Chapter 5: The Islamisation of Village Tradition

In Kolojonggo, the customs and rituals reported by C. Geertz, R. Jay and Koentjaraningrat in the 1950s are still practised: it is not unusual to see a lamp lit in front of a new-born baby's house; marriages are most frequently held in the Javanese month of *Besar*; flowers and coins are thrown away while the funeral procession parades to the cemetery; incense is burned and offerings are made at tombs; and *kendhuri* are held at each point of passage in an individual's life.

The persistence of these customs and rituals comes as a surprise, considering that Islamic development in Kolojonggo has been led by reformist Islam, while reformist Islam in Indonesia has been said to oppose these practices strongly (Abdul-Samad,1991:65-66; Federspiel,1970:67-83; Geertz,1956:147; Irwan,1994:80; Nakamura,1976:277; Noer,1973:95; Peacock,1978a; Umar Hasyim,1990:1-6). The reasons for this opposition are twofold: these practices have no scriptural basis in the Quran and Hadith and are connected to magical power, negating the Oneness of Allah (*Tauhid*). Seen from this perspective, the persistence of these practices indicates that Muslim villagers in Kolojonggo are far from the right path to Allah and that, by performing these practices, they commit the worst sin in Islam, *syirik* (the negation of the Oneness of Allah)

This contrast raises a few questions: do the reformist villagers in Kolojonggo have the same understanding of traditional practices as reformist intellectuals?; If they have the same opinion, why have their efforts to Islamise all aspects of their life not included the issue of traditional practices and how do they explain their participation in these practices which jeopardise their whole religious life?; If the reformist villagers have a different view of traditional practices from reformist intellectuals, what is their perspective and how do they make them fit reformist Islam?

To answer these questions, this chapter will focus on the ways the reformist villagers in Kolojonggo have dealt with traditional practices which are thought by reformist intellectuals to be incongruent with reformist Islam. No unitary perspective is shared by the reformist villagers, but different individuals have different ideas about different practices. In spite of this diversity, however, two tendencies are clearly visible among the reformist villagers, namely to reinterpret traditional practices and their meanings in Islamic terms and to incorporate Islamic symbols in traditional practices in order to accommodate them better to the new socio-religious situation. In the first part of this chapter, a ritual called *kendhuri* or *slametan* which lies at the centre of all the ritual practices will be the focus; this will be followed by a discussion of some of the rites of passage.

5.1. The Process of *Kendhuri* [1]

After darkness falls on the village, several messengers visit their neighbours, informing villagers of a celebration of *kendhuri* in a certain household. As their coming is already expected, their visit is not a surprise. Taking a seat and exchanging brief greetings with the male head of a household, the messenger conveys the news of *kendhuri* and the intention of the host to invite him. This formal meeting does not last long, just two to three minutes. Soon after his message is delivered, the messenger asks permission to leave for the next house.

A person who is invited wears semi-formal Javanese clothes: a cap (*peci*), a *batik* shirt and a *sarung* or trousers. However, he does not head for the host's house immediately. He waits for his neighbours to come outside or visits them. Although not informed, everyone knows who will go to the *kendhuri* since invitations to the *kendhuri* of a certain household are delivered to the same group of villagers all the time.

The host and his few other close relatives and neighbours stand at the gate, waiting for the guests. They also wear semi-formal Javanese clothes. Whenever a group of guests appears, they smile and shake hands one by one. Then the guests are requested to go into the living room where the *kendhuri* is to be held. Upon entering the room, the guests disperse. Some go further inside the room, away from the door, while others settle down near the door. Except for the hamlet head (*kepala dusun* or *kadus*) who is in his mid 40s, the old villagers who already have a married child usually sit away from the door, near the spot reserved for the officiant of the *kendhuri*, *kaum* [2] . The relatively younger guests find their seats near the door or outside the room when it is crowded. Those who arrive late but are eligible to take inside seats are asked several times to do so by others who have come earlier. As there is usually a space inside the room, it is not difficult to accommodate them. If no space is available, those sitting near the door make room for them, causing a little disturbance. Those who are relatively young but have prestigious occupations such as teacher or civil servant generally do not want to sit inside, although they are usually asked to do so. They prefer to be with other villagers of the same age.

The guests sit down on the floor with their legs crossed. As they lean against the wall, they naturally face those sitting on the opposite side. While waiting

[1] Villagers said there is no terminological difference between *kendhuri (kendhuren)* and *slametan* (cf. Hefner,1985:105). As they preferred the former to the latter, the term *kendhuri* will be used here. '*Kendhuri*' is a word derived from Persian, '*kanduri*', meaning 'feast' while '*slametan*' comes from Arabic, '*salama',* meaning 'safe' (Jones,1978:column 42&80). The fact that the term, *kendhuri*, originated from Persian was not known to villagers and they considered it as a word from Javanese, whereas the Arabic origin of '*slametan*' was well known to them.

[2] '*Kaum*' is a title for the officiant of traditional rituals. Installed not by an election but by a consensus of Muslim villagers, he carries out this role until he withdraws from it. It is not a paid position but a small amount of money is usually given to him by the host who uses his service. Every hamlet has its own *kaum*.

for other guests, they talk freely amongst each other. It is not unusual to hear laughter and loud voices. When the room is almost filled, the *kaum* appears. His coming indicates that the *kendhuri* is about to begin.

When no more guests are expected, the ritual foods parceled in a bamboo box (*besek*) are delivered from the outside; in some cases, *besek* are already placed at the centre of the room before the coming of the guests. One *besek* is given to each person. If someone has been invited but does not come, his close neighbour is supposed to take a *besek* for him. Therefore, two or even three *besek* are allocated to those present. For several minutes, the room is once again in an uproar over the number of *besek* to be taken home. In loud voices, the guests keep checking the list of those absent and dispense *besek* to the right persons.

Confirming that each guest has received the due number of *besek*, a representative of the host, usually an old man known for his linguistic skill and closely linked to the host by blood, neighbourhood or friendship, opens the *kendhuri*. His opening remark (*ujub*) generally consists of two parts. First, he asks forgiveness for would-be mistakes in his speech and thanks the guests for coming. Second, he makes the purpose of the *kendhuri* public, for example, a celebration of a birth, and requests the participation of the guests in the coming ritual prayers. Then, he introduces the *kaum* who will take charge of the second phase of the *kendhuri*. Taking his turn, the *kaum* reiterates the intention of the host and recites Arabic prayers. While his prayer is going on, some of the Muslim guests place their flat hands on or over their laps, turn their palms upward and close their eyes. Whenever there is a short pause between the Arabic prayers, they chant '*amin*'. Not all of those present, however, take this position. Some of them sit in silence, focusing their eyes on the mat or the wall. Others whisper to those sitting next to them. They just wait for the end of the Arabic chants which continue for three or four minutes. Rubbing the face with two bare hands signifies the completion of the *kendhuri*. All the guests get up quickly and return home, taking their *besek*.[3]

5.2. Various Occasions to Celebrate *Kendhuri*

Geertz classified *kendhuri* into four categories: life-cycle *kendhuri* which were given at each point of passage in the individual life such as pregnancy, birth, circumcision, marriage and death; calendrical *kendhuri* which were celebrated

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[3] Unlike the Protestant dwellers in a slum squatter community in Yogyakarta city where *kendhuri* was not celebrated (Guinness,1986:110), both Protestant and Catholic villagers in Kolojonggo hold *kendhuri*. No remarkable differences are visible in the pattern of the opening remarks between Muslim and Christian villagers except for two features: if the host is a Muslim, the representative and the ritual officiant are Muslims, whereas if Christian, they are Christians; and the ritual prayer of Muslims is uttered in Arabic whereas that of Christians, in high Javanese. Christians have their own ritual officiant, sometimes called *kaum Kristen*. However, the position of the Christian *kaum* is less formalised than that of the Muslim *kaum*. The title of *kaum* is never used to designate the Christian *kaum* in daily interactions whereas the Muslim *kaum* is generally called *Pak kaum*.

in connection with the yearly Muslim calendar; village *kendhuri* concerned with defining and celebrating one of the basic territorial units of Javanese social structure, the village; and intermittent *kendhuri* which were given from time to time for special occasions such as change of residence, change of name, embarking on a journey, bad dreams and so on (Geertz,1976:38-85). According to the memory of village elders in Kolojonggo, these four categories of *kendhuri* were celebrated in former days, although not all of those listed by Geertz were held in Kolojonggo. For example, villagers did not celebrate the *kendhuri* on the first day of *Sura*, on the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad and on the day of *Miraj,* while the *kendhuri* in the month of *Ruwah* (*Nyadran*), during the fasting month (*Maleman*) and after the fasting month (*Syawalan*) were given.

The occasions for which villagers actually celebrate *kendhuri* are different from what they consider to be the ideal or to have been observed in former days. Some of them are simplified while others are not celebrated at all. The *kendhuri* during the pregnancy of the first baby which are said to have been celebrated three times in former days, namely, at three months (*telung sasinan*), at seven months (*tingkepan* or *mitoni)* and at nine months (*procotan*), are now held only once, usually at seven months. In some cases, a *kendhuri* is not given even at seven months but is replaced with the delivery of a dish of foods only to a few close neighbours of the pregnant woman (*bancakan*). *Kendhuri* after birth also show the same pattern. Three *kendhuri* which are said to have been previously held, namely, on the day of the birth (*brokohan*), after five days (*pasaran*) and after thirty five days (*selapanan*), are simplified into one, so that it is generally *selapanan* at which the *kendhuri* is given. In the case of circumcision and marriage, the frequency of *kendhuri* follows the ideal pattern, namely, once for each occasion. *Kendhuri* after death which are said to have been given traditionally on the day of death, on the 3rd, 7th, 40th, 100th days, at 1 year, 2 years [4] and 1000 days after death, are also in the process of simplification. Of these seven or eight occasions, two or three are generally skipped. The most frequently simplified *kendhuri* are one either on the 3rd or 7th days, one either on the 40th or 100th days, one either 1 year or 2 years after death.

Unlike life-cycle *kendhuri,* the communal *kendhuri* was abolished in the late 1970s when a new hamlet head was elected and the calendrical *kendhuri* was also ended in the 1980s. In the case of the intermittent *kendhuri*, most of the occasions which are said to have been celebrated by *kendhuri* in former days, are not celebrated

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[4] Villagers had different ideas concerning whether two years after death should be given a *kendhuri* or not. Those who supported the view that *kendhuri* should not be celebrated two years after death sticked to the idea that the total number of *kendhuri* after death should be seven. The reason why it should be seven was not well understood by villagers. They just said seven times of *kendhuri* was the custom inherited from their ancestors. According to a villager regarded by others as a *dhukun* (traditional medical and magical practitioner, see Chapter VI for more about this concept), the celebration of seven times of *kendhuri* after death was because the essence of human body consists of seven different elements and seven occasions of *kendhuri* coincide with the dismantlement of these elements.

today, although this type of *kendhuri* has not disappeared totally. In 1993-1994, three *kendhuri* belonging to this category were held in Kolojonggo, one after a villager moved into a new house and two others, after recovery from sickness. When referring to these occasions, villagers preferred the term *syukuran* to *kendhuri*, although the mode of celebrating *syukuran* may not be different from that of *kendhuri*. [5] The abolition of other types of *kendhuri* and the use of the term, *syukuran,* rather than *kendhuri* to designate the intermittent *kendhuri* means that the term, *kendhuri*, refers exclusively to life-cycle *kendhuri*.

The simplification in the mode of celebrating life-cycle *kendhuri*, however, has not gone so far as, at least until now, to question a more fundamental issue: whether to celebrate it or not. Although there were a few who consciously mentioned the futility of it, most villagers including those who criticised it celebrated life-cycle *kendhuri* as a host and attended it as guests. [6] The way the simplification of *kendhuri* was dealt with in the opening remarks of the *kendhuri* also shows this point. When one of *kendhuri* after death was to be omitted, the representative of the host always made a remark that the *kendhuri* being celebrated, for example, on the 3rd day after the death, was both for the 3rd and 7th day after death. In this respect, villagers still stick to the traditional pattern of celebrating *kendhuri,* at least in the conceptual domain.

In brief, villagers in Kolojonggo celebrate *kendhuri* at each point of passage in the individual's life although, compared with the ideal pattern which is said to have been practised in former days, the frequency of celebration is simplified. The next question is, then, whether the interpretation of *kendhuri* supported by villagers in former days is still relevant to understand the reformist villagers' attitude.

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[5] *Syukuran* may take different forms from *kendhuri*. In two cases where a youth celebrated *syukuran* for entering university, only a short remark was made by a representative of the host at the opening of the meeting, saying that the *syukuran* was to express thanks to Allah for permitting the host to enter university. After that, meals were served and the guests, close friends of the host who came both from Kolojonggo and neighbouring hamlets, spent the rest of the *syukuran* chatting, playing games and, in one case, by singing songs. No *besek* were given to the guests afterward.

[6] Several villagers mentioned that, as far as they remembered, only two life-cycle *kendhuri* had not been celebrated in Kolojonggo: one at the time of marriage of Pak Nadi's daughter and the other at the 1000th day anniversary after the death of Pak Wanto's mother. It seems, however, that the absence of *kendhuri* in both cases was not caused by the dissatisfaction of Pak Nadi and Pak Wanto with the celebration of *kendhuri*. When interviewed, both Pak Nadi and Wanto, who were described by some other villagers as brave enough not to have celebrated *kendhuri,* emphasised that the reason they had not held *kendhuri* was circumstantial, namely, they had been in a situation which had not let them celebrate it, rather than ideological, that is, they wanted to express their objection to the celebration of *kendhuri*. Their reply seems generally to the point since they celebrated *kendhuri* for other occasions after they had skipped life-cycle *kendhuri* before. The fact that these cases are still remembered by villagers shows that life-cycle *kendhuri* have rarely been skipped and the celebration of *kendhuri* is still considered as an essential part of village life.

5.3. Islamic Development and *Kendhuri*

Villagers had two 'official' versions as to why they celebrated *kendhuri*. These were official since villagers used one or both of them when they were asked to comment on *kendhuri* and the representative of the host used one or both of them as his rhetoric in the opening speech. According to the first version, *kendhuri* is an occasion in which the host prays for *slamet*, a state 'in which events will run their fixed course smoothly and nothing untoward will happen to anyone' (Koentjaraningrat,1960:95) and the neighbours, who play a part to achieve this state, are invited. This interpretation is similar to that of the Javanese of the 1950s except for one crucial fact. If all sorts of supernatural beings of different origin such as local spirits, dead ancestors, Hindu deities and Islamic prophets were previously invoked to bring *slamet* in the opening remarks of *kendhuri* (Geertz,1976:11; Jay,1969:209), it is now only the name of Allah which can be heard in the actual celebration of *kendhuri*. The same is true when villagers were asked to point out to whom this ritual was directed and of whom they asked a *slamet*. They only talked about Allah, although the terms they used were diverse. Some used 'Allah' while others, '*Tuhan*', '*Pangeran*' or '*Kang Maha Kuwasa*'. Whatever the selection of the term may be, the official version of the meaning of *kendhuri* gives an impression that the space allocated to supernatural beings of heterogenous origins is entirely filled with the Islamic God, Allah. [7] The introductory remark of the *kaum* in a *kendhuri* for a wedding shows this point:

> To the respectable elders and all of those present
>
> *Asalamu'alaikum warrohmatulloi wabarokatu*. (May God give you peace and prosperity, mercy and blessing)
>
> I hope that peace and welfare (*kawilujengan*) from Allah
>
> will be bestowed to all of those present
>
> And I am delivering my feelings of thanks to Allah
>
> who has already given us health and welfare to such a degree that we can be here.
>
> There is nothing for which I'd like to ask your assistance

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[7] As will be mentioned in the latter part of this chapter, not all villagers possessed the same views. There were some villagers who seemed to adhere to the previous interpretation of *kendhuri*, namely, that it was dedicated to supernatural beings of diverse origins. However, most of those supporting this view did not want to express their idea to me but reiterated that a *kendhuri* was directed solely to Allah. One of the clues which made me understand that not a few villagers still supported this view was the incense burning during the celebration of *kendhuri*, an action which was considered by all villagers as a medium to invoke spirits. Some of those who put forward the view that a *kendhuri* was directed to Allah burned incense in their own *kendhuri*. However, in contrast with the previous time when incense would be burned in the room where *kendhuri* was celebrated, now it is done in the inner part of house or outside of it. As a result, if someone just sits down in the room where the official *kendhuri* is going on, it is impossible to know whether the host is burning incense or not.

except to ask you to help Pak Joyo and his family to send their prayers of blessing [to Allah]

I hope all the wishes of Pak Joyo in celebrating *kendhuri* will be fulfilled and what he has done and will do will be accepted by Allah.

With this intention in our mind, let's all ask Allah

so that everything may be peaceful and smooth (*wilujeng*)

For the purpose of comparison, the ritual prayers in a *brokohan*, which is held on the day of a baby's birth, are shown below. It is guided not by the *kaum* but by the *dhukun bayi*[8] whose major role is to give a massage to a new-born baby and to guide a few rituals such as *brokohan, tetesan* and *tingkepan*.[9]

In a *brokohan*, the *dhukun bayi* began the ritual by briefly talking about the baby for whom this ritual was performed; the time of its birth, its weight and the process of giving birth. Then she explained the meaning of the prepared foods.

Here plates of rice for *brokohan* have been prepared.

There are two *ambengan* (lump of rice taking the shape of mountain)

The first one is to make perfect [the journey of] *kakang kawah* and *adhi ari-ari*[10], in order for them to reach the Southern Sea.

The second one is given to *dhanyang*[11] living outside this village.

It is made complete by *jenang abang, jenang putih, jenang palang, jenang baru-baru, jenang pliring,*[12]

All of which render meals for *dhanyang* inside this village.

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[8] In former days when women gave birth to a baby in her own house, the *dhukun bayi* played the role of mid-wife. She is now deprived of this role since all women go to the modern clinic to give birth to a baby.

[9] *Tetesan* is a ritual enactment of female circumcision. A yellow herb called *kunir* (turmeric) is placed over the vagina of the baby and then removed by the *dhukun bayi*. *Tingkepan* is a ritual occurring at seven months of pregnancy of the first baby. In the one *tingkepan* that I attended, the future parents of a baby were bathed together by the *dhukun bayi* and their close relatives from both sides. After that, a scene of delivery was enacted. The *dhukun bayi* slid two young coconuts down inside the *sarung* of the future mother, one by one, while her mother and mother-in-law took them at the bottom. On each coconut were drawn pictures of Arjuna and Sembadra, both of whom symbolise the ideal types of male and female in the *wayang* story.

[10] *Kakang kawah* refers to the amniotic fluid and *adhi ari-ari*, the placenta. They are said to be the siblings of a baby.

[11] *Dhanyang* refers to the guardian spirit occupying a certain place such as house, tree, river, village and so on.

[12] *Jenang* is a porridge made from rice flour. The brown Javanese sugar (*gula Jawa*) and coconut are added to make different kinds of *jenang*: when *gula Jawa* is mixed, it is called *jenang abang*; when coconut milk is added, called *jenang putih*; when the added *gula Jawa* takes the shape of a cross, it is called *jenang palang*; when the *jenang* is made from *katul* (rice sifting) and sliced coconuts are scattered, it is called *jenang baru-baru*; and when the half of the *jenang* is brown and the other is white, it is *jenang pliring*. These five *jenang* are said to symbolise five different directions in this world: the north, the east, the south, the west and the centre.

I hope that all of those present will witness what I will surrender.

I will surrender [the following ritual prayer] to *Kang Maha Gesang* (the Being controlling life) in this village.

After this introductory speech, her ritual prayer began:

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim (In the name of Allah, the Merciful and the Compassionate)

I intend to cast a spell, [the name of] my spell is *Pulasari*.

All I offer is food, whatever condition it may be.

Flowers of *Gandaarum*, flowers of *Gandaarum* are [composed of],

Kanthil (name of a flower)is [for the baby] to behave harmoniously with and in accordance with (*kumanthil-kanthil*) the state of being,

(*Ke*)*Nanga* is [for the baby] to grow up, being protected (*winong*),

Mawar is [for the baby] to be disinfected (*tawar*) [from what is bad],

And *mlati* is [for the baby] to follow the right way (*sejati*).

With this, I ask blessing (*berkah pangestu*) from *Kang Murba Gesang* (the Being governing life).

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim.

I intend to cast a spell, [the name of] my spell is *Singasari*.

I wish everything to be regular and constant, as perfect as possible.

Kiyai Tawang, [that is] *kiyai* of love, *kiyai* of love, [that is] *kiyai* of protection,

May his soul (*sukma*) give permission to realise the requests of my granddaughter Sumirah (the mother of the new born baby) and her family.

For my faults in the guidance [of this ritual] and the preparation of the food, *wajib* (an obligatory gift) was prepared.

The *wajib* is 125 [Rupiah],

100 [Rupiah] is for acquiring a livelihood of food and clothes,

25 [Rupiah] for the fortune (*rezeki*) of my granddaughter Sumirah and her family.

The remarkable difference between the guidance of the *kaum* and that of the *dhukun bayi* is the object of their prayers. Whilst the former directs his prayer only to Allah whom he envisages as having a final authority to accept his prayer, the latter does so to several invisible beings such as local spirits living both inside and outside the village (*dhanyang),* an unidentified deity who controls

life (*Kang Maha Gesang*), the goddess living in the Southern Sea, an unidentified deity of love and protection, and the Islamic God, Allah. [13] On the other hand, the *dhukun bayi* puts emphasis on the meaning of the ritual foods, which is totally lacking in the case of the *kaum*. Her emphasis is in the same vein as the point made by Geertz's informant, who said, 'at a *slametan* all kinds of invisible beings come and sit with us and they also eat the food. That is why the food and not the prayer is the heart of *slametan*' (Geertz,1976,15). To the *kaum*, it is not the food but the prayer that lies at the heart of *kendhuri*.

The exclusion of 'non-Islamic' supernatural beings from the rhetoric of *kendhuri* reflects the penetration of reformist Islam into Muslim villagers. As Allah is envisaged as the only Being who has the power to realise the state of *slamet* and requests by Muslims, other supernatural beings are excluded from the invitation list of *kendhuri*, at least, officially. This change, however, does not seem to be enough to legitimise the practice of *kendhuri* in Islamic terms. Although the exclusion of all supernatural beings other than Allah in ritual invocations makes it possible to equate *kendhuri* as a mode of prayer to Allah, this cannot explain why Muslims should use it for this purpose. On the other hand, *kendhuri* is a ritual which is unanimously said to originate from Hindu-Buddhist tradition, not from an Islamic one. [14] In a situation where Islamic ways of praying prescribed by the Quran and Hadith are known to villagers, there is no reason why they stick to a ritual which is thought to be related to non-Islamic traditions.

Many villagers talked about the strength of tradition to explain the persistence of *kendhuri*. As it had been practised from the era of their ancestors (*jaman nenek moyang*), it would not disappear with ease. Some of them used the term '*tradisi*', an Indonesian equivalent of tradition, to explain the maintenance of *kendhuri*. As the term, *tradisi* retains a positive connotation in the national discourse, the equation of *kendhuri* with *tradisi* implies indirectly that *kendhuri* is something that should be preserved. Therefore, to them, the classification of *kendhuri* as *tradisi Jawa* is already a sufficient condition to explain and rationalise the maintenance of *kendhuri*. Since *kendhuri* belongs to *tradisi*, they need not abolish

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[13] Villagers could not remember exactly when non-Islamic deities were excluded from the official rhetoric of *kendhuri*. According to the *kaum*, he did not refer to the names of non-Islamic supernatural beings from the outset of his career as a *kaum* in the early 1970s. It is not certain whether his memory was correct or not since some of the villagers in their thirties who had been their teens in the early 1970s remembered the invocation of a variety of supernatural beings at the beginning of Arabic prayers. In the case of a neighbouring hamlet of Kolojonggo, the traditional style of ritual invocation continued until quite recently before the *kaum* died in the 1980s. The newly installed *kaum* in that hamlet did not follow the traditional pattern of invoking various supernatural beings but only recited a few Arabic passages as the *kaum* in Kolojonggo did.

[14] It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss whether *kendhuri* originated from Arab countries or from the indigenous religious tradition. What is important for the present discussion is that all villagers in Kolojonggo admit its Hindu-Buddhist origin. In the academic circle, the Hindu-Buddhist origin of *kendhuri* has not been challenged until recently when Woodward argues its Islamic origin (Woodward, 1988 &1989).

it by force but should cherish it as the old Hindu-Buddhist temples have to be preserved not only by the Hindu-Buddhists but by all Indonesians.

This justification, however, does not satisfy everyone. Some of the reformist villagers have attempted to impart new meanings to *kendhuri* in such a way that it does not contradict their religious teachings. Upon being asked why Islamised Java had not eliminated its previous Hindu-Buddhist tradition such as *kendhuri*, they told the story of Sunan Kalijaga, one of the nine central figures (*wali sanga*) who are said to have been responsible for the conversion of the Javanese to Islam. [15] According to their version, the inhabitants had religions of Buddhism, Hinduism, animism or a mixture of these when Islam entered Java in the 15th century. Seeing this situation, Sunan Kalijaga decided to use the old tradition as a container which would be filled with new contents rather than to take stronger measures. According to some, behind this decision of Sunan Kalijaga lay his consideration of *mafsadah-maslahat* (disadvantage-advantage): he measured the advantages and disadvantages of keeping tradition and reached a decision that to maintain tradition which would facilitate the conversion of all Javanese to Islam was more advantageous than to purge traditions which would hamper the conversion process. [16] A villager who was a civil servant, summarised the work of the *wali sanga* in this way:

> Their (*wali sanga*) duty was to extend Islam. For this, they did not prohibit all kinds of non-Islamic traditions that had existed before the coming of Islam. What they did at first was to modify some part of it, so that Islam could be easily accepted by the masses. For example, if there was a man worshipping a tree by burning incense and making offerings, they just proposed to change the ritual prayer rather than eliminating these customs. As a result, Islamic prayer gained its foothold in Java.

Other traditional practices such as *gamelan*, *wayang* and *tembang* are also interpreted in this framework. The more important point is that traditions have been coloured by Islam rather than the fact that they still retain their traditional appearance. A high school teacher related two Javanese art forms to the effort of Sunan Kalijaga:

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[15] For more about the textual literature on the *wali* of Java and visits to the tombs of the *wali* (*ziarah*), see Fox (1989).

[16] According to the reformist villagers, to measure advantage (*maslahat*) and disadvantage (*mafsadah*) is one of the essential methods to issue a *fatwa*, a religious decision, and to examine the relevance of Islamic teachings. For example, the reason why Muslims are forbidden from drinking alcohol can be understood within the framework of advantage and disadvantage, namely, the advantage that one can get from drinking alcohol such as psychological stability or maintenance of bodily temperature in cold atmosphere is less than its disadvantages such as temporary loss of one's reason, surrender to desires and economic waste.

It is true that *gamelan* (a traditional Javanese music) was the tradition of Hindu-Buddhism. But the *wali sanga* used it as a way of spreading Islam to the commoners since they knew that the Javanese liked to listen to the music. Sunan Kalijaga placed a set of *gamelan* in front of the *masjid*. Whenever villagers came to listen to this delicious (*enak*) music, he asked them to read the *sahadat* (the profession of faith) first. Then they were invited to the *masjid*. It worked. It was not difficult for him to make villagers enter the *masjid*. ... *Wayang*, originating from the Hindu kingdom, had the same fate. For example, one of the most important and powerful (*sakti*) weapons in the story of *wayang* is named *kalimasada*. It is a transformed pronunciation of '*kalimat sahadat*', or two passages of *sahadat*, the core of Islam. [17]

Kendhuri is not an exception. It is rather a typical example used to project their ideas onto traditions of non-Islamic origin. Sunan Kalijaga, seeing that *kendhuri* was widespread and cherished among the Javanese, adopted it rather than got rid of it forcefully. However, he could not tolerate one element in it because of its explicit contrast to Islamic teaching, namely, the ritual prayer. As a result, he replaced the old Hindu-Buddhist chants with an Arabic one. [18] As one informant put it, 'to whom one's wish is directed is the most important criterion to divide the Islamic from the non-Islamic.' Even the name of *kendhuri*, according to Pak Rup, a primary school teacher, was also the creative invention of Sunan Kalijaga rather than mere imitation of the Hindu-Buddhist tradition. He suggested that the word '*kendhuren*' stems from '**kendh***ung r***u***kon nge***ren***cangi*' which, he interpreted as 'let's help each other by giving out something', one of the highly appreciated values in Islamic teaching. [19]

[17] According to Supomo(n.d.:15-23), *kalimasada* has its origin in *kalimahosadha* (the name of Yudhisthira's weapon) of the *Bharatayuddha* and accordingly, had been known to the Javanese long before the coming of Islam to Java. It was only in the 19th century when a new meaning was attached to *kalimahosadha* and the equation of *kalimahosadha* with *kalimat sahadat* found its way into Javanese literature.

[18] The opinion of the reformist villagers that Sunan Kalijaga replaced the non-Islamic ritual prayers with Arabic ones in *kendhuri* does not seem to be correct since, as the case of Kolojonggo and those reported by Geertz and Jay show, the invocation of non-Islamic entities in ritual prayers was not abolished until quite recently. In this respect, their interpretation of Sunan Kalijaga seems to be a good example of what Hobsbawm and Ranger called 'the invention of tradition' (1983). In this recent invention of Sunan Kalijaga, he is described as a sage seeking after the best way to spread Islam and implement Islamic laws, whose strength came not from spiritual equanimity but from religious wisdom to measure advantage and disadvantage of tradition. In this respect, Sunan Kalijaga is a projection of the reformist villagers who try to solve the conflict between Islamic doctrine and traditional practices. See Geertz (1968:25-29) for more about the conventional image of Sunan Kalijaga supported by Javanese rural villagers.

[19] *Kendhung* means 'line up' or 'be ready to', *rukon* 'unanimous' or 'harmonious' and *ngerencangi* 'serve'. Put together, '*kendhung rukon ngerencangi*' means 'be ready unanimously to serve [others]'. Compared with this literal interpretation, Pak Rup's interpretation has an additional passage, 'by giving out something'. As this addition contains what he wanted to convey, it is not omitted in the text. This kind of language play to guess the origin of a certain word is called *kirata basa*. It gives someone a chance to interpret a word by emphasising certain aspects that he or she wants to stress. Pak Rup gave other

This lexical analysis of *kendhuri* provides us a chance to understand the creative succession of Sunan Kalijaga by some of the reformist villagers and the second version of explaining the purpose of *kendhuri*, that is, *sadhakah* (*sodakoh, sadhaqa, sedhekah, sidhekah*). According to the manual on BAZIS written by the village youth, *sadhakah* means to give something to others, expecting blessings from Allah in return. In the context of village life, it is interpreted to mean a distribution of food and other daily necessities to the poor from the capable without expecting return payment from the poor but from Allah.

In Kolojonggo, the term *sadhakah* is unlikely to have a long history in the official discourse of *kendhuri*. [20] Only one among three villagers who were frequently assigned the role of the opening speaker used it as a repertoire for his speech. In a *kendhuri* celebrating the 7th day of Pak Budi's death, for example, Pak Mangun delivered his speech in the following way:

> ... If there is a *sadhakah* this evening, it is for [the sending of] our prayer [to him]. While Kiyai Budi's soul is facing Gusti Allah [interrogation after death], that is, for seven days, I wish his wrong deeds and sins in this world may be forgiven. And [his dead soul is] distanced from tortures in Hell and in the grave and offered a lofty place. ... May the giving-out of *sadhakah* for remembering Kiyai Budi on the seventh day after his death, be used as an intermediary (*lantaran*) to Gusti Allah, The Greatest. May this request be realised!

In a *kendhuri*, as Pak Mangun said, what the host expects from the guests is their participation in his prayer to Allah. To enable his prayer to be accepted by Allah more easily, the host distributes food or wealth to others. To ask something of Allah is a recommended act of Muslims. When accompanied by other recommended behaviour such as giving out one's wealth, this way of praying to Allah is a highly praiseworthy deed. With the notion of *sadhakah*, therefore, the celebration of *kendhuri* can be considered as *amal* (religious behaviour) which will bring high religious merit (*ganjaran*).

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examples of it: *telasi, kanthil* and *kenanga*, three essential flowers in the offerings. According to him, the origin of *telasi* is *tesih isi* or 'still filled', that of *kanthil, kumanthil-kanthil*, 'to love', and that of *kenanga* (noun), *kenango* (imperative form of the verb, *kenang*) or 'to remind'. Put together, these three flowers carry a message that, when one still lives in this world (one still fills this world), one should love and remember one's deceased parents. With this interpretation, Pak Rup tried to illustrate that these three flowers were used originally not as media to make contact with supernatural beings but as media to convey a moral principle which is recommended by Islam.

[20] This does not mean that this equation has not been known in other parts of Java. In the Javanese dictionary published in 1939, *kendhoeren, slametan* and *sidhekah* are regarded as synonyms (Poerwadarminta,1939:567). Koentjaraningrat also uses the term, *sedhekah*, but confines its usage only to designating the series of the *kendhuri* after death without explaining the terminological difference between *sedhekah* and *kendhuri* (Koentjaraningrat,1985a:364-5). On the other hand, Bachtiar reports that the equation of *sedekah* with *kendhuri* was made by Muslims who tried to make it more suitable to Islam (1985:280).

At first sight, to relate the concept of *sadhakah* with *kendhuri* does not seem to be plausible since the flow of resources in a *kendhuri* is unlikely to be fit exactly to the implication of *sadhakah,* namely, a one-sided flow of resources. First, the host does not prepare food in a *kendhuri* relying only on his or her own resources, but receives contributions from others which, in 1993, reached about Rp 4000 from neighbours and more than Rp 5000 from close relatives. In most cases, the total amount of these contributions is large enough to cover the cost of celebrating the *kendhuri.* [21] Second, all villagers in the exchange network of *kendhuri* expect that their contribution will be reciprocated in the future when they become the host. Third, the same amount of contribution that the host receives from the contributors will be reciprocated in the future, irrespective of their economic differences. If a contribution is large enough to cover the cost of a *kendhuri,* economic resources are reciprocated in the long run, and economic inequality among villagers is not considered, it is not reasonable to say that the concept of *sadhakah* implying a one-sided flow of wealth from the capable to the poor can be applied to *kendhuri.* In order to solve this problem, it is necessary to see the different nature of flows of resources throughout the *kendhuri.*

Four different flows of resources take place centring on the *kendhuri.* First, those who receive contributions from others should reciprocate them when the contributors hold a *kendhuri.* As the occasions of celebrating *kendhuri* are different in each household, the flow of resources is not equal in terms of quantity. In spite of this imbalance, however, long-term exchange is conceptualised as a balanced reciprocity, probably due to the fact that the reason for this imbalance is beyond the control of villagers, such as birth and death.

The second is the exchange of contribution and food parcel. From morning till mid-afternoon, contributors visit the host's house, bringing either a white envelope containing money or a wooden carrier filled with foodstuffs. After they return home, a parcel of food is delivered to their house. The third is the exchange of labour and of a food parcel. In order to prepare food distributed to the contributors and to the guests at a *kendhuri,* the host needs women-power from a large number of villagers. For this, the host's family asks assistance of neighbours and of close relatives and, as a compensation for their labour, a parcel of food is delivered to the house of those who supply their labour. The governing rule of the second and third exchange is strict reciprocity. Those who do not contribute nor work do not receive the home-delivered food parcel whereas

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[21] The cost of celebrating a *kendhuri* depends on the quality of food distributed to the contributors and to the guests and on the number of the guests in the *kendhuri.* Roughly, it was around Rp 300,000 in 1993-94 (equivalent to around 500 kg. of husked rice) to celebrate a *kendhuri* where around 100 *besek* were prepared. This meant that about 60 to 70 contributions were enough to cover the cost. For the cost of celebrating a *kendhuri,* contributions and exchange system centring on *kendhuri* in Tenggar region, see Hefner (1985:216-238)

those who both contribute and work receive two parcels. [22] Villagers are conscious of this nature of exchange, so that the word designating the delivered food parcel is not *sadhakah* but *balasan* (reply) or *ganti lelah* (substitution of one's tiredness). As reciprocity has to be observed strictly, all visitors who come to the host's house are monitored and the hostess is alert to watch over the working process of her neighbours.

The fourth flow of resources is what actually happens during the celebration of a *kendhuri*. The host invites all villagers living in his *kendhuri* circle [23] and a *besek* is distributed to them irrespective of whether those who are invited attend it or not. This strict egalitarianism in the invitation rule means that those who do not contribute are also invited and given a *besek*. Let's take an example. Pak Mandyo had a *kendhuri* for celebrating his son's circumcision. During the daytime, his family received contributions from 75 visitors. Among them, 13 were those from outside his *kendhuri* circle while 62 visitors were from inside it. For the *kendhuri*, his family prepared 90 *besek*, slightly more than their expectation of the number of guests. They did so in order to prevent an accidental shortage of *besek*, even if this was unlikely to happen. That night, 85 *besek* were distributed and 5 were left. The discrepancy between 85 and 62 was the difference between the number of households in his *kendhuri* circle and that of the contributors living in it.

Two categories of households belonged to these 23 households. First, the recently married couples living with their parents and the old villagers living with their child's family were included in it. Although the parents may have contributed and the child may not or the other way round, two *besek* were allocated for that house. Second, it included the households belonging to the poorest in the hamlet. Female-headed households were a typical example of this category. They could not afford the high standard of the contribution which exceeded their average daily earnings by two or three times. To the ordinary households consisting of

[22] Not all of those who help cooking get a food parcel. Its delivery is dependent on whether one receives an invitation from the host's family and on the time and intensity of their work. Those who help preparing food for a while after they hand in a contribution are not eligible for a food parcel. Generally, it is those staying half a day (4-5 hours) or more in the kitchen who are liable to get one.

[23] *Kendhuri* circle (*wilayah kendhuri*) refers to an area within which the host invites guests for a *kendhuri*. This area spreads in four directions from the host's house although it does not form the exact shape of a circle. Each household has a slightly different *kendhuri* circle of its own. It seems that the present set of *kendhuri* circles was formed during the Dutch colonial time when the lowest unit of administration was not the *dusun* but the *kebekelan*, whose extent was smaller than that of the *dusun*. Many *kendhuri* circles of the present households overlap with the boundary of the *kebekelan* rather than that of the *dusun*. According to some villagers, the *kendhuri* circle of the Dutch colonial period has been maintained until now with minor modifications. Due to the increase in households living in a certain *kendhuri* circle from that time on, the number of households belonging to it has also increased from around twenty to thirty in the Dutch colonial period to sixty to a hundred these days. The different size of a *kendhuri* circle is dependent primarily on the location of a certain household. When a house is placed at the centre of the hamlet, its *kendhuri* circle is the widest, including up to a hundred households. When a house is located at the eastern or western side of the hamlet near *sawah*, its *kendhuri* circle includes about sixty households.

at least a spouse, it is unimaginable not to contribute to a neighbour's *kendhuri*. Although one may resort to debt, one will appear at the host's house to pay a ritual obligation. This is their way of achieving a sense of full membership in the hamlet, without feeling ashamed in one's interaction with neighbours. In this context, not to reciprocate the ritual contribution means that one admits to other villagers one is in a poor economic position.

In sum, two different logics governing the flow of resources in *kendhuri* make it possible to understand how the concept of *sadhakah* can be applied to *kendhuri*. The first principle of reciprocity in *kendhuri* ends conceptually with the delivery of the daytime food parcels to the contributors of material resources and labours. In the actual celebration of a *kendhuri,* then, comes the second principle of a one-sided flow of resources in the form of *besek,* irrespective of whether the actual cost of preparing *besek* comes from the contributors or not. That some villagers do not contribute to the host is another factor that allows the concept of *sadhakah* to be easily applied to *kendhuri*. Whatever the actual reasons for this, those who do not contribute are considered to be too poor to do so by others. In this sense, the distribution of food in a *kendhuri* fits the concept of *sadhakah*, namely, the flow of food from the capable to the poor without expectation of its repayment.

5.4. Islamising the Meaning of Ritual Foods

These days, a variety of ritual foods are parceled in *besek* before the coming of the guests and distributed to them just before the beginning of the introductory speech. The *besek*, however, does not have a long history. It entered the village sometime in the 1980s. Prior to that time, the ritual foods were arranged at the centre of the room until the end of ritual prayers. Then, several young guests divided these foods in banana leaves and distributed them to the guests. In spite of this change in the mode of distribution, most of the *kendhuri* foods have remained unchanged. As has been the case with the meaning of *kendhuri*, some reformist villagers have also tried to reinterpret these ritual foods by giving them new contextual meanings. Among the various ritual foods, two kinds of food which are essential for every occurrence of *kendhuri* are highlighted: a lump of rice and the chicken.

The process of cooking rice for a *kendhuri* is in two stages. At first, rice is boiled in a big bowl. Then, the half-cooked rice is transferred to a utensil called a *kukusan* and steamed. As the *kukusan* takes the form of a cone, the resulting rice also takes the same shape. This cone-shaped rice is given the new name of *tumpeng*.

The chicken used for a *kendhuri* should be a full-grown rooster. A hen is not permitted. After being slaughtered, the rooster is plucked and its body is cut in two. All the inner organs are removed, washed and reinserted in the body,

and various condiments and herbs are added. Then, the divided body is tied with two or three bamboo strings. First, each leg is folded and tied with a bamboo string so that the back sides of the upper and the lower feet can be in tight contact with one another. The next step is to tie the two wings to the body. A third string is used to fix the head to the body. For this, a villager passes the string through two holes in the nose, connecting the head to the neck. The last job is to boil it in a big bowl with various kinds of condiments and herbs. After it is cooked for around 2-3 hours, the rooster is called *ingkung*.

Asked why these two ritual foods had their special forms, many villagers talked about the convenience of cooking. In the case of the rooster, the strings tying the two feet and wings to the body are to prevent the added condiments from coming out while being boiled. As these strings hold the halved body tightly, this explanation is quite relevant. In the case of the rice cone, the reason is also simple. The *kukusan* itself is cone-shaped, which makes it inevitable for the *tumpeng* to take this form. When asked further questions about other possible meanings, many villagers did not have any idea; this was what their ancestors had done and they were just following (*ikut-ikutan*) what they had learned from them. A few village elders interpreted it within the framework of the traditional belief system. According to them, a mountain is the place where the dead souls reside with other invisible beings after they are freed from this world. By making the *tumpeng*, therefore, the host can make easy contact with those who will eventually bring the state of *slamet*. Some reformist villagers also had their own versions. Compared with the village elders, they expressed their ideas openly and confidently. A civil servant proposed his idea as follows:

> We cannot imagine a *kendhuri* without the *tumpeng*. Why is it essential among such a variety of foods? Just look at the Quran. There is a passage in it that the world created by Allah was not balanced at first. (He tried to refer to the exact verse of the Quran but he could not remember it.) … As a result, Allah made mountains. *Tumpeng*, taking the shape of a mountain, symbolises a world made by Allah. [24]

According to another informant, each grain of rice in the *tumpeng* symbolises a human being. As a collectivity of human beings, the *tumpeng* is the symbol of this world. But this explanation is not persuasive since it does not explain why it takes the form of mountain. So a further explanation is added. The *tumpeng*, taking the form of a cone, has only one peak. As a metaphor, it delivers a message that Allah is one and human beings cannot be the same as Him.

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[24] It seems that there is no verse in the Quran which clearly contains this idea. On the creation of mountain, there are two verses: 'And He hath cast into the earth firm hills that it quake not with you' (xvi:15) & 'And He it is who spread out the earth and placed therein firm hills and flowing streams' (xiii:3). The adjective 'firm' in these two verses seems to be the basis for Pak Sandiyo's idea.

On the other hand, the *ingkung* symbolises a human being. A hen or any other kind of animal is not permitted for making the *ingkung* but only a rooster. In Java, the rooster (*jago*) has a special meaning. The *jago* is regarded as the strongest and the cleverest of all chickens or, sometimes, of all animals. In everyday language, the *jago* signifies someone who is the best in a certain field. To say 'he is a *jago* in mathematics' means that he is the most brilliant at mathematics. In this context, it is not so difficult to understand the connection of *jago* to human beings, the best and the cleverest among all creatures of Allah.

When the ritual foods are arranged at the centre of the room, the *ingkung* is placed to face the *tumpeng*, surrounded by various foods made from vegetables and other ingredients. This geometric arrangement of the food is said to take after the cosmos. The *tumpeng* symbolises Allah, the *ingkung* human beings, and other small items of food all the products that Allah gave to human beings. The specific ways of preparing the *ingkung* reveal the relation of a human being to his or her Creator. A precise look at the *ingkung* shows that the shape of a tied chicken resembles that of human beings praying to Allah, a position called *sujud*; the upper and lower part of the feet are folded, the folded wings are tightened to the body, the chin is in touch with the neck and the head is placed at the centre of body. In sum, the arrangement of *kendhuri* foods can be interpreted as representing a human being praying to his or her Creator, surrounded by other creatures bestowed upon him or her by Allah. The purpose of praying is provided by three other ritual foods. These are *apem*, *kolak* and *ketan,* all of which are said to have originated from Arabic. *Kolak* is from *kolakqun* or speech, *apem* from *afuun* or to ask forgiveness and *ketan* from *kotokan* or mistake.[25] Together, they create a message, 'to utter words (prayers) asking forgiveness (of Allah) for all sorts of faults (that the host has committed)', one of the highly recommended deeds that Muslims are asked to do.

5.5. Syncretism and Tradition

Although some reformist villagers' reinterpretation of *kendhuri* is dominant due to their central role in Islamic activities, their ideas are not shared by all villagers or even by all reformist villagers. One of the reasons the plurality of views persists is the abstract nature of Islamic teachings in the Quran and Hadith. If these two ultimate sources are specific enough to contain passages on the validity of *kendhuri*, for example, 'do not celebrate *kendhuri* and do not make an *ingkung*', the diverse opinions might not have been sustained in the face of the surge of reformist Islam. Scriptural ambiguity gives villagers relative freedom to interpret abstract religious teachings in accordance with their specific orientations and dispositions.

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[25] The pronunciation of these three Arabic terms written in the text are taken from villagers. The right pronunciations of them are *qola* instead of *kolakqun*, *afwun* instead of *afuun* and *khatha'* instead of *kotokan*.

Overall, the attitudes of villagers toward *kendhuri* can be categorised into four, although these are not mutually exclusive and villagers may take different attitudes at different times and different contexts.

The first is what the *dhukun bayi* represents in her guidance of the *brokohan*: the traditional interpretation of *kendhuri* is still relevant. To those who take this position, supernatural beings are considered to intervene actively in human affairs and the *kendhuri* is a way to neutralise their bad effects, if any, and to attain the state of *slamet*. Although not a few villagers, especially those in their middle and old age, support this interpretation, it has been marginalised in village life. It is marginal because its supporters do not want to clarify their idea to others and, at the official level, they accept the view that *kendhuri* is directed solely to Allah. Nor do they express their ideas in action. In contrast to former days when the odour of the burning incense filled the room where the *kendhuri* was held (Geertz, 1976:12), those who want to burn incense now do so in a place where the guests in *kendhuri* cannot recognise it, for example, outside the house or in the kitchen.

The second is an accommodational and flexible attitude to the *kendhuri*. Those who support this position try to impart new meanings to *kendhuri* so that it may be harmonious with Islamic teaching. This does not mean, however, that they have kept every part of *kendhuri* intact. Those elements which cannot be harmonised with Islamic ideas such as invocation of supernatural beings in the opening remarks, burning incense and making offerings have been removed by them.

The third is a purist attitude proposed by reformist intellectuals in the city. Those who advocate this position insist that *kendhuri* should be removed from village life for it has no scriptural reference in the Quran and Hadith and it originated from the Hindu-Buddhist tradition. [26] Most of those supporting this position are young and unmarried reformist villagers who are not yet officially invited to *kendhuri*. In spite of the clarity of their ideas, it is not certain whether they will put their ideas into practice when they are invited to *kendhuri* in the future. Refusing to participate in the *kendhuri* of their neighbours is so radical in village life as to be interpreted as a gesture to sever their relations with others. Therefore, it is more likely that they will take either the second or the fourth position, when they have to legitimise their behaviour to attend *kendhuri* in the future.

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[26] Mas Bambang supporting the third position pointed out an aspect of *kendhuri* which makes the equation of *kendhuri* with a mode of praying to Allah impossible: the presence of Christian guests in Muslims' *kendhuri*. If *kendhuri* was an occasion on which the host expressed his or her gratitude to Allah and the guests were invited to participate in the prayer, Mas Bambang argued, Christian guests could not properly perform their roles. On the contrary, what Christian guests could do was to pray to their own God, an action which is *syirik* (polytheistic belief) in Islam. As long as Christians were invited to *kendhuri*, therefore, it could not be considered as a form of praying to Allah and, in this respect, the celebration of *kendhuri* could not be an Islamic activity.

The fourth position is to detach religious meaning from *kendhuri* and to emphasise the relation between villagers expressed in it. According to those who support this position, all villagers, irrespective of their religious and economic differences, are invited to and attend their neighbour's *kendhuri* and, in this sense, it is a ritual which actualises the social norm of harmony (*rukun*). With this shift of emphasis, ritual prayer or specific kinds of food are not thought to be at the heart of *kendhuri* nor to be preserved strictly. Instead, it is permissible, for example, to replace ritual prayer in *kendhuri* with a short prayer performed in other secular meetings [27] and to substitute bread which is favoured by villagers for boiled rice (*tumpeng*) which is not welcomed. [28] However, what cannot be replaced is the principle that all villagers living in the same neighbourhood or in the same *kendhuri* circle should be invited. Although those who support this position have not yet invented an alternative form of *kendhuri*, their position can be developed as radically as that of the third position, since *kendhuri* is thought to be just one mode of consolidating *rukun* among villagers and, if it is evaluated as not the best way, they will try to replace it with another form. [29]

Despite these differences in interpreting *kendhuri*, one common point is shared by almost all Muslim villagers: it is a ritual directed to Allah. [30] This commonality gives us a chance to reappraise the concept of syncretism which has long been used by scholars to characterise the religious orientation of Javanese villagers. [31] Syncretism refers to a religious framework where Islamic, Hindu-Buddhist, and animistic or indigenous religious elements are mixed together without causing a feeling of unease at the others' presence. In this framework, villagers do not differentiate one element from another and they have not given any

[27] In secular meetings, a short time in which every participant is asked to pray according to their own religious conviction is provided as a part of an opening procedure.

[28] These days, the *kendhuri* foods, especially those contained in *besek* are not welcomed by villagers. As these foods are cooked a few hours before the celebration of *kendhuri*, they are already cold when the *besek* is taken home, thus less delicious. In most cases, villagers give away the cooked rice in *besek* to chickens or other animals.

[29] Most Christian villagers supported the fourth view, commenting that *kendhuri* is a mode of expressing one's love to neighbours. In dealing with the non-Christian origin of *kendhuri*, Christians showed a more pluralistic attitude than the reformist villagers. They were willing to admit the Hindu-Buddhist origin of *kendhuri* and Islamic influences in it, while these admissions do not seem to have posed any problem for them to celebrate it. They were of the opinion that what was more important in celebrating *kendhuri* was not its form but its meaning. If the goal of *kendhuri* was toexpress one's love to neighbours, its non-Christian origin did not matter at all.

[30] The exception is only a few villagers who expressed their opinion clearly that all supernatural beings should be invoked in *kendhuri*. In one case, an old villager who was considered to be a *dhukun* by others argued that the sole invocation of the name of Allah in *kendhuri* would nullify its efficacy, namely, to bring the state of *slamet* to the host. This is because, according to him, *kendhuri* was based on 'Javanese knowledge' (*ilmu Jawa*), and 'Javanese knowledge' consisted of indigenous Javanese elements (*asal Jawa*) which put priority on one's contact with indigenous supernatural beings. Except for those who were considered as *dhukun*, I did not meet anyone either from Kolojonggo or from other parts of Yogyakarta who expressed their support of this idea to me.

[31] Syncretism has been supported by many scholars as a key to understanding the religious orientation of Javanese villagers. For more about this, see Benda,1958; Berg,1932; Drewes,1955; Geertz,1976; Jay,1963; Koentjaraningrat,1985a; Mulder,1983; Noer,1973; Supatmo,1943; Zoetmulder,1967.

thought to the question of the relations between these elements (Supatmo,1943:4) and of their origins. *Kendhuri* is one of the finest examples of the syncretic tradition. In the ritual prayer of *kendhuri* as reported by Geertz and Jay (Geertz,1976; Jay,1969:209), supernatural beings of different origin were invoked and *kendhuri* foods were dedicated to each of them without discrimination. [32]

As Hefner points out (1987a:535), the lack of attention paid by scholars to the nature of the religious outlook in rural Java after Geertz, Jay and Koentjaraningrat provided a comprehensive picture of it [33], makes it difficult to understand the process of change that has taken place in *kendhuri*, a change which provides an indicator of the religious orientation of the present Javanese villagers. Although the shortage of comparative data makes it impossible to generalise [34], the case of Kolojonggo provides a chance to look at both continuity and change in the mode and interpretation of *kendhuri*. On the one hand, the way *kendhuri* is celebrated is not clearly different from what it once was. Villagers are invited, foods are distributed, the representative speaks in place of the host, ritual prayers are recited and many of the occasions for which *kendhuri* were given are retained. There are also villagers supporting the view that *kendhuri* is dedicated to supernatural beings who intervene in human affairs. On the other hand, ritual prayer rather than ritual food is now considered by many to be the core of *kendhuri* and its content has changed. Supernatural beings of both Islamic and non-Islamic origin are not invoked and only the name of Allah is heard. The more important point to show the change is that almost all villagers agree to the idea that *kendhuri* is dedicated only to Allah, whether this admission is nominal or not. To the accommodational villagers who try to Islamise *kendhuri* rather

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[32] The ritual prayer reported by Jay goes as follows (1969:209):

'Giving honor to Mohammed the Prophet, to Adam and Eve, and to Dewi Sri, the rice goddess.' As more locally specific spirits are invoked - the Iron Smiths of Java, Earth and Water, the village Place Spirit, its Founding Ancestor, its First Clearer of the Land, the collective village ancestors - the litany gradually becomes more extended: ' Giving honor and food to the Place Spirit who guards the village of Tamansari together with the four sacred directions and the fifth [referring to the four cardinal directions and the centre, a directional complex of much mystical strength] all day and all night, we beg pardon so that there will be no troubles at all.

[33] One of the reasons that may explain this lack of attention is that the scholarly discussions on the religious orientation of the villagers in rural Java have centred on Geertz's book, *The Religion of Java*, and, in doing so, the focus has been placed on whether the trichotomy proposed in *The Religion of Java* is relevant and on whether this trichotomy can be applied to understand socio-political behaviour rather than on whether syncretism was or still is relevant to understanding the religious orientation of Javanese villagers.

[34] Bråton (1989) shows there are three different ways villagers in Central Java interpret *kendhuri*: a) a ritual to restore states of *slamet*, among other things by pleasing disturbing spirits; b) a ceremony of gratitude to Allah; and c) a modern, secular celebration. Although Bråton does not mention the official position of those who support the first view, he makes a remark that they do not express their belief clearly to others but try to dissociate themselves with what is considered to be non-Islamic such as incense and offerings. In this respect, the development reported by Bråton is comparable to that in Kolojonggo. See also Bowen (1993:174-81), for three distinct ways of interpreting *kendhuri* (celebrated for agricultural purposes) among Muslims in Gayo.

than to remove it, the influence of Islam is visible not only in the direction of ritual prayer but in the goal of *kendhuri*. If the reason for celebrating *kendhuri* for the villagers in the 1950s was to attain a state of *slamet*, its goal is now thought by them not only to achieve *slamet* but to actualise the Islamic virtue of *sadhakah*. This implies a semantic change in the way the celebration of *kendhuri* is interpreted. If *slamet* implies a homeostasis where 'nothing is going to happen' (*gak ana apa-apa*) (Geertz,1976:14) or 'there will be no troubles at all' (*mboten wonten alangan punapa*) (Jay,1969:179), *sadhakah* is a concept implying active involvement of human beings in seeking religious merit (*ganjaran*) and blessing (*berkah*) from Allah.

In sum, the syncretism which dominated villagers' interpretation of *kendhuri* in the 1950s has been gradually pushed to the margin in Kolojonggo. Now it is Islam which provides a basis on which *kendhuri* is interpreted and villagers' participation in it is explained. The degree that Islam is assimilated to villagers is different. However, the dominance of Islam is accepted by all of them, so that those who support the syncretic point of view are conscious of the difference between the Islamic and non-Islamic modes of interpreting *kendhuri* and show their official allegiance to the former.

The situation in Kolojonggo may represent one possible way a new Islamic tradition can emerge from a syncretic background. The initial stage in this process is to question and reinterpret village traditions and to recontextualise them in Islamic terms rather than to isolate and purge them from village life. This process seems inevitable since the efforts of villagers to Islamise village tradition have not been made in a cultural vacuum but in a local religious milieu in which the syncretic character of *kendhuri* had not been a matter of conscious questioning. An answer of Pak Leo to the question of why he did not give up celebrating *kendhuri* in spite of his objection to it is appropriate to understand the long-lasting impact of the previous local milieu on villagers. To this question, he answered, '[if I do not celebrate *kendhuri*] I do not feel good' (*kurang enak*). He, then, explained the state of '*kurang enak*' by giving a few examples, one of which was: 'it [that I do not celebrate *kendhuri*] is as if I excrete (*buang air besar*) in the toilet.' What he meant by this comparison was that he who had been accustomed to excreting in the nearby creek could not feel the same degree of satisfaction if he did so in a toilet, although the result was the same. As Pak Leo said, many villagers feel something is missing if they do not hold a *kendhuri* for the occasions which have been customarily celebrated with it. They, although ready to condemn the traditional ideas behind *kendhuri*, are children of a *kendhuri*-based religious culture (Bowen,1993:234). This, however, does not rule out the possibility that an alternative mode to *kendhuri* will be created in the future. Borrowing the terms of Pak Leo, as more people get accustomed to using the toilet, it will create a situation in which going to the creek is perceived to be unsatisfactory.

In Kolojonggo, a few symptoms are visible which show a new direction of change in village tradition. These are taking place mainly in life-cycle rituals whose forms are more flexible than that of *kendhuri* and which, in this respect, have a higher capability to incorporate new elements. In the following section, the efforts of some Muslim villagers to create a new Islamic tradition in life-cycle rituals will be discussed.

5.6. Constructing a New Islamic Tradition

Traditionally, *kendhuri* was not the only ritual celebrated at each point of passage in one's life but was accompanied by other optional ones. At seven months of pregnancy, villagers celebrated *tingkepan*, after birth, *tedhaksiti* [35] , upon circumcision, *supitan*, on engagement, *srah-srahan* and on marriage, *mantenan*. These days, two somewhat contradictory trends are visible in the way these life-cycle rituals are celebrated. On the one hand, the rituals at pregnancy and birth are in the process of simplification, so that *tingkepan* and *tedhaksiti* have seldom been celebrated recently. On the other hand, the wedding ceremony has become bigger in scale. In most wedding ceremonies, hundreds of guests are invited and conspicuous consumption becomes one of the most essential parts of it. In the case of *supitan*, both trends overlap, so that a few wealthy families celebrate it on a much greater scale while most villagers do it with or even without *kendhuri*. In this respect, the life-cycle ritual which is considered to be important and in which the most elaborate resources are mobilised is the wedding ceremony. It provides the best medium by which a person or a family can express their socio-economic status, modernity and religious orientation. [36]

A case of a villager who tried to separate himself from others in celebrating a ritual for pregnancy will be presented first. This case shows what the reformist

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[35] *Tedhaksiti* is a ritual held at seven months after birth celebrating the baby's first contact with the earth.

[36] *Kendhuri* is also an occasion where villagers can display their socio-economic status. However, the chances that the celebration of *kendhuri* canenhance the social status of the host are less than the wedding ceremony. First, most households consisting at least of a couple hold *kendhuri*, so that the celebration of *kendhuri* is more a minimum requirement to be considered as a member of a community than a sign to show one's distinctive socio-economic position. Second, the procedures of *kendhuri* are inflexible, making it difficult for the host to insert a section which may assert his or her distinctiveness from others. For example, the host can improve the quality of *kendhuri* food. However, the food items that should be included in *kendhuri* are less flexible than those for the wedding, so that one's *kendhuri* food cannot be remarkably different from others'. Third, the guests for *kendhuri* are invited from a fixed *kendhuri* circle, making it impossible, unlike the wedding ceremony, for the host to increase the number of guests arbitrarily or to invite them selectively. As a result, those who want to use *kendhuri* as a chance to assert their socio-economic difference should use more radical measures, one of which is not to receive contributions from others. However, this method, which surely gives the host a reputation for generosity, does not seem to be so attractive to villagers. In 1993-94, only one such case took place in Kolojonggo. Even the *lurah* in Sumber received contributions from other villagers for a *kendhuri* in his house,and selected the wedding ceremony of his son as a chance to display his socio-economic status by inviting a large number of guests and by conspicuous consumption.

villagers' major concern about village tradition is and the way they try to modify it.

When his wife was seven months pregnant with his first child, Pak Sis had to face a problem: his father asked him to celebrate a *kendhuri* while he did not want to do so. He had a conviction that traditional rituals such as *kendhuri* should, if possible, disappear from the life of Muslims and, as a young leader of the *umat* Islam in Kolojonggo, he alluded to his ideas in several religious meetings. As a result, he wanted to use this occasion to put what he had proposed to others into practice. However, he could not ignore the fact that his father was a *kaum* who guided *kendhuri* and that he lived together with his father. Due to this position, no other villagers thought the *kendhuri* would be skipped. Some villagers even said to me that it would be the best chance for me to witness the celebration of *tingkepan*, the conjecture grounded on villagers' conception that the *kaum* upheld the traditional side of religious life. It was not certain how the process of negotiation between Pak Sis and his father had been going on since both of them did not want to comment on this, but the news of the *kendhuri* in the *kaum*'s place spread a few days before its celebration. When I met him on the day of the *kendhuri*, however, Pak Sis denied the fact, at least to me, that he would celebrate a *kendhuri* related to his wife's seven months of pregnancy. Instead, he kept insisting what he intended to celebrate was a *syukuran* which had no connection with seven months of pregnancy. According to him, *syukuran*, namely, an occasion that one expresses thanks to Allah, could be held at any time during the pregnancy. Until that moment, I thought the term, *syukuran*, was just a different way of designating *kendhuri* and I interpreted this as an effort of Pak Sis to differentiate himself from the traditional terminology and to associate himself with an Islamic term. [37] It turned out later when the *kendhuri* finished in the *kaum*'s house that my guess was wrong. Just before I went home, Pak Sis informed me that the *syukuran* would be held shortly afterwards. When I re-visited the *kaum*'s place, I could see several villagers sitting inside the *langgar* (prayer house) in the front yard of the *kaum*'s house. All of them were close neighbours of the *kaum* who had attended the *kendhuri* before. In contrast to the *kendhuri*, Pak Sis also sat in the *langgar*. [38] Soon, it turned out that not all invited guests in the *syukuran* were those who had been invited to the *kendhuri*. Villagers living outside of the *kaum*'s *kendhuri* circle also

[37] Villagers believe that the term, *syukuran,* originates from Arabic whereas the term, *kendhuri,* from Javanese, although the origin of *kendhuri* is Persian (see footnote, no.1 in this chapter).
[38] In *kendhuri*, the host does not sit together with other guests inside the room where it is held. In the *kendhuri* celebrated in the *kaum*'s house, Pak Sis stood at the gate to greet the guests but he did not enter the room for *kendhuri,* whereas his father, the *kaum,* was present, not as a host but as an officiant of it.

came and two of them were from neighbouring hamlets. When all the guests arrived, the total of whom were around thirty, one of them who took the role of the representative of Pak Sis, explained the purpose of the *syukuran*, namely, Pak Sis and his family wished to thank Allah for the pregnancy and asked others to assist them in expressing their feeling of gratitude to Allah by way of reciting the Quran. The opening of the *syukuran* was quite similar to that of the *kendhuri* which had been celebrated a little while ago, but a difference was also visible in the selection of the representative. The representative who made the opening remarks in the *syukuran* was from the generation of Pak Sis, differing from the *kendhuri* where an elderly villager had taken this role. After a short speech, the representative asked the *kaum*, who was also present in the *syukuran*, to guide the recitation of Arabic prayers. Without mentioning anything, the *kaum* directly uttered, *al-fatihah*, the name of the first Surah in the Quran. With this, all participants started to recite *al-fatihah*. After chanting this Surah three times, the guests began to recite the Surah of Maria (*Surat Maryam*) in the Quran individually, the Surah which was requested to be read by Pak Sis. For almost half an hour, the *langgar* was full of different voices reciting different parts of this Surah. Some who finished reciting it chanted another Surah while others repeated it several times. Feeling that the guests were a bit tired of recitation, the *kaum* clapped his hands and chanted a few Arabic passages, signalling that the latter part of the *syukuran* would follow the sequence of the *tahlilan*. A few more Arabic passages were collectively chanted until the whole section finished with the recitation of *al-fatihah* once again. As was usual in *tahlilan*, the end of the recitation was followed by a short sermon delivered by one of the two guests coming from the neighbouring hamlet. The last part of the *syukuran* was devoted to eating together. As an expression of thanks to the participants in the *syukuran*, according to the representative, Pak Sis prepared a meal for them. Soon after they finished eating, the guests left the house of the *kaum*.

This case shows several elements which Pak Sis wanted to incorporate in the *syukuran*. First, his denial that the celebration of the *syukuran* was for the seventh month of pregnancy reflected his idea that the new tradition should be severed from the traditional rule of holding celebrations at a certain fixed time. He made public his idea by asking his representative in the *syukuran* not to specify his wife's seven months of pregnancy. As a result, the representative made a remark that the *syukuran* was related to the pregnancy of Pak Sis' wife, suggesting that it could have been held at any time during the pregnancy. This was different from what had been done in the *kendhuri* by the representative who clearly mentioned the *kendhuri* was for celebrating seven months of pregnancy. Second,

the invitation rule in the *syukuran* was not the same as that in the *kendhuri*. Rather than inviting all villagers living in the *kendhuri* circle of the *kaum*, Pak Sis invited only those with whom he had close friendship. It was not an accident then that most of those invited were the villagers who usually attended the *tahlilan* since it was one of the media by which Pak Sis maintained close relations with others. This pattern of invitation suggests that the new tradition in the mind of Pak Sis can not be harmonious with the *kendhuri* where no discrimination is permitted in invitation and even Christians are invited. On the contrary, the new tradition should be selective, based on religious difference or even the religious orientation of villagers. This is because, if the new tradition is Islamic, no villagers having a different religion should be included, although immediate neighbours. Third, the elements that he incorporated in the *syukuran*, namely Arabic recitation and sermon, were recognised as Islamic by all villagers. In this sense, the new tradition should be grounded on the elements which everyone agrees to be Islamic.

The case of the *syukuran* exemplifies a way a traditional practice can be replaced with a new form by those who are dissatisfied with its relation with non-Islamic tradition. In his effort to create a new tradition, Pak Sis was not an innovator who made something from nothing. The two elements that he employed, sermon and Arabic recitation, have recently been used by some villagers as a part of the life-cycle ritual, especially in the wedding ceremony.

In Java, the marriage between Muslims is officialised by an official of the Department of Religion. This process of officialisation, called *ijab*, can be done either in the government office or in the private house. In both cases, the procedures of *ijab* are almost the same. The bridegroom recites *sahadat Islam* and gives a token of marriage (*mas kawin*) to the bride under the guidance of a government official who informs the newly wedded couple of Islamic rules regulating marriage and divorce, recites Arabic prayers and delivers a short sermon. If these procedures were the whole of the wedding ceremony, the space reserved for non-Islamic traditions in marriage would be minimal. However, the *ijab* is just part of the whole complex of the wedding ceremony. After finishing the *ijab*, the newly wedded couple return to the bride's house where the marriage is celebrated once again in accordance with local custom. The guide of this latter part of marriage, which was thought to be more important than the former in the 1950s (Geertz, 1976:56) and still is in the sense that more resources and guests are involved, is not a government official but a specialist called *dhukun manten*. In former days the roles of the *dhukun manten* in the wedding ceremony included making and locating offerings in due places, conducting rituals and chanting spells, all of which displayed the syncretic nature of the wedding (ibid.:58-60).

Most ritual enactments at the wedding ceremony in Kolojonggo are similar to what is described by Geertz [39] and these are also guided by the *dhukun manten*. However, the emphasis that villagers put on these rituals has changed. Today, no rituals are regarded as an essential part of the wedding, no single ritual is performed uniformly at all weddings and villagers do not show any interest in their meanings. In this respect, it is more appropriate to consider them as entertainments and, sometimes, an art group such as *kroncong* singers (popular music originating from Portuguese songs), *dhagelan* group (comedians) and dance group are invited to perform during the wedding. On the other hand, the role of the *dhukun manten* is reduced to the technical side of rituals, namely, to inform the bride and the groom what they should do and when. The *dhukun manten* is also deprived of her previous roles of chanting magical spells and making offerings.

The facts that spells are not cast and offerings are not made [40] imply that no clear sign of syncretism is visible in the complex of the wedding ceremony. Instead, the major trend which characterises the wedding ceremony these days is 'secularisation', namely to disassociate the wedding ceremony from religious meaning and to associate it with a cult expressing social-economic status. This is reflected in the major interests of villagers to see the wedding ceremony. What they could remember concerning the wedding ceremonies in the past or what they immediately talked about after they attended the wedding were not ritual enactment but foods and the number of guests, two factors which determined the scale of a certain wedding. The more guests were invited and the more foods were served, the greater economic resources and the more chances to insert certain ritual enactments or entertainments. [41]

The second trend in the wedding ceremony, although it has not been yet popularised, is the opposite of the first one, namely to incorporate Islamic symbols in the wedding complex. [42] The elements to which villagers have recourse for

[39] These include the bride and the groom's throwing of betel nuts to one another, breaking of an egg by the bride on the foot of the groom, their standing on the double ox yoke and the groom's pouring of money into the hem of the sarung of the bride. See Geertz (1976:58-60)

[40] In a few weddings, offerings did not disappear totally and the host made one or two offerings in the house. However, it never happened that offerings were made in a place where guests would be able to recognise them or outside the bride's house, except for one case. In the rare occasion when a Catholic villager married off his daughter, the *dhukun bayi* was invited to make sixteen offerings inside the house and twenty-four outside it, including at seven different springs in his neighbouring houses, crossroads, a creek and big trees.

[41] The usual pattern of the wedding ceremony was to alternate between the serving of food and a certain program. The maximum number of serving food was four and in that case, the host could include four different agenda (one before the serving of the first food).

[42] The same trend is also visible in the wedding celebrated by Christians. In this case, the symbol that they use in the wedding is a hymn. Of the seven cases of Christian wedding that I attended, only in one case was a section included where a group of Christian youth came forward and sang a hymn. One Muslim guest told me later that this new section was not appropriate to the wedding ceremony where not only Christians but Muslims were invited. His evaluation reflected the negative attitude of the reformist villagers to Christian activities since, as will be shown below, Muslims also try to incorporate

this purpose coincide with what Pak Sis used in the *syukuran*: the recitation of passages from the Quran and a sermon. [43] Quite recently, one element has been added: to open the wedding ceremony with the recitation of Arabic prayers. This option is not a new one but has long been known to villagers. However, an idiosyncratic condition of Kolojonggo has prevented the use of it for the wedding ceremony, namely, the existence of a Christian Master of Ceremony.

The MC has the most important and appreciated role in the wedding, so that the MC-ship is only given to qualified men. One should possess a good command of the polite form of Javanese (*krama*), be middle aged and have a nice-looking face and white skin which symbolises one's distance from manual labor. Pak Suroyo, a primary school teacher, monopolised this role in Kolojonggo for around a decade. If he were a Muslim, his monopoly would continue until he is past middle age. However, he was a Christian, and therefore was not suitable, according to some villagers, to guide the wedding ceremony in an Islamic way. Their demand was not complicated, just to have an Arabic greeting at the beginning of the ceremony with '*Assalamualaikum waromatullohi wabarokatu*' (May God give you peace and prosperity, mercy and blessing). [44] This simple insertion, however, was not trifling to the reformist villagers, as one put it:

> How lovely to say, '*Assalamualaikum wa. wr.*', when you meet others? Compare it with other conventional greetings such as good morning (*selamat pagi*) or good evening (*selamat sore*)! Don't they imply that we don't need to be in a state of well-being in the afternoon? These greetings emphasise only the moment when we meet others and thus are not permanent. But, how about the Islamic one? We give blessings to others not for a restricted span of time: it is forever.

The lack of a qualified person for the MC role might have been one reason why it was hard for those who questioned the religion of Pak Suroyo to find someone to replace him. Even if they found someone, however, it would not be an easy task to deprive him of this role. Unless this replacement was done with good

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Islamic symbols in the wedding where Christians are invited. See Chapter VIII for more about this attitude of Muslims vis-à-vis Christians.

[43] In the weddings held in other villages, the Islamic symbols were more diverse than those in Kolojonggo. These included: the Islamic song, *samroh*, rather than the traditional Javanese song, *tembang*, was played before and throughout the wedding ceremony; the serving men in the reception and the bridegroom wore a *peci* and a shirt which is called '*baju santri*' (shirt worn by students in Islamic boarding school); and the serving women and the bride wore *jilbab*.

[44] It seems that the Arabic prayer *Assalamualaikum wa.wr.* started to be used only recently in Kolojonggo. Not many Muslim villagers uttered *Assalamualaikum wa.wr.* and those who recited this prayer did so only in a few limited situations such as when they entered the place where religious meeting was held and just before they started a speech in public meetings. When entering others' house, all Muslim villagers in Kolojonggo used *kula nyuwun* (I ask permission). This short history allows *Assalamualaikum wa.wr.* to be employed as a way to assert one's Islamic identity and makes it impossible for non-Muslims (including myself) to use it for greeting Muslims. For the controversies concerning non-Muslims' use of *Assalamualaikum wa.wr.* and the legislation prohibiting non-Muslims from uttering this prayer in Malaysia, see Peletz (1993:81-95).

reason stemming from Pak Suroyo himself, it would easily stir up gossip, which would eventually damage Pak Suroyo's reputation. Despite these difficulties, a new MC has recently emerged in Kolojonggo: Pak Mardi. At first sight, he failed to fulfil all the appropriate qualifications to be a MC: he worked as a labourer on construction sites, he was thin, his skin was dark and his command of Javanese was imperfect, as proved in the wedding ceremony when he stammered several times. Despite these shortcomings, he was a Muslim, with experience in guiding minor meetings. The transfer of MC-ship was also facilitated by the fact that he was a close neighbour of the host, which partially justified the replacement without humiliating Pak Suroyo in a direct way. Finally, the bride had a cousin who was braver than others in expressing his religious ideas and who urged her family to nominate Pak Mardi to be a MC. In village social life, this attitude could easily be labelled as arrogance (*sombong*) but her cousin's higher educational background as a student in the most prestigious university made it easier for him to behave in this way, lessening negative reactions from both his family and by his neighbours.

The wedding ceremony that Pak Mardi guided exemplifies what some village Muslims conceive an Islamised rite of passage to be. He opened the ceremony with an Arabic prayer. But he did not stop there. He continued his remarks in a mode in which the introductory statements of religious meetings are delivered: we utter praise and thanks to Allah, the Powerful (*Maha Kuwasa*) who has given us well-being and health so that we can come to this wedding. Then, he briefly delivered words of thanks to the guests for their coming, as is usual in the opening remarks of the wedding ceremony. This was followed by the recitation of passages from the Quran, a section which had been introduced to this village quite recently. Two young men came to the fore. They wore a *peci*, white shirts and black trousers, a fashion which is identified as that of the *santri* by villagers. One read two Arabic passages from the Quran while the other read their Indonesian translation. When asking prayers of blessing from the guests for the future spouse, Pak Mardi deviated once again from Pak Suroyo's usual way of guidance. When Pak Suroyo guided this section, he used an inclusive way by asking the guests to pray according to their own beliefs and by giving them a short and silent pause to pray. In the case of Pak Mardi, no pause was allowed:

> As an opening of this ceremony, I asked prayers of blessing from the guests. For Muslims who are present here, I will guide the prayer of the *Basmillah*. I ask the guests to follow my prayer either aloud or internally [in their heart].

Then he recited it with the use of a microphone, getting rid of any opportunities for followers of other religions to utter their own prayers. Even if this looks trivial, the way of extracting prayer from the attendants of a certain meeting is the key to understanding whether a certain gathering has a secular or religious

nature. All the meetings where villagers are invited irrespective of their religions are opened in a way that Pak Suroyo employs whereas the religious meetings both in the *masjid* or in a private house follow the way of Pak Mardi. In this respect, Pak Mardi violated the implicit but obvious custom by converting the multi-religious nature of the wedding, shown in the religious diversity of the guests, into an Islamic one. The remaining sessions, *ijab* and reception, proceeded as usual except for the fact that the *mas kawin* was the Quran, a villager delivered a short sermon and chanted long Arabic prayers and the ceremony finished with a collective recitation of an Arabic prayer of '*Alhamdulillah*' for which Pak Mardi also used the microphone.

Where Islamic models of rites of passage are not known, one of the options chosen by the villagers who are dissatisfied with the traditional ways of celebrating them is to create a new tradition. This has been done in Kolojonggo by incorporating elements which are considered Islamic by all villagers. The elements thus selected are the recitation of Arabic passages and a short sermon. The incorporation of Islamic elements into rites of passage, however, does not result in the total abandonment of village traditions. The *syukuran* was celebrated side by side with the *kendhuri*, its old counterpart, while the recitation of the Quranic passages and the sermon in the wedding ceremony did not need a sacrifice of other elements. Although the way villagers put their ideas into practice is not radical and is, in one sense, syncretic, what is significant is that the inclusion of these elements into life-cycle ritual is already enough for it to be viewed as Islamic both by those who try to create the new tradition and those who stick to the old one. This is because only a few villagers have ever adopted these elements as a part of rituals and, in this sense, their identity as 'things Islamic' has not yet been diluted. This assures that the process of creating a new tradition will be an on-going one. New Islamic symbols will be continuously incorporated while those which were once considered to represent 'things Islamic' will be routinised and lose their religious meaning.

5.7. Summary

In spite of a long history of conversion to Islam, a variety of practices originating from the local and Islamic tradition have co-existed in Javanese villages, making village traditions. The ways this co-existence is viewed have been different at different times and places. There was a time when villagers did not question the 'Islam-ness' of certain practices, judging from their scriptural basis in the Quran and Hadith, and thus local and Islamic practices existed side by side without conflict. Time has passed and reformist Islam has come to the countryside bringing a framework to separate 'things Islamic' from 'things non-Islamic'. As more and more villagers are committed to this stream of Islam, the traditional practices which were taken for granted are questioned and re-evaluated from this framework.

In Kolojonggo, two different attitudes to define 'things Islamic' are prominent in the circle of the reformist villagers. There is a puristic group who follow the position of reformist intellectuals in the city, namely by disapproving of anything which has no scriptural reference in the Quran and Hadith and by denouncing this as non-Islamic tradition. Their ideas, however, remain mainly ideals. The option that they can choose, namely, not to celebrate the practices categorised as 'non-Islamic' and to object to participating in these, is too radical to be practised in village life. The fact that most of those who support this position belong to the younger generation who are not the main body celebrating these practices also means their ideas are not expressed clearly in public life. The second group of the reformist villagers takes an accommodational position to locate traditional practices in the context of Islam by imparting new meanings to them. They try to interpret *kendhuri* in connection with Islamic concept of *sadhakah* and recontextualise the meaning of ritual foods in Islamic terms. To them, the argument that the traditional practices are 'non-Islamic' because they do not have scriptural basis in the Quran and Hadith is not exactly to the point, although this is not wrong. The Quran and Hadith do not give a clear guidance to everything that may happen in human society and those which are not directly referred to in the scriptures should be interpreted by human beings. Seen from this perspective, the attitude of classifying all traditional practices into 'non-Islamic' ignores the contextual meanings put on these practices which are persuasive enough to make them Islamic. The ways these reformist villagers deal with traditional practices show that the process by which an Islamic tradition emerges from the syncretic background is far more complicated than what is customarily portrayed. It is not simply a process of imposing a certain criterion on traditional practices and removing them, but rather a process of questioning their relevance, abandoning what can not be accommodated, reinterpreting what can be harmonious with Islam and recontextualising them in Islamic terms. With these efforts, the dichotomy of 'things Islamic' and 'things non-Islamic' is established as an axis to evaluate local tradition and villagers try consciously not to be identified with the adherents of 'things non-Islamic', in whichever manner this term is defined.

Plate 7: The contents of a *besek*. Two brown yams (*ketela*) at the upper centre are *kolak*; road break at the lower centre is *apem*; and banana leaf is *ketan* (glutinous rice).
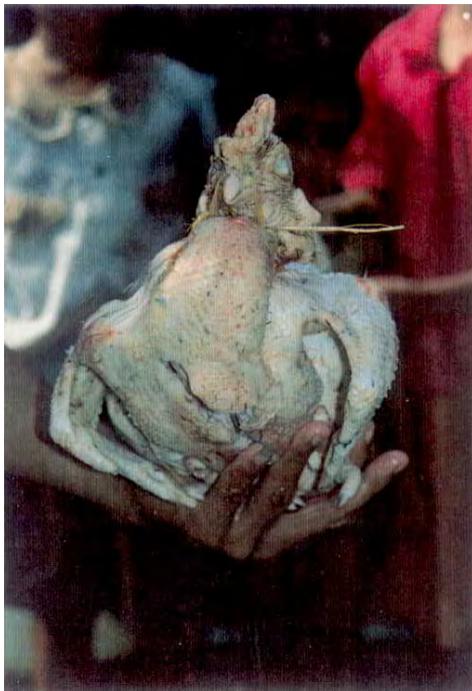

Plate 8: *Ingkung*

Plate 9: The celebration of a *kendhuri*. The *kaum* is the third on the left sitting along the wall.

Plate 10: The recitation of the Quran during a wedding ceremony