

# The Eduk Motif in Faturika Weaving: Symbolizing Traditional Leadership Through the Fourth Principle of Pancasila

Antonius Bere <sup>1\*</sup>, Selsus Terselly Djese <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Sinar Pancasila, Indonesia; email: [soelerekiak@gmail.com](mailto:soelerekiak@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan, Riset dan Inovasi Daerah Provinsi NTT, Indonesia

\* Corresponding Author: [soelerekiak@gmail.com](mailto:soelerekiak@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** Woven textiles are cultural artifacts imbued with rich symbolism and meaning. Among the values they embody are ethical principles that portray the noble character of an ideal leader. In Indonesia's contemporary socio-political landscape, however, leadership has been challenged by persistent problems, including corruption, abuse of power, and arbitrary governance, as reflected in numerous cases involving public officials. This study explores the cultural dimension of leadership by examining the symbolism and meaning of the Eduk motif in order to rediscover the noble values inherited from ancestors and embedded in cultural leadership artifacts, particularly the Eduk motif found in the woven textiles of Faturika, Belu Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia. Employing a qualitative interpretive approach, the study reveals that the Eduk motif embodies the virtues of leadership through its symbolic representation of the antlion and the Timor python. These leadership values converge with the Fourth Principle of Pancasila, particularly the principle of wisdom in deliberation and representation. The findings suggest that the ethical values embedded in the educational motif can serve as a cultural foundation for strengthening the moral character of leaders at both the local and national levels.

**Keywords:** Cultural Symbolism; Educate Motifs; Ethical Leadership; Faturika; Traditional Leadership.

## 1. Background

Woven fabrics are cultural documents and archives of a tribe's collective knowledge. Hoopen (2021) views them as documents containing many stories. Woven fabric motifs can be found in diverse contexts. Some stories tell of complex human relationships, mystical and magical powers, tribal history, even stories about local government politics, and other stories about traditional traditions. Through these stories, weavers embed the tribe's collective symbols and meanings as cultural documents.

Woven cloth was once a sign of maturity. In the past, a woman could not marry if she could not weave, as Barnes (1994) found in Lembata, and Timo (2005) and Hoopen (2021) found on Timor Island. Woven cloth also served as a sign of social status. On Alor Island, the raja motif was used only for the royal class. Upon death, the bodies of the kings had to be wrapped in woven cloth with the raja motif; no other motifs were permitted (McIntosh & Peni, 2020). In the Malacca region of Timor Island, as explained by Asa & Sae (2021), *Tais Marobo* is only used for sacred ceremonies in traditional houses. One of these is the rain-seeking ceremony. The red color of *Tais Marobo* is not merely aesthetic. This color is a symbol of nature. It is like the color of blazing lightning. Red symbolizes human closeness to nature, which is blazing like lightning.

Empirically, woven cloth, a symbol with various meanings, is woven for subsistence purposes. Woven cloth is a necessity for clothing and also material in cultural activities, especially weddings and funerals (see Susilo, et.al., 2020; Barrkman, 2014; 2006; Nuban Timo, 2007:8; Barnes, 1994, 1989; Bennett, 1998; Croese, 1995; Orinbao, 1992). In development, when changes occurred due to the entry of the monetary economic system. Woven cloth is no longer woven for personal consumption, but also for commercial purposes. In the past, foreign traders from China, Arabia, and colonialists began to engage in the woven cloth trade and made it as gifts for local rulers (Barrkman, 2009a; Billore & Hägerdal, 2019). On the island of Timor, through trade contacts, woven fabrics from outside the island were

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introduced and exchanged for honey, wax, and sandalwood. Some woven fabrics from Timor were also taken off the island as gifts to kings and nobles by Makassarese traders (Barrkman, 2009a; Hoopen, 2021) .

Here, woven fabrics began to come into contact with power. They shaped and became markers of powerful identities. Many motifs were woven by nobles and kings to serve as a symbol of identity and legitimacy of power (see Barrkman, 2009b; Forshee, 2001; McIntosh & Peni, 2020; Soelarto, 1977b).

Because of its association with power, this motif often tells the story of what it takes to become a king. Soelarto (1977a), for example, describes the Sumbanese noble motifs as representing the self-image and expectations of the people, who believe a king must be able to live in two worlds: in water and on land, like a shrimp, a crocodile, and a turtle. These animals are often woven into Sumbanese woven fabrics.

At this point, this study raises the symbolism and meaning of the Eduk motif commonly found in woven fabrics in the Faturika area. The Eduk motif in the past was a royal motif that could only be worn by a king. Therefore, there is a character of a king that can be obtained from exploring the meaning and symbolism of this motif. Faturika is one of the definitive villages located in the Raimanuk District, Belu Regency, Nusa Tenggara Province. The Eduk motif is one of the motifs found in the weaving tradition in the Faturika area and its surroundings. The problem raised in this study is how the symbolism and meaning of the Eduk motif in the weaving tradition in Faturika can reshape the noble character of a leader according to the fourth principle of Pancasila. The purpose of this study is to identify the symbolism and meaning of the Eduk motif as one way to contribute to reshaping the character of national leaders at the local and national levels .

To date, little research has been conducted to specifically and in-depth explore woven fabric motifs. Several important studies examining woven fabrics in the Timor Island region, such as those by Hoopen (2014, 2018, 2021) , do not specifically address the Eduk motif . Similarly, research conducted by Hamilton & Barrkman (2015) does not address the Eduk motif . Therefore, this study aims to contribute to this limitation.

## 2. Theoretical Study

Like a document in the form of an image, woven fabric and its motifs constitute a system of symbols and meanings. This system can be understood using several approaches. Koentjaraningrat (2015) sharply distinguishes the form of universal culture as a system of ideas and concepts, from the form of culture as a series of patterned human actions and activities, and from the form of culture as objects produced by human work itself. The first form of culture, culture is understood as a complex of ideas, concepts, values, norms and regulations. This form is the ideal form of culture or ideal culture. Because it is abstract, it cannot be touched or photographed. Because it is abstract, it exists within the minds of the people in whose culture it resides. It consists of ideas, concepts, and thought patterns that live together within a society and inspire that society. These ideas are interconnected within a cultural system .

The second form of culture is culture, which is a complex of patterned human activities and actions within society. This form of culture can be called a social system about or concerning the patterned actions of humans themselves. This social system consists of human activities that interact with each other at all times, always following certain patterns based on customary behavior. As a series of human activities within society, this social system is concrete in the sense that it can be observed and documented. In other words, this activity expresses or gives form to the ideas, concepts, or thought patterns that exist within the human mind.

form of culture is seen as objects created by humans. This form of culture is called physical culture because it is the totality of the physical results of human activity in society. It is very concrete in nature , namely in the form of objects that can be touched, seen, and documented .

The three forms of universal culture described above are closely related to one another, meaning they can be distinguished but not separated. Ideal culture or customs regulate and give meaning to human actions and works. Ideas and concepts, as well as human activities/works, produce physical objects. Furthermore, physical culture forms a specific living environment that often influences human behavior patterns and ways of thinking. In

other words, it can be said that when an idea or concept is activated into a certain form or shape, the idea gets its form.

Weaving is a human activity that expresses ideas or concepts in the form of signs, symbols, and emblems. Weaving begins with an idea or mindset maintained within a particular social group. To give form to that idea, humans engage in the act of weaving. Eventually, that idea or concept takes on a form. This form or shape is woven cloth or sarong. By combining weft and warp threads on a loom, humans have created meaning and value within the woven fabric in the form of symbols. Therefore, woven fabric is a tangible manifestation of a particular idea or concept.

### 3. Method

This study uses an interpretive qualitative approach to describe and elaborate on the focus of the study as it is in the field (Kothari, 2004) and to provide an interpretation of these conditions. The research method used is a field study method. The data collection process was carried out through in-depth interviews with weavers and traditional elders in Faturika. Data were obtained from research conducted in 2019 in Faturika Village, Raimanuk District, Belu Regency. The collected data were analyzed using data analysis techniques recommended by Brewer (2000). These techniques include data management stages; data coding, content analysis; qualitative descriptions, building data patterns, developing a classification system from open codes; and examining negative cases; exceptions that do not fit the analysis. The data were analyzed using a semiotic approach according to Andrew (2014).

### 4. Results And Discussion

In Faturika village and its surroundings, there are 3 types of eduk motifs known based on weaving techniques, namely fafoit eduk which is woven using the songket or fafoit technique, futus Eduk woven using the futus or ikat technique and Eduk sui woven using the embroidery or sui technique. The patterns of the 3 types of Eduk motifs can be seen in Figure 1.



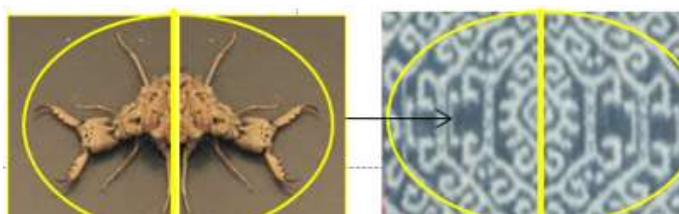
**Figure 1.** Fafoit Eduk motifs (left), Futus Eduk (center) and Eduk Sui (right).

*Source: Author's Documentation, 2019 and Research and Development Implementation Team of Bappelitbangda Belu Regency and NTT Province, 2019.*

In the weaving tradition of the Faturika region, the Eduk motif has several meanings, including ethical, historical, and ecological. This study focuses on the ethical meaning associated with the noble character of a leader. This meaning is found in the Eduk motif's form, which visualizes the Undur-Undur insect and the Timor python.

Eduk motif, according to an informant, is considered a form of artistic visualization of a type of ground insect; the mole cricket. In Tetun, this animal is called kuduku. The name eduk probably comes from the Tetun language term for this animal; kuduku, which has undergone a sound shift to become eduk. For Tetun people, the term eduk will be given as a mocking word for people who act like/ behave like a hermit crab.

In weaving techniques, there is a term known as the antagonistic dualism pattern or the opposite but twin pattern. Weaving patterns using this technique display objects in two opposing sides as if they were mirrored (cf. Sumardjo, 2010:150). An object is depicted in a motif that is in contrast to each other. This pattern can be found in the undur-undur painting technique as a motif known or named the eduk motif. This technique can be seen in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Antagonistic dualism pattern in educational motifs.

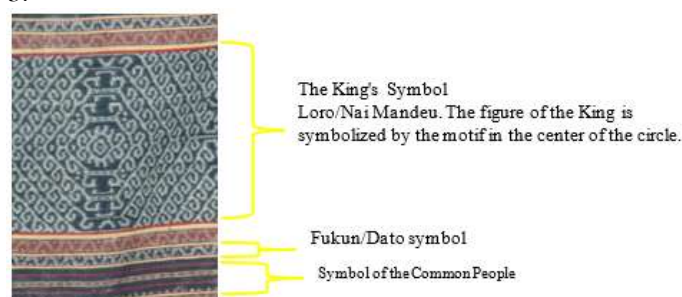
*Source: Analysis by the Author Team, 2019 and the Research and Development Implementation Team of Bappelitbangda, Belu Regency and NTT Province, 2019.*

The circle surrounding the mole cricket in the Eduk motif in the image Its shape is very similar to the earth traps often made by ant-like insects. These animals typically trap other insects, especially ants, by digging a hole in a spiral motion, eventually forming a funnel-like burrow into the ground. This funnel-shaped trap, if depicted in two dimensions, would form an endless circle, like the circle in the Eduk motif .

Eduk motif is also considered a royal motif, representing a king. The king is a figure of leadership within local leadership schemes. A king is considered a figure who embodies the image of the Almighty, possessing supernatural powers beyond all others, courageous, valiant, and intelligent, as well as the ability to conquer enemies.

According to informants, the Eduk motif, a symbol of the king, is present in the weaving as a unity with all the elements of the local leadership structure, along with the fukun / dato figures and the common people. As a unity in a piece of woven cloth, a king is in the center, surrounded or protected by other structural elements, and the common people are at the ends of the woven cloth, as the Eduk motif is the main motif surrounded by other smaller motifs as additional motifs.

In the social structure of the Tetun people in Belu Regency in general, as written by Seran (2007) , a kingdom (exemplified by the Fehalaran kingdom) consists of several fukun, uma manaran , or uma hun . Literally, these three terms respectively mean bamboo book segments, a named tribal house, and the main house or house of origin. Symbolically, these three terms can be understood as a clan or tribe or community of kinship. This community is formed by two things: blood ties or common descent from a founding ancestor of the uma and by marriage ties (marriage according to the paternal/patrilineal system). This clan is genealogical, primordial, and ethnocentric. This clan is then chaired or led by the oldest person called matas kawaik uma manaran who can also be titled dato or dato fukun or chairman of uma fukun . Above this uma leader figure is usually a king or Nai . The structural relationship between the two; nai and dato exist in a complex and intricate relationship. As conveyed by the informant, the symbol scheme of this structure can be seen in the futus eduk weave in figure 3.



**Figure 3.** Fakit Eduk and the symbols attached to it.

*Source: Author's Documentation, 2019 and Research and Development Implementation Team of Bappelitbangda Belu Regency and NTT Province, 2019.*

This visualization demonstrates that the Eduk motif woven cloth serves as a medium for transmitting the noble values inherited from our ancestors. In the social structure of the Faturika community, the Eduk motif is a royal motif. Therefore, this motif is exclusive. In the past, according to informants, only the royal family was allowed to use this motif. This exclusivity is determined by several reasons, one of which is the interpretive meaning of the undur-undur figure. The undur-undur is likened to an animal that embodies the noble character of a king or leader. According to informants, a king must continue to move forward, never retreat or give up, and be fearless. Antagonistically, this animal shows how a leader must build his or her own character. He or she must not give up easily. He or she must continue to move forward with confidence and with great precision, wisdom, prudence, and focus on goals. It is the opposite of the undur-undur's life character, which seems to always move backward.

On the other hand, the retreating step also serves as a philosophical lesson about the reflective and introspective process of evaluation. Occasionally, the journey forward needs to be complemented by a journey backward. The goal is to evaluate the entire journey that has been traveled. A leader requires evaluation and assessment of his or her journey of power. This is crucial for affirming or correcting future steps. He or she must not be closed to

evaluation; he or she must consider previous mistakes and past history to continually change for the better. Such noble leadership traits must be possessed by a king. He or she is not only fully oriented toward the future but also able to wisely and prudently continue to change based on past evaluations.

Furthermore, the accentuation of the Eduk motif as a king motif in Faturika village is uniquely rooted in a deep understanding of the ethology of the woodlice. Woodlice possess an instinctive ability to build nests. The woodlice's meticulous nest-building ability can also analogously serve as a reference for a leader. Woodlice nests are typically funnel-shaped. This nest-building process requires the woodlice's instinctive expertise and skills. A leader, in certain circumstances, is also required to act strategically by utilizing their intuition for the security of their region and the well-being of the community they lead. They must be able to design a mature regional governance strategy and regulations to ensure community stability. The Eduk motif reminds a leader that they must act in accordance with the woodlice's abilities.

Upon closer examination, this noble character aligns with the fourth principle of Pancasila, particularly the principle of Wisdom. In this context, according to Faturika local wisdom, a leader or king cannot exercise authoritarian leadership solely through physical strength, but rather through wisdom. This Wisdom character is symbolized by the Eduk motif. Wisdom is associated with correct understanding, discernment, intelligence, and the ability to make sound decisions.

Thus, the Eduk motif on this woven fabric serves as material evidence that the socio-political values of Pancasila concerning the character of wise and prudent leadership have long been upheld, idolized, respected, and practiced in the traditional state system of the Faturika people. This study concludes that the Eduk motif is a king motif that represents the traditional leadership philosophy based on the antagonistic nature of retreat. Leaders must advance, never give up with full calculation, precision, wisdom, or with full wisdom. This leadership value converges linearly with the principle of wisdom of the fourth principle of Pancasila. The value of noble leadership that legitimizes a king is measured, among other things, by his wisdom and prudence in exercising power. From this, it is clear that the substance of the fourth principle of Pancasila has indeed lived in the cultural value system of the Indonesian nation since ancient times, long before the formalization of the modern state system. One of these is in the material culture of the Faturika people of Belu Regency.

eduk motif, especially the futus eduk, is considered by informants to be a visualization of a snake coiled in an endless circle. Simply put, woven fabrics with the eduk motif as the main motif and its unity with additional decorative motifs around it demonstrate the artistic power and power of imagination of the weaver mothers in ancient times, which have been passed down to the present day. This motif inevitably shows the experiences of these mothers' encounters with their surroundings; other/previous weavers, the natural environment, whether animals or plants, and their personal spiritual experiences with the Supreme Being and His intermediaries (ancestors). One of these is an encounter with a snake.

Snakes are reptiles that live in abundance on the island of Timor and its surroundings. Hidayat (2014:13-16) presents several research results that conclude that there are at least 25 species of snakes in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), which live on land and in fresh water. Some of them are endemic species, for example the Timor Python or Python Timorensis. However, its existence on the island of Timor is still a matter of debate among experts. The Timor Python is still related to the Reticulated Python or Python Reticulatus which also lives on the island of Timor and is often mistakenly equated or called the Timor Python. The futus eduk woven motif, if looked at closely, has a similar pattern to the skin pattern of the reticulated python (Python Reticulatus). This can be seen in Figure 4.



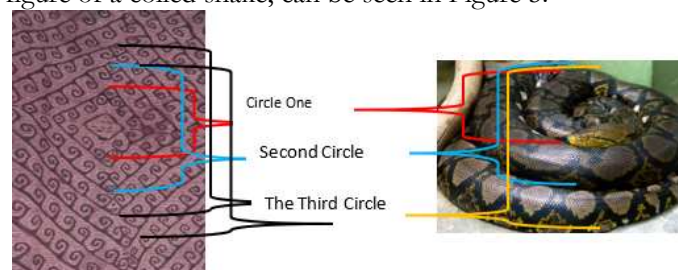
**Figure 4.** Timor Python or Python timorensis (left), Reticulated Python or Python Reticulatus (center), and the futus eduk motif inspired by a coiled snake (right).

*Source: Author's Documentation, 2019 and Research and Development Implementation Team of Bappelitbangda Belu Regency and NTT Province, 2019.*

Some people associate these two species of python with the name Likusaen. This snake, in stories, is depicted as possessing supernatural powers, wearing a flaming crown, and often described as being enormous. Therefore, the Likusaen is considered sacred. Francillon (1967) tells a little about the community's attitude towards this snake. According to him, the Tetun people in general, especially in the Fehan area, have a special treatment for snakes, especially pythons. They will remember the story of the Likusaen battle that occurred between Nai Wehali and Nai Rai Lor or Nai Likusaen when encountering a python. They also do not eat the meat of this snake, believing that they will experience certain diseases if they do.

These attitudes and actions may be ancient customs that continue to be repeated and passed down to the present day, although in this process of inheritance, this understanding may not be fully inherited, or may change or be replaced. In ancient understanding, animal figures are often considered to represent the presence of a protective spirit of a group of people or tribe. Several ancient traditions, such as those found by Hoopen (2021) and Hamilton & Barrkman (2015), illustrate that in the most traditional ancient life, people believed that the world consisted of real, visible entities and invisible spirits. These invisible spirits had greater power over human life. Often, these spirits were malevolent. Therefore, humans needed to protect themselves. The depiction of certain animal motifs on cloth, weaving, or carving on wood was an act of creating/presenting a protective spirit and giving it a new residence in the form of a motif on the cloth, weaving, or carving. By doing so, the actor the weaver, weaver, or carver placed themselves under the protection of the motif's spirit.

As briefly explained in the previous paragraphs, the personal experiences and inheritance of these weaving mothers in their contact with the natural environment are inseparable from the emergence of these woven motifs. The futus eduk motif woven into a piece of cloth may have emerged from these mothers' encounters with snakes in their daily lives. The snake, perhaps seen while they were gardening, was coiled around a tree. The snake's appearance was then given an artistic touch and expressed in woven threads that were then passed down from generation to generation. The circular pattern, analogous to and visualizing the figure of a coiled snake, can be seen in Figure 5.



**Figure 5.** Fafot Eduk with a circular pattern (left) and Python Kembang or Python Reticulatus in a circle (right)

*Source: Author's Documentation, 2019 and Research and Development Implementation Team of Bappelitbangda Belu Regency and NTT Province, 2019.*

The Timorese python, or flower python, is recreated in the Eduk motif by the Tetun people and surrounding communities living on the island of Timor and is called Likusaen. This snake is believed to have a crown that glows at night. The light from this crown symbolizes enlightenment, transparency, and the clarity of vision of a king or leader, guiding his people from the darkness of conflict or hardship. The light also signifies a leader's serenity and spiritual clarity.

In the oral tradition and mythology that developed on Timor Island as noted by Nordholt (1971) and Middelkoop (1959) The Likusaen snake is often depicted as a protector, a symbol of supreme power, or the embodiment of a king who possesses a radiant heirloom crown. It is always depicted as a large, crowned snake. Its crown is said to glow brightly. Physically, this snake is known for its scales, which emit an iridescent glow when exposed to light. As a result, this snake will appear to glow during the day when exposed to sunlight. This physical phenomenon then entered local mythological stories and experienced collective sacralization into a sacred figure with a crown of light on its head. This figure was then considered a figure of a king. The presence of this light became a religious magical legitimacy for the figure of the king. A king must be a figure who shines in the darkness of his kingdom. He must bring and give light to the darkness. This means he must be the solution to every problem in his kingdom.

In the mythology of Likusaen, this light emerges from a crown atop the king's head. The head is the center of all thoughts, ideas, and concepts. The radiant crown sits atop the head, meaning that light transcends the thoughts and concepts within the head. Therefore, in that light, there is wisdom that transcends and transcends thought, ideas, and concepts. Light is the synthesis of thought and feeling; therein reigns wisdom like a radiant crown. This wisdom is the foundation of a leader or king, who is fully responsible not only for leading but also for saving his people and kingdom, like light that constantly fights darkness.

## 5. Conclusion

For the Faturika indigenous people, woven cloth is more than just traditional clothing or an aesthetic commodity. The weavers use it as a medium to store, preserve, and transmit the community's collective memory. This memory is very rich because it contains many ideas, thoughts, and ancestral teachings. The Eduk motif has several meanings, one of which can be used as a mirror for character formation in national leaders in line with the fourth principle of Pancasila, especially the principle of Wisdom. The substance of the fourth principle of Pancasila, especially the principle of Wisdom, has indeed lived in the cultural value system of the Indonesian nation since ancient times, long before the formalization of the modern state system. One of these is in the material culture of the Faturika people of Belu Regency.

## Thank-You Note

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