

The Past and Present, Saparan Bekakak of Ambar Ketawang: A study of Cultural Transformation

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SUBJECT

History

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Received: October 31, 2024

Accepted: December 22, 2024

Online version: December 30, 2024

Keywords: *Saparan Bekakak*; Cultural
Transformation; Koentjaraningrat

acculturation. Diffusion occurs when Javanese remix DJ music moves from social media into the procession of the *arak-arakan*. Acculturation occurs when the ceremony uses Islamic prayers while maintaining non-Islamic practices. In addition, cultural changes can occur due to natural changes due to human activities, namely the physical deformation of Gunung Gamping and its transformation into a cultural reserve, as well as the cessation of mining, decreasing the number of sacrificed bridal dolls.

1. Introduction

Tradition is a description of human attitudes and ideas that have been passed down from generation to generation for a long time and are still being implemented today (Coomans, 1987:73; Sztompka, 2010:69). There are two ways in which tradition emerges, according to Sztompka (2010:70), the first is born spontaneously from below by involving many people. Second, it is born through coercion from influential parties. In this case, the mythical Saparan Bekakak ceremony was born by order of Prince Mangkubumi to commemorate his beloved retainer, Kyai Wirasuta. Saparan Bekakak is a traditional ceremony held annually every month of Sapar or Safar in the Ambarketawang area (Tashadi et al., 1992:35; Balai KSDA, 2017:37). Then the word 'bekakak' according to Poerwadarminta (1939:38) means offerings in the form of humans or animals. In Saparan Bekakak, the offering is a bride doll made of sticky rice slaughtered at Mount Gamping's foot.

Abstract

Saparan Bekakak is an annual tradition organized by the people of Ambarketawang. The series of traditions began with the creation of bridal dolls, *midodareni*, *arak-arakan*, slaughtering of bridal dolls, and closed with *slametan*. This long-standing tradition, which the Dutch archives refer to as the remnants of sacrifice, underwent a cultural transformation. This happens due to external and internal factors. Therefore, this study aims to reveal the forms of cultural transformation in *Saparan Bekakak*, the factors that influence it, and the impact of the changes. We used Koentjaraningrat's theory of the dynamics of society and culture to analyze this phenomenon. The theory explains that culture can transform due to internal factors, namely innovation and discovery, encouragement of discoveries, innovation and evolution, and external factors, diffusion, acculturation, and assimilation. In the Saparan Bekakak ceremony, changes occur from external factors, namely diffusion and

The emergence of this tradition is said to have originated from the split of the Mataram Kingdom into Surakarta and Yogyakarta, marked by the Giyanti Agreement (1755). The split led Prince Mangkubumi to temporarily reside in Talaga Village, Gamping (later named Pesanggrahan Ambarketawang) while waiting for the Yogyakarta Palace to be completed (Ricklefs, 2002:124; Ki Sabdacarakatama, 2009:95). From this historical event, there are several versions of the story regarding the origin of this ceremony, the most popular being the story of Prince Mangkubumi's or Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono I is favourite courtier, Kyai Wirasuta and his family who lived in a cave on Mount Gamping and were buried by the collapse of the limestone mountain, but their bodies were never found. Therefore, an order came down from Prince Mangkubumi, who at that time had become the Sultan of Yogyakarta with the title Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono I, to hold a slametan every Sapar month on Friday between the 10th-20th (Tashadi et al., 1992:36-37).

The tradition has been going on for over a century and has changed due to several influences, such as technological developments. The ever-moving dynamics of society have forced the ceremony to adjust. Unfortunately, the dynamics of society have made this traditional ceremony shift from being interpreted as something sacred to something profane. People, especially young people, have begun to forget the essence of this ceremony. Changes following the times sometimes do not reflect sacredness and moral values. Most of the research on this traditional ceremony only discusses the values contained without seeing the significant changes that have occurred, resulting in neglecting its sacred values. Therefore, research on Saparan Bekakak is important to reveal the changes from the ceremony and its impact on society.

This tradition, which is quite famous in the community, has been the object of many studies for final assignments and journals. However, the discussion of changes in the tradition has never been done. Therefore, this study aims to reveal the forms of change in the Saparan Bekakak tradition, the things that influence these changes, and the impact of the changes that occur. From the literature, several studies are relevant to the object of research, as follows.

Firstly, research titled Symbolic Meaning of Bekakak Tradition in Gamping Yogyakarta by Hidayati (2009). The final project discusses the relationship between symbols and society described by symbolic actions in religion, tradition, art, and Javanese Islamic tradition, which are then connected to the symbols in the Saparan Bekakak ceremony. Unfortunately, the meaning of the symbols is only based on the community's perception and is not supported by literature sources. Second, Nugroho (2019) initiated the research titled The Influence of Saparan Bekakak Ceremony Tradition on Social Solidarity in Ambarketawang, Gamping, Sleman. This final project explores the forms of solidarity of the Ambarketawang community and the influence of the Saparan Bekakak ceremony itself. In addition, this final project discusses the history, village demographics, and ceremony religiosity. As previously explained, studies on Saparan Bekakak do not explain the changes that have occurred, nor do they explain the impact of these changes. Therefore, this research can be a novelty for previous studies and shows the change of tradition from sacred to profane.

Koentjaraningrat's theory of community and cultural dynamics dissects the transformation of the Saparan Bekakak tradition. Before that, it is necessary to know about the three forms of culture initiated by Koentjaraningrat (2009:150): ideas, activities, and objects. Then, it also explains the reasons why culture can transform, namely due to internal factors: (1) innovation and discovery, (2) encouragement of discoveries, (3)

innovation and evolution; and external factors (1) diffusion, (2) acculturation, (3) assimilation.

The internal factor of cultural shifts is the process of innovation and discovery. This process is a renewal of using natural resources, energy, and other resources to create new products (Koentjaraningrat, 2009:210). This process usually takes place over a long period and goes through two stages: discovery and invention. Discovery is the invention itself, either in the form of tools or ideas that are new and created by individuals or groups of people. Then, when society recognises discovery, it becomes an invention (Koentjaraningrat, 2009:210). Then, in terms of innovation, some factors drive discoveries. This encouragement is a form of individual awareness of the shortcomings of a culture, the quality of a culture, and the existence of a stimulating system for creation in society (Koentjaraningrat, 2009:212).

New inventions are usually not created in a short period. A new discovery usually starts from small discoveries, which are then accumulated into new discoveries, so the evolutionary process also occurs in the innovation process. The difference between innovation and evolution is that the innovation process involves active individuals, while the evolutionary process involves passive and even negative individuals (Koentjaraningrat, 2009:213). Due to the active role of individuals in these discoveries, the innovation process is faster than evolution.

The first external factor of cultural shift is the diffusion process. The diffusion process is the process of individuals or human groups spreading cultural elements from one place to another, either by moving places or without moving places (Koentjaraningrat, 2009:199). This process is not only a form of cultural movement from one place to another but also cultural elements brought by one individual and accepted by other individuals. Second, acculturation is when a culture is faced with a foreign culture that is gradually accepted and becomes part of the culture without eliminating the characteristics of each culture (Koentjaraningrat, 2009:202). Then the third is the assimilation process. Assimilation is a social process when human groups from different cultures intersect for a long time so that the culture of each group forms a mixed culture (Koentjaraningrat, 2009:209). In this process, tolerance and sympathy are needed so that social groups easily accept these cultures. In the discussion section, in addition to explaining the transformation of the tradition, it is also reinforced by the views of Koentjaraningrat and the opinion of Wahyu Saktiaji (representative of the local government) to give his views on the impact of these changes.

2. Methods

This research uses the descriptive analysis method by describing the facts found and then analysing them using the theory. The data collection method uses two methods, namely 1) observation by direct observation and interviews with sources, namely Wahyu Saktiaji (50) as the chief organiser of *Saparan Bekakak* 2024 as well as the head of the Ambarketawang Cultural Village, 2) literature study by searching for secondary data sourced from Dutch newspapers, books and journals, social media uploads such as YouTube, and archives. Related to secondary data from Dutch newspapers, it needs to be separated from orientalist discourse to obtain objective data. Then, secondary data taken from videos on YouTube or other websites to avoid subjective things is gathered from sources that can be accounted for, such as the government or credible websites. In this case, the limitations of the method used are the limited literature data found regarding the *Saparan Bekakak* ceremony, especially before the 1800s. In addition, the

difficulty of finding reliable secondary sources is also an obstacle in conducting this research. Therefore, it is hoped that this research can be a trigger for further research.

3. Finding and Discussions

Mount Gamping

Mount Gamping was originally a limestone (gamping) deposit from the Middle Eocene Period with a layer thickness of 200 - 300 meters (Mohler, 1949:519). From this quote, it can be estimated that the age of Mount Gamping is around 42.5 - 16 million years ago. The deposits were formed in a shallow sea and uplifted into limestone hills due to inter-plate tectonic activity (Balai KSDA, 2017:5-8). It was in these hills that Prince Mangkubumi resided in 1749 while waiting for the Yogyakarta Palace to be completed. The choice of this retreat was based on the natural landscape of Mount Gamping, which could become a natural fortress so that the residents of the palace could be temporarily protected from danger (Sudrajat et al., 2007:3). This is reinforced by a quote from Babad Giyanti (in Sudrajat et al., 2007:3) which describes Mount Gamping as follows: *Gunung Gamping barisnya, ajajagang kukuh* which means "the line of Mount Gamping (as) a solid fortress". The description is followed by *jinagang pager bumi, akawah kukuh bakuh*, which means "a moat was made around (as) a wide and sturdy fence". The story goes that Prince Mangkubumi used the limestone mountain to supervise the construction of the Yogyakarta Palace from the top of one of the mountains, hence the name Ambarketawang.

Ambarketawang comes from two words, *ambar* and *tawang*. Gericke and Roorda (1901) say the word *ambar* means fragrant, and *tawang* means sky. If the two words are combined, it can be interpreted as a high and fragrant place. Because of its function, the local people call it Fort Ambarketawang or Jagang Ambarketawang. Junghuhn et al. (1845:77) describe Mount Gamping as a large chunk of rock like the debris of a collapsed mountain with a height of 1000-3000 meters covered by various wild plants, including fragrant flowers. The naming of this resort is probably based on the fact that the place, Mount Gamping, does smell good because it is filled with flowers.

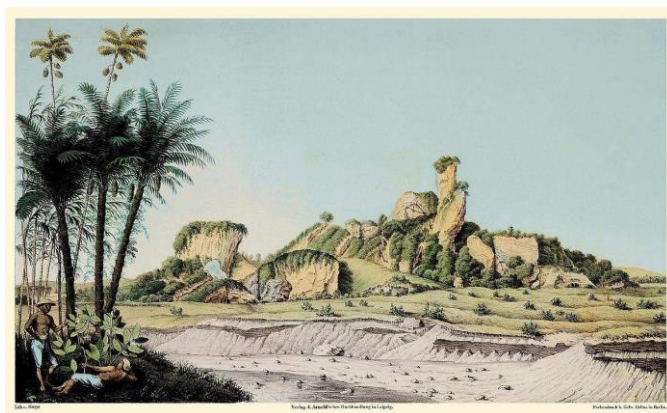


Figure 1. Sketch of Mount Gamping by Junghuhn
Source: Junghuhn, 1853

The mountain was mined for limestone to build important buildings such as the Yogyakarta Palace, Taman Sari, and others. The records of Junghuhn et al. (1845:78)

mention many niches where Javanese people extract limestone. However, at that time, Mount Gamping was still towering.



Figure 2. Mount Gamping in 1918
Source: KITLV, 1918

The rise of the sugar industry led to massive mining of Mount Gamping. The Sugar Law or Suiker Wet contributed to this exploitation. From the reports of the Yogyakarta Prefecture, starting in 1833, operating sugar factories were established (Houben, 2002:584-585). The mined lime was processed through *tobong gamping* (limestone furnace) and then deposited at the sugar factories to be used as a purifier for *nira*. Sugar production continued until the Great Depression, which was responsible for cutting the number of sugar factories by more than half (post-1931, only eight factories remained). However, mining continued until the 1950s (Balai KSDA, 2017:26). When mining finally stopped, the remaining Mt Gamping was no more than 1% of its former size.



Figure 3. Mount Gamping in 1957
Source: Arsip Jawatan Penerangan, 2017

People's Stories

Behind the excitement of the Saparan Bekakak ceremony, there is a story that the local community believes to be the origin of the tradition. Tashadi et al. (1992:36) explain the story from the description of Kyai Wirasuta, a retainer of the court steward who oversaw Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono I. After HB I moved to the new palace, his beloved servant, Kyai Wirasuta, and his family did not move with him, so they settled in one of the caves on the mountain. Besides living with his family, he kept many animals, such as hedgehogs, pigeons and quails. One day, on Friday, Kliwon, 10-15 Sapar, an accident happened to Kyai Wirasuta and his family. The cave he lived in collapsed and buried

him and his pets so that no one survived the incident. The incident was immediately reported to HB I, who then immediately searched. However, his body was never found. To commemorate his beloved servant, HB I ordered the community to hold a slametan every Sapar month on Friday between the 10th-20th. Since then, the ceremony has been held annually. Even in the newspaper Limburger Koerier: Provinciaal Dagblad (1932), the ceremony since 1883 has been officially regulated by pranatan or government regulation.

Saparan Bekakak Procession

The Saparan Bekakak ceremony is carried out in a series of long stages, starting from the *midodareni* stage and continuing to *sugengan ageng*. However, before the *midodareni* stage is carried out, preparations for the ceremony are made by making two pairs of bride dolls from sticky rice filled with brown sugar as blood. The two brides are decorated in two styles, namely Surakarta and Yogyakarta, as a sign of peace between the two kingdoms (Tashadi et al., 1992:43). The creation of it cannot be arbitrary; it must be by the provisions and principles that apply in the community. After the preparations are completed, the *midodareni* stage begins, the night before the wedding, when it is believed that angels will descend from heaven to bless the *bekakak* bride. On that night, people are present to honour the arrival of the angels even though the next day, the *bekakak* bride is slaughtered.

A procession or parade follows the ceremony stage by carrying two pairs of *bekakak* brides along with the procession and offerings around Mount Gamping or, at this time, the former location of Mount Gamping in the past. After the parade is over, the two pairs of *bekakak* brides will be slaughtered at the foot of Mount Gamping. Then, after the slaughter is completed, the last stage is *sugengan ageng* or *slametan* procession as a pledge of loyalty to Sultan HB I (Tashadi et al., 1992:35-36).

Form of Cultural Transformation

Culture is divided into two, namely static and dynamic culture. Dynamic culture continues to change by adjusting to the times, one of which is *Saparan Bekakak*. The oldest research findings of this tradition were recorded in a Dutch newspaper in 1894. Internal and external transformations will explain the forms of cultural transformation in the *Saparan Bekakak* ceremony.

Internal transformation: innovation of bekakak dolls

The innovation seen in the ceremony is the change in the shape of the *bekakak* doll that follows the times. The raw materials for making the dolls are still the same from time to time; it is just that the shape has developed from very simple to more complex and aesthetic with various decorations attached. In 1920, the shape of the *bekakak* doll was like a tiny human statue sitting cross-legged and very simple, as shown in the following picture.



Figure 4. Bekakak Dolls in 1920

Source: Form the Asia Society records (FA110)

The shape of the doll continues to evolve. In 1957, it was seen that bekakak dolls began to be decorated with modest decorations, using janur or young coconut leaves that were assembled in such a way and placed on the doll's head. However, compared to 1920, the shape of the doll this year is slightly enlarged and more human-like.



Figure 5. Bekakak Dolls in 1957

Source: Arsip Jawatan Penerangan, 2017

From this simple form, the shape of the bekakak doll has been made to be as similar as possible to humans over time. The bekakak doll, decorated with various accessories that characterize the Javanese bride, is placed in a palanquin and other offerings. This innovation certainly did not happen suddenly. It took a long time until the form of the bekakak doll became what it is today. The development of technology and attention to aesthetic culture make the form of bekakak dolls more beautiful. In addition to the attention to beauty, the change in form is supported by the change in the purpose of Saparan Bekakak from a sacred purpose to an economic purpose. The increasing population growth has caused the government to strive hard to improve the community's standard of living, one of which is by making Saparan Bekakak an annual regional tourism event that invites domestic and international spectators. This allows the community to take advantage of opportunities by selling at the event, thereby improving the community's economy. An aesthetic appearance is needed to attract tourists, so the bekakak dolls are made beautifully. The transfer of Saparan Bekakak from religious needs to tourism was confirmed by the Direktorat Jenderal Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam dan Ekosistem (2019) that the Batu Gamping Nature Tourism Park area along with the Saparan Bekakak tradition was directed as a unique interest destination for history and culture with an eco-edu-tourism concept.

Internal transformation: Ogoh-ogoh innovation

Ogoh-ogoh, or giant statue in this tradition, is used as a symbol of the guardian of Mount Gamping. However, some say that ogoh-ogoh is a form of human lust that must be controlled. This giant statue also undergoes innovation. This statue is displayed in various forms when times are more advanced according to the community's creativity. This can be seen in the picture below, which shows the ogoh-ogoh of Saparan Bekakak in 1935 as a human in traditional clothes.



Figure 7. *Ogoh-ogoh* Saparan Bekakak in 1935
Source: Fotocollectie Spaarnestad

In the following years, people continued to innovate in making *ogoh-ogoh*. Many *ogoh-ogoh* are displayed in various forms, ranging from tigers to monkeys. It is also not uncommon for a giant statue to be formed to resemble puppet characters such as Anoman and even ghosts, such as *Rangda* or *Leak*. From the results of the interview with Wahyu Saktiaji (50), information was obtained that the Ambarketawang Village Government still tried to maintain the originality of the *ogoh-ogoh* accompanying the *bekakak* bride so that the *ogoh-ogoh* that was beautified and formed variously came from the creativity of Ambarketawang residents. Each village that wants to make its *ogoh-ogoh* is allowed to do so, but the village government cannot provide funds, which means that funds come from residents' contributions.



Figure 8. *Ogoh-ogoh* Saparan Bekakak
Source: tribunjogja.com, 2022

Internal transformation: Kirab (parade) Bekakak

One of the changes that can be seen is the change in the procession of kirab bekakak from very simple to complex. Technological advances have made this process change rapidly. In the magazine *De Spaarnestad*, Haarlem in 1925, Heerom describes the sequence of the procession, starting with the departure at around three in the afternoon with the initial group of Muslims singing Islamic songs, followed by children whose bodies are covered in soot. Then, the bekakak dolls that will be sacrificed appear in as many as four pairs carried by four men (in each pair). This is followed by the jathilan players' lumping horses, followed by *ogoh-ogoh* or giant statues. The procession is followed by carts containing offerings, gamelan, and children covered in soot. At the end of the procession, a panel or district head is riding a horse along with someone who shelters him. For more details in the YouTube upload of the Komunitas Ohol channel sourced from Asia Society records (FA110) at minute 2.00 to minute 4.00, the sequence of the kirab bekakak is similar to the explanation above.

From the many proofs uploaded through social media, it can be seen that Saparan Bekakak is currently undergoing many changes. As explained by Tashadi et al. (1992:51), the procession begins with reog and jathilan troupes, Sugengan Ageng offerings, Gamping Tengah warriors, female warriors, demang troupes, kaum or rois (religious leaders), spear-carrying troupes, male participants, children's warriors, offering palanquins (jodhang), bekakak palanquins, equestrian troupes, carriers of offerings and processional tools, Gamping Lor warriors, and Gamping Kidul warriors. According to this explanation, it can be seen that the group accompanying the bekakak is more complex; there are novelties such as reog, female soldiers, and soldiers from each hamlet. The female warriors not previously seen in the Asia Society records (FA110) show the changing times when women were considered to have the same opportunities as men. The emancipation of women that is widely echoed today makes more and more women's roles appear in the kirab.

In the past, the implementation of the financing of the ceremony received assistance from the Kraton of 1,000 gulden. The shortfall was taken from the Penewu officials who governed Mount Gamping in the form of proceeds from mining funds/taxes set by Panewu Gamping to the miners (Tashadi et al., 1992:45). However, according to Wahyu Saktiaji (50), in the last ten years after Ambarketawang was designated as a cultural village and considered capable of standing on its own, the government no longer provides funding for the organisation of Saparan Bekakak. Therefore, the Ambarketawang Village Government takes funds from the village fund and looks for sponsors, with the total funds obtained from these two sources ranging from 50-100 million. With these funds, the government hopes that this tradition can attract tourists, improve the community's economy, and raise the name of Ambarketawang as a cultural village.

With this objective in mind, the technological advances and globalisation that have led to more varied displays in the Saparan Bekakak kirab are allowed as long as they are within the corridors of community norms. Wahyu Saktiaji (50) also asserts that sacred and proven must go hand in hand, so innovations in Saparan Bekakak to support the potential of the community are needed. However, it does not rule out the possibility that the impact of technological advances and the desire to 'viral' will lead to actions that violate community norms. This is exemplified by Wahyu Saktiaji (50), who talks about *ogoh-ogoh*, shaped like a female devil wearing a hijab and some groups dancing quite erotically. Individuals considered to have dishonoured religion and norms eventually receive sanctions from the government by not allowing the group to participate next year or paying several fines if they are considered to have disrupted the event. The existence of things beyond the committee's predictions causes the committee to continue to evaluate and find solutions so that the same incident does not happen again.

In this case, when concluding from the innovations mentioned above, Koentjaraningrat (2009:212) explains that the trigger for innovation is people's dissatisfaction with their current conditions. When looking at the increasingly modern conditions of the Ambarketawang community and the desire to improve living standards, the innovations made by the community are a form of solution to the problems faced by the community. Increasingly advanced times, significant population growth, and expensive basic needs encourage people to innovate their traditions by paying attention to aesthetics (efforts to beautify). From these efforts and encouragement from the local government, Saparan Bekakak has become a cultural preservation effort and a commodity with economic and tourism purposes.

External transformation: Diffusion

The diffusion process in this ceremony occurs when Javanese DJ music that is popular on social media, such as TikTok, is used in the procession. Music that tends to be modern and favoured by young people is then accepted as a form of modernisation in the ceremony. In the video of the Saparan Bekakak ceremony in 2023, uploaded by Adeeva Mo's YouTube channel at minute 19.20, there is a pickup truck carrying a *gunungan* and playing Javanese DJ music. Then, if we compare it with the video of the Saparan Bekakak ceremony in 1920 uploaded by the Komunitas Ohol channel sourced from Asia Society records (FA110), it can be seen from minute 2.00 to minute 4.43 that the music used is traditional musical instruments. Therefore, the progress of the times affects people's judgment when accepting a new culture.

In this case, Koentjaraningrat (2009:201) explains that the diffusion process that occurs in modern times takes place more efficiently without the need for human contact, namely with the existence of social media and other broadcasting media. The example above shows that diffusion incorporates modern elements into culture (which Koentjaraningrat does not oppose), but if the modern elements that diffuse violate the norms of society and thus disturb the sacredness of tradition, then by Wahyu Saktiaji (50) the modern elements need to be controlled so that they no longer 'endanger tradition'.

External transformation: Acculturation

One form of cultural change is acculturation. In this ceremony, there is acculturation between a culture that is considered an animist ritual and Islam. The newspaper *Het Nieuws van den Dag Voor Nederlandsch-Indie* in 1933 explained that the ceremony was somewhat animistic, followed by thousands of Muslims from various regions, and the prayers that were chanted were prayers from the Qur'an. The phenomenon of acculturation is still running today even though some people think that the ceremony is polytheistic or 'musyrik'.

Aangezien die offers -zoals men hieronder zal ervaren- een beslist animistisch karakter dragen, en men bovendien zeer duidelijk het ritueel terugziet van de menschen-offers, die daar in de oudheid moeten zijn gebracht, is het merkwaardig om de thans Mohammedaansche bevolking daar met tienduizenden tegelijk te zien samenstromen om deel te hebben aan de offerande (Het Nieuws van den Dag Voor Nederlandsch-Indie, 1933).

Since these sacrifices - as we will see below - are animistic, and we can also clearly see the ritual human sacrifices that must have been performed there in ancient times, it is remarkable to see today's Muslim population there, numbering in the tens of thousands at a time gathered to participate in the offerings.

The quote also explains that the Dutch suspected this ceremony was a remnant of human sacrifices made long before religion arrived in the archipelago. However, the animist ritual (although wrapped in Islamic prayers) is still favoured by thousands of Muslims. These allegations, of course, cannot be confirmed, primarily since a colonial party with an Orientalist bias wrote the newspaper. However, if we separate the alleged remnants of human sacrifice from the acculturation between animism and Islam, many 'Islamic' citizens would have opposed the tradition at this time because they considered it 'musyrik'. Koentjaraningrat (2009:208) also explains that if culture is rejected by 'conservative' people, these people can cause divisions in society with various

consequences for socio-political conflicts. Therefore, Wahyu Saktiaji (50) said that educating the community about the importance of tradition, especially the 'conservative' community, is needed to prevent conflicts between communities. This is also related to Saparan Bekakak, which does not prioritise sacredness but economic and cultural interests.



Figure 9. Thousands of People Watch the 1935 Saparan Bekakak Ceremony
Source: Fotocollectie Spaarnestad

Shift in meaning

The Saparan Bekakak ceremony was initially interpreted as a form of sacrifice to appease the guardians of Mount Gamping, who were angry because of the mining activities being carried out. As described in the Soerabaijasch Handelsbald newspaper in 1894, there was an accident when the ceremony was being held. The accident happened to Trosemito, who eventually died. From this, the community believed that the guardian of Mount Gamping was angry because the Saparan Bekakak celebration at that time was not as big as in previous years. In the following year, it was also explained in the newspaper Algemeen Handelsblad Voor Nederlandsch-Indie in 1927 that the ceremony was carried out to calm the guardians of Mount Gamping as well as ask for permission so that workers could carry out mining safely.

Djokja, 11 Aug. Ddo, 26 dezer zal, evenals tot dusverre jaarlijks gebeurde, te Gamping (Zuid Djokja) hen z.g. Saparan-feest wordeb gevierd. Om de kalkheuvels, waaruit de bevolkinf de kalk haalt, wordt dan in op ocht rondgetrokken, terwijl tenslotte eenige in den stoet meegedragen rijstpoppen, in de voornaamste grotten worden geslacht als offer aan de geesten, die alsdan, volgens het daar heerschende bijgeloof, rustig zullen toelaten dat de bevolking kalk uit de heuvels van Gamping haalt (Algemeen Handelsblad Voor Nederlandsch-Indie, 1927).

Djokja, 11 August Thursday, 26 This year, as every year so far, the Saparan festival will be celebrated in Gamping (South Djokja). They then walk around the limestone hills, where the community takes lime in the morning. Finally, some of the rice dolls brought in the procession are slaughtered in the main caves as offerings to the spirits, who then, according to the superstitions there, in order to calm them down, let the people take lime in the hills of Gamping.

The legendary story of Kyai Wirasuta then shifted the meaning of the tradition along with the cessation of mining activities. Unfortunately, it is not known when the story emerged. However, the presence of the story changed the meaning of this tradition into a symbol of loyalty to HB I as well as to commemorate the services of Kyai Wirasuta and his family, whose spirits are believed to inhabit the mountain (Tashadi et al., 1992:37).

Nevertheless, some residents still believe in the function of this ceremony as a *slametan*, so that the people of Gamping can be protected from danger. This is proven by the fact that the tradition is still held even though there was a COVID-19 pandemic at that time (Polsek Gamping, 2021). According to Wahyu Saktiaji (50), procurement during the pandemic was carried out because many people urged the event to be held even though the implementation was carried out with health protocols and supervised by the relevant regional offices.

Along with globalisation, the ceremony aims to improve the community's economy and regional tourism, as explained in the previous section by Wahyu Saktiaji (50). Another example is a night market before the Saparan Bekakak ceremony, which can be used as a source of community income. In addition, although not funded by the palace or related agencies, the committee always tries to make the procession more lively by displaying various festival costumes and *ogoh-ogoh* with various shapes every year.

Mount Gamping Changes

This change was caused by the shrinking of Mount Gamping from initially having several peaks, namely Mount Ambar Tawang, Gong, Gedhe, Buta, Petruk, Padasan, Tlaga, and Kliling (Balai KSDA, 2017:11) shrinking to four peaks then shrinking again to just one boulder. This is described in the newspaper *Het Nieuws van den Dag Voor Nederlandsch-Indie* in 1933.

Het bizondere is namelijk gelegen in de nabijheid van de overblijfselen der vroegere kalk-heuvels, welke door wellicht eeuwenlange exploitatie nu ineengeschrompeld zijn tot een viertal onaanzienlijke kalk-klonten (Het Nieuws van den Dag Voor Nederlandsch-Indie, 1933).

The speciality lies around the remnants of the former chalk hills, which, perhaps due to centuries of exploitation, have shrunk to four insignificant chalk outcrops.

As explained in the Mount Gamping sub-chapter, the shrinking size of this limestone hill occurred due to several factors, mainly due to the increasing sugar industry in the Dutch East Indies, precisely in Yogyakarta at that time. This shrinkage impacted the ceremony, namely a reduction in the number of dolls sacrificed. Previously, according to the newspaper *De Locomotief*, in 1933, the doll sacrifice was held in four different locations. The four locations were mining sites, each in the form of a cave. Each of these four locations had a pair of sacrificed brides, so the total number of brides was four pairs or eight pieces.

Gamping heeft 4 kalkwanplaatsen, bergen waarvan er 1 nagenoeg geheel afgegraven is, aan den voet waarvan het offeren der poppen plaats heft [...] De stoet wordt gesloten door 4 tandoes elk met 2 rijstpoppen. Bij iedere winplaats wordt twee poppen op zeer suggestieve wijze den hals afgesneden (De Locomotief, 1933).

Gamping has four limestone quarries and mountains, one of which has been almost completely excavated, at the foot of which the sacrifice of the dolls takes place [...] The procession concludes with four stretchers, each containing two rice dolls. At each slaughter site, two dolls have their throats cut in a very suggestive way.

The shrinking size of Mount Gamping to just one large boulder has reduced the number of dolls sacrificed. Currently, only two pairs of bekakak dolls are sacrificed. Nevertheless,

the two pairs of dolls symbolize peace between Yogyakarta and Surakarta. This can be seen from the decoration attached to the bekakak dolls that characterize Yogyakarta and Surakarta (Tashadi et.al., 1992:43). Due to the reduction of bekakak dolls, the accompanying offerings have also decreased. In addition, the slaughter is no longer carried out at the mouth of the cave or mining site because there is no longer anything that can be mined, and there is no cave, so it is carried out at the foot of Mount Gamping.

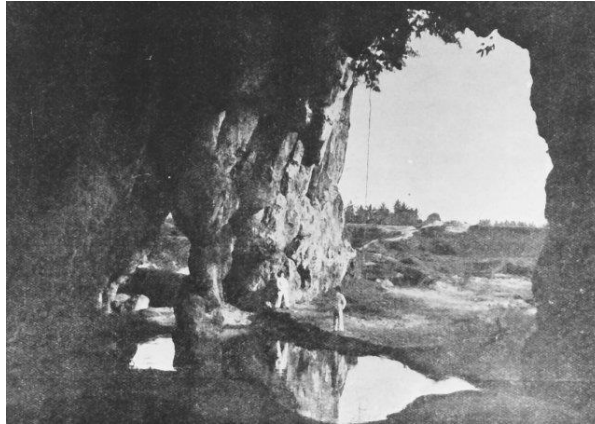


Figure 10. Cave on Mount Gamping 1920
Source: Collectie Nederland, 1920

Another change that occurred due to the shrinking of Mount Gamping is that people can no longer watch the procession from the top of it. Due to the height of the mountain, people can watch the procession from the top of the mountain. Currently, to watch the procession, people watch from the side of the south ring road to the Wates road.

Unfortunately, with the end of Mount Gamping, many people, especially young people, no longer understand the essence of the tradition. People only understand that Saparan Bekakak is a hereditary tradition held every year. However, they do not understand the sacredness of the tradition and do not even understand the history of the tradition, resulting in several events that violate norms. Therefore, archives regarding the changes in Mount Gamping and its impacts were collected to provide readers with an understanding that external changes can affect people's perspectives on a tradition.



Figure 11. Residents Witness the Kirab Bekakak in 1920
Source: Form the Asia Society records (FA110)

Conclusion

Several conclusions were drawn from the research on the transformation of the Saparan Bekakak ceremony. Firstly, the development of the times affects people's tastes, which causes the innovation process. The process causes the shape of bekakak dolls to be more beautiful and *ogoh-ogoh* and *kirab* to be more varied. Second, there is a process of cultural diffusion, namely when Javanese DJ music, which was previously on TikTok and popular among young people, is used in the bekakak procession and is enjoyed by all age groups. Third, there is an acculturation process between cultures considered animist and Islam without eliminating the characteristics of both. Fourth, from time to time, there has been a shift in the meaning of tradition, from sacrificial rituals to appease the guardians of Mount Gamping to economic and tourism interests supported by the government. Fifth, the mining of Mount Gamping has caused a shrinkage in the size of the mountain, which has changed the tradition by reducing the number of bekakak dolls sacrificed from four pairs to two pairs. Furthermore, the two pairs of dolls represent peace between Yogyakarta and Surakarta. From these conclusions, the Saparan Bekakak tradition is included in a dynamic culture or moves with the times.

From some of the points that have been explained, the main thing that underlies the transformation is not only globalisation but also the need to fulfil the community's economy, which changes the meaning of Saparan Bekakak. Although the local government has made efforts so that the sacredness of the tradition can go hand in hand with modernity (profane), the fact is that many changes that occur result in things that violate community norms and religion. The profanity also makes the essence of Saparan Bekakak no longer known by the community, including the younger generation. However, the positive impact of the increase in aesthetics and the inclusion of modern elements in Saparan Bekakak has led to an increase in the community's economy.

The limitation of this research is that secondary data is challenging to obtain, primarily archival data from the 1700s or older. Manuscripts about Saparan Bekakak (Cariyosipun Pareden Gamping) exist and have been transliterated by students of the University of Indonesia. However, the manuscripts do not tell the history of the formation of Saparan Bekakak; they only retell oral literature about Saparan Bekakak from the community. Therefore, this manuscript is new. However, there is still much historical data that researchers have not touched, so further research is possible, such as archival data managed by the DIY Archives Library, which can only be accessed offline. In addition, data collection from credible sources can also be used to complete this research.

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