



## Mangkunegaran dance style in the custom and tradition of Pura Mangkunegaran

✉ **Malarsih, Tjetjep Rohendi Rohidi, Totok Sumaryanto, Hartono**

Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

Received: August 22, 2017. Revised: October 21, 2017. Accepted: December 1, 2017

---

### Abstract

Mangkunegaran dance style is regarded as a cultural identity that is highly upheld by Mangkunegaran's society. In the organization that lives in Mangkunegaran, the sustainability of Mangkunegaran dance style is protected by the special art institution namely *Langen Praja*, under a bigger organization in Mangkunegaran namely *Reksa Budaya*. The existence of Mangkunegaran dance style is in fact related to the custom and tradition in Pura Mangkunegaran. The aim of this research is to find out how Mangkunegaran dance style is and what kind of roles that Mangkunegaran dance style has that may influence the custom and tradition in Pura Mangkunegaran. Methods used in this research is qualitative. Techniques of data collection used were observation, interview, and documentation study and the data validity technique implemented was data triangulation. Meanwhile, the data was analysed by using text analysis towards the Mangkunegaran dance style and the context analysis towards the role of Mangkunegaran dance in the custom and tradition had by Pura Mangkunegaran.

**Keywords:** dance; dance style; custom; tradition

**How to Cite:** Malarsih, Rohidi, T. R., Sumaryanto, T., & Hartono. (2017). Mangkunegaran Dance Style in the Custom and Tradition of Pura Mangkunegaran. *Harmonia: Journal of Arts Research And Education*, 17(2), 136-143. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.15294/harmonia.v17i2.12128>

---

### INTRODUCTION

In the era of kingdom life or to be more specific in the era of *Keraton* (Javanese word for a royal palace) or *Kasunanan* (sunanate) of Surakarta and *kasultanan* (sultanate) of Yogyakarta, Mangkunegaran has its own centre of government or being known by people as Pura Mangkunegaran. Until now, Pura Mangkunegaran has its own arts and cultures, and one among the others is the dance which claims to have the original style created by people of Pura Mangkunegaran themselves, known as Mangkunegaran dance style (Malarsih,

2007). Based on the history, Pura Mangkunegaran was established on 16 March 1757 AD (Prabowo, 2007).

The establishment of Pura Mangkunegaran is the result of struggle or the result of effort and tenacity of Raden Mas Said through the war against the king of Mataram Kartasura and the Netherlands. Raden Mas Said is the eldest son of Kanjeng Gusti Pangeran Arya Adipati (KG-PAA) Mangkunagara in Kartasura, later known as Raden Mas Arya Pangeran Suryakusuma, or Prince Sambernyawa, and then Prince Adipati Mangkunagara (Reksa Pustaka Mangkunegaran 1970,

---

✉ Corresponding author: B2 Building, 2nd Floor, Sekaran, Gunungpati, Semarang, 50229 Indonesia  
E-mail: [malarsih@mail.unnes.ac.id](mailto:malarsih@mail.unnes.ac.id)

p.12; Siswokartono, 2006).

There are some researches related to the Mangkunagaran dance style and in its relation to the history of the establishment of Mangkunagaran's government. For example, the research that was written by Suharji and published in Bedhaya Suryasumirat's book (2004) and Siswokartono (2006) who published the book entitled *Sri Mangkunegara IV sebagai Penguasa Pujangga* (2006). However, none of the books had discussed about the relationship between Mangkunagaran Dance Style with the custom and tradition in Pura Mangkunagaran.

Till recent years, Mangkunagaran Dance Style is still exist and well-known by people, or at least by Mangkunagaran society. However, due to the development of the era as well as the raise of new cultures and arts, the existence is no longer as famous as before. In relation to that, at least Mangkunagaran dance style is still be used as an art media in some events such as the traditional ceremony as known by the common society in order to continue the Keraton's tradition in Pura Mangkunagaran. Therefore, the aim of this research is to (1) Explain about how the form of Mangkunagaran dance style from the choreography aspect is., and (2) Explain about the role or function of Mangkunagaran dance style in the custom and tradition in Pura Mangkunagaran.

What is being seen as style is the characteristic that is shown by the specific identity of individual or regional or era (Murgiyanto, 1985). What is seen as Mangkunagaran dance style is an understanding of the specific identity of Mangkunagaran dance style that is shown by the dance characteristic in relation to Kemangkunagaran region. In this context, the dance style of Mangkunagaran is usually compared with the other two styles, the Surakarta dand Yogyakarta style. It is due to the historical aspect of origin on which what has been had by Pura Mangkunagaran (in the context of dance) is closely related with what had been had by both Surakarta and Yogyakarta (Suharti, 2005).

Related to how Mangkunagaran dance style is seen from its role and function in the custom and tradition in Pura Mangkunagaran, then we should learn about what custom is. Custom is understood as a cultural system (Kontjaraningrat, 1984; Robinson & Klingelhofer, 2002). This custom or cultural system has a complexity form of ideas, values, norms, rules, and etc. In relation to cultural system is the social system. Social system is related to the human's pattern of action. This social system consists of human activities that interact, relate, and mingle with each other in every moment and/or time. Through this, the role of Mangkunagaran dance style in relation to the social and cultural life of society of Mangkunagaran can be seen from the side of how the art of Mangkunagaran dance style can be used or functioned by the owner or society that supported the dance style. Custom has strong relation to what is called as tradition.

What is known as tradition, according to Simatupang (2013) is a pattern that is established as a result of continuing or preserving. It means, there are past habits which are continuously done by people of the recent era. In other words, the habit is passed from old generation to the new one. However, in tradition, generally, only certain habits which are considered positive, that can be labelled as tradition.

In line with what is explained by Simatupang related to the understanding of tradition is the explanation by Lindsay. According to Lindsay (1991) and Johnstone (2005) tradition is shown as a code about behavior and faith that can be accepted by group and continued by certain society or community. In addition, Sedyawati (1981), Kartomi (2004), and Suharto (2016) believed that specific tradition can only be felt by certain groups or communities as it belongs to a group or community or some specific societies and is used by the group or community or specific societies continuously from the old to the next generation. This is where the context of this research problem will be seen and studied; on which the discussion will be around the

role or function of Mangkunagaran style dance in relation to Mangkunagaran tradition and custom, as well as the function of Mangkunagaran dances style in certain activities in Pura Mangkunagaran.

## METHOD

Approaches which are applied in this research are choreology and social culture with qualitative as the method. Choreology and social culture were used to see the dance style aspect and the role of the dance. In this context, there is Mangkunagaran dance style in Pura Mangkunagaran's custom and tradition. The research design in this study is a single case study which only sees a case; that is about Mangkunagaran dance style and its role in Pura Mangkunagaran's custom and tradition.

### Location and Objective Study in the Research

This research was done in Pura Mangkunagaran Surakarta with the research objectives of Mangkunagaran dance style and its role in the custom and tradition in Pura Mangkunagaran. Dance style that is primarily seen is about the movement composition in custom and tradition in Pura Mangkunagaran. To be specific is the role of Mangkunagaran dance style in custom and tradition of Pura Mangkunagaran which is seen from the function of the dance in Pura Mangkunagaran and its relation to the continuity of the dance which has been hereditary preserved and used by Pura Mangkunagaran society.

### Data Collection Technique

Techniques of data collection applied in this research are observation, interview, and documentation study. Observation is done when there is a performance of the dance and practice of the dance along by observing directly the physical condition and life of Pura Mangkunagaran in its relation to the dance activity. The interview is done by the interviewer to the the key informant, who is *pengageng Putra Mangkunagaran*, a person who is in charge with Mangkunagaran dance, dance stylist,

dance instructor, dancer, *pengrawit* (the instrument player) and *abdi dalem*. Documentation data is used in relation to the documents of the existence of dance in Mangkunegaram, either in the form of pictures and/or audio-visual recordings of the community of Pura Mangkunagaran that is directly or indirectly involved in the activities of the arts in Mangkunagaran.

### Data Validity Technique

Data validity technique applied in this research is data triangulation. Data that is used in this research are the data from observation, interview, and documentation. Another way to gain the data for the triangulation is by doing the interview with some of interviewees in different time, but using same questions. This is done to check the consistency of the answers or details from the interviewees. The next step of the triangulation data technique is by doing the cross check from one interview to another interviewee. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

### Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis technique used in this research is text analysis in choreography context (Slamet, 2016) and context analysis in interactive form (Miles & Huberman, 1992; Rohidi, 2011; Nasution, 1996) by following these steps: 1) data collection, 2) data reduction, 3) data presentation, 4) formulating conclusion/verification. The first data collection was related to Mangkunagaran dance style that was seen from the model or movement aspects. The next step is by looking through and analyzing the Surakarta and Yogyakarta dance styles to see the characteristics which had formed the Mangkunagaran Dance Style.

In relation to the role of Mangkunagaran dance style in the custom and tradition in Pura Mangkunagaran, the researchers also had to observe the role of custom and tradition collected from all activities done in Pura Mangkunagaran. The most important moment that we had to observe was when this Mangkunagaran dance style was used by Pura Mangkunagaran and

how the interaction was developed after the use of the dance. Finally, all data which had been collected was reduced or chosen to see which data was appropriate with the research problem that was being analyzed. The was data then presented in descriptive form and written in a short narrative in the form of conclusion.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the research results are presented along with the discussion. It is not presented separately. Results of the research are explained using relevant concepts and theories.

### Mangkunagaran Dance Style in Choreographic Review

In this Mangkunagaran dance style study, the main issue discussed is related to the characteristic or specification of gesture and movement technique, and not about the entire choreography. Gesture and movement techniques cover the gesture and movement of the feet, body, hands, and head (Rochana, 2006; Pramutomo, 2005). This is done by considering that those aspects basically have shaped and formed Mangkunagaran dance style to have its own characterization.

#### Gesture and Movements of the Feet

Gesture of the feet covers the top part of the feet; from the part of upper thighs to ankles, soles of feet, and toes. Gesture of the top part of the feet for female dancers is known as *mendhak* (both feet are bent), meanwhile for the types of soft man dance and strong man dance, the feet movement is done by bending one of the foot, and another foot stands straight. Gesture of soles of the feet for 'woman dance' or '*putri alus*' (movement of dance representing woman behaviour and gesture) is both of the feet are oblique to the front (heel parallel to the heel and finger parallel to the finger). This gesture is used if the dancer is standing in the spot (*tanjak*), but if the dancer is moving or walking, then the gesture will be one feet is oblique and another feet

is crossing. It is similar to the soles of the feet gesture for the 'soft man type of dance' or '*tari putra alus*' and 'the strong man type of dance' or '*tari putra gagah*'.

To differentiate the types of the three dances, i.e. the woman dance, soft man dance, and strong man dance, size of the soles of feet movement can be observed. The distant between feet soles (measured from one heel to another) for woman dance is one fist size when the dancer is in standing position; for the soft man dance, the distance is one-foot sole; and two foot soles for the heel distance in strong man dance.

Besides the size of soles, movement of soles also can be used to differentiate those three types of the dance. Movement of the soles for woman dance is *gejug*, soft man dance is *sered*, and hard man dance is lifted feet (*junjungan*). However, for the gesture of feet fingers, all types of Mangkunagaran dance style are using *nylekenthing* gesture (feet fingers is lifted up). Other provisions for foot gesture which is used for this type of dance in general are thighs stretched, knees open, and soles of the feet are crossing. Overall, the main technique for foot movement lays on the ankle as the center of movement. It aims to keep the ideal position of the body movement while the dancers moves freely.

#### Body Gesture and Movement Technique

In order to form the body gesture and breathe smoothly in one time, the feelings of tension must be released. The way of breathing also should be controlled to prevent the change of the gesture. Movement technique from the body is centered in *cethik* (hip joints with the body). For the gesture of the body, backbones stand upright, shoulder is open, chest is bloated, and stomach is deflated.

#### Hand Gesture and Movement Technique

Hand gesture consists of arm movement and hand fingers movement. To differentiate woman dance type, man's soft dance, and hard man dance, the size of dancer's arm is observed. The size of arm gesture for woman dance type is arm leads

downwards and if we draw a straight line, then between *cethik* and wrist is parallel. For man soft dance type, if we draw a straight line then the shoulder and wrist is parallel.

For Mangkunagaran dance style, the size of arm gesture can differentiate the characteristics of the three different types of dances. The characteristic is that if the hand is in a bent position, then the line between *cethik* and wrist must be parallel and there is a distance of one hand of palms for the woman dance, and two span palms for the soft man dance, while for the hard man dance, the bending of elbows should be approximately 90 degrees.

Besides the gesture of the arm, another hand gesture is hand fingers movement. Hand movement used to all types of dance is *nyempurit* (for the right hand) and *ngruji* (for the left hand). Another gesture of hand fingers is still used for hard man dance type, like, hand finger gesture of *ngepel*, hand fingers gesture of *kinantang*, and hand fingers gesture of *naga rangsang*. Hand movement technique is centred in the wrist, followed by the arm and elbow. This is done in order to make sure that the arm and elbow position is in stable condition.

#### Head Gesture and Movement Technique

Head gesture is separated into two parts, those are gesture and eye sight (*pan-dengan*: Java) with the provision of an open eyelid, chin pulled back, a sharp view, and attention focused on the movement. The technique of neck motion (*pacak gulu*: Java), is centered on the bending (*coklekan*: Java) *jiling*, that is when the head joint with the neck (both for *tolehan* and *pacak gulu*).

#### The Role of Mangkunagaran Dance Style in Pura Mangkunagaran's Custom and Tradition

The role of Mangkunagaran dance style in Pura Mangkunagaran's custom and tradition can be seen from the real interaction of individuals that create the social relation. The next discussion will analyze

about how the real interaction of individuals that have been related may create a social relation in Pura Mangkunagaran. This research will also discuss about the use of social relation as a social structure that moves and develops dynamically using a frame of real phenomena of what happened in Pura Mangkunagaran. That frame is a structure of organization of Pura Mangkunagaran that has been working hand in hand to make a great Mangkunagaran. The main parts of that structure are Secretariate, The Mandrakumara Regency, and Reksa Budaya.

#### The Secretariate

Secretariate is led by a coordinator and helped by leader of technical/ non-technical planning, leader of financial, leader of personnel, and leader of public relation/ protocol. In their daily life, secretariate has responsibility to Sri Paduka Mangkoenagoro IX. The main job of secretariate is to operate/ keep the document as well as operate the official letter of Sri Paduka Mangkoenagoro IX, prepare and records the documents of decree and other types of important documents. The coordinator becomes a connector of communication between Sri Paduka Mangkoenagoro IX and other parties.

#### The Mandrapura Regency

*Mandrapura* regency is led by a *pengangeng* that is helped by a vice leader, a treasurer, and a secretary. They also have responsibility to Sri Paduka Mangkoenagoro IX. The main duty of Mandrapura regency, are: 1) Arranging and Managing household of the kingdom, structuring and maintaining Pura Mangkunagaran; 2) Caring the heirloom, building, yard, garden, electricity installation and water installation; 3) Managing the matter of ulama; 4) Protecting safety of kingdom; 5) Protecting the tourism site/ museum, in which the operation process is given to selected Tourism Agency.

#### Reksa Budaya Office

Reksa Budaya Office is led by a *pen-*

*gageng*, helped by a vice leader, expertise (interviewee), treasurer, and secretary. In running their job, they are responsible to Sri Paduka Mangkoenagoro IX. The main duty of Reksa Budaya is to make Pura Mangkunegaran as a centre of Mangkunegaran culture development. In doing their daily job, Reksa Budaya Office works together with Reksa Pustaka, Langen Praja, and Barawiyata. In detail, duties of those parts are stated as followed:

#### **Reksa Pustaka**

The duty of Reksa Pustaka is searching, developing, doing the inventory, translating, and maintaining the books of the library as well as documenting the main letters.

#### **Langen Praja**

The job of Langen Praja is to do *gladden* (dance practice) and dance show, *kara-witan*, and singing which songs and dance are based on the cultural believe of Mangkunegaran culture. Another job of Langen Praja is doing the regeneration in their field.

#### **Barawiyata**

Barawiyata's job is to maintain and operate the life of educational institution, either the general education or specific education in relation to cultural art.

#### **Satria Kawedanan Office**

Kawedanan Satria Office is led by a *pengageng* with a help of vice *pengageng*, trasurer, and secretary. They are responsible to Sri Paduka Mangkoenagoro IX. Jobs of Kawedanan Satria are: (1) Searching and maintaining the way of behaving, fashion, and ceremonial activity based on Mangkunegaran custom in general and Pura Mangkunegaran specifically, that has positive values, (2) Receiving the report of birth, marriage, and death of the son of *sentana dalem*, (3) Managing the book of the descendants and relatives of jumeneng Mangkoenagoro and issuing the charter or certificate, (4) Managing the book of the descendants of *punggawa baku* and issuing the charter or certificate, (5) Managing graves and guest house, (6) Putting out *pepanci* of *sentana dalem*, and (7) Operating custom and tradition in Pura

Mangkunegaran.

Mangkunegaran dance style is considered as the type of art that becomes the job of sub organization named Langen Praja under Reksa Budaya Office, doing *gladden* or practice and dance show, which is based on the result of the culture of Mangkunegaran as well as doing the regeneration in their field. All supporters of Mangkunegaran dance style said that Mangkunegaran dance style is admitted as an icon that is important to bring up the cultural wealth owned by Mangkunegaran which is highly upheld by all Mangkunegaran culture's supporters.

The role of Mangkunegaran dance style as a custom and tradition keeper in Pura Mangkunegaran can be seen from its function. Those functions are similar with what has been stated by Royce (2007) by citing the the dance function from Shay (1971). The functions of dance are: first, as a social order creation. Second, as the media of expression, that has both secular and religious belief. Third, as a social entertainment media or refreshing activity. Forth, dance is functioned as soul release media. Fifth, dance is functioned as an aesthetic activity. Sixth, dance is functioned as an economic activity.

Mangkunegaran dance style also has its own strategic function inside of Pura Mangkunegaran as a cultural identity which its existence is highly upheld. Therefore, in the structure of the organization in Pura Mangkunegaran, Mangkunegaran dance style is given a place to be protected, taught, and used for various important agenda in Pura Mangkunegaran. This is also used as custom and tradition in Pura Mangkunegaran. What is seen as tradition is the nobility and existence of that dance which is protected and respected by all supporters of Mangkunegaran culture. Mangkunegaran dance style is always used in Pura Mangkunegaran's cultural events and welcoming dance as well as all events that often held by Pura Mangkunegaran.

Based on the meaning of custom, generally as Koentjaraningrat (1990) and

Rigsby (2006) stated that custom has a similar meaning with cultural system. Custom or cultural system is a complex form of ideas, values, norms, rules, etc., as an ideal cultural form. Another system that has relation with cultural system is social system. Social system is related to patterned activity of human. This social system consists of human activities which are interacted, related, and socialized between one and others in every moment and time.

The role of Mangkunagaran dance style for the social life of Mangkunagaran society is seen from how Mangkunagaran dance style is used and functioned in some special activities. The use of its style in some special activities is connected to the custom or cultural system and social system of Mangkunagaran society specifically in Pura Mangkunagaran. The dance is being seen as a form of physical culture among those three aspects and connected as one chain. In fact, all organization elements and individual in Pura Mangkunagaran uses custom that is applied in Pura Mangkunagaran.

Custom has strong connection with what is said as tradition. According to Simatupang (2013), tradition can be seen as a form of continuity. In this case, what is stated as continuity is elements from past time that is delivered to the current time, and/or future. Tradition is also often called as habit. However, in tradition, generally only specific habit that has positive values that can be labelled as tradition.

In line with what is stated by Simatupang (1991) explained that tradition shows a code related to behaviour or faith that is accepted by a group and continued in a community or society. It is supported by Sedyawati (1981) by saying that a specific tradition is only used by spesific community or society as a next generation. What has been explained by social and cultural expertise about custom and tradition is in line with what is happened in Pura Mangkunagaran in relation to Mangkunagaran dance style.

## CONCLUSION

Mangkunagaran dance style is type of dance that has its own character which is only had by Mangkunagaran dance itself. The main character of Mangkunagaran dance style from dance aspect is on the specification of feet, body, hand, and head gestures and movements. Generally, the role of Mangkunagaran dance style in custom and tradition in Pura Mangkunagaran is first, as cultural identity of Mangkunagaran's society. Second, in relation to that cultural identity, Mangkunagaran dance style is used as a nobility keeper of Mangkunagaran. Further, Mangkunagaran dance also serves as a means to support important events held n Pura Mangkunagaran.

## REFERENCES

- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Johnstone, B. (2005). What is Tradition? From Pre-Modern to Postmodern. *Australian eJournal of Theology*, 5, 1-22.
- Kartomi, M. (2004). Some implications of local concepts of space in the dance, music, and visual arts of Aceh. *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 36, 1-49.
- Koentjaraningrat. (1990). *Pengantar Ilmu Antropologi*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Lindsay, J. (1991). *Klasik, Kitsch, Kontemporer*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Malarsih. (2007). Profil Pura Mangkunagaran dalam Struktur Organisasi dan Pengelolaan Organisasi Seni. *Harmonia: Journal of Arts Research and Education*, 8(2), 118-127.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1992). *Analisis data kualitatif: Buku sumber tentang metode-metode baru*. Terjemahan oleh Tjetjep Rohendi Rohidi. Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia Press.
- Murgiyanto, S. (1985). *Koreografi*. Jakarta: Dewan Kesenian Jakarta.
- Nasution, S. (1996). *Metode Penelitian Natu-*

- ralistik Kualitatif*. Bandung: Tarsito.
- Prabowo, W. S. (2007). *Sejarah Tari. Jejak Langkah Tari Di Pura Mangkunagaran*. Surakarta: Institut Seni Indonesia Surakarta.
- Rigsby, B. (2006). Custom and tradition: innovation and invention. *Macquarie LJ*, 6, 113.
- Robinson, D., & Klingelhofer, S. (2002). The rule of law, custom and civil society in the South Pacific: an overview. *Third Sector Review*, 8(1), 211
- Rohidi, T. R. (2011). *Metodologi Penelitian Seni*. Semarang: Cipta Prima Nusantara.
- Sedyawati, E. (1981). *Pertumbuhan Seni Per-tunjukan*. Jakarta: Sinar Harapan.
- Simatupang, L. (2013). *Pergelaran*. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra.
- Siswokratono, W. E. S. (2002). *Sri Mangku-nagara IV*. Semarang: Aneka Ilmu.
- Slamet, M. (2016). *Melihat Tari*. Surakarta: Citra Sain.
- Suharji. (2004). *Bedhaya Suryosumirat*. Semarang: Intra Pustaka Utama.
- Suharti, T. (1990). *Tari Di Mangkunaga-ran Suatu Pengaruh Bentuk dan Gaya Dalam Dimensi kultural 1916*. Yogyakarta: Universitas Gadjah Mada.
- Suharto, S. (2016). Banyumasan Songs as Banyumas People's Character Reflection. *Harmonia Journal of Arts Research and Education*, 16(1), 49-56.