

The Role of Sri Baduga Maharaja in the Spread of Islam in The Sunda Region

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History Article:

Received 13-06-2025
Accepted 14-06-2025
Published 16-06-2025

ABSTRACT

Sri Baduga Maharaja (Prabu Siliwangi) was a great king of the Sunda Kingdom who ruled around 1482–1521 AD, and was known as a just, wise, and peace-loving leader. The data is then analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques, starting with data reduction to filter relevant information from all sources. From this statement, it can be concluded that at that time there was a religious shift, with many Pajajaran people converting to Islam. Sri Baduga Maharaja did not directly spread Islam, but he played a role in creating peaceful and tolerant conditions that allowed Islam to spread well in the Sunda Kingdom. His open attitude towards religious differences made his reign one of the important periods in the early history of Islam in the Land of Sunda, reflecting how religion and culture are harmoniously intertwined. In this context, studying this collection of relics is an important means of understanding how Islam grew and took root in the cultural expressions of the Sundanese people.

Keywords: Sri Baduga Maharaja, Spread of Islam, Sunda region

How to Cite:

Supendi, U., Nurcahya, Y., Maulana, A. S., Nugraha, P. S., Syakira, M. K. ., & Salsabila, M. J. . (2025). The Role of Sri Baduga Maharaja in the Spread of Islam in The Sunda Region. Jejak Digital: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin, 1(4), 1172-1182. <https://doi.org/10.63822/xxmcgf21>

INTRODUCTION

Sri Baduga Maharaja (Prabu Siliwangi) was a great king of the Sunda Kingdom who ruled around 1482–1521 AD, and was known as a just, wise, and peace-loving leader. He ruled from the center of the kingdom in Pakuan Pajajaran (now the Bogor area). Although known as a Hindu king, Sri Baduga's role in the context of the spread of Islam is quite interesting and needs to be seen contextually.

The figure of Prabu Siliwangi has always been a historical research until now, to find out the essence of his personality and the noble moral messages he left behind. He is known as the King of the Pakuan Pajajaran Kingdom which reached its golden era. At the end of his reign, it coincided with the entry of Islam into the Land of Priangan. Some of his teachings (or the teachings of the Sundanese people in his era) in the military field, received great attention to become the inspiration for modern era military strategies. In the book *Siliwangi from Time to Time*, the Kodam Siliwangi history writing team explains the figure of Prabu Siliwangi as follows:

“According to sources of inscriptions, Prabu Niskala Wastukancana or Prabu Wangi ruled in Kawali-Galuh, East Priangan. Prabu Wangi was crowned king at a very young age. Therefore, his reign lasted for a very long time, namely for 104 years from 1363 to 1467. The Kawali inscription states that Prabu Niskala Wastukancana during his long reign reached the peak of his country's glory and prosperity, his royal palace was named Surawisesa. Thus, Prabu Wangi as king was very well known among the wider community. Rahiyang Dewa Niskala, namely the son of Prabu Niskala Wastukancana, which also means the father of Prabu Siliwangi, is not found in the babad, wawacan, or pantun stories. Meanwhile, the name Prabu Siliwangi, as Prabu Wangi's grandson, is always a figure in the babad, wawacan, and pantun stories. So that (the name) Prabu Siliwangi spread widely and was well known among the wider community”.

In the Carita Parahyangan manuscript it is said that the successor of Prabu Wangi who later became famous as the second figure in the kingdom government (Pajajaran) was: Ratu Purana, Prabu Guru Dewataprana, Ratu Jayadewa, Sri Baduga Maharaja and there were other names. This king ruled in Pakuan Pajajaran for 39 years (1474-1513). So his government was no longer in Kawali-Galuh, East Priangan; but in the West Priangan area, around the Bogor area.

Based on the existing inscriptions, only Sri Baduga has officially changed his title. Initially he was titled Prabu Guru Dewataprana, then he changed his title to Sri Baduga Ratu Haji in Pakuan Pajajaran Sri Sang Ratu Dewata. This new name or title is very beautiful, therefore in the Carita Parahyangan, he is called "Sriman Sri Wacana". This means, the famous one has a beautiful name. The title in the Batutulis inscription is called ngaran and the famous name (harum = fragrant). In Sundanese it is called wawangi or wangi. Because he has changed his title, that is most likely the reason why the people call Sri Baduga Siliwangi, which means changing his name or title. Likewise in the babad it is said that Siliwangi means "asilih wawangian".

The word "silih" which means to replace and "wangi" which means fragrant or famous, has a symbolic meaning, that Prabu Siliwangi replaced Prabu Wangi in all his glory and greatness. So we can say that the 9 Siliwangi period was the golden age of Pajajaran, just like the golden age of the Sriwijaya Kingdom or the Majapahit Kingdom." (Jarahdam Siliwangi, 1968: 7-8).

Sulyana WH et al. emphasized that the figure of Prabu Siliwangi was Sri Baduga Maharaja, who led the Pakuan Pajajaran Kingdom. The Pajajaran region at that time included Banten, Pontang, Cigede, Tamgara, Kalapa, Karawang, and Cimanuk. In addition, Sri Baduga was also known as the "Queen of Pakuan" and the "Queen of Sunda". (Sulyana et al., 2006: 38).

According to the history team of the Siliwangi Military Command (1968), the reign of King Siliwangi

was in 1474-1513. However, according to Sulyana WH et al., in 1482-1521. Most historians agree that the power of King Siliwangi at that time was Pakuan Pajajaran, in the West Priangan region. Perhaps because of the similar leadership between Prabu Wangi in Kawali Galuh and Sri Baduga in Bogor and its surroundings, he was nicknamed "Substitute of Prabu Wangi" alias Siliwangi. The greatness and glory experienced by Pajajaran as stated by K.F. Holle, in 1969, although only briefly, we can know the atmosphere of society during the Pajajaran period. If we examine it, during the reign of Prabu Siliwangi it was almost unexpected, because it was so orderly starting from the government system, religious system, astronomy and topography, war science, foreign language knowledge and handicrafts such as batik. (Jarahdam, 1968: 8).

METHODS OF RESEARCH

History as an empirical discipline demands that every statement must be based on credible facts. Without valid historical sources, history itself cannot be realized, which fundamentally distinguishes it from fictional and imaginative fairy tales. (Nasuha, 2017) In fairy tales, there is no claim that the story is based on empirical facts or is a representation of real events. The quality of historical sources is influenced by various factors, such as whether the source is an eyewitness or perpetrator of the event, whether the source is an original or secondary document, and the time distance between the event and the recording of the source. These aspects determine the credibility and authenticity of the source, so that in historical studies sources are categorized into primary, secondary, tertiary, and so on. From another perspective, supporting historical facts can be classified as artifacts, social facts, and mental facts, each of which has its manifestation as a source of objects, written, or oral.

This article uses primary sources in the form of Fragments of Carita Parahyangan compiled by Undang A. Darsa and Edi S. Ekadjati and Carita Parahyangan compiled by Atja. (Atja, 1968; Danasasmita et al., 1987) This study uses an empirical perspective which is a rational idea formed from individual experience, which according to Sugiono is a method that can be observed sensorily so that it can be verified by other parties. (Sugiyono, 2016) The data is then analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques, starting with data reduction to filter relevant information from all sources. (Anggito & Johan Setiawan, 2018) The reduced data is then interpreted through a historical approach, focusing on Prabu Siliwangi and its impact on the Islamic movement in Indonesia. Conclusions are drawn based on the relationship between the events of the Role of Sri Baduga Maharaja in the Pajajaran Kingdom and the Islamic Movement (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Starting his reign in the Pakuan Pajajaran era, Sri Baduga Maharaja ruled the Sunda Galuh Kingdom for 39 years (1482–1521), a period that was the peak of the glory and progress of the region now known as Bogor City. Under his leadership, Pakuan Pajajaran experienced significant developments in political, economic, and cultural aspects, making it one of the important centers of civilization in the region. This leadership constellation not only reflects political stability, but also shows its strategic role in strengthening cultural identity and integrating traditional values with the dynamics of the times. Contemporary research in the fields of history and cultural studies places his reign as a golden era that played a role in laying the foundation for the development of Sundanese civilization until the modern era.

1) Maintaining Religious Tolerance

In his youth, Sri Baduga or Prabu Jayadewata was known as a tough, brave, and agile knight traveler, reflecting a dynamic and adaptive leadership character. His first wife, Nyai Ambetkasih, was a direct descendant of Ki Gedeng Sindangkasih, son of Mahaprabu Niskala Wastu Kancana from the Surantaka Kingdom based in Kedaton Village (now Kapetakan District, Cirebon) and ruler of Muarajati Port Cirebon which borders the Sing Apura Kingdom. Historical narratives record that after the death of this figure, leadership was continued by his son-in-law, also known as Prabu Jayadewata, as part of the continuity of the tradition of power. Furthermore, the community's memory of the greatness of his great-grandfather, Prabu Maharaja Lingga Buana who died in the Bubad incident led by Prabu Wangi illustrates how heroic events and kinship relations helped shape collective identity and historical narratives in the land of Sunda. Interdisciplinary approaches in modern historical and cultural studies increasingly emphasize the importance of understanding the symbolic and ritual dimensions of the legitimation of power and the integration of traditional values in the political context of the time.

In various Old Sundanese manuscripts, the name of King Siliwangi appears consistently, as stated in Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian (Danasmita, 1987), Carita Parahiyangan (Atja, 1968), Bujangga Manik (Noordyun & Teeuw, 2009), and Carita Purwaka Caruban Nagari (Atja, 1986). Since the beginning of the 16th century AD, Siliwangi has been known as a central figure in the Pantun story and as a king who ruled in Pakuan Pajajaran. The four manuscripts broadly provide a description of (Prabu) Siliwangi.

One source, the Carita Parahiyangan manuscript, describes Sri Baduga's reign with the phrase:

“The ancient ancestors, where will my enemy come from, the great enemy of the little enemy. Like the Crete in the north of the west of the west, the Contribution of King Sribaduga to the Spread of Islam in Sundakreta feels. Don't Crete and be a man among the rich, and be greedy in the torment of the Sanghiyang”.

The people of Pajajaran were then free to determine a new teaching, namely Islam. The royal rules in the form of Sanghyang Siksakandang Karesian which contained basic rules were then flexible to be applied. In the manuscript it was explained that the position of the king was below the Gods and Gods, meaning that this position must receive the blessing of both. The way to get blessings was to obey their teachings. However, on the other hand, the king must also realize that the welfare and comfort of the people determine whether this mandate is successfully implemented or not. So, when chaos, rebellion, and social destruction occurred due to the king's old-fashioned leadership, the Gods became angry.

2) Relations with Cirebon and Banten

The expression means that the ancestral teachings that are upheld are able to prevent attacks, both in the form of military power and mental illness, and guarantee welfare in the northern, western, and eastern regions. On the other hand, the inability is only felt by households that are entangled in greed towards religious teachings. From this statement, it can be concluded that at that time there was a religious shift, with many Pajajaran people converting to Islam.

One of the important factors in the relationship between the Cirebon Sultanate and the Pajajaran Kingdom was family ties. Prince Cakrabuana and Sunan Gunung Jati, two main figures in the Cirebon Sultanate, had direct ties to Prabu Siliwangi, the ruler of the Pajajaran Kingdom. Prince Cakrabuana, as the son of Prabu Siliwangi, had a central role in the transition from Hinduism to Islam in the West Java region.

Sunan Gunung Jati (Syarif Hidayatullah), who was the son of Nyai Lara Santang, the younger sister of Prince Cakrabuana, also had blood relations with the Pajajaran royal family. He was the grandson of Prabu Siliwangi. This family closeness allowed the spread of Islam to occur persuasively and effectively in

Cirebon and its surroundings, but also created complex dynamics between the two kingdoms. The relationship between the Cirebon Sultanate and the Pajajaran Kingdom is a story full of political, cultural, and religious history that shaped the development of the West Java region in the 15th and 16th centuries. Both kingdoms had a major influence in the archipelago, and their interactions involved aspects that were very significant for the course of West Javanese history.



Figure 1. Batutulis inscription in Bogor mentions the greatness of Sri Baduga Maharaja in history.
(Source: Collectie Wereld museum, 1950)

In various sources of tradition from Cirebon, it is said that Prince Walangsungsang was the son of the king of Pajajaran (Prabu Siliwangi). Before settling in Cirebon, he first settled in wandering in the interior of East Priangan. Then Walangsungsang pioneered the development of the city of Cirebon based on Islam. According to Carita Purwaka Caruban Nagari, Walangsungsang at the end of his life developed Islam in the South Priangan area. According to 14 sources of tradition in Garut, Kean Santang was the son of the king of Pajajaran (Prabu Siliwangi). He had a disagreement with his father, but in the end it was agreed that Kean Santang was given the freedom to spread Islam throughout the Sunda Kingdom. Kean Santang's relics are in Godog in the form of a tomb and in Mount Nagara in the form of a former defense. In Cangkuang Garut there are two tombs of figures who spread Islam, namely the tombs of Sembah Dalem Pangadegan and Prince Arif Muhammad.

Both figures have connections with Cirebon. Based on traditional sources from Ciamis, the entry of Islam into the Galuh area (Ciamis) is connected with the figure of Apun Di Anjung or Prince Mahadikusumah or Maharaja Kawali. Prince Mahadikusumah was famous as a highly trusted cleric in Cirebon. The remains in the form of a stone base that may have been the remains of a mosque on Panjalu Lake Island (Ciamis) show the beginning of Islam in that area. Islam entered the Sumedang area through marriage. Prince Santri is known as the first regional ruler (Regent) of Sumedang who is Muslim. Prince

Santri is a descendant of the Pajajaran king on his mother's side and a descendant of Sunan Gunung Jati on his father's side



Figure 2. Map of Java from 1598 by Joannes van Doetecum the Elder, showing the city of Cirebon (Charabaon) with a flag on top of it. (Source: Mhatopzz)

The relationship between the Cirebon Sultanate and the Pajajaran Kingdom left a long-term impact that is visible to this day. The transition from Hindu-Buddhist dominance to Islam in the West Java region influenced aspects of culture, traditions, and belief systems of the Sundanese people. A number of cultural sites, such as the palace and mosque in Cirebon, bear witness to this acculturation process. In addition, stories about Prabu Siliwangi, Sunan Gunung Jati, and Prince Cakrabuana are still an important part of the oral culture of the West Javanese people, especially in traditional arts and folk legends. This cultural acculturation, which involves the adaptation of Sundanese Hindu traditions and Islamic teachings, enriches Sundanese culture which is still known today for its values of tolerance and pluralism.

The first king of the Banten Sultanate was Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin (1552-1570). Historically, the Banten Sultanate was related to the Pajajaran Kingdom. The Banten Sultanate was established after Pajajaran was attacked by Demak. The Pajajaran Kingdom was a Hindu-Buddhist kingdom that succeeded in uniting the entire West Java region, from south to north, under a single power. Banten was also one of the regions under Pajajaran's rule until the early 16th century. After Pajajaran's power began to decline, the Demak Kingdom began launching several attacks on Banten around 1520. Initially, the ruler of Pajajaran intended to cooperate with the Portuguese to help him deal with the Muslims in Central Java who had taken over power from the hands of the subordinate kings of Majapahit.

However, the Portuguese ignored their request. In the end, Sunan Gunung Jati, one of the Islamic figures, succeeded in controlling Banten in 1525-1526 AD. The arrival of Sunan Gunung Jati to Banten at that time was part of the mission of Sultan Trenggono from the Demak Kingdom to expel the Portuguese from the archipelago. After controlling Banten, Sunan Gunung Jati immediately took over the government, but did not appoint himself as king. In 1552 AD, Sunan Gunung Jati returned to Cirebon and handed over Banten to his second son, Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin. Since then, Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin was

appointed king of the Banten Sultanate. Thus, the relationship between the Banten Sultanate and the Pajajaran Kingdom is that the Banten Kingdom was established after the conquest of the Demak Kingdom against the Pajajaran Kingdom.

3) Cultural Heritage and Traces

The process of Islamization in Tatar Sunda that has been going on since the 15th century has not only left traces in spiritual and social life, but has also manifested itself in forms of material culture that are still preserved to this day. The peaceful and acculturative approach of preaching from figures such as Syarif Hidayatullah enabled the integration of Islamic values into local traditions without erasing existing cultural identities. This acculturative heritage is now represented through a number of artifacts and manuscripts stored in the Sri Baduga Maharaja Museum in Bandung, reflecting how religion and culture are harmoniously intertwined. In this context, studying this collection of relics is an important means of understanding how Islam grew and took root in the cultural expressions of the Sundanese people.

a) Momolo

In the cultural landscape of Tatar Sunda, momolo occupies a unique position as an architectural element that is full of symbolic and historical meaning. Its existence, especially at the peak of the roof of the mosque, is not merely structural, but also contains cosmological values that reflect the dialogue between local beliefs and transcendence in Islam Siswoyo et al. (2019). In this context, momolo acts as a visual representation of the process of integrating local values with Islam through a flexible and organic acculturation mechanism. As explained by Geertz (1973), culture is a "web of significance" that humans weave and interpret themselves. In this context, momolo becomes an important node in the weave of Sundanese-Islamic cultural meaning. It is not only the "crown" of the building, but also a symbol of respect for sacred space and an indicator of vertical orientation towards the Divine. Some forms of momolo even resemble the structure of a meru or stupa, signifying the continuity of the form of the Hindu-Buddhist tradition that was Islamized through a process of symbolic reinterpretation. Geertz emphasized that cultural change is not merely symbolic domination, but rather a negotiation of meaning in which old symbols are given new meanings within the framework of evolving beliefs.

Dasum Muanas (1998) stated that the shape of the roof and its peak ornaments, including the momolo, are "markers of the sacredness of space" which contain spiritual and religious protection functions. This strengthens the view that traditional buildings are not built haphazardly, but through collective rituals and consensus that reflect the harmonious relationship between humans, ancestors, and the universe. In this framework, the momolo becomes a "symbolic stamp" of the cultural and spiritual agreements of the community. Traditional architectural studies also highlight the spiritual function of the momolo as a protector of buildings from negative energy or evil forces (Reiza D. Dienaputra et al., 2021). Thus, buildings are not merely understood as physical structures, but rather as living entities that interact with nature and the supernatural world. In the daily lives of Sundanese people, the momolo is seen as an element that "speaks"—conveying the existence of sacred space and reminding humans of the vertical orientation towards God. The process of acculturation of this symbol takes place adaptively. Islam does not eliminate local values, but rather absorbs structures that are already alive and rearticulates them within a religious framework. The continued use of momolo in mosques since the 15th century, including in the missionary strategy to Hindu-Buddhist communities who had recently embraced Islam, shows symbolic flexibility in conveying spiritual messages through forms that are familiar to the community.

b) Glass Painting (Macan Ali Arabic Calligraphy & Jinem Building Arabic Calligraphy)

Among the ethnographic collections of the Sri Baduga Museum, glass paintings with the theme of Macan Ali and Jinem Building stand out as artifacts that reflect the process of Islamization of Tatar Sunda. Both are not just works of art, but contain deep meaning, especially through the use of Arabic calligraphy which is identical to Islam, which blends creatively and aesthetically with local culture. Purnomo (55) emphasized that the museum's collection reflects local cultural heritage that has adapted to religious elements, showing the process of acculturation between local traditions and Islamic values. The discovery of this painting, along with other artifacts such as momolo, is the result of an intensive search for six years (Punomo, 2025). Macan Ali, the symbol of the Cirebon Sultanate, historically symbolizes spiritual and political power. The shape of the tiger in the painting is composed of Arabic letters forming the sentence *lā ilāha illā Allāh*. This style illustrates how the local narrative of the guardian of the kingdom rooted in the Hindu-Buddhist beliefs of Pajajaran was Islamized through calligraphy, not by breaking, but by absorption and renewal. The tiger form is not removed, but rather re-formulated within the framework of monotheism (Dienaputra et al., 2021). Arabic calligraphy on the Jinem Building, the official building of the Kasepuhan Palace in Cirebon, has an architectural function in the form of words of praise to Allah and the Prophet Muhammad (Purnomo, 2025). This calligraphy acts as a sacred element that strengthens the spiritual legitimacy of space and power, even without representative figures such as Macan Ali (Ahmad Ghazali Syafi'i & Masbukin, 2021). Both works are made using the Cirebon reverse glass painting technique, using classic colors such as dark blue, brick red, and gold combined with traditional mega mendung and leaf motifs. In contemporary developments, artists such as Rastika add modern touches such as gradation and airbrush, without eliminating the main symbolic structure (Dienaputra et al., 2021)

c) Babad Banten Manuscript

Among the collection of ancient manuscripts stored in the Sri Baduga Museum, Babad Banten is one of the important historical documents in mapping the process of Islamization in the western region of Java Island. This manuscript not only stores information on the political history of the Banten Sultanate, but also reflects a local narrative regarding the spread of Islam that took place gradually, in layers, and full of cultural meaning. In the context of Indonesian Islamic historiography, Babad Banten not only records chronological facts, but also becomes a means of legitimizing power and transmitting religious values. The Babad Banten manuscript which is part of the Sri Baduga Museum collection (collection no. 07.74) is written in the form of poetry (dangding) with Pegon script and Javanese-Cirebon language. This manuscript consists of 418 pages and is estimated to have been written around 1890, before finally entering the museum collection in 1984 (Purnomo, 2025). Its narrative structure is divided into two large parts: first, about the history of Javanese kingdoms before Islam; and second, about the preaching of Islam and the establishment of the Banten Sultanate led by Maulana Hasanuddin, son of Sunan Gunung Djati (Nida Nurmustafha et al., 2024). This pattern shows an effort to construct history as a continuity between the pre-Islamic period and the emergence of Islam as a cultural regeneration. What distinguishes Babad Banten from ordinary historical records is the way this manuscript frames Islamization as a social and spiritual movement, not as a coercive military force. Juariah (2016) emphasized that, "Islamization was never carried out through violence or war without a clear reason. Attacks or expansion of power were more due to political factors with the motive of seizing power". This shows that Islamic preaching took place along with adjustments to local culture and dynamics, not open confrontation.

CONCLUSION

Sri Baduga Maharaja played a major role in the spread of Islam in the Sunda region through leadership that upheld religious tolerance and the stability of the kingdom. His open attitude towards diversity allowed the spread of Islam to take place peacefully, especially in coastal areas such as Cirebon, Banten, and Sunda Kalapa. Among the ethnographic collections of the Sri Baduga Museum, glass paintings with the theme of Macan Ali and Jinem Building stand out as artifacts that reflect the process of Islamization of Tatar Sunda. Both are not just works of art, but contain deep meaning, especially through the use of Arabic calligraphy which is identical to Islam, which blends creatively and aesthetically with local culture. By providing religious freedom and not suppressing the Muslim community, Sri Baduga helped create a social climate that encouraged the growth of Islam in the Sunda region, making his reign an important point in the early history of Islam in West Java.

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