

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND CULTURAL HARMONY IN ARAKAN PERAHU TRADITION

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Abstract

The Arakan Perahu tradition in Kalipasir Village, Tangerang, is a legacy from the ancestors commemorating the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which has historical roots since the 4th Sultan of Banten in 1639. Over time, this tradition developed with the launch of ships as a symbol of the spread of Islam. Even though there was a hiatus during the political struggle (1955-1993), this tradition was carried out again with the name changed to "Safinatunnajah Wassalamah" in 1994. This tradition reflects tolerance between Muslims and ethnic Chinese in Kalipasir, with Muslims respecting the religious activities of ethnic Chinese. Interestingly, in 2023, the government will participate in the event because, in previous years, traditional activities were only carried out in Kalipasir Village. The government supported the activities of the Chinese with facilities and security, but there was an imbalance against the activities of the Muslims. Nevertheless, the Kalipasir people still maintain traditions as part of the Tangerang civilization, respect differences, and uphold the values of Pancasila.

Keywords: Tradition; Maulid Nabi; Arakan Perahu; Tangerang

Abstrak

Tradisi Arakan Perahu di Desa Kalipasir, Tangerang, merupakan warisan leluhur untuk memperingati Maulid Nabi Muhammad SAW yang memiliki akar sejarah sejak Sultan Banten ke-4 pada tahun 1639. Seiring berjalannya waktu, tradisi ini berkembang dengan adanya peluncuran kapal sebagai simbol penyebaran agama Islam. Meski sempat vakum pada masa perjuangan politik (1955-1993), tradisi ini kembali dilaksanakan dengan nama yang berubah menjadi "Safinatunnajah Wassalamah" pada tahun 1994. Tradisi ini mencerminkan toleransi antara umat Islam dan etnis Tionghoa di Kalipasir, dimana umat Islam menghormati kegiatan keagamaan etnis Tionghoa. Menariknya, pada tahun 2023, pemerintah akan turut serta dalam acara tersebut karena pada tahun-tahun sebelumnya, kegiatan tradisi hanya dilakukan di Desa Kalipasir. Pemerintah mendukung kegiatan etnis Tionghoa dengan fasilitas dan keamanan, namun ada ketidakseimbangan terhadap kegiatan umat Islam. Meskipun demikian, masyarakat Kalipasir tetap menjaga tradisi sebagai bagian dari peradaban Tangerang, menghargai perbedaan, dan menjunjung tinggi nilai-nilai Pancasila.

Kata Kunci: Tradisi; Mawlid Nabi; Arakan Perahu; Tangerang

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a multicultural country with cultural diversity. The richness of the traditions and rituals of this society strengthens the stigma of humans as *homo festivalicus/celebrating man* (creatures who like to carry out a series of festive events/religious traditions and rituals). This is because tradition not only succeeds in making humans related to one another as a community but also the mutual influence between communities. Therefore, the issue of tradition and its formation is an important issue to study (Muhaimin AG: 2001).

The traditions that develop in each region are a manifestation of the acculturation between culture and religion, which is guaranteed to contain multicultural values within it. Multiculturalism can be interpreted as the fact of diversity. Existing diversity should be seen as a gift, but in reality, many consider diversity to be a problem. Multiculturalism is not just about difference and identity, but about being deeply embedded in and imbued with culture; that is, a set of beliefs and practices that give particular meaning to people's experiences and are pervasive in their character. (Parekh: 2000)

Tradition, as a manifestation of culture, functions not only as a social binder within a community, but also as a bridge of understanding between different groups. In the present context of a multicultural society like Indonesia, the preservation and understanding of traditions are key to building social harmony and strengthening national identity. Traditions in Indonesia serve an important role in preserving social cohesion and cultural identity amidst ethnic and religious diversity. local traditions (specifically in Indonesia) functions as 'social adhesives' that help communities sustain shared meanings and strengthen communal ties within a broader national context. (Koentjaraningrat: 2009)

Traditions need to be maintained as a new way of diplomacy and non-verbal communication to function as value enhancers for social solidarity between individuals in social life. The use of tradition as a communicative medium not only provides space for new applied dialogue but also infiltrates the real identity of diverse Indonesian society. This is the meeting point of this paper. where community harmony seems to be formed because of the similarity of communication through traditional channels. while the tradition is often formed based on local history that is believed and well guided.

Traditions play a vital role in shaping collective identity and maintaining the social stability of communities. Traditions serve as a mechanisms for transmitting important values and practices from one generation to the next, thus helping to maintain cultural continuity and social cohesion. It is this social cohesion that creates persuasive and intense communication to avoid things that cause segregation. Because communication is not only the transmission of information, but also the maintenance of society in time, it is not only the act of conveying information but the representation of shared beliefs. (Carey, J. W.: 2009)

Local traditions in multicultural societies can serve as a bridge of understanding and interaction between the different elements, creating a common space for dialog and collaboration. (Hefner: 2001). An example of acculturation is the tradition of Arakan Perahu, practiced by Kalipasir's village community in Tangerang, Banten. This tradition has been carried out from generation to generation. This tradition has become an important part of society's reconciliation process towards a common vision of multiculturalism. This tradition shows that social cohesion and harmony in society can very often be unified in a cultural setting.

This tradition cannot be separated from Kalipasir Grand mosque (Masjid Jami), one of the oldest mosques in Tangerang. The conjunction of this tradition with the classic

architectural heritage of the Kalipasir Grand Mosque provides historical certainty that, as a tradition, the Arakan Perahu Tradition conceives the values of diversity and spirituality of the local community. Moreover, the socio-cultural society of Tangerang has been inhabited by cross-ethnic groups for centuries.

The Arakan Perahu tradition is a tradition carried out to commemorate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad SAW as an ancestral heritage of the people of Tangerang. According to the beliefs of local elders, this tradition began to be carried out during the time of the fourth Banten Sultanate, led by Sultan Abdul Mafakhir Abdul Qadir in 1639 (Interview with regional government/Head of *Rukun Tetangga* (RT), 2023). A long period of time to be considered an unconsidered tradition.

However, from 1955 to 1993, this tradition was retrieved due to the turmoil caused by practical politics. Apart from that, during that year's trajectory, the life of the local Muslim community was also faced with the transition from *Orde Lama* (Old Order) to *Orde Baru* (New Order). Community elders also believed that the multi-ethnic groups in the community at that time agreed to postpone the implementation of the tradition because they were worried about racial segregation.

Until around 1994, this tradition started again with a boat procession. With the recovery of people's communication and their survival from the period of crisis, the people held the boat procession as a form of gratitude for the livelihood of old traditions. The name of the boat being paraded adapts to the aim of the tradition, namely *Safinatunnajah Wassalamah*, which means a boat of success and safety (*Nyukcruk Galur Mapai Patilasan Manuscript*).

The author sees the phenomenon and dynamics of this tradition as something necessary and essential to analyze. Not only to see how a tradition can be maintained, but also how inter-ethnic dialog can proceed together through a cultural approach. This research also reveals the support of cross-bureaucracy and the surrounding community in realizing cultural harmony.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research relies on fieldwork with qualitative data combined with historical studies. Data was collected through interviews, observation, and document study. The observation was conducted during the Arakan Perahu festival in Kalipasir village. During observation, documentation was carried out from the beginning of the event until the post-event.

In 2023, an archival exhibition was held for the first time. The respondents interviewed include a regional government, a local historian and also the chief of Dewan Kemakmuran Masjid (DKM) of Kalipasir Grand Mosque, the Head of the Culture and Tourism Department in Tangerang. One of the sources is a book of *Nyukcruk Galur Mapay Patilasan and Kalipasir Tulis: Kalipasir Jami Mosque in the History of Tangerang*.

This research uses the theory of symbolic interactionism. Weber and Mead regard people's behavior as how someone thinks and produces work that is based on social relationships, where society is described as a number of relationships and values with a process of socialization and interaction. For individuals, behavior is the primary value orientation that emerges in a specific societal context.

This theory is in line with this research, where *perahu* or boat is an essential part of traditional celebrations. The theory of symbolic interactionism holds that social reality is based on shared definitions held by individuals that relate to suitable forms that connect each other. The Kalipasir community agreed and synergized in celebrating the Prophet Muhammad's birthday and made the boat the main icon of the ceremony.

This reinforces the influence of the theory that humans always act towards something based on the meanings that something has for them. The boat here is not only the shape of the boat in the symbol, but also the meaning of the symbol based on the social circumstances of the community. (Blumer, H.: 1969)

Even though this theory rejects the view of social facts and social paradigms as its mainstream reference, in the Arakan Perahu tradition, society and individuals are seen as a social community, which is in line with this theory. Humans are capable of making policy modifications and changes because of their ability to interact with themselves, which makes it possible to test a series of action opportunities, assessing their relative advantages and disadvantages. Furthermore, humans are also, in the view of this theory, able to think due to their strong social interactions (Raho, 2007).

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Islamization of Banten in Cultural Interaction

In general, the process of Islamisation in Banten took place through an accommodating approach to local culture. The spread of Islam in Banten was peaceful and gradual, using trade and marriage routes. And that's also reflected in the process of its dissemination. In particular, the Tangerang area, which was also part of the Sultanate of Banten in the past, and the place where this tradition started. (Tjandrasmita: 2009).

The Arakan Perahu tradition is believed to be rooted in the history of the Islamization of the Banten Kingdom by Sultan Hasanudin, the first king, continued by Sultan Maulana Yusuf (1570-1580). During Maulana Yusuf's reign, this kingdom became a significant trade center. The heterogeneity of the people living within the Banten region has led to the celebration taking many varied forms.

Strong interpretation, during the time of Sultan Maulana Yusuf, was carried out by persuasive and compromising practices in the mass Islamization of society. This is proven by the widespread construction of mosques after the death of Sultan Maulana Yusuf. Sultan Maulana Muhammad (158-1596), the successor of Sultan Maulana Yusuf, was known as a sultan who liked to build mosques even in remote areas of Banten and other areas he wanted to conquer.

This cosmopolitan trade route and the concomitant Islamization mission gave rise to many areas that were de facto controlled under the authority of the Sultanate of Banten. These areas extend not only to coastal areas but also inland and along riverbanks as transportation routes. History proves that the initial development of cities often started from coastal patterns. Rivers became busy settlements and turned into cities (Rabani, 2010).

Other sources also explain that the traditions that occur among the people of Banten (Tangerang is included) are also due to the strong connection between magical/religious-magical beliefs. This is due to the close relationship between the religiosity of the local community and the rigid regulations of the sultanate from the past. Thus, religious practices often also involve the culture of the local Banten community, which has been Islamized. Religion is a central element in Banten culture. Religious activities dominate the entire life of the people of Banten, so the ceremonies carried out cannot be separated from religious elements (Fauziyah, 2016).

The involvement of religious teachers imported from various countries (such as *ulama* and figures from the Arabian and Persian Peninsula) is also considered an actor who has had a significant influence on the religious-cultural formation of the native population of the Banten Sultanate. However, successive Sultans throughout history

still provide space for acculturation with local culture. This seems to be something that needs to be appreciated about the culture of the Sultanate of Banten (Bruinessen, 2012).

It is strongly suspected that this tradition has been carried out since the time of the Banten Sultanate. This tradition is known as *Pajang Mulud*, which The Sultan of Banten reportedly popularizes as Abdul Mafakhir Mahmud Abdul Qadir, a.k.a. Sultan of Kenari in the 17th century. This evidence is obtained from the frequency of the Sultanate of Banten, as one of the largest Islamic sultanates in the archipelago, commemorating maulid and instructing its whole territory.

Pajang Mulud is still established in the Banten Lama (Old Banten) area. Even though this tradition, which started during the Banten Lama era in the framework of modernity, which initially only paraded gifts given by the Syarif Haromain to the Kingdom of Banten, has now also changed significantly to a procession in the form of fast food such as instant noodles, instant coffee, and so on. Besides, in the beginning, the tradition of Maulid Nabi was a sense of euphoria. However, now it has changed to be quite far from the initial objective as a medium of da'wah or proselytization (Natasari, 2021).

Kalipasir Grand Mosque and Important Figures

Masjid Jami' Kalipasir, or the Kalipasir Grand Mosque, is located in Sukasari Village, Tangerang District and faces the Cisadane River. Its western side faces the cemetery and the Cisadane River or Cipamunggas River, which was a sea transportation route at the time. Considering its ancient role, on 25 August 2011, this mosque was inaugurated as a cultural heritage building.

The author quotes from *Nyukeruk Galur Mapay Patilasan, Records of Oral Tradition Passed on from Generation to Generation*. In researching this source, it is realized that steps are still needed to verify the data and facts contained therein. However, the data is already believed by the local community as written evidence that is fairly old. In addition, some of the interview data has also changed several times. However, the author is very confident that this source can be used as primary data and then critically analyzed.

Jami' Kalipasir Mosque has a high historical value. Ancient Mosques in Jakarta and its surrounding areas, including Tangerang, have played an important role in the spread of Islam and the development of local communities. given that the whole region is close to each other and has similar historical roots. So the discourse related to mosques in the region is an indispensable part of a society (Heuken: 2003).

The Kalipasir Grand Mosque was founded by Raden Wiratanudilaga in 1576. Then, it was renovated during the time of Sheikh Abdul Jalil, a Persian cleric who spread Islam to Tangerang around 1455. Syekh Jalil's origin as a Persian cleric has been allegedly solid because of the intense interaction between the country and the Sultanate of Banten as the center of trade on the island of Java (Daliman, 2012).

In an information written by the Tangerang Government, it is stated that Kalipasir Village was previously an area that was opened or visited by Ki Tengger Djati in 1412. Ki Tengger Djati was a prince of the kingdom of Galuh (one of the Sunda kingdoms) who preferred to live a modest life and leave the life of the palace court. This journey from the palace gave him an understanding of the large area that was controlled by his ancestors, one of them being Banten (Tangerang/Kalipasir). Until on his journey, he met a scholar named Sheikh Subakir.

As a student of Sheikh Subakir, he traveled and opened land to spread Islam. The place became known as the Ki Tengger Djati Petilasan. At that time, Ki Tengger Djati

made a small place of worship for himself to pray. Then, in 1416, after the formation of the community settlement, the place of worship was expanded as needed. The society gradually expanded and the diversity of people who lived there. Ki Tengger Djati further widened his role as a religious figure.

In short, in 1608, Prince Kuripan and Prince Mahdjajadilaga repaired the mosque by adding a fence and gate to the mosque. Prince Mahdjajadilaga continued his leadership as Duke of Kuripan II, whose center of government was in Kalipasir. Kinship with the Sultanate of Banten was strengthened by the marriage of his daughter to Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa. At that time, conditions were heating up because of the war between the Sultanate of Banten and the VOC. Nyai Ratu took up arms to fight against the VOC. After her death, Nyai Ratu was buried behind the Kalipasir Jami Mosque.

In a collection of writings collected by community elders, *Kalipasir Writes: Kalipasir Jami Mosque in the History of Tangerang, a Record of Oral Traditions from Generation to Generation*, it is stated that since 1671 the renovation of the mosque was carried out by Tumenggung Pamit Widjaja until 1904. Only in 1918 was the addition of a minaret built by Raden Jasin Judanegara, together with H. Muhibi and H. Abdul Kadir Banjar, who continued to carry out repairs on the mosque. It is highly suspected that the absence of a tower since the 18th-20th century was due to respect for the plurality of the people there (Chinese, natives and Arabs). The use of minarets did not have the same urgency as the minarets of other ancient mosques, even the Great Mosque of Banten. (Pijper, 1985).

So from 24 April 1959 to August 1961, the old tower was repaired and overhauled by Hasbullah bin Abdul Kadir, together with HM Toha bin H. Muhibi, RH Abdul Syukur Yasin bin RHM Yasin and M. Badru Abdul Manan, Nyai Ratu Hj Murtafiah bint KH Asnawi (Sheikh Asnawi) then became known as the driving force behind the construction of the mosque.

It was also stated that Nyai Guru (the community's name for Nyai Ratu Hj Murtafiah) was related to Sheikh Nawawi Al-Bantani because he was still a cousin. In 1825, it is believed by many people that Sheikh Nawawi Al-Bantani stopped at the Kalipasir Jami Mosque to correct the direction of the mosque's *qibla*. This information really requires further research, considering that Sheikh Nawawi Banten himself is said to have been born in 1815 from many sources. In addition, his generation is still considered the descendants of the Banten Sultanate.

Kalipasir has many added values, one of which is the Kalipasir Grand Mosque, which has been designated as a cultural heritage, so it is also called the "Historical Village". Meanwhile, the tombs in the Kalipasir Grand Mosque area range from historical relics from the Padjadjaran era to the tombs of two regents, namely regent Raden Ahyat Pena (Tangerang) and Ahmad Pena, former regent of Cianjur.

Implementation of the Arakan Perahu Tradition

Basically, the celebration of Islamic holidays in Banten Lama is known as the *Pajang Mulud Tradition*. It was realized in several periods in the Banten Lama Sultanate. Each period experienced changes and gave a unique nuance to each region. Even though the celebration is currently carried out with elements of change, it still upholds existing noble values, especially Islamic values, which are worth emulating.

The tradition of Arakan Perahu began at the same time as the commemoration of the Prophet Muhammad's birth. It was held in the area around the Kalipasir Grand Mosque and was attended by residents and even people from outside Kalipasir who wanted to see the crowd. Every step taken by the pedestrians along the parade was accompanied by the reciting of *salawat* (prayers) to the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

Before a series of busy and scheduled traditional events, people usually read the *Maulid* Book, the *Sharaful Anam* book first. Reading the contents of the book, containing the characteristics, history and role models of the Prophet, has still been maintained, even though in the past, when this tradition was on hiatus, it was only limited to the reading of the book without continuing with a series of other activities. After that, the people then flocked to the main road, where some of the youth had prepared various parade attributes and creativity. The ceremony was enlivened with flags, the best and most varied clothes, and ornamental symbols in the shape of the boats, which were the main icons.

The boat not only depicts the maritime spirit of the Sultanate of Banten, which is capable of becoming an international port, but it is also a symbol of the people who previously were mostly fishermen. According to one community figure, Raufi Syarofi, Chair of the Kalipasir Grand Mosque, the use of the boat symbol as an icon of the Arakan Perahu tradition began to be celebrated during the time of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa.

Others interpret the boat symbol as a symbol of hope for safety from the blessings of the Prophet Muhammad. There is also hope that people will always be safe from the waves of the twists and turns of life's journey because these people are in a boat that is directly captained by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Meanwhile, some others believe that the tradition is related to the spreading of Islam in the archipelago, which was mainly through the water. The boat is the symbol of the message. These interpretations contain limitations as they depend on the interaction of meanings and the users when trying to understand the meaning of each other's actions (Ritzer, 1985).

The use of symbolic objects in the ceremony was indeed similar to the previous processions of the Sultans of Banten, who liked to parade gifts from the close relationship between Banten and the rulers of Haramain (Makkah and Medina) as the center of world Islam. Diplomatic relations between these kingdoms often legitimized the Sultan of Banten's power over its people. For example, in 1638, the Syarif of Mecca gave the title of Sultan to Sultan Abdul Qadir Abdul Mafakhir or Sultan Kenari (Kersten, 2018). Furthermore, people who followed him, such as Prince Pekik, also received the title Sultan Ma'ali Ahmad (Azra, 2013).

In this relation, the Sultan of Banten was often given gifts in the form of Islamic books. The Sultan also received flags and sacred clothing, as well as what is believed to be the Prophet's footprints from the Ruler of Haramain. When arriving in the sultanate, the gifts were paraded to the palace (Azra, 2013). The Sultanate commemorated the Prophet's birthday by displaying various gifts, so the tradition of celebrating the birthday developed in the Banten sultanate's territory, which often involved displaying "symbols", including the Kalipasir area, which is the furthest region of the Sultanate.

The next procession is to parade the boat as an icon around the sub-district. The icon boat, which is named *Safinatunnajah Wassalamah* (the boat of success and safety), has Arabic inscriptions written on each boat: *Adjalan* (ease), *Ikraman* (glory), and also *Tabdzilan* (glory). These three writing symbols convey a prayer and humility from the people that what they do is entirely a form of glorifying the Prophet Muhammad, as well as a form of da'wah always to remember His greatness and believe that being aware of Him will ease people's lives. The authors have not been able to detect whether there is a relationship between the name of the *Kitab Safinatunnajah* and the name of the boat symbol *Safinatunnajah Wassalamah*.

As described by many works, *Kitab Safinatunnajah* is an introductory book that is a reference for the majority of Muslims in Indonesia in terms of *fiqh* issues. Muslims in Indonesia have long used this book as a medium of Islamic learning in their society. The book was written by Sheikh Salim bin Abdullah bin Saad bin Sumair Al Hadhrami

in the 13th century of Hijra. The two names are close in time, both in the existence of the *Kitab Safinatunnajah* and the celebrations often carried out by the sultanate of Banten.

On the other hand, according to the views of Sumangku Getar (Head of the Culture and Tourism Department), Maulid Akbar, the other name for *Maulid Nabi Arakan Perahu*, is a great tribute to the majesty of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Hence, the procession is a form of minimal obedience that signals that the power of Islam is in this city.

The activity schedule for the *Arakan Perahu* tradition started at 07.00 AM and contained a boat procession preceded by prayers. After that, all the residents mingled in friendly interactions. At this stage, all residents, regardless of ethnicity/background, shook hands with each other and ate together until the call of the *Zuhr* (midday) prayer. After *Zuhr*, there was a reading of the *Syaraful Anam Maulid Book*, as well as the distribution of fruit and hundreds of baskets of food (*beseq*) made directly by Kalipasir residents. The *beseq* were then distributed to the people around and from outside Kalipasir Village. The *beseq* contained *nasi uduk* and side dishes, such as fried chicken and some vegetables. Meanwhile, mineral water, fruit and traditional cakes are served on plates during the pilgrimage (*ziarah*).

Among the activities carried out is visiting graves (*ziarah kubur*). The graves visited were the burial areas around the Kalipasir Grand Mosque. *Ziarah kubur* can be a bridge for this celebration. Thus, the celebration is not only done to show off physical abilities but also to strengthen inner mental states. *Ziarah Kubur*, in this part of a series of traditions, can provide at least two central values. The first is vertical values, which are the application of vertical spirituality to the meaning of harmonious relationships between creatures and God. The second is horizontal values, which explain the positive relationships that must be fostered between humans and other humans, as well as humans with animals and the natural environment (Guillot & Henri, 2007).

This event was held to show the harmonious relationship between an individual and his or her ancestor or ancestors. The moment was also a form of respect, appreciation, and devotion (*birul walidain*) to the ancestors and offering salvation prayers. Therefore, pilgrimage (*ziarah*) activities are also an essential part of this series of traditions.

Thus, besides carrying an iconic boat (*perahu*) and parading in long lines, most people also wear white clothes. White is the color (mentioned in the Prophet's hadith) as the color preferred by the Prophet Muhammad. They walked while holding banners containing forms of activities and community representatives. They also beat *hadrah* musical instruments along the way while reciting *salawat* until the end of the designated route.

A group of *hadrah* music holders precedes the order of the parade, followed by children with various craftings, as well as parents who encourage or read the performances. There were no standard provisions governing the order of the parade. The committee from the Kalipasir Grand Mosque and the local government determined the orders. Their walk was bordered by a plastic rope on the right side that adjoined the highway so that the line remained neat and safe from accidents of passing vehicles.

The creations displayed by the participants mostly carried colorful flags. Some carried Indonesian flags and community flags. The participants chanted Islamic prayers, such as Arabic *Lailaha Illallah* (the Tawhid sentence), *Allahu Akbar* (Takbir), and sholawat to the Prophet Muhammad in Arabic. During the observations, it could be seen that all colors and patterns made the celebration even more colorful.

Meanwhile, the procession route of the *Arakan Perahu* tradition in 2023 was from Kalipasir to Pasar Lama, then to Ahmad Damyati Road, MT Haryono Road, Kisamaun Road, continued to Kalipasir Indah Road on the edge of the river, until the bridge

then entered the Al-Ijtihad Grand Mosque. There, they were greeted by the mayor and government officials. Because the administrators of the Grand Mosque organized the event, then they immediately returned to Kalipasir (to the Kalipasir Grand Mosque).

In 2023, this tradition was not only held by the Kalipasir people, but also the out people of Tangerang participated in enlivening the Prophet's birthday with the Al-Ijtihad Grand Mosque as the starting and ending point of the event. However, it still involves the Kalipasir area as the starting and ending point of the event to maintain the central noble values of this tradition.

Kalipasir Tradition and People of Tangerang

Mapping traditions cannot be separated from the space where the traditions were formed. Because traditional practices, which often come into contact with religious approaches, are greatly influenced by changes in the society in which they live. (Koentjoroningrat, 2009). As the theory is, the depiction of The process of Islamization in Indonesia, especially in Banten, involved the adaptation and integration of local cultural elements into Islamic religious practices

Therefore, the demographic involvement of the Tangerang society in the *Arakan Perahu* tradition is also a part of this discussion. The linkage between this tradition and the history of the Banten Sultanate implies the pluralistic society of the Sultanate. The structure of society and social systems automatically form a pluralistic community of citizens. (Ridwan, et al, 2021).

In the *Arakan Perahu* tradition, there is no cultural standard related to the ornament, knick-knacks and clothing used. In the interior of the Grand Mosque, the base of the mosque, the absence of minarets, and the dominant red color give the impression of Chinese culture. This reality is made possible by the background of the people of Kampung Kalipasir, which is relatively similar to the "Kauman" area. It is a Muslim settlement in the center of a traditional river and maritime city in Java, which is marked by a mosque building.

The Kalipasir Grand Mosque marks the existence of Muslim civilization on the banks of the Cisadane River. On average, the residents of Kalipasir are people of Sundanese ethnicity who have continued their Sundanese-Muslim ancestors and Kasepuhan since the time of Tumenggung Aria Tangerang, long before the "Cina Benteng" community was known to revive the Pasar Lama Tangerang. Their lives there have established a culturally significant community, giving rise to an important cultural element. (Elma, 2020).

Benteng Chinese community began to occupy the Cisadane river banks more or less since 1830. They were often known as a community whose level was considered low by the government at that time. Generally, they work as laborers, farmers, fishermen and artisans. They are loyal to preserving the customs and traditions of their ancestors, as socially, they can unite with local people (Elma, 2020).

In the past, Kalipasir became the territory of the VOC. However, the VOC did not eliminate the leadership in Kalipasir, only that the leadership was regulated or appointed by the VOC. This was done to maintain security and stability in the border area so they could easily build defensive fortifications on the east side of the Cisadane River. Therefore, in Tangerang, it was known as the Makasar fort. The people who call Tangerang a fort mostly came from Batavia or Jakarta. This tribe grew because of the mixing of cultures from various ethnicities, including Madurese, Javanese, Sundanese Arab, Indian and Chinese. The dominant culture was the Chinese ethnicity. So many cultures that emerge are more towards Chinese culture, such as Tanjidor, Lenong, Cokek, and others.

This diversity of historical roots makes the people of Kalipasir less concerned about differences. Moreover, according to information from the local government, if traced genetically, it is very likely that the Kalipasir people, in particular, are genetically related. The Kalipasir Muslim community, according to various informants of this research, basically agreed to maintain harmony between residents based on the notion of *Islam rahmatan lil' alamin*, or Islam that spreads goodness in its teachings.

Although the Chinese community is considered a minority, but in the observation of researchers, Muslims and other communities accept their existence without any interference. The most important reason is their ability to understand the values of differences. For example, in Muslims where they always prioritize morals and humanity. This is what makes the Arakan Perahu tradition need to be revived as a form of acceptance of all forms of differences. Disputes over Kalipasir's inheritance have never been unheard of.

As for Chinese religious activities, Muslims still respect their activities. In fact, many Chinese people are involved in the traditional Arakan Perahu activities. This is considered the true spirit of the practice of celebrating the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet always made agreements with religious and ethnic groups to ensure security and peace and to create an atmosphere of mutual assistance and tolerance between groups.

Raufi Syarofi, a Kalipasir Muslim who is also an observer of the history and culture of Tangerang, argues that before the implementation of the tradition in 2023, the government was ensuring more security and facilities for the Chinese community activities, such as the use of roads and the involvement of police and related agencies.

This is different from Muslim activities such as Arakan Perahu, where roads were limited, and there was no police to guard. This was considered an imbalance on the part of the government towards events held by Muslims. In that sense, the regional government also responded well in maintaining and respecting differences in religious principles and framing them in the context of tradition.

The value of harmony in Arakan Perahu is the opportunity for each citizen to share energy, wealth, and ideas to make the event run well. During the observation, it could be seen that the people prepared for this event in about one month. During that month, every citizen from any religion or background, affluent, male or female, young or old, discussed and communicated intensely about this event. This solidarity has been built on the basis of a shared vision and desire to build a harmonious, peaceful, and mutually respectful society.

Sumangku, a regional government figure, also emphasized that every activity carried out by either the Chinese, such as Pecun, Barongsai, Liong and others or by Muslims can be carried out with complete wisdom. As the Arakan Perahu tradition is considered a 'valuable cultural heritage' owned by the people of Tangerang, the inability to care for differences in a pluralistic society will only scratch wounds on the sacred body of Garuda Pancasila, the fundamental philosophy of Indonesia.

The Arakan Perahu tradition, implemented by the local community of Kalipasir Tangerang and accommodated by the local government, has succeeded in creating a space for cultural interaction in the current era. Religious values color every symbol of this tradition. The community's understanding of history and the need to maintain the cultural heritage of the Kalipasir Grand Mosque make this tradition attractive for further study.



Picture 1. the Arakan Perahu Tradition in 1939. Source: Regional Archives/documentated by author. (2023)

CONCLUSION

The Arakan Perahu of Kalipisir Tangerang tradition is an expression of gratitude for the birth of the Prophet Muhammad. It is strongly suspected that this tradition has been carried out since the time of the Banten Sultanate. This tradition was known as *Pajang Mulud*, popularized by Abdul Mafakhir Mahmud Abdul Qadir, a.k.a *Sultan of Kenari*, in the 17th century.

The passage of time has made this tradition even more developed in terms of participants as well as crafts made by the Kalipisir community. The most visible difference is the symbols used in this traditional celebration. The use of the boat as a traditional symbol is based on people's interpretation of cultural identity and their hopes.

The festival still maintains previous culture, such as the reading of *Kitab Maulid Nabi Syariful Anam* on the Prophet's Birthday (*Maulid Nabi Muhammad*), showing off sacred objects (boat), and labeling the boat with prayers. All of them have similarities with the traditions of the Prophet's birthday during the Banten sultanate.

In this tradition, society's interpretation of symbols strengthens the multifunctional role of humans. *Perahu* (boat) is a carrier and product, as well as a subject and object. In a system, signs and symbols act as a means of communication to convey knowledge and messages. Symbols provide a basis for actions and behavior in addition to ideas and values.

The Arakan Perahu tradition also provides humanist and pluralist values, as a diverse society carries it out. It includes Sundanese, Javanese, Chinese and Arabs. The economic influence of society can also grow with this celebration. The relationship between the locals and the government can be communicated. This tradition also has a significant historical and sociological influence. Social solidarity thrives with the interaction during mass feasts, while the economic sectors also thrive with tourism attraction.

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