



Fieldwork Notes
Magic-planting Ritual of *Golok Ciomas*

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On January 2013, six researchers of Laboratorium Bantenologi visited the village of Babakan in the sub-district of Ciomas, a regency of Serang, Banten Province to watch an annual ritual of magic “planting” (*bengisian*) of *Golok Ciomas* (Ciomas Machete). The journey from Serang City where Laboratorium Bantenologi office was located took about an hour. Our destination was *Kyai* Muhaimin’s house. *Kyai* Muhaimin was the leader of *Pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) Sanabil al-Huda located in the village of Citaman, Ciomas. We had previously visited the house several times to observe the ritual as well as accompany colleagues from different areas to witness the ritual. The ritual was intended to “plant inside” the *golok* a magical power. Such a ritual also became customary between the 1st until the 12th of Rabiul Awwal, the first month in Islamic calendar, every year.

In 2013, the ritual was held on the 12th of Rabiul Awwal, the date in which Prophet Muhammad was born. *Golok Ciomas* had long been regarded as one of the cultural legacies of the Banten Sultanate with a range of historical values and mystical stories. Considered as a traditional Bantenese weapon, the *golok* has become the pride of the Bantenese. During the colonial period, it was used by the Bantenese to combat the Dutch and the Japanese.²

Many Bantenese believe that *Golok Ciomas* had some sort of magical elements, the same circumstance that the Javanese hold on in a *keris* (a traditional Javanese dagger). *Golok Ciomas* was different from *golok* used for household or farmer’s purpose because it was made in the special moment, ritual, and treatment. Therefore, many Bantenese believed that *Golok Ciomas* was a special weapon that because of its magical power: to defeat the enemy easily. In fact, many Bantenese people believed that the enemy would be defeated without taking out the *golok* from its cover. Another magical power of the *golok* was that it could release anger and make those who bring it become the mediator of the conflict among society. The

distinguishing aspect of *Golok Ciomas* from “regular” *golok* was that the *Golok Ciomas* maker would give poison of snake making the *golok* more lethal due to the deadly venom used along the sharp part of the *golok*. To illustrate, a banana tree sliced by *Golok Ciomas* would rot.³

Some people involved in *Golok Ciomas* construction were among others the descendants of *Ki Cengkuk*, *Sidik Santani*, and *Kyai Muhaimin*, each having different roles in the construction. The descendants of *Ki Cengkuk* had a specific role because they had a big hammer called *Si Denok*⁴ that functions to hit the *golok* made by *golok* maker in *Ciomas*. Meanwhile, *Sidik Santani* who lived in *Sibopong Girang* village was the *golok* maker producing *Golok Ciomas* for twelve generations. One of the tools used to create *Golok Ciomas* was *Ubub*, the air pump that blew the air to the furnace made of 1.5 meter of jack fruit wood. After *Sidik Santani* finished making *Golok Ciomas*, a special ritual to plant a supernatural power inside the *golok* is held. The third person who carried out such a stage was *Kyai Muhaimin*. In the magic planting ritual, he became the leader of the ritual. He had performed the magic planting ritual since the 1980s.⁵

Kyai Muhaimin accompanied *Laboratorium Bantenologi* team to visit *Sidik Santani*, who created *Golok Ciomas* and the blacksmith and one of the descendants of *Ki Cengkuk*. Inside *Sidik Santani*'s house, there were some *Golok Ciomas* owners who came not only from *Banten* but also other parts of *Java*, and they would participate in the ritual. Most guests had been to the house several times in order to keep, maintain or increase the magic of *Golok Ciomas*. There was a common belief that if *Si Denok* smashed *Golok Ciomas* seven times (seven *Rabiul Awal*) the power of *Golok Ciomas* will be more extraordinary. Meanwhile, women participated in the ritual by cooking traditional food, cakes, and beverages that would be presented to the guests after the ritual.

During the ritual of magic planting, *Kyai Muhaimin* read the *dhikr*, *hadarot*, *solawat*, some of *suras* of *Quran* and *doa*. Hundreds of *Golok Ciomas* in different shapes and forms were in front of *Kyai Muhaimin*. There was a big washbowl filled with water and seven different flowers and scents. Besides the washbowl, there was a small cup filled with burnt incense. *Kyai Muhaimin* washed *Si Denok* the hammer with the flower-infused water and *ja'faron* scents. After *Kyai Muhaimin* finished the *dhikr*, each of *Golok Ciomas* was hit by *Kyai Muhaimin* using *Si Denok* the hammer. After that, people who attended the ritual got the water. Some of them drank the water and some of them took the water home in plastic bottles.

According to one of the informants, people considered that the water had *baraka* that could cure diseases.⁶ Meanwhile, *kemenyan* was used to invite *jinn* to increase the magic of *Golok Ciomas*.

According to Oman, there were six preconditions to become a *Golok Ciomas*. First, the *golok* must be produced during the Rabiul Awal month especially between first and twelfth of Rabiul Awal. Second, the *golok* should be forged by Si Denok, the hammer. Third, the material of *Golok Ciomas* must consist of the main material and additional material. The main material was the old iron and the additional material was regular iron that can be found in material shop. The main iron was the old iron obtained in Pondok Kahuru and Bojong Honje. The old iron was the legacy of Banten sultanate that was buried in the area in the form of machetes and other objects. The search and the excavation of the old iron may not be done directly because those who wanted to do that should do spiritual exercise (*riyadhoh*). Due to the difficulties in finding the old iron, *golok* makers usually limited its usage. Rather, they combined it with regular iron in which it took the most composition of the *golok*. According to the *Golok Ciomas* maker, *Golok Ciomas* was the combination of five to seven kinds of iron that only the maker knew the composition of each iron.

The fourth requirement is that *Golok Ciomas* should follow the ritual performed by the descendant of Ki Cengkuk, i.e., Kyai Muhaimin. Next, *Golok Ciomas* should be made in Ciomas, especially in Bojong Honje and Pondok Kahuru because the iron and the water as the materials could only be found at the regions. The sixth, special water from Babakan village known for generations to make the *golok* was used. An important step the ritual was that *golok* should be placed in a special place that contained a snake venom to make the *golok* more powerful.⁷

There are some types of *Golok Ciomas*: *Candung*, *Mamancungan*, *Kembang Kacang* and *Salam Nunggal*. Furthermore, there are also some types of the holder of *Golok Ciomas* among others *Jengkol Sahulu*, *Wawayangan*, *Balingbingan*, *Jebug Sapasi*, and *Mamanukan*.⁸

After conducting the ritual, Kyai Muhaimin invited us to enjoy the meal and have a conversation. Kyai Muhaimin and the blacksmith also suggested that we buy *Golok Ciomas* priced variedly based on the type of the iron, the shape, the form, and the number of the *golok* forged with Si Denok in the yearly ritual. *Golok Ciomas* with a simple form and is only forged once by Si Denok has the cheapest price about Rp. 350,000 while the most

expensive Rp. 6,000,000 because it had bigger and longer shapes, a beautiful handle and had been forged seven times in seven Rabiul Awwals. We bought two *Golok Ciomas* to add to our collection.

Afterwards, *Kyai Muhaimin* then invited us back to his house to witness the ritual of the biggest *Golok Ciomas*, the 7 meter-long, 40 cm-wide, and 2000 kilogram *golok*. It broke the record and became the biggest *Golok* in Indonesia and perhaps in the world. Krakatau Steel Company financed the whole cost of the biggest *Golok Ciomas* production. The *golok* was stored in *Kyai Muhaimin*'s house. At Banten Province official ceremonies, such as The Banten Province Fair organized yearly, the *Golok* would be displayed at the fair. *Kyai Muhaimin* then continued the ritual of magic planting to the biggest *Golok Ciomas*. Because it was only the continuation of the ritual performed in Sidiq Santani, there were only some people that observed the ritual. In the ritual, *Kyai Muhaimin* read *doa* then he splashed the combination of water, scents, and seven kinds of flowers to all part of *Golok Ciomas*. After that, he forged the *golok* with *Si Denok* started from the front to the back while simultaneously reciting the *doa*. Thereafter, *Kyai Muhaimin* asked us to visit his house and we had a conversation about his collection. He had a variety of *Golok Ciomas*, which he sold starting from Rp 500.000,- to 6.000.000,-

Endnotes:

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² Ayatullah Humaeni, "Akulturasi Islam dan Budaya Lokal dalam Magi Banten" (Disertasi, S.Ps. UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2014), h. 233-235.

³ Oman Solikhin & Akhmad Supriyatna, *Golok Ciomas: Hikayat dan Keistimewaannya* (Serang: SporaPustaka, 2003), h. 3-7.

⁴ The most important requirement to become *Golok Ciomas* is *Si Denok* hammer's forging during the ritual of magic planting of *Golok Ciomas*. Ki Jamsari (85 years old) was one of the descendants of Ki Cengkuk now keeping and maintaining *Si Denok*. Ki Cengkuk had passed away about two hundred years ago and was buried in Babakan village, Ciomas. Many people from different regions visited his cemetery every year. Interviewed with *Kyai Muhaimin*, (24 January 2013); read also Solikhin and Akhmad Supriyatna, *GolokCiomas...*, 27-40.

⁵ Solikhin and Akhmad Supriyatna, *GolokCiomas...*

⁶ Interviewed with **Hsd** (34) and **Ad** (27) the owner of *Golok Ciomas* at Babakan village, Ciomas, 24 Januari 2013).

⁷ Oman Solikhin and Akhmad Supriyatna, *GolokCiomas...*,h. 45-56.

⁸ Oman Solikhin and Akhmad Supriyatna, *GolokCiomas...*,h. 57-67.