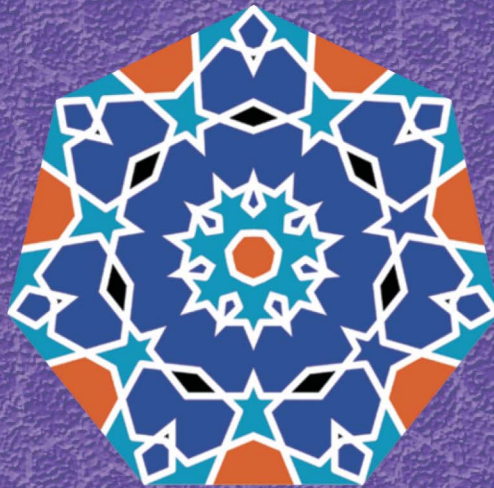


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Tèngka tradition in Madura: Constructive role of ulama as religious and cultural leaders

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Abstract

This research explores the tradition of *tèngka* in Madura society, and how scholars can appear as controllers in *tardisi tèngka*. The *tradition of tèngka* in Madura society is the grammar and rules that form the mindset, behavior, and customs of Madura. *Tèngka* covers all aspects of Madura people's lives to manifest in the pattern of daily life relations and manifests in rituals that have become habits in the midst of Madura society, ranging from various religious rituals, marriage rituals, and birth rituals, to death rituals. *Tèngka* is a culture in place as customary law, then the practice of *tèngka* in Madura society is difficult to avoid or even refute. Because it has been practiced and preserved for generations and becomes an increasingly powerful and deep-rooted tradition. One of the important roles of Madura scholars besides being a religious leader, as well as the controller of *the tèngka* tradition. The significance of the tradition of *tèngka* places Madura scholars as to the most decisive figure in the formation of Madura society. Madura scholars not only became religious figures but also became cultural figures who accumulated as guardians, movers, maintainers and at the same time controllers of *the tèngka* tradition.

Keywords: *Tèngka* tradition; Religious leaders; Cultural leaders; Madura

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Introduction

As an island that has gone through a long history, the Madurese community has succeeded in placing quite dynamic cultural values through cultural dialectics with different geographical characteristics, with the specific geographical character as an archipelago with all its natural resources. The flow of culture before the entry of Islam on the island of Madura shaped the strengthening of specific cultural characters in people's lives to the most crucial dimension in synergizing with Islam. Islam is a religion and culture that is deeply rooted in the Madurese community. Then it was strengthened again by religious and cultural relations which were instituted by Islamic kingdoms in the archipelago, especially by the Islamic Mataram kingdom. These two dialectical currents have become the strength and social capital of the Madurese community in facing the currents of change until now.

The strength of the combination of Islam and culture is a source of authority in the life of its people which is legitimized by government power. This power then develops so that the growth and development of Islamic boarding schools, *langgars* (small mosques) and educational institutions or religious organizations as centers of religious education. Although the combination of these strengths is in institutions that were previously instituted by the kingdom or government, they tend to follow the patriarchal current as adopted in the Islamic kingdom in Java, but in its development, the existence of pesantren, langgars, and other socio-religious institutions is driven by religious elites, both men (Kiai) and women (Nyai) who are highly respected by the Madurese community as the top social position.

The Madurese community's obedience to the ulama is evidence of respect for the highest position of the ulama in the social structure. The synergy of religion and culture that is rooted in Madurese social relations becomes the strength of a cultural entity that continues to be maintained in all aspects of social, cultural, educational, economic, and political aspects that have an impact on other religious organizations. For example, it can be seen in the religious aspect, fundamentally, habits have been taught from an early age that has accumulated in the *têngka* tradition in Islamic boarding schools and langgars, so that it has become a fairly militant tradition from generation to generation and applies comprehensively to both male and female students. female students.

The history of the entry of Islam into Madura is considered a serious effort by da'wah activists in Indonesia through various channels, including trade routes, royal routes, and the paths of the *Walisongo* (a group of nine ulamas who played an important role in the mission of da'wah in Madura (Ma'arif, 2015). Previously, Hindu-Shiva and Buddhist religions under the Majapahit kingdom were quite thick in coloring Madura, so that the cultural heritage of Madura was also colored by the characters of Hinduism, Buddhism, and the kingdom.

Because the Madurese community is a society that emphasizes an Islamic style, the strong penetration of Islam in the Madurese community forms a lifestyle that is full of nuances of Islamic religious values, starting from the pattern and development of education, the social life of the community, its economic relations, even in mass organizations and institutions. Its politics is also always oriented towards religious values. The tendency is to attract public interest and enthusiasm. The construction of obedience and religion is a non-negotiable choice, so that the activities in these religious rituals are intertwined with traditions that took root long before the entry of Islam on the island of Madura.

To build the influence of Islam in Madura, *da'wah* activists use a cultural *da'wah* approach. Cultural *da'wah* prioritizes forms of compromise with the culture that have been a tradition in the local community so that it opens up opportunities for *da'wah* missions to be more easily accepted. There is a belief among most Madurese people who view that obedience in carrying out Islamic teachings and preserving original beliefs can go hand in hand (Subahianto, 2004). This perspective has been built quite strongly from generation to generation and is strengthened by the support of religious elites who are directly involved in overseeing the preservation of local culture.

In reality, Madura gave birth to the construction of a society that has a social character that is quite strong and firm in holding on to tradition and religion, as described by Kuntowijoyo (1988) that the Madurese are more “naive” because the dominant one is cultural and religious homogeneity, because of their religious observance and strength in holding on to tradition. So what comes to the surface is obedience within the framework of fanaticism to religion and the power to maintain traditions that have always been associated with the Madurese community. In the end, the Madurese community is narrated as an Islamic society because of the power to maintain religious traditions, which is reflected in the behavior of their people in Islamic religious values and the commitment to preserving cultural traditions that have been preserved from generation to generation, so that Islam and culture become part of the ethnic identity of Madura.

Because of the strong influence of Islam in the life of the Madurese community, the existence of the *ulama* is very dominant and is placed as an important figure in social stratification. It began to be built in the early days of Islam in Madura. At that time, the kings in Madura considered the importance of Islam, so the *ulama* got special rights in the form of fief land. Fief land was free land belonging to the kingdom in villages, usually consisting of the best agricultural areas (Mansurnoor, 1990).

Islam is placed as the main thing in the lives of the Madurese community, so the existence of the *ulama* has a specific place for the Madurese community. In addition to matters of religious behavior, the social life of the community also rests on the authority of

the *ulama*. They became the unifiers of social elements and the holders of religious, social and, cultural authorities who were very influential in the life of the Madurese community.

In socio-cultural life, the Madurese community has a referential standard of hierarchical obedience to the main figures, which is reflected in the expression *bhuppa' bhabbu' ghuru rato* (father, mother, teacher, and king) (Moh. Hefni, 2012). They are the main figures that must be obeyed, while the *ghuru* are the main figures represented by many *ulama*.

Hierarchically, *ghuru* (*ulama*) are placed after their parents, more than respecting the ruler (*rato*). For the Madurese, many *ghuru* are a guarantee of morality and *ukhrawi* problems. From here, the philosophy is very strong and becomes a marker of the cultural identity of the Madurese. Because the *ulama* is placed as very influential figures in the life of the Madurese community, they have a very high and strategic position in the midst of society, both male clerics (*Kyai*) and female clerics (*Nyai*). The Madurese community places him as a figure who must be guarded and prioritized for security reasons, to be followed and respected.

Some of them are *ulama*, they have religious knowledge, and are positioned as religious leaders and community leaders. They have significant recitation congregations, are founders and caretakers of Islamic boarding schools, and their whole lives are dedicated to the interests of their adherents until society places them as role models in piety. As religious leaders, *ulama* have a very strong and influential personality in the community. His character in leading religion and religious institutions makes him one of the most significant variables in the formation of the Madurese community.

Apart from being religious figures who are very influential in the life of the Madurese community, Madurese clerics also play a significant role as Madurese cultural figures. They act as controllers of the *tèngka* culture. *Tèngka* is manners and rules that shape Madurese behavior and customs that cover all aspects of Madurese life. *Tèngka* is also influenced by Islamic teachings. There is an assumption that if one's intelligence and piety are not followed by understanding and implementation related to the *tèngka* tradition, it will be considered *kòong* (empty).

So this study explores the *tengka* tradition in Madurese society and how the critical role of *ulama* as Madurese religious leaders is to control the *tèngka* tradition. Although the *Ulama* in Madura is a separate social layer of society, they get voluntary attention and services from the community, students, and congregations. The existence of *ulama* is followed by support from various elements of culture in building and exercising their authority which takes place in the social, cultural and religious institutions.

This research is also a “differentiator” for the Madurese *ulama*, who have been targeted in the area of religious and political authority, but in this study their existence is not only a religious figure, but also a cultural figure who accumulates as a guard, mover, keeper, and at

the same time, controller of the *tèngka* tradition. If this is not guarded, it is considered not to maintain *murū'ah* (the prestige of the ulama), and the community will automatically turn away and reduce their sense of respect.

This study uses a phenomenological approach to focus on aspects of understanding and increasing sensitivity to the phenomena seen. Starting with how to understand the daily life of ulama, starting from their role, interacting and relating to the community as religious leaders and traditional leaders. The emphasis is on how a cleric carries out his socio-religious roles in detail and depth so that a deep understanding of the figure of the *ulama* as the controller of the *tèngka* culture can be obtained. By going through the process of “allowing” everything to flow (Heidegger, 1962).

This research begins by entering the insight into the perceptions of the Madurese *ulama* and informants by looking at how an experience is carried out and showing phenomena, and looking for meaning from experience. Because it involves awareness of all the breadth and depth that comes from reality (Ikbar, 2014), the researchers directly relate to their experiences in carrying out their roles through a more intense, conscious, active presence and sensitivity. Therefore, subjective life experiences and other supporting sources are essential data sources in this research.

Concept and application of *tèngka*

Madura has a tradition that is quite deep-rooted and continues to be preserved from generation to generation. The tradition is named *tèngka*. *Tèngka* in Madurese society is placed as customary law. Because *tèngka* is placed as customary law, the practice of *tèngka* in Madurese society is necessary even in terms of reference in attitude and behavior. *Tèngka* is a tradition from generation to generation and forms a strong bond in binding local wisdom.

Basically, the *tèngka* tradition is manifested in three frameworks, namely *tèngka lakoh* (behavior), *tèngka aghulih* (movement), and *tèngka pola* (behavior). All three have the same meaning, either behavior or manners, within the framework of Madurese culture. As understood by many people, Madura is identified as an island of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), so that the culture of *santri* (religious students) and *langgar* (small mosque) is dominant. The culture of the *santri* usually refers to classical books and Sufism, while the general public prioritizes the ability to adapt local culture.

Tèngka is considered polite behavior in the social life of the Madurese, such as socializing with family, friends, neighbors, and the surrounding community in general. *Tèngka* is the appropriate pattern of interaction in social life so *tèngka* learning is by seeing, observing, and

understanding. Observing every behavior in society, the next step is to distinguish which ones are justified by the community and which are not. There is a saying ‘*têngka tade’ sakolaanna’* (*têngka* does not go to school) because it is an unwritten rule (Rahmah, 2016).

As a review, it can be understood that the meaning of *têngka* is very broad as a tradition in Madurese society because *têngka* works automatically on the consciousness that has been integrated into the life of the Madurese community so that it becomes an unwritten cultural ritual. Both *ulama* and community leaders agree on a non-narrow definition of *têngka*. It can also be placed as an attitude that produces behavior, and it can even be constructed in a *ghebeyen* (event or activity) on a small or large scale.

From the breadth of understanding of the *têngka* tradition, it can be concluded that the *têngka* is not a written rule in its implementation but the implementation of the *têngka* above the written law. A cleric will frequently remind his students not to marginalize and forget the *têngka* tradition, “*têngka jih tade’ Bukunah,*” which means that the *têngka* does not have a book (is unwritten), but must be automatically embedded in Madurese behavior. One example of the embodiment of the *têngka* tradition is the habit of providing material assistance given by the community to people who carry out purposes such as marriage, birth, death, and others, also in the form of deliberation (*arembheg*) to *ulama* and relatives for a celebration.

Because *têngka* is a way of treating behavior and activity, either in a small-scale attitude (daily) or on a large scale (certain rituals), then the *têngka* is classified as *têngka rajeh* (large) and *têngka kenik* (small). Large *têngka* as in the rituals of Hajj, marriage rituals, birth rituals, death rituals, and others. While the *têngka kenik* (small) is manifested in everyday life, such as the treatment of parents towards their children or vice versa, the treatment of teachers and students, and others.

For example, in the pilgrimage ritual, Madurese, who has made the pilgrimage is considered a cultural position parallel to the Arab *towan*, who have their place in harmony in Madurese society. Hajj for the Madurese symbolizes the synchronic-diachronic vitality between Islam and local culture. Culturally, the *towan* (Indo-Arabic) is a sign of the religious symbolization of the Arab land, which is considered sacred.

Thus, the Arab land is considered a spiritual axis and a cultural magnet that can be thematically referenced (Anonymous, 2011). In the pilgrimage ritual in Madura there is a tradition of *slameden* (thanksgiving) before leaving for the pilgrimage in the form of prayer together by inviting neighbors and relatives. *Slameden* involves spending quite a lot of material because in addition to serving food, it also provides *bherkat* (gifts of various foods such as rice, side dishes and various cakes).

Aside from performing the pilgrimage, there is a tradition of *sajere* (visiting) people who return from the holy land of Mecca, by providing food and typical Middle Eastern gifts. The *sajere* tradition lasts from the first day to 40 days. So it is natural that the social costs of the Hajj rituals in Madura, from departure to return, are more expensive, even double the cost of the pilgrimage paid to the state.

The ritual of departing and returning from the pilgrimage is one of the *tèngka* traditions that must be carried out by the Madurese community who will carry out the pilgrimage. Although the social costs are more expensive than the costs of performing the hajj, this is not a burden for the Madurese because it is considered a commonplace and proud thing. People who have completed the pilgrimage have a fairly prestigious social status in their society.

In the marriage ritual, many *tèngka* tradition must be carried out for families who will marry off their children. Starting from *nyabis* (visiting) the *ulama* to determine auspicious days, visiting relatives to inform them of the wedding plans and inviting them to technical rituals before the marriage takes place. After the wedding ceremony, the bride and groom will carry out the next *tèngka* tradition by greeting the former (relative to friends), taking turns to the *ulama* and relatives.

Likewise, in the tradition of *tèngka* baby birth in Madurese society, namely *nyapot beji'* (visiting babies). People will flock to see newborns until they are 40 days old. This tradition involves a lot of women in the technical implementation, the *nyapot beji'* event usually includes donations for baby needs. The most fundamental thing in the *tèngka* tradition is the death *tèngka*, which is a ritual tradition for the dead, those who are affected by the loss of a family member. It is customary to hold recitations and *tahlilan* starting from the first day of someone's death until the seventh day, then 100 days, commemoration yearly to the thousand-day commemoration. From the first day to the seventh day, there is a *lalabet* tradition (visiting to express condolences), usually carried out by women, while men follow the *tahlilan* ritual. Even if a baby dies, the ritual must be carried out.

All of the ritual performances mentioned above, from the Hajj ritual to the death ritual, are a big *tèngka* tradition that the Madurese community must carry out. Ignoring this tradition will result in social sanctions, in the form of ridicule, exclusion and will not receive compensation from others, or there will be no balancing in the social life of the community. In Madurese society, many local wisdoms encourage people to live in a balanced way by maintaining behavior and speech, and also teaching prudence in living life in the world so as not to slip into disobedience, ugliness, and crime (Zubairi, n.d.).

If there is someone who does not respect the *tèngka* tradition in the Madurese community, then the Madurese will view him as "a person who does not understand *tèngka*" so that he does not reflect as a Madurese. Another implementation of behavior that reflects

the *tèngka* tradition is the pronunciation of words in carrying out relations with other people by paying respects, such as *ghelenon* (respectful greetings) for people who walk in front of sitting people. Without a greeting, it will become the subject of endless gossip in their environment (Hamid, 2016). The *tèngka* tradition if it is not noticed, let alone ignored and underestimated, causes sensitivity in the community and can also cause “*ghebengan*” (chaos) in society, which in turn can lead to *carok* (Wijaya, 2002). So the Madurese try their best to practice the *tèngka* culture, either out of necessity or self-awareness.

Ulama, as religious figures such as Kiai and Nyai Madura are the controllers of the *tèngka* culture. As *ulama* on the island of Madura they not only lead in religious rituals but also lead, determine and control the *tèngka* tradition, whether to make it big or small, meaning if the Kiai and Nyai have decided it, then it will be a decree that must be implemented. As for a Nyai who is more detailed and dominant in matters of *tengka*. As stated by one of the religious leaders in Pamekasan Regency:

“Urusan tengkanah reng bini’ (tengka kaum perempuan) lebih didahulukan dan urusan tengka kaum laki-laki menyesuaikan.”

This is because Madurese culture is more matrilineal, where women are considered to have higher rights than men. In the Madurese tradition, women are a place of purification, even more so for *nyai*. *Nyai* is a woman who has received an honorary degree from the community and is also a Muslim figure who has more knowledge than others in the field of religion. In the world of Islamic boarding schools, a *nyai* is the wife or child of the *kiai* and/or descendants of the *ulama*. His position is very respectable as a companion of the *kiai*, a caretaker of a boarding school and a figure in his community.

Nyai Madura, besides being a religious figure, is also a strong cultural figure by upholding the *tèngka* culture. So *nyai* Madura are required to maintain the image (image of poetry) by keeping the spirit of the *Nyai* as descendants of the *ulama*, such as maintaining attitudes and behaviors that reflect Madurese religious and cultural values, by maintaining clothing, attitudes and self-deprecating as religious leaders in behaving.

Ulama as a *tèngka* leaders

Kiai Ghafur and Nyai Khairiyah are a pair of Madurese clerics who are very influential in their community. They take care of approximately 1000 students in Islamic boarding schools. The raised students come from various corners of Madura and parts of Java. Besides taking care of the *pesantren*, they also serve many guests from the wider community and the guardians of the *santri*. They always come to their residence to consult and ask for advice on various problems faced by the community.

Preaching in *carok*-prone areas for them is quite a lot of energy and becomes a challenge in itself. Sometimes their preaching is followed by grumbling and even cursing of the people, who do not like the change towards a more moral civilization and do not trouble other people. The main mission of their *da'wah* is to control the *tèngka* culture so that it does not go too far (excessively) that it burdens the community, especially to the point of deviating from the curriculum of religious teachings. The *Kiai* saw that so far, the prevailing traditions in society tend to burden them, especially the traditions for those affected by the disaster.

Nyai Khairiyyah herself felt that society needed guidance and direction, especially in translating the *tèngka* tradition so that it did not conflict with religious teachings. Nyai Khairiyyah is well-aware that the Madurese community is a society that upholds self-respect, so anything is done to carry out traditions. For the *tèngka* community, self-esteem that must be maintained so that the community budgets special funds for *tèngka* tradition every month, as the budget for living necessities exceeds it. The complexity of the scale needs is very diverse, ranging from small scale to large scale. The costs for rituals in the *tèngka* tradition also vary because each individual and society have different levels of ability. In rural communities and the periphery, *tèngka* affairs are still powerful and dominant in their appreciation and implementation. On the contrary, in urban areas, it begins to decrease as social changes in society are not significant.

Many *ulama* try to assist the community in carrying out the *tèngka* tradition so that they can synergize with religious values. His efforts are to provide understanding through recitation groups, counseling and examples. Efforts are being made to create harmony in people's lives and harmony in the household without eliminating the *tèngka* tradition itself because this is a cultural heritage that must be preserved. Although it is not easy for them to invite the public to accept their *da'wah* quickly, patiently, and exemplary are the main keys in the *da'wah* process, they do it because Nyai Khairiyyah is well aware of the history and real conditions of her community, which grows and develops in an environment of work ethic and enthusiasm but is followed by a tradition of upholding self-respect.

The advantage for a religious leader in Madura is the value of obedience and obedience upheld by the community. As a religious elite in a different social status with a highly respected position by the community, the existence of *kiai* and *nyai* is very influential among the surrounding community. So his figure is seen as a savior and guide in directing the life goals of his community, then all his activities and advice will always be a role model. As scholars, the community will follow and obey what the *kiai* and *nyai* want. The cultural approach taken by *kiai* and *nyai* makes it easier to realize their desire to control the *tèngka* tradition in society. The main point of their struggle is to accommodate *tèngka* affairs by

making an inventory of any *tèngka* affairs that contribute significantly to the empowerment of the Madurese community, and any *tèngka* affairs which tend to be excessive and even burden the community.

However, they are committed to maintaining and preserving the *tèngka* tradition as a form of their dedication to the Madurese ancestors, who have inherited noble cultural values for the good of the Madurese community. The positive side of the *tèngka* tradition is that it fosters its energy and enthusiasm for the Madurese community because it contains circulative values, both in material and non-material forms.

A cleric has a very important role and responsibility to uphold dignity in the life of his community, so he is always called upon when the community is hit by various needs of life, ranging from marriage rituals, births, death rituals, recitations, economic problems and solving various life conflicts. *Ulama* has a lot of access to their community (such as the number of recitation groups that are nurtured). Their authority is arranged in their ranks, and they can take control without anyone objecting, so there is no struggle for supremacy.. The capitals owned by the Madurese *ulama* as sources of authority are religious and cultural capital.

Behind the *tèngka* rule, there is a coercive rule so that people care about others. The *tèngka* tradition makes unwritten rules so that people get used to sharing and getting used to helping each other. The best impact of this is a very high sense of community, not individualistic as is easily found in societies that do not know this kind of tradition, for example, in big cities. However the implications tend to be excessive and burdensome.

So the role of *ulama* as religious leaders in putting the fusion of culture and spiritual values into a significant contribution to creating local wisdom in Madura. Since childhood, the Madurese community has been formed by *kiai* and *nyai* to traditional religious values, because they have the opportunities, opportunities and religious authority provided. The construction of the role of the Madurese *ulama* in shaping the character of the *santri* makes the *kiai* and *nyai* the subjects of the success of religious and cultural transformation in Madurese society. His success in carrying out his role in the world of character lies in his dedication throughout his life to the values of religious struggle and traditional values that have been passed down from generation to generation, which are carried out consistently.

In general, the Madurese community places a religious figure, both male and female, in various roles, such as a motivator, because from these figures the spirit, enthusiasm, support and at the same time become the mecca in all daily activities. They are inspirations and role models for the Madurese community, so they are placed as essential figures for their congregations. What they see, use and do are always imitated and imitated. In the religio-sociological construction, the figure of a religious figure whose presence in society becomes

a vital social energy and spirit in balancing and directing an understanding of life based on religion so that it synergizes on a cultural basis. So, they have all the social, cultural and religious roles that grow roots and exist at the lowest level.

Conclusion

In Madura, a cleric has a dominant role in forming of his cultural identity. It cannot be separated from the role of religious values inherent in his daily life. The contribution of the ulama cannot be ignored because, in reality, they appear with all their comprehensive roles in all aspects of life in Madurese community. The construction of these various roles is a cultural heritage that has been running and maintained for a long time, so it has succeeded in forming awareness to continue to be carried out through social, cultural and religious roles. As stated by Husserl that awareness is not from reality, but awareness is the origin of reality, because objects created by consciousness.

Madurese *Ulama* carry out the construction of their roles as religious leaders and cultural figures. They build their awareness through social, economic and cultural characteristics quite specific because they have identities and motivations that are constructed through cultural values to form unique and distinctive intrinsic motivations that describe holistic obedience. The hereditary teachings packaged in religious ideology place the ulama as religious and cultural figures to tradition various local cultures.

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