Living Religious Moderation within the Sipakatau, Sipakainge’, and Sipakalebbi Cultures of the Bugis Community

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Abstract
This study aims to identify indicators of religious moderation in the internalization of Sipakatau, Sipakainge’, and Sipakalebbi cultures among the Bugis community in Mallari Village, Awangpone District, Bone Regency. It employs qualitative research in the form of case studies and interpretive methods. Data collection involves observation and interviews, with the analytical theory of indicators of religious moderation in Indonesia. The findings revealed several indicators of religious moderation in the mentioned cultures. Firstly, Sipakatau culture demonstrates tolerance and the accommodation of local values, as seen in socio-political life, emphasizing respect for political differences and upholding deliberation. Secondly, Sipakainge’ culture is committed to national values, evident through community compliance with village regulations and educational activities aligned with national education orientation. Lastly, the value of humanism is observed in the internalization of Sipakalebbi culture, as reflected in village government policies that empower individuals with disabilities. Theoretical implications suggest that religious moderation can be integrated into local wisdom through socio-political, educational, and cultural activities. However, the study’s limitations include not examining obstacles or challenges in mainstreaming religious moderation within the Sipakatau, Sipakainge’, and Sipakalebbi cultures in Mallari Village.


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**Introduction**

Subjective religious doctrines are frequent tools to legitimize various states of understanding and actions contradicting religion’s universal teachings. The phenomena of disbelief, intolerance, radicalism, and terrorism are deviant acts that tarnish and destroy harmony in the lives of religious people (Umar, 2021, p. 5); one example is the suicide bombing at the Makassar Cathedral Church on Sunday, March 28, 2021, which raised an uproar among Indonesia. The suicide bombers are suspected to be the Asharut Daulah Network. Even before the suicide bombing in January, Densus 88 had arrested 20 followers of the Asharut Daulah Network in several locations in South Sulawesi. The network is affiliated with radical Islamic groups that operate in Dolo, Philippines (Setiawan, 2022, pp. 55–56). This case is real evidence that the South Sulawesi region is not free from extremism and religious radicalism. The situation is unfortunate, considering that South Sulawesi is known as a place dominated by the Bugis community. The Bugis tribe is known in Indonesia for its local wisdom possessing noble culture.
People of Bugis are also known as communities that are consistent in carrying out the teachings of Islam. At the same time, the community continues to carry out the heritage of local wisdom passed down from generation to generation (Pabbajah, 2021, p. 92). This phenomenon shows that it is possible to implement the prophetic social teachings of Islam and coexist in harmony with the socio-cultural reality of the existing society (Husaini & Islamy, 2022, p. 52). In other words, a dialogical relationship between Islamic teachings and local traditions in Indonesia becomes attainable (Kasdi, 2018, p. 300). Such a statement is not an exaggeration since Islamic teachings can be eclectic with the values of local wisdom in the community (Ediyono, 2017, pp. 149–150). The eclecticism relation, which later became part of the Indonesian context, became part of the paradigm base for the emergence of the term ‘Islam Nusantara’. However, it is still reaping debate among Indonesian Muslim leaders over the term (Fahmi et al., 2019, pp. 333–334).

One of the noble cultures that are quite popular in the life of the Bugis people is Sipakatau (humanizing each other), Sipakainge’ (reminding each other), and Sipakalebbi (mutual respect). The noble value of sipak or sipakaleng sipakalebbi has been familiar as the Bugis society’s philosophy of life full of peace and brotherhood. Bugis culture contains the internalization of values forming moderate religious understanding and attitudes toward the lives of religious people with any background (Herlin et al., 2020, p. 284). However, awareness to understand the values is challenging for every religious individual, especially those in the Bugis community. Empirical facts are present in this statement, such as in the cases of radicalism and terrorism with religious nuances that the author has alluded to in the previous paragraph.

Apart from the noble culture of the Bugis society as above (Sipakatau, Sipakainge’, and Sipakalebbi), the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia in 2019 has formulated four indicators of religious moderation in Indonesia (Azis et al., 2021, p. 231). The four indicators include the value of national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodating local
traditions (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019, pp. 42–43). These values help to identify the character of individual religious understanding and attitudes in Indonesia, whether one is moderate. In this case, the cultural manifestations of the Bugis community in the form of the values of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakainge’*, and *Sipakalebbi* can also be synergistic with the government’s efforts to manifest a religious moderation lifestyle in Indonesia based on local cultural wisdom. Especially in the context of the multicultural society in Indonesia (Islamy, 2022, p. 51).

This study intends to identify indicators of religious moderation in the internalization of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakainge’*, and *Sipakalebbi* cultures by the Bugis community in Malari Village, Awangpone District, Bone Regency, South Sulawesi Province. Qualitative research of case studies using interpretive methods applied to analyze data collected from observation and interviews. The analysis proceeded using indicators of religious moderation in Indonesia. Several informants participated in this research’s data gathering interview, including WH, MH, and AR, as the prominent figures of Mallari Village. Some of these informants assisted in data gathering to identify the internalization of religious moderation indicators in aspects of village government policies, educational activities, and education in Mallari Village.

This research is essential to find the format of internalization of the Indonesian people’s values of local cultural wisdom through religious moderation. Previous research on this topic included Herlin et al. that explained that the existence of the *Sipakatau*, *Sipakainge’*, and *Sipakalebbi* culture contains the internalization of values for the formation of moderate religious understanding and attitudes manifested in educational activities, such as in the learning curriculum (Herlin et al., 2020, p. 284). Subhan’s research affirming that *Sipakatau* can manifest in family and community life (Bakri, 2020, pp. 254–255). Kaddi and Dewi’s research revealed that the understanding and implementation of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakainge’*, and *Sipakalebbi* for Bugis immigrants in Palu City can form solid and harmonious social interactions (Kaddi & Dewi, 2017, p. 348). The research of Halima et al. explained that the manifestation of character values...
contained in the *Sipakatau*, *Sipakainge*’, and *Sipakalebbi* cultures could be a strategy to prevent bullying (Halima et al., 2021, p. 82).

Based on the elaboration, none has discovered the presence of indicators of religious moderation formulated by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia in the cultural manifestations of the Bugis community in *Sipakatau*, *Sipakainge*’, and *Sipakalebbi*. This point becomes the distinctive aspect of this research.

**The Benchmark of Religious Moderation in Indonesia**

Religious moderation refers to a balanced understanding of individuals toward religion presented in one’s attitude. The balance in question is the middle-way principle in religious practice that will prevent an individual from being extreme, i.e., neither to the left nor right (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019, pp. 13–18). Moderate religious understanding and attitudes in Indonesia come into being by showing all elements of society, especially the government, through various ways of internalizing the values of moderate religious teachings, neither extreme left nor right. Formal and non-formal educational institutions strategically internalize efforts (Zaman et al., 2022, p. 139). Without question, it also includes the role of mainstreaming Islamic moderation values from Pesantren as traditional Islamic educational institutions that have developed in Indonesia (Nasir & Rijal, 2021, p. 52).

Therefore, it is appropriate if the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs 2019 formulated four predictors of religious moderation in Indonesia: First, national commitment uses to identify individual religious understandings and attitudes toward their commitment to the constitution. The attitude commitment in the praxis of religious, social, and national boundaries can reveal personal religiosity to show whether he can implement his religious teachings moderately in the context of national life.

Second, tolerance. The value of this indicator can identify individual religious understandings and attitudes in the context of the plurality of social life in Indonesia. The embodiment of tolerance by individual religious people can be fundamental in creating harmonious life relations in social plurality in
Indonesia. The tolerance indicator will emphasize mutual respect, respect, and acceptance between religious communities in all aspects of social life. The higher the spirit of tolerance of a nation towards the diversity of life, the more democratic the nation tends to be, and vice versa. Therefore, tolerance is not only related to religious beliefs but can be closely related to differences in race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, culture, and more.

Third, non-violence. This indicator works to identify the religious beliefs and attitudes of individuals who do not have a vision or mission to change Indonesia’s social and political system through acts of violence in the name of religion. Radicalism materializes with acts of terrorism in the name of religion. Those without this value can act as radicals or even anarchists hiding behind the legitimacy of religious doctrines to realize their orientation.

Fourth, accommodating to local culture. This value works to identify an individual’s religious understanding and attitude, whether one is moderate in responding to the plurality of local cultures in Indonesia. The value can shape individual religious understandings and attitudes that are inclusive and tolerant of the reality of local traditional wisdom as long as it does not conflict with the teachings of their religion (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019, pp. 42–47).

Apart from the description of the four indicators of religious moderation above, it is essential to recognize that it is a familiar topic for the Indonesian people. It goes without saying as Indonesian have deep-rooted social and culturally diverse capital. Indonesians tolerate and respect brotherhood and diversity (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019, pp. v–vi). In the context of Indonesian Muslims’ lives, normatively in Islamic teachings, the concept of Wasatiyyah manifested in the form of justice, balance, and tolerance (Helmy et al., 2021, p. 378). In addition, in the context of the current digital era, the spread of moderate Islamic teachings disseminates through da’wah activities on social media, taking into consideration that the existence of social media can also have a good or bad impact on da’wah activities in Indonesia (Akmaliah, 2020, p. 1).
The existence of the four indicators of religious moderation becomes an analytical theory applied in exploring and identifying the existence of religious moderation values in the cultural manifestations of the Bugis people about *Sipakatau*, *Sipakainge*’, and *Sipakalebbi*.

**Portrait of Mallari Village, Awangpone District, Bone Regency**

Bone Regency is one of the regencies on the east coast of South Sulawesi Province, which is 174 Km2 from Makassar City. Bone is the third largest district in South Sulawesi Province, with 27 sub-districts. The area of Bone Regency is 4,559 Km2, with the broadest area being in Bontocani District and the smallest area being in Tanete Riattang District (take a look at Bone Regency map).

Bone Regency is an area in South Sulawesi which strategically located. Bone Regency is one of the regencies on the east coast of South Sulawesi Province, about 174 km from Makassar. Its area is approximately 4,559 km or 9.78%, with an average population per km of 165 people.

The Mallari Village is one of the seventeen villages and one sub-district in Awangpone District, Bone Regency. Mallari Village consists of five (5) hamlets: Mallari Hamlet, Bacu Hamlet, Cempalagi Hamlet, Awangnipa Hamlet, and Nipa Hamlet.

Mallari Village is approximately 30 km from the sub-district capital and about 20 km from the capital of Bone Regency. Sampang’s location close to the beach or the sea is a separate point for the people of Mallari Village.

The population of Mallari Village is approximately 2,959 people, consisting of 1425 men and 1531 women. All residents of Mallari Village gathered in families (households) with a total of 750 families. The average family member is four people.

Mallari Village has a breakthrough policy under Wahyuli’s leadership, including the village head’s movement to prevent underage/child marriage. Not playing games in the program because the form of socialization of the Marriage Law regarding the age of marriage has collaborated with the
Office of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection in Bone Regency in providing the dangers of child marriage. In addition, collaborating with the Ministry of Religion in socializing the marriage age applied in marriage registration and the implications arising from child marriage or marriage is not old enough.

In Mallari Village, the village head is a great woman who became an agent of Saya Perempuan Anti-Corruption and is often invited to the center to speak with the Corruption Eradication Commission in discussing anti-corruption issues. Thus, Mallari Village has many benefits comings from leadership and the leadership system applied by the village in supporting various government programs.

The geographical map of Mallari Village is available in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Map of Mallari Village, Awangpone District, Bone Regency
(Source: Google Map, 2022)
Religious Moderation in Cultural Practices of the Bugis Community in Mallari Village on *Sipakatau*, *Sipakainge’*, and *Sipakalebbi*

The dialectic of local religion and culture in the realm of praxis and theory does not necessarily show the face of a harmonious relationship but rather shows dichotomous relations and even conflicts (Makatita & Islamy, 2022, p. 241). It is triggered by a discrepancy between the normative provisions of religious teachings and existing cultural norms (Hamzah, 2018, p. 1). Although interdependent relations between different religious communities are difficult to avoid (Ramdhani et al., 2020, pp. 195–196). In the context of harmonious relations between religious teachings and existing local wisdom, it becomes an urgent matter, especially in the multicultural life of Indonesian society, which has had historical roots over time (Wasino, 2013, p. 148). Moreover, Pancasila as ideology becomes Indonesia’s socio-political foundation, indicating how Indonesia will evade changing into a secular or theocracy country (Ropi, 2019, p. 597). However, it is crucial to realize that mainstreaming moderate Islamic discourse in Indonesia must not be distinct from the dynamics of existing political policies. Moderate Islamic discourse in domestic political life is strongly influenced by the political configuration that runs in Indonesia (Zaprulkhan, 2014, 2015; Zinira, 2022).

To identify indicators of religious moderation in the internalization of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakainge’*, and *Sipakalebbi* cultural values in the Bugis community in Mallari Village, the authors attempt to analyze various aspects, including community activities in the fields of government, economy, community activities to traditional activities in the village. Based on the data analysis found in the field, indicators of religious moderation in the internalization of *Sipakatau*, *Sipakainge’*, and *Sipakalebbi* cultural values in the Bugis community in Mallari Village can be classified as follows.

**Indicators of Tolerance and Accommodative Values of Local Culture in Internalizing *Sipakatau* Culture**

The term *Sipakatau* in the Bugis language means humanizing humans. *Sipakatau* cultural values have five meanings: telling the truth, honesty,
determination, mutual respect or mutual humanity (Sipakatau), and surrender to God Almighty (Rahim, 2012, p. 167). The manifestation of Sipakatau culture in the life of the Bugis society gives birth to an attitude of mutual respect, love, and respect for each other in many aspects of daily social life.

For socio-political life in Mallari Village, indicators of religious moderation in tolerance values are visible in the manifestation of Sipakatau culture when electing the leader. The election of leaders in the village has never become a clash or social conflict between the candidates and the community. As explained by Wahyuli, the Head of Mallari Village, there is no bias in every election of government leaders. The existence of the Village Head only gives an appeal to be welcomed, and there is no friction in a democratic party. It is left to each individual (community) to vote for their rights. Besides, indicators of tolerance value are apparent in the village decision-making process, which undergoes deliberate involvement of representative community leaders at the hamlet level related to government issues such as people’s activities, Islamic holidays, and agriculture.

The value of Sipakatau, manifested in leadership, is also reflected in the Mallari Village government, namely the gau lempu’e culture, which genuinely carries out the appointment properly and is transparent to its people and the government. The manifestation can be seen from the achievements of the Mallari Village government, as explained by the village government that as a form of transparency to the community, it has been confirmed as Mallari Village is named a role model village in village financial management given by the Bone Regency government and a charter from KPPN Watampone. It motivates Mallari Village officials to provide the best performance in village financial management to realize good governance (WH, interview, 2021).

Not only in socio-political life but indicators of religious moderation in the form of tolerance values can also be found in the internalization of Sipakatau cultural values in community education. The Sipak or Bugis culture has a relationship with the values of character education, namely religious values,
tolerance, honesty, social care, and respect for achievement. The manifestation of *Sipakatau* culture is following educational values, including speaking well, being polite, respecting the work of others, and not insulting friends at school. Therefore, in Mallari Village schools, ‘Five S Cultures’ scripture are available in every corner: Smile, Greeting, Greet, Polite, and Courteous.

Indicators of religious moderation in the form of tolerance in the internalization of *Sipakatau* values in socio-political life in Mallari Village show the understanding and social attitudes of the Bugis people in the village to respect and appreciate each other while accepting differences in social life. The manifestation of tolerance for religious people is a very critical element in building a harmonious pluralistic life in Indonesian society. Considering that democracy is the political system of Indonesia, individuals (groups) must be tolerant in responding to the existing pluralism. Therefore, in practice, the higher the tolerance towards plurality in a country, the more democratic it will be regarding social and political life.

Next, indicators of religious moderation in the form of a helpful attitude towards local culture can be found in the internalization of *Sipakatau* cultural values at various traditional events. This explanation came from Arife, the traditional leader of Mallari Village, that implements celebration events, such as marriage events. In the invitation to the implementation of the marriage, community leaders to dress in full traditional clothes, for example, stupid *mabbaju* for women and wearing traditional suits for men. In addition, the number of people who are *mattampa* corresponds to the number of times the marriage occurs. For example, the wedding ceremony is seven days away, so the number *mattampa* are also seven people (AR, interview, 2021). Moreover, the accommodative value to local culture exists in the manifestation of *Sipakalebbi*’s value in the *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) culture in Mallari Village, which remains strong. In this case, WH, gave an example of the house transfer event (*mampule’ bola*), the community will flock to come to help, and it becomes a tradition, with no need for an official invitation, as people will come to help (WH, interview, 2021).
The indicator of religious moderation in the form of a helpful attitude towards local culture in internalizing the *Sipakatau* value shows the religious character of the Bugis community in Mallari Village to be moderate in responding to the plurality of traditional local wisdom. The indicator of an accommodative attitude towards local traditions is that the individuals in the Bugis community in the village are friendly, open-minded, and tolerant in maintaining the legacy of traditional practices of local wisdom that has existed as long as it does not conflict with religious teachings (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019, pp. 43–47).

**Indicator of the Value of National Commitment in the Internalization of *Sipakainge’* Culture**

*Sipakainge’,* in the Bugis language, means reminding each other. *Sipakainge’* has two values: *warani* (courage) and *arung* (leader). *Warani* teaches humans the courage to express opinions, criticism, and suggestions. Meanwhile, *arung* teaches every person who occupies the leadership to have the humility to accept all opinions (criticism and suggestions). The existence of *Sipakainge’* as a noble value confirms that humans are far from perfection and will not escape mistakes. For this reason, the value of Sikapale is needed as an instrument in reminding others of the good or bad that will befall them. The axiological aspect arising from the *Sipakainge’* value will minimize the occurrence of violations of norms in people.

The internalization of religious moderation in the form of the value of national commitment can be found in the manifestation of *Sipakatau* culture in the *warani* context in Mallari Village. This result came based on an analysis of an interview with WH, who explained that there are efforts to prevent child marriage in Mallari Village. The village government took firm steps by forming Village Regulation Number 10 of 2019 concerning the Prevention of Child Marriage. The emergence of the Village Regulation pushes the village government, community, family, and parents to share obligations and responsibilities towards child marriage. So, suppose anyone dares to violate these regulations. In that case, one will be given social sanctions such as not being attended when slaughtering cattle or not attending the wedding party (*walimah*) event (WH, interview, 2021).
In the context of socio-political life, the concept of warani does not only mean courage but also a form of courage and firmness of leaders in making policies for the benefit of the people. This courage is carried out as a concrete manifestation of Sipakainge’s value to the community so that they do not take actions that negatively impact the future, such as village regulations regarding child marriage prevention. The manifestation of Sipakainge’s value in the regulation intends to provide positive suggestions to the community to act better. Sipakainge’ is a way to prevent immoral acts and misbehaving in society.

The attitude of national commitment can also be found in the internalization of Sipakunge culture in educational activities in Mallari Village. The culture of Sipakainge’ has a close relation to educational values. MH, the lead of the Islamic education institution in Mallari Village, explained that environmental values, curiosity, and creativity are in educational activities in Mallari Village. In addition, the Sipakainge’ culture can be realized to remind students to respect the time and obey school rules. In this context, the implementation of the Sipakainge’ culture will have a positive impact on the life of the school community. The cultural values of Sipakainge’ are also present in various rules that can regulate students’ good personality characteristics (MH, interview, 2021). Thus, the role of Sipakainge’s values in education is very progressive in giving effect to character education, which aligns with national education goals.

Indicators of religious moderation in the form of an attitude of national commitment to the internalization of Sipakainge’ culture in Mallari Village, both in the context of compliance with village regulations and internalization in the orientation of national education activities, show that the understanding and social attitudes of the Bugis community in Mallari Village are loyal to the fundamental national consensus, especially the spirit of nationalism in accepting various national principles contained in the 1945 Constitution and various other forms of regulations that apply in Indonesia. More importantly, in the current era of globalization, the flow of wisdom from outside (international) has great potential to enter Indonesia, which
could be positive or counter-productive to the spirit of national values or the ideology of Indonesia. In this example context, the importance of awareness and attitude of national commitment in realizing an attitude of religious moderation with the intention that every citizen can uphold the values of Indonesian unity and integrity in the frame of state and religious life.

**Indicators of the Value of Humanism in the Internalization of Sipakalebbi Culture**

*Sipakalebbi* in the Bugis means to praise, love, and help each other. In the realm of praxis, *Sipakalebbi* culture teaches humans to cultivate a familial attitude and always praise and appreciate one’s achievements, regardless of differences in social status.

Religious moderation in the form of values that uphold humanity (humanism) can be found in the internalization of *Sipakalebbi* values in various Mallari Village government programs. One example is the inclusive policy by the village government in respecting and empowering the existence of people with disabilities. Mallari Village has begun to promote inclusive efforts, one of which is the celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities regularly. The celebration comes in appreciation to people with disabilities who are no different from others. The reflection government program promoted by the Mallari Village government is an inclusive movement including people who fall into the category of having deficiencies, so village government programs related to disability inclusion are nothing but providing space for people who have limitations to be involved in public activities.

The existence of internalization of *Sipakalebbi*’s values in the Bugis community shows its progress in providing space for people with disabilities to be part of government activities. Wahyuli, the Head of Mallari Village, affirmed the involvement of people with disabilities in government activities, which is nothing but a manifestation of *Sipakalebbi* values. The form of services provided or the village government’s response to people with disabilities is concrete evidence of *Sipakalebbi*’s value towards people with
disabilities. *Sipakalebbi* means mutual respect and praise for each other, which means mutual love and mutual help create a family atmosphere and mutual assistance, and regardless of social status, this culture proves that the principle adopted in the process of statehood is the principle of cooperation. This example demonstrates that the Bugis society upholds the cultural values of *Sipakatau, Sipakalebbi,* and *Sipakalebbi* to create a family atmosphere based on the principle of ta'āwun or mutual help. The manifestation of *Sipakalebbi*'s values focuses more on respecting others to help each other in goodness by helping his brother’s work (WH, interview, 2021). Thus, it is not an exaggeration if the manifestation of *Sipakalebbi* culture in the form of appreciation and empowerment of people with disabilities is concrete evidence that the Bugis community in Malari village upholds human values in their understanding and religious attitude.

**Conclusion**

The discussion establishes that the indicators of religious moderation exist in the internalization of the *Sipakatau, Sipakainge’,* and *Sipakalebbi* cultures in the life of the Bugis people in Mallari Village. First, indicators of tolerance and accommodative value to local culture in the internalization of *Sipakatau* Culture exist in the manifestation of socio-political life in Mallari Village, which emphasises mutual respect for differences in political choices and upholds the value of public involvement in decisions related to public policies. Indicators of the value of tolerance can also be found in Mallari Village’s education world by implementing the ‘Five S Culture’ in all educational activities, including ‘Smiles, Greetings, Greetings, Polite and Polite’. Meanwhile, indicators of accommodative value to local culture in the internalization of *Sipakatau* Culture can be seen in efforts to preserve traditional customs that do not conflict with normative religious teachings. Second, the indicator of national commitment to the internalization of *Sipakainge’* culture. In this context, indicators of national commitment can be found in the community’s compliance with village regulations and educational activities that align with the orientation of national education. Third, indicators of the value of humanism in the internalization of
Sipakalebbi culture are available in the inclusive policy of the Mallari Village government, which respects and empowers the existence of people with disabilities in various village government programs.

The theoretical implications of the findings of this study show that mainstreaming religious moderation can be done through the internalization of the value of local wisdom manifested in socio-political, educational, and socio-cultural activities. The limitation of this research is that it has yet to examine the obstacles, barriers, or challenges in mainstreaming religious moderation through the internalization of the Sipakatau, Sipakainge’, and Sipakalebbi cultures in the life of the Bugis community in Mall. The limitations of this research can be a lacuna for future research. Considering the mainstreaming of religious moderation, which the Indonesian government emphasizes through the Ministry of Religion in the realm of praxis, it is not always welcomed positively by all Indonesian people.

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Living Religious Moderation Within the Sipakatau ....

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Living Religious Moderation within the Sipakatau....


