



## **Javanese-Bashu Cultural Art Adaptation**

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### **Abstract**

This article aims to find out and identify the cultural differences that exist in the two regions, as well as being one of the efforts to preserve regional cultural heritage. The writing of this article uses quantitative methods, namely by collecting data found on the internet and related journals. Cultural acculturation between Javanese and Chinese is a process of mutual interaction and influence between the two cultures. Both cultures have a long history with their characteristics. Artistic elements can merge through cultural contact and create new forms of cultural adaptation. Cultural exchange between Javanese and Chinese occurs in various areas of life, such as language, religion, art, and lifestyle. For example, many absorbing words are used from both languages, the use of traditional Chinese clothing in specific festivals, the adoption of Chinese architectural styles in the construction of houses, and the presence of Chinese cuisine flavours, which are in the taste of Javanese cuisine. The acculturation of Javanese and Chinese cultures provides opportunities for both cultures to explore and share experiences. This creates a rich diversity of unique and rich cultural identities. This acculturation is also an important example of how cultures can evolve through interaction and exchange between different cultural groups.

**Keywords:** Javanese; Bashu; Chinese; Acculturation; Culture

### **Introduction**

Culture is the result of the daily life habits of a particular group or ethnicity. That habit creates a distinctive activity and reflects self-identity for the adherents of these habits. According to E. B Tylor, Javanese culture co, commonly called *kejawen*, is a culture produced and adopted by Javanese ethnic communities living on Java island. Javanese culture has a high existence due to the preservation of cultural culture passed down from generation to generation. Suyanto (1990), in his book entitled *Javanese Life View*, explains that the characteristics of Javanese culture are religious, non-doctrinal, tolerant, accommodating, and optimistic. This is why Javanese culture, or *kejawen*, is robust in energy.

Chinese culture, or Bashu, is a culture produced and embraced by the Chinese people in mainland China. Chinese culture is one of the oldest and most complex cultures in the world to date; the traditional cultural values that are the driving factors and characteristics of Chinese people are harmony, benevolence, truth, politeness, wisdom, honesty, loyalty, and devotion. All of these driving factors become a unified and complex whole, so it can be concluded that Bashu culture is a culture with solid energy and character.

From these two cultures of Java and Bashu, the study or science of Javanese Bashu culture is presented, which specifically works on the comparison, harmony, adaptation, and acculturation between the two cultures. By comparing the two cultures, one can know the differences and characteristics of the two cultures and can adapt quickly. In addition, by adjusting, one can harmonize the knowledge between one and the other. By studying these two cultures, one will be able to analyze whether the two cultures produce acculturation and suggest the possibility of acculturation of the two cultures, as well as what and how. Of course, studying Javanese bashu culture is very useful, especially for Chinese language education students. According to Rudiansyah (2023), the study of Javanese bashu culture is new and focuses on both cultures, namely Javanese and bashu culture.

Javanese and Bashu cultures have different characteristics. The differences are striking, and both have intense energy. This difference has a significant influence on the form of culture produced. Culture has many varieties and types; from a habit, it makes something such as traditions, beliefs, arts, customs, heritage, livelihoods, crafts, religion and art. This article will review, more specifically, the results of culture in the form of interrelated traditions, rituals and arts. Traditions exist because of religiosity, or belief in something such as ancestors and spirits, as well as from a habit that is carried out in daily life and is carried out at a particular time according to belief and is sacred. Tradition is a description of the behaviour or attitude of the community over a very long period that has been carried out from generation to generation, starting from the ancestors. Coomans, M (1987:73).

The traditions carried out produce religious rituals or ceremonies. According to Koentjaraningrat (2002: 204), religious ceremonies or rituals are a form of belief system and ideas about God, Gods, spirits, Hell, Heaven and so on, but have a form in the form of ceremonies, both seasonal and occasional.

Art is the aesthetic result of a tradition or culture. Art is usually a medium of self-expression and entertainment for the general public. Through art, a group can describe their world and feelings and respond to social, political and cultural realities. Apart from being entertainment, art certainly has noble values that are educational. The arts have become an essential and deep-rooted part of human civilization. According to Banoe (2003: 219), art is a beautiful work resulting from human cultivation to fulfil the soul's needs.

Javanese culture is a culture owned and produced by the Javanese people. Meanwhile, bashu culture is a culture created by Chinese society. The science of Javanese bashu culture is a science that works on comparison, harmonization, adaptation and acculturation between the two cultures. The topic of discussion contained in this paper focuses on the comparison of Javanese bashu culture. More specifically, it discusses the traditions and art produced by the two cultures. By making observations and adding literacy insights, this essay can expand and add new knowledge to the science of Javanese bashu culture. The discussion of the relationship between ritual traditions and the arts raised is the Cirebon mask dance and the Bian lian dance in Sichuan opera in China.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **History of Mask Dance**

Topeng dance is a traditional dance that has become essential to the tradition of performing arts. This dance has a unique characteristic: dancers use masks to depict characters or characters in the portrayed story. The masks used in Mask Dance have various shapes and designs. Each mask often has symbolic and deep meaning, historically, mythologically, or religiously. These masks often represent characters in the story, such as kings, queens, warriors, gods, or legendary figures.

In Mask Dance, dancers use body and hand movements and incorporate dramatic facial expressions. These dance movements depict the character portrayed, including the personality, emotions, and traits associated with the character. Mask dancers must have expertise in mastering various dance movement techniques.

### **Cirebon Mask Dance**

Cirebon mask dance has existed since the 10th century AD and has developed from the 10th to the 16th century AD, especially during the reign of Prabu Panji Dewa. However, this dance began to spread over time to several West Java regions, including Cirebon. When it entered Cirebon, this dance mingled with local art to create a distinctive dance. Mask dance has specific meanings, philosophies, and symbols, such as romance, leadership, and wisdom. In the performance, these things will be conveyed to the audience so that they can understand and learn lessons from this dance.

#### *Meaning and Philosophy*

At first, this mask dance performance was only performed for the palace environment, but over time, this dance began to be performed for the community as a means of entertainment. In addition to being used as entertainment, mask dance is also used as a medium for the spread of Islam. Therefore, this performance also began to be packaged according to Islamic teachings with more philosophical and characterful performances, which will still have a purpose that provides examples of human behaviour and nature in religious observance adapted to Islamic teachings.

#### *Mask Dance Performance*

In the past, mask dance performances could only be held in an open place by forming a semicircle, and the dancer was in the centre and played from day to night, accompanied by torches as lighting. But over time, mask dance has been performed in buildings with decorative lighting. The mask dance itself also has its purpose, which is divided into three parts, namely:

1. Communal performances are held for all levels of society. Combined performances are born with great fanfare and usually last more than one night. Collaborative performances are only held during village celebrations and pilgrimages, not casinos.
2. Individual Performance: This Performance is held individually and will only be performed in the house's yard. Usually, this individual Performance is only performed at weddings, khiran or celebrations when a vow is fulfilled.
3. Pagelaran Babarangan is a performance around the village based on the mask puppeteers' initiative. This Performance is only performed when a town is harvesting, but if it is held before the harvest, the village is experiencing a drought

### *Types of Cirebon Mask*

At the time of the mask dance performance, it will usually show five masks, commonly called Panca Wanda, where each mask represents each nature and characteristic in humans:

1. Panji Mask, This mask depicts someone who has just been born into the world and is still clean or pure. The movements of this mask are very smooth and soft, which means a combination of the essence of silence and motion.
2. Samba Mask, The samba mask represents a child, which depicts the human phase of a child. Therefore, the movements of this mask must be agile and funny, like a child.
3. Rumyang Mask, This mask powerfully depicts someone who has entered the world of adolescence, and the movements wearing this mask contain a message that requires humans to do good.
4. Mask of Tumenggung, Topeng Tumenggu means a firm and virtuous person who should be performed with a message about characteristics and personality with high loyalty.
5. Kelana Mask, The kelana mask depicts someone angry and wrathful. This dancer will play an evil character but will still teach that humans must try to get happiness and life in a good way.

### *Mask Dance Equipment*

In addition to the mask, the central part of this dance equipment, several other pieces, such as dancer costumes with long sleeves adapted to Islamic teachings and ties with ukon pins, are also used. Ukon itself is an ancient currency. The dancers also wear belts equipped with keris, beading, bracelets, and batik cloth. Other properties include a shawl or sampler, knee-high socks, and a Songkran made of koan batik. On the head of the dancer, they are using a cover called cobra, which is equipped with two sumping and jamangan, while the bottom of the dancer uses pants below the knee. Especially for dancers performing the tumenggung mask, there will be additional properties such as cloth headgear, caps, and glasses. Remembering the main star of this Mask Dance property, which is the mask itself, which is made of wood, the dancers use the mask by biting on the rubber pads inside.

### **Bian Lian Dance**

Bian Lian (变脸, Bian Liǎn), meaning "to change one's face", is an ancient Chinese dance from Chengdu, Sichuan province. Bian Lian is part of the Sichuan Opera performance series. It has been known since 300 years ago, during the Qing Dynasty (1736-1795) during the reign of Emperor Qianlong. This performance art was originally a family tradition. In ancient times, the Bian Lian technique was passed down secretly from one generation to the next in a family. It is said that only sons were allowed to learn Bian Lian dance techniques.

### *Meaning and Philosophy*

In ancient times, people painted their faces to scare away wild animals in the forest. Then, over time, this practice became a performance art. In addition, this dance refers to the story of a masked hero who stole the wealth of the rich and then distributed it to the poor. The story also developed into a performing art. However, Bian Lian's performance art is rarely seen outside of China because non-Chinese citizens are not allowed to learn this art form. The art of Bian Lian has only been known outside of China since the mid-2000s, as it began to be performed to the public through international mass media and featured at Chinese gatherings. Performances outside

of China can only be found in Hong Kong and Taiwan. In addition, this dance is not taught to women because Chinese society is of the view that, when married, women will leave their parents' house. Because they wanted to avoid increasing the risk of losing this dance, Bian Lian dance was finally only taught to men. According to Harry Yuan (2019), the secret of Bian Lian dance lies in the dancer's robe, where the face masks are hidden.

#### *Bian Lian Dance Equipment*

Bian Lian dancers perform in brightly coloured costumes and are accompanied by dramatic music played on traditional ancient Chinese instruments. The dancers will prepare various masks of various shades and colours as the "faces" of famous characters in Chinese opera art. The facial masks used by the dancers are designed in detail, with the hope that each mask can express a particular emotion or intention of the dance.

#### *Performance Mechanism*

In a Bian Lian dance performance, the performer changes facial appearance in seconds. It is also said that Bian Lian dancers can change masks ten times in 20 seconds. Bian Lian dancers use several standard techniques to change their masks. They are wiping the face, blowing the face, and pulling the face. The masks are torn off to cover the dance moves when the performance begins. After that, the dancer will move the head, cover the face with a fan in the hand, or do swift hand movements. But there are specific difficulties when pulling the face. One of them should be a manageable adhesive when glueing the mask. The goal is to tear it slowly. In addition, this dance movement must be agile, clean and neat to cover and trick the eyes of the audience.

#### *The Meaning of The Bian Lian Dance Mask*

Like Cirebon mask dance, Bian lian dance also has a meaning in the type of mask used. Masks with red, white, black, and yellow colors are the most common on stage. Then as the times progressed, the masks were developed gradually. These developments such as the increase in colors on the mask. The meaning implied in the Bian Lian mask is as follows.

Like the Cirebon mask dance, the Bian lian dance also has a meaning in the type of mask used. Masks with red, white, black, and yellow colours are the most common on stage. Then, as time progressed, the masks gradually developed, including an increase in the mask's colours. The meaning implied in the Bian Lian mask is as follows. 1) Red: As the primary colour, it stands for loyalty, courage, and truth; 2) Black: Symbolizes stamina, courage, rudeness, and recklessness; 3) Blue: Symbolizes strength, ruggedness, courage, and rebellion; 4) Green Represents courage, tyranny, ferocity, and irritability; 5) Yellow: Indicates fierceness, ferocity, danger, and cunning; 6) White: Dangerous, cunning.

#### *Dance Presentation*

One of the most popular Bian Lian performance venues is the Furong Goucui Opera in Sichuan. The audience will be presented with a 70-minute performance of typical Sichuan Chinese opera art performances in the opera performance. In the show, there is a Bian lian dance performance. As for the performance, Bian Lian is usually played by one person or with a partner.

### **Highlighting Differences in Dance**

The Cirebon mask dance and the Bian Lian dance have similar outlines; both use masks. The masks used also have implied meanings. But in addition to similarities, there are also striking differences in the movements and stories presented in the dance. In addition, the traditions and rituals that form the background of the two dances are also very different. The reason is that the culture adopted and raised in these dances is different and has the same strong characteristics. The traditions and rituals that form the background of the two dances are as follows.

#### **Cirebon Mask Dance**

This dance is known to be very sacred. The reason is that fasting, abstinence, and semedi are required before dancing this mask. Until now, all these conditions are still obeyed by the puppeteers in the Cirebon area. Before dancing, offerings must be raised first to symbolize dualism and one figure. Therefore, the offerings in Cirebon Mask Dance usually use powder, combs, and mirrors that imply women, accompanied by cigars or cigarettes that illustrate men. In addition, there is also red porridge, which represents the human world and white porridge, which indicates the upper world. There are also bananas suggesting men and guavas implying women. Finally, coffee water symbolizes the underworld; white water represents the upper world, and tea water tells the middle world.

#### **Bian Lian Dance**

Initially, this dance could not be performed by women or those not of Chinese ethnic descent. Only some people can learn this dance because it is a secret cultural heritage. However, along with the times that demand the preservation of culture so as not to become extinct, the Chinese government provides licenses with certain conditions. Learning this dance takes ten years to be proficient and skilful. This dance is also known as sacred because it is only performed at certain traditional ceremonies, which means retelling the face of the face of a god considered a holy hero by the Chinese people.

#### **Suggestions Resulting from Cultural Acculturation and Fusion.**

Cultural fusion is one of the focuses of Bashu's Javanese cultural studies. In addition to research, this study also suggests and adds insight to literacy regarding one culture and another. The acculturation stage is the final focus of comparing Javanese and Bashu cultures. What the results of acculturation and fusion of the two cultures will look like will be an interesting topic to be discussed.

The suspicion of acculturation between these two dances is not limited to shadows and conjectures. Precisely in June 2016, at the Sultanate Palace Kesepuhan Cirebon, a performance of the Bian lian dance and the Cirebon mask dance combined into one. The combination of these two dances was performed by two originally Indonesian dancers who had studied Bian Lian dance for two years in China. The Bian Lian dance, which is a state secret, has been allowed to be performed and given a license to be completed in Indonesia after knowing that the Cirebon mask dance has similarities with the Bian Lian dance.

In the performance, a 10 kg costume, with a typical Cirebon mega mendung motif, is used by dancers when performing this combination of the two dances. The masks used are rummyang, panji, samba, tumenggung and klana masks that have been modified in the form of Bian lian masks. The dance music accompaniment is Chinese music.

Combining the Cirebon mask dance and Bian lian dance produces a new dance modification closely related to both ethnicities without eliminating cultural elements. The suggestion of the result of the fusion and acculturation of these two dances has been clearly illustrated. In addition, the use of dance equipment fully supports the dance performance.

This is a new step in the collaboration of two great ethnicities from two countries, and it is worth appreciating all the efforts made to make this collaboration a reality.

### **Conclusion**

The cultures of Java and China are both highly existent cultures. Both also have very concentrated and robust energy. So that when juxtaposed, it will produce something unexpected. The comparison between these two cultures has illustrated that each culture cannot dominate and overshadow the other. Instead, they both shine. Thus, the acculturation and fusion of the Cirebon mask dance and the Bian Lian dance bring a new history to culture without eliminating both cultural elements. This proves that national borders do not bind art. Differences do not hinder art, and art is a bridge between two different aspects.

By making an essay that works on the study of the insights of Bashu Javanese Culture, It is hoped to expand new knowledge about the characteristics and elements of the two cultures to the generations after us. In addition, it is expected to be a reference when writing other essays. With the knowledge attached about Javanese and Bashu culture, both comparisons and acculturation that exist, it can be a hope between the two cultures to develop without limits while maintaining the cultural elements adopted.

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