

## Monthly Ritual *Kamis Manis* as Representation of Celebrating Relation Between Human Being and God in Kalipagu, Ketenger Village, Baturraden District, Banyumas Regency

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**ABSTRACT:** The relationship between man and God usually understood and placed as a private matter of each human being. It practices in certain forms of worship (rituals) regulated by religion. In this case, the notion of religion is as known, adhered to, and practiced by the wider community such as, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Catholicism, Confucianism, and Protestantism. Those six religions have different way of worship systems and practices and therefore they also have different places of worship. In Kalipagu, Ketenger Village, Baturraden District, there is a ritual that can actually unite and bring people of these religions in a joint worship ritual together. It calls *Kamis Manis* rituals. Therefore the research was conducted to uncover such rituals which could unite people with different religion background. This research was conducted with qualitative methods. Data was collected through in-depth interviews and also carried out through participant observation. The results of this study shows that the *Kamis Manis* ritual has one purpose, namely request God Almighty to bring human being to become a good and noble person and asking for safety and welfare in navigating this life. In this ritual, social identity is stripped where people are only seen and placed as weak human individuals before the Supreme of God Almighty.

**KEYWORDS:** syncretism, ritual, Kalipagu, prayer, *Kemis Manis*

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Javanese people knows *Kejawen*. *Kejawen* is actually a way of life - sometimes also called Javanese philosophy - which is believed by Javanese people. *Kejawen* introduced God to Javanese people through the expression of "*Sangkan Paraning Dumadi*", which generally means that God is the Origin of all things. The existence of God is also believed to be represented in humans themselves through the phrase, "*Manunggaling Kawula Gusti*". Through these two basic expressions and the understanding that *Kejawen* is not a religion, Javanese people can become loyal adherents of Islam *Kejawen*, Hinduism *Kejawen*, or Christianity *Kejawen*, and so on. However, this is where *Kejawen*'s ability to adapt to the presence of religions, which is currently being questioned.

Some Javanese people are often accused of mixing religion with *Kejawen*. If a Javanese who is Muslim still believes in *Kejawen* then he will be accused of syncretism and this, in Islam, is seen as heresy/*bid'ah* (Mahmudah & Saputera, 2019). However, *Kejawen* does not mean it is prohibited or not allow to be believed in. *Kejawen*, for example, is actually believed to be able to strengthen ties of friendship - *silaturahmi* (So'imah, et al., 2020). In order to commemorate the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH – Praise Be Upon Him), the people of Yogyakarta and Solo perform the *Garebeg* ceremony and this ceremony - which of course does not exist and is not taught in Islam - is still popular and is held every year (Pratisara, 2020). Pratisara also stated that *Garebeg* is a form of *Kejawen* Islam, a ritual to commemorate the birth of the Prophet SAW which is practiced in the Javanese way. In his writing, Pratisara emphasized that *Kejawen* Islam began to be spread and practiced since the time of the Demak kingdom and by Walisongo.

It should be stated here that *Kejawen* Islam is actually a product of the long history of the presence and acceptance of Islam itself in Java and by the Javanese people. This historical Islam does not exist in an empty space. One of the developments in accepting Islam began with its encounter with religious beliefs that already existed and were deeply embedded in Javanese society. This belief is generally obtained from Hinduism and Buddhism with their various schools.

Early Islam in Java developed with its ability to be very flexible and adaptable to the Javanese values and norms and culture which foundationally coconstructed by Hinduism and Buddhism. They had developed hundreds of years earlier before Islam came to exist in Java. The construction of the Borobudur (Buddhist) temple and the Prambanan (Hindu) temple, as an illustration, is hundreds of years apart from the initial development of the Islamic kingdom of Demak. One of the strengths of the Demak

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kingdom was that it was able to get rid of and destroy the Majapahit kingdom which had a Hindu character (which later became the Balinese Hindu religious character). This millenium distance shows that the presence of Islam is confronted with the strong character of Javanese society which is based on Hinduism and Buddhism, on the one hand, and which contributed to developing *Kejawen*, on the other hand.

*Kejawen* Islam, it can be said, developed from the *syi'ar* efforts carried out by the saints of the "Nine Wali" (Walisongo). The stories of these saints are filled with myths. Such stories are certainly difficult for rational common sense to accept, a European scientific way of thinking (*logos*), that emerged later. In fact, long before the power of the *logos*, myth had a function: providing a context for life so that it makes sense, directing attention to the eternal and universal, having an impact on human behavior and experience, reducing sadness, pain, bitterness and understanding tragedy (Al Qurtubi, 2003). Islam which is finally accepted by Javanese must be understood in a frame of mind that does not have to be rational. As, in fact, this also happens to Islam itself which believes in the supernatural.

In Islam, God is *ghaib* (an unseen figure). God is in a condition of non-existence, God must be believed in *His* existence but God does not exist in material physical projections. Apart from that, such a view is not far from the Javanese expression that God is "*Sangkan Paraning Dumadi*" (the Genesis). In Islam, God is believed to be the Supreme Creator, the Creator of the Entire Universe. As humans are a reflection of God's existence, so that human could not avoid the presence of God and their unity in God – precisely here where the meaning of, "*Manunggaling Kawula Gusti*".

It cannot be avoided that syncretic thinking is certainly associated with the notion of a mixture of religious teachings. Wahyudi (2020) shows that the idea of religious tolerance must be distinguished from religious syncretism. In his article, Wahyudi said that GAFATAR (Gerakan Fajar Nusantara – the Fajar Nusantara movement) is a non-religious community that trying to build tolerance between religious believers. In this effort, GAFATAR had been accused to build religious syncretism and spreads religious heresy (*bid'ah*) so that the MUI (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*) banned them.

Religious syncretism is not always misleading. Khasbullah and Nisa' (2021) show that the syncretism between Islam and Sapta Darma (faith community) actually provides opportunities for those who believe in it to achieve spiritual balance and prosperity. Khasbullah and Nisa' also stated that the syncretism of Islam and Sapta Darma is a new space for religious communities to understand religion and spiritual values. *Kejawen* Islamic syncretism is therefore often seen and believed to be an effort to preserve tradition and culture, especially Javanese. This syncretism comes from the combination of Islamic teachings and Javanese culture which does not necessarily result in fragility in believing Islam itself (Dewi, 2018). Other writings that try to reveal syncretism almost all of them pose syncretism as a combination of religious teachings, such as studies conducted by Adde and Yansah (2021), Chandra and Hadi (2021), Dute, et al. (2021), Hermawan, et al. (2020), and Safiq (2019), to name a few.

Syncretism has attracted quite a lot of attention from researchers. Dute and friends (2021) in advance, for example, wrote about the syncretism between NU (*Nadlatul Ulama*) and *Muhammadiyah* in Papua. This article is interesting because syncretism is generally understood as a combination of two different teachings. NU and *Muhammadiyah* are indeed two different religious organizations but their foundations are the same, namely Islamic teachings. However, Indonesians know exactly that the implementation and practice of Islam by those two organizations are not always the same. As an example, the *Tarawih* prayers practiced by the two members of the organization are different. NU runs it with 21 *raka'at* and *Muhammadiyah* 11 *raka'at*. Dute and friends' writings do not explore the differences between the two because at a certain point these differences often sharpen and this is also widely known by Indonesian Muslims. Dute and his friends show the efforts of the two organizations to unite themselves and work together in order to build education with Islamic nuances in Papua. In this way, the writing of Dute and his friends actually provides a new interpretation of syncretism. Syncretism is not only understood as a combination of two different teachings but can occur at the organizational and/or institutional level even though the foundation remains on the same teaching.

Syncretism in the sense of a combination of two different teachings is actually quite well known to the Indonesian people. Since the ratification of the Constitutional Court decision Number 97/PUU-XIV/2016, religious beliefs can be used as an identity on a Resident Identity Card (KTP – *Kartu Tanda Penduduk*). Since then, the existence of various religious beliefs in Indonesia has begun to be known, such as, *Kejawen* in Javanese society, *Parmalim* in North Sumatra, *Sunda Wiwitan* in Sundanese society in West Java, *Kaharingan* in Dayak society, *Aluk Todolo* in Toraja, and *Marapu* in Sumba, to name a few. among them. In these areas, religious beliefs merge with the religions that develop in society.

Until now, *Kejawen* is still developing among its religious adherents in Javanese society. Pratisara's (2020) article above shows that the *Garebeg Mulud* ceremony in the *Kraton Yogyakarta* and *Solo* areas is a form of implementation of the integration of Javanese culture and Islam. *Garebeg Mulud* is the culmination of *Sekaten* – the Javanese evening bazaar which held initially to spread Islam between Javanese and to celebrate the birth of prophet Muhammad PBUH. These two traditional events actually originate from Islamic teachings. *Garebeg Mulud* is an event commemorating the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Meanwhile *Sekaten*, which is often associated as a traditional Javanese celebration, is historically the attempt of the two *Kraton* (Kingdom of *Yogyakarta* and *Solo*) to spread Islam to Javanese society and has been going on for hundreds of years. *Sekaten* itself comes from the word *syahadatain*, two sentences of the *shahada* – the oath of allegiance to Muslims which acknowledges the

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Oneness of God with Muhammad PBUH as God's apostle. These two events, which have a syncretic character, are still ongoing and are held regularly every year in the two palaces.

The discussion of the two articles above shows that studying syncretism is studying the combination of two teachings, either in the sense of cultural syncretism with religion or syncretism of beliefs and religion. Syncretism in Indonesia was born because religions were present in a society which had a culture and beliefs that were exist hundreds of years old.

### **II. METHOD OF RESEARCH**

This research is aimed at identifying, describing and explaining syncretism. This research conducted qualitatively in a grounded manner (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Creswell, 2007). In this case, the researcher does not prepare the research design deductively but inductively. The choice of such a design was made because it provides free space for researchers to explore the data and information obtained.

However, this research will not be carried out without direction because, deductively, the researcher has determined the problem and research objectives even though both are flexible, following developments in data and information obtained in the field. This is because researchers do not have detailed enough knowledge about the problem to be research or the people to be studied. Apart from that, in this research, the issues to be researched are actually one of the directions to be addressed. Therefore, the final product of this research is the discovery of problems in syncretism.

This research was carried out in Kalipagu, Ketenger village, Baturraden sub-district, in Banyumas regency. Technically, all members of the research team live in Purwokerto, which is not far from Kalipagu (15 kilometers). This nearby geographical distance is so advantageous for the researchers team. In fact, 3 out of 5 members of this research team had previously conducted research in this area on other topics. These considerations are what make this research reasonable to carry out.

This research selected purposively its subjects in accordance with the research objectives,: 3 founders of the "Lemah Wangi" site and 5 community leaders who participated in its development. Data and information collected in three ways. *First*, in-depth interview. This interview was conducted to explore data that is directly related to the objectives of this research and the research subjects are the primary data source in this research. This interview was conducted in a way to create a comfortable atmosphere for the subject with the aim of giving them the freedom to talk about and explain his experiences in establishing and managing "Lemah Wangi" site. *Second*, observation. In this research, data and information do not only come from narratives and explanations of the subjects but also conducting by visiting and observing "Lemah Wangi" site and attending rituals which held in "Lemah Wangi". For this reason, observations of syncretism become a secondary data source which certainly supports the data and information collected through interviews. Secondary data will also be explored through, *thirdly*, selecting documents related to the objectives of this research, such as scientific articles in research journals, textbooks, and other information from the internet. From a process perspective, data analysis in this research will be carried out through interactive and ongoing (Miles, Huberman, Saldana, 2014; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). In such a process, researchers carry out analysis either simultaneously or iteratively, back and forth between research components such as data collection, data display, data condensation, drawing conclusions, and writing reports. Meanwhile, the data and information that has been collected was analyzed using taxonomy and domain models (Spreadly, 1997). Through these two models, data is interpreted and analyzed according to the socio-cultural context in which this research was conducted.

In this research, the data was validated using the Triangulation model. In this model, researchers protect themselves against the possibility of bias by interviewing different subjects (Miles, Huberman, Saldana, 2014; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). For this reason, data validation carried out by interviewing community members who are not involved in the development of the "Lemah Wangi" site, religious communities who have participated in rituals carried out at "Lemah Wangi", and parties from government agencies related to culture in Purwokerto.

### **III. *KEMIS MANIS* AND SYNCRETISM IN "LEMAH WANGI" KALIPAGU**

#### **A. The Site of "Lemah Wangi" in Kalipagu**

This research conducted in Kalipagu, Ketenger village, Baturraden District, Banyumas Regency. Kalipagu is located about 15 kilometers, to the northwest of the Purwokerto, the capital city of Banyumas Regency. To go to Kalipagu we will have a beautiful scenery of residential areas and a land still covered with growing trees. In fact, to get to the village area in Kalipagu, we will go through a winding uphill road that is only big enough to pass two city cars, which must be careful when passing each other - because on one side is a ravine - and is in the middle of small forest.

Kalipagu is dominated by a sloping soil texture, typical of the slope of the land at the foot of a mountain - in this case, Mount Slamet. Many residents' houses are clustered in the center of the Kalipagu area itself and others are far from each other, separated by either fertile grassy fields or small forests. Kalipagu is also known for its ecotourism such as "Curug Jenggala", "Tandon" Pool, and "Batu Semende". The ecotourism area of Kalipagu that is currently under development - and is located in a fairly large area - is "Lemah Wangi".

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“Lemah Wangi” is an area – call by the locals as a site – about 3-4 kilometers from the center of Kalipagu, climbing towards a small forest. “Lemah Wangi” is located in a dense forest area at the foot of Mount Slamet. Until now, the forest is still under the responsibility of PT. Perhutani Banyumas Regency. The Kalipagu community is currently still trying to fight for the status of the forest in the “Lemah Wangi” area so that it can be changed to customary forest (*hutan adat*) status so that it can be managed by local residents themselves.

The “Lemah Wangi” site is a wide open area as a result of the cutting down of several trees. The wide, open land is surrounded by large trees that are still dense. In “Lemah Wangi” there is a site of ruins building, some of which still have its foundations as the result of excavations carried out by Kalipagu residents. According to a Kalipagu community figure who is trusted to discover and develop the site, “Lemah Wangi” is believed to be a place of education for *kasekten and kanuragan* – somekind of ancient science and physical trainings), especially those from the Ancient *Galuh* kingdom. However, “Lemah Wangi” was not only an educational and training place for princes from the Ancient *Galuh* kingdom but was also attended by princes from other kingdoms as well. Some parts of “Lemah Wangi” is now recognize as a place to pray mostly for Hindu adherents, but also Muslim. Some other parts of the site was places for reading – it is still unclear whether they used to be a kind of library or not.

The name of “Lemah Wangi” itself does not come from the original name of the “university” as during the era of the ancient *Galuh* kingdom. The process of naming “Lemah Wangi” was carried out by the main figures of Kalipagu. Seeing it from etymological side, *Lemah* means land, earth. Meanwhile, *Wangi* means a sweet smell, fragrant odor. It seems that the name has more of a female character, land is related to the expression of “mother earth” which means earth and *wangi* is one of the female characters, fragrant. However, according to one of the subject – whom the main figure of “Lemah Wangi”:

“Soil is Mother Earth, whose impression is extraordinary, which gives life. Soil in this matter, how can we as human beings achieve a reputation, a good deed in our own practice. It starts from the mother herself, from the mother's blessing. So, carrying out spiritual practice is actually our daily practice, to practice *unggah-ungguh* and *subosito*, this is included in the basics of spiritual practice. So, to achieve that, how can we ignite the energy of the universe, especially the energies from the earth itself, for us to put into practice, perhaps according to degrees and so on. *Lemah Wangi* also includes *lembah manah awan wengi*, right...”

The patriarchal socio-cultural construction of gender in Javanese society (Sofyan, MA., et al., 2021; Musrichah & Baskoro, 2021; Putri, 2022) is not visible in the statement above. However, the character of women as constructed in patriarchal culture itself refers to behavior that is full of *unggah-ungguh* (Javanese good conduct) and *subosito* (Javanese pattern of behaviour). This means that in Javanese culture, women behavior is obedient to *unggah-ungguh* and *subosito*. These two characters are the essence of the name “Lemah Wangi”, a place to discover, grow, and build human and community character that adheres to Javanese *unggah-ungguh* and *subosito*. In other words, for Javanese there is no tolerance for not behaving in a way that fulfills *unggah-ungguh* and *subosito*.

### B. *Kemis Manis* and Other Rituals

The *Kemis Manis* ritual is a collective prayer activity carried out by the people of Kalipagu once every month. *Kemis Manis* is held after Maghrib on Wednesday. However, according to the Javanese calendar, the chosen Wednesday after Maghrib is actually Thursday. This Thursday (of international calendar) was chosen to coincide with the first day of the Javanese calendar, namely *Manis/Legi* (in the Javanese calendar, there are 5 days in a week, namely: *Manis/Legi*, *Pahing*, *Pon*, *Wage*, *Kliwon*). In other words, the day chosen to perform the *Kemis Manis* ritual is not the first Thursday of international calendar, but actually Thursday which coincides with the first day of the Javanese calendar and that is *Kemis Manis/Legi*.

There are two things that are prepared and carried out in the *Kemis Manis* ritual, namely preparing the *sesajen* (offerings) and carrying out the *laku* (ritual practices). *Sesajen*, more or less from the word “sesaji”, means what is served. In general, what is served are food and drinks that are chosen deliberately and planned. These foods and drinks include *ketan tholo* (sticky rice), white rice, roasted corn and sweet potatoes. Meanwhile, offerings in the form of drinks include bitter coffee and tea as well as clear ones such as water, clear tea and clear coffee. Apart from that, offerings are also made in the form of flowers such as red roses, white roses and *Kanthal*. Next is *laku*, the implementation of the ritual itself. The essence of the practice itself is carrying out prayers together which, among other things, ask for a good self, peace, health and prosperity. This practice is carried out starting at around 07.00 pm by walking from Kalipagu to the “Lemah Wangi” site which is about 2 kilometers away, entering the forest area at the foot of Mount Slamet. It is on this site that *sesajen* is served and joint prayers are carried out.

The “Lemah Wangi” site is a site that is quite often used by the people of Kalipagu to carry out several other rituals. Apart from *Kemis Manis*, the ritual performed at “Lemah Wangi” is the *Asung Pakurmatan Sesaji Pepak*. This ritual is carried out specifically in the month of *Ruwah*, which is a month before the fast of Ramadan. This ritual is carried out with the culmination of a joint prayer. Another ritual that is also carried out at “Lemah Wangi” is *Merti Bumi*. Together with *Kemis Manis*, these rituals try to bring the people who attend the ritual to ask for protection and prosperity from God Almighty. The people who attended were also ask to always remember and be aware of their own identity. Humans are only God's creation, *Sangkan Paraning Dumadi*.



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Together with nature – as also God's creation – humans must live in harmony and order. By realizing the situation, humans are expected to be able to develop a life of mutual love, respect and living together with one another without seeing any differences, which is how nature was created by God. The land, water and air created by God have been arranged in such a way as to work together with each other to create an ecosystem so that humans can live in it.

### C. Religious Syncretism

Religiosity is generally defined and understood as religious knowledge, awareness and practice. In this sense, religion has rules and obligations that must be carried out by its followers (Ahmad, 2020). Considering this idea and the diversity of religions in the world, religiosity within the framework of religious perspectives create differences between religion. In that sense, each religion has a way of worship and a place of worship that is different from one another. Worship here is defined as the behavior of carrying out prayers in each religion. In this sense, the religions in this world have become diverse and, whether we admit it or not, religion has become a dividing component in human life.

Syncretism, on the other hand, is understood as something that is the opposite of the meaning of religiosity. Syncretism is actually understood as the unification and fusion of two different beliefs (Hasmin, et al., 2022; Khasbullah & Nisa, 2021; Muqoddam & Maghfiroh, 2019). In Islam, syncretism is even accused of being an attempt to mix Islamic teachings with Javanese so that it is considered as *bid'ah* (deviant) (Huda, 2023; Admizal, 2020). In fact, the process of Islamization of Javanese society which was led by the *Wali Songo* actually used local methods that already existed and were based on Hindu-Buddhist culture which was already present (Cipta, 2020).

Apart from such an understanding, the practice of syncretism actually contains the values contained in religion, especially regarding the existence of God. As in the practice of syncretism in Kalipagu itself, God is known and understood in various names such as, God Almighty, *Gusti Ing Akaryo Jagad* (God as Creator of the World), and *Sankan Paraning Dumadi* (Source of All That Exist). For its followers, *Sapta Darma* (one of *Kejawen* organizations) does not teach anything that is contrary to religion (Hasbullah & Nisa, 2021). *Sapta Darma* even brings inner depth to its followers who embrace Islam. When religious education is carried out through teaching in schools, whether we realize it or not, the "status" of religion is no different from other subjects or courses in schools. This means that religion is taught like other sciences. With such treatment, religion loses its spirituality. Syncretism, in this sense, is an attempt to give a spiritual touch to religion.

If syncretism is understood as the practice of *nenuwun* (asking God through prayer) through cultural practices based on belief in God, then there is actually no problem with syncretism itself. Especially if syncretism is understood as strengthening the spirituality component in religion. There is no religion that does not emphasize the recognition of the existence and power of God. God in religious teachings is the Ultimate Essence, the Creator Source of the Universe. Therefore, God is the One Who is All-in-One. *He* exists but *He* is *ghaib* (invisible). No human being can be trusted to have seen or known God. However, at the same time, it can be said, not a single human being rejects God existence. As one of the figures/inspirators of *Kemis Manis*, himself says that: "Javanese religion and culture here are not in conflict. Well, in *Kemis Manis* we maintain Javanese culture, but yes, at the same time, we strengthen the spiritual religion of those who participate."

It must be remembered that the presence of religions in Java has actually shaped the unique character of Javanese society. In a study conducted by Nawafi (2022) shows that the spread and development of Islam in Java took its form in the unity between pre-existing Javanese mysticism – formed by Hindu-Buddhism – and mysticism in Islam. In this unity, nature and humans are understood as representations of God's greatness in the form of the expression of *manunggaling kawula Gusti*. Humans cannot simply free themselves from their ties to God, so culture – as a work of human creation – is a "religion" in the sense that it regulates and guarantees the order of human life in the world. Thus, culture is a manifestation of various religions that humans adhere to themselves.

The *sesaji* in the *Kemis Manis* ritual are not worship of anything that is not God. On the other hand, *sesaji* is a social and religious expression of humans in worshipping God within the framework of cultural understanding. As stated earlier, God is *ghaib*. God is both there but not there. Not one of God's creatures have ever met God directly. It is at this point that *sesaji* are understood. *Sesaji* must be understood as the result of human cultural interpretation of the existence of God. The existence of humans as creatures created by God in the *sesaji* at the *Kemis Manis* ritual, for example, is manifested in the form of red and white roses and jasmine. The existence of these flowers does not directly refer to the form of God. Red and white roses are a symbol of the existence of *bapa* (father) and *biyung* (mother). It is through these two parents that humans obtain their existence. Both of them are the ones who introduce and teach humans about God. Regarding jasmine, in Javanese terminology it is interpreted as *roso ati* (feelings) *lan lathi* (tongue – speaking). This means that, through the teachings given and conveyed by the ancestors, God taught mankind to be able to guard their hearts, feelings and tongue and their speech.

There is something unique about the preparation of *sesaji* in the *Kemis Manis* ritual and it is related to gender. In general, *sesaji* in Javanese rituals are prepared by women. The various *sesaji* related to "women's affairs" such as food, drinks, various vegetables and flowers. In the *Kemis Manis* ritual, those who prepare the offerings are commanded by a man who has knowledge of the *sesaji*

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itself. Meanwhile, those who prepared it directly - according to the orders of the man who was the "commander" - consisted of several women and men. The following is a statement from one of the figures who prepares the *sesaji* in the *Kemis Manis* ritual:

"On the slopes of South Slamet, we believe that what is identical on the slopes of South Slamet is the *Lingga Yoni* symbol. This is a symbol of strength, enthusiasm, gentleness of heart, gentleness of mind. How we go from hard to soft is a combination in itself. Well, in rough language, if a man wants to keep *bras bres*, right, but someone has to soften him up, don't do it like this, it should be like that. Finally getting together in tune. That's basically it"

The role of men in preparing *sesaji* in the *Kemis Manis* ritual is not simply driven by the gender construction of Javanese culture. As stated earlier, Javanese culture is indeed patriarchal. There is also the position of men in preparing *sesaji* in the *Kemis Manis* ritual which represents an understanding of the *Lingga-Yoni* symbol which is actually not patriarchal. The symbol shows how the world should be built. The world would not be formed only by male characters without women. This means that the position of men in preparing *sesaji* in the *Kemis Manis* ritual is precisely to maintain this balance.

In the syncretism between Javanese culture and human religion, there are at least two important things, namely recognition of ancestors and contemplative practice. In Javanese society, the existence of ancestors is highly respected and appreciated. Through ancestors a culture was created that now regulates the lives of Javanese people. Apart from that, it is the ancestors who introduce humans to their true identity and God whom *Akaryo Jagad* (creating the world). Culture in its physical form and ideas, builded and developed by our ancestors from generation to generation. It must be maintained and adhered to so that the Javanese character is not lost and swallowed by time. Thus, it is the duty of the next generation to continue it, not only to maintain its meaning but also to carry out several components, including those that have become a tradition (Puspa, 2020). According to Kalipagu community leaders who participated in the implementation of *Kemis Manis*, appreciation and respect for ancestors meant:

"So from there, we must always be aware of our ancestors, our parents, without whom clarity of mind and clarity of heart will not be able to emerge."

God does not speak directly to humans. Through natural signs and in human life, God "says something" to humans. We get this kind of understanding through the teachings of our ancestors. Therefore, appreciation and respect for ancestors is carried out to obtain safety, prosperity and peace from God (Puspa, et al., 2020).

Efforts to get closer to ancestors and God can only be achieved through contemplation. This meditation practice tries to think deeply in silence. In the *Kemis Manis* ritual, this contemplation is done as the peak of the ritual which held at night, in the deep of the forest, and lit only by an *oncor* (bamboo filled with oil and small torned of fibre/cloth which is then lit on fire). In this ritual, it is also recommended that men wear all black clothing, while for women it is a Javanese kebaya which is also black. According to one of the figures in the *Kemis Manis* ritual, "*The black color absorbs all the various energies.*" The *Kemis Manis* ritual is followed by people from various religious backgrounds and beliefs. This background is not considered non-existent but rather:

"When it comes to rituals with silent prayer, it's done in one's own way... We come with our traditions and culture as Javanese people, so that's the point. It is then, it's up to each individual to have their prayer, right? That's the belief."

The syncretism in the *Kemis Manis* ritual becomes clear because of this. This ritual does not provide teachings about religious beliefs at all. This ritual brings residents who have different religious backgrounds into a unified identity, namely as Javanese.

The practice of contemplation here does not mean following Javanese cultural practices but rather returning to one's own religious beliefs. The *Kemis Manis* ritual is a ritual in Javanese culture aimed at celebrating the relationship between humans and God. There are no prayers or beautiful poems in Javanese that are read and chanted when praying together. All residents who take part in the ritual perform prayers in their own way, according to the religion they believe in and adhere to, in silence and contemplative silence. In the words of one of the participant of the ritual:

"The implementation is done together, but the gathering comes after us, it's like, we open the door, so go ahead yourself"

The *Kemis Manis* ritual is not syncretism as is often imagined and understood by many people. This ritual is a place for Javanese people to get closer and ask God. *Kemis Manis* is certainly not a teaching and has never taught animism or, let alone, paganism. *Kemis Manis* is a ritual in Javanese culture which is actually used as a medium of communication between humanity and God and where all *panyuwunan* (requests) to God are actually carried out in accordance with the religion believed in and embraced by each of those who participates in the ritual.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

- "Lemah Wangi" is a heritage site from the ancient Galuh kingdom era.
- *Kemis Manis* is one of the rituals carried out by the people of Kalipagu and is followed by other people outside Kalipagu.
- *Kemis Manis* is a collective prayer ritual participated in by followers from various religions background.
- In the *Kemis Manis* ritual, syncretism is unavoidable where the participants attend as Javanese, take the parts in the procession in Javanese tradition by preparing *sesaji*, wearing black clothes but praying according to the religious beliefs of each participant.

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