

Islam, Ritual and Settlement Pattern

A Case Study of Puyung Village, Central Lombok, Indonesia

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Abstract

Most of Indonesian people are Moslem, spread along Indonesian islands. In relation with their religion, the diversity of people and its culture make Islamic representation looks different from one area to another, especially in ritual activities. In fact there are some people which have similar culture however conduct their ritual in different ways. The interference of Islam and local custom which is a facet of culture, therefore, brings about the variety of ritual activities in Indonesia. One of the important ritual in human existence is lifecycle, which occurs in a certain place within their settlement. By observing the use of places for ritual activities, then we can find its relation with the settlement pattern.

Sasak people, in Lombok Island, is one among Indonesias' Moslem population which attached to ritual in their everyday life. In their history, Sasaknese has been influenced by so many occupation, so that they have gone through a number of religion changes. Formerly they were animism, then the occupation of Majapahit made most of the people as an Hindu follower. The expansion of Islam in Lombok was resulted in a syncretism between Hindu and Islam which popularly known as Islam Wetu Telu, then Islam become more dominant up to this date. The dominance of Islam are not automatically resulted in the disappearance of local custom, especially in lifecycle ritual. It is still exist which is also the case of their settlement pattern.

This paper focuses on Puyung Village, situated in Central Lombok Regency. By studying Islam, ritual and settlement pattern in Puyung, it can be learned that Islam in Lombok Island is not only manifested in the religious activities, but also existed in the daily activities, in which one of them is represented by their settlement pattern.

Key words: Islam, Ritual, Sasak, and Settlement Pattern

Introduction

Man, wherever they live, has relationship with their environment, and it is much influenced by their culture. The relationship between men and their environment doesn't directly come up, instead emerges and transform by culture (Locher, 1978: 172). One of the most important thing in culture is ritual especially rites of passage. Knowles (1996: 96), stated that we human being, in all our practices, engage in ritual, everywhere, in all parts of the globe and in all types of society. Some ritual are construed as an attribute of culture, collective actions in common space. Other rituals seem to be personal inventions, carried out in private settings.



Rites of passage is term used to refer to ritual ceremonies associated with birth, puberty, marriage, death, and similar crucial occasion marking critical point of transition in an individual's life. In his classic work *The Rites of Passage* (1909-1960), Belgian sociologist *Arnold van Gennep* observed that "The life of individual in any society is a series of passages from one age to another. Van Gennep coined the term "*rites de passage*" to refer to those "rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position and age". Rites of passage therefore accomplish various kind of transformation of status of members of any social group, moving them from one position in the social structure to another, and distinguishing them as socially defined beings (Norget, 2000: 88).

On the other side, religious ritual had thus been identified as the primary occasion on which the authority of the social group is asserted. Led by Durkheim (1915), functionalist anthropologist investigated ritual for the contribution they made to the formation and maintenance of social order. Ritual were commonly understood as key mechanism in reinforcing the collective sentiment and social integration. In this way, collective rites were the concrete expression of the central role of religion in social life, since they enabled the expression and reaffirmation of the shared values, norms, and cosmologies of collective group and hence were vitas to the perpetuation of the social order itself. Thus ritual in Durkheim's term was society enacted, formalized, symbolically represented, and constructed; collective rites were the "means by which the social group reaffirms it self periodically" (Norget, 2000: 83)

Dovey (1999: 43) stated that every culture construct such meaning, but which particular constructions depends on the social diagram which is being mirrored: 'the rituals enact the form of social relations and in giving these relations visible expression they enable people to know their own society. The rituals work upon the body politic though the symbolic medium of the physical body' (Douglas, 1966: 128). Such rituals are twofold: they identify a zone of purity and order while excluding pollution and disorder, and they ritually defend the body against danger (Dovey, 1999: 42).

Traditional settlement in Korea (Pilwon, 1991) showed that settlement pattern was highly influenced by Fengshui. The ideal site of Fengshui is embodied as a model of 'rear mountain, front water' with the settlement as centre. The typical development process of the settlement can be seen here, a man and his family with servant families move into a village which may



be a undeveloped, newly selected site or an already occupied one by other families than by his clan. He settles down naturally at the best spot of the site which is often found at the foot of the important moderate mountain peak, that is, at the interface of mountain and flatland. He is called 'Village Entered Ancestor' by the offspring dwelling there from that time on. Ideally, his house is handed over to the eldest son, and then to the eldest grandson, and so on, over periods, and it is called 'Family Head's House'. In case that a few, not only one, clans dwell at a settlement, there are as many Family Head's Houses. The settlement gets set up through continuous offshoots of the family by gradually transforming the land in front of the Family Head's House into house lots.

In other case settlement in Pakistan, in the Sind (Shaikh, 1996) was influenced by Islam which was showed by divided space between man and woman. She concluded that pattern of settlement and layout of the village and form of the rural habitat are based on religious and cultural values. In a general sense, cultural values and social expectation are deeply affected by the involvement of the religion with the pattern of settlement.

How ritual influence in settlement can be observed in Tswana. The Tswana believe that their ancestors greatly influence their existence in the present. In order to affect the ancestors influence, the living believe that they must observe various obligations and maintain a state of order – an avoidance of so – called 'hot' events which might have a detrimental effect – in the world of the living. A number of these observance have spatial implications and too are evident in the people's behavior (Hardie, 1985: 142).

For instance, at the time of death the house of the deceased is never left unoccupied. In fact the family and friends gather and sing throughout the night to keep away any malevolent influences. The house is blackened and only after the deceased is buried are the windows washed as is the whole house including the clothes of the deceased, thus signifying a cooling down of the yard attempting to normalize the space after the disturbance of the death which is viewed as a 'hot' action. Similarly at the time of birth the mother is segregated from the rest of the household and a branch is placed in front of her rooms (Schapera, 1950: 122). Only non menstruating women are allowed to attend to her. This action is taken because the mother is believed to be 'hot' from the birth and might adversely affect the household who likewise might, if they are 'hot' for any reason, affect her and her child (Hardie, 1985: 142)



Religion and Ritual in Sasak

The name of Lombok, previously, can be seen in the *Negaraker-tagama* book, Lombok is named Lombok Mirah or west Lombok, and Sasak Adi or east Lombok. In the pre historic era, Sasaknese was well known as the follower of animism and dynamism, and the people called *Boda* and the followers were called *Sasak-Boda*. Their believe was performed by their worshiped to ancestor through things, animals, the natural power as sacred things, (Wacana, 1988:15). There is a central of natural power in the Rinjani Mountain looked after by Anjani - the goddess. There were some ritual worships related to the blessing of Anjani, specially for rice planting and harvesting. In some areas, the existence of Dewi Anjani is the orientation of the settlement system. Many buildings generally face to the mountain like traditional buildings in Bayan and Sembalun most of them face to the north, to Rinjani Mountain.

The expedition of Majapahit in the 14th century influenced Lombok people to adhere Hindu. Furthermore, in the XVI century, the spread of Islam to some area, included Lombok by Sunan Prapen - the son of Sunan Giri has an important role for Sasaknese. In a few years, Islam was getting more popular among the Sasak People (Wacana, 1988: 43). The way of Islam teaching by Sunan Prapen was so accommodative to the local culture and believe triggered the emergence of the syncretism between Hindu and Islam; this was, later on, popularly known as *Islam Wetu Telu* or three ways of Islamic life. In this belief, supranatural and magic power were highly constituted. In the long time, the *Islam Wetu Telu* follower become decline, and the contrary of this situation Islam become more popular. The teachings of *Islam Wetu Telu* are reflected in the resting places, and old mosques (especially in Bayan). Besides, it teaches that Rinjani Mountain is the best orientation for many activities. The above belief keep being maintained because the noblemen fully support it.

Many Moslems consider that the Islamic doctrine which deviates a lot from Al Qur'an and Hadits need correcting. On purpose to disseminate the real Islam, Islamic leaders, or *Tuan Guru*, built some Islamic schools or *pondok pesantren*, Qur'an reciting or *pengajian*, etc. The expansion of Islam superseded the previous belief on Sasak people. Some ritual activities, however, such as religious meal activities in the burial, ritual activities in the opening of virgin land and also, building a house, keep existing. In addition, the principle of seniority is in some cases still maintained.



Generally, Sasaknese honour their ancestor and senior. Their belief to the ancestor is reflected in the location for worship and the direction of settlement and building. The honour to the senior is manifested in the location and housing position. In the case of ritual, rites of passages for Sasaknese has an important meaning i.e. birth, circumcision, marriage, and death. The implementation of such rites of passage are varied, based on economic level, social stratum, and their way of life.

Most of Sasaknese lived in a group in the form of house yard, in which each house yard is occupied by parents' house and son' or grandsons' houses; it can be called as a core family. In many cases, a house yard is not only occupied by a core family, but also by extended family. A house yard occupied by some families, built side by side with others is called *gubug*. Some *gubugs*, as a system, are called *repoq*, then some *repoqs* becomes *dasan* or *dusun* and finally as a village.

Sasak settlement (especially in the north of Lombok) have ideal layout of mountain villages consists of two rows of houses (*bale*), with a row of rice barns (*lumbung*) to one side, and in between the houses, a row of open walled pavillion (*berugaq*) build on six piles (*sekenem*). Other structures in the village include large houses (*bale beleq*) belonging to religious official, which are said to be occupied by powerfully ancestral souls. The actual graves of the ancestors have small houses of wood and bamboo constructed over them (<http://www.indonesianheritage>, 2001: 2).

Some ritual activities are tight up to their settlement, especially in the yard and *berugaq*. In the traditional village such in Bayan and Pujut, the function of *berugaq* is used for palm leaf recitation before a boy circumcision or a couple get marry. In the commemoration of Muhammad the prophet birthday, the mosque and prayer house or *santren – musholla* are used for listening the advice of religious leader or *tuan guru*.

Ritual in Relation with Settlement in Puyung

Puyung village is located in between Mataram, the capital of East Nusa Tenggara, and Praya, the capital of Central Lombok. Most of people in Puyung village could not be classified as traditional people, but in their daily activities has relationship with their culture. Such as



others Sasaknese, Puyung people still maintain their rite of passage. Among these ritual, birth ritual and marriage as initiation of human living will explore deeply.

Birth Ritual

The series of ritual activities in relation with birth are: *Tukaq Ari Kakaq*, *Peraq Api* and *Ngurisan*.

Tukaq ari kakaq

After the baby born, the baby's placenta should be washed usually close to the well, then it completed with custom equipment and it is prayed by baby's father. The main activities in this ritual is burying the placenta in the terrace for daughter or fence for son. This moment in which the placenta should be buried show that there is relationship between house and yard position for placing the placenta. Because of Sasaknese stay in house yard, then there is a certain pattern in placing the placenta for all of the family in the house yard. Thus, it can be said that house and yard has a certain pattern as a respond to this ritual.

Peraq Api

Seven or eight days after baby born, other event is held i.e. fire extinguisher. Firstly, mother and her child get purify in the well, then they extinguish the fire participated by family, relatives and neighbor. The last activities is praying and eating religious meal. All of activities are held in the yard, so the yard has a role in *peraq api* ritual. In a house yard usually there is a yard used for many activities, both for daily activities and ritual activities, one of them is for *peraq api*. In the micro context, it show that there is a public space which is used for many purposes in the settlement, especially in house yard.

Ngurisan.

The most important event in this ritual is shaving the hair in the mosque, in the specific time usually in Maulid Nabi, birthday of the prophet Muhammad. While the hair is cut, all of the participant say grace Al Barzanji, praiseworthy, to Muhammad the prophet. The last program in *ngurisan* is getting religious meal by all of the participant. Commonly, these moments are participated by some babies, and this mean including some families.



In the settlement context, the mosque is not only used for routine praying but also other activities, one of them is Ngurisan. In relation with mosque or prayer house usage is Maulid Nabi. The main program in this ritual is to listen the advice of religious leader or tuan guru in prayer house or mosque. Maulid activities is started with the meeting of people led by hamlet leader and followed by religious leader, custom leader. This activities is held in the evening after Isyak prayer, close to seven o'clock pm. The participants of this ritual are the people surround the mosque or *mukim masjid*, invited guest especially custom and informal leader of other hamlets.

The series of birth ritual in this settlement shown that there is a relationship between ritual activities with settlement pattern. The spatial usage of houses, yard, and religious facilities are the basic elements in settlement pattern.

Marriage Ritual

There are series of activities in relation with marriage, all of them are described below.

Midang

Midang means visiting woman, then the most important event in this ritual is visiting to the woman's house. Previously midang was followed by a series of custom ceremonies, but now it become usual visiting.

“Stealing” the Woman

The most popular marriage of Sasaknese is done by stealing the woman. Usually a man steal a woman in a woman's yard, then both of them go to man's relatives or an informal leader. The neighbor of man, man's relatives and friends will visit man's house as soon as they know that a man has stealed a woman. Furthermore, the arriving of some friends and relatives are noted by small party as a proof of the success for the “stealing” called *seboq*, held in yard. All of the houses in house yard are used for this ceremony especially for visitors party.

Sejati-Selabar

Sejati-selabar means letting the woman's parents know about the “stealing”. Then they decide the kind of material should be given or how much money should pay for the “stealing”. Man's family coming are participated by some participant, such family, hamlet leader, and



pembayun (negotiate – man). At the same moment it happened in woman's house. This ritual, again, show that the role of house yard, both man's and woman's house yard will always maintain for some activities also for ritual.

Sorong Serah

The most important event in this ritual is giving the custom material or the money agreed to woman's family. This occasion is participated by family, relatives, formal and informal leader. Almost all of this moment is held by local custom in house yard.

Nyongkolan

Usually this moment is the most glorious event. The most important event in this ritual is party in man's house and visiting woman's house by man's families. This procession is followed by performance of ritual dances 'gendang beleq'. The *gendang beleq* performance is shown up along the road to man's and woman's house. *Gendang beleq* show their performance in the woman's yard, then the yard again has a role in ritual.

Wedding Ceremony

Wedding ceremony can be said as a religion event because religiously this moment legalized man and woman as husband and wife. This ceremonies has a semi private setting in a micro area if it happened in the house, but it will be macro area if it happened in the mosque.

Bejango

Visiting woman's parent before living together in man's house yard. The most important event in this ritual is visiting woman's parent, especially for blessing along their marriage. This event is followed by family and relatives.

Menyapu

Visiting and praying in the ancestor burial. The most important event is praying in the burial, it take place in private setting in micro area. In the last even showed that burial has other role i.e. in settlement.

The series of ritual activities are shown that there are two main occasions in which marriage is held. The relationship between the man's and woman's house with area surrounding make the



house yard has an important role for marriage. In the spatial context, the yard and house as space become a centre by surrounding area. Especially in nyongkolan, the house and the road in kampong are exclusively used by this ritual, then the role of house and yard as a centre are conspicuous shown. Furthermore the settlement pattern based on ritual make the house yard, mosque, burial function as centre of ritual activities.

Conclusion

The development of Islamic teachings which are well understood by people are able to supersede the old belief. The old traditions slowly fade because of the campaign towards Al Qur'an and Hadits. Some of the teachings which are not in opposition to Islam, however, are still present one of them is in ritual.

Ritual, done by Sasaknese routinely, is still well maintain by people, then it perform by ritual activities and settlement elements. Settlement pattern consist of house yard and its element has relationship with people activities one of which is ritual. Realizing that ritual is always held by Sasaknese, so that it need to be well maintained. Settlement pattern in micro scale, in house yard, has a certain pattern which is showed by the arrangement of houses and yard as a public space. Also settlement pattern in macro scale, in village level, are grouped as cluster houses completed by house prayer or mosque. The groups of these settlement are connected by main road, in which the function of roads are not only for daily activities but also for ritual activities such in marriage procession.



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