



Ethnic Value in Toraja's Social Ritual: Cultural Education Perspective

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Abstract

This article focuses on the examination of traditional burial rituals within the Toraja tribe. It compares the execution of funeral rites in the past, which were deemed customary, with those conducted in the late 1990s. By conducting a comparative analysis of the two ceremonies, it is anticipated that we may ascertain whether there has been any alteration in the execution of the ritual. According to Durkheim, the notion of the holy appears to be a genuine aspect of religious beliefs and practices in religious events. Religious individuals, when closely observed, distinguish between two distinct realms: the sacred realm and the profane realm. Sacred entities are consistently seen as superior, possessing great power, prohibited from engaging in regular interactions, and deserving of utmost reverence. Conversely, profane entities are mundane, unremarkable, and pertain to practical routines of everyday existence.

Introduction

Prior to the introduction and proliferation of foreign religions like as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Confucianism, the Toraja civilization had well-established belief systems centered around the veneration of ancestors (animism) and the spiritual power of certain objects (dynamism) (Bhatt, 2020). Subsequent religions assimilated the indigenous religious system. Due to the syncretic nature of Toraja culture and the shared belief in an ancestral religion, the faiths introduced to Toraja were not immediately embraced or flatly rejected, but rather integrated into the existing Toraja belief system. Understand the spiritual and esoteric emphasis as well (Rastogi, 2021).

The Toraja people worship a religion called Aluk Todolo. The Aluk Todolo religion is considered sacrificial since it involves the shedding of blood from animals, such as chickens, pigs, and buffalo, throughout all religious ceremonies (Segara, 2023). Custom dictates all social norms and conduct. In addition, weddings are governed by custom rather than aluk, which is a religious process. While conventional participants are involved in the marriage ceremony, no religious clergy members are participating. These are some of the most prominent characteristics of Torajan culture: There exist six distinct categories of societies (Bachrong & Ansar, 2021): 1) agricultural, 2) work-intensive, 3) highly-integrity, 4) domestic, 5) ceremonial, and 6) hierarchical. Names (sanga), cuisines (kande), tongkonan, carvings (passura'), regional genealogy (bate manurung), traditional ceremonies (aluk rituals), and other similar elements serve as symbols by which people establish their identity.

The Toraja tribe's mountainous lands continue to house several ancient graves. Instead of interring their deceased in the ground, they place them in stone tombs, which, as one might anticipate, do not decay as quickly (Wijaya & Dwijendra, 2021). During the Ma'nene' burial ritual, the Torajan people commemorate their deceased ancestors by replacing their clothing as a gesture of respect and reverence. During this ceremonial event that pays tribute to their

ancestors, the Torajan community adopts the names Ma'nene' or Ma'putu', which translate to "wrapping back" in the Indonesian language (Putra et al., 2023). It is their responsibility to maintain this tradition as a tribute to their ancestors. The Toraja people often engage in the Ma'nene' culture, which is distinguished by symbols that possess significant symbolic significance and have been transmitted between centuries. The Ma'nene' ceremony entails adorning the ancestors with fresh attire (Carlson et al., 2022). The coffins of the ancestors are exhumed from their graves or mausoleums and transported to the designated venue for the Ma'nene' ceremony. Meanwhile, a substantial number of relatives were waiting and assembling. Following a delicate extraction of the body from the casket, relatives attired the deceased in what seemed to be a newly laundered clothing. The Torajan people observe the Ma'nene' ritual to pay homage to their deceased, be they ancestors, prominent individuals, or relatives. Even at present, they maintain optimism that the spirits of their forebears will protect them from danger, including calamities, pests, and other misfortunes (Tahir et al., 2020).

The Torajan people, often referred to as the "Aluk Todolo," have a strong connection to their old faith and actively engage in spiritual practices (Lange, 2020). Christianization and local beliefs are disguised under the guise of Toraja customs and culture. The objective of this synthesis is to develop a deep understanding of the Toraja people's old religion and to eliminate the idea that they should distinguish themselves from one other based on superficial differences in ceremonial practices, rituals, and language. The Toraja people prioritize reflection and core knowledge over worldly matters (Tarrapa & Junaedi, 2021).

The Ma'nene' Ritual has been discovered to integrate Aluk Todolo ideas, which are related to the Toraja understanding of the supernatural. In order to effectively define the issue, researchers must have a thorough understanding of these ideas (Kuba et al., 2023). There is disagreement among people on the common usage of the term "religion" in Indonesia, which includes followers of many faiths such as Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. In several cultures, there is a lack of consensus over the precise meaning of "religion." Furthermore, many societies struggle to distinguish between activities that are considered "religious" or "spiritual" and the more ordinary parts of everyday life.

Methods

Research Approach

In accordance with the problems studied, an ethnographic approach is used. This research is descriptive qualitative in nature. This qualitative descriptive reviews views on the Ma'nene' Ritual which still exists in Toraja. At the research stage, to obtain the context of sacredness and existence, an ethnographic approach was used, while a semiotic approach was used to understand the meaning of cultural symbols. The use of these types and approaches is adjusted to the purpose of the research.

Informant Selection Techniques

In relation to this research, the key informants are the families who carry out the Ma'nene' ritual. Apart from that, young people who are influenced by the Aluk Todolo tradition will certainly be a strong source of information as well. Not only that, informants can be people or parties who have an indirect relationship with the family, but can also be people or parties who are considered to have adequate knowledge of information related to the focus of the study. The diversity of informant age categories can be a concern in carrying out data collection for this research. Grouping data according to the level of compliance with the Aluk Todolo tradition was also taken into account in selecting informants.

Based on the research object with reference to the main concept or main problem stated above, the data collection techniques used include observation, interviews and documentation. In this research, the analytical technique used is Mircea Eliade's approach which describes the concept of "the sacred" as a distinct and dramatic good in human personal experience. From here, a view of life from the perspective of the Torajan people will be revealed. This is quite understandable because through ethnography it will highlight the existence of the meaning of the Ma'nene' ritual.

Results and Discussion

The Sacredness of Aluk Todolo's Beliefs

The Rambu Solo and Rambu Tuka rituals are actually an expression of understanding the depth of spirituality, which is called religiosity. For Aluk Todolo, every aspect of human life is sacred, containing mystical elements. Since the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel in Toraja, Protestant missionaries (GZB) were faced with a complicated theological dilemma. On the one hand, the original belief of Aluk Todolo is deeply embedded and animates human life in Toraja and the appreciation is expressed in the rituals of Rambu Tuka' (concerning life) and Rambu Solo (concerning death). On the other hand, one must of course remain faithful to dogmatic Calvinist principles; syncretism must be prevented. So the missionary council formed what was called the 'Custom Commission' to deal with this difficult problem. This commission proposed the basic criteria to be used, namely that religion can be separated from culture. So traditional religion (aluk) can be separated from custom (ada'). Logically speaking, ada' and Christianity can complement each other, just as ada' and aluk, they can be combined without falling into heresy. (Bigalke, 1982: 213-224).

The customary commission carefully examines rituals related to the life cycle (rambu tuka) and rituals involving death (rambu solo). As a result, practically all Rambu Tuka rituals are prohibited for Christians, except for the after-harvest feast and the blessing of the tongkonan house. However, also at parties after the harvest and the blessing of the tongkonan it is strictly forbidden to carry out religious rites (aluk). In relation to Rambu Solo, the customary commission is very aware that the future acceptance of Christianity by the Torajan people will depend greatly on policies regarding the Rambu Solo ritual. So deeply and strongly is the tradition of death ceremonies embedded in the hearts of Torajan people, as expressed in the motto "sipopa'di' - siporannu", making it impossible for Zending to prohibit Christians from taking part in them. So, in contrast to the attitude taken towards Tuka signs, the policy regarding Solo signs can be said to be more lenient. The most important thing is that the Rambu Solo carried out by Christians must be cleared of any religious elements (aluk), and become just a cultural ceremony (ada').

Whether we realized it or not, this policy subsequently brought about very fundamental changes in the religious and spiritual life of the Torajan people. In the original Toraja religion (Aluk Todolo), aluk and adat are a complete unity, cannot be separated. There is no known dichotomy, or division between two mutually contradictory lives, between religious life and profane life. The Rambu Solo and Rambu Tuka rituals are actually expressions of appreciation for spirituality, which is called religiosity. For Aluk Todolo, every aspect of humanity is sacred, containing mystical elements.

In Aluk Todolo, the traditional death ceremony with the sacrifice of animals has its basis in aluk; in other words, basically religion/belief. Therefore, to separate the religious elements from traditional funerals is to empty them of their true basis. The main target of the Customary

Commission's policy is of course the understanding of 'provision', namely the belief that the sacrificed animals will accompany the deceased to the afterlife. The most fundamental understanding of Torajan humans regarding their existence: humans are an integral part of the cosmos and their relationship in a state of brotherhood with other creatures is transcendent (humans and other creatures were created in a state of brotherhood at the beginning in the upper world through the sibarrung sauna). Thus, erasing the belief in 'provisions' certainly affects Torajan people's understanding of their essential relationships regarding the mystery of self-others-in the cosmos.

When the traditional funeral ceremony is emptied of religious motifs, it will require new motifs. In this way, the process of changing motives takes place. Animal sacrifice in traditional death ceremonies also involves what is called "siri' to mate" (siri' of the dead). This concerns a person's responsibility towards parents or grandparents. Siri' to mate requires a person to try as hard as possible to carry out the death ceremony for the safety of parents or grandparents in the afterlife. So siri' to mate is first determined by the familial relationship between a living person and a deceased person. When religious elements were removed from death ceremonies, siri' to mate shifted to siri' to tuo (siri' for the living). Siri' to tuo, which concerns both self-esteem and shame, is determined in a public context. Deviations can further change the positive aspects of siri' towards excessive concentration on personal and family prestige. The death ceremony has gradually turned into a concentration and manifestation of siri': carrying out a flamboyant and expensive death ceremony will increase the prestige of the person involved/his family, while failure to carry it out will bring shame to the person involved/his family.

Departing from one of the functions of symbols explained by Smith & Steward, namely managing anxiety. The author sees that this function is very visible in the implementation of the Ma'nene' ritual. For members of the community who carry out the Ma'nene' ritual, they feel worried about the condition of the bodies of their ancestors so they try to care for them by adding cloth wraps. The Rindingallo people also have their own satisfaction when they have finished carrying out the Ma'nene' ritual for their ancestors. Apart from that, the next ritual function seen in the implementation of the Ma'nene' ritual is to increase group solidarity. This function is very commonly seen in Rindingallo society. The solidarity of this group is very visible when they determine together the time for the Ma'nene' ritual, which is held every year in August. Apart from that, when the Ma'nene' ritual takes place, the entire village community is involved in helping, such as helping to lift bodies from graves, preparing food and cleaning graves.

From a theological perspective, our cosmos may be divided into two different realms: the sacred and the secular. The profane is frequently dismissed and reduced to the level of the ordinary; its realm is not highly esteemed or venerated. The Sacred is an extraordinary and profound realm that leaves a lasting impression and is hard to be erased from memory. Eliade argues that traditional and modern religious experiences exhibit profound disparities. Certain individuals, regardless of whether they align with conventional or same-sex religious beliefs, possess an inherent ability to perceive their surroundings as inherently sacred. However, modern individuals are not accepting of such matters. According to his perspective, the sole means for individuals in the present day to advance comprehensively is by providing valid reasons for everything, including their own actions and the surrounding environment. His perception of the world is consistently characterized by squalor.

The author observes that all five symbols employed in the Ma'nene' ceremony are profane in nature. Therefore, it is inappropriate to label them as "Sacred" as they do not embody anything revered or considered holy by the people of Baruppu Selatan. The symbols employed in the

Ma'nene' ritual hold great societal value as they symbolize the family's profound sentiments of love, gratitude, reverence, admiration, and concern for their ancestors or departed relatives. Eliade's intention was to convey that objects that were formerly imbued with cosmic significance can now be seen only as functional indicators. The author acknowledges Aluk Todolo's portrayal of the Ma'nene' rite as the "Sacred" aspect due to its involvement with supernatural phenomena and its religious significance. According to Mircea Eliade, symbols encompass a wide range of elements, including tangible objects, myths, signs, narratives, and rituals.

The Baruppu people perceive the gesture as a means of expressing appreciation towards their ancestors, who have consistently demonstrated unconditional love towards them throughout their existence. Upon careful examination, it is evident that this symbol lacks any representation of sacred or divine significance. This phenomenon occurs because the participants in the ritual envision themselves as the legitimate owners of the symbols, hence attributing distinct meanings to each symbol. While the Baruppu people no longer hold this symbol in high esteem, they are actively striving to assign it renewed importance in their contemporary existence. Consequently, the interpretation has relied on the locals' perception of the symbols. In order to fully understand symbols, it is necessary to take into account the cultural actors or the individuals who own them.

Based on our understanding of the symbolic significance of the Ma'nene' rite, it is evident that the Baruppu people view these items not only as utilitarian objects, but also as manifestations of affection and reverence for their forebears. This aligns well with Mircea Eliade's assertion that the true function of a symbol is to transmute an item or action into something beyond its apparent nature.

Attending to cultural issues is crucial for the establishment of Toraja society. The Toraja people's artistic practices encompass religious, social, and moral aspects, all of which contribute to the lofty ideals of symbolic order and promote unity among individuals. The transmission of cultures and traditional knowledge throughout generations is a vital source of cultural empowerment due to the abundance of moral precepts and values they encompass.

Prior to commencing the Ma'nene' rite for the ancestors, all members of the family who bear the responsibility must reach a unanimous agreement. The determination of the implementation timeframe, costs, and resource utilization will be established over the course of this conversation. In order to carry out the Ma'nene' ritual, the nuclear family members are required to visit the cemetery at dawn and proceed to uncover the grave or tomb, then extracting the remains. Subsequently, the cadavers were removed from the mats or boards and left to desiccate in an open-air environment. Subsequently, the family's textile was employed to envelop the deceased's bones. It is crucial that the body seems intact and uninjured. The inanimate corpse was returned to the excavation or hole after being clothed. As part of the Aluk Todolo tradition, the Rindingallo people often abstain from consuming rice starting in August while they engage in the Ma'nene' ceremony. However, they are permitted to ingest sweet potatoes, bananas, and an assortment of fruits. In addition, the Ma'nene' ritual stipulates that the food must be cooked in close proximity to the grave rather than within the confines of the home. Furthermore, Ma'badong exercises are conducted as part of the Ma'nene' ritual. Conversely, Ma'badong is exclusively bestowed upon those who belong to the same social status as their forebears. Villagers sometimes arrange Bulangan londong, which are cockfighting events, and frequently spend evenings in the cemetery, in addition to Ma'badong.

Christian Version of Ma'nene'

In Rinding Allo District, most of the people, in fact almost all of the people, embrace Christianity. Therefore, this section explains the process of implementing the Christian version of ma'nene'. Every time something is done by the Torajan people, of course there must be a discussion with the family about the planned activity, one of which is a family meeting on the mother's or father's side which is also held by the Aluk Todolo people. The event in question is the ma'nene' event, the first thing begins with a family meeting about the time of implementation, families in one Tongkonan gather to discuss this event. After the time for implementation is determined by one family group, the time is always scheduled after the harvest season is over, then the ma'nene' event is held.

People in the Rindingallo area call ma'nene' ma'pu'tu which means "wrapping". Unlike Aluk Todolo's version of ma'nene', the current ma'nene' does not carry out the ritual of preparing the ingredients that will be used as sacrifices before the day of its implementation begins and the time for its implementation is only one day and starts from sunrise until midday at around 7 o'clock. Preparations are complete until 12 noon and arrive at the cemetery or Patane. Patane is a family burial house containing seven descendants in one family. Long ago, patane was in the caves of rock cliffs. Now, patane is built in places that are not too difficult with boards or in the form of concrete buildings like city houses.

Because of these difficulties, people now rarely place the bodies of the recently deceased on rock cliffs. To make it easy to access, the patane was then built on the side of the road. The usual size is 2 x 2 m to 4x4 m (Irmawati, 2009:56). There are also people who look for large stones on the side of the road, then carve them into a room which is usually called a stone hole. This indicates that it is time to lead to the timing of the tuka signs. Ma' nene' is currently only carried out for one day, but in one area, especially in the Baruppu area, three or four families can carry it out during the month of August or when the harvest season is over.

People from the noble caste also no longer carry out artistic activities (ma'dondi, ma'badong) like the Aluk Todolo people do, just like other castes they only eat together at home or in Tongkonanan, no longer in cemeteries, then go to the cemetery or patane to clean and change clothes or re-wrap the body in new clothes or cloth. When the time for the implementation arrives, the family invites neighbors or the community to take part in this event. The family who will carry out this event, prepares cloth to replace the clothes of their deceased relatives, flowers, and pa'piong bai, which the pig will then be slaughtered and cooked with mayana leaves and then later eaten together with the people who come.

Every member of the community who comes to take part in the ma' nene event is treated to drinks such as coffee or tea and tori' cake (a typical Toraja cake). After all the residents have gathered and been served drinks and cake, the religious figure, namely the worship leader (Priest), prays together before eating together and going to the cemetery to perform ma'nene'. When they finish praying and eating together, the family and community go to the cemetery bringing new cloth to be used to "re-wrap" the body of the deceased relative, as well as bringing water and flowers, if necessary, they can also bring food.

When they arrive at the cemetery or patane, usually there are relatives who are immediately sad and even cry because they remember their deceased relatives who have now become corpses and returned to God. The first thing to do is clean the grave or patane, then open the patane door and take out the bodies one by one from the coffins which had previously been wrapped during Rambu Solo'. During the research I was doing at that time the bodies were placed in the old patane which was made of wood and was still rudimentary, but at that time

the new patane had been finished so the bodies were moved to the new patane which was built bigger and wider than before which was similar to small house, because his relatives were only able to build a house for his relative who died due to economic factors. Wrapping corpses also keeps up with the times, in the past when cloth was still difficult to obtain, corpses were usually wrapped in used sacks or dry tree bark, before finally being wrapped in plain red or plain black cloth. But recently, when cloth is easy to obtain, people no longer use used clothes, sarongs or bed sheets. The cloth that wraps the corpse is also colorful, according to the social status of the user. The bodies were removed one by one from the old patane and then dried in the sun and placed in front of the patane.

The bodies that were taken out first were older bodies, as during the research I was doing, I saw the grandmother of one of my sources who was taken out first, there were three bodies of older people at that time, then they were cleaned and re-wrapped or renewed in cloth. What's new, at that time the atmosphere looked sad and some even cried. The cloth used to re-wrap the corpse must be strong and new and must be the same, the thicker the cloth wrapped around the corpse, the longer the person has been dead. After the older bodies are removed, the bodies are first wrapped again in what is called ma'nene' or ma'pu'tu'.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, humans are incapable of directly exploring, acquiring knowledge about, or personally witnessing the world. Humans may only expect to see or encounter this sacred encounter by employing rituals that are grounded on symbols. According to Aluk Todolo, the Ma'nene' ceremony involves adding fabric wrappings to convey the ancestors' goals, wishes, and dreams for the family's future to the Creator. This practice is regarded to be mutually beneficial. Eliade argues that myths and symbols, which symbolize our dependence on reality and a transcendent aim, are essential to spiritual existence and cannot be eliminated. Both the importance and the techniques for conducting the ma'nene' ritual seem to have undergone alterations. Aluk Todolo states that the goal of ma'nene' is to express reverence towards deceased ancestors, with the anticipation that the living relatives will visit and confer their blessings onto the family during the execution of the ritual. Furthermore, there has been a modification in the procedures of carrying out the ma'nene' rite. As stated by Aluk Todolo, before, this ritual was predominantly conducted in cemeteries, however now it takes place within the confines of individuals' residences. Cemeteries and Ma'badong were once inhabited by villagers, and cockfights were prevalent, but these customs have subsequently ceased. Firstly, the Rindingallo engage in a Christianized version of the traditional ma'nene' ritual, which is also referred to as Aluk Kasaranian.

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