

Facing the New Era of Local Tourism: Identifying the Tomb of Sayid Luhung Alwi for Developing Religious Tourism in Semarang

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Abstract. This study aims to identify the tomb of Sayid Luhung Alwi, one of the prominent figures of Islam in the 19th century. As a preliminary study, following Dominic Lapointe's concept about the paradox of alterity in the tourism areas, this study is necessary to develop religious tourism in Semarang in the mid of alterity tourism era as a result of Covid-19, from global to local tourism. This study identifies three main aspects, namely history, tradition, and its supporting community.

Keywords: local tourism; religious tourism; Sayid Luhung Alwi; Semarang.

1 Introduction

The epidemic of Covid-19, spread rapidly around the world since December 2019. The outbreak which formerly began in Wuhan China has had a major impact on the world of tourism globally [1]. Covid-19 is also stated to be a major cause of the collapse of the tourism industry and has affected all human activities, ranging from social and religious to cultural. It has shaken the world tourism industry, although it has been supported by a large hotel chain and various digital booking platforms. At present, the world tourism industry is facing an unprecedented threat, so that in the near future the world of tourism must adapt globally as well [2].

In Indonesia, this condition has been felt since the government stopped flights to and from China starting on February 5th, 2020. As a result, many airlines and travel companies suffered heavy losses and impacted national tourism [3]. In addition to international (foreign) tourism, Covid-19 has also influenced domestic tourism activities in Indonesia, including the number of visits to religious tourism sites. In Java, the tombs of the Kings of Demak and Sunan Kalijaga (one of the Walisongo) in Central Java, were closed since March 2020 to prevent the spread of Covid-19 [4]. The closure was also carried out by other Walisongo tomb managers, such as the Sunan Ampel's tomb in Surabaya, East Java [5].

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As a result of the closure of Walisongo's tombs, the pilgrims chose to make a pilgrimage to the graves of saints (*wali*) around their homes. One of the tombs that “start” visited by local tourists is the tomb of Sayid Luhung Alwi in Meteseh, Semarang. The emergence of local tourism activities in the context of religious tourism is indeed not a new thing. However, adopting Dominic Lapointe’s idea [6], about the paradox of alterity in tourism areas, the presence of Sayid Luhung Alwi’s tomb became a marker of changing patterns of tourism from global to local, namely the strengthening of local tourism. In addition, changes will also occur in the pattern of fulfillment that are not only oriented to tourists, but also to the host community as a strategy for survival. To meet these objectives, three important aspects need to be further defined, namely religious tourism, community-based tourism, and sustainable development.

There are two definitions of religious tourism. First, travel activities for religious purposes and second, travel activities to provide needs for religious tourists [7]. In general, religious tourism is also driven by several motivations, namely providing mental and spiritual needs and avoiding stress on worldly affairs [8]. In this context, the tomb of Sayid Luhung Alwi has “provided a place” for pilgrims with religious motivations, for instance to receive blessings or just to relieve fatigue from the rush of work. Community-based tourism (CBT) is a concept of tourism management from, by, and for the community. Communities in this context are supporting communities, either those who have been in formal form or still in the form of informal groups (cultural ties). Socio-anthropologically, community means a group of people who have a common interest, both place, interest, and understanding. This concept is also a response to the pattern of development that nuances of colonialization [9], when the community has always been an object and not the subject of development. Sustainable development is the result of CBT, which holistically must include several things, which should be ecologically responsible, socially compatible, culturally appropriate, politically equitable, technologically supportive, and economically viable for the host community [10]. In the context of Sayid Luhung Alwi’s tomb, the concept of holistic sustainable development requires further study, although several potentials have been identified.

2 Research Method

The main objective of this study is to identify the tomb of Sayid Luhung Alwi as an effort to develop a new religious tourism in Semarang. Following Aafid Gulam [11], this study used historical method, i.e. sources of historical data (especially how to combine online tools and traditional sources) and criticism of historical sources. Because this study has written in the mid of Covid-19 pandemic, the majority of data collection was undertaken through online sources. Observation and informal interviews with the tomb guards and pilgrims were not carried out in depth, following the government’s instructions to practice physical distancing. However, all data and information also available on the internet, so that it can be scientifically justified.

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 The History of Sayid Luhung Alwi

Sayid Luhung Alwi is known by name of Mbah Luhung or Mbah Mursit. There is no information about the birth of this figure, except that he is the third son of Habib Hasan ibn Thoha ibn Yahya or Mbah Singobarong or Syaikh Kramatjati who was buried in Kampung

Duku, Semarang. Based on that, he is approximately to live in the mid of 19th century. It is reinforced by the information written on the signboard on the front of the tomb, that he died on Tuesday, April 7th, 1842 AD or coincided with *Safar* 25th, 1258 Hijri. According to information from Latif, Sayid Luhung Alwi's genealogies are: Alwi ibn Hasan ibn Thoha ibn Muhammad Al-Qodli ibn Thoha ibn Muhammad ibn Shaykh ibn Ahmad ibn Yahya. From his mother, Gusti Kanjeng Ratu Bendoro, Sayid Luhung Alwi has relation to the Sultanate of Yogyakarta through Sultan Hamengku Buwana II as his grandfather [12]. It also indicates his relationship with Pangeran Diponegoro, the leader of Javanese War from 1825-1830. This war, became a boundary in the history of Java and the history of Indonesia in general between the Javanese order and modern times [13]. At that time, Semarang had become a centre of government and military of the Dutch East Indies. At the end of the Java War, Semarang witnessed the defeat of Pangeran Diponegoro when the prince was taken as a prisoner to Batavia [14].

As a family member, his father, Habib Hasan ibn Thoha also known Raden Tumenggung Sumodiningrat, the uncle of Pangeran Diponegoro and Sentot Prawirodirjo and also the brother in law of Sultan Hamengkubuwono III (Pangeran Diponegoro's father), he has a duty to protect the security of Sultan Hamengku Buwono II and the glory of the Sultanate of Yogyakarta as the emissary of the sultan to meet with Pakubuwono V about the planned resistance movements against the British at Wedi-Klaten in 1810. He was also responsible for securing the north coast of Java from the attack of the British army by deploying his troops by the name of Singobarong [14]. At that time, British army together with 1,000 best-trained troops, half of them, was European and Sepoy, had gathered in Semarang, Ungaran, and Salatiga. Here, Tumenggung Sumodiningrat (Habib Hasan) became the most persistent adviser to the Sultan to fight against the British. Although Yogyakarta finally fell in the hands of the British in 1812 and the Sultan abdicated, Tumenggung Sumodiningrat (Habib Hasan) and Pangeran Joyokusumo were few of the princes and high officials who led the defense wholeheartedly [14].

Habib Hasan bin Thoha, is an Arab-Hadrami immigrant. He spent his child and education at Inat, Hadramaut. After traveling to Penang and Cirebon, he settled in Semarang in the 18th century [15]. The story become an illustration of the Arab-Hadrami diaspora which has been lasted for a long time and becomes the historical basis of the Arab-Hadrami movement in Semarang in the beginning of the 20th century with modern form [16]. The process of the Arab-Hadrami's diaspora has also been a manifestation of the earliest Arab-Hadrami globalization driven by shipping and trade complete with their dynamics in adapting to the new environment before the steamship was discovered [17].

Habib Hasan ibn Thoha has 10 children, namely Sayid Thoha (buried in Ciledug), Sayid Muhammad, Sayid Alwi (Mbah Luhung), Mbah Surgi Jatikusumo (buried in Batang), Sayid Ali (*mufti* of Yemen), Sayid Yahya, Sayid Hamid, Sayid Umar, Dewi Aisyah (Raden Mas Ayu), and Raden Ayu Fatimah. Among Sayid Hasan ibn Thoha's grandchildren were Pangeran Panotogomo Sayid Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Hasan who was also known by the name of Sultan Alimuddin, Sultan of Kutai Kertanegara and Habib Muhammad Luthfi ibn Ali ibn Hasyim ibn Umar ibn Thoha ibn Hasan ibn Thoha ibn Yahya [15]. As the son of a patriot, Sayid Luhung Alwi inherited the values of the struggle from his father, Habib Hasan ibn Thoha. Although the war was over, and the remnants of Pangeran Diponegoro's soldiers were scattered in several areas in Java, Sayid Luhung Alwi continued his activities in Semarang as preacher and teacher of the Islamic religion [12].

The name Luhung, is derived from Javanese language, which means *luhur* or nobleness [18]. Based on the name and designation as sayid, he is a descendant of the Arab-Hadrami surnamed Yahya and at the same time strengthens his social position as a descendant of the

Prophet Muhammad. Based on his family tree, the family of Ibn Yahya is a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad from the genealogy of the family of Muhammad Mauladdawilaih. To the bottom, the latter has four children, namely Sayid Abdurrahman As-Saqaf, Sayid Alwi, Sayid Ali, and Sayid Abdullah. The Ibn Yahya family, are descended from Sayid Alwi, together with the families of Maula Khileh, Ibn Sahl Maula Khileh, Muqibal, Al-Hadi, Fad'aq, Dahman, Barzeneh, Zahum, and Bakhsin Mauladdawilaih [19]. Meanwhile, to the top branch, Muhammad Mauladdawilaih is a descendant of Muhammad ibn Ali Ba'alawi (Al-Faqih Al-Muqaddam) ibn Ali ibn Muhammad Shahib Mirbath ibn Ali Khali' Qasam ibn Alwi ibn Muhammad ibn Imam Alwi ibn Imam Ahmad Al-Muhajir ibn Isa ibn Muhammad ibn Ali Al-Uraidli ibn Ja'far Shodiq ibn Muhammad Al-Baqir ibn Ali Zainal Abidin ibn Imam Husayn ibn Ali ibn Abi Thalib who married Fatimah ibnt Rasulullah Muhammad [20]. While the use of Javanese names, Luhung, referring to the existence of Arab-Javanese assimilation which often occurred in the past. An example about this statement is the history of Maulana Sunan Jati or Syarif Hidayatullah the founder of Cirebon [21]. This name might imply the nobility of Sayid Luhung Alwi. Besides being known as a fierce warrior against the Dutch, like his father, he was also known as a propagator of Islam in the southeastern part of Semarang. According to information from Suwito, the regular pilgrim, a public figure, and a leader of *Shalawat* group in Sendangmulyo, near Meteseh. The nobleness of Sayid Luhung Alwi, told by the surrounding community, with his penchant to give alms to the poor.

3.2 The Tomb of Sayid Luhung Alwi

The tomb of Sayid Luhung Alwi is located in Meteseh, Tembalang, Semarang [22]. As shown in **Fig. 1** and **Fig. 2**, this tomb has big, green, and beautiful dome, renovated from April to September 2019 and was completed in December 2019. This new dome, remembering to the shape of the Hadrami's dome in Yemen. Before renovated by the community, this tomb was only made of wood. The shape of the dome, similar to the dome tomb of his father, Habib Hasan bin Thoha in Kampung Duku, while the edge decoration is similar to the decoration of the Great Mosque of Pekalongan. The dome tomb is surrounded by a beautiful yellow jar. Based on a board in front of the tomb, besides Sayid Luhung Alwi, there is the tomb of Mbah Suginem/ Mbah Satiah (wife of Sayid Luhung Alwi), died on March 24^a, 1834; Mbah Hasan Badowi who came from Turkey died on February 22^a, 1822; Han Si Mou or Eyang Bayu Seto, who came from China died on September 9^a, 1838; and Kyai Iskandar Syah, a native of Sumatra, died on May 18^a, 1834. In addition, there were also the graves of two caretakers, namely Mbah Kasmirah (died on February 6^a, 1842) and Mbah Jasmin (died on November 21^a, 1844) and Eyang Nurudin, as Lurah Pondok (died on March 14^a, 1846). But, after tomb renovated on the last 2019, there is only one grave on that tomb.



Fig. 1. The tombstone of Sayid Luhung Alwi (Source: Photo by Rabith Jihan Amaruli, 2020).



Fig. 2. The Dome Tomb of Sayid Luhung Alwi after renovated (Source: Photo by Rabith Jihan Amaruli, 2020).

Besides the main building in the form of a dome, the tomb complex has also been equipped with a pavilion as the main second area of the community. As the tomb of an Islamic leader, religious activities also coloring the tomb of Sayid Luhung Alwi. In addition to pilgrimage, this tomb is also regularly held *mujadah* (reading Qoran and the praises to prophet Muhammad), and *tirakatan* (penance, stay up all night) on every Monday *Pon* in Javanese calendar. The peak of this activity is the *Haul* ceremony of Sayid Luhung Alwi in month of *Safar* in the Islamic calendar and was first held grandly on February 15th, 2020 [23].

The location of the tomb is near the Dahlia resident, an immigrant housing complex that was built in the middle of an indigenous settlements. The access road to the tomb is accessible, but some points are still in the form of dirt roads. However, the rural atmosphere

with trees and rivers adds to the beautiful surroundings of the tomb. For some pilgrims, like Suwito said, this adds to the solemnity in prayer. Physical infrastructure became the most basic element to construct a devotional site, both energy and ritual. That's why, in Muslim world, tombs of saints are physically differentiated from ordinary graves. This kind of sites design also provides practical and symbolical devotees for religious purposes [24].

3.3 Supporting Community

Supporting groups are important important element in developing local tourism. Jamaah Kanzus Sholawat Angudi Barokahe Gusti (ABG) and the community incorporated in the Facebook account "Pendopo Makom Habib Luhung Alwi" can be the main subjects in this matter [25]. As the name implies, Jamaah Kanzus Sholawat ABG is part of network of a prominent *tarekat* figure in Indonesia, Habib Luthfi ibn Yahya, the great grandson of Sayid Luhung Alwi. As a traditional sufi master, Habib Luthfi ibn Yahya, became so populer in Java. His charisma on social media, engender traditional forms of Islamic authority. Habib Lutfi's popularity has made him a Sufi master who has many followers. They are followers of the Syadziliyah, one of the most trusted *tarekat* (Sufi order) in Indonesia; Alawiyah, the Sufi order taught by the Sayid families; or just Habaib (*s. habib*) lovers (*muhibbin*). In addition to recitation, teaching of the *tarekat*, and *Haul* (commemoration of the day of death), the figure of Habib Lutfi is increasingly popular, after the habib uses social media as a propaganda. Since 2000, the regular monthly gathering in Pekalongan has attracted thousands of devotees ranging from government officials and members of the armed forces to Muslim scholars and rural peasentries [26].

In addition to the two groups above, namely Jamaah Kanzus Sholawat ABG and the Pendopo Makom Habib Luhung Alwi community, the surrounding community can also be considered as supporting communities. The community around Meteseh, is a society that has profound "traditional" Islam (*santri*) nuances, the main supporter of the existence of tombs of the saints. It is indicated by the number of Islamic religious institutions, such as Sarochaniyah Islamic Boarding School, Taqwal Ilah Islamic Boarding School, Al-Ishlah Islamic Boarding School, At-Taqwa Orphanage, and Al-Fithrah Islamic Boarding School.

4 Conclusion

As a preliminary study, this research has identified the tomb of Sayid Luhung Alwi, covering its history, tradition, and supporting community. These three aspects need to be considered to develop new religious tourism destination in Semarang as well as to response in dealing with a new era of local tourism in Indonesia towards 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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