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# Reimagining *Mantenan*: The Changing Traditions of Javanese Marriages in Panglungan Village, East Java

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Abstract: This research explores the transformation of the Mantenan tradition in Panglungan Village, East Java, as it adapts to social, religious, and cultural changes in modern times. Mantenan, a traditional Javanese marriage ceremony, is deeply embedded in cultural values and rituals such as Nontoni, Lamaran, Tembusan, Petung, Adeg Tratag, Pasang Taruh, Kembar Mayang, Siraman, Midodareni, Ijah and Qabul, Temu Manten, and Walimahan. Using an ethnographic approach, this study examines how these rituals, rich in symbolism and spirituality, continue to evolve in response to modernization and shifting community structures. Through Geertz's trichotomy theory, the research reveals how the Panglungan community reimagines these rituals, adapting them to contemporary values while preserving their cultural identity. The findings demonstrate how the tradition of Mantenan has been reinterpreted to maintain its relevance in the modern era, ensuring the continuity of ancestral heritage while reinforcing the unique cultural identity of the Javanese people of Panglungan. This study also highlights the dynamic nature of cultural traditions and their role in shaping community identity in the face of modernity.

Keywords: Mantenan traditional; Javanese Marriages; cultural transformation.

# Introduction

Mantenan is a traditional Javanese wedding ceremony that consists of several ritual stages. The first is nontoni, a social visit to determine the status of the prospective bride. Second is petung, which is the process of calculating the weton (birth date). Third, ngelamar is an intention proposal and a request for blessing to proceed to marriage. After that, fourth, Wangsulan, the response to the proposal (Yadiana & Faidah, 2020). Fifth is Srah-Srahan, giving gifts from the groom to the bride as a sign of acceptance of the proposal (Syukur & Aurelia, 2024). Sixth, Pasang Tarub decorated the house with woven materials like blakrak or janur (young coconut leaves) in front of the house. Seventh, Siraman, a ritual performed specifically for the bride, aiming to cleanse both body and soul, is conducted by the elders of the bride's family (Sholikhin, 2010). Eighth, Kembar Mayang, a decoration made by a fairy or companion beside the bride and groom, symbolizes the universe's prosperity (Fitriyani et al., 2020). Ninth, Midodareni; a night where the bride is not allowed to leave, intended for her safety. Tenth, Panggih; the meeting between the bride and groom, marking the public recognition of their legitimate marriage (Syukur & Aurelia, 2024).

A previous study by Kartika (2020) discussed marriage as a sacred ceremony with significant future impacts. Fahmi (2024) stated that traditional marriage ceremonies are inherited cultural practices from ancestors. Permatasari & Wijaya (2018) examined the changes in societal behavior and the factors influencing the organization of traditional weddings in Java. Ruslan et al. (2021) share a similar perspective with Fahmi, asserting that marriage traditions handed down from ancestors remain prevalent today. Pratama & Wahyuningsih (2018) noted that marriage ceremonies are passed down from generation to generation, having long-term effects. Ratna et al. (2021) emphasized that marriage is a sacred and monumental event for couples, provided it is conducted according to the established customs and rules. These previous studies share a common theme in discussing the Javanese Mantenan ritual. However, they differ in their focus on transforming the ritual and the symbolic meaning of Javanese marriage in Panglungan, viewed through Geertz's trichotomy theory of social structure.

Marriage in Javanese tradition holds strong customs and rituals, but in contemporary times, it faces challenges stemming from the conflict between traditional values and modernization (Dhofier, 1980; Fauzi, 2012; Ishaq et al., 2023). Often, differences emerge between ancestral values and the lifestyle of younger generations, who prioritize simplicity and freedom in their approach to marriage. This includes the ritual complexities of Javanese traditional weddings, which may cause conflicts within the extended family.

This study explores how the *Mantenan* tradition is preserved and transformed in response to the evolving social and cultural context. By studying the transformation of the *Mantenan* tradition, the research seeks to help the *Panglungan* community find a middle ground, adjusting to ongoing changes while maintaining local wisdom and balancing it with elements of modernization. Therefore, this research will conduct an in-depth examination of the transformation of Javanese wedding traditions in *Panglungan*, based on the perspective of the *Panglungan* community in Wonosalam, Jombang.

## Method

This study utilizes a field research design as the scope of the research. The ethnographic approach aims to describe and explain the *Mantenan* tradition to prevent it from being eroded by the passage of time and to ensure its continuity for future generations. Therefore, the role of ethnography is to understand people, their cultures, and their way of life to foster harmonious families (Manan, 2021). In data collection, the author gathered information from expert informants those who can interpret the experiences of the *Mantenan* phenomenon in Panglungan, who are credible and able to provide interpretations based on scientific knowledge (Creswell, 2014). Expert informants can recount their experiences but may not necessarily have academic qualifications (Ainiyah, 2018). The informants in this study include village elders, religious leaders, community members, and practitioners of the tradition. Therefore, the ethnography applied here refers to the social phenomena of the *Mantenan* tradition from the perspective of the Panglungan village community. To obtain a comprehensive explanation of the *Mantenan* tradition in the cultural context of Panglungan village, the author employs triangulation to analyze the data (Budianto, 2020).

## Results and Discussion

# From Nontoni to Walimahan: The Evolution of Javanese Wedding Traditions

Tradition is a long-standing practice that a community observes as a symbol of unity and solidarity (Merlan, 2006). Unity helps reduce conflicts and fosters a harmonious life, particularly in Javanese cultural traditions. *Mantenan* refers to the Javanese traditional wedding ceremony, which is considered sacred and follows a well-established sequence of rituals based on ancestral customs (Firnanda et al., 2024). *Mantenan* is derived from *manten*, which means bride or groom in Indonesian. Specifically, "*Mantenan*" refers to the event where the bride and groom meet, symbolizing their official union (Interview with Mestiah, 2025). This ritual represents the essence of the celebration, where the couple is publicly acknowledged as a family.

Table 1. The Mantenan Rituals

Ritual	Meaning & Purpose	
Nontoni	Groom meets the bride's family to ensure compatibility.	
Lamaran	Engagement, where the groom seeks the bride's family's approval	
Wangsulan	Bride confirms acceptance of the groom's proposal.	
Adeg Tratag	The community prepares the wedding venue with symbolic decorations.	
Pasang Tarub	Temporary shelter for guests during the ceremony	
Kembar Mayang	Symbol of unity and hope for harmony in marriage	
Siraman	Bride's ritual bath for protection and blessings	
Midodareni	Reflection and spiritual preparation before the wedding	
Ijab Qobul	Formal religious ceremony marking the marriage contract	
Temu Manten	Public announcement of the marriage, with symbolic rituals	

Srah-Srahan	The groom's family presents gifts to the bride's family.			
Walimahan	Feast and celebration to thank God and share joy with the community			
Source: Data analysis				

Based on Table 1, the following are the key rituals in the Mantenan ceremony: First, Nontoni. This ritual involves the groom visiting the bride's family to familiarize himself with the bride and her family (Safitri & Mustafa, 2021). It serves as a way to assess compatibility and mutual interest between the couple. This process is essential in the Mantenan tradition as it helps the couple understand each other and ensures they are ready for marriage (Masudah & Yoenanto, 2023). Before proceeding to the next ritual, the Panglungan community considers various factors when selecting a potential partner, such as character, lineage, and religion, as parents want the best for their children and seek guidance to ensure a successful marriage (Interview with Setia Minayu, 2025). As recommended in Islam, the selection of a spouse is based on wealth, lineage, and religious beliefs (Harahap, 2024), aiming for a successful family life both in this world and the hereafter.

Second, Lamaran (Engagement). In this phase, the groom and his family express their intent to marry the bride and seek the approval of the bride's family. This ritual often includes exchanging tokens, such as rings and offerings of sugar, coffee, and local delicacies, symbolizing strengthening the family bond (Sholikhin, 2010). The engagement signifies that the bride is formally committed to the groom (Interview with Saiman, 2025). Third, Wangsulan. In the Panglungan community, this ritual marks the bride's formal acceptance of the groom's proposal. It is followed by the petung ceremony, where both parties' birth dates (or weton) are analyzed to determine an auspicious wedding date, ensuring a smooth and prosperous marriage (Sutikno et al., 2022).

Fourth, Adeg Tratag. This ritual involves relatives and neighbors working together to prepare the house for the wedding by decorating it with traditional symbols, such as banana trees and woven bamboo, to signify the approaching event. It is also believed to invoke blessings for the safety and success of the wedding ceremony (Mijianti et al., 2024). Following this, the bride and groom are secluded (pangih) to protect them from bad luck (Interview with Saiman, 2025). Fifth, Pasang Tarub. This involves the construction of a temporary structure (tarub) at the wedding site to shield guests from the sun and rain (Yusuf, 2023). This structure is typically erected for two days, with the first day referred to as melekan cilik and the second as greng or dong (the peak of the celebration).

Sixth, Kembar Mayang. Alongside the tarub preparation, the community constructs kembar mayang (twin flowers), representing the bride and groom's unity. This ritual, made from young banana trees and decorated with coconut leaves, signifies the couple's hope for a harmonious and fruitful life (Wawancara with Saiman, 2025). After the ritual, the kembar mayang is discarded to symbolize the groom raising the bride's social status and to protect the couple from danger during the ceremony (Breliana et al., 2023). Seventh, Siraman: The bride undergoes a ceremonial bath with water infused with flowers and coins, a ritual intended to protect her from harm and ensure her safety in marriage (Fathiha, 2022). This ritual is performed the night before the wedding melekan cilik and is conducted by family elders (Wawancara with Mestiah, 2025).

Eighth, Midodareni. This is a traditional evening of prayer and reflection, often involving the bride staying awake until midnight. This practice is believed to connect her with angels and benevolent spirits, seeking their blessings for the marriage (Afifah et al., 2024). However, this ritual is becoming rare in Panglungan due to changing societal values and increased religious awareness. Ninth, Ijah Qobul. This is the formal ceremony where the marriage is solemnized according to religious rites. In Islam, this involves the groom's acceptance of the marriage contract, typically after a sermon (khutbah nikah), which provides marital advice to the couple (Putri et al., 2024). This ceremony signifies the official union of the bride and groom. Tenth, Temu Manten. The bride and groom are publicly presented as husband and wife during this ceremony. Traditional rituals such as the exchange of kembar mayang, the symbolic tossing of betel leaves (nyawat suruh), and the stepping on eggs (ngidek endok) follow, each carrying symbolic meanings related to fertility, harmony, and the couple's new life together (Lestary et al., 2024). The bride also washes

the groom's feet as an act of devotion, while the couple shares a meal, symbolizing their partnership in life's challenges.

Eleventh, Srah-Srahan. The groom's family presents gifts to the bride's family, including various symbolic items such as bananas, rice, and household goods, all carrying specific meanings related to prosperity, harmony, and the couple's future life together (Interview with Minem, 2025). Twelfth, Walimahan. The final wedding feast is a public celebration, thanking God for the successful union and sharing the joy with family and friends (Rahmawati & Munif, 2023). This event fosters social ties as guests bring gifts of food and money to contribute to the celebration, symbolizing mutual support and community solidarity (Geertz, 1976).

## Generational Shifts in the Mantenan Tradition

Transformation is the process of making a significant change or shift in form, structure, or character, often resulting in a new and improved state (Poutiatine, 2009). In English, "transform" refers to altering shape or form (Mezirow, 1977; Smalley, 1993). Transformation means gradual change until reaching a particular stage (Kress, 2005). From the above definition, it can be concluded that transformation does not occur instantaneously or entirely, but rather gradually.

Mantenan is an indigenous tradition of the Javanese people that remains extant today, despite experiencing several changes in its ritual processes (Buttenheim & Nobles, 2009; Hull & Hull, 1987). These changes have occurred due to the evolution of time and human thought, making modifications necessary to preserve ancestral traditions (Interview with Minem, 2025). The Panglungan community has transformed gradually, visible through different periods or generational shifts. To facilitate understanding of the Panglungan community, the author utilizes Geertz's trichotomy theory in classifying the community. Geertz (1976) categorizes society into abangan, santri, and priyayi. The Panglungan community, however, refers to these categories as kejawen, pinter, and nduwe. Although these classifications are similar, they differ slightly in terminology. These groups hold distinct perspectives on the execution of the Mantenan tradition.

First, the abangan group in the Panglungan community is called wong kejawen. They hold firmly to the traditions inherited from their ancestors. This group mainly consists of elders who believe that all the traditions left by their ancestors must be performed and cannot be neglected. They believe that the practices impact the bride and groom and their families. As a result, these traditions are carried out to avoid undesirable outcomes and honor their ancestors. Hence, these traditions must be preserved. The kejawen group strongly believes in the spiritual world and adheres to animism. They believe that misfortune will befall the family if any tradition is left out. Therefore, all ritual stages must be performed, from nontoni to walimahan (Interview with Kariani, 2025).

Based on the depiction of the Mantenan ritual practices in Panglungan, there is a transformation in societal perception among the different groups. For example, wong kejawen from the X generation and older perform the full Mantenan rituals, which include nontoni, lamaran, peningsetan, tukar cincin, tembusan, petung, adeg tratag, pasang tarub, kembar mayang, siraman, midodareni, ijab qobul, temu manten, tukar kembar mayang, nyawat suruh, ngidek endok, basuh kaki, digendong ke kuade, sungkeman, dulangan, ngesok duwek, srah-srahan, and walimahan. They believe that leaving any of these rituals incomplete would result in misfortune for the family. However, millennial and Gen Z generations do not feel the need to perform every single ritual, considering the time and financial costs involved (Interview with Mestiah, 2025).

Second, the santri group, or those knowledgeable in religion, are known in Panglungan as wong pinter. They disagree with the kejawen group because some traditions conflict with Islamic teachings and contain elements of shirk (idolatry) in their rituals. Therefore, they propose modifying the rituals, incorporating Islamic values. According to Wong Pinter, the Mantenan tradition must still be performed as a cultural symbol to preserve ancestral heritage. However, Islam should adapt it (Interview with Supeno, 2025). For Wong Pinter, the Mantenan tradition is seen as incompatible with Islamic practices, with some ritual stages viewed as containing shirk. As a result, Wong Pinter modifies the sequence of rituals, incorporating Islamic principles to maintain tradition and religious integrity (Interview with Sumardi, 2025).

Third, the priyayi group, known in Panglungan as wong nduwe, comprises respected individuals holding positions in government or those focused on their careers and less involved with the Mantenan tradition. Due to their lack of understanding and preparation for the traditions, they often delegate the task of performing the rituals to someone familiar with them (Interview with Kariani, 2025). The Wong Nduwe group, previously indifferent to cultural and religious practices due to their busy work lives, has transformed, now acknowledging the importance of social and cultural awareness. They carry out the Mantenan rituals by entrusting a trusted person to manage the details, following either kejawen or santri practices, depending on who is appointed to lead the rituals (Interview with Sundari, 2025).

To clarify the perspectives of the Panglungan community, the author classifies the community using Geertz's trichotomy theory, which divides society into three groups: Abangan, Santri, and Priyayi, each with distinct characteristics. The Abangan group believes in mysticism and detailed ceremonial practices, the Santri group emphasizes religion daily, and the Priyayi group comprises individuals with social status based on wealth or lineage (Geertz, 1976). The author presents data on the Mantenan tradition in Panglungan in the following table:

Table 2. Transformation of the Mantenan Tradition Based on Geertz's Trichotomy Theory

Table 2. Transformation of the Manietian Tradition Dased on Occile's Thenotomy Theory				
Social	Local Term in	View on the Mantenan Tradition	Ritual Modifications	
Group	Panglungan			
Abangan	Wong Kejawen	Firmly adheres to inherited traditions,	No modifications. Rituals must	
		performing the entire set of rituals	be performed in full;	
		without omitting any stages (nontoni to	neglecting any stage would	
		walimahan).	bring misfortune to the family.	
Santri	Wong Pinter	Accepts the Mantenan tradition as a	Modifications were made to	
		cultural symbol but adapts the rituals to	ensure rituals aligned with	
		align with Islamic teachings, avoiding	Islamic principles, but some	
		elements of shirk.	stages are incompatible with	
			Islamic beliefs.	
Priyayi	Wong Nduwe	Less involved in the rituals, primarily	Rituals are carried out by	
		focused on career and social status.	trusted individuals, following	
		Often delegates the execution of rituals	either the practices of Wong	
		to others.	Kejawen or Wong Pinter,	
			depending on who leads.	

Source: Data analysis

Table 2 illustrates the transformation of the Mantenan tradition based on Geertz's Trichotomy Theory, categorizing the views and ritual modifications across three distinct social groups. The Abangan (Wong Kejawen) group firmly adheres to inherited traditions, ensuring that all ritual stages, from nontoni to walimahan, are carried out without omission. For them, neglecting any part of the ritual is believed to bring misfortune. In contrast, the Santri (Wong Pinter) group views the Mantenan tradition as a cultural symbol but adapts its rituals to align with Islamic principles, eliminating elements of shirk (polytheism). Modifications are made to ensure the rituals comply with Islamic beliefs, although some stages remain incompatible with these teachings. Meanwhile, the Priyayi (Wong Nduwe) group is less involved in the rituals, placing more emphasis on career and social status. They typically delegate the execution of rituals to others, relying on trusted individuals to perform the rites either according to the Wong Kejawen or Wong Pinter practices, depending on the leader.

The explanation above highlights how each group's approach to the Mantenan tradition is shaped by their social roles, beliefs, and cultural priorities. Despite the numerous changes in Mantenan ritual practices among the Panglungan community, this behavior reflects efforts to preserve and maintain the Mantenan tradition, albeit in different forms (Ainiyah, 2025). However, the dynamic Panglungan society has transformed its execution of the Mantenan rituals, adjusting them to align with modern times and Islamic teachings. This transformation is evident in incorporating Quranic verses, salawat, and prayers for divine blessings and safety.

The execution of the Mantenan tradition remains culturally significant, despite shifts in values (Biya & Bukido, 2023). This is evidenced by the community's continued practice of the tradition while ensuring it does not conflict with religious teachings (Makka et al., 2024). In line with this, the tradition is carried out with consideration for the public good. Despite differing viewpoints, the Panglungan community prioritizes mashlahah (the public interest) to foster strong social bonds and well-being (Kayadibi, 2019). This has led to the transformation of the tradition, which, once in conflict with religious principles, now coexists by respecting social, cultural, and religious contexts. The transformation of the Mantenan tradition in the Javanese village of Panglungan reflects society's adaptation to social, religious, and cultural changes, which have evolved. As a result, the community has come to recognize the importance of keeping up with the times. Additionally, the Panglungan Javanese community has altered the Mantenan tradition based on different social groups, with each group's ritual sequence reflecting their cultural identity. The transformation of the Mantenan ceremonial rituals in Panglungan aims to preserve and protect the cultural heritage of their ancestors so that it does not vanish with time.

## Conclusion

The transformation of the *Mantenan* tradition in Panglungan Village highlights the dynamic interplay between cultural preservation and modernization. Through the lens of Geertz's trichotomy theory, this study has shown how different social groups within the community—wong kejawen, wong pinter, and wong nduwe—interpret and adapt the traditional rituals according to their distinct beliefs, religious affiliations, and social positions. The Mantenan ceremony, though evolving, remains deeply rooted in Javanese cultural identity, reflecting the community's continued commitment to honoring their ancestors while accommodating contemporary values.

The adaptation of the Mantenan ritual, particularly in its modification to align with Islamic teachings and modern social realities, demonstrates the resilience and flexibility of cultural practices. While older generations maintain a strong attachment to the whole ritual sequence, younger generations, influenced by modern lifestyles, seek to simplify the ceremonies to reduce financial and temporal burdens. This generational shift signifies the ongoing negotiation between tradition and modernity, where cultural practices are not abandoned but instead reinterpreted to preserve their relevance.

The Mantenan tradition in Panglungan serves as a microcosm of the broader cultural transformations occurring within Indonesian society, illustrating how traditions can evolve in response to social, religious, and cultural changes without losing their foundational essence. The study underscores the importance of understanding cultural practices as living, adaptable elements of community identity, which continue to shape and reinforce social cohesion, even in the face of modern challenges.

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