

BADUY PLURALISM: From Myth to Reality

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Abstract

Indonesia is a land of many tribes, with each tribe having different customs. However they have a bond in the form of the state motto, Bhineka Tunggal Ika. This motto is based on a philosophy embraced by every tribe in the form of the teachings passed down from the ancestors such as pantun (Malay poetic form), rhyme, guguritan (Sundanese literary works), history and myths. Myths here are stories about things that happened in the past in the form of the history of the origins of man and nature, or the origin of a nation. Myths as a local wisdom are believed to be the truth by every member of the tribe applied in everyday life. This includes the myth that tells about human cultural diversity (plurality), and the community will implement its content. What about the Baduy community in Banten, do they have myths and apply the myths that deal with pluralism in their life? The Baduy are one of the ethnic groups in Indonesia who have myths about the creation of the universe, human origins, and even myths about the events that will occur. The myth about the origin of humans in the Baduy community begins with the creation of Adam as the first human, and then he had children that gave birth to the whole nation in the world. Because every human in the world is the great-grandsons of Adam, the Baduy believe that all humanity is dulur (brother) despite differences in customs and religion. The reality of social life of the Baduy community, either Baduy Dalam (inner baduy) or Baduy Luar (outer baduy) is that they greatly respect all mankind despite the different cultures and religions. Prohibition to enter the Baduy traditional village for foreigners is because of historical factors, namely the agreement made by their ancestors with the Dutch. This research concluded that the Baduy society is a society that understands the plurality of cultures; it is based on a myth that they believe and apply in their life about tolerance of other religions.

Key Word: Pluralism, Baduy, Lebak Banten, myth and reality

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an area that has a wide range of tribes, and each tribe has its own religious belief, tradition, culture, and customs. Despite the differences, they have been living in peace, and one of the pillars of the bond is the motto *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* which means unity in diversity within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. The *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* bond is very strong

due to the belief of each ethnic group based on acceptance and respect to other ethnic groups by practicing the teachings of the ancestors in the form of *pantun*, rhymes, songs, *guguritan* and myths.

Myths are one of the cultural elements in any society and is considered part of the record of the history of culture. A myth is a communication system that provides a message with regard to the rules of the past, ideas, memories and recollections or decisions that are believed to be true (Barthes, 1981: 193). A myth is not an object, concept, or idea, but rather an emblem in the form of discourse. Therefore, a myth always appears in the form of symbolization (Hasanudin, 1998: 2). In the semiotic perspective, a myth is considered as a semiotic system i.e. signs, symbols, and something symbolized. The myths that have developed in the Indonesian society varies from stories about the creation of the universe, the origin of human beings, to events that will happen at the end of life in the world. The myths are believed to be true and applied in the daily life of the Indonesian society.

The myths cannot be considered only as a fictional story since they have become a basis for the society to judge something. This is one of the functions of myths. Mircea Eliade argued that one of the important functions of myths is to build a model of behavior (Eliade, 1963: 8); in addition myths can also provide religious experiences. By telling or demonstrating and applying myths, a member of a traditional community may feel separated from the present and return to the mythic age, thus bringing them closer to God. (Honko, 1984: 49). Lauri Honko asserted that in some cases, a society will reenact a myth to recreate the atmosphere of the mythic era. For example, the practice of healing conducted in ancient time in an attempt to cure a person is reenacted (Honko, 1984: 49). Similarly, Roland Barthes argued that modern culture explores the religious experience. Because the task of science is not to uphold the morality of man, a religious experience is an effort to connect with the moral feelings in the past which contrasted with the world of technology in the age of the present. Meanwhile Joseph Campbell declared that a myth has four main functions: mythical function--to interpret the admiration of the universe; cosmological function — to describe the shape of the universe; sociological function — to support and endorse a particular social code of conduct; and pedagogis function —to live a life as a human being under any circumstances (Campbell, 1998: 22-23).

A myth as a local wisdom is believed by every ethnic group and applied in daily life. The content of the myth itself is global and universal in a sense that it contains wisdom from ancestors for the next generation's life. Among the ethnic groups in Indonesia that has myths as one of the guidelines through

their life is the Baduy community living in Kanekes Village, Lewidamar Sub-district, Lebak District, Banten Province. Up to now they hold strongly to *Pikukuh Karuhun* (gudilenes from the ancestors) that originated from myths or mandates passed down from their ancestors. The Baduy society is a society which intentionally rejects any culture contrary to the values of their culture. They live and form a separate community in the middle of a wilderness area in the Mountains of Kendeng, Lebak area in Banten.

Although they have chosen to protect themselves from the outside communities, they respect other cultures. On the other hand, the myth indicates that they believe that all humanity originated from Prophet Adam, and they are the direct descendants of the first human. Adam has several offspring that spread all over the world. The descendants of Adam then had children that gave birth to the various ethnic groups around the world. They have their own customs and culture. The Baduy believe that they are tasked to spread to every part of the world (interview with Jaro Sami: 2013).

These myths have been in practice in their daily behavior in the form of attitudes of respect and appreciation, and they consider other people outside their tribe as *dulur* (brothers). This reality shows that the Baduy are flexible in dealing with other cultures outside of their own. Furthermore they also respect all beliefs outside of their own such as Islam, Christianity and other religions (interview with Jaro Alim Cikeusik)

The Baduy society is not a society with rigid customs. On some customs associated with their own cultural structure, they are very strict, but in matters related to the culture of other people, they are open, respectful, and sympathetic and sometimes they adopt the culture of others that is, of course, not contrary to their own. One may now ask a question, what is pluralism according to the Baduy? Do they have an exclusive or inclusive understanding in their traditional customs? What myth underlies their respect of other cultures? And what is their attitude towards the culture outside their customs? The answers to these questions would be very interesting.

This paper is intended to examine the Baduy pluralism that begins with the study of myths that develop especially regarding the origins of human beings and cultures outside the Baduy. Then it proceeds with the study on perception and behavior of attitude of pluralism that they apply in their daily life in the form of the attitude to life which gives space to the other ethnic groups to live side by side, respecting and honoring each other. The research is expected to explain in detail about the Baduy society with regard to pluralism and its application in everyday life. This study is also expected to be able to provide more information about the Baduy's culture which is ready open dialogue and

tolerant toward other cultures.

This paper was based on the results of the qualitative research with a phenomenological approach, which is used to give an idea about the myths of the Baduy community in their view of life. The data were obtained by direct observation of the Baduy in the village of Kenekes, Sub-district of Lewidamar, District of Lebak, Banten Province, Indonesia. In addition, in-depth interviews were also conducted with Jaro (the chieftain) in Cikeusik, Cikertawana and Cibeo Village, the administrative center of the Baduy. To complement the research, a literature review was also conducted to obtain relevant data. The data analysis technique employed descriptive analysis which describes the myths that exist in the Baduy community, as well as their behavior based on these myths. Furthermore, the data were analyzed with the approach the cultural interpretation (Clifford Geertz: 1993)

DEMOGRAPHY AND THE ORIGINS OF THE BADUY

The Baduy are a group of indigenous people who inhabit the area around the mountain of Kendeng Ciujung, administratively an area of Kanekes Village, Leuwidamar Subdistrict, Lebak District, Banten Province. The land area of the Baduy is 5,101.85 hectares (Asep Kurnia: 2010). Most of the land is made up of mountainous plateaus with valleys of the river basin and the upper reaches of the river that flows to the north. The central and southern part of the village is the protected forest or the Baduy often call it *leuweung karamat* (protected forest). The Baduy have three *tangtus* (seats of government), based in Cikeusik, Cikertawana, and Cibeo. In addition to the three *lembur* (villages), there are 58 other village settlements of the Outer Baduy community. Based on their settlement, the Baduy are divided into three groups that lived in different areas. These groups are:

1. The Inner Baduy (*Kanekes Dalam*)
2. the Outer Baduy (*Kanekes Luar*)
3. the Dangka Baduy

The Inner Baduy communities live three main areas, namely Cikeusik, Cikertawana and Cibeo. This society is practicing *pikukuh karuhun* (traditional customs), for example, they are only permitted to wear clothing with two colors i.e. black and white, and in addition they also wear white *totopong* (headbands). The Baduy do not use modern objects, such as electronics and chemicals. They make their own clothing from the natural materials found around the community. If the clothing is sewn, certainly they sewed it themselves by hand (Asep Kurnia, 2010).

The second group is the Outer Baduy characterized by black or dark blue

clothes. They also wear headbands with black and pre-dominantly blue color *batik*. This community lives in villages surrounding the main area of Kanekes Village. The Outer Baduy community is the isolated Baduy for several reasons such as violating of the customs in the area of the Inner Kanekes, marrying someone outside the Inner Kanekes, or withdrawing from the Inner Baduy with a variety of reasons. Originally, the Outer Baduy were the Baduy, who were tasked with maintaining the authenticity of the Baduy in their function as filters for every foreign culture (interview with Jaro Sami Cibeo). Therefore the Outer Baduy community there is now using modern equipments such as cell phones, electronic goods, chemicals and other technological devices. In some ways, however, the outer Baduy community still accepts and recognizes the indigenous Baduy traditions. This is what distinguishes the Outer Baduy group from the Inner Baduy.

The third group, namely the Dangka Baduy, is those that have really left the Baduy, both geographically and culturally. They are the descendants of the Inner or Outer Baduy, but generally do not live in the Kanekes area for example living in the Kompol area in sub-district of Lewidamar. Although they do not have to observe the Baduy traditions, they still claim to be the Baduy people and in some respect they would still follow the customs of the Baduy. This is evident when a ritual is held in the Inner Baduy area, some of them still join it.

The Baduy community knows no writing form; they only know the spoken language. Therefore, their origins are passed down from generation to generation in a narrative form. The Baduy community sees the record of time as all the events in the life of their people, the process of time is a world history which is equivalent to the state of the universe. Similarly, the origin and designations of the Baduy should be seen in terms of their assumptions about themselves, i.e. a variety of *karuhun* connections with the universe in the time circle that places them on a specific position as outlined at the beginning of their existence.

The origins and naming of the Baduy can be divided into two terms: the term given by people outside the community and the term they call themselves. Which term is better known will depend also on the frequency of the term being used. In reviewing the use of the term to refer to the Baduy, it is interesting to note how the designations used are reviewed in a long period of time for a few hundreds of years ago. Thus, the name of the Baduy today as it has been used as a term for the group of people who live in Kanekes Village, apparently was given after Islam entered the northern Banten area in the 16th century (Edi S Ekadjati: 2009).

The term Baduy today is more popular and accepted by the Baduy themselves

who inhabit Kanekes Village, though they are also sometimes referred to as the Rawayan tribes or *urang Kanekes*. Although it has been accepted as a standard term, some researchers are still looking for a term for this society. For example foreign writers at the beginning of the 18th century and the 19th century indicated the choices for terms that considered all possible aspects and tried to find the answer, including linguistic aspects (for example, Jacobs and Meijer, 1891; Pennings, 1902). The standardization of the terms Badawi, Badoeien, Badoei and Bedoeis by the Dutch was often supported by the official reports of the colonial government officials. Therefore, it is also possible that the word Bedoeis was associated with the Arabic word, *badwi*, that referred to groups of people who lived as a nomad in the desert. In addition, the word 'Baduy' is also sometimes associated with 'Buddha', which means non-Muslim.

Pleyte (1909) gave the reason for the term 'Baduy' which is associated with the elements of their own culture. He argued that the word 'Baduy' has no connotation as an insult and no relation to the word 'Badwi', but comes from the word Cibaduy, the name of a river in the north of the village of Kanekes. That is to say, to call oneself is one of the Sundanese habits to name the village or place of establishment, place of birth or places that can provide a meaning of life. In this respect, it is no surprise when the term Kanekes urang is also used by them, as the term that emphasizes the nature and cultural values that originate from the village of Kanekes.

As several experts from Europe called them, the interview conducted with the *kokolot* (elders) indicated that they are called 'Baduy' because of the Baduy Hill in their region and the Cibaduy River, so people who live in the area are known as the people of Baduy. This is in accordance with the recognition of them as the owners of the Baduy culture (interview with Jaro Sami Cibeo). Regarding the origins of the Baduy also became a unique problem to some researchers from Europe like Jacobs and Meijer, 1891; van Trich, 1929; Geisi, 1952 who reported that the origins of the Baduy were the original inhabitants of the area, while the writers after the independence of Indonesia often associated their origins with the collapse of the last Hindu Kingdom of Sunda in West Java, namely the Kingdom of Pajajaran in 15th century (Djunaedi et al., 1985; and Danasasmita, 1986). The Baduy are descendants of refugees who fled Pajajaran Palace to the South of Banten and cornered by the attack of Hasanuddin who spread Islam in the area.

The Baduy themselves reject the opinion stating their origins are from the Kingdom of Pajajaran fugitives or the Sultanate of Banten. Ayah Mursyid as a representative of Jaro Tangstu Cibeo argued:

“Kami teu sebeh melengek kana cerita nu nganggap kami ieu asal tina katurunan masyarakat pelarian atawa pengungsian ti karajaan kasultanan Banten baheula. Eta anggapan the sarua jeung ngarendahkeun harkat martabat kami, saba masyarakat palarian hartina hiji masyarakat nu boga kesalahan , atawa masyarakat nu pagaweanana ngalawan atawa masyarakat nu geus teu aya guna atawa teu dipake ku masyarakat lainnya.” It means “We cannot agree as to the story that assumes that we are descended from refugee communities of the ancient Kingdom of Banten. This assumption is tantamount to demean the dignity of our tribe because the community of the breakout indicates one of the communities that committed some wrongdoings, or worked against the government or the community that was regarded as useless by other communities.”

From the description it clearly shows that the origins of the Baduy in accordance with their belief are the indigenous peoples who have lived there since the beginning of the history. They have the obligation to keep the harmony of nature in accordance with the command of Adam, a Messenger of God who was their ancestor. This opinion is shared by all of elders interviewed i.e. Jaro Sami, Jaro Alim, Jaro Dainah, Ayah Mursyid, Ayah Nanih and several other tribal elders.

BADUY RELIGIOUS SYSTEM

The Baduy have faith that the universe is ruled by the creator called *Nu Ngersakeun*. According to their old traditions they believe that their region is the origins and the source of the whole universe. The argument which they believe is that they are the descendants of Prophet Adam who was sent to Earth after being expelled from heaven. The concept of Adam in their tradition is slightly different from beliefs that exist in Islam and other Abrahamic religions. From interviews with Jaro Sami as Jaro Cibeo it could be concluded that Adam was not the only one person but there are four to seven. Each Adam has his own responsibilities mandated by God. Adam Tunggal was progenitor of the Baduy who was given a mandate to keep *kabuyutan* in the Baduy area, and his descendants continued the task of maintaining the balance of nature (meditation with worship of the nature), in addition their task includes *ngasuh ratu nyanyak menak* (giving advice to kings and rulers of the country).

The belief concept of the Baduy cannot be separated from the Sundanese philosophy, as *Urang Sunda*, they believe in the three worlds namely *Buwana* (world) *Panca Luhur*, *Dunia Panca Tengah* dan *Dunia Panca Handap*. The pance luhur is a world of the creator and the spirits of the ancestors who

always keep an eye on the lives of their tribe. In *buwana* there is also the same world called “*Guriang*”, a world inhabited by the ancestors who have died. It is only the *puun* (tribal elders) who are able to communicate with this world. The *panca tengah* world is the world currently inhabited by humans, where they are given obligations that must be implemented for the provision to the next world. In the *panca tengah* world man executes each command and prohibition inherited from the ancestors; the prohibitions are in the form of taboo/*pamali* or *buyut* which means something that must not be done. When *buyut* is violated, then they will get a sanction from the *adat* (customary law) and from their ancestors. Furthermore the *Panca Handap* world is the afterworld inhabited by the *dedemit* and the spirits of the bad people. In the Islamic concept, this world is called hell (Edi S. Ekadjati, 2010).

Basis of religion of the Baduy is the respect of the ancestors’s spirits and the belief in one single power, *Batara*. Their belief is called *Sunda Wiwitan* or *Sunda Wiwitan* religion. The orientation, concepts and religious activities are addressed to *pikukuh karuhun* so that people can live in accordance with the way that has been determined by the ancestors. For example, The Baduy believe that they are an old group of people who have the obligation to keep the holy land of Kanekes, while other humans are the younger group that enlivens the world. They believe they have responsibility to improve the world through *tapa* (deeds, work) and implement *pikukuh karuhun*, meaning when Kanekes as the core of the universe is well maintained, then the whole world will be secure; Disruption to the core is fatal to all human life in the world. The most important religious and customary concepts that becomes the core of the Baduy *pikukuh* is the principle of “*No Changes*”, as expressed by the proverb “*lojor teu meunang dipotong, pondok teu meunang disambung*” (long should not be cut, short should not be extended). The concepts are not within the Baduy themselves and the strength depends on the actions or conduct of a person outside of their culture. The concept of *pikukuh* is the embodiment of a religious custom and is determined by the intensity of the concept of work and each individual’s religiousity. To carry out all customs form of *pikukuh karuhun*, the Baduy people will be protected by a power which is *Batara*, through the “*guriangs*” sent by *karuhun*, on the contrary if the customs are violated, *Batara* will cast *bala* and disaster for the Baduy and society in general.

The top of the Baduy leadership is the *Puun*, there are three of them and they are found in the three *kapuunan* namely Cikeusik, Cikertawana and Cibeo. The position of the *puun* is not only as supreme leader, but spiritually they are also considered the direct descendant of *karuhun* representing them in the world. There are a number of concepts that are obligatory for the *puun* in order to

carry out *pikukuh karuhun*, i.e. keeping the *Sasaka Pusaka Buana*; keeping the *Sasaka Domas* or *Parahyang*; nurturing and maintaining the nobles/officials; meditating for the welfare of the world; dedicating to the goddess of rice by fasting on the ceremony, worshiping the ancestors, and making *laksa* for the ritual of *Seba* (Garna: 1988).

The ancestors of the Baduy people are categorized in two groups i.e. the ancestors of the period of the *Batara* and the period of the *puun*. *Batara Tunggal* is depicted in two dimensions, as a power and strength that is not visible but is everywhere, and as a man of great power. In the human dimension, the *Batara Tunggal* has seven offspring sent to the world in *kabuyutan* (place for the ancestors), which is the starting point of the world of *Sasaka Pusaka Buwana*. They include *batara cikal*, who is said to have no descendants, *Batara Patanjala* who has seven descendants, namely (from the most senior) *Daleum Janggala*, *Daleum Lagondi*, *Daleum Putih Seda Hurip*, *Dalam Cinangka*, *Daleum Sorana*, *Nini Hujung Galuh*, and *Batara Bungsu*. They are the ancestors of the Nobility of *Sawidak Lima* or seven original *batara*, the ancestors of the Baduy. *Batara Janggala Daleum* is the eldest, and is the ancestor of *tangtu Cikeusik*; *Daleum Putih Seda Hurip* is the ancestor of the people of Cibeo village. The other third level *batara* each is the ancestor of other leaders (Edi S Ekadjati, 2010)

Five second level *bataras*, younger brothers of *Batara Pantajala*, *Batara Wisawara*, *Batara Wishnu*, *Batara Brahmana*, *Batara Hyang Niskala*, and *Batara Mahadewa*, who are the ancestors of people outside the Baduy called *salawe nagara* (twenty-five states), which indicates a large number of people, and according to the knowledge of the Baduy they live in a very broad area next to the Cihaliwung River (Garna 1988). This group is considered the descendants of the younger Baduy. Of the seven of the third level of the ancestors of the Baduy, it seems that only the *Jaro Dangka* relatives are descended the female lineage. The others are from a patrilineal line. The *puuns* are descendants of *Batara Patanjala*, and until the late 19th century as recorded by Jacobs and majer there had been 13 *puun Sikeusik* (1891: p 13). According to a record made in 1988, the number of *puun Cikeusik* was 24, and the last was Puun Sadi (Garna: 1988).

An important concept in the religion of the Baduy is *karuhun*, generations of the predecessors who have died. They gather at the *Sasaka Domas*, i.e. a place in the old forest in the upper reaches of the Cijung River. The *Karuhun* can incarnate or come in the original form to see their descendants, and the way to is through the village forest. In connection with the concept of *karuhun* there are other concepts i.e. the “*guriang*”, *sanghyang*, and *wangatua*. “*Guriang*” and *sanghyang* are considered the incarnation of the *karuhun* to protect their

descendants from all danger, disruption of others as well as other evil beings (such as *dedemit*, *jurig*, *satan*); *wangatua* is spirit or the incarnation of the spirit of the dead parents. Their beliefs had never changed until Islam came to the region of Lebak Banten, although they did not accept Islam directly but the infiltration of Islam slowly and subtly penetrated into their beliefs. The interviews with Jaro Sami, Ayah Mursyid, Jaro Dainah and Jaro Alim showed that the religion of the Baduy is *Slam Sunda Wiwitan*. The addition of the word 'Slam' is a response to the coming of Islam to the Baduy region, then their ancestral stories come with the existence of the term Prophet Adam and they also recognize the existence of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad as the Seal of Prophet. Some of the Baduy rituals also have gone through acculturation with Islam, for instance in their wedding they recite Shahada Muhammad by inviting hosts of Cicakal Girang which is a land in the Muslim area of Baduy village. The interactions between the Baduy and Islam have also resulted in their common greetings such as "Assalamualaikum", or "Alhamdulillah" and "Insya Allah".

THE MYTH ABOUT HUMAN ORIGINS IN THE BADUY

The Baduy have various myths that contain the origins of the world, human beings and events that will occur in the future. Among the myths believed is that the creation of the Earth was through three phases namely *Jaman Poek* atau *Alam Gumulung*, *Alam Bercahaya* (bright world) dan *Alam Bumi Padang Poe Panjang* (real world in the life of *panca tengah*). This process began from the period in which the earth was in the form of thick and clear state, then it hardened and gradually widened. The starting point is located in the center of the earth, i.e. the *Sasaka Pusaka Buwana* to which the seven *batara* were sent in order to spread humans. It is also the place of the ancestors (interview with Ayah Mursyid).

The starting point of the centre of the earth's creation became the village of *tangtu* which is considered as the core and embryo of human life. This point is called *Cikeusik* as *Pada Ageung*, *Cikartawana* called The *Kadukujang*, and *Cibeo* called *Parahyang*; these three villages are also called *Sanghyang Daleum*. Specifically, the position of the ancestors (*kabuyutan*) and the *tangtu* line show the connection of *karuhun*, i.e. *Pada Aguing* as *Sasaka Pusaka Buana*, its *dangka* is called *Padawaras*. *Kadukujang Kabuyutan* are also found in *Cibeo* and *Cikeusik*, and the *dangkas* are called *Sirah Dayeuh*. The concept of *buana* (the world) for the Baduy is related to the starting point, the path, and the end of life. There are three *buanas* i.e. *Buana Luhur* atau *Buana Nyungcung* (heaven, the aboveworld) which is infinite and spacious, *Buana Tengah* or

Buana Panca Tengah, where humans go through most of their life. *Buana Handap* (the underworld) is part of the land that is not limited to the area. The conditions in the three worlds are just like this world as there are night and day, but other things are contrary to this world. It is the most sacred of the Kanekes area, especially *taneuh larangan* (holy Land, the forbidden land) where the village of tangtu and kabuyutan are located (Edi S Ekadjati, 2010).

The myth about the origins of the human beings circulated among the Baduy is that after completion of the creation of the world, God created (*nurunkeun*) Adam into the face of the earth together with his wife Eve. From Adam and Eve, came their descendants who became the ancestors of all mankind in this world. Since Adam as the ancestor of the Baduy had the obligation to keep the the *mandala Sasaka Domas*, his descendants shall continue this responsibility. Meanwhile, the descendants of *Adam Serping* have the task to enliven the world, using this world as a means of enjoying happiness. Therefore, the Baduy myth is believed to be the basis for their acceptance of the diversity of cultures and customs of this world. In other words, the Baduy understand that the plurality and multiculturalism are a reality that is inevitable because it is the destiny of the *Nu Ngersakeun Gusti Allah*, the Almighty God (interview with Jaro Sami Cibeo).

Departing from this myth, they believe that all humans originated from Adam who was the first man in the world. Since humans came from a single lineage, they believe that all humanity is *dulur* (brothers), so the equality as human beings in their belief is understood as humanism and respect for all humanity that has existed in the Baduy community. The myth has been passed down orally by the Baduy community and is believed to be a fact, and the evidence to support this is the *Sasaka Domas* which is the beginning of all creation of the universe and the origins of mankind.

BADUY PLURALISM: FROM MYTH TO REALITY

The myth of the origins of humans is profoundly believed by every member of the Baduy community. This is evident from the results of interviews with members of the Baduy community living around the rice field who believe that they are descended from Adam. This notion is deeply rooted in their daily lives. The Baduy never discriminate a person entering its territory based on religion. As long as they respect the customs of the Baduy, they will also be honored just like the other guests. Prohibition for the people of European origin, the Dutch, the Chinese and other non-Muslims to enter the *Baduy Tangtu* area is due to an agreement between the Dutch colonial government and the Baduy. In practice, the ban was not for religious reasons, as some

Christians may also enter the area of the Baduy. Merry, a Christian woman conducted research in Kampung Cibeo, a region of the inner Baduy. *Jaro, puun and other* traditional elders there were aware of her presence, but they did not question it.

The interviews conducted with Jaro Alim also showed that they are very respectful of other religions, as evidenced by the large number of guests visiting the inner Baduy and the *Puun* in Cikeusik, Cibeo or Cikertawana for different purposes. In general, people who come to visit the *puun* are those who wish to get blessings, prosperity and be spared from dangers in the world. Those who come are not only of the Baduy community, but also Muslims, Christians and people of other religions. Interestingly, these people mostly come from Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Bekasi, Tangerang, and even from outside of Java such as Sumatra and Borneo. When the writer visited Cikeusik, he met and stayed together at Jaro Alim's house with someone from Palembang who asked for resolution of debt problems. He asked the *Puun* to say prayer for him so that he could pay off his debt. Similarly, the writer met with a guest from Lampung who had visited the Baduy five times in order to ask for prayers from the elders of the Baduy regarding the issues of his life.

The Baduy treated the guests well and consider them as brothers who need help and the Baduy should serve them just like brothers. The Baduy's hospitality was proven by welcoming the guests and letting them stay in the house. They do not hesitate to talk about their customs and serv the guests regardless of religion and cultural background. During my stay at Cipaler, Cibeo and Cikeusik villages, they are more or less the same, never treating people on the basis on religion and cultural background. All of the guests were considered as brothers and respected and treated nicely. This shows that the myth of the origins of humans is so powerful in their everyday life and therefore they really understand that a society in reality is plural and has its own belief and religion.

Furthermore their life style also reflects the attitudes of respect and tolerance to different customs and religions. They assume that all religions are equally good, each serving God in its own way. Therefore, in their view, no religion or custom is better than the others. Each religion has responsibilities, and the Baduy are responsible for keeping the balance of nature by meditating to apply the whole *pikukuh karuhun* and giving advice to the authorities and officials (*ngasuh ratu nyanyak menak*).

CONCLUSION

The Baduy, as one of the tribes that deliberately excludes themselves from

modern culture, are not ignorant about cultures outside their own. One of the myths that exist in their culture is about the creation of the first man called Adam. From him, many peoples in the world were born such as the Dayak, Chinese, Indians, Europeans and so on. This myth is believed by the Baduy as a fact passed down to them orally. Furthermore, the myth is implemented in everyday life in the form of deep respect toward other ethnic groups, religions and beliefs. They never force their beliefs on others as they believe that those religions and beliefs are pathways that have been determined by God Almighty, the *Nu Ngersakeun*.

The Baduy community's understanding of the religions and the cultures of others is a form of pluralism which provides a space of tolerance for all humans who observe different religions so that they can coexist peacefully without having to blame each other. They believe that all religions and customs oblige people to do good and serve God. What distinguishes one religion from the other is merely the responsibilities borne by each nation. The Baduy are a group of indigenous people who have duties and obligations to keep the balance of nature with meditation and to carry out all the *pikukuh karuhun* in the form of customs such as *kawalu*, *seba*, *muja* and rituals to honor the gods especially the Dewi Sri (the rice goddess) or Nyi Pohaci. This is typical of the Baduy society, open to other religions and cultures but would not adopt them. However, in practice they also accept the concept of other faiths that are not in conflict with the values of their belief which the religion of *Slam Sunda Wiwitan*.

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