

Religiosity of the Indigenous *Kasepuhan* Sunda Community in West Java

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ABSTRACT

This research is set out on the basis of a unique diversity that occurs in an indigenous (*kasepuhan*) Sundanese community in Ciptagelar. In general, Sundanese people are Muslims, but some Sundanese indigenous peoples are practicing a religion that is better known as the Sunda Wiwitan, a religious belief born and developed by the Sundanese *Buhun*, or early Sundanese people. This research aims to uncover and find out values of religiosity of the indigenous Sundanese community in Ciptagelar, located in Sirnarasa village of Sukabumi district, West Java province. This research uses a qualitative, descriptive method, a technique that reveals the research data in depth in order to know the description of the objects accurately. The results of this research substantiates a religion that thrives among the indigenous Sundanese people, rituals of which are based on the culture of Sunda *wiwitan* or *buhun* (indigenous people) and the influences of Islamic teachings. Hence, the religion of the indigenous *kasepuhan* Sundanese community is an accommodation of how the Sundanese local culture with the teachings of Islam.

Keywords: Religiosity, Sundanese culture, indigenous religion, Islam, and Ciptagelar community

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a nation of diverse culture, race, ethnicity, language and tribe. This diversity makes Indonesia a pluralistic nation.[1] According to Furnival, plural society means a society that is composed of two or more different social order but living together.[2, p. 16], [3, p. 33] In terms of the diversity of Indonesian culture, this shows that the life style and nature of the people in this country are multi-ethnic, spread throughout Indonesia. According to the Central Statistics Agency and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies report, Indonesia has more than 600 ethnic groups with diverse cultures and languages.[4] Meanwhile, the Nusantara Indigenous People Alliance website (AMAN) notes that there are more than 2,000 indigenous groups in Indonesia.[5] However, in 2010 the BPS, in the Bappenas report, noted that Indonesia has around 1,400 ethnic groups.[6, p. 15] The diverse characteristics of these communities can make the Indonesian Nation more colorful and united with their respective cultures such as the famous motto in Indonesia, *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* or "Unity in Diversity."

Each Indonesian ethnic group that has diversity has its own culture, noble cultural values, and local excellence or local wisdom.[7] However, in this modern era, ethnic groups with all their local wisdom are stereotyped by "modern society". They are often identified as a culture that is left behind, primitive, and shunned by modern society and is considered a culture in which people lack material wealth. In fact, this dichotomy is wrong. Many

people from local cultures in various parts of the world are "stable, well-fed and comfortable, often more so than many of the non-elite members of European societies until the twentieth century." [8 pp. 14–5.] In addition, the civilization and culture which were inherited by local people from their ancestors have their own uniqueness with valuable meanings such as traditions to preserve the environment, inheritance of social social values, religion and belief in spiritual beings, education and culture.[9]

One of the indigenous peoples that was the object of research was the *Kasepuhan* Ciptagelar indigenous people. Administratively, these indigenous peoples are in Sirna Resmi Village, Cisolok, Sukabumi District, West Java Province. Some members of the *Kasepuhan* Ciptagelar indigenous community embrace Sunda Wiwitan, while some others affiliate themselves to Islam. However, not a few also embrace these two beliefs, Islam and Sundanese Wiwitan.[10]

The Sundanese *Kasepuhan* community has sought to preserve and maintain the inheritance of Sundanese ancestors which are still related to *tatali paranti karuhun*. It aims to preserve the relation balance between nature and the life of the Sundanese. In addition, it should be noted that the Sundanese people, both young and old, have gradually lost their identity due to the process of modernization and globalization. As a result, they will have difficulty or they will not recognize Sundanese traditions, records, language, and culture that is passed down from generation to generation. This can result in the extinction of Sundanese culture as a result of the

times.[11] Therefore, these problems draw our attention to conduct research on the Sundanese Kasepuhan community in Ciptagelar, Sukabumi Regency, West Java Province with a focus on their religious side, including their religious system and religious rituals.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative descriptive method with a phenomenological approach. This method examines the status of a group of people, an object, a set of conditions, a system of thought or a class of events in the present. It is aimed to make a systematic, factual and accurate description, picture or picture of the facts, properties and relationships between the phenomena investigated. [12, p. 63] The object of this research is the Kasepuhan Ciptagelar community.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research on community of Kasepuhan Ciptagelar's culture was conducted by several researchers before, such as Alamsyah, Hendra Samsuri, Ali Khomsan,[13] and Ayatullah Humaeni.[14] Alamsyah conducted research on the indigenous people of Kasepuhan Ciptagelar to find symbolic meaning in the work of these indigenous peoples. Furthermore, Samsuri describes a model on how the indigenous people of Kasepuhan Ciptagelar manage forests so they can have a positive impact on the next generation. Then, the research conducted by Humaeni et al at a glance seems similar to this research but there are some fundamental differences between them. Humaeni et al Used an ethnographic approach to their research, while this study used a phenomenological approach, which is aimed to find meaning for the beliefs that exist in the Kasepuhan Ciptagelar indigenous people based on the viewpoints of their members. In addition, Ali Khomsan et al. also conducted research on the indigenous people of Kasepuhan Ciptagelar with the aim of exploring the socio-economic characteristics of their households, including the survival mechanisms and nutritional status of children in these indigenous communities.

3.1. The Origin of Kasepuhan Ciptagelar

The name Ciptagelar has its own meaning. Cipta is taken from name Abah Anom namely Encup Sucipta while gelar means Abah Anom, with her daughter, held a new sheet and life in a new location, and also gave freedom to both the people inside or outside the community to touch, see or glance at Ciptagelar Village. During the village relocation, the only one who followed Abah Anom and his family was only *perangkat adat* (the adat upholders) and the *baris kolot* (the old generation). Meanwhile, the people were encouraged by Abah Anom to stay and if they were to move, they would have to get Abah Anom's permission.

The move from Ciptarasa to Ciptagelar village was carried out at night because the 'light of guidance' could only be seen in the dark at night. The 'light of guidance' itself gives a clue where Abah Anom has to open a new village. The new village, now named Ciptagelar village, was previously a paddy field that was included in Sukamulya Village.[15] The Kasepuhan community is thought to have come from an area in Bogor called Guradog. They admitted that they still had genealogical relations with the last Sundanese-Hindu kingdom in West Java domiciled in Bogor, namely Pakuan Padjadjaran. They aimed on carrying out the mission to develop Sang Hyang Dewi Sri, namely developing rice. This is illustrated in a many folklores and rhymes that was found at that time. The king who was involved in the literary work here was Prabu Siliwangi. In Wawacan Sulanjana, It was found that Prabu Siliwangi was the first king who emphasized his people to have a brave character. After Batara Guru through Ki Bagawan ordered King Siliwangi to plant various types of grains throughout his territory, Various types of grains were sourced from body parts of the body of Dewi Sri Pohaci.[16]

Kasepuhan could be defined as indigenous peoples who still hold their customs and traditions. They have a way of life and teachings that they have carried out since from their ancestors or since the glory of Padjadjaran kingdom. The meaning of pangawinan has become their socio-religious concept. This means the unity of the 'real world' with 'the unseen world', the unity of 'the Goddess Sri, the goddess of rice with the land', with 'heaven with earth'. In addition, this meaning has a symbolic meaning to unite macro and micro comos to achieve a unity of life. According to Adimiharja, the symbolic meaning of Kasepuhan community's is expressed in the *tilu sapamulu expression, two saccharents, hijieta keneh* which means even though there are various desires, attitudes and traits, in essence human beings come from sources that are 'one' which is 'the Almighty'.[16]

3.2. The Religious System

In the daily life, the implementation of religious activities is still dominated by beliefs in the customs and traditions of his ancestors (tatali paranti karuhun). The concept or view of life is dominated by customs and traditions rather than referring to the main source of his religion (the Koran). In this case, contemplation of the universe has led them to the conclusion that the universe is an orderly and balanced system.[15]

However, the Kasepuhan Ciptagelar Traditional Village has three life pillars namely Sara, Nagara, and Mokaha. Sara is the first meaningful concept of life in implementing religious doctrines. Islam is a religion that is strongly established in the life arrangements of the Kasepuhan Ciptagelar Indigenous Peoples. Islam is a way of life which is cultured with the value of local traditions. Nagara, the second concept is in the form of obedience and obedience to the rules and regulations decided by the Government. Because it is mandatory for Indigenous

Peoples to obey government regulations, this has become a habit practiced by their ancestors. Mokaha, third concept, can be interpreted as the concept of preserving traditions and traditional values inherited by Karuhun (Ancestors) because it is mandatory and required to maintain all the traditions inherited by the ancestors, in order to make life safe, conducive, and prosperous.[15]

Members of the Kasepuhan Ciptagelar believed that those who wanted to be successful and happy in their lives, they have to achieve unity, or *manunggal*, with the Universe, that is a state of uniting the macro and micro universe. A proverb with which the Ciptagelar people express their achievement of this state is the following: *tilu sapamilu, dua sakarupa, hiji eta keneh* (a similar three, a twin two, and a one only). This proverb is a statement which describes that humans in the world are diverse and embrace various desire, behavior, and character, yet in essence they are similarly a God's creature.[15]

Furthermore, as an effort to achieve order and harmony in life, members of the Ciptagelar community must harmonize their talks, attitudes, and intentions (*ucap lampah ka lawan tekad*). For the Ciptagelar people, the life guidance, which is their ancestors' tradition (*tatali paranti karuhun*), has to be practiced in daily life. Every act of transgression of their tradition is believed to inflict disaster in their community (*kabendon*). This disaster can happen to both the individuals and the society. This way, the Ciptagelar indigenous people try to protect their community from disastrous events.[15]

Their belief in *tatali paranti karuhun* is reflected through a number of symbols, such as a taboo (restriction) and particular signs which have symbolic meanings. Another belief of the Ciptagelar indigenous people which can not be ignored is their respect to Dewi Sri, believed as the Goddesses of Rice. For example, they called Dewi Sri by the name of Nyi Pohaci Sang-hyang Sri Ratna Inten Purnama Alam Sejati. This refers to their belief that Dwi Sri only resides in the rice plants once in a year, meaning that the planting season for the rice is only done once in a year.[15]

For them, any practice that transgresses the rules of rice planting will cause a harvest failure. Thus it is understandable that each cycle of rice planting is always celebrated with various ceremonies, such as *I sasarap* (rice-field preparation ceremony), *ngabersihan* (rice-seed fertilizing ceremony), *ngaseuk* (rice-planting ceremony), *tebar* (seed-spreading ceremony), *mipit* (rice-picking ceremony), *ngadiekeun* (seed-storing ceremony) *nganyaran* (rice-harvesting ceremony), and *pongokan* (rice-drying ceremony), and *seren taun* (a ceremony to express their gratitude to their ancestors following their successful harvest. There are also divers names for the traditional agricultural tools, such as *etem* (rice cutter), *lesung* (rice grinder), and *rengkong* (a tool to bring the bundles of rice stems to the *leuit*).[15]

Leuit for the Ciptagelar people does not only mean a room in which they stored the rice, but is also related to their belief, that is, a symbol to respect their rice goddesses, Dewi Sri. This belief has been so much internalized in their life that they are sure that if they do not store their

rice in the *leuit* they will go into a disastrous life (*kabendon*).[15]

Another manifestation of their previous beliefs is related to their habit, rule, and restriction (taboo) with regard to the *leuit*, such as the taboo of selling the rice, and grinding the rice with a grinding machine (*heuleur*). They are allowed to sell their rice as long as the rice is leftover of the last year's harvest, or one that has been freed from its sacredness (*dirasulkeun*) according to the adat rules and the adat stakeholder (*sesepeuh girang*). This way the indigenous people of the Ciptagelar community will only sell the rice that are left from the previous harvest season.[15]

3.3. The Ritual Practice

In the beginning, Kasepuhan Ciptagelar was a culture that was passed down from his ancestors, which until now has been preserved and preserved to his children and grandchildren, especially with regard to the pattern of procedures for growing rice. Basically, in the planting of rice, time and calculation are needed, especially when the rice planting will be carried out by counting and by using constellation *kidang* and *kerti* or also called *weluku* stars. that's the calculation of the indigenous people when they are ready to plant rice. indigenous people grow rice once a year. the duration of planting rice from rice planted to harvest is around five to six months. The rice planted is local rice and up to now it has been guarded and preserved. Then, in the next six months, our community usually raises fish in the rice fields as one of our needs when there is a ritual to replant rice.[17]

The local wisdom of the Ciptagelar indigenous people is one of the cultural traditions that can be learned and followed by the city community in general. based on interviews, they used to learn about some of the behavioral traits of adat, especially how to work together, relate to neighbors, and are always active in carrying out friendship among each other. furthermore, they never discriminate between the rich or the poor.[17]

In the belief of the Kasepuhan Ciptagelar community, it is believed that the Ciptagelar community must carry out a series of traditional ritual ceremonies to get blessings from the Almighty so that the yield from planted agriculture can be maximized. The life cycle of rice from planting to harvest has a set of customary rules and ceremonies that must be carried out, including:[17]

- *Ngaseuk*, rice planting which was preceded by a ceremony begging for safety and security and making pilgrimage to the funeral of the ancestors.
- *Sapang Jadian Pare*, One week after planting rice this ritual is held to ask for the blessing of the mother (Earth) to be planted, followed by asking for the blessing of the ancestors and the creator so that the rice grows well.

- *Pare nyiram, mapag pare beukah*. When the rice comes out, they perform a ritual that aims to beg the rice to grow well and avoid pests.
- *Sawenan*, the ritual which held after the grains of rice began to come out.
- *Mipit Pare*, the ritual that is held when going to cut rice, it is aimed to ask permission from the ancestors and also to be given an abundant harvest.
- *Nganyaran* atau *Ngabukti*. The ritual is when rice is pounded and cooked for the first time.
- *Ponggokan*, the tradition of gathering the elders to discuss population issues based on each person's tax. This gathering tradition is usually carried out a week before the Seren Tahun ritual and about organizing
- *Tradisi Seren Taun*. This tradition is at the peak of the activities of the indigenous people of Ciptagelar in the rice life cycle. This event is held every year as part of a tradition of honoring the ancestors and rice goddess Sang Hyang Pohaci (Dewi Sri). This event was held with various forms of art. The main thing is that rice is carried by parading for later and stored in barns, one of which is in communal barns. The ceremony was led by Amil and held at the Big House, also witnessed by several residents. The prayers are not separated from the religion they believe and the prayers also are not much different from their sects even though sometimes there are differences in expression.

Before praying, it starts with preparing a series related to food prepared by the residents. Then, Abah led the ritual to the Ancestors (aiming to ask permission from the ancestors as an intermediary so that prayers reach the Almighty). Finally, Amil recites prayers to the Almighty to convey all the desired desires especially in order to get blessings in the rice that has been harvested.[17]

4. CONCLUSION

The Kasepuhan Ciptagelar Traditional Village has a variety of interesting things, as revealed in the origins (history), the religious system, and religious rituals of the Ciptagelar people. The indigenous people of Kasepuhan Ciptagelar have three pillars namely Sara, Nagara, and Mokaha. Sara is a religious system that is implemented in Kasepuhan society adherents of Islamic values. Nagara is to comply with all forms of regulations and regulations issued by the state (government), and Mokaha is to preserve and preserve the traditions inherited by the

ancestors (culture). Actually, there is clarification related to the religious system of the Kasepuhan Ciptagelar indigenous peoples, namely as followers of Islam. However, because in terms of the application of Islam and Sundanese cultural traditions, there is always a religious acculturation with a culture that is realized in their daily lives.

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