

## ***Gagar Mayang* in the Wedding Ritual of the Javanese Ethnic Community in Nagan Raya**

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Submitted Date: 30 April 2026

Accepted Date: 29 May 2026

Published Date: 30 May 2026

### **Abstract**

This thesis will discuss about “*Gagar Mayang* in the Wedding Ritual of the Javanese Ethnic Community in Nagan Raya”. *Gagar Mayang* is one of the complements in the Javanese ethnic wedding ritual. The purpose of this study is to find out the history of *Gagar Mayang* in Nagan Raya, the Meaning and Value of *Gagar Mayang* in the Javanese ethnic wedding ritual in Nagan Raya, and the efforts of the Javanese Ethnic Community in Nagan Raya in preserving *Gagar Mayang*. The method used in this study is a Qualitative method using Observation, Interview and Documentation instruments. The data obtained are analyzed by means of data reduction, data display and verification (drawing conclusions). The results of this study indicate that the History of *Gagar Mayang* in Nagan Raya began with the migration of Javanese ethnic to Aceh, the meaning of *Gagar Mayang* in the wedding ritual is the acceptance of the groom by the bride and also by each family, the values contained in *Gagar Mayang* are socio-cultural values, economic values and artistic values. Efforts made by the Javanese ethnic community to preserve *Gagar Mayang* are carried out by *Gagar Mayang* craftsmen by passing on their skills to their children as successors.

**Keywords:** *Gagar Mayang, Ritual, Marriage, Javanese Ethnicity and Nagan Raya.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Aceh is a province in Indonesia located at the western tip of Sumatra Island. Generally, 12 ethnic groups inhabit the region, living side by side with all their distinctive characteristics, continuing to develop and preserve them for many years. The Javanese ethnic group that predominantly inhabits Aceh is the Acehnese, whose settlements are often found in coastal areas, both along the Langsa coast on the North-East Coast and the Trumon coast on the South-West Coast (Rahimah, 2018).

Various other ethnic groups also reside in Aceh, including the Gayo, who inhabit the highlands of Aceh Province, the Alas, Kluet, Singkil, Tamiang, Sieumeulu, and Aneuk Jamee (Manan, 2013). The Aneuk Jamee tribe generally lives and is spread along the West-South coast from Aceh Singkil Regency to Simeulu (Umar, 2006). Apart from the Aneuk Jamee tribe who are descendants of Minangkabau, there is also the Javanese tribe who are descendants of Java and inhabit several areas in Aceh Province, one of which is the Nagan Raya Regency area.

Nagan Raya is a regency in Aceh Province. It was split off from its parent regency, West Aceh Regency. Nagan Raya is approximately 287 km from the provincial capital of Aceh and approximately six hours from Banda Aceh (Jamaluddin, 2016). Just like the districts in Aceh in general, Nagan Raya is also rich in cultural diversity that can be seen from all aspects of the lives of its people at special times, for example in wedding ceremonies, circumcisions of the apostles and many others. Generally, this cultural diversity remains based on Islamic law, just like the culture of other Acehnese people (Indra, 2020).

The Nagan Raya region is one of many regions where customs and culture are highly valued in their social life. In general, the customs and culture of the Nagan Raya community are not much different from those of other regions on the west coast (Amsal, et al., 2019). However, due to its heterogeneous population, the culture of Nagan Raya differs from that of the surrounding west coast. One such difference is the customs and culture of the Javanese ethnic group, who have long resided in Nagan Raya.

The Javanese have been present in Nagan Raya for a long time. One of the reasons for their arrival was when PT Perkebunan Socfindo hired them as workers. The company brought them in because, at the time, PT Socfindo, located in Aceh, needed a large workforce, so they brought in workers from Java (Saputra, 2018). There are four sub-districts in Nagan Raya which are inhabited by ethnic Javanese, including Kuala, Kuala Pesisir, Tadu Raya and Darul Makmur sub-districts.

It is undeniable that the presence of the Javanese ethnic group in Nagan Raya has contributed to the richness and uniqueness of the region's cultural diversity. This is because the Javanese in Nagan Raya generally maintain Javanese customs and culture, preserving them so that they can grow and develop alongside local culture. Among the many Javanese cultural traditions still practiced and preserved, one is the use of *Kembar Mayang*, commonly known as *Gagar Mayang*, in Javanese wedding rituals in Nagan Raya.

From the explanation above, it is interesting to research *Gagar Mayang* as one of the complements of wedding rituals. This is very unique because previously many scientific papers in the form of journals and theses have raised *Gagar Mayang* in wedding rituals as a topic of discussion, but in Aceh itself, specifically in Nagan Raya Regency, researchers have never found it. In addition, researchers feel it is important to document it because as immigrants, of course, the Javanese ethnic group must continue to preserve *Gagar Mayang* in wedding rituals, so that their identity reflected through their cultures is not lost over time. For this reason, researchers want to know more about *Gagar Mayang* in Javanese ethnic wedding rituals in Nagan Raya, such as the history of *Gagar Mayang* in Nagan Raya, the meaning of *Gagar Mayang* in wedding rituals, the procedure for making *Gagar Mayang* and efforts to preserve it. Therefore, it will be entitled "*Gagar Mayang* in Javanese Ethnic Wedding Rituals in Nagan Raya".

## METHODS

The method used in this research is a qualitative method. Qualitative research is research that aims to understand phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perception, motivation, actions and others holistically, namely thinking comprehensively and considering all possibilities that can influence human behavior or a particular event, and by describing it in the form of words and language, in a certain context that is natural and by utilizing various natural methods (Manan, 2015).

The research method used in the title "*Gagar Mayang* in the Wedding Ritual of the Javanese Ethnic Community in Nagan Raya" is qualitative research, used in this study is a Qualitative method using Observation, Interview and Documentation instruments. The data obtained are analyzed by means of data reduction, data display and verification (drawing

conclusions) (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The location of this research is in Karang Anyar village, located in Darul Makmur District, Nagan Raya Regency, a village with a majority Javanese ethnic population. The object of this research is *Gagar Mayang* as one of the elements of Javanese culture that is still used and preserved in the lives of the Javanese ethnic community in Nagan Raya, specifically in wedding rituals.

The data collection technique in this research on the *Gagar Mayang* in Javanese Ethnic Wedding Rituals in Nagan Raya techniques are the most strategic step, because the main aim of the research is to obtain data that is true and complete (Hardani, et al., 2020). For this reason, in this research, the researcher will use instruments that include observation, interviews and documentation in data collection techniques, as well as using data analysis techniques as a complement. The next process is to conduct a data analysis process using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Manan, 2020). The final step in the research method of the *Gagar Mayang* in Javanese Ethnic Wedding Rituals in Nagan Raya is writing with provisions so that it can produce a scientific writing about the *Gagar Mayang* in the Wedding Ritual of the Javanese Ethnic Community in Nagan Raya.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. History and Development of *Gagar Mayang* in Nagan Raya

Around the beginning of the 20th century, the Dutch East Indies government launched a policy called *Estiche Politiek*, or what is commonly called ethical politics, applicable to all areas under Dutch East Indies control. This policy was created by the Dutch East Indies government as a policy of reciprocity. The Dutch East Indies government provided an introduction and education regarding the education system, modern agriculture and plantations, irrigation systems, building transportation facilities, and transmigrating residents from Java to Sumatra (Erwiyanto, 2017). During this migration, not only did the population of Java move, but also their customs and culture were brought to their new home in Aceh. The Javanese community in Aceh generally continues to use Javanese customs and culture as tools and guidelines for living, such as language and the implementation of sacred rituals such as weddings. One Javanese custom and culture that remains in use in wedding rituals is the use of *Gagar Mayang*.

*Gagar Mayang* is one of the complements of the Javanese ethnic wedding ritual which has been used for generations and still continues to this day, besides *Gagar Mayang* some circles also call it *Kembar Mayang*, according to Sidik Gandawarsito *Kembar Mayang* is:

*Kembar Mayang* is a kind of bouquet of yellow coconut leaves (young coconut leaves), in the form of mayang flowers (= areca nut flowers), several types of leaves, ivory coconuts and all of them are in the shape of a tree of life (tree of heaven) with a pineapple or banana flower (ontong, Java) as a crown on top. This symbolizes the tree of life and a tree that can provide everything one desires (Purwadi, 2005).

By the Javanese Ethnic Community in Nagan Raya, *Kembar Mayang* is called *Gagar Mayang*, and is used in one of the chains in wedding rituals. In Nagan Raya, *Gagar Mayang* began to be used along with the Javanese ethnic migration to Aceh which has been going on for decades.

### B. The Meaning and Value of *Gagar Mayang* in Javanese Ethnic Wedding Rituals in Nagan Raya

*Gagar Mayang* is one of the Javanese customs used by the Javanese ethnic community in wedding rituals in Nagan Raya, in the form of a flower bouquet that includes seven types of flowers, several carvings made from yellow coconut leaves, and a head with a banana shoot on top (Interview, 2021). *Gagar Mayang* signifies virginity for women and good

fortune for men. *Gagar Mayang* is like a person's tree of life, filled with prayers and good hopes.

### 1. Types of Mayang

There are three types *Mayang* which are known to the Javanese ethnic group in Nagan Raya include the following:

#### a. *Kembang Mayang*

*Kembang Mayang* is a single *Mayang* flower. *Kembang* in Indonesian means flower, while *Mayang* is the flower of the areca nut tree. *Kembang Mayang* is a single *Mayang* flower, called *Kembang Mayang* because it indicates someone who is not married.

#### b. *Gagar Mayang*

*Gagar Mayang*, *Mayang* is the deceased, and *Gagar* in Indonesian means "fallen or dead." This *Gagar Mayang* is used in the death rituals of the Javanese ethnic group in Nagan Raya (Interview, 2021). *Gagar Mayang* In death rituals, it can only be used if the deceased is still a virgin or *joko*. Unlike the *Gagar Mayang* used in wedding rituals, which consists of two, in death rituals, there is only one *Gagar Mayang*. After *Gagar Mayang* once the *Gagar Mayang* is ready, it will be redeemed by the deceased's family. The *Gagar Mayang* will then be carried by a member of the *Joko* family, parallel to and accompanying the coffin on its way to the cemetery. After the burial ceremony is complete, the *Gagar Mayang* will be placed directly on top of the gravestone.

#### c. *Kembar Mayang*

*Kembar Mayang* there are two *Mayang*, which is why they are called *Kembar Mayang*. These *Kembar Mayang* are used in wedding rituals by the Javanese people of Nagan Raya: one *Mayang* belongs to the groom and one *Mayang* belongs to the bride (Interview, 2021). There has been a shift in the local community's use of the term *Gagar Mayang*. The term *Gagar Mayang* was originally used for death rituals, while for wedding rituals it was called *Kembar Mayang*. However, because the pronunciation of *Gagar Mayang* is easier, local people use it as *Gagar Mayang* for both death and wedding rituals.

### 2. Elements of *Gagar Mayang*

Besides being called *Gagar Mayang*, the series of elements contained in *Gagar Mayang* is also called the *seven-shaped flower*, because it consists of seven types of leaves or plants. The meanings and functions of these seven elements include:

#### a. *Yellow Coconut Leaf*

Yellow coconut serves as the material used to form several of the carvings found on *Gagar Mayang*, such as the shape of birds, *pecut-pecutan*, *grasshoppers*, *kitiran*, *sempritan*, temple, *keris-keris* and *ketupat*. *Janur Kuning* means someone's wish, or a good desire from within a person.

#### b. *Pureng leaves*

Leaf *pureng* Functioning as an accessory that completes a series of *Gagar Mayang*, these leaves are usually stuck at the bottom of the *Gagar Mayang* it self.

#### c. *Andong leaves*

Leaf *horse-drawn carriage* also functions as an accessory and complement to a series of *Gagar Mayang*, *andong* leaves have the meaning of praying, prayers and good hopes, *andong* leaves are one of the elements that cannot be left out of a series of elements that form *Gagar Mayang*.

#### d. *Banyan leaves*

*Banyan* leaves are one of the elements that form *Gagar Mayang*, which means protection, shelter, or something that will protect.

e. Betel Nut Flower

Areca nut is one of the elements that must be present in a series of *Gagar Mayang*, this betel nut flower is then called *Mayang*. The betel nut used is an unblown betel nut, still in the shell, symbolizing a child who is still pure, indicating someone who is still a virgin or *joko*.

f. *Gedebok* Banana (Banana Stem) and Raja Banana Child

The plantain stem functions as a foundation or a place to attach a series of elements that form it *Gagar Mayang*, such as *leaves of seven shapes*, carvings of birds, diamonds and others. Meanwhile, the plantain baby will be inserted into the plantain stem as a peak that rises above *Gagar Mayang*. The stem and child of this plantain mean honor.

3. Carvings and Their Meanings in *Gagar Mayang*

There are several forms of deep carvings *Gagar Mayang* among them are as follows:

- a. Keris-kerisan means a form of self-protection
- b. *Pecot-pecotan*, means as a self-motivator in facing life's obstacles, for example, when we are facing a problem, we have to encourage ourselves to get up again and be enthusiastic.
- c. Birds and grasshoppers have the meaning of searching for sustenance, just as birds and grasshoppers always fly to look for food, so too with humans, wherever they go, one of their main goals is to look for work, to look for sustenance.
- d. Ketupat, means a house, a place for shelter, besides that it also means a storage container, for example when someone gets wages or a salary then the money will be saved to be used later when needed.
- e. *Sempritan*, means hospitality, as social beings of course as humans we must greet each other, not just stay silent, but must interact with the surrounding environment.
- f. *Kitiran*, means the direction of the wind.
- g. Temples, temples are places of worship for Hindus, in the *Gagar Mayang* carvings used by ethnic Javanese in Nagan Raya, temple carvings only serve as a complement and decoration. In the wedding ritual, *Gagar Mayang* consists of two sets, one belonging to the bride, and the other belonging to the groom. If one of the brides is no longer a virgin or virgin, then *Gagar Mayang* will only be one, namely for the bride who is still a girl/virgin.

4. The Process of Making *Gagar Mayang*

*Gagar Mayang* will be made the night before the reception takes place the next day, the making of *Gagar Mayang* is done at the house of the bride who is holding the reception, usually at the bride's house. *Gagar Mayang* will be made by 3-4 craftsmen for 2-3 hours of the making process, there are no special requirements for a craftsman to be able to make *Gagar Mayang*, if someone has the skills in making *Gagar Mayang* then they are allowed to make it. The ingredients used are usually sought by the makers themselves. *Gagar Mayang*, However, sometimes the event host also provides them. Once the *Gagar Mayang* is finished, the host or host of the reception will pay a ransom. This ransom is in the form of money paid by the host to the *Gagar Mayang* makers (Interview, 2021). There are several differences between the groom's and bride's *Gagar Mayang*. Among them, the groom's *Gagar Mayang* features carvings of birds and keris (a type of keris). The bride's *Gagar Mayang* features more floral designs and ketupat (a type of *ketupat*).

5. The Process of Using *Gagar Mayang*

*Gagar Mayang* is used when the groom is reunited with the bride, this chain of stages is called *nemukkek manten*. Before the groom is reunited with the bride, the groom's *Gagar Mayang* which was previously made at the bride's house will be brought to the house where

the groom sits before being met. When the *nemukek manten* process takes place, each *Gagar Mayang* will be carried by someone who is still a girl from the bride's side and the groom's *Gagar Mayang* will also be brought by someone who is still a joko. When the moment comes when the bride and groom are facing each other, the two *Gagar Mayang* will be exchanged. Then, the bride's *Gagar Mayang* will be thrown onto the roof of the house, while the groom's *Gagar Mayang* will be placed on the bridal dais.

#### 6. The Meaning of *Gagar Mayang* in Wedding Rituals

The main meaning of *Gagar Mayang* in the Javanese ethnic wedding ritual in Nagan Raya is when the *Gagar Mayang* belonging to the bride and the groom are exchanged, this means that the bride has been accepted by the groom and his family, and the groom has also been accepted by the bride and her family, as new family members from each side. When the *Gagar Mayang* belonging to the bride is thrown onto the roof of the house and the *Gagar Mayang* belonging to the groom is placed on the bridal dais, this is intended so that only one *Gagar Mayang* becomes a guide for their lives and that belongs to her husband, because in essence the husband is the head of the household in married life.

#### 7. The Values of *Gagar Mayang*

##### a. Socio-cultural values

*Gagar Mayang* also serves as evidence of good social integration between the Javanese ethnic community and the local community, namely the Acehnese ethnic community. The local community greatly respects the cultural customs of the Javanese ethnic community who live side by side with them. This is evidenced when cross-cultural marriages between Javanese and Acehnese ethnic communities occur. *Gagar Mayang* is also still used as a form of respect for the existence of Javanese culture in Nagan Raya. In cases of cross-cultural marriages like this, *Gagar Mayang* will be made by the Javanese ethnic group, then will be handed over to the non-Javanese family of the bride and groom before the *nemukek manten* procession takes place.

##### b. Economic Value

*Gagar Mayang* is one of the many Javanese customs that are still used and preserved today by the Javanese ethnic community. This brings its own blessings to *Gagar Mayang* craftsmen, especially when many couples carry out rituals or wedding receptions, the *Gagar Mayang* craftsmen will be invited and asked to make *Gagar Mayang* and then will receive a ransom from the family who held the event, it can be said that making *Gagar Mayang* is an additional job for *Gagar Mayang* craftsmen.

##### c. Artistic Value

*Gagar Mayang* consists of several carvings made from yellow coconut leaves, including birds, pecot-pecotan, kitiran, fern leaves, keris, temples, ketupat, grasshoppers and also sempritan. These carvings certainly have their own beauty, art and also the skills of the craftsmen also influence the formation of the carvings and *Gagar Mayang*.

### C. Efforts of the Javanese Ethnic Group to Preserve *Gagar Mayang*

*Gagar Mayang* is one of the customs and cultures of the Javanese ethnic group that continues to be practiced and preserved even though they have long lived outside of Java. Naturally, the Javanese, as an immigrant community, face unique challenges in preserving and preserving their culture, including the use of *Gagar Mayang* in wedding rituals.

#### 1. Obstacles Faced in Preserving *Gagar Mayang*

The challenge in preserving *Gagar Mayang* is that materials such as puring-puringan leaves, also known as grave flowers, and Raja banana stems and shoots are becoming increasingly difficult to find in people's yards. In recent years, these have become increasingly difficult to find, and are often replaced with other types of banana stems and

shoots ) (Interview, 2021). Apart from that, it is also because young people's interest in the art of making *Gagar Mayang* is relatively low, many young people are not interested in *Gagar Mayang* and usually they only know that *Gagar Mayang* is used for weddings, while they tend not to know how it is made and what materials are used.

## 2. Efforts to preserve *Gagar Mayang*

Efforts made by the Javanese ethnic community to preserve *Gagar Mayang* are usually carried out by *Gagar Mayang* craftsmen, the craftsmen will usually pass on their skills to their children, the craftsmen will bring their children to participate in the process of making *Gagar Mayang*, apart from that, usually the craftsmen will invite several young people who have an interest in making *Gagar Mayang*. They will then be taught and directly involved in the *Gagar Mayang*-making process. There have been no specific efforts by the community or village officials, such as holding classes or training on *Gagar Mayang* making, or cultivating the plants used in the process.

## CONCLUSION

The history of *Gagar Mayang* used by the Javanese ethnic community in wedding rituals in Nagan Raya began with the migration of the Javanese ethnic group to Aceh, the largest migration occurred during the Dutch colonial era, the migration of the Javanese ethnic group in Aceh included 1830-1870, 1948-1970 and 1970-1980 onwards. *Gagar Mayang* in Javanese wedding rituals, it signifies the acceptance of the groom by the bride and vice versa, as well as acceptance by each family. The *Gagar Mayang* values in wedding rituals include socio-cultural, economic, and artistic values. Efforts made by the Javanese ethnic community to preserve *Gagar Mayang* usually carried out by *Gagar Mayang* craftsmen by passing down their skills to their children, apart from that there have been no other special efforts made by certain parties or by the Gampong apparatus as an effort to preserve *Gagar Mayang*.

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