

The Meaning of Ha'a Luha Ritual as a Medium of Information for Kemak Tribal People

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ABSTRACT

The Ha'a Luha ritual is a sacred tradition of the Kemak people in Belu Regency, Indonesia. This ritual is performed yearly due to certain beliefs deeply rooted in the community. This ritual is considered sacred and an inseparable part of the Kemak culture. This research seeks to raise the meaning of the Ha'a Luha Ritual as a medium of information for the Kemak tribe in Sadi Village, East Tasifeto sub-district—the method used in field research with a qualitative descriptive approach. Data collection techniques are done through observation, interviews, and documentation. Then, the data processing technique uses Ground Research. The results showed that the Ha'a Luha Ritual highlights its role as a cultural practice, communication, and information media for the Kemak community. The ritual helps maintain cultural identity, strengthens social ties, and promotes harmony with nature and ancestors. Participation in these rituals helps younger generations understand their cultural roots and develop pride in their heritage. It also contains moral and spiritual messages, promoting safety, togetherness, trust, and connection with ancestors.



INTRODUCTION

Culture is a way of life that evolves and is shared by a group of people, passing down from generation to generation. Culture significantly impacts the amount of human knowledge, including the system of ideas or thoughts that exist in the human mind. It substantially influences how people perceive themselves as members of society and interact with their surroundings. Individuals are exposed to cultural values that shape their cognition and behaviour, such as caring attitudes towards others and the environment (Amelia, 2023). Culture varies or changes with time as a supporting component that attempts to adapt to the world's modernity. However, its uniqueness is neatly structured so that it is not dissolved by the curvature of time or the flow of globalization itself.

Local communities frequently have deep relationships with their surroundings' historical and cultural heritage, which influences the order of daily life, as witnessed in Indonesian cultural heritage regions (Pahrizal, 2021). Similarly, Sadi Village is one of the communities in Belu Regency, East Tasifeto District, East Nusa Tenggara Province, which shares a straight border with the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste. Customs have a significant impact on village community life. Sadi Village features a rite called Ha'a Luha that has been passed down through generations of the Kemak tribe. This ritual is performed once a year as a way of asking for blessings and prayers to the Divine (Ubu or Maromak) through people who have died (Matebria) so that anyone who wishes to migrate to change their fate, or pursue further education, cultivate gardens and rice fields, is always blessed, given ease in business, kept safe from danger, illness, temptation, and can become a useful person for everyone.

The Ha'a Luha rite is thought to promote solidarity among the Kemak people. It is a volunteer effort in which everyone, from the chief to community members, donates their time, ideas, and resources. The ritual includes offerings and prayers to the ancestors and the Almighty, and it is typically held at an altar made of ancestral stones near the traditional house. Ha'a Luha is also thought to provide good luck and health to those who join and donate to the ceremony, whereas those who do not may face consequences such as illness, academic failure, and business stagnation (Nttonlinenow.com, 2019; Mau et al., 2023). Rituals can also strengthen social group solidarity and strengthen members' sense of belonging (Emaningsih, 2016).

The ceremony is a community ritual that shares information while valuing the community's culture, population, and resources. In the context of indigenous peoples, information media can refer to disseminating information and education through traditional or local media, such as Ha'a Luha. In light of this, the author investigates how Ha'a Luha might disseminate information to the Kemak tribe in Sadi Village, East Tasifeto District, Belu Regency, to enhance participation and understanding of adat. This study aims to fill a hole in prior research on the Ha'a Luha article as a culture that serves as a source of information for the Kemak tribe community.

METHODOLOGY

This type of research is qualitative research with a descriptive approach. The method is used because the data collected is qualitative data obtained in the field. Qualitative research methods generally involve collecting, organizing, and analyzing semi-structured qualitative data and applying social theory, social research design, and media content analysis in research (Sari et al., 2022). This descriptive approach tends to use inductive analysis, thus emphasizing process and meaning based on the subject's perspective (Rukajat, 2018). This research was conducted in the Kemak Tribe Community in Sadi Village, East Tasifeto District, Belu Regency, Indonesia.

Data collection techniques used to obtain data in this study are observation, interviews and documentation. For data analysis techniques collected in research, Grounded Research analysis techniques are often known as fixed comparison techniques. Grounded theory is commonly used in social science research, including education and information literacy research (Dougherty, 2017; Hicks, 2018). The analysis is iterative and systematic, and the theory is developed based on the data collected rather than starting with pre-existing ideas or statements.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Proficiency in Implementing Customary Values and New Community Adjustments

The Ha'a Luha ritual is a tradition of the Kemak tribe, generally divided into tribal groups whose dates do not coincide. Tribal leaders and communities have the skills to implement their traditional values. One day before the Ha'a Luha is held, the activities carried out during the day are the people in the tribe (Maneri or what their daughters' families call Inama) prepare equipment such as looking for firewood in the forest, drawing water, preparing cooking utensils, select rice, buy betel nut and cow, prepare sacrificial animals (pigs for established boys and chickens for girls). In the evening, there is Seimama (serving one betel leaf and one dried areca nut); the aim is to count the number of women who have left and settled in their husband's tribe (Maneheu) as well as boys who are considered established in the tribe (Maneri) or who are usually called by the families of their daughters (Inama). The ritual implementation stage is characterized by a ritual process from the traditional house to the place of slaughter (Hatu Salamata) and then to the grave (Luha).

In the morning, the community slaughtered chickens and pigs in a collection of Pemali stones (Hatusalamata) as a form of respect for the spirits of ancestors and requests blessings to the Supreme Being through the ancestors. This ritual is considered sacred and must be carried out because those who violate it will be subject to direct sanctions in the form of disasters. This is a Luha ritual that must be carried out because there is a sacredness in the ritual, so it must still be carried out by every tribe member, both within the tribe and those who are migrating outside. There is a responsibility given

when someone cannot carry out the ritual; those who cannot attend are obliged to carry out and send offerings such as betel nuts, chicken, and pig. Since the ancestors, the Ha'a Luha Ritual has no changes in it because it is not allowed to be changed, so it does not eliminate the traditional values in it by being obliged to be carried out because it is an ancestral heritage. Statements from people who participated in traditional events:

"So that I know, I must be present and actively carry out the Ha'a Luha ritual according to the date for our tribe on November 28 so that I can see and understand what the tribal leader is doing and ask the meaning of the pronounced mantra".

In the past, with supportive natural resources, the obligation to bring pigs and chickens was fine for the community in carrying out the ritual. So far, tribal leaders and members have been obliged to bring chickens and pigs to maintain local community customs. At present, due to the times and the low natural resources available, as an option presented, those who bring pigs in an emergency can bring chickens. Those who bring chickens can bring betel nut or sopi, and those who want to see the guidance of life are required to bring chickens and pigs as an option for limited access. In principle, these offerings have no compulsion; if you can afford it, you are welcome to bring chickens and pigs; if you cannot, you can only bring betel nuts or cows for the girls and chickens for the boys. However, if people want to see the fate of their lives in the future, they must bring chickens and pigs.

How to Influence People's Attitudes and Behavior

Customs refer to traditions, norms, and procedures passed down from generation to generation in a society. This includes various aspects of life, such as traditional ceremonies, marriage systems, and social rules. The people of the Kemak tribe must obey the rules or agreements agreed upon by the elders to preserve the Ha'a Luha ritual in the Kemak tribe of Sadi Village. Customs have meaning and importance in people's lives because customs refer to traditions, norms, and procedures passed down from generation to generation in a society. Customs cover various aspects of life, such as traditional ceremonies, marriage systems and social rules. Customs play an important role in maintaining a society's identity and cultural sustainability. Therefore, customs have meaning and significance in people's lives and the culture of a region (Chairina et al., 2023; Sutansyah et al., 2023; Astuti et al., 2016; Une, 2021).

Traditional ceremonies serve various purposes, including seeking salvation, strengthening cultural identity and preserving ancestral heritage. Traditional ceremonies can also be a means to teach people about environmental values that need to be maintained, such as sustainability, balance, and harmony with nature (Riyan & Mulyati, 2023). Rituals are performed to seek salvation and tangible

evidence of the beliefs held by groups or community members about the existence of powerful forces outside of humans. Traditional rituals play an important role as a form of effort to seek salvation in various aspects of community life. In particular, in the context of safety, traditional ceremonies have a spiritual function related to worshipping ancestors, spirits, or God to ask for safety (Andini, 2017). As such, customary rituals are important in maintaining local wisdom, traditions, and environmental sustainability in various traditional societies.

Customs often believe in the existence of calamities, and certain ceremonies are performed to avoid these calamities. In understanding catastrophe, the Kemak people perform rituals to apologize to their ancestors in order to be given good fortune. The Ha'a Luha ritual asks for blessings from the supreme being through the ancestors to be kept away from disease, accidents, and smooth business. It can be a person who is beneficial to everyone and as a form of knowing relatives. The Ha'a Luha ritual is a belief ritual of the Kemak people, which is carried out once a year from the end of November to the beginning of January to meet ancestors and the Supreme Being. Through this Ha'a Luha ritual, the Kemak people worship the spirits of deceased ancestors by bringing offerings such as pig rice for boys in the house tribe (Maneri) or what their daughters' families call (Inama) while married girls (Maneheu), bring their shares such as chicken, betel nut, areca nut, and soup.

Understanding the Ha'a Luha Ritual for the Young Generation

Customary teaching can help raise the younger generation's awareness about the importance of Pancasila values and their existence in the community (Saragih, 2022). The pattern of customary learning taught to Kemak tribe children is carried out by learning from parents and then continuing with learning from traditional elders. Through this, they obey the messages of the ancestors, who recommend continuing to celebrate this traditional Ha'a Luha ritual. Because with this ritual, the community can get to know each other with the descendants of nonna's children (Maneheu), or the descendants of boys (Maneri); the purpose of getting to know so that there is no inbreeding, the Kemak people believe that inbreeding will give birth to disabled children. As parents, the Kemak community teaches children to be obliged to carry out the Ha'a Luha ritual because it is very sacred; if it is not heeded, they will experience disasters.

With the belief in the Ha'a Luha ritual, the aim is to ask for blessings from the supreme being through people who have died. This can be seen in the words spoken in the sentence *kal ami to'ol tai te, imi ta tau te da Humur Ubu Pi Upu or Amar Baigdiu no Inar Baigdiu* meaning if we lift (prayer) does not arrive, you will convey it to the Designer and the Creator or the Greatest Father and the Greatest Mama. Adat is an integral part of the identity of a group or nation. Teaching adat to the younger generation helps them understand the roots of their own culture and develop a sense of pride

in their heritage. Adat often reflects the values and norms that our ancestors have respected for centuries. By learning about adat, the younger generation can understand and practice these values in their daily lives.

There is no compulsion to perform the Ha'a Luha ritual, but it is required because we will automatically deviate if we do not perform it. Those who carry out the Ha'a Luha ritual will get blessings through help in business, school, and protection when working overseas. If they do not heed it, they will get a reprimand in the form of illness, failure in education, all their efforts will be stuck and so on. This Ha'a Luha ritual must be carried out because by carrying it out, the community can strengthen the bond of brotherhood by apologizing to each other, who may have a dispute and can bring chickens to perform the ritual as a form of apology to the ancestors. People who come to the ritual have their intentions to meet the ancestors; this is also a form of respect for the supreme being with guidance through chicken veins or pig hearts.

This ritual is deeply rooted in Kemak society and is believed to connect the living with their ancestors and the divine. It is a significant cultural practice that embodies participation, trust, togetherness and belonging. It is considered a means of social cohesion within the Kemak community, involving decision-making processes, seeking blessings from ancestors and maintaining social harmony. The ritual is performed by Mako'an (ritual leader) and is central to the community's cultural identity. It is also believed to provide insight into family status and serve as a platform to seek divine blessings for plans. The Ha'a Luha ritual is deeply rooted in the cultural heritage of the Kemak people and is passed down from generation to generation, thus playing an important role in preserving their cultural identity and social unity (Buti et al., 2022; Koli et al., 2021).

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion of the research on the Ha'a Luha Ritual as an information medium shows that this ritual is not just a cultural practice but also a form of communication between the Kemak people and their ancestors and the Supreme Being. It plays an important role in maintaining cultural identity, strengthening social ties, and maintaining harmony with nature and ancestors. The Ha'a Luha ritual also serves as a medium of information for the younger generation about the traditional values, norms and procedures passed down through generations in Kemak society. Through participation in this ritual, the younger generation can understand their cultural roots and develop a sense of pride in their cultural heritage.

In addition, this ritual also contains moral and spiritual messages conveyed through mantras and symbolic actions in the ritual procession. Through direct experience in the Ha'a Luha ritual, Kemak people learn about safety, togetherness, trust and connectedness with their ancestors. Overall, the Ha'a

Luha Ritual is not only a sacred cultural practice but also an important medium of information for the Kemak people to understand and maintain their cultural heritage and establish a harmonious relationship with nature and their ancestors.

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