant of their norms and moral etiquette. Fashions, thus, is a manifestation of the society and their cultural practices.

Some observers contend that a considerable of Minangkabau women have lost their identity in dressing, eating, communicating, etc (Sola, 2020; Syafira & Putra, 2019; Zainal, 2014). This happens, we hypothesize, because they do not recognize or may have forgotten fundamental values, a

legacy that has been passed throughout the centuries especially dealing with '*tangkuluak*', an upper part of woman's outfit in Minangkabau.

This study focuses on the concept of ideal women according to the Minangkabau community. The criteria of the ideal woman can be found in Minangkabau proverbs containing implicit meaning related to ethical value, namely the view about women's ideal morality. This ethical value can be interpreted from its function and purpose as a concept of moral and character education for the young Minangkabau generation.

Education can be interpreted as efforts to help students develop all their potentials (heart, thought, spirituality, motivation, and physical body) to face the future (Daniah, 2016; Ramdhani, 2017). Loss of character is the root of all misbehaviors and deviant acts. Character is a unique personal way of thinking and behaving in order to live and work together within the family, community, nation, and state. Individuals with good character are those who can make decisions and are ready to take responsibility for every consequence of these decisions (Pala, 2011; Shumer et al., 2012).

Character education is teachers' conscious efforts to instill values to their students (Chowdhury, 2018; Paul et al., 2022). It has now become an educational movement to support students' social, emotional, and ethical development. This type of education can be regarded as the process to develop students' noble characters by practicing and teaching moral values and civilized decision-making in the relationship between humans and other humans and between humans and the divine (Almerico, 2014).

A genuine concept of character education in Indonesia can be extracted from various Indonesian customs and cultures. Various religious teachings and leadership practices have long applied this type of education in this country (Ismail, 2016; Saidek & Islami, 2016; Susilo et al., 2022). Today's concept of character education in

Indonesia is the result of the National Workshop on Cultural and Character Education in 2020 in Jakarta which formulated a national agreement on the development of cultural and character education.

There have been few studies addressing moral values for Minangkabau women in the literature and the current study tries to explore an old heritage namely 'fashion' which has deep meaning not only in the appearance but also deep inside the philosophical stands. A part from it, this sound matrilineal system in business has been very unique as written by Djuhari (2017) when she maintain that "The uniqueness of "*Minangkabau*" culture compared with other cultures in Indonesia, among others are: (1) lies in the system in familial relations, that is matrilineal system that is looking at family relationship based on maternal lineage; (2) "Nagari (village)" which is the lowest system of government in "*Minangkabau*", and is a system of government established by custom, and has the same laws, cultures and customs; (3) the dynamics of politics, also indicate the influence of customary values in the leadership system;

The fourth uniqueness of *Bundo kanduang* lies a wandering culture that contains a philosophical value "*where the earth is rested, where the sky is upheld*" which means we must be able to adjust where ever we are, this is also an appreciation of local values; and (5) natural metaphors that serve as a source of inspiration as well as a view of life Yulika (2012) "*Minangkabau*" traditional highly uphold the dignity of women (Fauzi & Kumalasari, 2020). This statement is not only because of the matrilineal system used but because women are given a special place in the custom to take in a broader stance. Minangkabau women's gait, not only in the household but also in the community. An ideal woman who can be an example in the family as well as in society is called "*Bundo Kanduang*." *Bundo Kanduang* means a real mother, in whom radiant characteristic of hospitality, shade, and piety, so that she will be a role model for family and society (Jamil, 2015).

Minangkabau women to which this study refers to are those with the title "*Bundo Kanduang*", an honorific and endearment address by which children call their biological mother. It is also the title given to the leader of all women and the leader of women in the traditional Minangkabau local institution of KAN (*Kerapatan Adat Nagari*) (Remiswal et al., 2013). Historically, "*Bundo Kanduang*" is the name of Dara Jingga, the first child of King Dharmasraya also known as Sri Tribuana Mauliwarmadewa (1255-1295M) (Piliang & Sungut, 2014).

The term "*Bundo Kanduang*" in the later development of its meaning is used to address women with good morality or ideal women as expected by the Minangkabau community as outlined in the Minangkabau traditional proverb of "*Bundo Kanduang*". For example, Rohana Kudus, a Minangkabau heroine who fought for women's proper education by establishing the first school for women in Minangkabau, is referred to as "*Bundo Kanduang*" due to her service and heroic acts to the Minangkabau people. Rohana Kudus is a Minangkabau woman who attempted to sow the seeds of "liberation" for women. Religion encourages humans to utilize their minds and potential. This potential and mind utilization can be realized through education. This basis encouraged Rohana to have self-determination and bravery to face her opponents who disagreed with her. Descriptions of the above figures, raises some important questions to be answered such as: (a) What is the sorts of *Bundo Kanduang* in the Perspective of Character Education? (b) What are the ideal women represented in *Bundo Kanduang*?

METHOD

The method used in this study is a qualitative method through descriptive analysis. Data were collected through interviews and observations. Several leaders were met and interviewed at the Centre of Minangkabau Cultural Information in Padang Panjang, West Sumatra and Adityawarman Museum Padang City, West Sumatra and etc research carried out using the library research

method, namely studying theoretical claims and interpreting the meaning of the Minangkabau proverb of "*Bundo Kanduang*". Furthermore, this study also seeks to explain the concept of character education for Minangkabau women as figures conducting the character education itself.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Bundo Kanduang in the Perspective of Character Education

Philosophy of Ideal Minangkabau Women is stated as follows:

"Bundo kanduang limpapeh rumah nan gadang, Amban puruak pagangan kunci, Pusek jalo kumpulan tali, Kapai tampek batanyo, Kapulang tampek babarito, Sumarak dalam nagari, Hiasan dalam kampuang, Nan gadang basa batuah, Kok hiduik tampek baniek, kok mati tampek banasa, Kaunduang-unduang ka Madinah, Kap payuang panji ka sarugo". In English, it says "The Real Mother, the Pillar of the great house, the Key keeper of people's treasures, the Center of a net to which the knot is tied, the Sources of information for those to go and the Source of news for those to return, the Splendor of her Nagari, the Exalted and the Wise one, to Whom the living place their intent and the dead place their vow, the Protecting veil to Medina, the Flag banner to the heaven.

The above Minangkabau proverbs describe six important positions of *Bundo Kanduang*: *limpapeh Rumah nan Gadang, Amban Puruak Pagangan Kunci, Pusek Jalo Kumpulan Tali, Sumarak dalam Nagari, Payuang Panji ka Sarugo* serta *Nan Gadang Basa Batuah. Bundo Kanduang Limpapeh Rumah nan Gadang*. From these six important positions, two conclusions can be drawn. First, "*Bundo Kanduang*" as a cultural preserver is given a high status by her people, and she is considered worthy of being a good life role model in "Kato"/Kata (Minangkabau law) and religion (Islam). The second conclusion is that *Bundo Kanduang* is the moral concept as the aim of character education for all Minangkabau women at large. This second conclusion was obtained

after conducting etic research related to the components of good character according to Lickona and the explanation of character education concepts based on Indonesian traditional customs and cultures (Samani & Hariyanto, 2011).

Thomas Lickona's Concept of Character Education

Lickona 2013 contend that moral judgments can increase strong feelings, and both judgments and feelings motivate moral action. For individuals to make a moral judgment or identify moral qualities of certain character traits, Lickona believes that the results of the identification can help the development of children's and community development for the benefit of the children themselves and of the community.

Moral judgment is in the form of good character components, which consist of three groupings. The first grouping is moral knowledge, the second is moral feeling, and the third is moral action. Thomas suggests that moral judgments can increase moral feelings, but moral emotions can influence thinking. An important moral revolution usually begins with empathy for marginalized groups (slaves, women, workers, children, people with special needs, etc.).



Diagram 1. Components of Good Character According to Lickona (2013)

According to Thomas, the arrows connecting each character domain with the other two domains emphasize the interconnected nature of each of these domains. Moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral action do not function as separate

parts but influence each other in any way (2013).

Hariyanto and Samani (2016) propose an explanation of the concept of character education in Indonesian traditional customs and culture. They assert that Indonesia has its own genuine concept of character education. This concept can be extracted from various Indonesian customs and cultures. Various religious teachings and leadership practices have long applied this education in this country. Therefore, the existence of character education according to customs and culture in Indonesian territory is justifiable. Indonesia has a multi pluralistic community, so the assumption that language is a cultural product can be used to discuss the culture-based concept of character education (Samani, 2016).

The above statement supports the analysis of the Minangkabau proverbs related to "*Bundo Kanduang*" by using the theoretical approach of character education according to Lickona. In light of the second conclusion drawn from the six important positions of "*Bundo Kanduang*" in the Minangkabau proverbs, these six important positions and how they relate to the components of good character according to Lickona are explained below.

Analysis of the Description of Minangkabau Ideal Women

Bundo Kanduang Limpapeh Rumah nan Gadang

Limpapeh is the main pillar of a building. Limpapeh in a *rumah gadang* is the main pillar of the *rumah gadang* (the Minangkabau traditional house). It is located in the middle of the house, and those who come into the house will see it first. Related to the existence and high status of *Bundo Kanduang*, Limpapeh is a metaphor used to describe *Bundo Kanduang* as the main and important figure in the community. She is important, respected, and exalted (Handrianto, 2017; Wiemar et al., 2021).

The moral knowledge of "*Bundo Kanduang*" in the above proverb is explained through the metaphor of the main pillar of her people's house, which means that she plays an important role in the solidity of the Minangkabau traditions. She is a wise woman who can make decisions by considering the prevailing traditional and religious norms so as not to threaten the long-established traditions. Making these decisions will inevitably involve moral awareness of the practiced norms, namely knowing moral values and having a good perspective on seeing every problem by using moral thinking from various points of view. All these considerations are personal knowledge that *Bundo Kanduang* needs to have.

The moral feeling of "*Bundo Kanduang*" in the above proverb is explained through the metaphor of the main pillar of her people's house, which means that she plays an important role in the solidity of the Minangkabau traditions. She is a wise woman who loves good things. It proves that "*Bundo Kanduang*" is able to control herself as a role model for her people in making decisions. A role model is someone who has empathy and awareness to share with others. Although she has extensive knowledge, she still maintains humility by being a good mother to her people. Because of this humility, her community gives her good appreciation, which proves that "*Bundo Kanduang*" has good dignity.

The moral action of "*Bundo Kanduang*" in the above proverb is explained through the metaphor of the main pillar of her people's house, which means that she plays an important role in the solidity of the Minangkabau traditions. She always maintains her good habits by practicing every societal norm until it enables to have a good competency value on these norms (Rohana, 2018).

Bundo Kanduang Amban Puruak Pagangan Kunci

Amban is a piece of cloth wrapped around the waist or a type of corset with a

pocket to store stuff. *Puruak* means to sink and also to save. *Amban Puruak Pagangan Kunci* means the key keeper of everything related to the people's wealth and savings. Another definition is a household manager who manages her people's houses, rooms, and other buildings as well as regulates the utilization of facilities and other wealth reserves. As *amban puruak pagangan kunci*, *Bundo Kanduang* is required to be conscientious, economical, careful, and money-wise (Ibrahim, 2009).

The moral knowledge of "*Bundo Kanduang*" in the above proverb is explained through the metaphor of a household manager who is conscientious, economical, careful, and money-wise. It means that she plays a vital role in the economy of her people with good care and her good perspective in every use of facilities and inherited assets. Determining this good perspective requires personal knowledge related to moral thinking to understand moral values and moral awareness, which eventually leads to making wise decisions.

The moral feeling of "*Bundo Kanduang*" in the above proverb is explained through the metaphor of a household manager who is conscientious, economical, careful, and money-wise. It means that she plays a vital role in the economy of her people with good empathy for every problem befalling her people. This empathy is a trait that indicates that she loves good things that are raised from her conscience. This good self-control to maintain consistency in maintaining societal norms has increased her self-esteem as a human being with all the humility she has.

The moral action of "*Bundo Kanduang*" in the above proverb is explained through the metaphor of a household manager who is conscientious, economical, careful, and money-wise. It means that she plays an important role in the economy of her people with the desire to preserve and maintain her people's inheritance in an appropriate manner. This desire is evident in her willingness to take

lessons in every financial problem she faces so that there will be no further mistakes that can cause harm to her people. By always studying such issues, she has the knowledge that makes her competent.

Bundo Kanduang Pusek Jalo Kumpulan Tali

Like a fishing net, *Bundo Kanduang* is the base of all ropes or threads into a net, which is the central knot of the net and the place to hold the it. She is the center of all gathering information and all gathering problems (Ibrahim, 2009).

The moral knowledge of "*Bundo Kanduang*" in the above proverb is explained through the metaphor of the base of all ropes or threads into a net, the center of all gathering information, and all gathering problems. It indicates that she plays an important role in resolving her people's problems with the ability to determine her own perspective in seeing any arising problems and in finding the solution to the problems from various points of view related to the societal norms, religion, and implemented law and regulation. The determination of this point of view aligns with the knowledge of moral values and moral awareness, which emphasizes moral thinking in every decision making. The decision taken is a form of application of the essence of all personal knowledge and experience.

The moral feeling of "*Bundo Kanduang*" in the above proverb is explained through the metaphor of the base of all ropes or threads into a net, the center of all gathering information and all gathering problems. It indicates that she plays an important role in resolving her people's problems with the capability to love good things. An agreement in resolving problems will only be obtained from someone fair and wise. Loving good things stems from a strong sense of empathy and conscience. It can improve the quality of self-control to stay within the circle of prevailing norms in determining attitudes towards every phenomenon amid societal life. With the

proof of "*Bundo Kanduang*" ability to provide solutions to every problem in her community, especially related to women and the young generation, she maintains her pride as a member of a society with a noble civilization.

The moral action of "*Bundo Kanduang*" in the above proverb is explained through the metaphor of the base of all ropes or threads into a net, the center of all gathering information and all gathering problems. It indicates that she plays an important role in resolving her people's problems with the competence to realize her desire to lead her people by providing a perspective following the societal norms. She has the habit of taking every lesson from the experience she has.

Bundo Kanduang Sumarak dalam Nagari

To know the position of *Bundo Kanduang* as "*Sumarak dalam Nagari*", it is important first to know the role of "*Panghulu*" (male leader/ the Minangkabau king). The title "*Sumarak dalam nagari*" is given to Bundo Kanduang for her participation in supporting the role of *penghulu*. "*Panghulu*" means the person who holds *hulu* or the base of everything, which means that *penghulu* is the holder of power and the leader who must give good examples for his people. In addition, *hulu* can also mean the source of springs or rivers. Based on this definition, *panghulu* should be clear, purifying, and cleaning like water in a spring (Ibrahim, 2009).

The moral knowledge of "*Bundo Kanduang*" in the above proverb is explained through the metaphor of helping *panghulu* realize good governance for the Minangkabau people. It indicates that she has moral thought, moral awareness, and knowledge of moral values to become a role model for her people. To provide a good example to her people, she should be ready to provide solutions to any arising problems in the form of wise decision-making. Decision-making begins with determining the perspective by considering the prevailing norms and is formulated with personal knowledge obtained

from the lessons learned from her experiences.

The moral feeling of "*Bundo Kanduang*" in the above proverb is explained through the metaphor of helping *panghulu* realize good governance for the Minangkabau people. It indicates that she has high self-esteem and the self-control to stick to the prevailing norms. In addition, she has a conscience of loving good things and an empathetic attitude, which enable her to care about the welfare of her people by participating in every community empowerment activity. Such attitude shows the humility of "*Bundo Kanduang*".

The moral action of "*Bundo Kanduang*" in the above proverb is explained through the metaphor of helping *panghulu* realize good governance for the Minangkabau people. It indicates that she has the competence to assist *panghulu* in running programs around women's issues and children's education. With this competence, "*Bundo Kanduang*" can realize the shared desire of the Minangkabau community to have a female leader. "*Bundo Kanduang*" has a habit of taking lessons on every arising problem, especially about women.

Bundo Kanduang Nan Gadang Basa Batuah

Nan Gadang Basa Batuah is the great and the wise one. Thus, she is a glorified, exalted, and wise mother. To foster and maintain this title, she must strive to maintain the abilities, achievements, and morality inherent in herself. In addition, children, grandchildren, and members of other clans must continue to glorify, and bless her (Ibrahim, 2009).

The moral knowledge of "*Bundo Kanduang*" in the above proverb is explained through the metaphor of the great and the wise one. It indicates that she has moral thought and moral awareness and has knowledge of moral values from customs and religion to be applied in making decisions. This decision is made based on the prevailing norms and experience in the form of personal knowledge or reflection. In

addition, her ability to maintain achievement and morality inherent in herself proves that she has a high point of view and determination.

The moral feeling of "*Bundo Kanduang*" in the above proverb is explained through the metaphor of the great and the wise one. It indicates that she always makes decisions based on empathy that comes from her motherly conscience. She always listens to her conscience to enable her to have strong self-control so as not to violate the prevailing norms. It makes her consistent in maintaining her self-esteem as a member of Minangkabau society.

The moral action of "*Bundo Kanduang*" in the above proverb is explained through the metaphor of the great and the wise one. It indicates that she has the habit of learning to master traditional, religious, and general knowledge to help *Panghulu* realize the shared desire of the Minangkabau community to be a knowledgeable, noble, and religious society.

Payuang Panji ka Sarugo

Payung Panji is commonly used in certain ceremonies. In general, it functions to protect people from heat and rain. It implies that *Bundo Kandung* protects her people from harm in this case through the synchronization of religious teachings and tradition as a life guide in the world and the hereafter. *Bundo Kanduang* teaches her people and family to avoid immorality by applying her good teachings in their attitude and action.

The moral knowledge of "*Bundo Kanduang*" in the above proverb is explained through the metaphor of protecting her people from harm. It indicates that she has important personal knowledge related to the synchronization of religious teachings and traditions as a life guide to life in the world and the hereafter. This perspective explains that she has moral awareness and knowledge of moral values as the result of her reflection on morality. This reflection helps her make good decisions to address the arising

problems particularly related to women (Sutarso, 2020: 45).

The moral feeling of "*Bundo Kanduang*" in the above proverb is explained through the metaphor of protecting her people from harm. It indicates that she realizes the importance of loving the good things from synchronizing religious teachings and tradition as a life guide in the world and the hereafter. It is a form of her conscience and awareness that self-control can be increased by getting closer to God. It is also of the form of her empathy for the fragility of adolescent life, so she provides a solution for the adolescents to avoid immorality by applying good religious teachings and norms. These religious norms are also used as self-control in acting as a female leader with self-esteem and humility.

The moral knowledge of "*Bundo Kanduang*" in the above proverb is explained through the metaphor of protecting her people from harm. It indicates that she can see the synchronization of religious teachings and tradition as a life guide in the world and the hereafter, a competence that must be mastered and applied. With this competence, it is expected that she can address various phenomena.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The implicit meaning of Minangkabau philosophy contains proverbs related to ethical values extracted from the Minangkabau tradition. Descriptive analysis of this meaning shows that "*Bundo Kanduang*" is described as *Limpapeh Rumah nan Gadang* or the main pillar of the great house. Because of her charisma from her inner beauty, she is considered prominent, respected, and exalted by her people.

The second proverb metaphorizes "*Bundo Kanduang*" as *Amban Purua k Pagangan Kunci* meaning that she is the key keeper of her people's wealth and savings. As the key keeper, she is required to be conscientious, economical, careful, and money-wise. The third proverb metaphorizes

"*Bundo Kanduang*" as *Pusek Jalo, Kumpulan Tali* meaning that *Bundo Kanduang* like a fishing net as the base of all ropes or threads into a net is the place to which all information and problem gather.

The fourth proverb metaphorizes "*Bundo Kanduang*" as *sumarak di nagari* concerning her role in supporting the role of the *penghulu*, so she must give good examples to the people. The fifth proverb metaphorizes "*Bundo Kanduang*" as "*nan gadang basa batuah*" meaning that she is an exalted, wise, and glorified mother. by the Minangkabau community. She needs to uphold this title by achieving good morality.

The sixth proverb metaphorizes "*Bundo Kanduang*" as *payung panji ka sarugo* concerning her role to protect her people from any harm by synchronizing religious teachings and traditions to help the Minangkabau younger generation to avoid immorality.

Based on the components of good character according to Lickona (2013), the six proverbs of *Bundo Kanduang* contain the domains of character including moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions that are interconnected. It can be concluded as a genuine concept of moral education and character by the Minangkabau community as part of Indonesian cultural wealth.

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