

# Toraja, The City of Rituals

## (One Ritual can Introduce Many Kinds of Rituals)

### A Cultural Anthropology Study

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**Abstract:** This study aims to show and reveal how rich Toraja is in various types of rituals and why Toraja is known as the city of rituals. This research uses qualitative methods and participant observation, where the writer conduct field research and conduct direct observations. This method uses cultural anthropology approach and ideological linguistics. The results of this study indicates that Toraja cultural practices exist today because of their beliefs. The symbols contained in the ritual shows that in general rituals in Toraja include offerings and sacrificing. Social change in Toraja between the past and the present is influenced by modernization, scientific development, the environment and ideology. Toraja rituals have a big impact in tourism.

**Keywords:** Toraja, Rituals, Cultural Anthropology

#### I. INTRODUCTION

Toraja is famous for its language, culture and people. What stands out the most is the ritual culture. People often associate the city of Toraja as a symbol of death, such as the rambu solo ritual and the manene ritual. However, if explored deeper, Toraja is rich in various kinds of rituals, because (1) in one ritual it can introduce various kinds of rituals, namely pesung. There are various kinds of pesung such as pesung pare, pesung for newborns, pesung for celebration and so on. In just one ritual, a series of events usually takes place very much, such as the rice ritual, before the rice harvest there are various ceremonies that are held first and after the rice harvest and the following ceremonies. (2) Each region in Toraja has its own beliefs about rituals, although in general the term is the same.

Rituals are cultural heritage from ancestral beliefs. Because this is an cultural anthropology study, this study will reveal cultural practices, rituals, social change and the impact of tourism. This study also looks at the diversity of human culture in the contemporary world.

Through research and theory, as for the problem statements as follows, what is the cultural practice in Toraja? What rituals still exist in Toraja? How does the social change in Torajan language and culture? How is the impact of Toraja tourism on rituals?

#### II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Duli (2012) have also mentioned some parts of rituals in Toraja, *rambu tuka* (ceremonies related to life) and *rambu solo* (ceremonies related to death). The rambu tuka ceremony

is a ceremony related to gratitude, joy, birth, marriage and the harvest season which is regulated in *aluk rampe matallo* (rules of the ceremony which are carried out from sunrise to midday, 2012).

Nooy-Palm (1979) explain that pesung in Kesu Toraja series II is known as pemanala. A pesung is an offering for the gods to eat which consist of cooked rice and scraps of meat from all the different parts of whatever animal has been sacrificed, with the exception of the buku sanduk, or shoulder blade.

Rappoport (2009) in songs from the thrice-blooded land is a ritual musical performance through ethnographic narrative. This work is a description of varieties of music, those of the family celebrations performed in the highlights rituals, and those of the prophylactic rituals aimed at protecting or curing a locality from disease. This part is preceded by an introduction to the ritual cycle presented through prism of the officiants songs and narrations.

Sandarupa (2015) describe Toraja as the city of the living dead. The Torajan people are known for their death rituals. The Toraja people really maintain the tradition of keeping and caring for corpses. The corpse that has not been ritualized is believed that the spirit is still around the community. If it has been ritualized, it is believed that the spirit will go to heaven.

Salombe (1986) in his book with the title the Toraja people with their rites, describe ritual in Toraja is more seen as a religion oriented. The *aluk to dolo* divided two rites according to the torajan's beliefs that are, rambu tuka and rambu solo.

From various backgrounds of the researchers' point of view on ritual, it can be seen that rituals in Toraja have a variety of rituals. Although there are various kinds of rituals, rituals in Toraja are generally synonymous with sacrifices and offerings. What was sacrificed was believed to be an offering for the next life.

#### *Cultural Anthropology*

Ember (2002) stated that cultural anthropologist or known as are interested in how population or societies vary in cultural feature. It also seek to understand on how and why peoples today and in the recent past differ in their customary ways of thinking and acting.

The study of cultural anthropology is divided into two categories, namely, cultural anthropology based on anthropological science and the development of anthropology. According to Asmana (2020), the study of cultural anthropology based on anthropological science is divided into four, prehistoric, ethnolinguistic anthropology, ethnology and ethnopsychology. Meanwhile, studies based on the development of anthropology are divided into prehistoric archeology, anthropolinguistics, ethnology, culture and personality, symbols, and linguistic ideology. The focus of this study is linking with symbols and linguistic ideology.

#### *The theory of sign*

Sign theory is very popular among anthropologists. They use this theory a lot and then elaborate on other theories. Sign theory that is often used as a benchmark in anthropological studies is Pierce's theory of signs. Saussure sparked the sign theory with the term semiology, which sees objects as sign, signifier and signified (Arafah & Hasyim, 2019). Then it was developed by Pierce, who saw signs based on thoughts or what he called signs as interpretants. The theory offered by Pierce is very helpful in interpreting cultural symbols (Rahman, 2017).

#### *Linguistic ideology*

Silverstein (1979) brought the concept ideology into terms as cultural epitome. So it also important to include in any kind of cultural research. He explains linguistic ideology have always have a place to see culture as a different form of thoughts. While through culture, Silverstein explains in order to see the meaning of language, linguistic ideology must take place and the cultural aspects will also emerge

### III. RESEARCH METHOD

The methodology of the study is ethnographic, describing language and culture (Annisa, et al., 2019; Kaharuddin et al., 2020). The ethnographic research focuses on social situations in which particular attention is given to place, actor, and activities (Hasyim et al., 2019). This method is based on participant observation.

In the participant observation, the researcher was in the field directly observing and recording people's use of language and their language behavior. The researcher located himself in a social situation and recorded a number of aspects of social situation such as space, actor, activity, object, act, event, time, goal, and feeling (Spradley, 1980).

### IV. DISCUSSION

To answer the research questions, each question will be answered from the perspective of cultural anthropology through symbols and linguistic ideology.

#### *Cultural Practice and Ideology*

Culture will still continue exist over time, it's the belief that will be lost within time. Between culture and belief, the two complement each other. Supposing, if asked which one first

exist in this world, life or earth? The answer would definitely be the earth. Without earth there would be no life. Earth created life, and life gave an opportunity for humans, animals and nature to live in this world. So, culture exist because of a belief. Then was born the so-called customs. Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom an any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Rice, 1980). According to Tyler (1917), cultures are complexes of learned behavior patterns and perceptions, societies are group interacting organisms.

The ideology of the Toraja people is very strong towards cultural practices. They believe that if the ritual is not carried out it can have a negative impact on individuals, their success and their village (pemali). They also believe that once the ritual is done they will feel safe, protected, and will go to heaven for the people they pray for. Therefore, the Toraja people are willing to sacrifice many animals such as buffalo, pigs or chickens and even animal blood. Whatever the ritual, there are always animal sacrifice.

#### *Rituals and Symbols*

There are so many rituals in Toraja, not to mention that each region has its own beliefs, but this study will focus and reveal one type of ritual, namely the pesung pare ritual (rice ritual) in Tambunan, lembang Tallu Penanian and its symbols.

Pesung Pare in Tambunan is known as *pesung kande nene*, *pesung kande deata*. It means the ritual focus on praying to the ancestor and gods. In Tambunan also consist of stage 1 as *aluk pare* (deata) and stage 2 as *aluk nene*. Aluk pare in pesung is the opening ritual.

The following stage 1 ritual are :

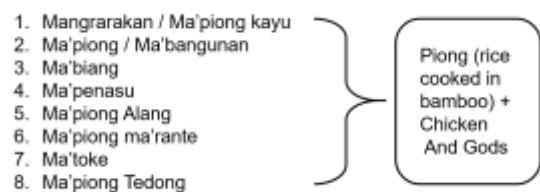


Figure 1. Stage 1 ritual

All of the rituals in stage (1) is an activity of praying and offering to the Gods. The whole process of the ritual is being done in lantang pare, outside the house of *tongkonan*. The *piong* (rice cooked in bamboo) in stage (1) symbolize the food of the God. The purpose of the ritual is to say thank you to God for taking care of the rice fields. The food symbolize as to say their thank you and gratefulness.

After stage (1), the next stage (2) of pesung is aluk nene. Aluk nene ritual is the main course of the event The following ritual aluk nene in Tambunan are :



Figure 2. Stage 2 ritual

In stage 2, the above ritual shows that the ritual must be carried out in stages. In this case it also shows that there are so many symbols that are used during the ceremony, the food for the ancestors and gods is different, for example the *Ma'tada* ritual is devoted to the ancestors while the *Menammu* ritual is devoted to gods. The way of serving it is also very different. This ritual is carried out as a form of gratitude for the harvest obtained. In addition, this ritual is also performed as a request contained in the *Ma'ssuru* ritual.

#### *Social Change: Between The Past and Present*

Rituals are part of culture, not tradition, ancestral teachings or religion. Because, culture changes over time and there is no implied evidence that the culture was ever written legally.

Anthropologists have researched and proven that cultural differences in the past and the present are always changing, whether it is the influence of modernization, the development of science or the environment that forces change. That is what makes cultural authenticity fade over time. Because what we see now is not the same as what people saw in the past. Culture is believed to have originated from ancestral beliefs. If people used to believe in the existence of gods and mystical things, this indicates that culture was a creation of humans themselves.

#### *Tourism : The Impact Of Rituals Event*

Tourism in Toraja is divided into two, modern and traditional tourism. What attracts tourists from abroad to visit Toraja is traditional tourism. Meanwhile, modern tourism attracts more local tourists. People from abroad generally recognize Toraja as a unique ritual culture. Therefore, it would be nice if traditional tourism was preserved and not changed. There is a

quote from Sandarupa, S which says that don't die before going to Toraja, Toraja is a piece of heaven.

## V. CONCLUSION

Through the study of cultural anthropology, it can be seen how culture always changes from time to time. Ideology also plays a role because people's beliefs often change which form a new culture. Toraja cultural practices exist today because of their beliefs. The symbols contained in the ritual shows that in general rituals in Toraja include offerings and sacrificing. Social change in Toraja between the past and the present is influenced by modernization, scientific development, the environment and ideology. Toraja rituals have a big impact in tourism.

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