

# Ethnobotanical Studies in the Ritual of Panjang Jimat Ceremony at the Kasepuhan Palace Cirebon

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## ABSTRACT

Indonesia is the second country with a high level of biodiversity and culture from each region. One area that has high biodiversity and culture is the city of Cirebon. The unique culture of Cirebon City which combines aspects of biodiversity and culture is the Panjang Jimat Ritual which is carried out at the Kasepuhan Palace in Cirebon. This ritual is carried out on the night of 12 Rabiul Awwal which aims to commemorate the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. However, until now, there has been no research that examines the various types of plants used in this ceremony, even though knowledge of the types of plants used can help to determine the status of natural resources, the distribution of plants, and the interactions between plants and people in the city of Cirebon. Therefore, this study aims to identify various types of plants and their symbolic meanings used in the Panjang Jimat ritual. The research method used is descriptive quantitative by collecting data through interviews and observation. The results showed that there were 18 plants used in this ceremony which included *Oryza sativa*, *Cocos nucifera*, *Rosa* sp., *Mangifera indica*, *Musa paradisiaca*, *Magnolia alba*, *Curcuma longa*, *Syzygium aromaticum*, *Zingiber officinale*, *Cinnamomum verum*, *Jasminum sambac*, *Styrax japonica*, *Cananga odorata*, *Citrus* sp., *Bambusa* sp., *Arenga pinnata*, *Salacca zalacca*, and *Malus* sp. This research is the first time it has been conducted, so ethnobotanical studies are very important to determine the interaction between plants and the local people of Cirebon.

**Keywords:** Ethnobotany, Panjang Jimat Ritual, Cirebon City

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelagic country which has more than seventeen thousand island (Syahril, 2022). Each island has different geographical conditions, Indonesia's geographical position is located between two continents and two oceans and is crossed by the equator making Indonesia as one of the countries with a large level of biodiversity in the world. Indonesia also ranks seven which is estimated to have 25% of the world's flowering plant species with 20.000 species, 40% of which are native to Indonesia or endemic (Puspitasari & Roziaty, 2022).

Cirebon city is one of the areas with a high level of biodiversity quite high in Indonesia. Astronomically, this city is located at the position of 6,41° SL and 108,33° EL on the north coast of the western part of Java. The area of Cirebon city extends from west to east about 8 kilometers and from north to south about 11 kilometers with an altitude  $\pm 5$  m above sea level and includes lowland areas with varying heights between 0-200 m. In accordance with the location of the area, which is by the sea, Cirebon City including areas with moderately high air temperatures with a minimum average air temperature of 24,13°C and the average maximum temperature of 31,18°C.

Based on the geographical location, the biodiversity in the Cirebon City area is quite high. Although located on the coast, this city is not only rich in aquatic biodiversity, but also has a fairly high potential for terrestrial biodiversity, including in agriculture. Some of the food crops that are cultivated in this city include rice, cassava, sweet potato, and green beans. Not only is it rich in biodiversity, the geographical conditions of Cirebon City are different from other regions, also influences the community in meeting their needs, so that the city of Cirebon has a different community culture, including in terms of cultural diversity.

According to KBBI, culture means reason. In general, culture can be defined as a way of life that exist in a group of humans (Syakhrani & Kamil, 2022), which has developed and been passed down from generation to generation. Culture can also interpreted as the result of human reason, in this case various things its forms and manifestations are known throughout history and belonging to human which is not rigid, but always evolving and changing so fostering humans to adapt to cultural

changes and the challenges of traditional times to enter modern times (Widyastuti, 2021).

Cirebon city is one of the cities that is still thick with traditional culture. The culture that exist and develops in this city has different characteristics from other regions in Indonesia. The culture in the city of Cirebon departs from tradition and religion, so that each culture has religious elements that tend to be religious and then blends with the palace culture which has a very distinctive and prominent royal nuance. One form of traditional culture that is still being carried out today is a traditional ceremonial ritual. Traditional ceremonies are a form of cultural manifestation that is manifested in the form of complex patterns of human behavior in society or commonly called a social system (Embon & Ketut, 2019). This activity related to habits called rituals. Rituals are ways a person or individuals in a society that is done to present their history. Therefore, rituals are inseparable from traditional ceremonies which are carried out continuously or seasonally (Marpaung & Idris, 2022). One of the ceremonial rituals the custom that is found in Cirebon is a ritual of panjang jimat ceremony at the Kasepuhan Palace, Cirebon. The ritual of panjang jimat ceremony is a series of ceremonies which is held every year, namely on the night of 12 Rabiul Awwal. This ceremony aims to commemorate the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW (Javanese Islamic, 2019). Panjang jimat is one of the cultural symbols to express admiration for the prophet Muhammad SAW. Where in Panjang jimat there are many symbols that want conveyed to the community, and at every stage it is very closely related to the birth process and Islamic teachings which have their own symbols and meanings. Symbols are something that is used to represent something else, namely a kind of sign, painting, badge, including the use of plants that state something or have a specific purpose (Dewi, 2022).

The ritual of panjang jimat ceremony as one of the traditional ceremonies as part of the product of human culture in its practical level cannot be separated from the use of natural resources, such as plants in the surrounding environment. The relationship between humans and environment is very close and has been going on for a long time (Niman, 2019). Many plants are used in traditional ceremonies carried out by the community, such as rice (*Oryza sativa*), cassava (*Manihot utilissima*), sand ginger (*Kaempferia galanga*), coconut (*Cocos nucifera*), and others. Plants used in traditional ceremonies have a main function related to symbolic meaning (Iskandar, 2017). For example, rice (*Oryza sativa*) symbolized food sufficiency, and flowers symbolizes fragrance (Kasim et al., 2021).

Traditional ceremonies carried out by the community are increasingly being eroded by the current of modernization. Regarding the use of plants in traditional ceremonies, the knowledge and use of plants by the

community is decreasing, so that their existence is not noticed. Especially documentation related to the use of plants used in traditional ceremonies is still relatively small and the transfer of knowledge from generation to generation is mostly done orally. Therefore, through ethnobotanical studies the emphasis is on how to express the relationship between community culture and plant resources in the environment, especially in the Panjang jimat ceremony. So it is necessary to ethnobotanical studies, especially regarding utilization of plants used in this ceremony.

Based on some of the things above, this research was conducted to identify various kinds of plants and their symbolic meanings are used in the ritual of panjang jimat ceremony at the Kasepuhan Palace, Cirebon. This is mainly related to the lack of documentation regarding the knowledge and use of plants in the ritual of panjang jimat ceremony at the Kasepuhan Palace, Cirebon. In addition, this research on ethnobotany in the Panjang jimat ceremony is the first so that it can become a basic reference for future research.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the cultural diversity that exist in this country is regarding culture found in the Kasepuhan Palace, Cirebon. Cirebon has many different cultures, including the customs and traditions that exist in the Kasepuhan Palace. Like it is known that the palace is a social structure in which there are complex community rules so as to create unique culture. A culture will not arise without the interaction and existence of the community. The Kasepuhan Palace is one of the palaces that is still well maintained authenticity. We can see the uniqueness of the palace with eye from the forms and relics of part history which have become silent witnesses in the development of the times.

Besides the beauty and attractive architectural style of the palace buildings, the uniqueness of other palaces is reflected in the customs and traditions of the palace which are still upheld, as part of the obligation and efforts to preserve the nations culture. One of the well-known traditions from the Kasepuhan Palace is the Mauludan Tradition which is held every 12<sup>th</sup> of Robiul Awwal to commemorate the birth of Muhammad SAW. In the Mauludan tradition, which is a sequence of processions commemorating the birth of Muhammad SAW is symbolized with certain objects that are rich in meaning, the core goal for muslims is always follow Muhammad SAW teachings.

In its implementation, the Panjang jimat ceremony uses a wide variety of plants as a consequence of biodiversity in the area, but until now there has been no research study discussing the use of plant and their symbolic meanings in the ceremony. Previous research only studied the meanings of communication symbols in general in the Panjang jimat ceremony at the Kasepuhan palace. From the result of that study, only the denotation and connotation meanings of the

various ritual tools used in the ceremony were obtained, as well as the myths believed by the people of Cirebon throughout the ceremony (Fitriyani & Nugroho, 2019). Therefore, it is important to conduct research on ethnobotanical studies on the Panjang jimat ceremony at the Kasepuhan Palace Cirebon for the first time.

Ethnobotany is the science of using plants in everyday life and ethic customs. Ethnobotanical studies are not only concerned with taxonomic data, but also regarding knowledge that is regional in nature, in the form of an overview that studies the interrelationship between human and plants, and concern the use of these plants and the preservation of natural resources (Hotimah et al., 2019). Until now, many ethnobotanical studies have been carried out by researchers in various regions in Indonesia, such as the study of ethnobotany as community traditional medicine in Kalisalak Traditional Village, Banyumas, Central Java (Hidayah et al., 2022), ethnobotanical study of Tamiang tribe wedding customs in Menanggini Village, Aceh, Tamiang, Aceh Province (Ramadhani et al., 2021), as well as ethnobotanical studies of certain species covering the entire territory of Indonesia, such as review: ethnobotanical study of *Pandanus tectorius* in Indonesia (Rustamsyah et al., 2022).

Ethnobotany is a science that can be used as a food, medicines, dyes, building materials, ritual ceremonies, myths, and others. Ethnobotany has several specific studies which consist of several types of studies. Handayani (2018) states that the study of ethnobotany is a descriptive form of documentation traditional ethnobotanical knowledge processed by the surrounding community, this study include studies of botany, pharmacology, sosanthropology, economics, linguistics, and ecology. Ethnobotany has a role including as plant conservation, which includes various varieties of agricultural and plantation crops in traditional farming systems, as well as the presence of other biological resources. Ethnobotany also has a role in protecting the intellectual property of local communities, such as knowledge of the use of plants develop according to the values that grow in society, also be useful from an economic perspective because it can identify new types of plants that have economic potential; and commercial value (Ridanti et al., 2022). Based on some of these things, it is important to carry out an ethnobotanical study regarding the use of plant and their

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research that has been done about the use of plants in the ritual of Panjang jimat ceremony at the Kasepuhan Palace, Cirebon. There are 17 types of plants used in the process of the ceremonial activities. Each plant has its own symbolic meaning (Table 1). From the table, it can be seen that there are 17 types of plant used in the ritual

symbolic meanings in the Panjang jimat ceremony at the kasepuhan palace Cirebon.

## METHOD

The research activity was carried out on October 7, 2021 at the complex Kasepuhan Palace Cirebon which is located at Jl. Kasepuhan, No. 43, Kesepuhan, Kec. Lemahwungkuk, Cirebon, West Java. The phenomenon that is the case in this research is the relationship between high biodiversity, especially plants in the Cirebon area with one of the traditional ceremonial rituals, namely panjang jimat ceremony. This study focuses on the analysis of the use of plants and their symbolic meanings used in the ritual of panjang jimat ceremony at the Kasepuhan Palace, Cirebon.

Figure 1. Research sites



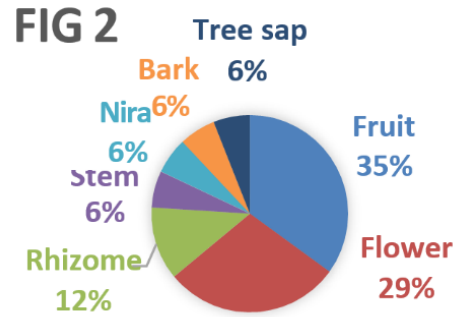
In this research, researchers took two sources of data, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources. Primary data source is the first data source where a data is generated. In this research, the primary data source used was to conduct direct interviews with the research subject, namely Mr. Elang Ayi as the head of the customs and traditions of the Kasepuhan Palace, Cirebon. While secondary data sources are data obtained not directly from the sources, but obtained from a second part. This data support primary data that researchers have obtained. This secondary data sources obtained by researchers through literature studies on the book and internet. Plant data along with symbolic meanings obtained from interview sources and literature are classified based on the family and the part of used. After that, the results obtained were processed descriptively qualitatively.

of Panjang jimat ceremony at the kasepuhan palace Cirebon which belongs to 12 families. The widely used plant family consist of 4 families, namely *Arecaceae*, *Poaceae*, *Zingiberaceae*, and *Rosaceae*. *Arecaceae* consist of 3 species, *Poaceae* 2 species, *Zingiberaceae* 2 species, and *Rosaceae* 2 species (Fig. 2).



**Figure 2. The four families most used in theritual of panjang jimat ceremony at the Kasepuhan Palace Cirebon**

The part of the plant most used in the ritual of panjang jimat ceremony at the Kasepuhan Palace Cirebon consist of 6 types of fruit, then 5 types of flowers, followed by 2 types of rhizome, and 1 type of stem, bark, tree sap, and nira (fig. 3).



**Figure 3. Percentage of plant parts used in the ritual of panjang jimat ceremony at the Kasepuhan Palace Cirebon**

**Table 1. A list of plants and their symbolic meanings used in the ritual of panjang jimat ceremony at the Kasepuhan Palace Cirebon**

No	Family	Species	The part of plant used	Symbol
1.	<i>Poaceae</i>	Rice ( <i>Oryza sativa</i> )	Fruit	The birthday of the holy Prophet Muhammad SAW
2.	<i>Arecaceae</i>	Coconut ( <i>Cocos nucifera</i> )	Fruit	Blessings on the birth of Prophet Muhammad SAW
3.	<i>Rosaceae</i>	Rose ( <i>Rosa</i> sp.)	Flower	Amniotic fluid
4.	<i>Musaceae</i>	Banana ( <i>Musa paradisiaca</i> )	Fruit	Human humility towards nature
5.	<i>Magnoliaceae</i>	Magnolia ( <i>Magnoliaalba</i> )	Flower	Describe a sacred ceremony
6.	<i>Zingiberaceae</i>	Turmeric ( <i>Curcuma longa</i> )	Rhizome	Treatment for mothers who have just given birth for a period of 40 days
7.	<i>Myrtaceae</i>	Clove ( <i>Syzygium aromaticum</i> )	Flower	Treatment for mothers who have just given birth for a period of 40 days
8.	<i>Zingiberaceae</i>	Ginger ( <i>Zingiber officinale</i> )	Rhizome	Treatment for mothers who have just given birth for a period of 40 days
9.	<i>Lauraceae</i>	Cinnamon ( <i>Cinnamomum verum</i> )	Tree bark	Treatment for mothers who have just given birth for a period of 40 days
10.	<i>Oleaceae</i>	Jasmine ( <i>Jasminum sambac</i> )	Flower	Describe a sacred ceremony
11.	<i>Styraceae</i>	Frankincense ( <i>Styrax japonica</i> )	Tree sap	Describe a sacred ceremony
12.	<i>Annonaceae</i>	Cananga ( <i>Cananga odorata</i> )	Flower	Describe a sacred ceremony
13.	<i>Rutaceae</i>	Orange ( <i>Citrus</i> sp.)	Fruit	Low self-esteem, forbid arrogance
14.	<i>Poaceae</i>	Bamboo ( <i>Bambusa</i> sp.)	Bark	Means Abu Thalib who welcomed the birth of Prophet Muhammad SAW as a guide for the people to the path of

				truth
15.	<i>Arecaceae</i>	Aren ( <i>Arenga pinnata</i> )	Nira	Describe adik getih (blood)
16.	<i>Arecaceae</i>	Snakefruit ( <i>Salacca zalacca</i> )	Fruit	Symbol of safety and includes nutrition menu
17.	<i>Rosaceae</i>	Apple ( <i>Malus sp.</i> )	Fruit	Symbol of safety and includes nutrition menu

The types of plants used in the ritual of panjang jimat ceremony at the Kasepuhan Palace Cirebon consist of 17 plant species belonging to 12 families. The four most widely used families in this ceremonial ritual are *Arecaceae* with three species namely *Cocos nucifera*, *Arenga pinnata*, and *Salacca zalacca*. Poaceae family with two species, namely *Oryza sativa* and *Bambusa sp.* *Zingiberaceae* family with two species namely *Curcuma longa* and *Zingiber officinale*. *Rosaceae* family with two species, namely *Rosa sp.* and *Malus sp.* Each species contains different meanings and symbols, but is united with one characteristic, namely a form of commemoration and respect for the birth of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. This is inseparable from the main purpose of holding to the ritual of panjang jimat ceremony, namely to commemorate the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

One of the most widely used herbs in the ritual of panjang jimar ceremonies is the family Poaceae, namely rice plant (*Oryza sativa*). This plant is the main ingredient for making nasi jimat, nasi uduk, and tumpeng jeneng which are mandatory dishes in the ceremony. Based on the results of interviews with respondents, it is said that rice is one of the ingredients from nature that must be present in this ceremony, in addition to being the main ingredient, rice is also a symbol of the birth of the holy Prophet Muhammad SAW, holy like white rice, the rice used must also be brushed off by sunti virgins who have never married and had sexual relations. This is to symbolize that the rice that will be served is really clean and holy rice. The definition of a sunti virgin in this ceremony is different from definition in the tradition sumur penganten in the Kanoman Palace, Cirebon which defines a sunti virgin as not a woman who is not married or has children, but the definition of a sunti virgin here is a woman who always takes care of her wudhu, so that she remains saintly (Atika et al., 2020). Various rice dishes are an integral component of various rituals and traditions, as it is considered as the main or fundamental food in daily life. It can be seen that rice is a staple food that must be present in every dish and also applies to every tradition. Rice or paddy is a representation of the symbol of prosperity, fertility, and well-being in living one's life (Wahyuti et al, 2019). While bamboo (*Bambusa sp.*) used as a torch in the ritual of panjang jimat ceremony, the torch symbolizes an Abu Thalib who came at night to welcome the birth of Prophet Muhammad SAW as someone who will lead mankind to the path of truth.

Plants from the *Arecaceae* family are also plants that are widely used in the ritual of panjang jimat ceremony, one

of which is coconut (*Cocos nucifera*), the part of the coconut that is most widely used in this ceremonial ritual is coconut oil used in the make of the nasi jimat, as well as coconut milk which is used in making nasi uduk, tumpeng jeneng, and various other foods. Coconut symbolized as a form of our gratitude and blessing for the birth of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Based on the results of interviews with respondents, it is said that coconut is a plant which all parts can be used by humans, just like the Prophet Muhammad SAW who has been waiting for his birth to provide guidance, intercession, and useful knowledge that can guide his people to the straight path. Two other species from the *Arecaceae* family, namely aren (*Arenga pinnata*) which are the basic ingredients for making air serbat which symbolizes adik getih (blood) that comes out of someone who has just given birth. As well as salak (*Salacca zalacca*) which is used in one of the ritual stages, namely nyaji buah which symbolizes salvation for mankind and includes the nutritional menu in this ceremony.

Another plant that is also used in the ritual of panjang jimat ceremonies is turmeric (*Curcuma longa*), ginger (*Zingiber officinale*), cloves (*Syzygium aromaticum*), and cinnamon (*Cinnamomum verum*) which is the basic ingredient for making boreh (traditional scrub). In this ritual, the four plants are the basic ingredients for making the boreh has a meaning as a treatment for mothers who have just given birth for a period of 40 days. Not much different from other traditional ceremonies, the ritual of panjang jimat ceremony too using flowers in the ritual ceremony. Flowers generally have volatile essential oil content which has an important role related to taste and smell. One of the flowers that must be present in the ritual ceremony is a rose (*Rosa sp.*) and its extract which symbolizes the amniotic fluid of a mother who has just given birth. In the research conducted by (Rofiq, 2018) it was found that the rose flower carries the meaning of the symbol "dumadine jalma menungsa", which refers to the process of one's birth into the temporal world. Therefore, the rose flower is often symbolized as a mother giving birth to her child into the world.

In the procession of siraman benda pusaka in the ritual of panjang jimat ceremony, various types of flower are also used, such as cananga (*Cananga odorata*), jasmine (*Jasminum sambac*), and magnolia (*Magnolia alba*) which symbolizes that this ritual is a very sacred ceremony as commemoration of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. According to (Lismawanty et al., 2021) each of these flowers has its own meaning and symbol attached to them. For instance, the cananga originates from



the word "kenangan ing angga", which means the hope that one's child will always remember all of their ancestral heirlooms or "pusaka". The jasmine carries the meaning that when one is about to take action, they should use a pure heart, and that their outer actions and inner intentions should be aligned. This meaning is in line with the use of jasmine flowers in the nadran ritual ceremony in Karangsong Village, Indramayu, that the meaning of jasmine flowers is that when taking action it always involves the heart, not just acting. In addition, another meaning of the jasmine flower is that in speaking it should always contain sincerity from the deepest conscience, physical and spiritual must always be the same, compact, not hypocritical (Lismawanty et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the magnolia represents a feeling of connection or "tali rasa", or "tansah kumanthil kanthil", which means a love and affection that will never be broken.

Several other types of plants are used in the ritual of panjang jimat ceremony are oranges (*Citrus* sp.) which symbolizes a human being who should not be arrogant and must always be humble towards Allah SWT, and apples (*Malus* sp.) which symbolizes salvation for mankind as well as a nutritional menu in this ceremony. In addition, there are also other types of fruit, namely bananas (*Musa paradisiaca*) which have special meaning that symbolizes human humility towards nature. Humans can do nothing except by the will of Allah SWT. Another type of plant that is also used in the ritual of panjang jimat ceremony is

#### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that there are 17 types of the plants used in the ritual of panjang jimat ceremony at the Kasepuhan Palace, Cirebon. The most widely used plant parts are fruits and flowers. The types of plants that used is *Oryza sativa* which symbolizes the birthday of the holy prophet, *Cocos nucifera* which symbolizes the blessing of the birth of Prophet Muhammad SAW, *Rosa* sp. which symbolizes amniotic fluid, *Musa paradisiaca* which symbolizes human humility towards nature. *Magnolia alba*, *Cananga odorata*, *Jasminum sambax*, and *Styrax japonica* which symbolizes a sacred ceremony. *Curcuma longa*, *Syzygium aromaticum*, *Zingiber officinale*, and *Cinnamomum verum* which have meaning as treatment for a mother who has just given birth for 40 days. *Salacca zalacca* and *Malus* sp. which symbolizes safety and

frankincense (*Styrax japonica*) which is taken from the tree sap, and later burned as perfume in a series of ceremonial rituals which also has a symbol that the ritual of panjang jimat is a sacred ceremony. This is an accordance with the statement Susanti (2018) which states that the meaning of burning incense is to carry out the sunnah of the prophet. It is said to be sunnah because the prophet and the angels really like fragrant smells. One of them comes from the frankincense itself.

The part of the plant that has the highest utilization in the ritual of panjang jimat ceremony is the fruit, which is 35% of the 17 types of plants used in this ritual. Each type of fruit has its own meaning. The types of fruit include *Oryza sativa*, *Cocos nucifera*, *Musa paradisiaca*, *Citrus* sp. *Salacca zalacca*, and *Malus* sp. another part of the plant that is also widely used in this ritual is the flower, which is 29% of the 17 types of plants. The types of flowers include *Rosa* sp., *Syzygium aromaticum*, *Jasminum sambac*, *Cananga odorata*, and *Magnolia alba*. Another part of the plant used in this ritual is the rhizome, which is 12% of the 17 plants, consisting of *Curcuma longa* and *Zingiber officinale*. While other plant parts are only utilized by 6% of the 17 plants. Namely *Bambusa* sp. whose stems is used, *Cinnamomum verum* whose bark is used, *Arenga pinnata* whose nira is used, and *Styrax japonica* whose tree sap is used.

nutrition. *Arenga pinnata* which symbolizes adik getih (blood). *Bambusa* sp. which symbolizes an Abu Thalib who welcomed the birth of the Prophet Muhammad SAW as a guide for the people to the path of truth, and *Citrus* sp. which symbolizes low self-esteem and prohibits arrogance.

The research on ethnobotany studies is still limited to the Panjang jimat ceremony at the Kasepuhan Palace, even though there are two other palaces in the Cirebon area which have similar traditions. Further research is needed regarding the Panjang jimat ceremony at the Kanoman and Kacirebonan Palace, so that we can compare the use of plants in the Panjang jimat ceremony but in different places environments. It is hoped that a broader perspective will be obtained regarding the use of plants in the Panjang jimat ceremony at the palaces of Cirebon region.

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