

The Acculturation Dynamics of the Sekaten Tradition in Modern Indonesia

Abdul Karim, Moch. Khafidz Fuad Raya

Kudus State Islamic Institute, Indonesia. Email: abdulkarim@iainkudus.ac.id, Center for the Study of Muslim Society (CSMS), Indonesia. Email: hafidzraya@yahoo.co.id

Abstract

This article examines the socio-religious dynamics behind the traditional Sekaten held by two large palaces (keraton) of Javanese kingdoms (Surakarta and Yogyakarta). This phenomenon is unique, for Sekaten is a local traditional cultural performance where Islam and Javanese cultures are beautifully blended. The current dynamics of acculturation support tourism potentials. Using a qualitative approach, historical and ethnographic methods, data were collected through in-depth observations during the Sekaten festivals at these two palaces. The results indicate that in the past the sekaten tradition functioned as a 'religious institution', which made the Surakarta palace and the Yogyakarta palace as symbols of the strongest Islamic empire in Java. This research asserts that local Islamic tradition in the past had undergone a paradigm shift, although the tradition has been preserved until the modern era. In the modern context, local cultural traditions have developed and are connected to economic motives through cultural tourism destinations supported by local governments.

Keywords: *sekaten, local traditions, Islam, dynamics, commodities*

Introduction

Indonesia is a country that has 17,508 islands inhabited by over 360 tribes with 1,340 ethnicities. This number is 41% of the total population of the community (Isra & Faiz, 2021; Utomo & McDonald, 2021).

This country also has 34 provinces which place it as a country rich in culture (Lancet, 2018). Traditions formed in society is based on local cultural beliefs and values (Van den Steen, 2010). But what is happening in the contemporary world is that culture has changed because of the strong influence of globalisation that has swept the entire world (Jensen et al., 2011; Ullah & Ming Yit Ho, 2021).

Boman calls the strong pressure of globalisation on local culture to give birth to a phenomenon called "cultural globalisation"

which comprises homogenisation, hybridisation and polarisation. This theory implies that, on a global scale, seemingly paradoxically important events occur at the same time (Boman, 2021). This means that local traditions, such as those, have experienced a paradox, where they must preserve traditional culture but must also be able to survive amid the onslaught of modernisation. This phenomenon then continues in the commodification of local culture as tourism objects that bring economic benefits (Co^okun, 2021; Mokgachane et al., 2021; Soukup et al., 2021).

Sekaten is a local Javanese tradition that combines elements of the strong *kejawen keraton* culture with Islamic teachings. Popularised by the two major Javanese courts (the Surakarta

* Naskah diterima Februari 2022, direvisi April 2022, dan disetujui untuk diterbitkan Mei 2022

<https://doi.org/10.47655/dialog.v45i1.510>

Dialog, 45 (1), 2022, 29-40

<https://jurnal.dialog.kemenag.go.id>, p-ISSN:0126-396X, e-ISSN:2715-6230

This is open access article under CC BY-NC-SA-License

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>)

keraton and the Yogyakarta keraton), sekaten is performed every year on the anniversary of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, from the 12th *maulud* (in Javanese calendar). This tradition is celebrated with a series of activities starting from the opening ceremony, a gamelan exhibition that is paraded to the Masjid Agung Keraton (the Great Mosque of the Palace), to reading the life story of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. After that, sekaten is continued with other rituals that are typical of the Javanese palace, such as *tumplak wajik* and *grebeg maulud*. The *grebeg maulud* ritual is the peak event of sekaten which can attract all residents to foreign tourists.

The ritual above shows that sekaten is not only a cultural product but also a tool to create economic value. Here, Clarke termed cultural products (such as sekaten) as 'cultural diplomacy' in which both the past (past and contemporary) accepted each other's contradictory cultures (Clarke, 2016). In addition, sekaten can become a diplomat toward the acceptance of the economic value of cultural tourism. This acceptance finally gave rise to a new opportunity to exploit culture for the sake of tourism (Timothy, 2021). Finally, sekaten is very susceptible to being distorted by the modern paradigm, where the value of ancestral heritage is replaced by new values that change from their original meaning (McIntosh & C. Prentice, 1999). The sustainability of tourist destinations is determined by four capitals, namely natural, human, social and manufacturing (Zhang et al., 2021). The preservation of the sekaten tradition may be continued by tourism destination factors, where human and social forms of the local culture are worthy of being promoted through tourism.

This article examines the sekaten tradition as the identity of the Javanese Islamic Palace, which is currently experiencing acculturative dynamics. Focused on two research formulations, namely shifts in social dynamics and shifts in cultural values. As a tradition that has been rooted for a long time, sekaten is sacred by the Javanese people and until now, the tradition is still preserved. Borrowing Ward and Geeraert's theory that continuous intercultural

contact (traditional and modern) creates challenges and changes (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). This makes the sekaten tradition change its orientation and get a kind of challenge of the values and essence of culture. The results provide new findings that the acculturation of the sekaten tradition means two things that are paradoxical, namely integrating religious syncretism with entertainment that leans toward materialism.

Research Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a field research scheme (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Aurini et al., 2021; Gao et al., 2020). Since this research is to explore the meaning of the sekaten cultural tradition in the Javanese Islamic Palace, the methods used are history and ethnography. The ethnographic method functions to reveal and interpret the values, behaviours, and beliefs of the community culture that have long roots and become a way of life (Okely, 2020). While the historical method functions to reveal everything that surrounds the sekaten tradition in the past (Wolf, 2018). The data collection technique used in-depth observations carried out by researchers during the mid-2019 period in March until the celebration of the Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH ended in November 2019. Researchers also dug up data from 2 courtiers of the Yogyakarta Keraton who were court retainers during the Grebeg Maulid ceremony, and 1 person who is trusted as representative of the palace for public relations.

Results and Discussion

The History of Sekaten Tradition

This tradition stems from the reign of the Islamic kingdom in Java, namely the Demak kingdom, which destroyed the remnants of the Majapahit kingdom in Daha (now Kediri) in 1527 (Sastrawan, 2020). Ricklefs quotes from three different versions of the collapse of the Majapahit kingdom in the *Babad Tanah Djawi*, where the Demak kingdom with an iconic Islamic propagator called *Wali Sanga* (nine saints from Java) spawned elements of Islam into the Javanese tradition which was previously thick with Hindu-Buddhist traditions (M. Ricklefs,

1972). Even though it is in power, Islam cannot be directly assimilated with the *kejawen* (Javanese culture), which is still deeply rooted. Islam must go through a series of acculturation processes of “teachings” and “culture” through works of art and literature because the culture of pre-Islamic Javanese society advanced in terms of literary and artistic works (Das, 2021).

In the process of acculturation, Islam had to face complicated conditions which were divided into the ‘*kelas atas* or upper class’ in which there were kings and the nobility with a palace culture that still preserved Hindu-Buddhist teachings and the ‘*kelas bawah* or lower class’ which contained civil society with animism-understanding. Its dynamism is still strong. Islam must also acculturate with Chinese culture as the wave of sea expeditions carried out by Cheng Ho of the Ming Dynasty openly gave birth to Indo-Chinese-Arabic ethnicities in the northern coastal areas of Java (Gallop, 2016; Wade, 1997). From these various processes, in Java, they are known as slametan, kenduri, and sekaten, which are symbols of Islamic rituals that combine two different cultural elements. It can be considered that the ritual results from the assimilation process.

Kejawen tradition is a Javanese life guide that contains a philosophy of life, shared collective knowledge, and universal teachings of goodness embraced by the Javanese people (Hilmy, 2018; Muttaqin, 2014). *Kejawen* differs from a relatively religious *abangan* compared to *abangan* that tends to syncretism (Askuri & Kuipers, 2019; Geertz, 1983; M. C. Ricklefs, 2008). The tradition of *kejawen* is more widely found in the Central Java region, especially Yogyakarta, as the center of civilization and symbol of Javanese Islamic rulers, namely the Surakarta Keraton and the Yogyakarta Keraton. Under the rule of this keraton, *kejawen* became a traditional palace system that was elevated into a classy orthodoxy tradition. Keraton Yogyakarta, or popular *Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat*, is the palace of Yogyakarta Keraton that stood after the Islamic Mataram kingdom collapsed. Because of the *Perjanjian Giyanti Mataram* signed in mid-February 1755, Islamic power after Mataram Islam was broken up into

the Sultanate of Yogyakarta and the Sultanate of Surakarta known as *Kasunanan Surakarta Hadiningrat* (Susilo, 2016). This agreement was agreed because there was a conflict in the land of Mataram Islam after the authority of Sultan Agung faded between Prince Mangkubumi as a rebel party and Pakubuwana II as the Mataram Islamic party, with V.O.C. (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*) with the division of these two sultanates is a dual power that rules the people of Yogyakarta.

After this agreement, Prince Mangkubumi proclaimed himself as The King of Ngayogyakarta under the name of *Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono I* and founded the Yogyakarta Keraton (Ratnawati & Santoso, 2021). While Pakubuwono II founded Surakarta Kasunanan under the name Sri Susuhanan Pakubuwana II (Fauzia, 2019; Kumar, 2020). The title *Sri'* in these two palaces as King and also as a religious leader called *Panata Gama*, and the palace is as a spiritual center that guides people's morals to get to know Islam (Wessing, 2003; Woodward, 2011a).

The role of kings and keraton as entities that create new laws or traditions. Sekaten results from a marriage with Islam. This tradition is preserved since the Sultanate of Demak came to power, which only sounds the traditional gamelan during the maulid celebration of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. As an extension of the Islamic Mataram kingdom, the Keraton of Yogyakarta and the Keraton of Surakarta continued this tradition with various additions of cultural rituals. Tradition as the control of keraton to the community to balance the diversity of developing cultures, considering that Central Java is a cosmopolitan province where it gathers with various ethnic backgrounds, considering that Central Java itself opens access to tourism because of the many cultural heritage sites ranging from Keraton to cultural heritage sites such as Borobudur and Prambanan Temple (Bourchier, 2019; Salazar, 2010).

Bebbington saw setting up local power-sharing layouts often led to power struggles that conditioned culture to access to power (Bebbington et al., 2004). Sekaten is the product

of the gianti treaty effect in which the split of two powers led to the dualism of territorial control in the social structure of society. So with a decade, the power of dual power can be mediated with cultural traditions.

As a product of assimilation, previously sekaten is a Hindu tradition called *aswamedha*, which is a ceremony of fortifying accompanied by ancient prayers and alms of food for six days. Continued with the closing ceremony with *asmaradana* on the seventh day with a ceremony of *semedi* and burning incense (*dupa*), accompanied by a large offering as gratitude. In *Serat Pustakaraja*, *aswamedha* and *asmaradana* are like *grebeg maulud* ceremonies in a sekaten ritual to distribute food and earth crops to the community (Tedjowirawan, 2015), but their distribution to certain people is not open to the public such as *grebeg maulud*. In the golden age of Majapahit, when Hayam Wuruk came to power, *aswamedha* and *asmaradana* were no longer carried out per community group, but were open to the public. This ceremony is known as *shraddha*, a ritual for the worship of ancestors in Hindu mythology. This ritual was first introduced by Hayam Wuruk to remember the death of his mother Sri Wishnu Wardhani and was also performed on Hindu communities in Gujarat India (Jacobsen, 2018; Prakash, 1997).

Apparently, this culture continued until the era of King Brawijaya V as the last ruler of Majapahit, who allegedly had closeness to Islam (Florida, 2018). The *shraddha* ritual during the time of King Brawijaya V was a large ceremony paraded into the middle of the field accompanied by a large gamelan hit that became the king's favourite. Because of its proximity to Islam, slowly the culture of gamelan was adopted by the Sultanate of Demak. From here a second then converted by the Guardians of Sanga as the birth ceremony of their ancestor (prophet) namely Prophet Muhammad PBUH through the advice of one member of the guardian named *Sunan Kalijaga* to perform the tradition of conversion *shraddha* with gamelan created by Sunan Giri and Sunan Kalijaga. The impact of the ceremony many people who were originally Hindu converted to Islam. Because

of the many who bear witness to God and the Prophet Muhammad PBUH as messengers of God (in Islamic term: *Shahadah*), then the pronunciation of the Javanese tongue of the *Shahadatain* becomes *Sekaten*.

Some other versions of the word origin of the word sekaten that are popular in the ears of the public include; First, *sakhatain*, which means to keep the noble mind and sacred heart to give themselves to God. Second, *sahutain*, which means avoiding bad things that contain similarities to the term bulkhead, which means limiting yourself from evil deeds. Bulkhead is commensurate with the term *sekati*, which means principled balanced living that can judge good and bad. It is not known exactly where the word sekaten came from, but the dominance of Islamic patterns from the two sultanates is closer is the word *shahadatain*. The spirit, after popularised by the Wali Sanga (nine saints) still echoes until the Islamic Mataram kingdom. Small-scale *grebeg mauludan* rituals with heirloom motorcades of Demak kingdom heritage held by the kings of Mataram Islam, including during the golden age of Sultan Agung, which increasingly revived Islamic values through the hereditary tradition of the legacies of the Sultanate of Demak.

Sekaten Ritual Order

As a culture, the sekaten tradition has been carried out since the era of Sultan Agung in the Mataram Islam kingdom (in the past) to the era of the Yogyakarta Sultanate (modern period). As mentioned above, this tradition has a sequence.

Parading the Gamelan Sakti

The sekaten celebration begins with parading a magical gamelan (*gamelan sakti*) called the '*miyos gangsa*' ritual. This gamelan belongs to the Yogyakarta Keraton, named *Kanjeng Kiai Guntur Madu* and *Kanjeng Kiai Nogo Wilogo*. The gamelan is paraded from inside the palace and towards the *pendhopo* by a convoy of *punggawa keraton* (court courtiers) or *abdi ndalem* (official courtiers). Then, after arriving at the *pendhopo*, paraded again to the Masjid Agung (the Great Mosque), which was in the North

Square of the Yogyakarta Keraton, accompanied by the soldiers of the palace. The *punggawa keraton* and soldiers of the palace wore their official clothes according to their position. Because this is an Islamic tradition to commemorate the birthday of Prophet Muhammad PBUH, courtiers and palace soldiers are prohibited from committing sins during the *miyos gangsa* ritual and are required to perform ablution (*wudhu*).

Next, the gamelan is placed on both sides of the Masjid Agung. This gamelan will be beaten by the *abdi ndalem niyaga* for seven consecutive days. The ritual of playing the gamelan is thought to have been carried out since the Wali Sanga era. Those who played were *Sunan Kalijaga* and *Sunan Giri* played in the middle of the courtyard of the Masjid Agung Demak accompanied by *gending* or songs composed by the Wali Sanga. The sound of gamelan songs and beats invites many people to the mosque to witness this artistic attraction. The Wali Sanga have agreed that as a da'wah effort, they insert Islamic teachings into song lyrics so that people know God. Starting from the public's interest in rituals that caused them to convert to Islam by saying two sentences of testimony to God and His Messenger (*syahadatain*) which became popularly known as *sekaten*.

Numplak Wajik

The Sekaten tradition presents a different figure from several rituals in Java where, besides rituals with objects and people, sekaten also involves food as one ritual that should not be missed. This ritual is called *tumplak wajik* or *numplak wajik*, which is a ritual of making a typical palace food called *wajik* (a type of cake made of glutinous rice and palm sugar). *Wajik* cake is a symbol of palace food that is loved by the community. The materials made show symbols of Javanese crops as glutinous rice which was an idol food during the Majapahit era, and palm sugar as a symbol of Javanese sugar (or called *gulo jowo*).

During this ritual procession, the *abdi ndalem* carry cooking utensils such as *lumping* a type of a glutinous rice crusher or pounder, and

kenthongan such as bamboo with holes punched to produce a warning sound. The function of this tradition is to prepare the *grebeg maulid* event where there is a ritual of distributing food to the community which is cooked by *abdi ndalem* (a *wajik* cake) and crops. This ritual also obliges the *abdi ndalem* to purify themselves (*wudhu*).

Grebeg Maulid

The peak of sekaten tradition is called *grebeg maulid*, which is held on the 12th of Rabiul Awal, the day when Prophet Muhammad PBUH was born. *Grebeg* means giving free food to the public on a large scale. Uniquely, the food that is *digrebeg* contains all kinds of food and crops that are spilt into a large litter shaped like a mountain. People know it as a *gunungan*. The *Gunungan* is then escorted by ten kinds of official soldiers, typical of the palace called *bregendo*. *Gunungan* is paraded from the palace to the main celebration of the sekaten, namely the courtyard of the Masjid Agung.

Grebeg Maulid is held from around 08.00 in the morning until late in the afternoon at 10.00. *Gunungan* was then prayed for by the '*ulamâ*' who was sent by the sultan so that the Javanese people would be given safety and blessings by commemorating the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. The mountains are distributed to the community by raiding one by one together without taking turns. *Grebeg* became a symbol of the prosperity of the Javanese palace and protected the people for their control over the land of Java.

Commodification of Sekaten Tradition

In cultural theory, globalisation is a factor that suppresses changes in the essence of culture. This is a cycle in cultural ecology that will inevitably occur along with the times when the relationship between humans and the environment undergoes an evolution that forms a new landscape (Piccardo & Canepa, 2021). Globalisation causes the blurring of cultural boundaries between countries with the entry of foreign cultures into the local culture (Anderson & Hale, 2019; Zapp et al., 2021). The entry of this foreign culture initially caused hard friction, so it required a negotiation process that was

difficult (Weber et al., 2011). If it has mingled, the culture will experience a process of assimilation that can shift the actual cultural identity and give birth to a new culture in the modern era (Edensor, 2020). This popular culture then replaces people's lifestyles (Danesi, 2018; Jenkins et al., 2020). The influence of modern culture impacts the perspective of the millennial generation that seems less interested in the values in traditional cultural heritage. The millennial generation is more inclined to depend on the consumption of technology and information, and a practical lifestyle (Raharjo et al., 2020). This generation thinks that local culture is an ancient tradition that is not by the needs of the times.

This condition then makes various parties involved in maintaining local cultural heritage to carry out strategies so that culture can be accepted by modern generations and popular culture. Cultural tourism is a strategy to preserve traditions amid the struggles of modern society (Kim et al., 2019, 2019; Young & Markham, 2020). Efforts to preserve culture are carried out by opening cultural tourism locations which require a fee to enter the location. For example, you need a ticket or buy certain attributes to enter tourist sites. In addition, there are transportation services to tourist sites, toilet services, goods storage services, and other paid services. In addition, the large number of people selling various cultural souvenirs at the location and food and drinks make the sekaten tradition the most interesting place to visit because it provides a variety of entertainment and tours that spoil the eyes and hearts of tourists.

Cultural traditions such as sekaten seem to bring their own blessings to the local community. They can sell various souvenirs and various food and drinks along with other paid services. Apparently, this cultural commodification can help local governments reduce the unemployment rate. So don't be surprised if then the local government makes traditional sekaten tourism a local government policy.

For 40 days, for example, the local government provides a location for a people's

market which is specifically intended for the sekaten tradition. The Sekaten Celebration Night Market (PMPS - *Pasar Malam Perayaan Sekaten*) has opened up great economic opportunities for the community by opening micro, small and medium business stands spread throughout the Yogyakarta area. Besides snacks, PMPS provides souvenirs typical of Yogyakarta made by local handicrafts of the people of Yogyakarta.

In 2011, the king of the Sultanate of Yogyakarta Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X set the theme of sekaten with the title "*Harmony of Culture, Economy, and Religion*". This implies that the sekaten tradition has three meanings: as a cultural heritage tradition, as a tourism opportunity, and as a liaison between the sultanate and the community. As a liaison, the function of the sekaten wanted to strengthen the existence of the sultanate towards the people with their concern for the welfare and entertainment of the people. In addition, Islamic symbols in sekaten make Islamic teachings very open to local culture and the progress of modern civilization.

Sekaten: The Sultanate's Religious Institutions

Initially, the sekaten tradition was only a religious celebration to commemorate the success of the *shraddha* tradition during the reign of King Brawijaya V. After the collapse of Majapahit, the *shraddha* was converted to sekaten which is still religious (Pigeaud, 1962). Woodward said that during the Wali Sanga era, religious nuances were maintained, but the substance was changed from Hinduism to Islamic religious ceremonies. This change was approved and supported by the Demak sultanate as the ruler of Islam after the fall of Majapahit. Although it has become an Islamic ritual, the Javanese character remains strong in the sekaten structure (Woodward, 2011b). The "cover" of *shraddha* is still embedded in the memories of the Javanese people, with some modifications to the story, the gamelan used, and the gending sung by sekaten carrying different substances from *shraddha*. Finally, sekaten is not just a ritual in religious

ceremonies, but has changed its function as a medium for teaching Islamic values to the community. It can be said in this dimension that sekaten is a 'religious institution' created by the Wali Sanga and the Demak sultanate before they finally made a *pondok pesantren* for people who wanted to learn Islam.

The function of this religious institution lasted until the era of Islamic Mataram where sekaten, as a tool for Sultan Agung, faced the Dutch colonial invaders who wanted to enter Java in 1628-1629. The psychology of the Javanese people was wavering because of the many conspiracies carried out by the Dutch colonial colonialists. Physical attacks have been carried out by Sultan Agung, but to overcome the conspiracy, the public must realize Islamic religious education. Strengthening through this dimension requires strategies and approaches that are difficult. Sekaten was taken as an effort by the Sultan to strengthen the loyalty of the people to the kingdom (Meersbergen, 2021). During the destruction of *Paheman Radya Pustaka* by the Dutch colonial government, the "kepatihan" building founded by Patih Sasradiningrat IV must be destroyed forever (Alhamami, 2020; Arainikasih, 2021). Only sekaten is the only Islamic educational institution typical of the Surakarta palace that is still enjoyed by the public.

Sekaten: From Traditions, Cultural Heritage, to Cultural-Religious Tourism

The sekaten tradition is unique because, besides combining Javanese culture with Islam, it also combines the essence of religion, culture and tourism. *Grebeg maulud*, for example, is an icon of the popular sekaten tradition known to the international community. The procession of the mountain procession from the palace to the courtyard of the Masjid Agung to fight for food, fruits, vegetables, and other produce invites many people to join the food fight.

People believe that the food that is got if it is on the ground or eaten will bring blessings and safety. As discussed, sekaten is a religious institution of the sultanate, in the Surakarta palace. For example, sekaten extends Mataram. When the Javanese people were still unfamiliar

with Islam, sekaten was a medium for channelling the Islamic ideology of the palace. But over time, the emergence of Islamic educational institutions after the independence kingdom made this tradition lose its function in the Surakarta palace. Sekaten is only a 'cultural heritage' left by the Surakarta palace. Meanwhile, in the Yogyakarta palace, the sekaten has three functions as described previously. However, according to several circles, including religious and cultural observers, with PMPS, the public's interest in the sekaten ritual has decreased. They come to shop more and enjoy culinary delights and travel instead of participating in enlivening the sekaten tradition.

In the past, sekaten as a tool of religious propaganda through culture is currently deemed inappropriate, and the potential for cultural heritage is used by businesses to commercialise this traditional ceremony. It could be said that the shift in the value of sekaten was also influenced by the respective existences of the two palaces. The unstable political condition of the Surakarta keraton after Indonesian independence ended with the freezing of the palace by the Indonesian government in 1950 because of an internal kingdom crisis that resulted in the Surakarta palace losing its dignity as Islamic ruler in Java because of various rebellions that occurred (M. C. Ricklefs, 2019). Meanwhile, in the Yogyakarta palace, the shift indicator is because of the 'triangle' orientation, as previously described above. The increasing awareness of religion and the proliferation of Islamic educational institutions also affect people's interpretation of the sekaten tradition. This tradition is mostly understood as an 'entertainment' ceremony rather than a symbol of its Islamic identity.

Finally, initially sekaten as a cultural heritage tradition, turned into an object of interest in cultural tourism that generates economic value. The effort to preserve the sekaten tradition as described above serves as a cultural heritage inherited from the previous Javanese Islamic rulers. When the sekaten tradition has shifted in that direction, the objectification of "culture" is reduced to "art

culture” which can then be commercialised. The practice of cultural commercialisation is the impact of government policies promoting cultural traditions in the tourism sector. In addition, the factor of changes in social conditions and the circulation of commodification actors such as investors, tourism managers, government, and private parties ultimately causes a circle that is difficult to change when culture has been commercialised.

Conclusion

The history of sekaten since the era of the Demak Sultanate in the 14th century until now has experienced a shift in the value and substance of its traditions. As a product of assimilation, before Demak came to power, sekaten originated from a Hindu tradition called *aswamedha* and turned into *shraddha*, a ritual for worshipping ancestors in Hindu mythology. Because this tradition has been ingrained in Javanese society, in the era of the Wali Sanga (seven Islamic guardians) it was later converted into *sekaten* with the full support of the Demak Sultanate. At this time, the sekaten functioned as a ‘second madrasa’ as a religious education institution for the Javanese people to guide them to this knowledge. Sekaten continued to exist with its role as the second madrasa until the Islamic Mataram sultanate, until the split of the two Javanese Islamic kingdoms into the Surakarta Sultanate and the Yogyakarta Sultanate after the Giyanti Agreement. The shift in value occurred when the Sultanate of Surakarta collapsed after the independence of Indonesia and the influence of globalisation that occurred in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta. After these two incidents, the sekaten tradition is no longer a religious educational institution or a symbol of the Islamic kingdom, but there is a distortion from the objectification of “culture” to “cultural arts” which can then be commercialised through cultural tourism destination programs. The substance of the shift from religious-cultural syncretism gave birth to cultural commodification, opening a new pattern space that the heritage of cultural traditions is a national asset for the development

of a creative economy that can improve the economic welfare of the community and re-strengthen the identity of the Islamic kingdom which is increasingly being lost by globalisation.

Acknowledgement

We thank the *Kudus State Islamic Institute* for its support while researching Central Java in mid-2019. We also thank the *Center for the Study of the Muslim Society (PPMM) in Malang* for helping to compile the data and elaborate it so that this paper can be enjoyed by readers. We thank the *abdi ndalem* of the Yogyakarta Keraton and representatives from the public relations of keraton who have provided data and information regarding the sekaten ceremony.[]

Bibliography

- Alhamami, A. A. R. (2020). Paheman Radyapustaka sebagai Skriptorium. *Manuskripta*, 10 (2), 249–249. <https://doi.org/10.33656/manuskripta.v10i2.167>
- Anderson, G., & Hale, G. (2019). Borders in Globalization: Alberta in a BiG Context. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 34 (2), 149–156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2018.1481447>
- Arainikasih, A. A. (2021). Heritage Politics and Museums During Japanese Occupation Period, 1942-1945. *International Review of Humanities Studies*, 6 (1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.7454/irhs.v6i1.304>
- Askuri, A., & Kuipers, J. C. (2019). An orientation to be a good millennial Muslims: State and the politics of naming in islamizing Java. *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 9 (1), 31–55. <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v9i1.31-55>
- Aspers, P., & Corte, U. (2019). What is Qualitative in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Sociology*, 42 (2), 139–160. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-019-9413-7>
- Aurini, J. D., Heath, M., & Howells, S. (2021). *The How to of Qualitative Research*. SAGE.

- Bebbington, A., Dharmawan, L., Fahmi, E., & Guggenheim, S. (2004). Village politics, culture and community-driven development: Insights from Indonesia. *Progress in Development Studies*, 4 (3), 187–205. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1464993404ps085oa>
- Boman, B. (2021). Parallelization: The Fourth Leg of Cultural Globalization Theory. *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science*, 55 (2), 354–370. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12124-021-09600-4>
- Bourchier, D. M. (2019). Two Decades of Ideological Contestation in Indonesia: From Democratic Cosmopolitanism to Religious Nationalism. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 49 (5), 713–733. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2019.1590620>
- Clarke, D. (2016). Theorising the role of cultural products in cultural diplomacy from a Cultural Studies perspective. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 22 (2), 147–163. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2014.958481>
- Co^okun, G. (2021). Authentic Experience in Tourism and Commodification. *Journal of Tourism Leisure and Hospitality*, 3 (2), 95–102. <https://doi.org/10.48119/toleho.867086>
- Danesi, M. (2018). *Popular Culture: Introductory Perspectives*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Das, S. (2021). In Search of the Prototype: An Art Historical Enquiry into the Evolving Form of Pratimas in Kumartuli, West Bengal. In S. K. Das & B. Basak (Eds.), *The Making of Goddess Durga in Bengal: Art, Heritage and the Public* (pp. 131–154). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-0263-4_6
- Edensor, T. (2020). *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003086178>
- Fauzia, A. (2019). Soul Catcher: Java's Fiery Prince Mangkunagara I, 1726–1795, by M.C. Ricklefs. *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, 175 (2–3), 394–397. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-17502014>
- Florida, N. K. (2018). Pustaka Raja Histories: Majapahit, Mn 81-84. In *Pustaka Raja Histories: Majapahit, Mn 81-84* (pp. 65–66). Cornell University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501721588-014>
- Gallop, A. T. (2016). The Early Use of Seals in the Malay World. *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, 102, 125–164.
- Gao, C., Du, G., Liu, S., Zhang, D., Zhang, K., & Zeng, B. (2020). Field study on the treatment of collapsible loess using vibratory probe compaction method. *Engineering Geology*, 274, 105715. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enggeo.2020.105715>
- Geertz, C. (1983). *Abangan, santri, priyayi: Dalam masyarakat Jawa*. Pustaka Jaya.
- Hilmy, M. (2018). Towards a religiously hybrid identity? The changing face of Javanese Islam. *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, 12 (1), 45–68. <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2018.12.1.45-68>
- Isra, S., & Faiz, P. M. (2021). The Role of the Constitutional Court in Protecting Minority Rights: A Case on Traditional Beliefs in Indonesia. *Litigating the Rights of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples in Domestic and International Courts*, 125–148. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004461666_006
- Jacobsen, K. A. (2018). Pilgrimage rituals and technological change: Alterations in the shraddha ritual at Kapilashram in the town of Siddhpur in Gujarat. In *Religion and Technology in India*. Routledge.
- Jenkins, H., Peters-Lazaro, G., & Shresthova, S. (2020). *Popular Culture and the Civic Imagination: Case Studies of Creative Social Change*. NYU Press.
- Jensen, L. A., Arnett, J. J., & McKenzie, J. (2011). Globalization and Cultural Identity. In S. J. Schwartz, K. Luyckx, & V. L. Vignoles (Eds.), *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research* (pp. 285–301). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-7988-9_13

- Kim, S., Whitford, M., & Arcodia, C. (2019). Development of intangible cultural heritage as a sustainable tourism resource: The intangible cultural heritage practitioners' perspectives. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 14 (5–6), 422–435. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2018.1561703>
- Kumar, A. (2020). Panji in Javanese court literature and beyond. *Wacana*, 21 (1), 135–155. <https://doi.org/10.17510/wacana.v21i1.889>
- Lancet, T. (2018). Indonesia disavows “unity in diversity”. *The Lancet*, 392 (10142), 96. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)31564-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)31564-2)
- McIntosh, A. J., & C. Prentice, R. (1999). Affirming authenticity: Consuming cultural heritage. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26 (3), 589–612. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383\(99\)00010-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(99)00010-9)
- Meersbergen, G. van. (2021). ‘Safe Habitations’: Colonial Settlement in Ceylon and Madras (pp. 201–220). Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004471825_009
- Mokgachane, T., Basupi, B., & Lenao, M. (2021). Implications of cultural commodification on the authenticity of iKalanga music: A case of Domboshaba traditional music festival in Botswana. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 19 (2), 153–165. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2019.1700989>
- Muttaqin, A. (2014). From occultism to hybrid Sufism: The transformation of an Islamic-hybrid spiritual group in contemporary Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 4 (1), 81–104. <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v4i1.81-104>
- Okely, J. (2020). *Anthropological Practice: Fieldwork and the Ethnographic Method*. Routledge.
- Piccardo, C., & Canepa, M. (2021). Cultural Ecology: Paradigm for a Sustainable Man-Nature Relationship. In W. Leal Filho, A. Marisa Azul, L. Brandli, A. Lange Salvia, & T. Wall (Eds.), *Partnerships for the Goals* (pp. 248–258). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95963-4_26
- Pigeaud, T. G. Th. (1962). The Posthumous Ceremony in Honour of the Râjapatnî in 1362. In T. G. Th. Pigeaud (Ed.), *Java in the 14th Century: A Study in Cultural History* (pp. 169–211). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-011-8776-3_9
- Prakash, G. (1997). The Modern Nation's Return in the Archaic. *Critical Inquiry*, 23 (3), 536–556. <https://doi.org/10.1086/448842>
- Raharjo, N. P., Rozi, B., Burhani, R., & Raya, M. K. F. (2020). Indeks Literasi Digital Muslim Milenial di Indonesia. *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam*, 10 (2), 370–408. <https://doi.org/10.15642/jki.2020.10.2.370-408>
- Ratnawati, & Santoso, P. (2021). Gender politics of Sultan Hamengkubuwono x in the succession of Yogyakarta palace. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 7 (1), 1976966. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2021.1976966>
- Ricklefs, M. (1972). A consideration of three versions of the babad tanah djawi, with excerpts on the fall of madjapahit. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 35 (2), 285–315. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0041977X00109371>
- Ricklefs, M. C. (2008). The birth of the abangan. *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, 162 (1), 35–55. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-90003673>
- Ricklefs, M. C. (2019). The Sweat of the King: State Wealth vs. Private Royal Wealth in Pre-colonial Islamic Javanese Kingdoms. *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, 175 (1), 59–66. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-17501020>
- Salazar, N. B. (2010). Tourism and cosmopolitanism: A view from below. *International Journal of Tourism Anthropology*, 1 (1), 55–69. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJTA.2010.036846>
- Sastrawan, W. J. (2020). How to read a chronicle. *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 48 (140), 2–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2020.1701325>

- Soukup, M., Lužný, D., Bláha, J. D., & Skupnik, J. (2021). The aura of tattoos: The commodification of tradition in Buscalan village, the Philippines. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 49 (3), 153–160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajss.2021.04.001>
- Susilo, S. (2016). Common identity framework of cultural knowledge and practices of Javanese Islam. *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 6 (2), 161–184. <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v6i1.161-184>
- Tedjowirawan, A. (2015). Dewi Rukmawati sebagai Penasihat di dala Serat Pustakaraja. *Jumantara: Jurnal Manuskrip Nusantara*, 6 (1), 19–67. <https://doi.org/10.37014/jumantara.v6i1.308>
- Timothy, D. J. (2021). Cultural Heritage and Tourism: An Introduction. In *Cultural Heritage and Tourism*. Channel View Publications. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781845417727>
- Ullah, A. K. M. A., & Ming Yit Ho, H. (2021). Globalisation and Cultures in Southeast Asia: Demise, Fragmentation, Transformation. *Global Society*, 35 (2), 191–206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2020.1747992>
- Utomo, A. J., & McDonald, P. F. (2021). Internal migration, group size, and ethnic endogamy in Indonesia. *Geographical Research*, 59 (1), 56–77. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-5871.12433>
- Van den Steen, E. (2010). On the origin of shared beliefs (and corporate culture). *The RAND Journal of Economics*, 41 (4), 617–648. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1756-2171.2010.00114.x>
- Wade, G. (1997). Melaka in Ming Dynasty Texts. *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 70 (1 (272)), 31–69.
- Ward, C., & Geeraert, N. (2016). Advancing acculturation theory and research: The acculturation process in its ecological context. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 8, 98–104. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.09.021>
- Weber, Y., Belkin, T., & Tarba, S. Y. (2011). Negotiation, Cultural Differences, and Planning in Mergers and Acquisitions. *Journal of Transnational Management*, 16 (2), 107–115. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15475778.2011.571640>
- Wessing, R. (2003). The kraton-city and the realm: Sources and movement of power in Java. *Framing Indonesian Realities*, 199–250. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004486829_012
- Wolf, J. H. (2018). Historical Methods. *Journal of Human Lactation*, 34 (2), 282–284. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0890334418757448>
- Woodward, M. (2011a). Order and Meaning in the Yogyakarta Kraton. In M. Woodward (Ed.), *Java, Indonesia and Islam* (pp. 137–167). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0056-7_4
- Woodward, M. (2011b). The Garebeg Malud: Veneration of the Prophet as Imperial Ritual. In M. Woodward (Ed.), *Java, Indonesia and Islam* (pp. 169–198). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0056-7_5
- Young, M., & Markham, F. (2020). Tourism, capital, and the commodification of place. *Progress in Human Geography*, 44 (2), 276–296. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132519826679>
- Zapp, M., Marques, M., & Powell, J. J. W. (2021). Blurring the boundaries. University actorhood and institutional change in global higher education. *Comparative Education*, 57 (4), 538–559. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2021.1967591>
- Zhang, H., Leung, X. Y., & Bai, B. (2021). Destination sustainability in the sharing economy: A conceptual framework applying the capital theory approach. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 0 (0), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2021.1937076>

