

Shifting Meaning of Sekaten in the Modern Era

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ABSTRACT

This article contains changes in the meaning of the sekaten tradition from time to time, especially in this modern era. Data was obtained through a descriptive qualitative research method which is a natural research and the data produced is descriptive. The research is expected to be able to reveal the shift in the meaning of sekaten in the current era. The results of this study obtained that the sekaten upacara comes from the da'wah method carried out by the guardians and the symbols used in the sekaten traditional ceremony have Javanese Philosophy values. Through ritual symbols, the meaning contained is communicated by the community in a sustainable manner even though the times have changed, not changing the original meaning of the sekaten ceremony. Through this ceremony, a communication ritual process occurs so as to pass on the understanding of the meaning of good values to the community. The conclusion of this study shows that the Sekaten Ceremony is a complex cultural practice, which combines elements of Islamic beliefs, community interaction, and the transmission of traditional values and practices. These traditions are a testament to the region's rich cultural heritage and the continued importance of these traditions in people's lives.

Keywords: Shift; sekaten; modern era

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the countries with a form of government in which it has many tribes, religions, races, customs, and cultures and also has many islands, no wonder Indonesia is called a maritime country, Indonesia has a lot of tribes and is inseparable from the customs of their ancestors, this diversity is what makes Indonesia have its own characteristics from other countries (Ponulele et al, 2023).

Regional culture is a cultural resource that is never exhausted to be explored and must always be explored to complement the existence of national culture in Indonesia. There are many varieties and patterns of culture in Indonesia that tourists admire. One of the regional cultures that is a national cultural asset is the Sekaten Cultural Tradition. According to Zamani (in Sujanti & Aulia, 2023), the Sekaten traditional culture is a tradition to commemorate the Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, which will be held again at the Surakarta Hadiningrat Kasunanan Palace in Solo, Central Java. This hereditary tradition since

the time of the Demak Kingdom or around the 15th century is marked by the laying of Kyai Guntur Madu and Kyai Guntur Sari gamelan belonging to the Surakarta Palace in the southern and northern wards of the Surakarta Grand Mosque area.

The Sekaten celebration in Surakarta was held for seven days. Sekaten comes from the word *shahadatain*, which means two sentences of *shahada*. Symbolically, the two *shahadat* sentences are represented in two Sekaten gamelan devices, namely *Kanjeng Kyai Guntur Sari* and *Kanjeng Kyai Guntur Madu* which are sung alternately. This gamelan is sounded for seven days. How to Play, Function, and Sound Produced The two puppets were placed in different places, namely in the *Pradangga Kidul Ward* and the *Pradangga Lor Ward*, both of which are located in the courtyard of the Great Mosque in the Surakarta Palace area (Daniswari, 2022).

The sekaten tradition was originally a form of effort made by the guardians to introduce Islam to the community through art and culture (Nursolehah et al, 2022). The Sekaten Celebration in Surakarta as a multi- dimensional event. Apart from being a medium for Islamic da'wah, it is also an economic facility, a means of entertainment and a tourist facility. The palace has a moral responsibility to develop culture and religious teachings. Thus, Islam that spreads is constantly adjusting to the local civilization and cultural environment. In Sekaten, there was a mixture of Javanese Islamic culture.

The development of the times has made changes in a more modern direction, which is strengthened by globalization. When dug deeper, which one affects first is modernization. Why does modernization affect first, because modernization in a certain period of time gives rise to a process called globalization, because the process of uniting various forms of human groups into one form. The flow of globalization towards modern changes has made the development of sekaten traditions undergo various changes. From the changes due to globalization, it can affect the sekaten tradition in various ways in the continuation of the sekaten tradition procession. This research aims to explore the changes in the function of Sekaten in the modern era, focusing on social, cultural, economic, and religious aspects. An analysis will be carried out on the shift in the meaning and perception of the community towards Sekaten, as well as how this tradition adapts to the demands of the times without losing its cultural essence. Through an interdisciplinary approach, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of Sekaten traditions in the context of modernity, as well as its implications for the preservation of cultural heritage and local identity in the midst of globalization.

METHOD

Research on the shift in the meaning of sekaten in the current era is a descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive qualitative research is natural research and the data produced is in the form of descriptive (Syifaul Adhimah, 2020). The research is expected to be able to reveal the shift in the meaning

of sekaten in the current era from the thoughts and actions of the research object (Oktaria, et al. 2023). This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type of research. This research focuses intensively on one particular object that studies it as a case. Case study data can be obtained from all parties concerned. This research also uses a sociological approach to religion, where religion is seen as a social action or social fact, something tangible and observable that affects people's behavior (Mibtadin, M., & Hedi, F. 2020). Religion is considered a belief system that includes social behavior. Data collection was carried out by means of interviews and library research which was carried out by reviewing and analyzing existing literature that has relevance to the shift in the meaning of sekaten in the current era (Miza Nina Adlini, et al. 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

History of Sekaten

Sekaten originated during the Demak Kingdom. When Walisongo discussed how to spread Islam in Java. Sunan Kalijaga proposed to adapt the customs and traditions of the Hindu community, such as the semedi event being replaced with prayer, and the offering event being replaced with the celebration of Islamic holidays.

At the celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's Birthday, it is proposed to sound gamelan around the mosque to attract the interest of Javanese people who like gamelan. When the people came, the Guardians then preached and taught Islam. From the word "syahadatain" that was pronounced at that time, the term "sekaten" emerged which continued to be preserved and held regularly every year, even when the Kingdom of Demak changed to the Kingdom of Mataram, the Sultanate of Jogjakarta, and the Sultanate of Surakarta.

The Sekaten tradition involves beating Kyai Guntur Madu and Kyai Guntursari gamelan for 6 days in the month of Maulud. Special Sekaten gendings are also played, such as Rambu, Rangkur, Lunggadhung, and others. Before Sekaten, the courtiers of the palace made spiritual preparations such as fasting and flushing jamas to purify themselves in carrying out this sacred task (Sujanti & Aulia, 2023).

Sunan Kalijogo has an important role in the sekaten tradition, because he uses the tradition as a propagation of Islam. Therefore, in 1408 a large mosque was established in the Kingdom of Demak as a center for Islamic religious broadcasting. Every year on the date. 5 to date. In the 12th month of Mulud or Robiullawal, a celebration or night market is held in the square to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, the celebration is called sekatenan (E.S. Aedinarto, 2008).

The celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's Birthday using the art of gamelan can attract the attention of people from various directions. The moment of gathering the crowd was used as a vehicle by the guardians to convey the teachings of Islam by giving advice and teachings about Islam. People who come can also enter and sit in the portico of the mosque by first reciting the shahadatin. People who are

sick in the mosque yard are told to wash their hands, faces and feet with pool water outside the mosque foyer.

The sekaten tradition has a symbol of syncretism seen in the titles of Javanese Islamic kings such as the title of Sultan, califahtullah sayyidin panatagama, tetunggul khalifatul Mu'minin, susuhunan, and so on, such as Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono while still carrying out all Islamic teachings and not leaving this culture as a form of practicing traditions and beliefs that continue to be carried out continuously and repeatedly (Al-Fajriyati, 2019).

Meaning

One of the important aspects of the sekaten tradition is the religious significance in the celebration of this tradition. During this celebration, Muslims in Surakarta remember and celebrate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH with prayers, Qur'an readings and commemorations of goodness. These rituals help deepen the understanding of Islam among the people around Surakarta and strengthen their relationship with religion (Muhammad Fatih and Rasmuin, 2023). The Sekaten tradition is a cultural practice that has developed through interaction and communication between various individuals and groups in society. This tradition is deeply rooted in the beliefs and values of the community, and is considered a way to bring blessings and spiritual meaning to the community.

The names of Sekaten gending (gamelan compositions), such as Salatun, Dhindang Sabinah, Ngajatun, and Supiyatun, have symbolic meanings related to Islamic teachings and beliefs. These gendings are a means to commemorate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and express the dedication and desire of the community to embrace Islam. The Udhik-udhik event, in which the Sultan distributes pieces of coins, is a symbolic ritual that represents the granting of divine grace, wealth, and spiritual blessings to the community. This tradition reflects a deep belief in the spiritual meaning of the Sekaten celebration and the role of the Sultan as a respected figure who can grant such blessings (Sujanti & Aulia, 2023).

In an interview with one of the Javanese cultural figures in Surakarta, he said that everything in the sekaten tradition has meaning. Janur is interpreted as the coming of Allah's guidance. There are various types of guidance, some are direct and indirect. Direct guidance is from Allah, while guidance that is not stilted is such as through teachers, scientific studies, etc. Furthermore, Inang is interpreted as the pillars of Islam, because there are 5 elements in it. People who have implemented the pillars of Islam, then they are light or consider Islam easy. Then tobacco is likened to zakat. When our name is to be remembered until later, then we need to give something to others, be it wealth, energy, thoughts, knowledge, etc. After that, there is a kanthil flower which is likened to a hajj. This means that the person who has done the hajj can become Uswatun Hasanah for others. Then the person who sells gangsing is interpreted as the world is only temporary. The gangsing symbolizes our life. Life is full of competence, so we need to continue to strive

to develop our potential and seek as much experience as possible. In addition, there is also a piggy bank which means that life needs to have savings. His savings are righteous deeds. Lust is actually neutral, so we need to manage lust to be positive.

Overall, the Sekaten tradition is a complex cultural practice, which combines elements of Islamic beliefs, community interaction, and the transmission of traditional values and practices. These traditions are a testament to the rich cultural heritage of the region and the continued importance of these traditions in the lives of the people (Sujanti & Aulia, 2023).

Sekaten in the present era

The implementation of the sekaten tradition in Surakarta does not only involve the Palace, but also involves elements of the government (local Religious Department) and the private sector. Currently, the celebration of sekaten is also accompanied by an exhibition of various products. Night markets are an integral part of the sekaten tradition. People generally view sekaten as a folk party combined with various traditional and religious ceremonies, such as grebeg or gunung ceremonies (Hadiningrum, 2018).

In the Sekaten tradition, there are also changes in the core procession of the Sekaten tradition, such as the absence of the shahadatain ritual. The meaning and values of the sekaten tradition are also beginning to be forgotten by the younger generation. The influence of globalization and modernization is considered the main factor that encourages the change and fading of sekaten tradition among society, especially among the younger generation (Dutayana & Bustami, 2022). In an interview with one of the Javanese cultural figures in Surakarta, he said that all the philosophies in the Sekaten tradition give a moral message. When people attend the Sekaten tradition, they do not get a moral message, which means they do not get blessings. According to him, the ability to absorb a strong capacity is when we have a lot of knowledge, and understand the meaning that exists in a tradition. The changes in the sekaten tradition are likened to waves. The changes are up and down. People sometimes don't care, and sometimes they also care about culture. Despite the changes, the sekaten ritual ceremony which is an ancestral cultural heritage is still considered to have an important role in people's lives (Hadiningrum, 2018).

With the Sekaten ceremony and the night market, revenue receipts will also increase. For the community who support Sekaten culture, they are satisfied because of the availability of all the facilities and facilities for the implementation of the ceremonial tradition. However, it is also felt that there is a shift in the purpose of organizing where the community tends to lead the ceremony as one of the cultural tourism attractions that can be consumed by domestic and foreign tourists (Edipeni and Sri Mulyani, 2020).

In a conversation with one of the Javanese cultural figures in Surakarta, he said that to face change is with knowledge. When this nation values knowledge and morality, then this nation will be prosperous. With knowledge, people can develop technology, innovation, and solutions to face new challenges. In

addition to knowledge, good morals and moral values are also very important for the glory of a nation. Noble morals will be the foundation for sustainable progress. Science and noble morals are two things that complement and strengthen each other. Knowledge without good morals can cause abuse and negative impacts. On the other hand, good morals without being based on science will find it difficult to solve complex challenges.

Of course, there is a lot of time to work together in launching and enlivening this event. As stated by IsIstriyanti (2024) This phenomenon is evident in communal engagements that unite members of society. These activities encompass regular gatherings organized under the auspices of local community centers, such as the Neighborhood Association (RT) and the Rukun Warga (RW). Beyond mere social interactions, these gatherings serve as essential mechanisms for fostering solidarity among residents. Furthermore, religious observances and cultural practices continue to play pivotal roles in cementing collective ties within the community. Communal involvement that unites community members is very important in the lives of local communities in many places. These communal activities are usually held regularly under the coordination of local community centers, such as Rukun Tetangga (RT) and Rukun Warga (RW) (Fiki, Dhiyaul, Yoga, 2024).

CONCLUSION

The Sekaten tradition is a cultural practice that has developed through interaction and communication between various individuals and groups in society. This tradition reflects a deep belief in the spiritual meaning of the Sekaten celebration and the role of the Sultan as a respected figure who can provide these blessings.

In an interview with one of the Javanese cultural figures in Surakarta, he said that everything in the sekaten tradition has meaning. Overall, the Sekaten tradition is a complex cultural practice, which combines elements of Islamic beliefs, community interaction, and the transmission of traditional values and practices. This tradition is a testament to the rich cultural heritage of the region and in the lives of the people.

Despite the change of times, the sekaten ritual ceremony is an ancestral cultural heritage that is still considered to have an important role in people's lives. In addition to knowledge, good morals and moral values are also very important for the glory of a nation. Noble morals will be the foundation for sustainable progress. Science and noble morals are two things that complement and strengthen each other. Knowledge without good morals can cause abuse and negative impacts. On the other hand, good morals without being based on science will find it difficult to solve complex challenges.

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