

UGM Students Examine Kawalu Tradition of Baduy Tribe

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Cultural Sciences students of UGM, Charistya Herandy, Aisyah Suki Pratiwi, and Rahmalia Intan Sulistyawati, examined the way of life of the Baduy tribe, particularly Baduy Dalam, during the Student Creativity Programme for Socio-humanities research.

“Our research employed observation method of the participants and intensive interviews which come as a friendly chat,” said Charistya.

The Baduy tribe that is also known as Urang Kanekes, she said, consisted of two sub-groups: Baduy Luar (Outer) and Baduy Dalam (Inner). They live at the foot of Kendeng hills in Lebak regency, Banten province.

The two groups differ based on the “freedom” to live their lives. Baduy Luar is allowed to use electronic devices, sandals, means of transportation, and clothing. Baduy Dalam forbids all of those.

“Despite this difference, both groups still respect and maintain their tradition from their ancestors. One of those is the Kawalu tradition,” she said.

Kawalu tradition is also known as a holy month for the Baduy people. This is run every three months in each year during the months of Kasa, Karo, and Katiga. Kawalu contains prayers for the safety of the human beings and nature. During the Kawalu period, local and international tourists, local and central officials are not permitted to enter the areas of the Baduy Dalam which include Cibeo, Cikawartana, and Cikeusik villages.

The Kawalu tradition is also aimed as a ritual to pray for God's blessings for the country, which he said as showing the value of nationalism of the Baduy tribe that supports national integration.

"This is because the Baduy Dalam tribe seems 'distant', 'remote', 'primitive' as if being not part of Indonesia. This does not mean that they cannot integrate, in fact there is love and loyalty towards the nation," said Charistya.

The students examined deeper into the existence of the Kawalu tradition of the Baduy people which they said as able to supporting integration in Indonesia.

"This research is expected to open new views regarding the firmness of the Baduy people in upholding the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia," she concluded.

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