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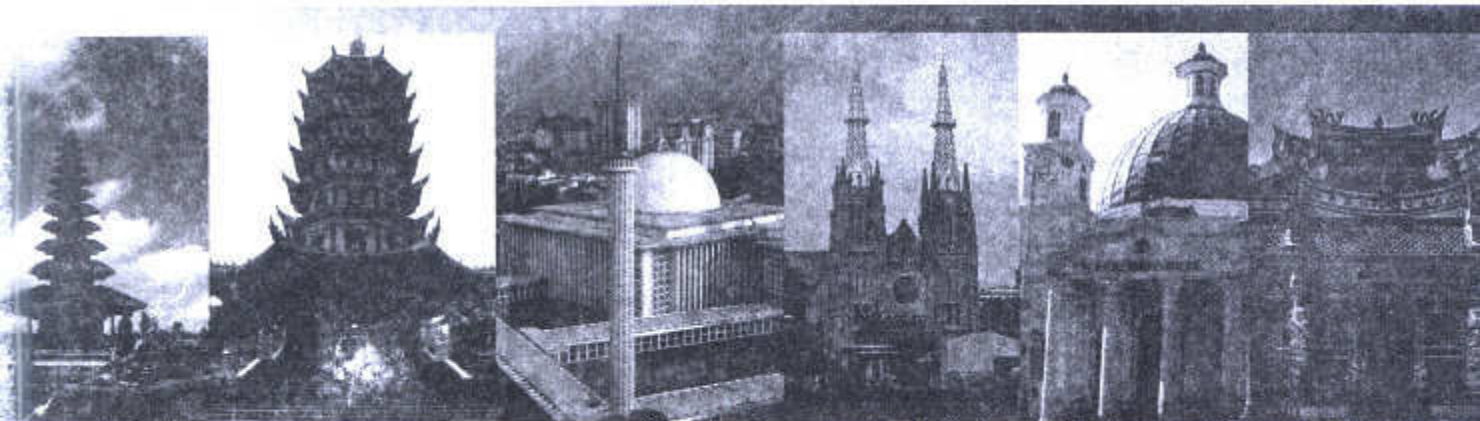


Center for Research and Development of Religious Literature and Heritage
Office for Research and Development and Training
Ministry of Religious Affairs of The Republic of Indonesia

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CONTENTS

Editorial Notes	ii
1. The Growth of “Islamic” Radical Books in Indonesia <i>Choirul Fuad Yusuf</i>	1 – 22
2. Women, Leadership, and Mosque’s Cultures: Indonesian Heritage in New York City <i>Etin Anwar</i>	23 – 52
3. Lyrics in the <i>Dolalak</i> Dance Purworejo Central Java as a Form of Islamic Folk Songs <i>Djarot Heru Santosa, Timbul Haryono, and RM Soedarsono</i>	53 – 94
4. Cultural Strategies of Abdi Dalem in the Global Era in Achieving Welfare <i>Sulistiyowati</i>	95 – 116
5. Traditional Ritual Water Conservation, and Islamic Thought <i>Mohammad Fathi Royyani and Abdul Syukur</i>	117 – 144
6. Islamic and Customary Law in Aceh Darussalam Constitution <i>Gunawan Adnan</i>	145 – 176
7. أثر التشيع في تصحيح الحديث: دراسة عن تصحيح أبي عبد الله الحاكم النيسابوي حديثي الطبر ومن كنت مولاه فعليّ مولاه في كتاب المستدرک على الصحيحين <i>Abdul Malik Gazali</i>	177 – 204
About Authors	205
Notes to Contributors	209

EDITORIAL NOTES

The growth of religiously radical books has already occurred in parallel to the growth of universal ideologies, philosophical thoughts, and universal ideas of religion in the world-wide, spread globally by information and technological progress. This first article, “The Growth of “Islamic” Radical Books in Indonesia”, written by Choirul Fuad Yusuf, sociologically, attempts to describe how the development and spread of Islamic literary works, particularly on the conflictually-nuanced books in Indonesia. The article of which data is referred to the research-findings on *Survey of Religious Books in Indonesia*, highlighted some notes. *First*, the growth and development of Islamic books, since last decade, tends to be strongly dominated by the practical-Islam books. This phenomenon, is culturally predominantly caused by any pragmatic view of the Muslims at large. *Second*, if it is compared to its former development, the liberal books of Islam seems to face any decline of quantity and interest due to its messages perceived as too freely secular. *Third*, both fundamental books containing the ideas of teaching-purification, and radical “Islamic” books proposing the *syariah* Islam implementation totally and establishing Islamic state in Indonesia, tend to very be stagnant and not too popular amongst Indonesian Muslims because of their political aspiration for defending Indonesia as their country.

The second article is about “Lyrics in the Dolalak Dance in Purworejo Central Java” is written by Djarot, Timbul and Sudarsono. They highlighted that Islamic education teachings which is transmitted performatively in the form of folk-songs is relatively very effective. The article, which is very descriptive and informative in nature, shows that the performance art is methodologically significant and functional in the approaching people’s soul and spirituality to be closer to the God believed. So, for the future, the writers confidently recommend to Government to maintain and conserve this traditional method of Islamic teachings or *dakwah Islamiyah*.

The third article, Etin Anwar which talks on the use of social, religious and cultural heritage for community building and mosque participation by Indonesian Muslim communities in New York City and its impact on women's leadership in al-Hikmah mosque and their production of moral agency and pious self in the mosque setting. She argues that Indonesian Muslim women in Al-Hikmah mosque have more leadership capacity due to the cultural heritage of Indonesian Islam and the complementary status of women in their communities.

Further, Sulistiyowati's article on "Cultural Strategies of Abdi Dalem in the Global Era in Achieving Welfare" talks about the life of Abdi Dalem in facing the globalization era, particularly focusing on the why-ness of the Abdi Dalem's have a strong dedication to the King. The Abdi Dalem's (royal officials) of Jogjakarta Palace, historically, devoted of the Kings on the reach of blessing (*ngalap berkah*). They believed in the non-material as the highest values. To be an Abdi Dalem who devotes to the King will be functionally effective to gain both inner and outer welfare. Through her research carried out in 2009, she concludes that to be Abdi Dalem, actually, is not only motivated for the need of seeking for blessings (of the King or Sultan), but it is also inherited by their ancestors. Although, the monthly salary (*paring dalem*) received by Abdi Dalem, ranging from IDR 7,000.00 up to IDR 15,000.00 but they feel happier and more fortunate in getting welfare. This social fact, of course, becomes a very unique phenomenon in the modern era or *jaman saiki*.

The fifth article is "Traditional Ritual, Water Conservation and Islamic Thought, written by Muhammad Fathi Royyani. This article discusses the traditional ritual of water conservation and its relation to the Islamic thoughts on utilizing the natural resource. This article, substantially, explicates of how the relation of the concept of *Kawin Cai* and Islamic thought, known as the Seven Grade (*Martabat Tujuh*). This article important to read though it seems to be only as a reportive work.

The sixth article of "Islamic and Customary Law in the Aceh Darussalam Constitution" written by Gunawan Adnan tries to show readers that there is a tied and hard relationship between Islamic law

and customary law in the Aceh Darussalam constitution. This relationship phenomenon is clearly seen through the examination study of the manuscripts of the so-called the three law of Aceh, especially pertaining to *siyasaḥ*. The article jumps to a brief conclusion that the most Islamic law, especially the political domain (*siyasaḥ*) has been permeated into Monarchic Aceh Darussalam structure. The institution of *Ahlul Halli wal Aqdi* (parliament), *syura* system, King and functionary conditions are systemically needed for carrying out the state. Further, based on *qanun*, the form of Aceh Darussalam kingdom is not purely a monarchy, endowed by generations, but has been constructed by modern Islamic Republic State. Moreover, the relationship between Islamic law and customary law (*adat*) in Aceh Darussalam kingdom has already been found in the form of both total and selective absorptions.

The last article, written in Arabic “أثر التشيع في تصحيح الحديث”, by Abdul malik Ghazali, studied on the book of *Al-Mustadrak ‘ala Ṣaḥīḥain* written by Abu Abdillah al-Hakim al-Nisaburi (w. 405). The author argues that Al-Hakim easily approved on *hadis* either *hadis saḥih* or *hadis hasan*. This action, at least, indicated that Al-Hakim was already influenced by *syiah* domination in the reign of Muslim states at that time.

Traditional Ritual, Water Conservation, and Islamic Thought

By Mohammad Fathi Royyani and Abdul Syukur

Abstract

Traditional ritual is a kind of expression of art and culture as well as a form of human appreciation of nature, gained through long term and perpetual processes. Traditional ritual thus can thus be regarded as traditional wisdom. Kawin Cai is one of the traditional rituals in Kuningan society derived from inter religious views. Through this ritual we could tell that the people respect their natural environment for sustainable living. Nonetheless, most of the symbolic practices in the ritual are no longer understood by the people, so that anthropological approach is needed to interpret them.

Keywords: local wisdom, religious thought, traditional ritual, water conservation

Introduction

This article will discuss interaction between local beliefs and religion that showed by traditional ritual. This ritual basically is constructed by local people as their expression and appreciation of the nature. Ritual is one of local strategies to conserve their natural resources. During the ritual, many attributes showed and these not only refer to religion but also to local perspective about the nature (Dafni, 2007).

For local people nature is an important thing which should be protected. Nature gives many things to support human life. Climate, plant, water, and animal are nature elements that nature

provides. Every local people in Indonesia have specific expression relating to nature. The expression depends on nature condition. For Sundanese people, for example, water is an environmental element that gives people many things, from domestic purposes till economic ones.

Water is an important thing. How Sundanese people responds water condition and manage their water resources will be discussed through historical and Islamic perspective. How local people and Islamic through negotiate and interact also will discussing.

One of the non-biological resources belonging to the nation of Indonesia is water resources. Water is a natural resource which becomes a basic requirement for maintaining the balance of living beings in their lives, both biological and non-biological. In the unavailability of water there will be no continuity of life. Despite being a fundamental requirement for human life the availability of water in some areas is becoming a problem. Some factors that affect water availability are the rate of population that rapidly grow bigger and bigger and rapid development of housing so forests as water absorbing area has been reduced drastically. If these water resources are disturbed so that will surely cause an imbalance of natural life.

Life order is a set of interactions or relationships between living things, between animals and animals, animals and herbs, plants and plants, man and man, man and animals, humans and plants, as well as the relationships between living things with the transcendental, i.e. God. In the biology terminology, this order is known as an ecosystem.

An unbalancing ecosystem that occurs in the nature as a result of disruption of water resources utilization due to exploitation of the nature can cause a variety of disasters. Flood, land erosion and sedimentation of water absorbing area as well as drought are the consequences when water resources are disturbed.

Not to mention a number of other living beings and non-beings that their existences depend on water. The unbalancing ecosystem will affect biological types and diversity or even their extinctions.

Among factors that being the cause of the disruption of the natural resources is the increasing population. The increasing population of course requires additional number of land for settlement, and when the number is getting bigger and bigger it can reduce the land that becomes water absorbing area. Another thing that can interfere with the water resource is a change of the society's view and attitude towards water. The change of life has also changed the social values related to water use. Many people still regard water as a gift from God so that it is free for them to use it unwisely or to disuse it as they want.

Moreover, the reduction of water absorbing area also occurs because of deforestations. Forest is very significant to support the availability of water for the region around. Today's problem of the availability of clean water for human needs is increasingly critical. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to produce a rule with regard to water resources sustainability. Otherwise, the water resources will run out.

Significance of water as determinant of the ecosystem balance and the fulfilment of human life needs has become a factor conducive to the emergence of social conflicts, because each seeks to control the water resource. Water issues have also become international discourse today, particularly issue of the privatization when water is controlled by companies for private benefits.

Although there has been a "frenzied" situation about water problem but efforts to save water resources through conservation of the forests, for instance, have not been a focus of attention from many people. As a result, humans behaviour that exploit natural resources also has still not diminished.

One of the areas that have a strategic role in water supply for the needs of people is Kuningan district. It does not only supply water to its people but also surrounding areas such as Cirebon and Majalengka districts. As an area located in the foothill of Mt. Ciremai, Kuningan has dozens of water sources that provide water for different needs, such as home consumption, as well as for ecological, agricultural, plantation, and economic purposes.

With regard to the strategic position of Kuningan district and growing up disruption of the region as a result of human behaviour that could potentially reduce the quantity and quality of water the local government finally issued Regional Regulation (*peraturan daerah*) No. 38/2002 that contains rules of spatial setting and states that Mt. Ciremai is an area of natural conservation.

This legal effort to save water resources is undoubtedly needed, because in the absence of legal devices an arbitrary human behavior concerning water usage will increasingly be uncontrollable. Water management is also required to manage and utilize water resources.

Sometimes, the establishment of legally water utilization alone does not make the society aware enough about the need to maintain the sustainability of water resources. For that reason, it is necessary to revive the traditional wisdom that remains among people. Because of its latency and closeness to people's lives traditional wisdom will be surely more effective than formal rules.

Since the initial history of human life people have managed natural resources with regard to their sustainability. They have not taken over what they need. People have their own mechanisms in using and keeping nature so that it remains sustainable. Among these mechanisms that are able to maintain balance of the ecosystem are myths and tradition that can be found among the society.

Besides being one element of cultural expressions and having religious values traditional rituals can also function as a medium of education. In this case, it can be stated that traditional ritual performance is as a "system of inheritance" in the form of cultural diffusion.

Fieldwork concerning research on relationship between traditional ritual and water conservation was conducted for three-time visiting to the village of Manis Kidul and Babakan Mulya. The first one was on November 8, 2007 when the *Kawin Cai* ritual was held; the second one was from May 26 to 30, 2008; while the third one was from June 16 to 20, 2008.

During these stays in those villages the researchers observed not only the procession of the ritual but also patterns of social life. Also, the researchers conducted deep interviews with both key and ordinary informants. The first ones were defined based on information from local people that they should have more knowledge concerning the tradition. Other key informants were who defined by the researchers themselves with regard to their involvement in the ritual such as practitioners and the village officials.

While ordinary informant were selected randomly when the researchers observed the ritual as well as their daily lives. These observations and interview with the informants were done either at their homes or wherever they were such as in paddy fields, shops and vendors and plantations.

Because of concerning a specific issue this research can be said as a case study (Stake 2000). As the research focuses on the specific case the researchers should establish concepts that relate to the object being studied, select phenomena or events and create interpretation about phenomenon and events were observed.

Research was conducted in two villages, i.e. in Manis Kidul and Babakan Mulya, sub-district of Jalaksana, Kuningan

district. This location selection was based on the fact that in these villages the traditional ritual of *Kawin Cai* usually takes place.

Within these villages one can find springs that are not only sacrificed by the local people because of magical power they have but also attracted tourists to come for bathing. As tourist destination these places have given villagers and people around economic benefits. On the other hand, tourist comings have local tradition "contaminated". Tourist activities have also made local people access to the water limited and not more freely as before.

Some methods of collecting data used in this study were participatory observation, interview, life-history, and books study. Participatory observation included video documentation and taking notes about detail activities relating to the *Kawin Cai* ritual.

To explore meaning of these activities the interviews were conducted both with the Chairman of the executive Committee, other practitioners involved with the ritual and public watchers. Some public figures were also interviewed with regard to the ritual activities. Interviews with public figures are important in terms of their point of views about meanings of the ritual and their attitudes towards water.

Books research was meant to collect data to support and compare in the analyzing data obtained from the fieldwork. Theoretically, more and more data collected from literatures will enrich data as a whole and sharpen the analysing process. Literatures data collections were mainly conducted out of the ritual activities.

There were many activities in the process of *Kawin Cai* ritual. This procession was full of symbolic things as both cultural and religious expressions. These symbolic expressions were showed in the form of specific terms and performances. Consequently, we have to interpret them in order to understand the meanings contained in such expressions (Geertz, 1973; Rabinow and William M. Sullivan, 1979).

This interpretive approach treats the culture or tradition as a system of meaning. In the interpretive approach, culture should be understood broadly as a net of semiotic meaning (web of significance) or meaning patterns that formed symbols so that in order to find out such meaning we must analysis and interpret those symbols (Geertz 1973: 5).

Culture, whatever its form, is a pattern of transmitted meanings were historically being formed in the symbols, or a system of conceptions inherited in the form of expressions and symbolical signs which become the means for people to communicate in order to preserve and develop their knowledge about their attitudes toward life (Geertz 1973: 89). Thus it can be said that the *Kawin Cai* ritual is the same as the text that must be read, and observers are the readers who need to find a set of signs in order to find its meaning as a whole.

In addition to interpretation, understanding and analyzing meaning of the *Kawin Cai* ritual can also be done with "treating" it as folklore. Danandjaja (2002), for example, places traditional ritual as folklore. Grouping the traditional ritual as folklore by Danandjaja is similar to what has been done by Brunvand (1968 in Danandjaja, 2002).

According to Brunvand (1968) in Danandjaja (2002) folklore can be grouped into three: the oral folklore, partly folklore and folklore which is not verbal. Viewed by this method the traditional ritual of *Kawin Cai* can be included into partly folklore group. This is because the traditional ritual contains oral tradition in the form of spoken language, and because language as a means of communication by which symbolic message delivered then it can be said that the traditional ritual is a social construction. By establishing the ritual, society's framework with regard to water is formed.

Folklore that existed in the community contains myths. The *Kawin Cai* ritual also contains myths. Myth according to

Hadimulyono in Minsarwati (2002) is an event in the past that reveal or give meaning to people's life and determine their fate in the days ahead. By this definition myth will bring influence on human behaviour in all aspects of human life, whether social, economic, cultural, and ecological.

People in Manis Kidul and Babakan Mulya villages do not know person who first performed this *Kawin Cai* ritual and when it started to be implemented. They just said that this ritual has been carried out by their forefathers since the days of ancient times (*baheula*). In fact, they even do not know the reason for this ceremony was held. They only carry out the ritual as a custom that has been inherited from their ancestors since ancient times.

General View of the Location

The *Kawin Cai* ritual takes place in two locations, namely in *Balong Dalem* and *Sumur Tujuh Cibulan*. These places of the ritual are located in two villages, namely Babakan Mulya and Manis Kidul. Socio-cultural condition of the people in both villages seen from their daily work is that majority of the population are farmers, though recently some choose other professions.

Speaking of population, by June 2008 the population of Babakan Mulya village is 3,483 people, with the composition of the male 1,742 people and female 1,742 people. In this village teenager population, between 15-19 years of age, is the most that is 337 people comprising 173 boys and 165 girls. On the other side, the population of Manis Kidul village is 6,131 people consisted of male 3,121 people and female 3,010 people. As in the village of Babakan Mulya, population of Manis Kidul village are dominantly teenager.

The two sites that are central to the implementation of the *Kawin Cai* ritual are *Balong Dalem* and *Sumur Tujuh Cibulan*.

These two sites are sacred to the community, and *Sumur Tujuh* (seven springs) located in Cibulan, Manis Kidul are even not only used by people from the surrounding for their daily lives but also visited by people from distant areas, such as Cirebon, Indramayu, Majalengka, or even from Jakarta for a variety of purposes or "intention" they have. *Sumur Tujuh* or seven wells have their own names, and each name has its own meaning:

- The first one is named *Kejayaan* because its water is believed to have 'power' to help a person to achieve success.
- The second one is named *Keselamatan* because it is believed to be the source of salvation.
- The third one is named *Pengabulan* which means that it can grant any wish.
- The fourth one is named *Kamulyaan*, which means that it is a source for the glory of life
- The fifth one is named *Cisadane* which means that it is the beginning of Genesis.
- The sixth one is named *Cirencana* which means that any human plan or desires can be fulfilled.
- The seventh one is named *Kemudahan* which means that it can help and facilitate any human effort in grabbing all the plans.

Next to the location of the wells is the swimming pool of Cibulan in which a kind of fish named *kancra* sanctified by people around. They call it *ikan dewa* (the god fish). There are two versions regarding to the sanctification of the fish. According to the first version the fish is the reincarnation of a daughter of the gods from the heaven, while another version says that the fish is the reincarnation of soldiers loyal to *Prabu Siliwangi* but condemned by *Prabu Kiansantang* because they did not want to embrace Islam.

Talking about seven wells, the guardian (*kuncen*) of the Cibulan swimming pool said that that number is a symbol representing the human search for authentic identity, i.e. human essence. According to him, the philosophy of the seven wells is that there are six brothers and the seventh one is upright (*sedulur enam ketujuh pancer*). He continued that people who come there and pray and draw water from these seven sources were classified into two purposes, i.e. those who are "looking for" wealth and the others want to "understand the times".

As for sanctification of Balong Dalem by surrounding people it is associated with the development of the pool that historically originated from the Sultanate of Cirebon. According to oral stories collected through interviews it is known that at the beginning Balong Dalem was built by the Sultanate of Cirebon, who was also known as *Sultan Haji Matang*, for the purpose of his bathe.

At first, there were three water source located around the Balong Dalem, but now there are only two sources still producing water, i.e. the springs named Cikabayan and Cikungkulan. From the Cikungkulon spring water is divided into two parts, partly for purposes of irrigation and partly to fill the Balong Dalem. While Cikabayan spring today produces a little water.

Based on observation, condition of Balong Dalem as a tourist attraction is less well maintained, thereby reducing the interest of visitors. Such condition is different from the Cibulan swimming pool which is relatively well preserved. As a result, in 2007 the Cibulan swimming pool was able to donate financial revenue for the village of Rp. 350 millions.

The existence of the seven sacred wells is associated with the story of Sundanese people in Kuningan as well as Majalengka districts and the surrounding area with regard to the story of *Prabu Siliwangi*. At the time of his life, before becoming the King of

Pajajaran, *Prabu Siliwangi* was a King of the Kingdom that existed in Majalengka, not so far from Kuningan.

According to the story, *Prabu Siliwangi* often travelled in order to build his Kingdom. Remains of the past in seven wells are probably the remnants of him when he travelled to Karawang to meet *Sheikh Quro*, an Islamic proselytizer in Karawang district. The story also tells that *Prabu Siliwangi* married *Nyai Subang Larang*, one of *Sheikh Quro* disciples. From his marriage with *Nyai Subang Larang*, *Prabu Siliwangi* had three children, namely *Walangsungsang (Pangeran Cakrabuana/Mbah Kuwu)*, *Rara Santang* (later better known as *Syarifah Muda'im*/mother of *Syarif Hidayatullah*), and Prince *Kian Santang*.

Later, when the Kingdom of Cirebon evolve and 'colonised' surrounding area, many of the stories associated with the Kingdom of Cirebon. One of them is the story that is told by people in Kuningan district. According to the story, one of *Syarif Hidayatullah*'s sons was Prince *Manis* who spread Islam in the area of Kuningan. From figure of this Prince the history of the village as part of the cultural identity of the community was built.

This association was done by the people to define their existence in relation to the conditions existing in the vicinity. In other words, the identity formation is not only as a 'dress' but also as part of the definition of the existing conditions related to the vicinity. Given that at the location there are remains of the past, the society tried hooking these remains with the broader context, i.e. the *Prabu Siliwangi* story.

Another story tells that in the village of *Manis Kidul* there is also relic stone of the megalithic age with footprint. Unfortunately the stone is lost because it was stolen. Again, the people tried associating this stone with the story of King *Siliwangi* that during his life *Prabu Siliwangi* was fond of travelling and visiting places that were still under his control. One of these places visited by *Prabu Siliwangi* is the region of Cirebon and Kuningan.

Cirebon is a place in which one of *Prabu Siliwangi* children founded a kingdom which later became a great one. From this child *Prabu Siliwangi* got a grandchild named Syarif Hidayatullah or Sunan Gunung Jati who was well known as Islamic proselytizer in Cirebon and the surrounding area.

Since *Prabu Siliwangi* frequently travelled, and often also passed through the area of Kuningan and took a rest in the same place, he made stone on which he used to sit scarred. This stone was surrounded by seven shallow springs. There was an oddity about such springs. The water they had it never overflowed, no matter how heavy rainfall. On the contrary, how much the water was taken it did not make the water decreased or declined.

In addition to the seven springs in Cibulan there is also a large spring with a very large water discharge so that it formed a pool and then lot of people bathing in it. It was in 1939 when the pool was made for bathing with the spring was located in the middle of the pool. From that time until now, the pool was inhabited by the god fish (*Labeobarbus dournesis*). Being live god fish in this pool indicates that the water quality is very good. The name of Cibulan itself is thought to refer to the origin of the word *Cai Katimbulan* which means water sprung up.

History of *Kawin Cai* Ritual

Based on the interview, the *Kawin Cai* ritual is a traditional ritual that has a long history. It is said that the ritual has been existed since memorial time, while other said that it has been conducted since 570 A.D. Both interpretations mean that the ritual had already existed long before Islam came to Indonesia or, even, before Indonesia and Kuningan existed. But, by defining that year seems that they are trying to anchor their tradition to Islamic history in which 570 A.D. was the birth of the prophet Muhammad so that the tradition is legitimated by Islamic doctrines.

The ritual is used to carry out on day 30th every month of *ruwah* or *rajab* according to the Islamic calendar. Association the ritual with this month is deliberately intended to honour Islamic month in which the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven (*mi'raj*). The association between the ritual and Islam shows that there is trace of Islamization in the area. However, along with time and the social development the ritual was later held on each ahead of the rainy season in the hope that the forthcoming harvest obtained good results.

There are two versions with regard to the origin of the *Kawin Cai* ritual. The first version says that this ritual was originally called *mapag cai* or to welcome water. The second says that it was originally called *nyokot cai* or to fetch water. *Mapag cai*, from which term *Kawin Cai* come, symbolizing marriage of water is based on the myth of the marriage between *Kebo Wulan* and *Sang Reti Kadayun* (son of *Manik Maya*). The ritual, therefore, is intended to welcome *Sanghyang Pwah Aci* (Goddess of *Sri*). In ritual of *Kawin Cai* water from *Balong Dalem* represents a "bridegroom" while water from *Sumur Tujuh* of Cibulan represents a "bride".

According to the informants the representation of *Sumur Tujuh* of Cibulan as bride shows that, in addition to its location lower comparing to *Balong Dalem*, it befits a woman who symbolises fertility. *Balong Dalem*, on the other hand, is upper position so it symbolizes a male. That is why its water is directly used for the purposes for people daily lives and as a boy, or men in general, need a "blessing" from a mother who is symbolized by *Sumur Tujuh* of Cibulan.

Some informants stated that there was a change of name of the ritual from *mapag cai* to the *Kawin Cai* in 2000 and this is related to the local government strategy who wanted to make the ritual is a tourism event. This government effort to change and

revitalize people tradition is intended to increase foreign exchange as well as to reconstruct people identity of Kuningan district.

This government intervention concerning local tradition is undoubtedly good in terms of reviving the old traditions; but, on the other hand, the intervention might make such a tradition lost its meaning. The tradition that should initially be life guidance (*tuntunan*) changes into tourism that makes it as merely spectacle (*tontonan*) for people.

This government intervention can be seen from the presence of the government apparatus as the most important part of the procession. *Kiwu* or village chief as representative of the government occupies a prominent position in the ritual; he is as the custodian of water that will be married.

In terms of the implementation, there are formerly 9 villages that are directly involved with the ritual as citizens in these villages take advantage of the water both from *Balong Dalem* and *Sumur Tujuh* of Cibulan. These are Babakan Mulya, Manis Kidul, Jalaksana, Sadamantra, Padangenan, Cimiru, Nangerang, Garatengah and Japara. Along time and social changes, however, there are only six villages now that are directly involved with the ritual of *Kawin Cai* i.e. Babakan Mulya, Manis Kidul, Jalaksana, Cimiru, Padangenan and Sadamantra. From these six villages, furthermore, only Babakan Mulya and Manis Kidul are actively involved because here the water sources are located.

Ritual Procession: Ethnography View on the Ritual

Based on observations and interviews, the *Kawin Cai* ritual is performed in three sessions. The first is a procession of taking water from *Balong Dalem*; secondly, taking water from the *Sumur Tujuh* of Cibulan; and finally, wedding procession of both water (*cai*). As for the implementers in this ritual are *Kuncen*

(caretaker of Springs) who performs as *Ki Lengser* and usually wears white cloth, *Kuwu* (village chief), the Elder (*sesepeuh*), and others supporting personnel such as *Pacakar*, lady-in-waiting (*Dayang*) and soldiers who dress up in Royal-style.

These four kinds of people (*Ki Lengser*, *Kuwu*, *Sesepeuh* and other supporting personnel) act as if the ritual is really human marriage procession. *Ki Lengser* acts as a religious official, *Kuwu* becomes father of the bride and bridegroom because from their administrative territory the water is taken, *Sesepeuh* acts as the Elder whose blessing is necessary, whereas other supporting personnel (*Pacakar*, *Dayang* and soldiers) act as cheerleaders and guards the marriage procession.

The initial ritual that should be conducted during the ritual is to slaughter two white goats at 12.00 exactly. But, before that a butcher and other people go to the sacred place in which the goat slaughtering will be performed. Here they are not necessary to wear ritual attributes.

Around the will-be-goat-slaughtering place food and flower offerings made by people before could be seen under trees, beside big stones or next to the water sources. When the butcher and people reach the place they, led by a religious leader (*imam*), will pray or *tawasulan* by reciting *Fatihah* (the first *surah* of Quran) all together for the purpose of the prophet, the late religious leaders (*wali*) and their ancestors benefits. The *imam* then makes prayer for the purpose of their own safety and prosperity in both Arabic and Sundanese. While they are making prayer they make a circuit of trilateral rice (*tumpeng*) and flowers. When they finish paying they will eat the rice and flowers will be poured into the goats.

Meat of the goats that have been slaughtered was cooked and at the end of the ritual was served to the guests and those who had been participating in the ritual. This is called *selamatan* or *syukuran*. At 13.00 persons in charge of the ritual were ready at a

predetermined location that is *Balong Dalem*, with all necessary equipments. During the preparation, the visitors were entertained by music from gamelan of Degung. Having considered that the all things got ready the MC (Master of Ceremonies) then announced that the procession of taking water from Pool of Cibulan would begin.

MC announced a series of procession of the ritual. Having finished announcement *Ki Lengser* soon came before *Kuwu* of Babakan Mulya to ask for his permission to take water from Pool of Cibulan. After having his permission *Ki Lengser* with a group of people went to Cibulan in Manis Kidul village. This procession was accompanied by music of *Geder*, *Ronggeng Buyut* and *Papalayan*. Usage of different kinds of music during the ritual is not only for the purpose of merely entertainment but also as an attempt to revive the Sundanese music especially that have ever existed in Kuningan district.

As soon as arrived in Cibulan, *Ki Lengser* came before the Elder (*Sesepuh*) and *Kuwu* of Manis Kidul village to convey their intention and purpose and asked their permissions to take water from Pool of Cibulan. Here there were utterances indicating as if the water was ready to be taken and to be married like human beings. Having got permission from *Kuwu* and the Elder (*Sesepuh*) of Manis Kidul village *Ki Lengser* then took water from Pool of Cibulan preceded by reciting certain prayer. The water was placed in *kendi*, an instrument made from clay (pitcher).

After taking water *Ki Lengser* went again to *Kuwu* and the Elder on Manis Kidul village to state that the water has been already taken and asked for their permissions to return to *Balong Dalem*. Both *Kuwu* and the Elder answered that they allow him and his group to go back.

The group soon went back to *Balong Dalem* in Babakan Mulya. Having arrived around *Balong Dalem*, those who were assigned to carry the water both from Pool of Cibulan and *Balong*

Dalem walked in tandem. Ki Lengser and two people who carried the water from the two pools came to face *Kiwu* of Babakan Mulya to report on a series of event that have been done and to state the next events.

After that, the Elders of Babakan Mulya village said prayers for water and soil fertility as well as life safety. Prayers performed using both Arabic and Sundanese. Then, the procession of union of water from two pools began. Those who in charge to carry water from *Balong Dalem* and of Pool of Cibulan walked in adjacent towards *Kiwu* and the Elder (Sesepuh). The latter then united the water of the two pools in a jug and finally he poured it into the fountain-head of Tirtayatra in *Balong Dalem*.

Once the water was poured into the Tirtayatra ladies-in-waiting (*para Dayang*) and *Pakacar* (soldiers) took water from that fountain-head and put it into jugs or other equipment to "bathe" village officer who is in charge of organizing irrigation, economic development and rural areas. In local term he is called "Raksabumi". This village officer bathing is intended that the officer can charge well such as keeping water sources, public welfare and so forth.

After bathing the "Raksabumi" the ritual essentially finished. However, because there were also many government officials, including the Regent of Kuningan, so the procession was followed by welcoming speech from the government officials.

Religion and the Traditional *Kawin Cai* Ritual

The *Kawin Cai* ritual is a kind of syncretism between religion and tradition. Religion, on the one hand, as normative teachings assumed come from the "heavens" is something abstract; on the other hand, religious practices are things that are real. Religious practice is a human creation so, in this sense, religion becomes part of culture. As part of the cultural system,

religion interacts with the traditions which already existed in a society. Thus, religious practice will change in line with the changes taking place in the society.

The *Kawin Cai* ritual performed by Manis Kidul and Babakan Mulya villages is a sort of "document" that describes the interaction between religion and local traditions. Reciting prayers in Arabic, *tawassulan* and certain clothing used in the ritual shows that religious teachings of Islam are involved in this traditional ritual. In other words, the *Kawin Cai* ritual is one of the remaining traces of the long history of Islam in Kuningan district.

The coming and development of Islam in Sundanese areas (*tatar Sunda*), particularly in Kuningan district, encountered two traditions at once. The first is the tradition and the rural agrarian mindset; second is a Hindu-Buddhist tradition which is strongly inherent to the society. Cultural contact between Islam and local traditions that already existed made acculturation. This acculturation between Islam in one side and local traditions on the other side is also called a syncretism.

The *Kawin Cai* ritual is a tradition typical to mountain people who are familiar with their environment. Like people of the past time they have close relationships with the environment in which they live. Various influences from agrarian, Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic traditions are clearly visible in the *Kawin Cai* ritual. Spirit offerings, prayers in Islamic way, belief in the spirits of ancestor are clear indications of influences from these three entities.

Influence of the teachings of Islam on agrarian people life in Kuningan is something that is understandably because Kuningan is a buffer area for the Islamic kingdom of Cirebon. Close distance between Kuningan and Cirebon makes Islam has developed quickly in Kuningan and rapidly been absorbed into its people tradition.

Research conducted by Hafner (1985) on the Hindu Tengger community in mount Bromo also shows how Islamic influence clearly visible in the everyday life of Tengger people. Meanwhile, Woodward (1989) who studied about syncretism between Islam and Javanese tradition in Yogyakarta sultanate also finds that the two streams blended into a new entity.

Contact between Islamic Mysticism (Tarekat) and Tradition

Based on a story related to meanings of the symbols about seven water sources (*Sumur Tujuh*) it can be guessed that the meanings are influenced by Islamic teachings particularly from the concept of Sufism "*Martabat Tujuh*" (seven realms) brought by an Acehnese *Sufi*, Abdul Rauf Singkel (d 1701), who had influenced a lot of areas in the archipelago. Among his disciples was Sheikh Abdul Muhyi (d 1736) in Priangan whose tomb is located in Pamijahan village in Tasikmalaya district (Wajdi 2004:37). Abdul Muhyi was *ulama* who became an important figure of *ulama* network in XVII century. His *sufistic* teachings even affected upon various Sufi Orders (*tarekat*) in Java (Yahya 2007; 4). These doctrines, especially doctrine of the "*Martabat Tujuh*", have influenced on the books of *Serat Tuhfah (Sekar Macapat)* in Tegal, Central Java, *Serat Centhini* by Sheikh Amongrogo in the time of Sultan Agung and *Wirid Hidayat Djati* in Cirebon (Yahya 2007; 114-129).

Abdul Muhyi's influence especially in Cirebon and Kuningan areas can be traced on the historical record of his life. According to Yahya (2007, 10), Abdul Muhyi was ever settled in the area of Darma, sub-district of Kuningan, for 7 years from 1678 to 1685. During his stay in Kuningan, Sheikh Abdul Muhyi was not only preaching to spread Islam but also likely built a knowledge networks among *ulama* in Cirebon and Kuningan, one of them was Mbah Muqayyim (the founder of Pesantren Buntet) (Wajdi 2004: 38).

A sufistic teaching of Sheikh Abdul Muhyi concerning "Martabat Tujuh" (seven realms) is associated with *tajalli* or Divine self-disclosure to His creatures. According to this teaching, the first realm is *Alam al-Ahadiyyah* that is emptiness before creation. Because God does not need a place in this first realm God is absolutely alone, only the One, without attribute, not being creative or provide any.

The second realm is *Alam al-Wahdah* which relates to the Oneness of God, there is nothing that resembles attributes of God, forms the so-called bright like *Jauhar-Awwal* (the first light which is commonly referred to as the essence of Muhammad). Essentially, in this realm there is a real thing since God has attributes or *ta'ayyun awwal* such as *qadim* (eternal), *azali* (pre-existing) and everlasting.

The third realm is *Alam al-Wahidiyyah*. At this realm God began a subject (entity) to another without any facilities. Through utterance of "*Kun*" (be as it is!) then there is that exists all, a situation in which everything exists or manifests without confusing, mixing up and without error.

The fourth realm is *Alam Arwah* that is the stage where soul has already existed but has not received fate. The soul is still holy light that will be the beginning of life so that it is called "soul-gracious" (*nyawa rahmani*). The soul is made of light which is the essence of fire, water, wind and soil.

The fifth realm is *Alam al-Mithal*, i.e. when the "gracious soul" has received fate or when it has split into the form of lives that have been burdened with the provisions of life, the state of the soul God has made the lives that they have *Jism* (material container). At this realm the souls have had their own role, thus came the term 'plant soul', 'animal soul', 'physical soul' and 'spiritual soul'.

The sixth realm is *Alam al-Ajsam*, circumstances in which the subtle body is termed *ruhiyyah* starting to take shape which

then also ready to accept the existence of physical and spiritual senses and others. Such bodies are called unseen naked body. This illustrates the realm of God's creations have been neatly arranged and can be divided or have received any arrangement, especially a human. Finally, the seventh realm is *Alam al-Insan al-Kamil*. At this realm God breathed soul termed *idhafi* spirit into the body of Adam (Yahya 2007; 69-76).

The influence of the *sufistic* teachings of “*Martabat Tujuh*” from Sheikh Abdul Muhyi on *Wirid Hidayat Djati* is stages that must be passed by a person wants to achieve the highest degree of perfection. Levels in *Wirid Hidayat Djati* reflect stages of achieving the highest *maqam* or level (Wajdi 48).

With regard to the influence of the *sufistic* teachings of “*Martabat Tujuh*” upon Javanese (and Sundanese) mysticism as well as Sheikh Abdul Muhyi had settled in Kuningan, it is possible that such teachings have been absorbed by the Kuningan people so when they interpret the existence of *Sumur Tujuh* they interpret them as a symbol of human searching for reality. According to Nurwenda (caretaker of *Sumur Tujuh*) people who have already “understood” about the essence of the *Sumur Tujuh* will “understand the times” (*mengerti zaman*).

Position “bride” and “bridegroom” related to the origin of water, the former from *Balong Dalem* and the later from Pool of Cibulan, in the *Kawin Cai* ritual also implies people understanding since the past concerning the way of human beings to achieve or reach the true nature of humanity. “Marriage” is one of the stages of consciousness or realm in the course of his search for the essence that is *manunggaling kawulo lan Gusti* (union with God).

Tradition and Water Resources Conservation

In some areas water is a sensitive issue because it is a basic human need. However, water is not only human need used for

drinking, cooking and washing, but also agricultural need used for plantations and farming. Consequently, people need for water is getting bigger and the magnitude of this need sometimes lead people to conflict related to water management.

Conflicts concerning water management in the society are usually resolved through a certain mechanism. This mechanism has been institutionalized and is really effective in reducing social conflicts. Research conducted by Alfitri (2000: 47) shows that tradition of *Siring* in Lahat district can resolve social conflicts in terms of water resources struggles. Besides *Siring* tradition in Lahat other people of Indonesia who have similar way are *Subak* in Bali, *Ulu-ulu* in Central Java and *Awig-awig* in Lombok. According to Sutarwan (2003) *Subak* irrigation system in Bali basically is a community-based system and it reflects local wisdom in water resources sustainability. In the *Subak* system each activities is always preceded by a religious ritual.

Besides having mechanism related to water regulation local tradition is also a kind of social appreciation or thank God expression for water resources they have. Such appreciation and expression are performed by people in Manis Kidul and Babakan Mulya villages in the form of *Kawin Cai* ritual.

Although people in these two villages routinely perform the ritual they in fact are not well aware that what they do every year has close relation to water conservation and management in order to sustain its availability. It can be seen from the *Kawin Cai* ritual in which entertainment and musical performances are more visible than any other, and as they stated that by showing rare musical performances they intended to revive their classical music as part of people tradition in Kuningan.

What they do is merely for traditional reasons. There might be also some who actually want to take over water resources for their own benefits. By conducting the ritual, however, such intention could not be implemented or, at least, their intention

cannot come up because the ritual can function to be barrier for them to control water privately.

The ritual, therefore, makes the water resources as a public property and they are preserved by all together. Anyone can take advantage of these resources for daily lives without exceeding from their necessities. The ritual, in other words, is a sort of social control toward people conflicts of interest concerning water resources.

The ritual can also be regarded as an anticipatory attitude as well as public response to the natural disaster that can unexpectedly appear. Awareness to re-invigorate the tradition is an adaptive response which requires all resources used to resolve urgent issues in addition to providing resources for the future. According to Saifuddin (2005:131) traditional ritual is one of social activities related to human adaptation to the environment.

The implementation of tradition in which the ritual is of course included means that humans are actually conducting self restoration efforts of reciprocal relationships with other living beings around. After conducting the ritual their view toward other living beings will be renewed and they, people of two villages, will be more aware of the importance of water resources for the survival of life.

Conclusion

The *Kawin Cai* ritual is one of the "puzzles" of the community since the past that its meaning should continuously be looked for and answered by people afterward. In the absence of scientific data about when it was first conducted and with what purpose, information about real meaning of the ritual will be hard to find.

For the time being interpretation of the symbols contained in the ritual procession is only at the level of "fumbling" through

myth and traces that the society left behind. This way of effort about meaning of the ritual might be wrong, but by looking at the entwined interaction between human beings and the environment in the past, it could be said that the ritual is essentially a form of respect towards nature is the most logical. In other words, traditional ritual, such as *Kawin Cai* one, is an expression of the social respect as well as a message for generations afterwards that they are not to impose nature arbitrarily.

In addition, the *Kawin Cai* ritual also indicates the trace of encounter between religion (particularly Islam) and local tradition. Among religious doctrines that the "most" tolerant to local tradition is spiritual teachings, these are Islamic mystics in the form of Sufism, propagated through the mystical order (*tarekat*).

As a matter of fact, the *Kawin Cai* ritual is very effective to have an area conserved and avoided from human destruction. By performing the ritual periodically keep the society from attempting to destruct of water resources in at least the two villages.

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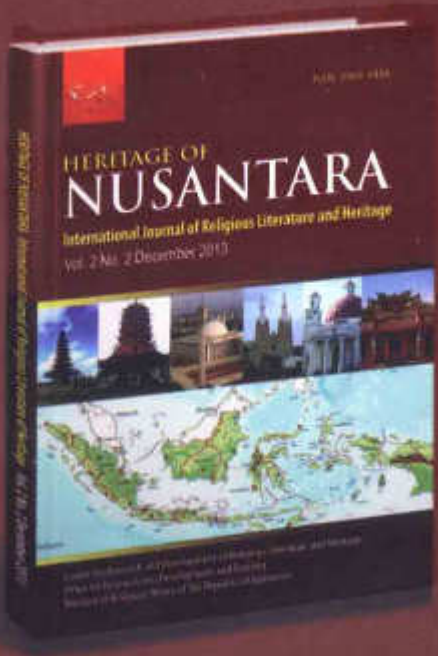
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Etin Anwar

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As a Form of Islamic Folk Songs
Djarot Heru Santosa, Timbul Haryono, and RM Soedarsono

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Sulistiyowati

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Mohammad Fathi Royyani and Abdul Syukur

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Gunawan Adnan

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