
**THE CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE AND VALUES OF THE
UIS NEON JALI LEGEND IN TIMAU VILLAGE,
NORTHWEST AMFOANG SUB-DISTRICT,
KUPANG REGENCY**

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Abstract	Article Information
<p><i>This research explores the religious values embedded in the oral legend of Uisneon Jali in Timau village, Northwest Amfoang Sub-District, Kupang Regency. The study uses a qualitative descriptive method to analyze the legend as a part of the community oral literature and its function in preserving cultural beliefs. The findings reveal that the legend reflects four primary religious values: belief in Uisneon Jali as a supernatural entity, requests (petitions, blessings, and forgiveness), expressions of gratitude, and surrender to Uisneon jali. These values demonstrate how local communities intertwine traditional beliefs with spiritual practices, especially in the context of farming activities and rituals. The study underscores the importance of oral literature in sustaining cultural identity and transmitting values across generations.</i></p> <p>Keywords <i>Uisneon Jali, religious values, oral literature, legend, Timau vil-</i> <i>lage.</i></p>	<p><i>Received:</i> <i>11/03/2025</i></p> <p><i>Revised:</i> <i>15/03/2025</i></p> <p><i>Accepted:</i> <i>17/03/2025</i></p>

INTRODUCTION

Language is not merely a means of communication but also a medium through which culture, beliefs, and values are transmitted across generations. Halliday (2014) emphasizes that language functions as a social semiotic system in which meaning is shaped by cultural and social contexts. In indigenous communities, language is central to the preservation of oral traditions such as myths and legends, which are imbued with moral teachings and local wisdom. These oral narratives constitute the collective memory and ethical framework of a community. The values embedded within language particularly through oral literature often convey religious, moral, and ethical messages. Hymes (2018) explains that communicative

competence entails not only linguistic proficiency but also an understanding of cultural values conveyed through speech. This is especially relevant in the context of local legends, which may include sacred expressions and ritual phrases commonly used in traditional ceremonies. As Nababan (2019) points out, the erosion of indigenous languages in traditional settings can lead to the loss of cultural identity and the disintegration of local knowledge systems.

One such oral tradition can be found in Timau Village, Northwest Amfoang Sub-district, Kupang Regency, namely the legend of Uis Neon Jali. This legend recounts the story of a divine figure with supernatural abilities who interacts with nature and blesses the community. To this day, phrases and expressions related to Uis Neon Jali are still employed in various agricultural rituals, including land clearing, planting, requesting rain, and harvesting. This continuity demonstrates the enduring impact of the legend on both the religious practices and agricultural life of the Timau people.

Despite the richness of oral traditions in the region, there has been limited scholarly attention devoted specifically to the religious values contained in the legend of Uis Neon Jali. Most existing literature focuses on broader ethnolinguistic or anthropological aspects of Timorese communities without delving into the specific functions of local myths in religious life (Setyawati, 2020; Nababan, 2019). Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by offering a focused analysis on the spiritual dimension of the legend. This research lies in its documentation and analysis of the religious values embedded in a localized oral legend that remains actively practiced within agricultural and ritual life. By interpreting these values within the framework of contemporary cultural relevance, the study contributes both to the preservation of indigenous knowledge and to the academic discourse on ethnoreligious identity. Research problem is what religious values are embedded in the legend of Uis Neon Jali in Timau Village, Northwest Amfoang Sub-district, Kupang Regency? While this study aim is to identify and describe the religious values found in the legend of *Uis Neon Jali* and to analyze their relevance in the spiritual and social life of the Timau community today

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Approach: Sociology of Literature

This study adopts the sociology of literature approach, grounded in the philosophical premise that literary works are intrinsically connected to society. Literature is not an autonomous artifact but a cultural product shaped by and for the society that produces it. According to Wellek and Warren (1965), this connection stems from several key factors: (1) literary works are created by authors, (2) authors are themselves members of society, (3) they draw from the cultural resources available within society, and (4) literary products are eventually received and interpreted by the community.

The sociology of literature examines the reciprocal relationship between literature and its sociocultural context. Literary texts, including oral literature such as legends, are imbued with life values—ethical, religious, social, and philosophical—that serve as guides for

human conduct. These values are reflected in themes concerning the nature of life, labor, interpersonal relationships, human-nature relations, and the divine (Damono, 1984).

According to Swingewood (2008), literary works are embedded in social and cultural systems and thus cannot be fully understood in isolation. He argues that excessive focus on textual structure can detach a work from its actual social function. Instead, a sociological analysis enables a comprehensive understanding of how literature reflects and shapes cultural values, collective beliefs, and social behavior. This is especially relevant in oral traditions, where the function of storytelling is both didactic and spiritual.

Research Gap and Novelty

While studies on Timorese oral literature have generally addressed myth and folklore from ethnographic or linguistic perspectives, there is limited scholarly investigation focusing on the religious values embedded in local legends, particularly the legend of *Uis Neon Jali* in Timau Village, Kupang Regency. This research fills that gap by applying a sociological approach to literature, aiming to uncover the religious and moral worldviews reflected in the legend.

The novelty of this study lies in its contextual reading of religious values within a living oral tradition, demonstrating how these values continue to influence agricultural rituals, communal beliefs, and social cohesion in the Timau community. This offers fresh insight into the role of legends as carriers of indigenous knowledge and belief systems.

Oral Literature as Cultural Expression

Oral literature refers to verbal expressions that are passed down across generations through spoken word, encompassing myths, legends, proverbs, and ritual speeches. Hutomo (1983) defines oral literature as the cultural expression of a community that is transmitted orally and reflects the values held by that speech community. He further classifies oral literature into four types: (a) narrative-based, (b) non-narrative patterned texts, (c) non-narrative formulaic expressions, and (d) behavioral or performative material such as drama (Hutomo, 1991).

Legends are considered a narrative-based oral literary form. Suhendra (1995) describes legends as hybrid texts that combine historical elements with mythic imagination. Although their historical accuracy may be disputed, they are deeply believed by the community and often define their worldview. Mulyono (1988) further asserts that legends are folk tales linked to natural or historical events, often containing sacred or supernatural elements.

Harold and Brufann (in Djajanegara, 1984) categorize legends into: Supernatural legends involving miraculous or mystical occurrences; Personal legends – centered on historical or revered figures; Local legends – explaining the origins of places or natural phenomena.

The legend of *Uis Neon Jali* may be classified as both a local and supernatural legend, given its narrative of a divine figure who interacts with the land and continues to be invoked in ritual practices.

Concept and Types of Values

In literary studies, values are central to interpretation. Wellek and Warren (1965) affirm that literature arises from value-laden reflections, making values the foundation of literary creation. Poerwadarminta (2003) defines values as traits or elements that are considered important or useful for humanity. Soelaiman (1991) expands this by identifying values as encompassing moral judgments, feelings of preference, and social usefulness in human interactions.

Koentjaraningrat (1974) emphasizes that cultural values are underlying principles guiding human behavior, including religious beliefs, ethical norms, and attitudes toward life and the cosmos. In traditional societies, these values are often expressed through rituals, expressions, proverbs, and oral narratives.

In this context, the legend of Uis Neon Jali serves as a repository of religious and cultural values, especially relating to human-divine relationships, nature reverence, and communal identity. The legend reflects a worldview wherein supernatural forces guide agricultural success and social harmony.

Classification of Values

According to Pamungkas (2021), there are four major types of spiritual values: Religious values – rooted in belief systems and sacred doctrines; Aesthetic values – related to beauty and artistic expression; Moral values – concerning notions of right and wrong in behavior; Empirical values – based on logic and observable phenomena. Further classification by Abdullah & Aftab (2022) includes: Personal values – internal convictions guiding individual behavior; Social values – norms governing interaction within the community; Unity values – fostering cohesion and solidarity; Cooperation values – encouraging collaboration; Peace values – promoting harmony and conflict resolution.

These classifications provide an analytical framework to identify and interpret the values embedded in the legend of Uis Neon Jali, particularly those with religious significance and relevance to communal life.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a **qualitative descriptive method**, a research approach designed to provide a systematic, factual, and accurate depiction of phenomena, characteristics, and interrelations as they exist in the present context. As Sanga (2008:4) defines, descriptive research aims to produce detailed portrayals or “pictures” of a social setting, group, object, or system of ideas to gain a deeper understanding of its current status. The **qualitative approach**, as explained by Bogdan and Taylor (in Aminuddin, 1990:15), is a form of research that generates **descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words** derived from observed behavior or lived experience. Kirk and Miller (in Moleong, 2000:3) further define qualitative research as a tradition in social sciences that emphasizes **naturalistic inquiry**, focusing on the observation of people within their cultural context and using their own terms and language.

In the context of this study, the **qualitative descriptive method is used to explore the religious values embedded in the legend of Uis Neon Jali**, as narrated and practiced by the people of Timau Village. This approach is deemed appropriate because it allows the researcher to interpret the social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of oral traditions through a narrative and interpretive lens.

While previous research has documented folklore and oral traditions in Timor (Hutomo, 1991; Suhendra, 1995), few studies have specifically analyzed the **religious values conveyed through local legends** using a qualitative descriptive method. This study fills that gap by offering an **in-depth narrative analysis** of the legend of Uis Neon Jali based on **local oral sources** and contextual ethnographic observation.

This research lies in its methodical **translation and interpretation of oral texts into written form**, followed by an analysis of their religious meanings. It captures **living cultural heritage** through first-hand fieldwork, thereby contributing to both the **documentation and cultural preservation** of indigenous knowledge systems.

The data in this study consist of **primary and secondary sources**: **Primary Data**: Derived from oral accounts, including direct interviews, verbal expressions, and ritual narratives told by local elders and cultural informants in Timau Village. **Secondary Data**: Supporting documentation in the form of photos, written materials, previous research findings, and field notes. The following methods are used to collect data: **Interviews**: Conducted with key informants, particularly elders, cultural leaders, or individuals directly involved in preserving and narrating the legend of *Uis Neon Jali*. **Recording**: Oral accounts of the legend are audio-recorded to ensure accuracy and authenticity. **Documentation**: Photographic evidence and relevant artifacts are collected to contextualize the research. **Data triangulation** is conducted by comparing accounts from different informants to test the validity of the information obtained. **Observation**: Direct observation is carried out at the research site to examine rituals and practices associated with the legend, enhancing the contextual analysis. Once the data are collected, the following steps are taken to process and analyze them: transcription, translation, analysis. The translated text, along with interview results and field observations, is subjected to thematic content analysis. Themes related to religious, moral, and social values are identified and interpreted in light of the research problem. This analysis is conducted in line with the framework of sociology of literature, enabling the researcher to uncover how the legend functions as a vessel of religious values in the local cultural context.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Timau village is located in amfoang barat laut district kupang regency, the geographical location of timau village is as follows: the north is bordered by the bonpo river the south is bordered is bordered by faumes village and saukibe village. the west is bordered by saukibe village, timau village has population of 602 people, 836 men and 766 woman. Most of the people work as farmers and a small number who work as civil servants (PNS) and self employed. The religion adopted by the Timau community is protestant christianity.

In timau village there are is a large stone with footprints on it. The stone is round with a diameter of 3 meters and a height of 1.6 meters. The top of the dawan people, especially timau, the stone is not just a stone has long been called uisneon jali which means becoming God. Thus, the origin of the footprint incident developed and interesting story lived in the community which they called uisneon jali which means becoming God. Based on the characteristic of the story namely the story of a large stone and the name of the place, this story is classified or called a legend.

The values contained in the legend of *Uisneon Jali* are religious values and social values

Religious values

Religious values can be described as at thought patterns and behaviour patterns that reflect the religious values contained in the legend of uisneon jali. This study leads the disclosure of community beliefs about the influence of supernatural powers that underlie the facts that actually occur in the timau village community.

Social values

Social values reflected in the legend of *Uisneon Jali* include the importance of community cooperation, mutual respect, and collective rituals. In the story, the people work together during farming seasons—clearing land, planting, and harvesting—while invoking the name of *Uisneon Jali* in communal prayers. This shows a strong sense of solidarity and interdependence among villagers.

Furthermore, the tradition of reciting ritual utterances together emphasizes the role of unity in upholding cultural identity. According to Sibarani (2015), social values in local traditions are often expressed through shared responsibilities, mutual assistance and maintaining harmony within the community. These aspects are seen clearly in the way the Timau community honors *Uisneon Jali* not individually, but as a collective.

Thus, the legend does not only carry religious teachings but also reinforces the community's commitment to social values such as cooperation, togetherness, and respect for ancestral customs.

Synopsis of the Legend of *Uisneon Jali*

*An bi batan unun uisneon jali onle mansian anaek
anaek an monin bi pahpinan le faijan unun*

“Long ago, god took the form of a giant-like human who walked the earth in ancient times”.

mansian anaek in be'in anaek in su

“A giant of a man, he possessed immense strength- holding up the sky and crading the earth. As God in human form, he created the havens and the earth”.

Bi tab'uges in loi paha pinan in hae, Na seka

*neuin hanun bian an bi tabu na an jali nai nunus
an bi bale-bale an bi tabu nan in nato' natuin in
su neno an bi na ulan nok akum kan sanuf an bi
paha'pinan, an be na am nahas anae leuf*

“At one time, he lifted the world with his mighty feet, and as his shoulders shifted, earthquakes struck everywhere. In his anger, he raised the sky high, causing rain and dew to stop falling to the earth-and in that moment, famine spread severly the land”.

*amenat ma amates an jail an bi bale-bale bi
tabu uisneon jali namnah Bi-fel-bi fel Le na ab
kan honi natuin uisneon jali an totem nahat*

“Sickness and death were everywhere. When God grew hungry, pregnant women could no longer give birth-nothing could happen until he was fed”.

*leka uisneon jali namsen nok in nekan namlil
am nahat an bi pahpinan an hoe, mansian an ka'i
am nahat anaek-anaek ale muit-muit nahoin oke-oke
le bijael keso an moebijael enaf*

“

*an bi tabu uisneon jali an hao mui fuij an bi
tabu nan an saun an bi bale-bale*

“In that moment, the almighty God fed the wild aimals, and they roamed freely, appearing everywhere across the land”.

*bi tabu nan aseoktin naseka haena ne'u nok
alij nok le oni-oni an tain bi le haug-haug an bi tabu*

“At the time, hunters switched their steps-left became right and right became left-while swarms of bees began to nest in the trees”.

uisneon jali Na nukLof Funan An met Aobia

“When the almighty god is in sorrow, a lunar ecplise will occur”.

bi tabu nan uisneon jail in monit he nam sop ge

“At the time, the life of the almighty God was nearing its end”.

bi tabu na an fain neu in balan le hit ka tahine

At the moment, he was preparing to return to a place unknown to all.

*mes in kan nao fe uisneon jali nabelak nain
in haen nobin es fatu naek ki tunan, neo
tog hen fua in hae nobin masi
le in katitefaan bi pah pinan*

“Before he departed, the almighty god left a footprint on a great stone, so that the people would continue to worship him even though his form no longer walked the earth”.

*nokle in haen in an moetog an nao
henfua an bi lein haen nobin hen toti
berkat on lehen moe lele, ai hen sen, hen
kai nok hen toit ulan*

“Because of this footprint, people began to worship at its site, seeking help and blessings whenever they cleared their fields, during planting and harvest seasons, and when praying for rain”.

in na molok nak on i

“He speaks like this”:

1. *Amolok le hen moe lele* (tuturan saat membersihkan ladang/speech when cleaning the field)

*uisneon jail, am baban kai Musona kai bale
he haim am etu mnahat nok am mninut, he
haim ha'o hai aom hai taum*

“Almighty God, please help us prepare a place to clear the land, so we may find food and drink to nourish our bodies and souls”.

2. *Amolok le hen hainiki lele lait hen sen* (tuturan saat ladang sudah disiapkan/speech when the field has been prepared for planting)

*Uisneon jail am hanik afu nai jan haug nonoh
hen senam bebin pen fini aen fini hen mainik
hen monim na tol nok asluat he neka napen
maputu an bi lehai lele*

“Almighty God, please cool the fields, the trees, and the rattan, so we may plant corn, rice, tubers, legumes, and vegetables. Keep the heat and scorching sun away, so that all we plant may grow in abundance”.

3. *Amolok le han toti ulan* (tuturan pada saat minta hujan/speech when asking for rain)

*Uisneon jail am baban kai musanut man kai ulan
hen poin nan kaile hai senat sin hen oe ten*

“Almighty God please send down the rain to water our crops, so they may grow strong and thrive”.

4. *Amolok le hen ka'i na lal je* (tuturan pada saat selesai panen/speech at the end of harvest)

*Uisneon jali haim ka'i milal jen es hai
im neo ko hem sakoi mam toit
makasi neo ko*

“Almighty God, we have completed our harvest, and we come with heartfelt thanks”.

*haen nobin es ne kuan Besinapit, Desa Timau, Kecamatan
Amfoang Barat Laut Kabupaten Kupang talantia tabu i*

“Footprints on a rock are found in *Besinapit* village, Desa Timau, Kecamatan Amfoang Barat Laut, Kabupaten Kupang until now.

*haen nobin le an bi fatu tunan tog timau sin
fe an fua leka le tabu i on le hen na pai lele
hen sen nok an toit ulan*

“The footprint on the stone is still revered as a sacred site by the local people during every harvest and planting season, where the pray for rain-even to this day”.

Value

According to Abdullah value refers to concept that hold to individual or members of the group as a collective pile of something that is described and have influence on the selecting methods well as act of some alternative purpose. Value in this case in concluded something that society collective and individual personalities.

The values contained in legend of uisneon jali are as follow:

1. Personal value

*Uisneon jail, am baban kai Musona kai bale
he haim am etu mnahat nok am mninut, he
haim ha'o hai aom hai taum*

“Almighty God, please help us prepare a place to clear the land, so we may find food and drink to nourish our bodies and souls”;

This sentence reflects an individuals hope and believe in fulfilling independently.

2. Social value

Uisneon jail am hanik afu nai jan haug nonoh
Hen Senam bebin Pen fini Aen fini Hen Mainik
hen monim na tol nok asluat he neka napen
maputu an bi lehai lele

“Almighty God, please cool the fields, the trees, and the rattan, so we may plant corn, rice, tubers, legumes, and vegetables. Keep the heat and scorching sun away, so that all we plant may grow in abundance”.

The main focus is on agricultural results that benefit the group or community .

Uisneon jail am baban kai musanut man kai ulan
hen poin nan kaile hai senat sin hen oe ten

“Almighty God please send down the rain to water our crops, so they may grow strong and thrive.”

The request for rain to nourish crops has a collective impact on the farming community.

Unity value

Uisneon jali haim ka'i milal jen es hai
im neo ko hem sakoi mam toit makasi neo ko

“Almighty God, we have completed our harvest, and we come with heartfelt thanks”.

Expressing gratitude after harvest reflects shared success and group harmony

In the ritual of clearing the fields, each time a ceremony is performed at the footprint of uisneon jali, the people of Timau gather in full attendance, each bringing a pig. The pig is slaughtered and its blood is collected in a container. Then, a small amount of the blood is dripped onto the footprint of uisneon jali, after which the traditional leader recites a chant.

The blood is then mixed with water so that it can be evenly distributed among the community members who participate in the ritual. It is sprinkled on their fields as a source of strength from uisneon jali, to protect them from wild animals while clearing the land. After the ritual, they slaughter and cook the pig then share a communal meal on the stone where uisneon jali's footprint remains.

Speech when the fields is prepared every time a ritual is carried out the footprints of the uisneon jali, the community comes in full bringing a pig. The pig is killed and its blood is collected in a container. A little blood is dripped onto the footprints of the uisneon jali then

blood is mixed with water so that it can be distributed evenly to the people who take part in the ritual, to be sprinkled on their corn and rice seeds as the power of the uisneon jali so that plants are protected from all pests. After carrying out the ritual, they cut and cook the pork then they eat together on the stone that was the footprint of the uisneon jali. And during the rain invoking ritual each time it is performed at the footprint of in uisneon jali, the people bring a pig. After the pig is slaughtered its blood is poured onto the footprint of uisneon jali, in hopes that rain will fall to help fertilize the crops that have been planted. The people of timau, in the amfoang barat laut sub-district kupang regency are farmers who still believe in the legend of uisneon jali. The timau community gathers in full, bringing a pig which is then slaughtered and its blood is poured on the footprints of uisneon jali as an expression of gratitude to him.

CONCLUSION

The legend of *Uisneon Jali* is more than just a story—it is a living tradition that sustains religious, social, and agricultural practices in Timau Village. The belief in a divine being who once walked the earth and left a sacred footprint continues to guide rituals, promote unity, and reinforce cultural identity. These practices, rooted in local wisdom, embody a profound interconnection between spirituality and everyday life. The study illustrates how folklore can serve as a medium for understanding cultural resilience, religious values, and communal cooperation. It also emphasizes the importance of preserving such traditions as part of Indonesia's intangible cultural heritage.

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