



## IDENTIFYING THE MYTH OF THE BANYAN TREE CIRCULATING IN THE COMMUNITY

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### ABSTRACT

Banyan (*Ficus Benjamina l.*) Is a type of tree that is found in Indonesia. Banyan tree grows with hanging roots that grow bigger and bigger. This paper identifies the air content around the banyan tree (*Ficus Benjamina l.*). The results of observations show that there are several compounds contained in the banyan tree. In the midst of the public circulated rumors that say that many mystical things that make the banyan tree often sacred and feared. One of the rumors circulating is not being able to sleep under a banyan tree because it could die. The conclusion of this observation is that the public's knowledge is correct, that the prohibition of sleep under the Banyan tree can cause fatal consequences, namely death. It's just that people consider it related to mystical things associated with the existence of supernatural beings. Apparently the assumption was wrong after being studied scientifically. These observations reveal that the banyan tree's hanging roots produce CO<sub>2</sub> gas which is toxic to the human body. If the CO<sub>2</sub> gas is inhaled by humans and then mixed with the bloodstream, the blood hemoglobin can bind more strongly with CO<sub>2</sub> and is toxic. Blood flow will flow to the brain and interfere with the work of the brain, so the fatal result that can occur is death.

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### INTRODUCTION

One influence that arises in the community is the rumor that considers certain sacred places or trees as something that must be protected and saved. The form of this

assumption varies in each traditional society in a particular area. The form of respect for nature is shown by some people who consider the banyan tree (*Ficus benjamina linn.*) To be a haunted tree, a sacred tree, a sacred tree, and a tree of life. One of the

rumors circulating is the prohibition of sleep at night under the Banyan tree. That is because of an incident which caused the death of the person who slept under the Banyan tree

Banyan Tree (*Ficus benjamina* linn.) Is one type of plant that is often found in various parts of Indonesia. Banyan Tree which is a native plant of Southeast Asia, including from Indonesia. These banyan trees are widely planted as decorative plants in public facilities such as the Minangkabau traditional house, the Rumah Gadang, the town square, public squares, and road shading (Hayne 1987, Bauer & Speck 2012). *Ficus benjamina* linn is one of the plants of the Moraceae family which is easy to grow in various land conditions including dry land. The growth of the banyan tree can reach a height of up to 40-50 m with a trunk diameter reaching 100-190 cm. veneklaas et al. (2002) states that banyan trees including fast-growing plants with a growth rate of 65 mg-1 / day.

For the people of West Sumatra Minang Beringin tree (*Ficus benjamina* linn.) Has its own meaning and role in the layout of the gadang house in West Sumatra. In the community's opinion woody trees such as the Banyan Tree (*Ficus benjamina* linn) Function as a protective plant to make the air around the house cool gadang. However, the assumption about the rumors that have spread is still believed by some people.

Banyan (*Ficus* spp.) Is a species that has a very high ecological value, its role in the natural karst area and which has been heavily interfered with by humans. The characteristic of *Ficus*'s growing ability as an epiphytic, semi-epiphytic plant and independent tree allows this plant to have a

very old age, even in some places it can live for hundreds of years. The *Ficus* epiphytes group usually lives on other tree trunks and eventually kills the host tree. Semi-epiphytes initially lived in a ride but later their roots could reach the ground and they could photosynthesize themselves, whereas the *Ficus* spp species, which included trees, could live directly without intermediaries between host trees. (Astika, 2003).

Economically, wood from the *Ficus* tree is included in low durability (class IV) and low strength class so that it cannot be used directly for tools. This is different when *Ficus* is still alive. *Ficus* in the form of a tree can reach 35 meters high with a very wide canopy and has a lot of fruit so this banyan species is known as a habitat for many birds, reptiles, insects and mammals (Wirdateti dan Dahrudin, 2008; Suwarno, 2006; Harisson, 2005).

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this observation is to identify the air content around the banyan tree and the ability of the banyan (*Ficus benjamina* linn.) To reduce pollutants in the air in an effort to mitigate air pollution, and public knowledge about banyan (*Ficus Benjamina* linn.). This matter which was observed included; the existence of a banyan from the perspective of traditional society is not the existence of a banyan which is influenced by natural factors and mitigation that is to overcome or overcome pollutants in the air.

## METHOD

Data was collected through interviews conducted on 28 September 2019 dengan narasumber which is a tour guide Rumah Gadang located in Pusat Dokumentasi dan Informasi Kebudayaan Minangkabau dan Pak Datuak who sell around the Rumah Gadang. The tools and materials used in the interview are video and voice recording

devices in the form of an Android mobile phone, and several lattices as interview material. Sources or informants were taken based on the tour guide and Pak Datuak in the observation area. The interview lattice is used as a guide so that the interviews conducted are directed, some interview participants have the task of asking questions and some are tasked with recording the interview process as evidence and attachments to the report. After the data is collected, a recapitulation is carried out and then an analysis of the results of the interviews has been obtained. Some indicators in this interview are the level of community knowledge that develops in the daily life of the resource person on the myth of the Banyan tree circulating in the community.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION



**Figure 1.** *Ficus benjamina* L.

Latin name : *Ficus benjamina* L.  
Location : Pusat Dokumentasi dan Informasi Kebudayaan Minangkabau (PDIKM), Padang Panjang, Sumatera Barat

### **Community knowledge**

Banyan tree has a trunk that grows tall and has many branches and functions as a shade tree

### **Description**

According to the tour guide and pack of datuak interviewed, the Banyan tree in PDIKM does not have supernatural myths. He thinks that the banyan tree planted in PDIKM is intended as a shade to make the air around the gadang house cool because it has broad branches and hanging roots.

Based on observations and interviews with tour guides and traders who are at location Pusat Dokumentasi dan Informasi Kebudayaan Minangkabau (PDIKM) Sumatera Barat information is obtained that the Banyan tree, which is usually around the Minangkabau traditional house, the Gadang house is only a shade tree. This is because the banyan tree has a trunk that grows tall and has many branches. A shade plant is a tree-shaped plant with a branching height of more than 2 meters and can provide shade and a barrier to sunlight.

Observations made at PDIKM aim to see and get firsthand information on how people think or place managers about banyan trees that are there. In PDIKM there is 1 large banyan tree on the left side of the gadang house yard. This banyan tree is very large with its distinctive characteristic, which is very large and very lush hanging roots. The hanging root that comes from the branch of the banyan tree trunk has a diameter that varies depending on the size and age of the banyan tree. A small hanging root will grow so that its diameter becomes larger and covers the main tree. However, the banyan tree in PDIKM does not yet have a very large hanging root, there is only a small diameter diameter hanging acres. When under this banyan tree the air will feel so cool because the hanging roots of the banyan tree produce oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>) so that the air around this tree will feel very cool.

Regarding the rumors circulating in the community was also asked to the manager of the place. According to him, the Banyan Tree in PDIKM does not have mystical rumors, it's just that rumors circulating in the community depend on the trust of the community itself. Whereas the existence of the banyan tree around the gadang house only serves as a protector, air conditioning and as a shelter. Banyan tree itself is a type of large tree that has very lush leaves, so it is very suitable and is also often used as a shade tree, because of its size

The crown is very big. In addition, the Banyan Tree is also very closely related to the myths of the Indonesian people, especially in the supernatural world. So of course the banyan tree is very attached to Indonesian culture. Another unique feature of the Banyan Tree is the hanging root part. The hanging roots of the banyan tree are long roots that grow on the crown and hang. Although often referred to as a root, but actually the types of hanging roots have different definitions from roots that are in the soil. Banyan tree itself still has roots that are in the ground to support the weight of the tree. Hanging roots have a very important function in the process of respiration, aka breathing in the process of photosynthesis. The hanging root found in the banyan tree is a type of respiratory root, so the hanging root is an important part of the banyan tree which helps the banyan tree carry out the process of respiration alias breathing. Besides hanging roots in the Banyan Tree also has the same function as roots in the soil, which is to absorb water and also CO<sub>2</sub> substances in the air, for the benefit of the process and respiration cycle of the Banyan Tree. Banyan Tree Root can function as a strap.

During the day, the tree produces oxygen so it is very beneficial for the body. During the

day, the tree uses sunlight as energy to carry out photosynthesis. In addition, trees need carbon dioxide and water as ingredients in cooking food so they can produce oxygen. That is why during the day, being under a tree feels cool and fresh. At night the trees no longer carry out photosynthesis but respiration. In the process of respiration, trees need oxygen as material to produce carbon dioxide and water. So that at night, trees no longer produce oxygen but carbon dioxide. Tree respiration at night is what makes us not allowed to sleep under the tree at night.

Respiration is a biological process, in which oxygen is absorbed to be used in the combustion process (oxidative) which produces energy followed by expenditure of residual combustion in the form of carbon dioxide gas and water. If carbon dioxide is inhaled and enters the body until it is mixed with the bloodstream, hemoglobin in the blood will bind more strongly with carbon dioxide than oxygen. Hemoglobin and carbon dioxide bind will act as poisons in the body. These poisons will flow to the brain and will eventually disrupt the workings of the brain. Therefore, to avoid things that are not cold, you should avoid taking shelter, playing, or sleeping under a tree at night.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on observations made at the Gadang House location in the Minangkabau Cultural Documentation and Information Center in Padang Panjang, West Sumatra regarding the banyan tree, the community uses the banyan tree as a shade tree because it has lush leaves that produce oxygen so the air becomes cool and widening twigs. so that it can become a shelter. However, the banyan tree is still often considered sacred because of the myths that circulate in the community,

one of which if sleeping under a banyan tree can cause death because there are disturbing supernatural beings. However, this is not appropriate because after being studied scientifically, the prohibition of not sleeping under a banyan tree is not because there are waiters / spirits, but because the banyan tree produces carbon dioxide at night for its respiration process, where the respiration process produces CO<sub>2</sub> which if inhaled by the body the CO<sub>2</sub> will be toxic to the body and if it reaches the brain and interferes with the workings of the brain so that it can be fatal and cause death.

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