



## Character Education Values in the Great Grebeg Tradition of Demak City: Historical and Normative Perspective

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### Abstrak

Penelitian kualitatif ini bertujuan untuk menggali nilai-nilai pendidikan karakter yang tertanam dalam tradisi Grebeg Besar di Kota Demak. Grebeg Besar merupakan suatu bentuk kesenian hasil akulturasi budaya Islam Jawa dengan budaya Arab, yang bertujuan untuk menghormati perjuangan para wali dalam menyebarkan agama Islam di tanah Jawa khususnya di Demak Bintoro yang diprakarsai oleh Sunan Kalijaga. Sosialisasi global saat ini menyebabkan masyarakat memiliki sikap individual dan egois serta menghargai uang atau money centric. Pengaruh media massa yang menyebarkan konsumerisme, pewarisan nilai secara instan, dan internalisasi nilai-nilai global menyebabkan hilangnya nilai-nilai tradisional. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan historis dan normatif yaitu berkaitan dengan objek penelitian. Metode historis digunakan untuk memahami Islam dari sudut pandang sosial-historis, sedangkan metode normatif digunakan untuk memahami Islam dari sudut pandang doktrinal-teologis. Lokasi penelitian berada di Kabupaten Demak yang merupakan pusat tradisi Grebeg Besar. Data penelitian diperoleh dari pihak pengelola Masjid Agung Demak, pihak pengelola makam Sunan Kalijaga, dan masyarakat sekitar. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa nilai-nilai pendidikan karakter yang tertanam dalam tradisi Grebeg Besar Kota Demak adalah kepemimpinan, gotong royong, estetika, dan religiusitas. Tradisi Grebeg Agung dapat menjadi media pembelajaran bagi siswa sekolah dasar untuk memahami dan menerima nilai-nilai pendidikan karakter yang terkandung dalam tradisi tersebut.

**Kata Kunci:** Grebeg Agung, Tradisi, Nilai Pendidikan Karakter

### Abstrack

This qualitative research aims to explore the values of character education embedded in the tradition of Grebeg Besar in Demak City. Grebeg Besar is an art form resulting from the acculturation of Javanese Islamic culture with Arab culture, which aims to honor the struggle of the saints in spreading Islam in Java, especially in Demak Bintoro, initiated by Sunan Kalijaga. Today's global socialization leads people to have individual and selfish attitudes and values money or money-oriented. The influence of mass media that spreads consumerism, instant inheritance of values, and internalization of global values leads to the loss of traditional values. Research uses historical and normative approaches, that is, related to the object of research. The historical method is used to understand Islam from a social historical perspective, while the normative method is used to understand Islam from a doctrinal-theological perspective. The research location is in Demak Regency which is the center of the Grebeg Besar tradition. Research data were obtained from the management of the Great Mosque of Demak, the management of Sunan Kalijaga's tomb, and the surrounding community. The results of the analysis show that the values of character education embedded in the tradition of Grebeg Besar in Demak City are leadership, mutual assistance, aesthetics, and religiosity. The Great Grebeg tradition can serve as a learning medium for elementary school students to understand and accept the values of character education contained in the tradition.

**Keywords:** Great Grebeg, Traditions, Character Education Values

## Introduction

Indonesia has the largest Muslim population, not only in Southeast Asia, but also in the World. In 2010, the number of Muslims in the world reached 1,599,700 thousand people, while the number of Muslims in Indonesia was around 209,120 thousand or around 87,296% (Fithriana & Kusuma, 2018). And the majority of Indonesian Muslims live on the island of Java. There are so many traditions that have been passed down from the previous kingdoms on the island of Java, the kingdom before the arrival of Islam, where these traditions are far from the teachings of Islam. But since the arrival of Islam, with many saints of Allah spreading da'wah invitations to embrace Islam, they do not want to immediately abolish the tradition, but wrap it with Islamic teachings, so that the followers of the previous teachings can adjust and accept the teachings of Islamic da'wah freely.

Demak began to be known at the end of the 15th century as the first Islamic kingdom in Indonesia. The location of Demak which is not too far from the beach causes this city to be visited by many traders (and Islamic religious broadcasters), probably since the 14th century (Ramelan, 1997). Demak City is one of the religious cities that has a new life for the Muslim Community that has developed and has the idea of being a religious committ. Wali Allah gives instructions that are relevant to the lives of people in the city of Demak.

One of the ritual traditions held by the people of Demak is Grebeg Besar where the tradition is carried out once a year. This is an interesting thing to discuss. Because this tradition has long been carried out and preserved from the time of the ancient kingdom. And continued to be a means of proselytizing the Guardians of Allah.

Grebeg Besar is an art resulting from acculturation of Javanese Islamic culture with Arab culture, which aims to honor the struggle of the saints in spreading Islam in Java, especially Demak Bintoro, which was initiated by Sunan Kalijaga. Today's global association directs people to have an individual and selfish attitude and money value or oriented to money. As well as the influence of mass media that spread consumerism, inheritance of instant values, internalization of global values causes the loss of traditional values (Setiyarini, 2011).

Grebeg Besar is a traditional event that has religious ritual value for residents of Demak Regency to welcome the arrival of Eid al-Fitr Hajj on every 10th of Dhul-Hijjah. Which was originally held to commemorate the anniversary of the Demak Mosque built by Sunan Kalijaga with Sunan Bonang, Sunan Gunung Jati and Sunan Ampel.

The interesting thing about Grebeg Besar Demak is related to Aqidah Islamiyah and certainly has many values in it. It would be even more interesting if it were then studied by integration-interconnection analysis, because then it would be possible to know the relationship between normative, scientific and empirical values. This search exploration is more focused on the values of the great grebeg tradition and its relation to character education.

## METHODS

This research is qualitative. Qualitative research is research based on objects from how to capture object phenomena in research. Qualitative research emphasizes deductive analysis and inductive inferences as well as analysis of relationships between observed phenomena using scientific logic. And the data generated from qualitative research is descriptive (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018).

This research uses historical and normative approaches. Because all those

things are related to each other in this study. The historical method is an approach used to understand Islam from the perspective of social history (Minhaji, 2020). This method studies the development of Islam from the past to the present, including changes that occur in religious teachings and practices (M Amril, 2019).

The normative method is an approach used to understand Islam from a doctrinal-theological point of view (An Nur Lampung Islamic University, 2020). This method studies Islamic teachings contained in the nash, such as the Quran and Hadith (An Nur Islamic University Lampung, 2020). Research with normative methods is carried out by collecting data from nash sources, such as books of tafsir and hadith. And the normative approach which is done by looking at religion in terms of its teachings. While the historical approach is a study and other sources that contain information about the past.

The location to be studied is in Demak Regency, which is the center of this Grebeg Besar tradition activity. And the source of research will be the Management of the Great Mosque of Demak, the Management of the Tomb of Sunan Kalijaga and the surrounding community.

## Hasil dan Pembahasan

### A. Cultural Traditions and Customs

The tradition in the big dictionary is Indonesian a hereditary custom from ancestors that is still used by the community. Meanwhile, Culture is defined by the assessment or assumption that the way has existed is a good and correct way (Nisa, 2020). Islamic tradition is the result of a dynamic process of religious development in participation to regulate its adherents to carry out daily activities. Islamic tradition has more influence on very light rules towards its adherents

and always does not force the actions of its adherents' abilities.

#### 1. Friendship between the Kasepuhan and the Regent of Demak

The big grebeg begins with a mutual relationship between the Kadilangu kasepuhan and the Regent of Demak, begins with the Regent's visit to Sasono Rengga Kadilangu, and vice versa, kadilangu kasepuhan and his family meet the Regent and usually they are received in the Regent's guest room

#### 2. Tumpeng Sembilan Event

The night before Eid al-Adha, a Tumpeng Sembilan event was held which described the number of Wali Songo. Tumpeng was paraded from the old Demak Bintoro Regency pavilion to Masjid Agung Demak for grabs by visitors who were waiting at the Mosque

#### 3. Patangpuluhan Warrior Parade

On the 10th of Dzulhijjah, a kotang Ontokusuma sharpening ceremony was held which began after the Eid al-Adha prayers. The sharpening of the pusakan is the process of purifying historical relics. So that the object does not suffer damage, sharpening is a way of caring for heirloom objects

#### 4. Kotang Ontokusumo sharpening

The sharpening started from the Demak Regency Pendopo with the handover of jamas oil by the Regent to the Manggala soldiers who would bring him to Kadilangu escorted by patangpuluhan soldiers Cubok (Ardianto et al., 2022).

#### 5. Grebeg Besar

The tradition of Grebeg Besar is closely related to the history of Wali Songo's struggle in fighting for the spread of Islam

in the 15th century. At that time, Demak became the center (Bintoro Sultanate) on the island of Java. During the heyday of Sultan Fattah's reign with his spiritual advisory council, Sunan Kalijaga, he organized Grebeg. The Grebeg event was held as a medium for da'wah.

#### 6. Sunan Kalijaga

Sunan Kalijaga is a laqab attributed to Raden Syahid. So called because according to the story, Raden Syahid was appointed as a guardian or sunan because he had been able to guard the stick on the edge of the river.

Among the existing Walisongo, he is known as a great soulful guardian. He is a leader, warrior, muballigh, poet, and philosopher. Scholars and nobility were very sympathetic to the way he was delivered. Because the method of da'wah is adapted to social phenomena and existing community circumstances. Cultural acculturation without contradicting the value of Islamic teachings would be the right formulation to develop Islamic da'wah in Javanese society (Mustaghfiroh & Mustaqim, 2014).

As a guardian, Sunan Kalijaga is also a loved one of Allah SWT. Therefore, Sunan Kalijaga has a karamah in the form of physical and mental excellence that is not owned by others in general. In addition, as a sign of his guardianship, he has the title "Sunan" like other guardians (Ainun Najib, 2020).

After returning from his wanderings to Java, Sunan Kalijaga then got the task to spread Islam. His da'wah was carried out by traveling from one area to another

until it was known as Muballigh Keliling. The condition of Javanese society at that time was still very strongly influenced by Hindu-Buddhist beliefs, which still held strong the customs and traditions of their predecessors and ancestors. However, Sunan Kalijaga actually allowed these customs and culture to continue, but he still slowly included Islamic teachings both concerning the essence (Tawhid) and sharia and akhlaqul karimah (Ainun Najib, 2020).

#### B. Normative

Islamic law is the basic rule for all aspects of the life of Muslims sourced from the Quran and Al-Sunnah. As stated by the Prophet Muhammad:

تركت فيكم أمرين لن تضلوا ما تمسكتم بهما  
كتاب الله و سنة نبيه

It means

"I leave two things that will not mislead, they are the Book of Allah and the Messenger of Allah" (Narrated by Ibn Abdil Barr)

The two things referred to in the above hadith are Kitabullah and Sunnah. Thus, Muslims must hold fast to what was testified by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in all aspects of his life. The Word of Tsaqalain or الثقلين حديث is a hadith that was once famous and mutawatir based on the Prophet Muhammad who said, "Actually, I leave two heirlooms for you, the Book of God (Qur'an) and Itrahku (Ahl al-Bayt). The two will not be separated until the end of the world (Fraai, 2022).

History says that Islam developed rapidly in the archipelago by incorporating Islamic values in every custom, tradition and culture of the nation. For example, the da'wah or spread of Islam carried out by the

Songo Guardians, they spread Islam by taking a cultural approach not by fighting culture or customs but they juxtaposed or harmonized so that religion and custom became complementary. Adat is equipped with religion as a result of actions that can be in line with Islamic law, and vice versa if religion is included in the culture. This certainly brings positive things that will be very beneficial for the spread of Islam if Islam is returned to its true essence, namely rahmatan ili alamin.

Islam, with all the universality of the Shari'a it brings, is a perfect and complete religion as a guide to all dimensions of human life. God said:

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي  
وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا ۗ

It means

"On this day I have perfected for you your religion, and I have given you my favor and have Ku-ridhai Islam become a religion unto you" (Q.S. Al-Maidah : 3)

According to Tafsir Ibn Kathir, this verse describes Allah's greatest favor to this people, because Allah has perfected for them their religion, and may prayers and greetings be bestowed upon him. That's why Allah made him the last prophet He sent for humans and jinns. There is nothing lawful but what is lawful, nothing is haram but what it forbids, and there is no religion other than what it prescribes. Everything he preached was true, and there were no lies and lies (Translation of the Qur'an, 2015a).

Syafii said, the Prophet said that Muslims should be 'adah muhakamah, which is to respect the customs. Allah says:

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ ۗ ١٩٩  
It means

"Be forgiving, instruct the u'rf (good customs), and turn away from ignorant people." (Q.S. Al-A'raf (7): (199)

According to Tafsir Jalalayn: "Be forgiving, it is easy to forgive in the face of the treatment of the people, and do not retaliate and tell the people to do what is good and turn away from the foolish and do not serve their foolishness (Translate the Qur'an, 2015a).

Some scholars say that man is of two kinds: first, a good person, accept the virtues he gives you, do not burden him with something beyond his abilities and something that constricts him. Second, a bad man, command him to do the ma'ruf. If he rebels and remains in his way, does not want to follow your advice and continues to do foolishness, then turn you away from him (Translation of the Qur'an, 2015).

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَىٰ  
الرَّسُولِ قَالُوا حَسْبُنَا مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا أَوَّلًا  
كَانَ آبَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ ۗ ١٠٤

It means

"When it was said to them, "Come according to what Allah has revealed and follow the Messenger," they said, "It is enough for Us what We have found from Our fathers." And will they follow their fathers, even though their fathers know nothing, nor will they be guided? (Q.S. Al-Maidah : 104)

Wali Allah according to Tawhid scholars is a person who keeps and follows what Allah loves and does, hates and is angry with what Allah hates and wraths and always commands what Allah loves and hates and forbids what is hated and wrathed by Him (Umry, 2018).

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ۗ ٦٢

It means

Remember, verily the saints of Allah, there is no concern for them and neither do they grieve. Yunus: 62).

According to Tafsir Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, it is mentioned that Allah explains that those who help Allah have no worries about His doom in the Hereafter, and they do not grieve over the missed pleasures of the world (Umry, 2018).

### C. Historical

Historically, this Grebeg Besar tradition was a means of da'wah carried out by Sunan Kalijaga during the era of the Demak kingdom which at that time was led by Raden Fatah. Which at that time the community was still very thick embracing the teachings of Hindu-Buddhism. So Sunan Kalijaga used the moment of Eid al-Adha as an opportunity to attract public attention by preaching through this tradition. He did not want to abolish the tradition before the advent of Islam, but to incorporate the values of Islamic teachings in the tradition. And this is the background for the emergence of the Great Grebeg tradition.

By looking at the phenomenon that until now runs among the people of Demak, this tradition is used as a moment to commemorate and honor the struggle of previous heroes in spreading Islam. Of course, there will be a shift in values that were not initially the same as what society feels today. Which at first glance when viewed from its values in ancient times is as a means of proselytizing Sunan Kalijaga which is the majority of Hindu-Buddhist communities, with today the majority of people are Muslim. And what is happening now are the values of honoring and commemorating the merits of heroes. And of course these values are different from the former.

And researchers believe that not all the science that is perceived now existed in the time of Sunan Kalijaga, but there are new sciences emerging. Because we cannot see or examine from one point of view, but there are many things that we can take from values outside the normative view.

According to the results of interviews by researchers with resource persons (Ta'mir of the Great Mosque of Demak, and several residents of Demak), there are the following points:

- a. The background of the emergence of this tradition began with the means of proselytizing Sunan Kalijaga in spreading Islam. In the past, there was only tahlilan, then some Demak Ulama added to the activity with the recitation and reading of the Quran, around the 1970s the event experienced its peak so it was called Grebeg Besar. So that there was a development with the existence of people selling, until finally the government participated in enlivening this tradition. And developed this Demak culture with the Tumpeng Songo motorcade. Because the government is involved in this culture, the Tumpeng Songo event starts from the Regency pavilion to the Great Mosque of Demak.
- b. The purpose of this Great Grebeg tradition is to Shiar Islam through Tumpeng Sembilan with recitation, so that this Great Grebeg tradition becomes a means of da'wah in developing Islamic religious teachings.
- c. The benefits of holding the Great Grebeg tradition when viewed from a religious and social point of view, among them are:
  - 1) The existence of friendship between the people of Demak and areas outside Demak
  - 2) Improving an economy because there are people selling
  - 3) Can gather between Ulama' and Umara' in Demak Regency

- d. This tradition can be seen from the phenomenon that occurs with its development from ancient times to the present.

The phenomenon used to be called sekaten, because the Kingdom of Demak moved to Solo Kepajang. And now it is called the Big Grebeg. There is a development between these two phenomena when viewed from their values, namely;

- 1). In the past, Sunan Kalijaga used this tradition as a means of proselytizing Islam among the people of Demak who at that time were still Hindu-Buddhist. Which at that time around the mosque there was a crowd that could attract the attention of the public and curious to see, and the requirement to be able to see had to read the shahada, not pay for tickets or tickets.

- 2). Now, the term is freer, because Grebeg Besar has a large scale, in addition to recitation, there is also entertainment, namely the night market in the Tembiring market. And many also invite pilgrims to make a pilgrimage to the tombs of Sultan Demak, Raden Fatah, Adipati and Sultan Trenggono. In addition, at this time it developed again with the Sholawatan parade in Mawlid with the invitation of students and Pesantren and Jam'iyyah.

- e. Early scholars had thought carefully about the normative angle of this tradition. With the tumpengan, it can be a sodaqoh for the community. But the drawback is that people are scrambling to get the rice tumpeng, and a lot of mubadzir rice falls.

#### D. Analysis of the Integration-Interconnection of Values of the Great Grebeg Tradition

This study explains the analysis of the Great Grebeg Tradition in Demak Regency through historical and normative approaches. This tradition can be seen from several

approaches to Islamic studies. Again, Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world. In addition, Indonesia has a lot of traditions that cannot be separated from generations of kingdoms in ancient times where the majority of religions were Hindu-Buddhist. With the entry of the Wali Allah into the country, they spread the teachings of Islam through cultural approaches and traditions. The Wali did not abolish cultural customs and traditions, but made it a means of preaching in conveying the teachings of Islam in accordance with the Word of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, the Word of God in the Qur'an:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجِدْ لَهُمْ  
بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ  
وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ١٢٥

It means

"Invoke to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good lessons and argue with them in a good way. Indeed, it is your Lord who knows better about who is lost from His way, and He knows those who are guided more."

The saints conveyed the teachings of Islam with great wisdom, especially Sunan Kalijaga where he received many recognitions from scholars and nobles that the way he delivered his da'wah was adapted to social phenomena and community conditions that existed at that time, especially in Java.

Among the benefits of the Great Grebeg Tradition is the friendship and meeting between the Ulama and Umara (Officials). As God says:

وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا  
وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ  
وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا  
مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَن كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا  
٣٦

It means

Worship God, and do not associate Him with anything. And do

good to two parents, relatives, orphans, poor people, near neighbors and distant neighbors, and colleagues, Ibn Sabil and your servant Sahaya. Indeed, God does not like people who are proud and boastful. (Q.S An-Nisa: 36)

Seeing the development of this tradition which involved the Government in the celebration of Grebeg Besar with the procession of Tumpeng Sembilan to the Great Mosque, and Jamas Oil to Kadilangu there were rows of creativ from the community, with many performances from young people. This shows that there is a sense of ukhuwah Islamiyah among the people of Demak by competing to show their creativity. Allah's Word in the Qur'an about Ukhuwah Islamiyah:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا  
اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ١٠

It means

The believers are brothers. So make peace between your two brothers, and fear Allah, so that you may receive mercy. (Q.S Al Hujurat : 10)

#### E. Character Education Values from the Great Grebeg Tradition

Based on the results of the integration-interconnection analysis, there are character education values embedded in the tradition of Grebeg Besar in Demak City, including: (Ardianto et al., 2022)

1. Leadership values: Religious leaders and community leaders hold leadership roles in the Great Grebeg tradition. This shows how important leadership is in organizing and leading events that involve many people.
2. The value of Mutual aid: The Great Grebeg tradition involves many people working together to plan and execute the event,

demonstrating the importance of the value of gotong-royong in building cooperation and solidarity in the community.

3. Aesthetic Value: Aesthetic value is very important to beautify and enrich the culture of the community, as shown by the procedures for the implementation of the Great Grebeg, which is beautiful and unique.
4. Religious Values: The Great Grebeg tradition is practiced as a way to show reverence and devotion to God. This shows how important religious values are for increasing people's faith and piety.

The Great Grebeg tradition can serve as a means of learning for elementary school students to understand and accept the values of character education contained in the tradition.

#### CONCLUSION

From the results of the study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Normatively, all activities in this tradition are in accordance with the teachings of Islam. Historically, this tradition was an effort and means of proselytizing the Wali Allah during the spread of Islam in Indonesia, especially in Java, where the majority of people embraced Hindu-Buddhism.
2. The values that can be taken from the tradition of Grebeg Besar are alms (Nasi Tumpeng) with produce, friendship between Ulama and Umara' (Officials) and ukhuwah Islamiyah between the people of Demak itself.
3. The principles of character education embodied in the Great Grebeg tradition can be used to teach children and help them develop as individuals. For example, the value of mutual aid and



leadership can be taught through activities in schools or in communities that involve cooperation and shared responsibility. In addition, art and cultural activities or religious activities can also help enrich the knowledge and experience of young people.

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