

# **Acculturation of Javanese and Malay Islam in Wedding Tradition of Javanese Ethnic Community in Selangor, Malaysia**

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## **Abstrak:**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat bagaimana tingkat akulturasi Islam Jawa dan Melayu pada pernikahan masyarakat etnik Jawa di selangor, Malaysia. Menurut teori budaya, setiap budaya mempunyai keunikan sebagaimana keunikan individu. Keunikan budaya pernikahan masyarakat etnik Jawa di Selangor diyakini sebagai proses negosiasi budaya Jawa terhadap budaya Melayu. Teori akulturasi dipakai dalam penelitian ini untuk membantu menjelaskan dan memahami data. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa tradisi pernikahan etnik Islam Jawa di Selangor menunjuk pada tingkat akulturasi yang tinggi. Dalam bahasa antropologi, akulturasi tersebut mengarah pada "subtitusi" dan "sinkretisme". Subtitusi dalam makna tradisi Jawa untuk sebagian besarnya diganti dengan budaya baru (Melayu). Akulturasi juga bisa dikatakan mengarah pada sinkretisme budaya, yakni percampuran dua budaya menjadi budaya baru yang sifatnya khas.

## **Kata Kunci:**

Akulturasi, pernikahan etnik Jawa, subtitusi, sinkretisme

## **Abstract:**

This study is to see the level of acculturation of Javanese and Malay Muslims in Javanese community wedding at Selangor Malaysia. According to the theory of culture, each culture has a uniqueness, as a individual uniqueness. The unique culture of Javanese ethnic wedding in Selangor is believed to be a process of negotiation between Malay and Javanese cultures. Acculturation theory is used in this research to explain and understand the reality of that culture. The study concluded that ethnic wedding traditions of Javanese Islam in Selangor pointed to the high level of acculturation. The acculturation leads to a "substitution" and "syncretism". The substitution refers to the meaning that the Javanese tradition for the most replaced with new culture (Malay). Acculturation can also be said as a cultural syncretism, the mixing of these two cultures into a new culture that are distinctive.

## **Keywords:**

Acculturation, Javanese ethnic wedding, substitution, syncretism

## Introduction

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic state.<sup>1</sup> The three largest ethnics are Javanese, Chinese, and Indian. Javanese immigrants derive from Java Island, i.e. East Java, Central Java, and West Java. The East Javanese mostly came from Ponorogo, Madiun, Pacitan, and other areas.<sup>2</sup> The arrival of Javanese immigrants to Malaysia were not only initially affected by socio-economic factors but also socio-political and socio-religious of Indonesia at that time. In early 20<sup>th</sup> century, before 1945, Indonesia was under Dutch colonization. The colonization limited the space as well as became a threat to resident's safety at the time. Most immigrants were also influenced by religious factors, that the arrival in Malaysia to preach and earn money for the Hajj.<sup>3</sup>

Javanese ethnic in Malaysia, nowadays, are the third and fourth

generations of their ancestors. As Javanese generation, they have more unique culture than other ethnic of Malay. They still preserve their ancestral traditions, on the other hand, they also absorb the local traditions, Malay-Malaysia in which Islamic values and tradition are extremely good. In everyday communication, they are used to speak the Javanese of *Ngoko* (middle-rank Javanese language level) among them.<sup>4</sup> Language is a very important cultural symbol for the community. The commitment to maintain the traditions of the ancestors is also reflected in their proverb: "*Tak kan Jawa hilang di dunia*" (Javanese would never have gone from the world).

The principle of loyalty to tradition and ancestral culture is also reflected in the wedding traditions of Javanese ethnic in Malay. Though the wedding traditions are already wrapped in Malay tradition, based on my observation, Javanese culture appears in the wedding of Javanese community in Selangor Malaysia. One of the examples is the tradition of *gotong-royong* (mutual cooperation) in preparing for the wedding ceremony on Javanese community

<sup>1</sup> Ahmad Zaharuddin Sani Ahmad Sabri, *Raksa Raya Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Institut Terjemahan dan Buku Malaysia Berhad, 2014), 1. According to the data source, there were 48 languages spoken by people living in the islands, however the Malay remain becomes the national lingua franca. It indicates that Malaysia has been heterogenous and multi-ethnic country. Rozeyta BT. Omar and Paimah BT. Atoma, "Pluraliti Budaya dan Etnik di Alam Melayu Zaman Awal", [www.eprint.utm.my](http://www.eprint.utm.my), accessed on September 23, 2015, [www.eprint.utm.my/14774/](http://www.eprint.utm.my/14774/).

<sup>2</sup> "Kajian Etnik Jawa di Malaysia", accessed on September 25, 2015, [www.hissham66.blogspot.com](http://www.hissham66.blogspot.com).

<sup>3</sup> Harith Faruqi Sidek, "Sejarah Pembukaan Penempatan Orang Jawa di Selangor", [www.arithsidek.blogspot.com](http://www.arithsidek.blogspot.com), accessed on September 25, 2015, [www.arithsidek.blogspot.com](http://www.arithsidek.blogspot.com).

<sup>4</sup> The immigrants from Java spoke Javanese language to communicate in the economic activity and in the slavery of the colonialization, as the result there are six countries that the population partly use Javanese language as daily communication. They are Republic of Suriname, Singapore, Malaysia, Holland, New Caledonia (ex French colonialized country), and Cocos Island. "6 Negara di Dunia yang Memakai Bahasa Jawa", [www.cuap-cuap.net](http://www.cuap-cuap.net), accessed on April 8, 2015, <http://www.cuap-cuap.net/2014/11/6-negara-di-dunia-yang-menggunakan.html>.

in Selangor. The tradition of *gotong royong* is not substantively different from the tradition of *rewang* in Java. Even, some people there prefer to call *rewang*. They also name *gotong royong* as *kenduri kahwin* (also called as *selametan*), a term which is also quite popular in the Javanese community.<sup>5</sup> Any traditions will experience the change whenever it interfaces another culture, Sorokin confirmed that there will always be elements that are eternal or he called it as the *continuity within change*.<sup>6</sup> If only the physical appearance of tradition has changed, at least, the spirit of the tradition is maintained, because it is associated with society and ethnic's philosophy of life. It indicates that there is acculturation between Javanese and Malay-Malaysia culture.

In certain cultures, marriage is something sacred, like birth and death (the three crucial cycles in life). Moreover, marriage is also identical to socio-civic dimension. Therefore, there are many processions and ceremonies which accompany a wedding of Javanese community in Malaysia.

Sacredness and sociality of marriage as described above is seen in wedding tradition of Malay society. One source stated that sacredness and sociality of marriage make the tradition accompanying the Malay wedding tradition sounds a little bit complicated, because of a lot of steps must be passed. The complexity arises because the concept of marriage in Malay tradition must get approval from parents and

obtain social recognition of family, neighbors, and society. Thus, although not become pillars of the wedding, a lot of the wedding procession, customs, and ceremonies that accompany marriage are essentially social, which is related to how to socialize marriage to the society.<sup>7</sup>

Based on the explanation above, this paper explores the Javanese ethnic in Malay society in preserve the Javanese wedding traditions and how these traditions are adapted to the local culture and tradition of Malaysia. According to the theory of culture, each culture has a uniqueness as like individual uniqueness. The uniqueness of Javanese wedding tradition in Malaysia is that such tradition is believed to be a negotiation of Javanese and Malay cultures.

## Research Method and Theoretical Framework

This study is basically a field research of qualitative research design. The primary data of this study is a tradition and wedding practice of Javanese ethnic of Malay society in Selangor, and how do they interpret the wedding tradition. Therefore, the primary sources are the practice of wedding traditions of the society in Selangor Malaysia and the people performing such tradition. As the qualitative research characteristics, this study wanted to explore the meaning of culture and wedding traditions of Javanese Muslims community in Selangor Malaysia. This was done to see the acculturation

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<sup>5</sup> Observation, March 20-23, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Nur Syam, *Madzab-Madzab Antropologi* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2007), 138.

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<sup>7</sup> "Adat Perkawinan Melayu", [melayuonline.com](http://melayuonline.com), accessed on April 8, 2015, <http://melayuonline.com/ind/culture/dig/1545>.

of Javanese Moslems and Malays in the tradition of their wedding. That's why this research was humanist paradigm (nonpositivist) with an anthropological approach.

An anthropological approach was relevant to the topic and research objectives, which described the acculturation of Javanese-Islam and Malay-Islam culture on the Javanese ethnic wedding traditions in Selangor Malaysia. The characteristics of antropological approach are: 1) descriptive, not normative, 2) local practices, 3) connections accross social domains, 4) comparative.<sup>8</sup>

Based on the characteristics of the anthropological approach above, this research is intended to describe the practices and rites that accompany the important events of human life, namely marriage. Therefore, the main point of this research is the local practices Javanese-Islam wedding culture in Selangor, and how the culture is associated with other life domains (religion, socio-culture, and socio-economic). This study also contains a comparative element, which compares Javanese ethnic wedding tradition in Selangor with traditional Javanese wedding in Java. This comparison, not only aimed to see the uniqueness of the Javanese wedding traditions in Selangor, but also to see the level of acculturation of Javanese and Malay-Islam in term of wedding tradition in Selangor Malaysia.

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<sup>8</sup> Amin Abdullah, "Urgensi Pendekatan Antropologi untuk Studi Agama dan Studi Islam", [www.aminabd.wordpress.com](http://www.aminabd.wordpress.com), accessed on October 23, 2015, [www.aminabd.wordpress.com](http://www.aminabd.wordpress.com).

Meanwhile, the theory used in this research is acculturation. Acculturation is a social process; the contact between two different cultures or more which result changes in both cultures. Researchers of culture has interested in the process of acculturation to understand how this process leads to changes, whether social or cultural change.<sup>9</sup>

Koentjaraningrat stated that acculturation is a social process to accommodate and integrate elements of foreign cultures into its own culture, without losing its own cultural characteristics. In this case, Koentjaraningrat pointed that long ago in the history of human there has been migration, the movement of tribes from one area to another. This migration led to the meeting of groups of people from different cultural backgrounds. When one cultural group meet other cultural groups, there will be an interaction and cultural contacts, or the meeting of two cultures.<sup>10</sup> Such meeting of has led to acculturation, ie the process of integrating other cultures into its own culture without against identity of the culture. In other words, it can be said that acculturation is an integration of two different cultures that produces a new culture, but it does not eliminate the characteristics or nature of the original culture. It is a kind of adaptation in a new cultural environment.

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<sup>9</sup> Arkanudin, "Akulturasi sebagai Mekanisme Perubahan Budaya", [www.arkandien.blogspot.com](http://www.arkandien.blogspot.com), accessed on October 23, 2015, [www.arkandien.blogspot.com/2010/06/](http://www.arkandien.blogspot.com/2010/06/).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

In the context of Javanese Moslem society, the process of adaptation and acculturation can not be separated from “text” of religion, which has been absorbed into the native culture and then it is negotiated with the development of culture. Therefore, Geertz viewed Javanese Moslem as a socio-cultural “text”. That means, people are not merely seen as a cultural entity, but an entity which is formed and influenced by religious texts. The texts of this culture are transmitted from one generation to another, which in turn is also influenced by socio-cultural environment. The transmission of intergeneration presupposes a cultural dynamics, yet the cultural dynamics will always be associated with the first and basic Scriptures.<sup>11</sup>

Looking at the history of Islam in Java, adaptation, acculturation, and negotiations between Islam and Eastern culture with the Javanese Moslem society seemed to be obvious. This, as well as the development of Islam in Java, mostly utilized culture as a way to deliver Islamic value as played by the trustees in Java island. It was obvious that the process of Islamisation of Nusantara (Indonesia archipelago), including Java, was organized by using the network which utilized channels and various local media. BJO. Schrieke, sociologists and historians of the Netherlands, in his Indonesian Sociological Studies asserted that since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the archipelago has practically been integrated culturally by Is-

lam, a new religion came from a region which could be called as the center of Islam.<sup>12</sup>

It is not surprising that Javanese Islam is known as “syncretic” culture. Javanese Islam is also considered to be very tolerant of foreign cultures. In the case of rejection of foreign elements, the Javanese did not protest it in violent ways. Hence, they revived the myths that remain eternal in their souls; it is the hope of the coming of queen of justice. In the context of the Javanese, all of the elements of foreign cultures can be absorbed and interpreted according to the Javanese values. *Kejawen* philosophy becomes a control tool to protect their identity as Javanese. Javanese values have also been integrated in such a way with Islamic values. It should be recognized that religion mainly brought big influence on a culture of a group.<sup>13</sup> Geertz classified the Javanese into *santri* (Javanese Moslems who practice a more orthodox version of Islam), *priyayi* (upper classes/noble), and *abangan* (Javanese Moslems who practice a much more syncretic version of Islam). In its development, the influence of *santri* on *priyayi* and *abangan* classes is strong enough. That is, the culture of *abangan* class and *santri* has been adjusted to the

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<sup>12</sup> Hasan Muarif Ambary, *Menemukan Peradaban: Jejak Arkeologis dan Historis Islam di Indonesia* (Ciputat: Logos Wacana Ilmu, 2001), 63.

<sup>13</sup> The Geertz’s social classification *santri*, *priyayi*, dan *abangan* were the controversial one since it mixed the social classification with belief aspect. *Santri* (Muslim students) are the pious and religious followers, *abangan* means Java-Islamic followers, and *priyayi* means royal blood family. In fact, the classification had been appreciated and contributed significant influence toward cultural establishment.

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<sup>11</sup> Azyumardi Azra, “Santri-Abangan Revisited”, introduction to Bambang Pranowo, *Memahami Islam Jawa* (Ciputat: Pustaka Alvabet, 2009), xiii.

Islamic value. This is due to most of the *santri* in Java was not puritanism who was antipathetic toward culture, but instead utilize culture as a medium for delivering the Islamic value.

The history also shows that there was an expansion of the influence of Islam of Java to other places. Historically, when Islam of Java was already taking a political role, Islamisation in key areas of Java was more massive, even Islam of Java also expanded its influence beyond Java, such as Banjarmasin, Hitu, Ternate, Tidore, and Lombok.<sup>14</sup> The expansion of the influence of Islam Java to outside Java certainly had not stopped on the subject of religion but also had cultural implications. Such cultural implication was a negotiation and acculturation. In the later period and in subsequent development, the Islamization conducted widespread across the country border with varied motives, ie the economic motive as figured out in Javanese Moslem diaspora communities to the Malay Peninsula.

In line with the cultural implications above, anthropologists claimed that acculturation occurs when contact between the two cultures or more is intensively maintained. Dealing with this level of intercultural contacts intensity, anthropologists proposed some concepts of classification:<sup>15</sup>

1. Substitution, the existing of the previous element or the complexity of the cultural elements

are substituted with new elements that fulfills its function, which involves structural changes in smaller level.

2. Syncretism refers to mixing of old elements with new ones and establishes a new system. In this context it is possible to be a significant change.
3. Addition refers to the level of cultural blending in which the elements or the complexity of the new elements are added to the old culture.
4. Deculturation refers to the cultural fusion that eliminates the substance of a particular culture.
5. Origination: refers to the level of cultural blending in which new elements are added to fill the new needs as the situation changes.
6. Disclaimer: refers to the conditions changing very quickly, so a large number of people do not accept it. This rejection can appears in various ways, whether smooth or extreme ways such as rebellion.

From an anthropological view, every tradition and culture will change when it is faced with a social world which is constantly changing. It is described theoretically "disorganization" to "integration" stage, or similar to a school of Hegelian dialectic; the stages of cultural changes were divided into, integration, disintegration, and reintegration.<sup>16</sup> In the contemporary era, the

<sup>14</sup> Ambariy, *Menemukan Peradaban*, 56.

<sup>15</sup> Azra, "Santri-Abangan Revisited", xiii.

<sup>16</sup> Syam, *Madzab-Madzab Antropologi*, 137

Javanese culture is not solely centered in Solo and Yogyakarta. In Iman Budhi Santoso's words, Javanese culture has melted, flowed, and become the pulse of life of Javanese in Java, the transmigration community beyond Java Island, Suriname, Malaysia, Singapore, and others.<sup>17</sup>

However, every change always leaves something behind to be eternal. In this case, Sorokin stated that there was always a continuity within change.<sup>18</sup> This concept can be used as a framework on how deep the acculturation of Javanese tradition and the Malay's in terms of wedding traditions Javanese community in Selangor Malaysia.

### Wedding Tradition of Malay Society as Javanese Descent

One of the characteristics of the anthropological approach is descriptive-comparative study. Comparison of this article is directed to the comparison between the Javanese ethnic community in Selangor Malaysia with Javanese in Java in term of wedding tradition. The comparison, again, will be able to show the level of acculturation wedding tradition of Javanese Moslems community in Selangor to the Malay tradition. Comparisons will be made to the various rites and ceremonies that accompany wedding ceremony.

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<sup>17</sup> Iman Budhi Santoso, *Manusia Jawa Mencari Kebenangan Hati: Menuju Tata Hidup-Tata Laku-Tata Krama* (Yogyakarta: Diandra, 2013), 104.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

### 1. Pre-Wedding Ceremony

Marriage is a sacred thing containing the strong promise (*mitsâq ghalîzh*) between spouses. Therefore, the concept of marriage in Islam should only be done once in a lifetime by Moslems. Divorce is normatively viewed as a despised and despicable thing, and only be performed under emergency conditions. The normative principle was later embodied in the various ceremonies that accompany wedding, among which are the custom of *merisik* and *meninjau*. The meaning of *merisik* and *meninjau* tradition are, *first*, to see if the spouse to be is truly single and not in someone else's fiancée, and *second*, to see the whole background of spouses. As in the Javanese tradition, it is important to look at *bibit* (refers to genealogy), *bebet* (refers to family, relatives, and friends), and *bobot* (refers to the faithfulness of God, personality, lifestyle, and educational background) of each spouse will be. This is because a marriage is expected to be eternal until *kakenninen* (being grand-parents) and can be *sakînah mawaddah wa rahîmah*. In Javanese tradition, *merisik* and *meninjau* are similar with the *nontoni* custom. In the Javanese, *nontoni* provides a chance for both couples and the two families to see the background of each other. Although, these two traditions have a similar substance, there is no definite information that acculturation has occurred in this culture and tradition. It is probably because the two societies have the same value in viewing marriage as something sacred. Hence, prudence in choosing a spouse is a crucial thing. Another similarity is that the value of marriage is basically not simply

related to persons who want to get married (the bride), but marriage is also strongly related to the family. Marriage is not only marrying the bride couples, but also marry the two families. In this context, the involvement of the family is important in all of the wedding procession, primarily in the tradition of *merisik* and *meninjau* (in Selangor) and *nontoni* (in Java).

After the procession of *merisik* and *meninjau*, if both couples understand and accept each other, then in accordance with the concept of Malay customs, the next ceremonies are *merasi*, applying and making a proposal, *gotong royong*, reading *the barzanji*, and preparation for the banquet. These ceremonies on Javanese community in Selangor has been simplified. *Merasi* tradition, for example, is not widely used by Javanese ethnic communities in Selangor, as it is considered no longer appropriate to their beliefs.

Among the pre-wedding ceremonies above, the social rites of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) is considered as Javanese influences. In Javanese philosophy, *gotong royong* is a manifestation of a very important aspect of harmony. *Gotong royong* related to the wedding ceremony is called *rewang*. *Rewang* is a form of *gotong royong* conducted to prepare the ceremony, which is also known as the *kenduri kahwin*. *Gotong royong* is primarily held before the wedding by the relatives of host and also the neighbors.<sup>19</sup> Most Javanese in

Malaysia even still call it as *rewang*. According to H. Mahani, a Professor (not in the sense of Professor in Indonesia, but the teacher to the school before University), addressing this term to *gotong royong* was not absolutely right. *Gotong royong* refers to a wider context of interests, not individual. In the case of wedding ceremony, according to him, it is more accurately described as *rewang*,<sup>20</sup> the term which is very popular in the Javanese wedding tradition.

The tradition of *nyumbang* (to donate) related to the wedding is the influence of Javanese tradition, namely *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation). *Nyumbang* is a donation of money given to the wedding host. The donators are usually guests who attend the wedding and they are not involved in *rewang*.<sup>21</sup> As the Javanese tradition nowadays, the donation is money. Tradition *nyumbang* on wedding traditions in Selangor is apparently more explicit than those in Java. In the Javanese ethnic wedding traditions in Selangor,

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broader sense. In economic issue, *gotong royong* could take the form of development of ditch, farm-land, and plantation garden. The Javanese call this with *kerigan*. In social matter, the kind of *gotong royong* would be like the building of mosque, road, bridge, house, and many others. It is called as *sambatan*. Awang Sariyan, "Persepsi Keturunan Jawa di Malaysia terhadap Bangsa Jawa di Tanah Induknya dalam Konteks Kekerukupan Tamadun", [www.pustaka2.upsi.edu.my](http://www.pustaka2.upsi.edu.my), accessed on September 2015, [www.pustaka2.upsi.edu.my/eprints/298/cgi/ex](http://www.pustaka2.upsi.edu.my/eprints/298/cgi/ex).

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Mahani, Bukit Badung, March 21, 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> The tradition of *gotong royong* deals with not only marriage matters or *rewang* in Javanese tradition but also economic and social issues in

donations are given directly to the parents of brides. In this case, the parents are standing in front of the house to welcome the guests. At that time, guests give the donation while shaking hands with the parents. In contrast, the donations in the Javanese wedding in Java are not given directly, but the host provides a box for donation. While the host is sitting with the bride and groom on the stage.

In the Javanese wedding in Selangor, it is also known a tradition of *leklekan*, when the relatives and neighbors do not sleep all the night as part of the wedding tradition. In the Javanese in Java, this is known as *tirakatan* night as part of the *midodareni* event. I believe, *leklekan* wedding traditions in Selangor is a part of the acculturation of Javanese tradition and Javanese ethnic's in Malaysia. It can be seen from the term *leklekan* itself, which is the Java language.

*Kenduri* tradition (festivity) accompanying the wedding tradition is also a meeting point of Javanese and Javanese ethnic in Selangor. Tradition of *kenduri* with *nasi ambang* (Javanese food) is still faithfully maintained by Javanese ethnic community in Selangor, not only on wedding traditions, but also other important events in the cycle of human life, ie, birth, marriage, and death. According to Muhajir, Javanese ethnic communities name it as *nasi ambang*. *Nasi ambang* is served during the festivity (*kenduri*) and quartered after it is recited pray for safety. Then, the rice

is taken home by guest, and it is known as *berkat*.<sup>22</sup>

The traditions and ceremonies above can be considered as a form of acculturation of Javanese-Islam culture and Javanese ethnic in Selangor. It is also possible that there would be an acculturation on other ceremonies, though it was packed with Malay or local culture. This is because the characteristics of the Javanese is tolerant to other cultures, especially if their position is newcomers. In addition, the Javanese and people of Selangor actually have many equal values. This two communities affiliated to the same culture, namely the Malay culture, and the two communities have the same belief, namely Islam. As far as my observation, the religious tradition of Selangor people is similar with the Javanese's. They practice Syâfi'î School in the same manner as the Javanese. This school is also known to be very tolerant with the local culture. Therefore, it is not surprising that such *barzanji* recitation tradition and *khatm al-Qur'ân* also commonly accompany wedding traditions. Such two religious traditions is also commonly found in the Javanese society.

## 2. Wedding Ceremony

The main phases of the wedding ceremony are *'aqd al-nikâh* procession (marriage contract) and wedding reception. *'Aqd al-nikâh* procession is not much different from the Javanese. This is because both communities have the same religious tradition, the school of Syâfi'î. However, unlike Javanese, the

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with Muhajir, Bukit Badung, March 21, 2015.

father of the bride acts as wali (guardian) of his own daughter on the procession. For Javanese ethnic community in Selangor, it is an obligation for the father to be wali of his daughter, and the *qâdlî* (religious official) is guiding its procession. On the other hand, Javanese who do not have a religious background generally depute their responsibility of being wali to the marriage official (*naib*) or *kiai*. It is considered more practical.

Meanwhile, the wedding reception is simple, as the writer looked at the Javanese ethnic wedding traditions in Selangor. The key point of the celebration is a banquet; banquet for guests and family in-laws with standing partymodel. It is different with Javanese, in which the reception or *temu manten* is not only about the banquet, but also containing a series of events, speech by the host as well as *khutbah nikah* (marriage advice). Although the Javanese's reception nowadays has been shifted to a model of standing party, such model is not common for rural society.

This is in line with their statement that the wedding traditions (especially the wedding reception) in Selangor is complex and spend high cost. While the Javanese wedding traditions are carried out in a simple way or *climen*. For Javanese, the greatness of the wedding party depends on the economic level of the host. As it is known that people of Selangor are in the level of prosperous.

The banquet at the reception involves catering service and waiter. When the reception is held, the host also orders a grilled lamb for guests besides

the usual dish for a reception. Although involving *catering service*, the hosts are still providing plenty of food which is particularly for other various series of wedding ceremony. It is accomplished by relatives and neighbors in by *gotong royong*. They generally slaughter the cow or buffalo by themselves for the banquet in various series of wedding ceremonies.

The description above are the differences of a banquet of wedding reception between Javanese and Javanese ethnic in Selangor. While in a particular case, the would be a similarity. For example in the *kompangan* (Malay traditional music) to welcome the bride and bridegroom (*temanten*). This is the result of same religious tradition between the Javanese and Selangor people.

### **Forms of Acculturation: Spiritual, Social, and Economic Aspects in the Wedding Tradition of Malay Javanese Ethnic**

Migration of Javanese to Selangor Malaysia is a major factor of the acculturation of Javanese and Malay culture. There is an interplay of Javanese and Malay Selangor-Malaysia in the context of wedding tradition, though it should be admitted that the influence of Malay culture is dominant. Javanese as a newcomer in Selangor Malaysia requires them to adapt socially to the local culture. Moreover, the Javanese is known to be very tolerant to foreign cultures, even it is integrated with their own culture along not contradicted to culture identity, or without losing its own culture characteristics. Culture con-

tacts of Javanese Muslims and Malay society produce a new culture without eliminating the identity characteristics of native culture. It can be seen on Javanese ethnic community in Selangor Malaysia which has a unique culture rather than other ethnic.

The forms of acculturation between Javanese-Islam culture and the Malay on Javanese ethnic wedding traditions in Selangor Malaysia has been described beforehand. Such forms of acculturation are more likely a visible symbol in the form of wedding ceremonies. In the following section, the writer will describe several points of acculturation between cultural entities.

### 1. Dimension of Spirituality of Javanese Ethnic Wedding Traditions in Selangor

One of the Javanese ethnic characteristics in Selangor is their religiousness. Javanese are classified into *santri*, *abangan*, and *priyayi*, however, the ancestors who migrated to Malaysia generally were *santri*. This is due to motives of migration to the Malay peninsula were to preach and transit for the pilgrimage. If *abangan* had migrated to Malay for economic motives, their religious consciousness would increase, because of the Islamic nuances of the Malay.

Javanese ethnic religiousness in Selangor Malaysia can be seen in their wedding tradition. Marriage for them is not merely a civil relationship between the couples, but it is a manifestation of implementing religious instruction. As the Prophet Muhammad said that to marry is his *sunnah*, and whoever does not perform his *sunnah* is considered as not

him. Furthermore, marriage is part of the *maqâshid al-syarî'ah*, namely remaining of generation. Because the first reason of marriage is to perform religious instruction and not merely as civil relationships, so religion emphasizes that marriage is a sacred and strong relationship (*mitsâq ghalîzh*).

As explained earlier, we can find another religious forms tradition accompanying the wedding traditions. There are *khatm al-Qur'ân* (Quran recitation) tradition, *kenduri* tradition, and reading the *barzanji* on pre-wedding ceremony. These activities always involve local religious leaders. It also can be interpreted as recognition of the figure and charisma of *kiai*, as Javanese name it. The figure of *kiai* become the reference for Javanese. *Kiai* is closer to the lower class community, speaks their language, and guide the religious life in a simple and easy to understand.

In addition, there is a view which stated the core of wedding ceremony is on *'aqd al-nikâh* procession which is carried out based on Syâfi'î school. However, they can not omit custom traditions which is popular in the community.

The spirituality and religious value in wedding tradition are also seen in the *kompangan* traditional music to welcome *temanten* (the brides-groom). *Kompangan* is a typical Islamic tradition, as well known in Javanese. Praying led by religious figures are also always seen in wedding ceremonies. People who come to the wedding ceremony also wear religious costumes, in which they generally use a *baju takwa* and *kopiah*, except for a

few young people among them, or host with traditional dress.<sup>23</sup>

## 2. Social Dimensions of Javanese Wedding Tradition in Selangor

Javanese ethnic wedding traditions in Selangor are full of social and societal dimension. A series ceremony that accompanies wedding traditions, the *'aqd al-nikâh* procession and the wedding reception, also means socializing their marriage to communities and close relatives. For Javanese ethnic communities in Selangor, marriages conducted secretly rise rumors in the community. Such wedding usually happens to hide their disgrace, the promiscuity before marriage. For Malay society, promiscuity as something reprehensible and contradict to the teachings of religion.

The social dimension of marriage is that the wedding should be appropriate with the customs of the society. A community has their own customs about the stages of a marriage performed. In this case, marriage is not enough to be done based on the religious instruction and ignore unwritten customs. In line with this, it is important to harmonize the marriage processions with the customs. When the wedding rules are violated, a custom usually has determined the mechanism of social sanction. Communal life, in this case, is so dominant, while individualistic as reflected in Western culture is not appropriate with the Eastern culture.

The social dimension of Javanese ethnic wedding traditions in Selangor

<sup>23</sup> Observation, March 20-23, 2015.

Malaysia looks too complex. It can be seen from many series of ceremonies conducted, whether pre-wedding and post-wedding ceremonies. But in practice, these ceremonies has been simplified, so that the complexity of wedding tradition can be reduced. If this simplification is a result of social agreement (convention), it is acceptable. *Vice versa* if simplification is done by an individual.

Based on Asmidar's research, Malay wedding tradition is not completely implemented. The implementation is for a demand of social obligations/customs. This is, according to Asmidar, because the society is now generally demanding a very practical thing, which is different from the ancestors.<sup>24</sup>

Asmidar identified some ceremonies of wedding traditions that have changes, among which are associated with matchmaking, *merisik*, *menggantung* ceremony, *berinai* ceremony and *berandam* ceremony. In the contemporary Malay society, most young people do not get couples through an arranged marriage, but they look for the partner by themselves. This shift, in turn, has implications for other ceremonies. Because marriage is not through an arranged

<sup>24</sup> The scope of the study is in Bantayan Hilir village, however the phenomenon of tradition integration seems generalized. It is based on its nature, that tradition is easy to integrate and it is dynamic together with the development of era. Asmidar, "Perubahan Tradisi Perkawinan Etnis Melayu di desa Bantayan Hilir Kecamatan Batu Hampar Kabupaten Hilir", <http://download.portalgaruda.org>, accessed October 19, 2015, <http://download.portalgaruda.org/article.php?>

marriage, the couple are looking for their own and usually have known the potential partner, the *merisik* and *meninjau* ceremony nearly implemented to meet the demands of the customs. *Menggantung* ceremony has been shifted, because most equipment of the wedding ceremony is rental, the *menggantung* ceremony has been simplified, not as in past.<sup>25</sup>

### 3. Economic Dimensions of Java-nese Ethnic Wedding Tradition in Selangor

Wedding ceremony and tradition can not be separated from the economic dimension. For Javanese ethnic in Selangor Malaysia, wedding tradition is a costly event. It can be seen on the complexity of various ceremonies that accompany wedding tradition, and funding of all these ceremonies should be accomplished by the host. As the wedding fund is big enough, it can not be denied that the host actually hopes of gaining donations (Javanese: *buwuh*) from the guests, which could cover the wedding cost, or even more.

Because of the high wedding cost, the host gradually prepares the funds and all the needs of a wedding ceremony. They also do a spiritual endeavor in the hope of all which are prepared can be a blessing, in the sense of what it is prepared to meet all the needs in the wedding ceremony or even be excessive, as well as getting donations in significant numbers. This endeavor is in the form *slametan*, *istighâtsah* by inviting *kiai*.

Since they have a strong relationship with Java, some people take the time to visit relatives in Java to inform and ask

for blessing regarded to their events. During their visit to Java, they also visit the *kiai* ask for prayer of a successful event.

### Conclusion

Based on discussion of the study, it resulted findings as follows: *Firstly*, the wedding tradition of Malay-Malaysian society is normatively complex. It can be seen from the series of ceremonies that accompany the wedding tradition. The complexity of the wedding tradition is a reflection of the harmonization of the human with God, with humans, even with nature. Thus ceremony is *merisik* and *meninjau*, applying and making a proposal, *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), and reading the *barzanji* which is conducted as pre-wedding ceremonies. While, the wedding itself consists of *menggantung* ceremony, *berinai*, *berandam*, *khatm al-Qur'ân*, *'aqd al-nikâh*, and wedding reception. Still, the ceremonies as mentioned above is simplified in its implementation, or even partially not implemented. Normativity tradition is no longer considered as something that must be implemented, but in a certain level, it can be adjusted. This means that there has been a shift in wedding traditions as a result of socio-cultural development, including the cultural contact between Javanese and Malays in Selangor.

*Secondly*, the wedding traditions of Javanese Moslems in Selangor indicate that there is a high level of acculturation. In the language of anthropology, the acculturation leads to a "substitution" and "syncretism". Substitution means that most of Javanese tradition has been replaced with new cultures (Ma-

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

lay), which fulfilled its function. That is, as various similarity on cultural substance, the replacement of the old culture does not relatively cause problems. For example, both Javanese and Malay wedding traditions see marriage as a sacred as well as the social event. Therefore, there are various ceremonies that accompany marriage, despite it has been simplified in many ways. The substance of Javanese ethnic wedding traditions in Selangor Malaysia lays on three dimensions: the spiritual dimension, the social dimension, and economic dimension.

Acculturation lead to a cultural syncretism, the mixing of these two cultures into a new culture that is distinctive. Javanese villages (Javanese community) in Malay/Selangor certainly have a tradition that is a little bit different with other community in which the people are relatively heterogeneous. Bear in mind that the relationship between Javanese community in Malay and Javanese tradition has faded simultaneously because of the distance with their ancestors.[]

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