

# Cultural Inculturation: Riyaya Undhuh-Undhuh Celebration in Service at Gereja Kristen Jawa, Dagen-Palur, Surakarta

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**Abstract.** Humans are social creatures, and pluralism is a necessity in human tradition and culture. Through culture, humans can live together, adapt, and inculturated according to the context of place and time. Gereja Kristen Jawa Dagen-Palur is one of the churches that develops local theology, in the context of contextual cultural inculturation. Kejawen culture in the land of Java is not an obstacle in interacting horizontally between people and the surrounding community but is also able to interact vertically through liturgical facilities that build human interaction with God. Riyaya undhuh-undhuh celebration is a form of inculturation in which church culture and teachings blend, building social togetherness and togetherness in worship in the church. The local theology developed by the Javanese churches, in this case, GKJ Dagen-Palur, became the starting point for the development of a very diverse cultural inculturation in Indonesia. Through this paper, it is hoped that studies of local culture will emerge, which can be studied academically. This study and research are also expected to be able to contribute to the preservation of indigenous culture which is the most beautiful and precious gift from God for the Indonesian people who live in a diversity of ethnicities, cultures, and languages.

**Keyword:** Cultural Inculturation; Riyaya Undhuh-Undhuh; GKJ Dagen-Palur

## 1 Introduction

The progress in this era of globalization has helped a lot and provided solutions to various difficulties experienced by humans. Science and technology are modern cultural products for humans today. E. B. Taylor defines culture as that which encompasses all human experience [1]. Humans live with a culture that is inherent in them. Taylor further states that culture includes knowledge, art, morals, law, and other capacities and behaviors that are accepted or learned by humans and members of society [1]. The products in various inventions have provided a space for inculturation, where every country is increasingly open and can accept western culture or developed countries for common goals and progress. Inculturation becomes something natural as long as it does not conflict and does not interfere with the existing culture. Culture is inherited not from a genetic process, but through the process of inculturation, namely the process of human interaction in which an individual learns and accepts his or her culture. Humans acquire their culture both

consciously through direct learning and unconsciously through interaction [2]. Science and technology as a product of modern culture is a window for the life of a new culture for communities, groups, regions and even a country.

Gereja Kristen Jawa Dagen-Palur (GKJ Dagen Palur), is a religious institution that has the mission of proclaiming the Gospel, and the task of opening up to various backgrounds of one's life. The church needs to develop openness to the diversity or diversity of traditions and cultures that its people already have. Openness and willingness to accept cultural diversity in church life is a necessity for the preservation of the rich traditions that have been passed down by the ancestors of this nation. Indonesia has 1700 islands, 1001 regional languages, and 1331 tribes. This is evidence and a fact that cultural inculturation is something that is necessary to build a contextual theology based on the local wealth of a church.

*Riyayaundhuh-undhuh* is one of the traditions that was built in an encounter between Javanese tradition and Christian teachings. The word *undhuh-undhuh* or *ngundhuh* means picking[3]. In general, picking crops from crops or agriculture that have been waiting for so long. When the harvest season arrives, the Javanese people manifest their joy by performing *riyayaundhuh-undhuh* or harvest celebrations. This tradition is a form of gratitude to God who has bestowed his blessings on humans. Usually, this community excitement is manifested in the form of an all-night shadow puppet show, as well as songs by *sinden*, namely singers who accompany the shadow puppet show.

Since 1984, as a mature church, GKJ Dagen-Palur has periodically held the tradition of *riyaya undhuh-undhuh* in Sunday Worship. Usually, the *riyaya undhuh-undhuh* event is held to coincide with the church calendar, namely the descent of the Holy Spirit. On this occasion, the congregation brought their harvest, and not only limited to agricultural products but also innate variety. Those who do not have crops can bring livestock, carving, cooking, and others. Cultural inculturation is a social fact, there may be still some parties who reject the occurrence of cultural inculturation on the grounds of syncretism.

## 2 Theory

The word inculturation comes from the Latin "*inculturatio*". Formed from the word "in" which indicates something exists/goes; in (in), on (above) or indicating something is moving; to, towards, in, up. And the verb "*colo*", *colere*, *colui*, *cultum* refers to cultivating, cultivate, working, inhabiting, nurturing, respect, worship. The verb comes from the *cultura* noun, namely: cultivation, agricultural land, education, worship, worship. It can be seen from the combination of all these meanings that the word *cultura* gets the meaning of culture. Through the origin of the word above, *inculturatio* means insertion into a culture. In a broader and general sense, inculturation is an adjustment and adaptation to society, groups of people, habits, language, and behavior that are usually found in a place. Inculturation usually leads to contextualization or indigenization [4]. Contextualization has existed since the early church met the other world. As an ecumenical endeavor, there are two kinds of patterns in contextualization, namely: First, the attitude of the receiving church. This provides an understanding of the relevance of theological struggles for churches in mission areas. The receiving church first thinks about relevant matters in their place before in turn adapting to the ecumenical liturgical pattern. Second, is the attitude of the sending church. This means that there is an awareness

that contextualization is not like changing outer clothes without changing the soul. The receiving church begins the contextualization process by considering the ecumenical liturgical pattern, then from the results of these considerations try to apply it in its place[6]. In simple terms, inculturation is the process of integrating the faith experience of a local church into local culture in such a way that the experience does not only reveal itself in the elements of the culture concerned, and thus creates a new unity and communion, not only within that culture, but also as an element that enriches the mission of the church.

The expression *undhuh-undhuh* comes from the word *undhuh* or *ngundhuh* which means to pick. While the word *riyaya* means holiday, so the expression *riyaya undhuh-undhuh* can be understood as a harvest day, where residents or the community celebrate to express gratitude for the blessings they receive. In the *undhuh-undhuh* ritual, the community brings various harvests in the form of plants, fruit, livestock, rice, cakes made from cooking, and various community works[7]. After all the work and harvests have been collected, they then make mountains whose contents are the results of the harvest, for example containing vegetables, long beans, carrots, rice, eggplant, and others. The mountains are paraded around according to the route that has been made by the traditional holders or the elders of the local community. The *riyaya undhuh-undhuh* tradition is very close to *kejawen* nuances that are in contact with syncretism, especially the agrarian beliefs of the ancestors about Dewi Sri, who is believed to have a very important role in determining the success of the harvest; Therefore, the *riyayaundhuh-undhuh* tradition in ancient times was a Javanese thanksgiving ceremony for Dewi Sri for the success of the harvest.

When Javanese people know religion, especially those who are Christians, the *riyayaundhuh-undhuh* tradition is not eliminated but instead is *uri-uri* or preserved with new nuances to make it more in line with Christian teachings. This inculturation resulted in a cultural transformation that synergized with each other to create a new tradition. This tradition is packaged into a *riyayaundhuh-undhuh* worship which is held by the church in the context of thanking the people to God. God for His protection and blessings so that all those who work hard in trying something in the form of agriculture, fisheries, livestock can harvest or produce good results. good or even abundant.

Gereja Kristen Jawa (GKJ) Dagen-Palur is a tribal church whose residents are mostly Javanese. In the current development, the Dagen-Palur GKJ consists of various ethnic groups; Javanese, Batak, Minahasa, Papuan, Chinese, and others. Even though it is located in Central Java, Surakarta to be precise, GKJ Dagen-Palur has become a mini Indonesia in togetherness and fellowship. GKJ Dagen-Palur was matured into an independent church on June 2, 1984, by GKJ Margoyudan which was previously the mother church, whose task was to advise and assist the process of becoming an independent church, which is currently named; Dagen-Palur Javanese Christian Church [8]. Dagen-Palur consists of two regional alliance groups, namely the people in the Dagen hamlet area and the people in the Perumnas Palur area. Until now, the service of the Dagen-Palur GKJ is growing and expanding to the Mojolaban area, Karanganyar Alit.

The history of the ministry of GKJ Dagen-Palur grew and developed when the first pastor was ordained, on Pdt. Novemberi Choeldahono, MA [8]. Ecclesiology in the history of the ministry of GKJ Dagen-Palur is developed through a vision and mission that empowers all elements and potentials that exist in the existence of the congregation's life. One of the ecclesiological movements for evangelism is to develop contextual local theology, which is rooted in the repertoire of Javanese life and traditions [9]. GKJ Dagen-Palur membership consists of various life backgrounds, such as farmers, teachers, civil servants, entrepreneurs, traders, and housewives; of course with various

levels of economic ability. Infinite gratitude to God is manifested in the riyaya undhuh-undhuh worship which is usually determined by the Assembly in October along with the week or in the family month. At the riyayaundhuh-undhuh celebration, there is usually a separate committee formed to ensure that this event is held lively, smoothly, and successfully. Usually, the committee records the types of offerings for the riyayaundhuh-undhuh celebration from each family.

The priest as the leader of the community in exploring the kejawen ritual, which is full of mystical and critical aspects, is transformed into a celebration that has the nuance of gratitude to God for His blessings. Daniel L. Pals, quoting from Emile Durkheim's studies that ritual cannot be understood apart from people's lives; meaning that understanding ritual cannot be separated from the social aspect. Durkheim emphasized that the most fundamental aspects of religion are sacred and profane. The sacred is defined as the powerful and respected. While the profane is defined as part of daily life. Church rituals that are inculturated in the liturgized celebration of riyaya undhuh-undhuh become part of thanksgiving that is filled with nuances of Christian teachings based on the Bible [10]. This cultural inculturation runs and merges into a new tradition through a long journey that has been carried out by the predecessors who carried out evangelism based on the traditions and culture that existed in the local community where the church was founded.

### **3 Method**

Related to research on inculturation of culture and religion, including qualitative research. Qualitative research is the method to explore and understand the meaning that some individuals or groups of people ascribe to social or humanitarian problems. This research is more descriptive qualitative in nature, where the researcher wants to describe the problems and phenomena that occur in the field as they are to get the facts [10]. Data collected by studying literature, followed by data grouping and analysis and then drawing conclusions[11].

### **4 Result and Discussion**

At first, the riyayaundhuh-undhuh tradition was a kejawen tradition carried out by the Javanese as a form of gratitude to Dewi Sri, who was believed to be the giver of blessings and protection to the farmers. Dewi Sri is believed to be the element of success so that the harvest is abundant without any disturbance from pests, especially disasters or calamities. Even in the riyayaundhuh-undhuh tradition, the community shares their gratitude by "responding" to the Javanese term which means renting, organizing, or holding a shadow puppet show all night, with the sweet voices of the "sinden" adding to the splendor of the shadow puppet show. Gending accompaniment and mixed saris in the repertoire of Javanese music traditionally carry a message of gratitude to Dewi Sri who has guarded and blessed the farmers until the harvest arrives.

#### **4.1. Riyaya Undhuh-Undhuh Tradition as Cultural Property**

The *riyaya undhuh-undhuh* tradition is seen as a "super noble" cultural wealth for the Javanese people. This is a phenomenon of local cultural wealth that needs to be "scrambled" or preserved. The tradition of *riyaya undhuh-undhuh* became a sociological phenomenon where people have a religious sense to be grateful to the giver of blessings who at that time was believed to be Dewi Sri. Indeed, on the one hand, this can lead to syncretism, namely the worship of gods constructed by humans themselves as gods whose existence is higher than humans. Although it seems synchronic, the deepest meaning in *riyaya undhuh-undhuh* carries a religious message, namely "*nguri-uri kakulturn*" or maintaining and preserving culture and social messages where harvest happiness can be felt by all members of the community.

#### **4.2. Riyaya Undhuh-Undhuh Tradition in LifeJavanese Community in GKJ Dagen-Palur**

Gereja Kristen Jawa (GKJ) in general, which stands in Java, sees that every tradition that exists in Javanese society is the existence and identity of the Javanese people. The *riyaya undhuh-undhuh* tradition is a symbol of the Javanese respect for nature which has sheltered and helped various toils and jobs in cultivating their agricultural products. This tradition is inculturated with church traditions through a cultural transformation so that every cultural symbol that has grown is developed into a celebration of joint worship directed to God according to Christian teachings. GKJ Dagen-Palur living together with local traditions and culture is not without problems and friction. For example, the tradition of "slametan" 3 days, 7 days to 1000 days after someone dies, "kenduren", "ruwatan", "tumpengan" and many others are local cultural treasures which if able to be inculturated through cultural transformation will emphasize that Culture is not an obstacle for humans to know and believe in Christ [9].

GKJ Dagen-Palur which has matured since 38 years ago has built a Vision and Mission that leads to the preservation of tradition and culture as local wisdom that needs to be preserved and preserved. Biblical catechesis and understanding, as well as discussion vehicles in various seminars, become a bridge for the process of integrating local culture, becoming part of the wealth in concocting worship that has cultural nuances where traditions and teachings meet for the glory of God's Name.

## **5 Conclusion**

One area that has a diversity of traditions such as *riyaya undhuh-undhuh* is the residency of Surakarta in Central Java. This tradition has inculturated the religious life embraced by the people in Surakarta, especially the church congregation at GKJ Dagen-Palur, Surakarta. The tradition of *riyaya undhuh-undhuh* has been inculturated in the realm of worship, not only in GKJ Dagen-Palur, but in various churches in Java. Various traditions and cultures that grew up in the Javanese society contributed positively to the growth of faith in God in the development of worship models through a touch of culture that existed earlier in the church where the church was founded. The vision and mission of GKJ Dagen-Palur which is based on the proclamation of the living Christ has greeted culture as a means of developing local theology of GKJ Dagen-Palur through history for the younger generation as the foundation of the church in the future. Further research on cultural inculturation

which is full of human values and togetherness, such as; *slametan*, *kumbokarnan*, *ruwatan*, *banchakan* and so on, so that through research that produces a study, it is hoped that it can be the starting point for more in-depth research that can be justified academically to become a vehicle for constructive discussion.

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