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The Value of Integral Togetherness in the Local Wisdom of Banyu *Panguripan* and Confucian Philosophy

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Abstract

In modern society, which is increasingly dominated by individualistic attitudes, values of togetherness are gradually eroding. Meanwhile, within Indonesia's multicultural context, there exist various forms of local wisdom that transmit teachings and practices of communal living. The Javanese ethical principle expressed in the saying "Banyu Panguripan" (meaning "each person must give the water of life") functions as a moral imperative that emphasizes the importance of sustaining one another's existence. Implicitly, this expression conveys a moral teaching that communal life must be built upon the value of sharing. It affirms that human existence is realized through one's capacity to become a source of goodness, assistance, and life-giving energy for others. Likewise, Confucianism, rooted in the Chinese philosophical tradition, upholds the values of ren (humaneness), yi (righteousness), li (social propriety), xiao (filial piety), and zhi (wisdom) as foundational principles for fostering harmonious social relationships. Although emerging from different cultural contexts, both traditions offer relational ethics and social solidarity as the core of communal life.

Keywords

Banyu panguripan, confusianism, togetherness, society

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's cultural diversity offers a rich foundation of moral values embedded in everyday social life. Among these values, the spirit of togetherness occupies a central place and is expressed in various forms of local wisdom. In the Javanese context, this principle is reflected in the concept of Banyu Panguripan. The idea views water not only as a symbol of life and fertility but also as a representation of how human actions can nurture, sustain, and empower others.

In contemporary society, however, this spirit of togetherness faces significant challenges. The rise of individualism, accompanied by increasing competition and social fragmentation, gradually weakens the practice of solidarity in daily life.

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The value embodied in Banyu Panguripan becomes particularly relevant in this situation, as it encourages individuals to live in mutual care, cooperation, and harmony – both with others and with the natural environment.

Alongside this local wisdom, Confucianism stands as one of the most influential philosophical traditions in East Asia. It offers a long-standing vision of moral cultivation, disciplined conduct, and social harmony.1 Rooted in the teachings of Confucius, this tradition highlights key virtues such as ren, yi, li, xiao, and zhi. These values serve as ethical foundations for forming morally responsible individuals and establishing a well-ordered society.2

Placing Banyu Panguripan and Confucian ethics into dialogue opens the way for a deeper intercultural reflection on relational morality. While both traditions emphasize harmony, solidarity, and mutual care, they differ in their ethical approaches. Confucianism tends to be more structured and hierarchical, grounded in clearly defined social roles and norms. In contrast, Banyu Panguripan is more relational, symbolic, and rooted in everyday communal practices. Despite these differences, both perspectives offer valuable insights for responding to contemporary challenges concerning social alienation, declining solidarity, and weakening moral character. Research on the work ethic of the Chinese community, for example in the article The Influence of Confucianism on the Work Ethic of Chinese People, aims to show that the values of Ren, Li, and Zhi contribute to shaping a culture that is honest, diligent, and responsible.3

This research stems from four main questions. 1) What moral values are contained in the concept of banyu panguripan as part of Javanese ethics and culture; 2) How is the structure of core Confucian values reflected in classical ethical sources; 3) What are the similarities and differences between these two ethical systems; and 4) What is the relevance of the values of banyu panguripan and Confucianism to modern society. These questions serve as the connecting thread in the discussion that will be elaborated in the following section.

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[1] Yohanes Jong Sogen dkk., "Pengaruh Konfusianisme Terhadap Etos Kerja Orang-Orang Tionghoa di Indonesia," *Lumen Veritatis: Jurnal Teologi dan Filsafat* 16, no. 2 (2025): 120, https://doi.org/10.30822/mvywtk83

[2] Komang Heriyanti, "Humanisme dalam Ajaran Konfusianisme," *Widya Katambung: Jurnal Filsafat Agama Hindu* 12, no. 1 (2021): 56. https://doi.org/10.33363/wk.v12i1.694

[3] Yohanes Jong Sogen, dkk., Pengaruh Konfusianisme Terhadap Etos Kerja Orang-Orang Tionghoa Di Indonesia, 215

This research uses a qualitative and descriptive approach, which emphasizes literature study methods as well as comparative analysis. The method used aims not only to reveal the symbolic meaning of each value, but also to reflect on it and implement both teachings into daily life.

This study seeks to explore the moral values embedded in Banyu Panguripan, examine the ethical framework of Confucianism, compare the two systems, and reflect on their relevance for modern Indonesian society. Through this comparative lens, the paper aims to contribute to a more holistic understanding of relational ethics and to propose ways of nurturing communal integrity in the midst of rapid cultural and social change.

Theoretical Framework: Banyu Panguripan

Cultural Roots and Context

Javanese society is deeply shaped by agricultural life, in which water holds a central role both materially and symbolically. As an agrarian culture, the success of rice cultivation depends heavily on water, making it not merely a natural resource but the foundation of communal survival. This centrality of water is reflected in the development of irrigation systems, riverside settlements, and communal water-management traditions across the Javanese landscape.

Within this context, the relationship between humans and nature – particularly between farmers and water sources – has always carried sacred significance. Protecting natural water sources, rivers, and irrigation channels is regarded as a moral responsibility. This cultural ethos can still be seen today in traditional practices such as *Reresik Lak*, a communal cleansing of water channels carried out as both an act of gratitude and an effort to maintain agricultural fertility.[4]

Water, in Javanese cosmology, is not only a physical necessity but also a spiritual symbol. Known as *banyu* or *tirta*, water represents purity, blessing, and life. It cleanses, nurtures, and sustains. Therefore, when people are encouraged to embody the spirit of *banyu panguripan* – "the water of life" – they are being invited to become a blessing for others, just as water is considered a divine blessing for all forms of life.

[4] Reni Dikawati, "Tinjauan Filosofis Budaya Agraris Reresik Lak: Konservasi Air Dalam Praktik Pertanian Dusun Ngiring," *Jantra* 14, no. 1 (2019): 29 https://doi.org/10.52829/jantra.v14i1.80

The Metaphorical Meaning of "Water of Life"

In Javanese tradition, 'water of life' is a very rich metaphor, surpassing its existence as a physical liquid. Water represents the ideal qualities and actions that a person should possess. Water is symbolized as a symbol of purity. In daily life, water can cleanse dirt both physically and spiritually, such as during bathing and the removal of original sin in Catholic Church baptism. In this regard, humans ought to always maintain the clarity of heart, mind, and intention so that their actions are always pure and clean. Water is also known as a symbol of coolness. Its presence provides a feeling of freshness and relief during times of heat (thirsty → drink water: relief). Therefore, the presence of every person should rightly become a source of comfort for others – calming many people and not provoking conflict..

Water is also understood as a symbol of humility. The basic nature of water, which always flows to lower places, reflects the value of humility or *andhap asor* in Javanese culture. No matter how high a person's position is, a humble attitude is still expected, even manifested through the willingness to embrace those with a lower social status. The presence of water, which does not discriminate, illustrates service provided without considering one's position or social dignity.

When someone has successfully practiced the metaphorical qualities of water (purity, humility, coolness), they have become the true 'water of life.' Its implication in a social context, being 'the water of life,' means a person becomes a source of blessing. In other words, their presence provides benefits to many people – not a source of problems. In this context, a person is able to elevate the status of their peers. Furthermore, being 'the water of life' also means being willing to share knowledge and goodness. This can help their peers to develop and also sustain their lives. Surely, such a person can become an example for others, capable of providing the right direction for their peers.

The concept of 'water of life' or *urip iku kudu aweh banyu panguripan* is a concrete embodiment of the noble Javanese principle, namely *migunani tumraping liyan* – literally meaning 'being useful to others'.[5] The highest goal of a Javanese person in life is to reach a point where their presence can provide benefit, help, and be willing

[5] Sagita Cahyani, dkk., Konsep *Ayem Tentrem* dalam Keluarga Jawa, *Wacana Psikokultural: Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi* 1, no. 1 (2023), 38. https://doi.org/10.24246/jwp.v1i01.10220

to sacrifice for others and also for the universe.[6] *Migunani tumraping liyan* is akin to banyu panguripan, which is identical to giving 'water of life' – benefits for others. Both aim to emphasize concrete actions in giving and being beneficial as the essence of life that has meaning. This also demands becoming a transcendent human being, where the focus of life is no longer on fulfilling personal needs but on contributing socially. This invitation gives meaning that life becomes whole and valuable not from what one has, but from how much one gives a portion of their 'life' for others.

Ethical Dimensions of Banyu Panguripan

The concept of *banyu panguripan* is essentially a moral code of ethics that governs how an individual should behave within their community. There are four ethical dimensions of the banyu panguripan concept that can be applied in communal life. First, individual moral responsibility. Everyone is required to have a moral obligation to cultivate themselves to become a 'source of life' or a benefit for others. Not only to avoid evil, but also to actively do good. A person must ensure that their presence is not passive, but rather actively contributing positive values to communal life. Second, personal-relational solidarity and harmony. This dimension transforms from oneself to relationships between individuals and communities. Through the concept of banyu panguripan, the intended relationship with others is by building a strong network of solidarity. This solidarity is manifested in attitudes of helping each other and mutual cooperation. The goal of all these social interactions is to realize a harmonious life. A harmonious life means a state that is balanced, without conflicts and disputes, uniting each individual to help one another.[7] If consistently practiced, a person will create a peaceful and harmonious environment. Everyone will feel valued, assisted, and comforted.

To achieve such harmony, a *welas asih* attitude is needed. *Welas asih* is a behavior that shows that someone is willing to share in what another person is feeling.[8] This spirit becomes the main driver behind the desire to realize *banyu panguripan*. *Welas asih* seeks to ensure that the giving of 'water of life' is done without

[6] Tirto Suwondo, dkk. (1994), *Nilai-nilai Budaya Susastra Jawa*, Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 86.

[7] Tirto Suwondo, dkk. (1994), *Nilai-nilai Budaya Susastra Jawa,* 139.

[8] Dwi Hardani Oktawirawan & Taufik Akbar Rizqi Yunanto, Welas Asih: Konsep Compassion dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat Jawa, *Anthropos: Jurnal Antropologi Sosial dan Budaya 6*, no. 2 (2021): 147. https://doi.org/10.24114/antro.v6i2.17326

expecting anything in return from others. Such giving must come from a sincere heart. The spirit of compassion prioritizes collective well-being, fostering empathy, which is the ability to feel the suffering of others – thereby motivating someone to provide 'life' for their fellow beings.[9] Acts *welas asih* not only benefit the person receiving help but also positively impact oneself. This state makes a person feel 'useful,' resulting in personal satisfaction and eliciting positive feelings within oneself. This situation makes a person feel 'useful', giving a certain satisfaction and creating positive feelings within oneself.[10] Hopefully, this can help create a peaceful life, mutual understanding, and safety without any conflicts between one another.

Practical manifestations: From hospitality to collective care

The values of banyu panguripan historically appear in everyday practices. One example is *gotong royong*, where community members collaborate to support shared goals, such as building a house or preparing for communal events. Another traditional practice is placing a water jar (*kendi*) at the front of a house to refresh passersby – a symbolic and literal embodiment of unconditional giving, hospitality, and trust.[11] These practices collectively maintain social balance, where the strong support the weak, and abundance flows to those in need. This reduces the risk of social envy, conflict, and inequity.

Principles of Confucian Ethics

Historical Background and Cultural Setting

Confucianism is not merely a religious tradition; it is a comprehensive philosophical and ethical system that has shaped Chinese civilization for more than two thousand years.[12] Founded on the teachings of Confucius (Kongzi) – who lived between 551–479 BCE – this tradition emerged during the Spring and Autumn period, an era marked by political instability, social disorder, and the erosion of moral values.

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[9] Jena, Y., "Etika kepedulian: Welas asih dalam tindakan moral," *Kanz Philosophia 4*, no. 1 (2014): 3. https://doi.org/10.20871/kpjipm.v4i1.51

[10] Dwi Hardani Oktawirawan & Taufik Akbar Rizqi Yunanto, "Welas Asih: Konsep Compassion dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat Jawa," 148.

[11] Eko Karjuan, *Menelusuri Jejak Kendi dalam Tradisi dan Kehidupan sehari-hari*, 8 Mei 2025, diunduh pada 27 November 2025 pukul 22.21 WIB https://rri.co.id/entikong/lain-lain/1505397/menelusuri-jejak-kendi-dalam-tradisi-dan-kehidupan-sehari-hari

[12] Komang Heriyanti, "Humanisme Dalam Ajaran Konfusianisme," 58.

Confucius was born in Qufu, known originally as Kong Qiu or Zhong Ni.[13] Coming from a modest background, he worked early in life as a shepherd, record keeper, and bookkeeper. His administrative talent eventually led him to serve as a Minister of Justice in the State of Lu.[14] However, political corruption and the unethical behavior of Lu's rulers compelled him to resign.

Choosing instead to advocate for social and moral reform, Confucius traveled through various states – Song, Chen, Cai – offering guidance to princes and ministers. Although many rulers rejected his proposals, his influence grew through his disciples, who later recorded and disseminated his teachings.

The sociopolitical crisis of his era – corruption, declining virtue, and abuse of power – shaped his ethical vision. Confucius believed that external disorder reflected internal moral decay, especially within leadership.[15] Therefore, his philosophy sought to rebuild society by first cultivating moral integrity in individuals. The core idea is simple but profound: A harmonious society begins with morally cultivated individuals.The goal of Confucian ethics is the formation of junzi – a person of noble character whose moral excellence radiates outward, influencing family, community, and ultimately the entire social order.[16]

***The Concept of Humanity* (*Ren*)**

Ren is the highest goodness and is the core of all Confucian teachings. *Ren* is often translated as humanity, virtue, or benevolence.[17] Its existence becomes a quality that distinguishes humans from other creatures. *Ren* manifests love that begins with the closest ones, namely family, then gradually extends to the wider community, and ultimately encompasses the entire universe. This is not merely a feeling, but a sincere desire to see others grow and be free from suffering, both socially and spiritually. This aligns with the principle of ren, which is that human goodness arises from a heart full

[13] Yohanes Jong Sogen, dkk., Pengaruh Konfusianisme Terhadap Etos Kerja Orang-Orang Tionghoa Di Indonesia, 119.

[14] Kerajaan Lu: merujuk pada sebuah negara Kuno di Tiongkok selama Periode Musim Semi dan Gugur

[15] Ria Kasanova & Mohhamad Rudiyanto, Perbandingan Konsep Perkembangan Manusia dalam Filsafat Hegel dan Confucius, *Paradigma: Jurnal Filsafat, Sains, Teknologi, dan Sosial Budaya* 31, no. 1 (2025): 68. https://doi.org/10.33503/paradigma.v31i1.1483

[16] Chuang, S., & Wang, G. G., "Confucian philosophy and influence on perceived values and behavioural orientations by Taiwan's millennials," *Human Resource Development International* 21, no.4 (2018): 368. https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2018.1433393

[17] Komang Heriyant, "Humanisme Dalam Ajaran Konfusianisme," 61.

of empathy. Through *ren*, each person is guided to show *welas asih* (empathy), fairness, and also to be unselfish in their life. With this attitude, it is hoped that everyone will be able to build all social relationships. When someone is able to put themselves in another person's position, they can surely understand their needs and feelings.

By giving attention and affection to others, a person does not expect any return for what they do. However, this is done purely because it comes from an internal drive within themselves and is carried out to achieve a moral goal.[18] In the context of social life, *ren* is the foundation of healthy relationships between individuals. Without ren, social relations can become fragile. Therefore, all other policies in Confucianism are concrete manifestations of ren. Thus, the existence of *ren* becomes a 'spirit' in morality itself.

***Moral Truth* (*Yi*)**

Yi is the principle that governs how ren should be practiced in daily life. It relates to a person's ability to make morally correct decisions. In Confucian teachings, the primary basic motivation of humans is to uphold virtue.[19] This means that a person does what is right and just according to their situation and role – regardless of whether the action brings material gain or personal popularity. In principle, *yi* is opposed to self-interest. Therefore, if someone does good deeds solely to receive rewards, their motivation has not yet reached true *yi*.

In Confucian teachings, it is said that "great people understand virtue, while small people understand profit." Confucius' interpretation of great people indicates that they have public responsibilities. The higher a person's position or role, the greater their moral obligation. Therefore, 'great people' – or leaders – must prioritize collective virtue over personal interest. Every leader must work with integrity, honesty, and responsibility. *Yi* is the only motivation that can guarantee such a just government.

On the other hand, Confucianism does not immediately aim to condemn personal pursuits by the common people. In daily life, it is natural for 'ordinary people' to think about food, clothing, and family needs. However, this teaching seeks to

[18] Ongky (Setio Kuncono), "Inti Sari Ajaran Konfusius dan Mengembangkannya," *Study Park of Confucius Journal: Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi, Sosial, dan Agama 3* no. 1 2025: 11. https://journal.spocjournal.com/index.php/journal/article/view/48

[19] Komang Heriyanti," Humanisme Dalam Ajaran Konfusianisme," 61.

emphasize that everyone will become a better person and achieve a meaningful life if each person orients their life goals toward seeking virtue. Thus, *yi* is an invitation to transcend oneself, that is, to go beyond personal interests and bring good to oneself as well as to society.

***Etiquette and Structure of Relations* (*Li*)**

Li is a behavioral norm that serves as a principle to maintain social order. *Li*, as an expression of *ren* and *yi*,[20] is manifested in rituals, etiquette, and moral habits that govern human relationships in daily life.[21] At a simple level, *Li* refers to politeness, manners, and etiquette that regulate everyday interactions. This provides a clear structure for the social relations of each individual, making everyone know how they should interact appropriately according to their role.

The existence of *Li* is expected to overcome differences and gaps that occur in society by establishing standards of behavior that are correct and acceptable to everyone. For example, the young respect the older ones through interactions that are conducted with respect and civility so that conflicts can be minimized. The implementation of *Li* also requires proper moral consideration. Everyone must use moral truth (yi) to determine which *Li* is appropriate to apply. If not, then *Li* is merely a formality. Its implementation is a form of responsibility to maintain social order and to show respect to others. *Li* is considered the center of tradition and culture that must be studied in order to realize a moral self.[22] By applying the principles of *Li*, social interactions become structured, thereby creating order and harmony that are not only physical in nature but also ethical and spiritual.

***Filial Piety* (*Xiao*)**

Xiao is a fundamental virtue in Confucianism that serves as the foundation for all relational ethics. It is the pillar of morality within a family.[23] Its manifestation is the ethical obligation of a child to respect their parents, a younger sibling to their older

[20] Alfa Wena Bernanda & Wakhudin (2023), Memperkokoh Keharmonisan Umat Beragama Antara Konghucu dengan Umat Beragama Lain, *Multiverse: Open Multidisciplinary Journal* 2 no, 3 (2023): 374. https://doi.org/10.57251/multiverse.v2i3.1203

[21] Komang Heriyanti, "Humanisme Dalam Ajaran Konfusianisme," 62.

[22] Lee, J. (2024). Religious Dimensions of Confucius' Teachings on Ren and Li in the Analects. *Religions*, *15*(6), 668. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15060668

[23] Komang Heriyanti, "Humanisme Dalam Ajaran Konfusianisme," 62.

sibling, and a wife to her husband.[24] In this context, Confucianism views the family as the first school for shaping morality. Within the family, a child learns to love, respect, obey their parents, and make sacrifices for others.

The expression of morality within the family must eventually also be realized in a broader social context. This can be demonstrated through the loyalty and obedience of the people to their leaders. Therefore, a harmonious and well-ordered family, built on the principle of *xiao*, is the smallest unit that becomes the key determinant in creating peace and order in society.

***Wisdom* (*Zhi*)**

Zhi is often translated as wisdom. Its role is very important in Confucian principles – not only as an intellectual ability but also as the ability to distinguish between right and wrong. This wisdom is acquired through self-awareness.[25] A person can be said to act rightly if they know their strengths – more than that, most importantly, they know their own moral shortcomings. Wisdom begins when each individual dares to see themselves objectively and dares to acknowledge their mistakes. For that reason, a person is required to have the courage to express the truth as it truly is. By applying *zhi* in their life, a person will act with moral righteousness to create a harmonious social order.

The core of Confucianism is that an ideal social order can only be realized if it starts from the smallest unit, namely an individual who has integrity and has successfully cultivated themselves. These five values shape a complete person. Therefore, Confucian ethics demands self-development. Every person basically has the potential to be good. According to the Confucian view, the potential to be good is not acquired through social status or birth but is obtained through learning and practicing morality directly in daily life. By upholding the values in Confucianism, every human being is expected to become a junzi or 'a noble person.' A noble person in life possesses moral integrity, leadership, and wisdom.[26] Because each individual participates by cultivating themselves into a junzi, they will automatically create

[24] Yohanes Jong Sogen, dkk., "Pengaruh Konfusianisme Terhadap Etos Kerja Orang-Orang Tionghoa Di Indonesia," 123.

[25] Yohanes Jong Sogen, dkk., "Pengaruh Konfusianisme Terhadap Etos Kerja Orang-Orang Tionghoa Di Indonesia," 123.

[26] Tungary, E. F., & Rini, J. E., "Paralelisme ajaran Konfusius dan Katolik: Analisis perbandingan tentang etika, moralitas, dan peran keluarga" (Dissertation, Petra Christian University, 2023), 7.

order in their relationships with others – which will ultimately realize social harmony in community life.

Comparative Analysis

The comparison of these two values highlights how both ethical systems from different cultural contexts, Javanese and Chinese, seek to articulate the importance of relational ethics and social solidarity. Both values offer a rich reflection on how humans should cultivate good relationships to maintain harmony and mutually give life to one another. To make it easier to see the comparison, the following is a comparative table of banyu panguripan and Confucian ethics.

Table 1: Data coding on the water of life and Confucianism

Aspect	Confucianism	Banyu Panguripan	Remarks
Source of Values	Philosophical tradition of Kongzi; cosmic harmony; virtue ethics (Ren, Yi, Li, Xiao, Zhi).	Javanese agrarian tradition; symbolism of water; ethics of life-giving presence.	Both emerge from collective cultural experience, oriented toward social harmony.
Core Values	Ren, Yi, Li, Xiao, Zhi.	Purifying, nurturing, soothing presence; compassion; mutual assistance; communal harmony.	Confucian values form a structured virtue system; Banyu Panguripan is contextual, symbolic, and relational.
Concept of Human Goodness	Goodness formed through moral education and habitual cultivation.	Goodness realized through acts of nurturing and sustaining others.	Confucianism emphasizes structured self-cultivation; Banyu Panguripan

			focuses on spontaneous relational care.
Social Ethics	Social hierarchy, defined roles, adherence to norms.	Egalitarian cooperation, gotong royong, daily practices of harmony.	Confucianism is normative-structured; Banyu Panguripan is horizontal-relational.
Form of Harmony	Achieved through ritual order and moral alignment.	Achieved through natural, "flowing" harmony resembling water.	Complementary approaches: structural vs. organic harmony.
Moral Aim	Formation of junzi and a well-ordered society.	Creation of a rukun, balanced, mutually sustaining community.	Both seek harmony through

Source: created by the researcher, 2025

Philosophical Similarities

Both teachings originate from ethics that govern relational interactions. They both aim to emphasize relational ethics and social solidarity as the core of communal life. In the midst of developing individualism, the values contained in these ethics can serve as a solution for everyone in facing various challenges related to individualism. This communal life is never separate from the principle of solidarity that must be lived by everyone. The spirit of banyu panguripan emphasizes the importance for every human to give life to one another, live in a spirit of mutual cooperation, and maintain social harmony in the community. Similarly, Confucianism also focuses on correct and harmonious relationships, which become the foundation of an orderly society.

To realize the ideal aspirations of society, a social moral norm that governs such matters is needed. Through the spirit of banyu panguripan, the Javanese community seeks to make their communal life so harmonious, emphasizing values such as living

in harmony, being in balance, and without conflict.[27] Meanwhile, Confucianism aims to place morality at the core of the social structure. Its goal is to create social harmony and an orderly society. These good and noble goals cannot be achieved if each person does not actively participate in self-development. Therefore, these two sets of values can only be realized if a person cultivates themselves into a 'good individual' through the development of universal values to become a source of benefit for the life around them (*migunani tumraping liyan*).

Conceptual Differences

After observing the similarities in both ethics, let's look at the differences. These two ethics have fundamental differences in their approach and structure of solidarity. From the perspective of ethical approach, the concept of banyu panguripan emphasizes personal-spiritual and philosophical values. The solidarity it seeks to build comes from inner drive and sincere intention. This is different from Confucian ethics, which is more structural and normative. This can be seen from the goal of harmony achieved through the implementation of social order as well as the emphasis on the clear role of each individual.

Metaphorically, *banyu pangutipan* is also different from Confucianism. The metaphor of water is more flexible, gentle, and humble. The nature of water, which always flows downward, is cool, and pure, becomes the ideal of action that every human being should take. This spirit makes everyone realize that *'urip iku urup'* (life is to shine). Everyone must make their life shine and provide light for others. This is the essence of Javanese humanity, which is to give life to others.[28] When someone fails to provide the 'water of life' to others, that person loses meaning in their life.[29] Viewed from the metaphor of Confucianism, it is more about order and hierarchy. Through social rules and the application of etiquette, Confucianism seeks to provide a clear structure to the patterns of relationships that exist in society.

The solidarity approaches used are also different. Banyu panguripan is more horizontal and empathetic. This social solidarity is realized through mutual cooperation driven by a spirit of *welas asih*. Moreover, the relationships meant here

[27] Magnis-Suseno, Franz, *Etika Jawa: Sebuah Analisa Falsafi tentang Kebijaksanaan Hidup Jawa* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1997), 99.

[28] Sastroatmodjo, S., *Filsafat Hidup Jawa,* (Semarang: Effhar, 2003), 58.

[29] Suyono, R. P., *Falsafah Hidup Orang Jawa: Dalam Ungkapan dan Tindakan Sehari-hari*Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar,2017), 45.

are not only among humans but also with nature. From the Confucianism perspective, the approach used is hierarchical but emphasizes justice. This solidarity is regulated within a clear relational structure. For example, in the concept of *xiao*, through filial devotion by children to their parents. In a broader context, every person has greater moral responsibility toward higher authorities.

Thus, these two ethics use different approaches. *Banyu panguripan* emphasizes the individual's character strength to spontaneously become a blessing to others. Meanwhile, Confucianism focuses on the order of roles within a structured system to ensure the creation of social order.

Important Points of Convergence

Although these two ethics have different approaches, the core concepts of both can be placed in a space of dialogue due to their analogous functions. The first is *ren* (humaneness) with the concept of *welas asih* (empathy). *Ren* as the highest good in Confucianism aligns with the concept of *welas asih* in the Javanese tradition. Both concepts become a sincere internal drive-in seeing others grow and serve as the basis for all virtues. Second, *yi* (moral righteousness) with *migunani tumraping liyan* (being useful to others). The principle of *yi* in Confucianism, which is acting based on moral righteousness – not personal interest – aligns with the noble goal of Javanese ethics, *migunani tumraping liyan*, which is living to be beneficial to others. Both ethics equally demand individuals to transcend self-interest toward a more collective common good. This is the moment when someone has achieved self-transcendence. The final meeting point is between *li* and Javanese etiquette. *Li* is a norm of behavior aimed at maintaining social order and can be paired with the concept of Javanese etiquette (politeness). Both can function to provide a structure of respectful interaction and emphasize manners, thus minimizing conflict.

Relevance for the Life of Indonesian Society

The values contained in *banyu panguripan* and Confucianism have strong relevance for the formation of social ethics in Indonesian society in the modern era. Amid the currents of globalization that increasingly promote individualism, unhealthy competition, and the weakening of the culture of mutual cooperation, these two ethical systems offer a moral spirit that reaffirms the importance of communal life in society.

Banyu Panguripan, with the spirit of 'giving life' to others, aims to place kindness, solidarity, and social relational balance as the foundation of a society. These values align with the character of the Indonesian people who uphold the principles of mutual cooperation, tolerance, and social sensitivity to face various common problems in community life. Meanwhile, Confucianism, through its five main values, reinforces the urgency of moral education, discipline, responsibility, and order in social life. In the context of Indonesia, these values are very relevant for improving the quality of social relations, work ethic, and shaping the character of young generations with morality and integrity.

Both of these ethical systems provide an important contribution to the development of social and ecological spirituality. *Banyu panguripan* offers ecological awareness that is currently beginning to be neglected by some people. This awareness aims to emphasize the importance of balance between humans and others, including with nature. Confucianism teaches cosmic harmony as a part of morality. With this awareness, the hope is to be able to cultivate a stronger ecological consciousness amidst the challenges of environmental damage occurring in Indonesia.

Therefore, the relevance of these two ethical systems lies not only in their ethical depth but also in their ability to provide concrete moral direction for the life of Indonesian society, which is facing rapid social, cultural, and moral changes. These two ethical concepts can serve as inspiration for the development of social ethics, character education, moral leadership, and a more harmonious and civilized community life.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the ethical perspectives of Banyu Panguripan and Confucianism through a comparative philosophical lens, highlighting both their shared foundations and distinctive contributions to relational morality. Despite emerging from different cultural milieus, both traditions articulate a vision of ethical life that prioritizes communal harmony, mutual care, and the moral transformation of individuals.

The Javanese concept of Banyu Panguripan frames ethical action through the metaphor of water—purifying, nurturing, calming, and humbly flowing toward others. It emphasizes generosity, empathy, ecological harmony, and the responsibility to become a life-giving presence in one's community. Meanwhile, Confucian ethics offers a more structured system centered on the virtues of *ren, yi, li, xiao*, and *zhi*.

These virtues form the basis for cultivating the junzi, the morally exemplary person capable of sustaining a well-ordered and harmonious society.

The comparison reveals three key insights. First, both traditions share a relational orientation in which morality is rooted in interpersonal responsibility and mutual flourishing. Second, both offer meaningful correctives to contemporary challenges—particularly individualism, social fragmentation, and the weakening of communal bonds. Third, while *Banyu Panguripan* provides a symbolic and organically relational model of harmony, Confucianism offers a normative and structurally guided pathway toward social order. These differences are not contradictions but complementary strengths that, when placed in dialogue, enrich one another.

In the context of modern Indonesian society, the integration of these two ethical frameworks holds significant potential. *Banyu Panguripan* contributes localized wisdom that affirms the value of solidarity, ecological sensitivity, and communal balance. Confucianism reinforces moral discipline, integrity, and the importance of role-based responsibility. Together, they present a holistic moral vision that can inform character education, strengthen social cohesion, and foster a culture of empathy and mutual support.

Ultimately, this study concludes that *Banyu Panguripan* and Confucian ethics—while distinct in structure and expression—share a common aspiration: the formation of morally grounded individuals who contribute to the flourishing of their communities. In a world increasingly shaped by rapid change and rising individualism, these traditions offer a timely and profound reminder that the vitality of a society depends on the moral quality of its people and the strength of their relationships.

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