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# Sacred Sites: Between Islamic and Hindu Traditions in Indonesia (A Comparative Study of Sacredness, Rituals, and Symbolism)

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## Abstract

This study aims to compare the sacrality, rituals, and symbolism found in the Tomb of Sunan Kudus and the Tomb of Raja Udayana, two sacred sites representing Islamic and Hindu religious traditions in Indonesia. Through a qualitative approach, this research identifies the spiritual, cultural, and social values passed down by these tombs, as well as how the rituals and symbolism reflect each religion's understanding of the relationship between humans, nature, and God. The Tomb of Sunan Kudus, with its 'buka luwur' and 'ngalap berkah' traditions, highlights the influence of Islamic Sufism and the values of tolerance, while the Tomb of Raja Udayana, with its 'Pujawali' and 'Nyekah' rituals, embraces the 'Tri Hita Karana' teachings that harmonize humans, nature, and God. This study also emphasizes the role of these tombs as centers of pilgrimage and the preservation of tradition, as well as their influence in strengthening collective identity within the community. The findings indicate that, despite differences in teachings and ritual practices, both tombs share universal values regarding the importance of maintaining harmony, spirituality, and human relationships. These findings provide deeper insight into the role of sacred tombs in fostering interfaith tolerance and the preservation of cultural heritage in Indonesia.

Keywords: Sacred Tombs, Sacrality, Rituals, Symbolism, Intercultural Communication.

## Introduction

Sacred tombs in Java and Bali play an important role in the spiritual and cultural life of the community. Besides having a major influence on cultural identity, these tombs reflect a harmonious blend of religion and local traditions (Chandra & Hadi, 2021a; Supriatna & Pageh, 2022) . These two regions, Java and Bali, illustrate a unique integration of religious beliefs, traditions, and reverence for the sacred, which directly shapes a distinctive cultural identity (Dwipayana & Sartini, 2023; Kholiq, 2013) . The existence of these sacred tombs is not only a spiritual place, but also an important pillar in building the spiritual and cultural awareness of local communities (Dwipayana & Sartini, 2023; Syudirman, 2024) .

In Java, the tombs of the saints are pilgrimage centers that reflect the fusion of Islamic teachings and traditions of ancestor respect (Karim, 2017; Munfangati, T;2020). This pilgrimage tradition shows the community's belief in the spiritual blessings obtained through visits to the tombs, as well as reflecting the acculturation between religion and culture that forms a strong belief system (Hayati, 2020; Latif & Usman, 2021; Mujib, 2016). On the other hand, sacred tombs in Bali

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such as the Karang Rupit and Pemecutan Sacred Tombs illustrate the integration of Hindu and Islamic elements in architecture and symbolism, making them not only a place of worship, but also a source of spiritual inspiration that is believed to bring blessings to people's daily lives (Makin, 2016; Rinaldi Permana Putra, 2023). Balinese people have a high awareness in preserving these sacred tombs as part of efforts to maintain cultural and spiritual heritage (Andayani et al., 2017).

The study of sacred tombs has attracted the attention of many researchers in exploring its spiritual, architectural, social and intercultural communication dimensions. Research on Islamic tombs, such as by Azra (2004), Chambert-Loir et al. (1995), and Ricklefs (2008), focus on their spiritual transformation and social value. Meanwhile, Hindu tomb studies by Covarrubias (1937), Hooykaas (1974), and Picard (1996) explore the role of tombs in Hindu spirituality, particularly in Bali. However, most of the studies were conducted separately without linking the two traditions. This research aims to fill the gap by comparing the sacred values, rituals, and symbolism of tomb pilgrimage in Islamic and Hindu traditions, in order to deepen the understanding of their interaction and influence in religious practices in Indonesia through the role of intercultural communication.

This paper aims to fill the void of studies related to sacred tombs in Islamic and Hindu traditions. In line with that, three questions can be formulated. **First**, What is the sacred value attached to the holy tomb in the two traditions? **Second**, What are the similarities and differences in the rituals performed at the holy tombs in the two traditions. **Third**, what is the symbolism used in the worship of the holy tomb in the Islamic and Hindu traditions? These three questions are the subject of discussion in this paper.

This paper is based on several assumptions: **First**, holy tombs in Islamic and Hindu traditions have sacred values rooted in their respective spiritual beliefs; **Second**, despite differences in rituals and symbolism, communities interpret holy tombs in spiritually similar ways; **Third**, pilgrimages to holy tombs have not only religious, but also social, cultural, and political dimensions, and help shape religious and cultural identities. The symbolism and rituals associated with holy graves also reflect a fusion of local beliefs and religious teachings.

## **Literature Review**

# **Holy Sepulcher**

The word 'makam' comes from the Arabic *maqam*, which means a certain position or place that has a value of honor (Munawwir, 2017). In Indonesian culture, the term makam refers to the final resting place or location where a person's body is buried after death (BPPB, 2016). A tomb is not only considered a physical place, but also a space that has important spiritual and social dimensions. In Java, the term *pesareyan* is known, which etymologically means 'final resting place', and has a similar meaning, namely the location where a person rests after leaving this world (Marwoto, 2018; Widyastuti, M., 2016)

The term 'holy tomb' refers to the burial place of individuals who are considered to have spiritual sanctity, such as saints in Islam or priests in Hinduism (Latif & Usman, 2021; Marwoto, 2018; Suparman & Bagiada, 2020). These tombs are revered because they are believed to have a spiritual influence that brings blessings to pilgrims (Mujib, 2016; Mundakir, 2020). In Indonesia, sacred tombs play an important role in religious and cultural life, serving as a place of pilgrimage as well as a symbol of respect for figures who have contributed to the spread of religious teachings or moral values (Hayati, 2020; Latif & Usman, 2021). In Java and Bali,

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pilgrimages to holy graves integrate local traditions with religious beliefs, making them spiritual centers that are preserved across generations.

# **Sacredness Theory**

Sacredness, which reflects majesty and holiness, is central to the understanding of sacred tombs in Hindu and Islamic traditions as centers of spirituality. According to Mircea Eliade (1959), sacred places, including tombs, are manifestations of the transcendental in the profane world (Ilea, 2021). In the Hindu tradition, ancestral tombs and temples symbolize deep spiritual connections, where rituals and reverence are performed for ancestors and deities (Tohari, 2021). Meanwhile, in the Islamic tradition, the tombs of saints or scholars are considered to have a direct connection with divine powers, and pilgrimage to such tombs becomes a practice of seeking blessings and spirituality (Elaskary & Yun, 2017; Jamhari, 2014).

The sacredness of a tomb is closely related to the spirituality of the person buried. If the person buried is a saint or holy person, the tomb becomes a respected spiritual center. In the Islamic tradition, the tomb of a saint is not only a resting place, but also an important part of the social order that teaches moral and religious values through the pilgrimage tradition. Pilgrims remember the saint's example, strengthen spiritual connections, and internalize religious values (Faidah, 2021; Kusumaningtyas, 2023; Ulfah et al., 2021). Meanwhile, in Bali, respect for the tombs of saints in the Hindu tradition shows unique adaptations according to the cultural context (Tohari, 2021). In both Islam and Hinduism, sacred tombs become a meeting point between the profane and the sacred, reinforcing community identity as well as a spiritual connection to their cultural heritage (Singh & Ahmad, 2021).

# **Ritual and Theory**

Victor Turner (1969) and Clifford Geertz (1973) made significant contributions in understanding the role of rituals and symbols in society, especially in the context of pilgrimage rituals at holy tombs in Hindu and Islamic traditions. According to Turner, rituals function as symbolic acts that connect humans to the spiritual world and strengthen social cohesion (Uhrin, M., 2021). In this context, pilgrimage rituals to holy graves reflect respect for ancestors or spiritual figures, and serve to affirm religious and cultural identity. This ritual is not only a religious practice, but also a means to strengthen religious values in the community (Suroyo et al., 2022).

Geertz (1973) emphasizes the importance of symbols in understanding culture and religion, where ritual symbols, such as offerings in Balinese Hinduism and prayers in Islam, connect the temporal world with the sacred (Segal, 2012). In pilgrimage traditions, these symbols have religious meanings as well as reflecting broader social and cultural values, for example in pilgrimage to the graves of saints in Islam which involves prayers to get closer to God (Jamhari, 2014). According to Suroyo et al. (2022) showed that rituals such as slametan in Javanese culture serve to strengthen social integration amidst societal change (Crumrine, 1970), in line with Turner's view that rituals strengthen social structure and community identity. Similarly, pilgrimages to temples and ancestral graves in Hindu traditions maintain the continuity of tradition and cultural identity (Suroyo et al., 2022).

# **Syncretism Theory**

The theory of syncretism explains the fusion of culture and religion at Hindu and Islamic shrine tombs in Indonesia. The concepts of 'folk religion' and 'official religion' by Robert Redfield (1956) and Clifford Geertz (1973) illustrate how local beliefs blend with formal teachings,

creating unique religious practices (Chandra & Hadi, 2021). In Java, holy tombs often combine animist and pre-Islamic elements, while selamatan and ruwatan traditions reflect the fusion of Islamic teachings with local culture. This practice shows that religion at the holy tomb is not only rooted in formal teachings, but also local traditions that enrich the spirituality of the community (Hermawan, 2022).

Ancestor worship practices in Balinese Hinduism reflect the adaptation of indigenous beliefs of the archipelago, creating traditions that are inclusive and attuned to cosmological balance. These traditions strengthen spiritual connections with ancestors and maintain harmony between humans and nature. However, the development of tourism presents a challenge for indigenous villages to balance tradition with modernity. Although influenced by modern lifestyles, indigenous villages continue to adapt, integrating modern elements without losing spiritual identity, making Bali an example of harmony between ancestral traditions and modernity (Dwipayana & Sartini, 2023).

## Method

This research focuses on the Tomb of Sunan Kudus in the Islamic tradition and the Tomb of Gunung Kawi in the Hindu tradition, both of which are considered sacred and become pilgrimage destinations. Both have rituals and symbolism that reflect spiritual values as well as local culture, and illustrate the harmonious interaction between Islam and Hinduism. Qualitative methods were used to describe the phenomena in both tombs, by collecting primary data through ritual observation and interviews with competent informants, as well as secondary data from related literature and historical documentation. In summary, the interviewed informants are mentioned as described. Table 1 below.

No.	Nama	Occupation and identity	Address
1.	(R.1)	Tombkeeper	Holy
2.	(R.2)		Holy
3.	(R.3)	Pilgrims	Demak
4.	(R.4)	Pilgrim	Holy
5.	(R.5)	Stakeholder	Bali
6.	(R.6)	Community leaders	Bali

Table 1. List of Informants

The data obtained were then grouped based on their respective trends according to the questions asked. The next stage is data display which is divided into three parts. Data display includes the activity of reorganizing information that provides the possibility of drawing conclusions. The data was analyzed using analytical descriptive techniques.

## **Results**

## The Holy Tomb of Sunan Kudus

# Sunan Kudus: Wali Spreading Islam on the North Coast of Java

Ja'far Shadiq, or Sunan Kudus, was born in Kudus in the 15th century AD. He was the son of Sunan Ngudung and Syarifah, and the younger brother of Sunan Bonang, with a lineage that goes back to the Prophet Muhammad through Ali bin Abi Talib and Husain bin Ali (Rosyid,

2020; Sunyoto, 2016). Sunan Kudus learned religion from Kiai Telingsing, a Chinese scholar who followed Admiral Cheng Ho. Armed with knowledge of religion, governance and Javanese culture, he developed a distinctive and culturally adaptive da'wah (Ricklefs, 2001; Sunyoto, 2016).

Sunan Kudus once served as warlord of the Demak Sultanate, replacing his father, Sunan Ngudung, who died on an expedition to East Java (De Graaf & Pigeaud, 1985; Sunyoto, 2016). Around 1549 AD, he began to preach in Kudus, as written on the mihrab of Masjid al-Aqsa, one of his historic relics (Khotimah, 2018; Rachmawati, 2018). Apart from being a scholar, Sunan Kudus was known as a cloth merchant, a tradition that is still continued by the people of Kudus today (Rachmawati, 2018).

Sunan Kudus, one of the main figures of Wali Songo, had an important role in spreading Islam in Java, especially in Kudus (Mundakir, 2020; Sunyoto, 2016). With a wise and adaptive approach, he succeeded in harmonizing Islamic teachings with local traditions that were thick with Hindu and Buddhist influences. One example is the prohibition of cow slaughter, as a form of respect for Hindu beliefs that consider cows as sacred animals (Adzkiya' & Rohman, 2019; Ricklefs, 2001). This humanist and tolerant approach reflects an attitude of respect for local wisdom, so that the teachings of Islam are more easily accepted. The Menara Kudus Mosque, with its tower resembling a Hindu temple, symbolizes the harmony between Islam and Javanese culture (Azra, Azyumardi, 2004; Khotimah, 2018).

Sunan Kudus, also known as the 'merchant wali' due to his trading skills, not only focused on the spiritual aspect, but also paid attention to the economic and social aspects of society. Through his teachings, he encouraged people to have a strong work ethic and participate in productive economic activities (Muhajarah et al., 2022; Salma, 2022). Sunan Kudus's preaching was not limited to religious aspects, but included broader social and economic dimensions (Cahya et al., 2020; Muhajarah et al., 2022; Rachmawati, 2018). It also emphasizes the importance of moral and ethical values, maintaining good relations with others, and respecting other beliefs. These teachings play an important role in shaping the inclusive character of Javanese society. Until now, the values taught by Sunan Kudus are still alive in Kudus traditions, such as Dandangan before Ramadan and buka luwur, which are symbols that unite Kudus people from various backgrounds (Azra, Azyumardi, 2004; Nikmah, 2023; Rosyid, 2020).

Thus, Sunan Kudus's legacy is visible in various aspects, from the architecture of the Menara Kudus Mosque to the traditions that are still preserved. His inclusive preaching approach, prioritizing tolerance and respect for local culture, became an effective model for spreading religion. Sunan Kudus proved that Islam can coexist with local culture without losing its essence. To this day, his tomb in the Masjid al Aqsa Menara Kudus complex remains a pilgrimage destination, reflecting his enduring influence in society and a unique cultural identity that combines elements of Islam with local traditions.

## The Tomb of Sunan Kudus: Sacred Value

The sacredness of Sunan Kudus's tomb lies in the community's belief that this place is a source of blessings, a location for 'ngalap berkah' (seeking goodness and blessings). In the theological view, saints are considered to occupy a sacred position after the Prophets, because of their piety and divine virtues that they achieved through spiritual journeys to reach the peak of ma'rifat. The characteristics of divinity such as karamah, barakah, and syafa'at are inherent in the wali, making them respected and believed to bring goodness to others, both during life and after death.

It is this belief that makes the tombs of the saints, including Sunan Kudus, a crowded pilgrimage center.

Various folk tales believed by the community regarding Sunan Kudus's karamah, as told by one of the caretakers of the Tomb of Sunan Kudus (R1, 60<sup>th</sup>), are as follows:

"According to the people's stories, Kanjeng Sunan Kudus has a lot of karomahs, including being able to treat sick people, and his prayers are mustajabah. Sanese, the karomah of Kanjeng Sunan nggih kagungan pusaka ingkang saget ngedalaken suwanten ingkang gegirisi saget dadosaken poro musuh kacirir keranten ajreh ...masyarakat percados menawi kanjeng sunan meniko kinasihi Gusti Allah ingkang katah karomahipun ..." (Interview R1, (60 years old); Kudus).

# **Meaning:**

"According to folklore, Sunan Kudus had special features, including being able to cure diseases with prayer. Another specialty was that Sunan Kudus had an heirloom that could make a very frightening sound and could cause enemies to collapse out of fear. People believe that Sunan Kudus was a wali (lover) of God who had many privileges ..." (Interview R1, (60 years old); Kudus).

Almost the same statement was also made by a pilgrim from Demak (R3) who deliberately came to the tomb of Sunan Kudus to pray, as follows:

"Well, I've been traveling to visit Kanjeng Sunan Kudus, in fact I've been praying to Kanjeng Sunan, in the hope that Allah will answer my prayers, so that my family will be saved from bad luck and other illnesses, and will be safe in the world and the hereafter. Everything depends on the will of Gusti Allah, I believe that in reality Gusti Allah meniko is not sidho, but moved by nature ... I hope that my sickness will be able to get well thanks to the tawasul of Kanjeng Sunan ..." (Interview R3, 75<sup>th</sup>, Kudus).

## Meaning:

"Yes, I have repeatedly made pilgrimages to the *tomb* of Sunan Kudus, with the intention of *tawasul*, hopefully my prayers will be answered by Allah, my family will be kept away from calamities, diseases and will be safe in the here and now. Everything depends on the will of Almighty Allah. I believe that the saints of Allah did not die, only moved on. I hope that my illness can be cured with the tawasul of the Holy Sunan ..." (Interview R3, 75<sup>th</sup>, Kudus).

The statements of R1 and R3 above show the community's belief in Sunan Kudus's charity as a saint of God, who is believed to have extraordinary abilities such as healing diseases and protecting from threats. This belief encourages many people to make pilgrimages and make alms, asking God to answer their prayers, protect their families, and obtain safety in this world and the hereafter. People also believe that the saints do not really die, but only move on, so they can still intercede for blessings for those on pilgrimage

The sacredness of Sunan Kudus's tomb is evident in the annual tradition of 'buka luwur', held every 10th Muharram. This ritual involves changing the cloth covering Sunan Kudus's tomb, and is attended by thousands of people from all over. The procession is not only a symbolic effort to 'ngalap berkah' or seek blessings, but also a form of respect for Sunan Kudus as a figure who contributed to the spread of Islam in Java. The people who gather to participate in this event are not just carrying out tradition, but also building strong social ties, creating a sense of community, and strengthening collective identity as part of a community that respects ancestral

heritage. Buka luwur at the Tomb of Sunan Kudus is a sacred moment that unites the community in a spirit of togetherness and respect for centuries of tradition.

Thus, the sacredness of Sunan Kudus's tomb is reflected in the community's deep respect for Sunan Kudus as a figure spreading Islam and a saint of God who is believed to have karamah or spiritual privileges. This sacredness is seen in various traditions, such as the annual ritual of *buka luwur*, pilgrimage, and the community's belief in the blessings that can be obtained by *praying* at his tomb. Apart from being a place to seek blessings, the tomb also functions as a social and spiritual center, which strengthens the bonds among the community and affirms their collective identity. Through this practice of veneration, Sunan Kudus's tomb is not only a historical site, but also a spiritual symbol that inspires values of togetherness, tolerance and respect for religious and cultural heritage.

# Ritual Variety at the Tomb of Sunan Kudus

The various rituals at the Tomb of Sunan Kudus are a manifestation of the sacredness and spiritual heritage of Sunan Kudus. As a place believed to be sacred, various rituals are performed by the community to draw blessings as well as show deep respect for the figure of Sunan Kudus, who is seen as a saint of God and spreader of Islam in Java. These rituals include daily pilgrimages, tawasul, as well as annual ceremonies such as buka luwur and *khoul* which have deep spiritual, social and cultural meanings.

**First**, pilgrimage and *tawasul*. Rituals of pilgrimage and tawasul at the Tomb of Sunan Kudus take place almost every day, both day and night. Pilgrims come from various regions in Indonesia, and often from neighboring countries such as Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei (interview R1, 60 <sup>th</sup>, Kudus). They come with various purposes, ranging from asking for blessings, praying for safety, to seeking inner peace in this place that is considered holy. This ongoing pilgrimage tradition shows how strong the community's respect for Sunan Kudus as one of the Walisongo, who is considered a spiritual intermediary to get closer to God. The tomb is not only a place of contemplation, but also a symbol of the peaceful and tolerant spread of Islam in the archipelago. The presence of pilgrims from various social and cultural backgrounds reflects the spiritual appeal of Sunan Kudus's tomb that transcends geographical boundaries, making it an important pilgrimage center in the Southeast Asian region.

Based on observations, pilgrims to the Tomb of Sunan Kudus generally perform rituals by reading *tahlil* before performing prayers. The reading of *tahlil* usually begins with reading *tawasul* with *Surah al Fatihah*, then continued with reading Surah Yasin and a series of *tahlil* dhikr and closed with *tahlil* prayers. The reading of the *tahlil* ritual series is sometimes read in congregation and there are also times when it is read alone. In the recitation of the prayer, the pilgrims look solemn as they pray for blessings to God through the intercession of Sunan Kudus, a respected saint of God. They believe that spiritual closeness to Sunan Kudus can strengthen their relationship with God, bring inner peace, and increase hope for the fulfillment of their prayers (Observation dated 1/11/2024)

**Second**, the *buka luwur* ritual. The buka luwur ritual is one of the annual events commemorating the khaul, or anniversary of the death of Sunan Kudus, which falls on the 10th of Muharram each year. This event emphasizes the sacredness of Sunan Kudus's tomb and is a form of respect for the Wali. In this procession, the worn-out grave cloth or *luwur* is replaced with a new one, as a symbol of purity and respect.

Buka luwur is not just a change of cloth, but a sacred moment that invites thousands of people, both local people and pilgrims from various regions. They gather with sincere intentions, to seek blessings and pray for the grace and bounty of Allah SWT. The presence of these pilgrims helped create a solemn atmosphere, filled with chants of prayer, hope, and gratitude for the spiritual guidance that Sunan Kudus had passed on. Buka luwur is a reminder for the people of the importance of honoring the ancestors and maintaining traditions that are full of religious meaning.

According to the mausoleum keeper (R1, 60<sup>th</sup>), the series of *buka luwur* commemorations starts with the Jamas *Pusaka Cintoko* event on the 15th of Dhulhijah. This is a ritual to purify the heirlooms that has become a hereditary tradition. Then on the 1st of Muharram, a recitation of the Hijri new year is held at the Sunan Kudus Tomb Area, followed by the procession of releasing *the luwur* cloth next day. In the middle of Muharram, a *Munadharah Masail Diniyah* event, *Apostle's Prayer*, *Terbang Papat*, *Khotmil Quran*, and orphan compensation are held at the Menara Kudus Mosque. In addition to those already mentioned, on the same day there was also the distribution of *Ashura porridge* distributed to houses in Kauman, then in the evening there was a recitation of *Qasidah Al-Barzanji* at the Tomb of Sunan Kudus. The climax of the buka luwur event is on the 10th of Muharram with a series of public recitations, distribution of *jambal* rice or *blessing copies* and then ends with the installation of a new *luwur* at the Tomb of Sunan Kudus (interview R1, 60 th, Kudus).

The *buka luwur* ceremony creates strong social ties among the community as they collectively participate in the sacred procession, while strengthening a sense of community and collective identity. As said by an informant who is an academic/researcher (R3, 50<sup>th</sup>):

"The buka luwur ceremony is not only a ritual event, but also has a social dimension. At the event, pilgrims from various backgrounds, including officials, scholars, businessmen, students and the community gathered to honor and remember the services of Kanjeng Sunan Kudus. The presence of these pilgrims helped create a solemn atmosphere, full of prayers, hopes, and gratitude for the spiritual guidance that Sunan Kudus had passed on. Buka luwur is a reminder for the people of the importance of honoring the ancestors and maintaining traditions that are full of religious meaning." (Interview R3, 50 Kudus).

Thus, the *buka luwur* ritual at the Tomb of Sunan Kudus is an annual tradition full of religious and cultural significance, carried out in honor of the *anniversary* of Sunan Kudus's death. This procession, involving the replacement of the cloth covering the tomb (*luwur*) with a new cloth, is not only a symbol of respect but also a moment to strengthen the spiritual bonds and gratitude of the community. Every year, thousands of pilgrims gather to pray, *seek blessings*, and take part in a series of religious events that include recitation of the Quran, distribution of compensation, and other symbolic events. Buka luwur is a powerful reminder of the legacy of Sunan Kudus's noble values that are expected to continue to be preserved and inspire future generations.

## **Symbolism of Sunan Kudus's Tomb**

The tomb of Sunan Kudus is one of the historical and religious sites that has a deep symbolic meaning for the people of Indonesia, especially Muslims in Central Java. The tomb not only serves as the final resting place for Sunan Kudus, one of the Wali Songo, but also as a spiritual center that brings together various cultural, religious and historical elements in harmony. The symbolism contained in the tomb reflects the cosmological views and values of the local

community, and reflects Sunan Kudus's efforts to spread Islam using an acculturative approach. Some of the symbolic meanings of the holy tomb of Sunan Kudus include:

**First**, the symbolism of the tomb's architecture. The architecture of the Sunan Kudus Tomb complex, including the Menara Kudus Mosque, reflects a rich cultural blend of Hinduism, Javanese and Islam. The symbolism of this acculturation is evident in the building design of the tomb complex, which is decorated with Hindu temple-style gates as gateways. The minaret of the mosque is also built to resemble a temple with a red-brick structure, showing typical elements of Hindu architectural art. In the mosque building, the three-pitched roof is one of the characteristics influenced by Hindu-Javanese architecture, showing a harmonious blend of local culture with Islamic elements. In addition, the mosque has five doors on each side, symbolizing the pillars of Islam, while the mosque gate is designed to resemble a Bentar Temple, signifying a deep respect for Hindu art traditions. The architecture as a whole illustrates the adaptation of Islam to local culture in a unique and meaningful form.

**Second**, the symbolism of the *luwur* cloth as a symbol of purity and respect. The luwur cloth covering Sunan Kudus's tomb is replaced every year in the buka luwur ritual, a tradition performed every 10th of Muharram. Buka luwur is a symbol of sanctity, respect and commemoration of Sunan Kudus as a revered figure in the history of Islam in Java. The replacement of this cloth reflects the community's commitment to maintaining and caring for the tomb physically and spiritually. The luwur cloth also symbolizes the effort to cleanse the heart and enhance the spirituality of pilgrims who come to pray and *seek blessings*. With a new cloth installed each year, buka luwur becomes a purification ritual that serves to renew the community's resolve to emulate the life of Sunan Kudus, who was known for spreading Islam with tolerance and wisdom.

**Third**, the value of tolerance in the life of Sunan Kudus. The symbolism in Sunan Kudus's tomb is also reflected in the teachings of tolerance brought by Sunan Kudus. Known as a wise figure, he spread Islam peacefully and prioritized cultural acculturation. One famous story is Sunan Kudus's decision not to slaughter a cow, an animal considered sacred in Hindu beliefs, as a form of respect for the local community. This gesture demonstrated Sunan Kudus's commitment to creating a harmonious and tolerant society. His tomb is a lasting symbol of the importance of respecting differences and living life with tolerance, in accordance with the teachings of Islam as a mercy to the universe.

As such, the holy tomb of Sunan Kudus is more than just a resting place; it is a living symbol of the spiritual, cultural and social values bequeathed by Sunan Kudus. With its unique architecture that combines Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic elements, as well as the meaningful tradition of buka luwur, the tomb serves as a reminder of the acculturation and tolerance values that have taken root in Javanese society. Within the frame of symbolism, the tomb teaches the importance of maintaining sanctity, caring for ancestral heritage, and strengthening spiritual bonds as the basis for a peaceful and blessed life.

## The Sacred Tomb of King Udayana at Gunung Kawi Temple

## King Udayana and the History of Gunung Kawi Cemetery

King Udayana, one of the great kings of the Warmadewa Dynasty, ruled Bali in the 10th to early 11th century AD. This dynasty is known as the protector of noble Hindu values in Bali. During his reign, King Udayana brought strategic policies that maintained the survival of the community

3136 Sacred Sites: Between Islamic and Hindu Traditions in Indonesia in a fair and equitable manner, while preserving Hindu culture and religion on the Island of the Gods (Ardhana et al., 2014; Remawa, & Seramasara, 2021; Suatama, 2019).

One of King Udayana's pro-people policies is recorded in the Batur Pura Abang A Inscription (1011 AD), plate VIIa. This inscription reveals his strategic policy of helping the people of Er Hawang Village who were experiencing difficulties, by giving forest land to be used as farming land to fulfill their needs, as follows:

"....ya tika alas gamya tan pawwang, sanambahakĕnikang karāman, i pāduka haji, pinintanya pakathānin, inger hawang, mapakna kbwanĕn, tanĕmana gangan, sahanahana, samangdadyakna harakna..."

## Translation:

".... is a forest that can be reached and is not inhabited by people, offered by the inhabitants to his majesty, requested as the territory of Er Hawang village for gardens to plant vegetables as needed for food..."

King Udayana married Mahendradatta, daughter of the Isyana Dynasty and sister of Dharmawangsa Teguh of the Medang Kingdom, East Java. This marriage cemented Balinese and Javanese relations, creating significant cultural, religious and political syncretism (Dwi, Amurwani et al., 2014; Remawa, & Seramasara, 2021). From the marriage three sons were born: Airlangga, Marakata, and Anak Wungsu. After the coup that brought down the Medang Kingdom, Airlangga was evacuated to Java to resume the throne in the Kediri Kingdom, while Marakata and Anak Wungsu continued to rule in Bali, reigning in 1018-1049 AD and 1049-1077 AD respectively (Putra, Tjokorda Raka., 2015)

As a tribute to the services of King Udayana, the construction of the Gunung Kawi Temple Complex began during the time of King Marakata and was completed by King Anak Wungsu (Dwi, Amurwani et al., 2014). Located in Tampaksiring Village, Gianyar, this temple is believed to be the tomb and monument of honor for King Udayana and his family (Ade & Dewi, 2023). Gunung Kawi Temple has a distinctive architecture, with the temple carved directly into the rock cliff (Sanjaya, K. O. & Mahendra, G. S., 2023). Apart from being a place of pilgrimage, this site functions as a sacred place, a medium for historical education, cultural heritage, and a symbol of King Udayana's greatness as a dignified leader of Bali.

The Gunung Kawi complex itself consists of several temple reliefs carved into large rock cliffs in the Pakerisan River valley. These temples are believed to represent members of the royal family, including King Udayana, Mahendradatta, and his sons (Gunawarman, 2018) . The architecture of these temples shows characteristics of the ancient Balinese architectural style, which combines Hindu elements with local beliefs. The temple's position near the river also symbolizes purity, in accordance with the Balinese belief that water is a sacred element that can bring spiritual cleansing (Astrama & Mahayasa, 2021) .

Thus, the legacy of King Udayana's glory is still visible in various aspects, such as temple architecture, literary works (Babad), and culture and traditions that continue to be preserved. His leadership that prioritizes the interests of the Balinese people is a role model that is relevant today. The reverence for his sacred tomb at Gunung Kawi Temple Complex, which remains a place of pilgrimage and spirituality for the Balinese people, reflects his enduring influence. Through strong leadership and character, King Udayana created a great cultural identity combining Hindu teachings with local Balinese traditions, which has been preserved to this day.

# The Sacred Value of Udayana's Tomb at Gunung Kawi Temple

For the Balinese people, King Udayana is revered as an ancestor and spiritual figure, in line with the RajaRsi concept that considers the king as the embodiment of God's right hand (Darna, I Wayan, 2018; Putra, Tjokorda Raka., 2015). His tomb at Gunung Kawi Temple has high sacred value, not only as a final resting place, but also as a pilgrimage site where people pray for blessings and prosperity (Ardhana et al., 2014; Remawa, & Seramasara, 2021)

The Gunung Kawi Temple complex has a sacred value that is closely related to the teachings of Tri Hita Karana, which emphasizes harmony between humans and others (Pawongan), nature (Palemahan), and God (Parhyangan) (Ardhana et al., 2014; Peters, Jan Hendrik & Wardana, Wisnu., 2014). Its location that blends with nature reflects a harmonious spiritual relationship, making it a center of pilgrimage and worship to Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa as well as respect for ancestors. The belief in its spiritual power, plus the supportive natural conditions, make Gunung Kawi Temple an attraction for pilgrims and travelers. The presence of Gunung Kawi Cliff Temple in this complex adds religious significance as a place for Hindu worship.

Various folk tales believed by the Balinese people regarding the greatness of King Udayana also became the breed of Leaders to come and ask for blessings, as conveyed by one of the Guardians of the Gunung Kawi Cliff Temple (R4), as follows:

"There are a lot of devotees who are praying to the officials, agencies, and leaders of Bali. Raganyane ngaturang bhakti tur yadnya, mangdane nunas safety muah kerahajengan saking Ida Bhatara sane malinggih ring Pura. Selantur ipun, wenten still sane ngaturang punia antuk nunas guidance sareng Ida Prabhu (Udayana)." (Interview R4, (50 years old); Tampaksiring).

# Meaning:

"Most visitors come from officials, agencies, or leaders in Bali. They usually come to offer prayers and yadnya offerings so that they are given the grace of safety and prosperity from Ida Bhatara who is in the temple. Furthermore, there are also those who offer punia to ask for guidance from King Udayana." (Interview R4, (50 years old); Tampaksiring).

In addition, this tomb complex is considered a source of spiritual energy. Balinese Hindus believe that this place has an aura of purity, power and peace, making it perfect for meditating or performing tapa brata as a form of self-purification. It is also believed to provide protection to the surrounding villages, as it is guarded by the spirits of the ancestors who reside there.

A corroborating statement regarding this was delivered by a pilgrim from Klungkung (R5) who had performed prayers at Gunung Kawi Temple, as follows:

"Nggih yadiastun sampun lebar, titiang madue sraddha Ida Prabhu Udayana muah Prati Sentanan Ida kari ngejaga muah nuntun bhakta sami ring sejebag Bali puniki. Nika mawinan Candi puniki wenten tur kedadosang place sane mewasta suci antuk ngaturang bhakti muah sesangi." (Interview R5, 57, Klungkung).

## Meaning:

"Yes, even though he has left the world, I believe that the power of King Udayana and his sons and descendants still inhabit, guard, and guide the Balinese people. That is why this temple is present and used as a sacred place to offer prayers and supplications." (Interview R5, 57th, Klungkung).

The statements of R4 and R5 reflect the community's belief in the majesty of King Udayana and the value of spirituality inherent in the Gunung Kawi Temple Complex. As an influential king, King Udayana and the Bhatara who reside in Gunung Kawi Temple are believed to always protect and accompany the Balinese people. Therefore, it is not surprising that many travelers, pilgrims, and Balinese leaders come to offer prayers, ask for safety, and prosperity. The sacredness of this complex is not only to honor ancestors, but also as a form of worship to Hyang Maha Kuasa and an effort to maintain the harmony of nature and its contents.

Thus the sacredness of King Udayana's Tomb at Gunung Kawi Temple is reflected in the community's respect for him as a leader and spiritual figure who brought the progress of Bali. This tomb becomes a social and spiritual center that reflects the harmony of man, nature, and God according to the teachings of Tri Hita Karana. The practice of worship at this tomb makes it a spiritual symbol that revives the values of struggle, humanity, and respect for Balinese cultural and religious heritage

# Ritual Variety of the Sacred Tomb of King Udayana at Gunung Kawi Temple

Rituals at Gunung Kawi Temple reflect the sacredness and high respect for King Udayana and his family (Ardhana et al., 2014) . As a sacred cultural heritage, various rites are passed down from generation to generation, reflecting the majesty and example of King Udayana as a leader who brought prosperity to Bali (Remawa, & Seramasara, 2021) . Some of the commonly performed rituals include Pujawali, Nyekah, and Meditation.

**First**, Pujawali, or Piodalan in Balinese tradition, is a routine yadnya ceremony performed by Hindus in a temple or shrine to worship Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa and honor ancestors and gods (Darta, 2020). At Gunung Kawi Temple, pujawali is held every year on the Holy Day of Purnama Sasih Katiga, which usually falls in August or September in the Gregorian calendar. This holy time coincides with the anniversary of the founding of the temple in the temple complex, considered the best moment to offer puja and sincere prayers to God and Ida Bhatara who resides in the temple (Interview R4, 50, Tampaksiring).

Observations showed that during Pujawali or Piodalan at Gunung Kawi Temple, the people of Banjar Penaka, Tampaksiring Village, worked together to prepare the entire ceremony. Preparations include decorating the Palinggih temple, making Penjor, preparing banten, and other offerings. On the D-Day, devotees, both villagers and visitors, offer offerings, flowers, gifts of money, and fruits. Hindus who attend are also free to perform prayers to Ida Bhatara who is in the temple. This piodalan is believed to bring blessings of peace and prosperity, not only for local residents but also for the Balinese people in general. By upholding the Tri Hita Karana concept during the ceremony, all aspects of life, including nature and the environment, also feel a positive and harmonious impact (Observation, 10/11/2024).

**Second**, Nyekah or Ngaben Leluhur at Gunung Kawi Temple is a symbolic ceremony to honor King Udayana and the ancestors. Although Ngaben is usually performed for recently deceased family members, this ceremony symbolizes a request for the blessing of the ancestors so that the relationship between the living and the dead remains harmonious. This ritual reflects the value of *Pawongan* in the Tri Hita Karana teachings, which emphasizes the importance of maintaining harmonious relationships between people, including with ancestors. In addition to honoring King Udayana and his descendants, this ritual also serves to strengthen the relationship between worshipers at Pura Candi Gunung Kawi (Peters, Jan Hendrik & Wardana, Wisnu., 2014).

**Third**, meditation and tapa brata rituals are often performed at Gunung Kawi Temple by Hindu religious leaders and the general public. This activity aims to unite with the spiritual energy of King Udayana and ancestors, as well as cleanse themselves from negative influences. This place is believed to have special powers that provide tranquility and strengthen the mind. In Hinduism, tapa brata and semadhi yoga are part of *Catur Marga Yoga*, especially *Raja Marga Yoga*, which emphasizes the unification of mind, soul, and heart as a path to the Almighty (Resa, 2023).

Talking further about the meditation and tapa brata rituals performed at Gunung Kawi Temple, it was confirmed by one of the Temple Guardians of Gunung Kawi Cliff Temple (R4). He explained his confession as follows:

"Oh wenten, wenten. I'm very grateful for the many devotees who practice meditation, yoga, and meditation in the temple complex. Wenten sane has become a saint, a community leader, much wenten still sane saking dura Bali tour dura country. Nggih yening tetujonyane pinih becik, pasti kecemawis olih Ida" (Interview R4, (50 years old); Tampaksiring).

# Meaning:

"Oh there is, there is. When it comes to visitors who perform tapa, bratha, yoga, and semadhi in this temple complex. There are those who have the title of saint, public figures, and even those who come from outside Bali and abroad. If the purpose is noble and based on goodness, it will definitely be accepted by Ida." (Interview R4, (50 years old); Tampaksiring).

Thus, the Gunung Kawi Temple complex is known as a sacred place with strong spiritual and sacred values, where various important rituals are performed, such as Pujawali, Nyekah, and meditation. Pujawali which is held every Purnama Sasih Katiga as an offering to God, Nyekah which is a tribute to the ancestors, as well as tapa, brata, yoga, and semadhi rituals performed for self-purification and inner calm. All these rituals, which have been performed for generations, illustrate the preservation of the noble values of the archipelago at Gunung Kawi Temple.

## Symbolism of King Udayana's Tomb at Gunung Kawi Temple

The sacred tomb of King Udayana in the Gunung Kawi Temple Complex has a deep symbolic meaning, especially for Balinese Hindus. More than just a final resting place, this temple is a historical heritage that combines elements of Balinese and Javanese culture, Hinduism, and the timeless value of struggle (Ade & Dewi, 2023) . The noble symbolism reflects the harmony of metaphysics, humanism, and patriotism combined with the spirituality of Balinese nature. The example of King Udayana as a leader who prioritizes the welfare of the community makes this temple not only a sacred place, but also a cultural heritage and a special spiritual center (Remawa, & Seramasara, 2021; Sanjaya, K. O. & Mahendra, G. S., 2023) . Some symbolic meanings of the sacred tomb of King Udayana at Gunung Kawi Temple Complex, Gianyar, Bali include:

**First, the** architecture of Gunung Kawi Temple's cliff carvings, which are carved directly on a large rock cliff, symbolizes strength and firmness, reflecting the leadership spirit of King Udayana and his descendants when leading Bali. It also symbolizes sincerity and dedication in honoring the spirits of the Pitara or ancestors (Ade & Dewi, 2023). Since the beginning, Gunung Kawi Temple functioned to commemorate the great services of King Udayana and his family. In addition, this architecture symbolizes the harmony of Balinese society from time to time. The sculptural form also illustrates the harmony between humans and nature, in accordance with the

teachings of Tri Hita Karana, especially the Palemahan aspect (Peters, Jan Hendrik & Wardana, Wisnu., 2014) . This value is reflected in the story of King Udayana who honored nature, as recorded in the Batur Pura Abang A Inscription (1011 AD), when he cleared the forest to support the economic life of the Er Hawang Village community.

**Second, the** Pakerisan River. The Gunung Kawi Temple complex is located near the Pakerisan River, which is considered sacred by the Balinese people. In Balinese tradition, river water, including the Pakerisan River, symbolizes purity and the flow of life (Adisastra & Prabawa, 2024). The existence of this river reminds people and visitors of the importance of maintaining harmony with nature, especially in preserving water. The location of the sacred tomb in the Gunung Kawi Temple complex adjacent to the river also reflects the closeness of King Udayana to the people and the surrounding nature. This symbolizes the balance of life between humans and their environment and provides an educational message for today's leaders to always prioritize environmental sustainability in every step of development.

**Third,** *Tri Hita Karana.* The philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana*, which includes harmony between humans and God (Parhyangan), humans and nature (Palemahan), and humans and others (Pawongan), is beautifully reflected in the Tomb of King Udayana. This tomb is a tangible manifestation of this harmony, where visitors who come to Gunung Kawi Temple are not just making a pilgrimage or traveling. Many make offerings and tributes to ancestors, get closer to God through Tapa Bratha, or simply blend in with the beauty of the surrounding nature. The temple structure that blends perfectly with the natural environment reflects that spirituality is an inseparable part of everyday life and the universe (Peters, Jan Hendrik & Wardana, Wisnu., 2014). These three aspects of *Tri Hita Karana* continue to be maintained and preserved by the community and visitors as a noble heritage that harmonizes life.

Fourth, the Symbol of Spiritual Leadership. King Udayana is revered as a wise leader with deep spiritual insights. His tomb at Gunung Kawi became a symbol of inspiring leadership, where he was remembered as a figure who was close to the community, God (Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa), and the universe (Ardhana et al., 2014). His example and policies continue to live on in the leadership values inherent in the Gunung Kawi Temple complex. This can be seen from the regular visits of leaders and institutions in Bali who seek guidance and welfare at the holy tomb. In addition, the symbol of King Udayana's leadership also serves as a valuable historical educational medium for the younger generation.

Thus, the sacred tomb of King Udayana at Gunung Kawi Temple symbolizes the values of life such as leadership, humanism, spirituality, and culture inherited by him and his descendants. The sculptural architecture of the cliff depicts strength and resilience, while the Pakerisan River symbolizes the harmonious relationship between man and nature. The concept of Tri Hita Karana reflects Balinese philosophy, making this tomb a symbol of spiritual leadership and a guide to life. All these elements emphasize the importance of preserving the history, culture and spiritual values reflected in the harmony at Gunung Kawi Temple, Tampaksiring, Gianyar, Bali.

## **Discussio**

This research shows that the Tomb of Sunan Kudus and the Tomb of King Udayana are both symbols of sacredness that reflect spiritual, cultural and social values, although with different focuses. The Tomb of Sunan Kudus illustrates the fusion of Islamic and local Javanese culture, with rituals such as buka luwur and ngalap blessings reflecting the teachings of Sufism and tolerance (Falaq, 2022; Khotimah, 2018; Maftuchah & Fauji, 2020; Mundakir, 2020; Nikmah,

2023; Rosyid, 2020), while Udayana's Tomb of the King highlights harmony between humans, nature, and God through the teachings of Tri Hita Karana, with rituals such as Pujawali, Nyekah, and meditation emphasizing self-purification and respect for ancestors (Ardhana et al., 2014; Peters, Jan Hendrik & Wardana, Wisnu., 2014; Remawa, & Seramasara, 2021; Resa, 2023). These two tombs, although different in philosophy and symbolism-where the Tomb of Sunan Kudus reflects cultural acculturation and the Tomb of King Udayana connects humans with nature-reaffirm the importance of maintaining tradition, spirituality, and respect for ancestors as guidelines for life that harmonize society.

Research on the Tomb of Sunan Kudus and the Tomb of King Udayana shows that these two sites are evidence of the continuity of spiritual, cultural and social values inherited by great figures in the history of the archipelago. Both tombs function as places of respect, spiritual centers, and symbols of the community's collective identity, with local traditions that maintain harmony through the fusion of religious and cultural elements. Rituals such as buka luwur at the Tomb of Sunan Kudus and Pujawali at the Tomb of King Udayana strengthen the spiritual connection and identity of the community, proving that these tombs are not just historical sites, but also cultural centers that inspire tolerance, harmony and preservation of ancestral heritage.

The continuation of sacredness, ritual and symbolism at the Tomb of Sunan Kudus and the Tomb of King Udayana is influenced by several main factors. Religious factors, such as belief in the karamah of spiritual figures and inherited religious teachings, form a strong basis for rituals and pilgrimages. Cultural factors, through the acculturation of local traditions with religious values, strengthen community identity. Social factors, with the role of the local community and the function of the tomb as a center of solidarity, help maintain this tradition. Historical factors, such as the influence of figures in the history of the archipelago, as well as environmental elements that support the sanctity of the place, also contribute. In addition, the influence of globalization through religious tourism provides challenges and opportunities that also play an important role. All these factors interact to maintain the sustainability of the spiritual, cultural and social values of the two tombs.

Based on the above research, the threats to the preservation of the Tomb of Sunan Kudus and the Tomb of King Udayana include the commercialization of tourism that can reduce the sacred meaning of the tomb, social change and globalization that erode local traditions, as well as physical damage to the site due to an increase in the number of visitors and natural disasters. In addition, social or religious conflicts, lack of awareness about the importance of cultural heritage, and the shallowing of ritual meanings can also threaten the sustainability of existing spiritual and cultural values. For this reason, wise management, synergy between the government and the community, and increased education are needed to maintain the preservation and noble meaning of the two tombs.

## Conclusion

This research found that the Tomb of Sunan Kudus and the Tomb of King Udayana at Gunung Kawi have deep spiritual and cultural values, despite coming from different contexts. Sunan Kudus's tomb reflects the acculturation of Islam with Hindu-Buddhist traditions, through rituals such as buka luwur that strengthen social and spiritual ties. Meanwhile, the Tomb of King Udayana highlights the harmony of Balinese Hinduism with Tri Hita Karana, reflected in Pujawali rituals that honor ancestors and purify oneself. Both tombs serve as spiritual centers that maintain noble values, strengthen collective identity, and continue to inspire future generations.

The limitation of this research lies in the focus on only two sacred tombs, namely the Tomb of Sunan Kudus and the Tomb of King Udayana, which does not represent the diversity of sacred sites in Indonesia. The research emphasizes aspects of sacredness, rituals, and symbolism without discussing the socio-economic impacts or political roles around the tombs. Limited primary data and restricted access to local communities also affect the depth of understanding of religious and cultural practices. In addition, this research has not included a study of changes in the meaning of rituals and symbolism over time and the influence of globalization. Therefore, further research with a broader scope and more diverse perspectives is needed.

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