

Prominent Process of *Defembula Kahitela* Ritual Practice by Muna Ethnic in Barangka District

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Abstract– *The ritual practice of corn planting (defembula kahitela) is one of the agricultural traditions that have been handed down from generation to generation by Muna ethnic communities in Barangka District. The practice of the defembula kahitela ritual expresses Muna's ethical cultural conditions in the midst of the development of the modernity of agricultural patterns. The strong traditional values in the Muna ethnic community then make the ritual practice of the defembula kahitela still exist and maintained very well by Muna ethnic in Barangka District. This study aims to analyze the process in the ritual practice of the defembula kahitela on Muna ethnicity in Barangka District. The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach with a qualitative descriptive method. Data collection techniques used in this study is interviews, observation and document review. This study uses qualitative and interpretative descriptive analysis. Based on the results of the research that has been done, it was found that the ritual of defembula kahitela has 15 stages that must be passed by the farmers, namely: 1) detambori, 2) dewei, 3) tughori, 4) desula, 5) derangka, 6) dekatondo / deghala, 7) Kaago-ago, 8) detisa, 9) defenomi, 10) depasele, 11) defolimba, 12) detongka, 13) kasaraka, 14) detotowi, and 15) depanto. Each stage in the ritual practice of defembula kahitela is always followed by a ritual in its implementation which aims to ask for the safety of the farmer and the fertility of the corn planted awake, so as to obtain better results.*

Keywords– *Power, Ritual, Defembula kahitela, Muna ethnic.*

I. INTRODUCTION

As one of the efforts in maintaining the livelihood, every ethnic group in the archipelago is always required to carry out activities that can support the fulfillment of their daily needs. For people who live in rural areas, generally have inadequate intellectual knowledge so that the efforts to be realized are shared in forms of livelihood such as farming, raising livestock, and as laborers. Seeing the condition of the Barangka District community, with a strong traditional in nature, with a low quality education, many people choose to become farmers in an effort to fulfill

their family's daily needs. For people in Barangka District, farming is not only a living support, but farming is an ancestral tradition that must always be preserved as well.

In its agricultural habit, corn plants are the main commodity of choice agriculture in Barangka District. The choice of corn as a staple plant is based on the fact that corn is the main commodity in Southeast Sulawesi. Even so, farmers in Barangka District did not fully assume that corn was a superior commodity, but farming corn as a tradition that is passed on from one generation to the next until now. That is why corn for Muna ethnicity is used as traditional food.

Along with the corn farming, as it is considered as the traditional habit, it also has a traditional ritual practice for every step in doing the farming so called defembula kahitela. The practice of the ritual of defembula kahitela has many steps that must be carried out. However, before carrying out the defembula kahitela activity, the first thing to be determined is a good day and time to start planting. The Muna ethnic community believes that there are times that are not good or unlucky in each month, and if the farmer starts the activity at that time it is believed that something bad will happen, both to the farmers' crops and to the farmers themselves. To find out the ill-fated times, there are people who were able and trusted by the Muna ethnic group in Barangka District to count and see natural phenomena such as seasons and astrology in the sky namely parika.

The process of planting corn by the people of Muna in Barangka District is always accompanied by various kinds of farming traditions and rituals. In corn farming activities there are a number of steps that must be passed starting from the pre-planting period, planting period, harvest and post-harvest period, which have various kinds of rituals. Abstinance for Muna ethnic farmers if they do not carry out ritual practice of defembula kahitela, it is believed by farmers to cause adverse effects on the plants and the farmers themselves. In practice, there are safeties rituals carried out by farmers equipped with various requirements led by Parika. In principle, the ritual carried out is based on the ethnic beliefs that there must always be harmony between humans and other forces outside of

human beings, so that in farming there is a balance with their lives (Mustaman, 2015).

II. METHODOLOGY

The study of the process in ritual practice of defembula kahitela in Barangka District, West Muna Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province is included in descriptive qualitative research, namely research that provides a description of the situation or symptoms that occur. Through qualitative methods, it allows researchers to organize, criticize, and clarify interesting data. Thus, this qualitative research guides researchers to obtain unexpected discoveries and build new theoretical frameworks (Endraswara, 2003: 14-15).

This study uses qualitative methods, with techniques for collecting data through observation, interviews or document review. This method is used for several reasons. First, adjusting qualitative methods is easier when dealing with multiple realities. Second, qualitative methods present directly the nature of the relationship between researchers and informants. Third, this qualitative method is more sensitive and more adaptable to many sharpening with shared influence on the patterns of value that faced by the researcher (Maleong, 2004: 9).

The method of determining informants in this study conducted with purposive method. The consideration is that the informant is determined to have a lot of knowledge and experience about the object of research. The informants interviewed in this study were based on certain criteria. First, they are recorded as traditional leaders and community leaders, readers of prayers or mantra (parika). Secondly is the local government in Barangka District. Third is local people who live in Barangka District. This study uses qualitative and interpretative descriptive analysis. The process of data analysis is done by examining all data from various available sources. The first step is to examine data from various sources, make comparisons and illustrations, concepts, criteria, and abstractions. According to Nasution, analyzing data is a difficult job and requires hard work. Data analysis requires creative power and high intellectual abilities. There is no particular way that can be followed to conduct an analysis so that each researcher must find his own method that is felt to be suitable with the nature of his research. The same material can be classified by different researchers (Sugiyono, 2009: 244). The data that has been collected is first selected both from the results of observations, interviews, document studies, and literature studies. Then it is classified, categorized and interpreted by looking at the relationships between the data to reveal interrelated elements.

III. FINDINGS

Basically ritual is a series of words, acts of religion followers by using certain objects, equipment and equipment, in certain places and wearing certain clothes. Turner's explanation of ritual has actually given an idea of what he calls symbols (Turner, 1974: 19). Defembula kahitela is a ritual practice for Muna ethnic in Barangka District at the time of corn cultivation and has been embedded in the peasants and has become a tradition on the ethnic Muna. In the practice of the Muna ethnic defembula kahitela in Barangka District, there are various stages of land clearing until postharvest is carried out and should not be abandoned by farmers in its implementation. Of the fifteen stages, each step will be described and the cultural material used in the explanation below:

1. Detambori (Land Opening)

Detambori or opening new land is the initial activity of farmers when planting corn. But before farmers start clearing land, farmers must know when it is a good time to start land clearing activities and when it is not. Starting from determining the good day, farmers need a parika who is believed to have knowledge about the procedures and spells that are in the ritual. After a good day is determined, then with permission Parika the farmer begins to open the land. On land that has never been worked on (new land), Parika first checks whether the land can be processed or not.

2. Dewei (Clearing)

Dewei activities do not need a good day calculation anymore, but before they start, they will first recite a mantra by Parika, so that the spirits of the inhabitants of the big trees do not disturb the people who will do the activity in that place. The subtle spirit is moved from its place and the location of the spirit settlement is shown by Parika, with the hope that this treatment of evil spirits will become friends with the farmers or humans who will use the forest to make a living by farming.

3. Tughori (Cutting down)

Not much different from dewei, tughori activities such as cutting down trees on the land that will be planted with corn also requires a parika for it is the one who has the power in ritual matters. In the ritual activities of cutting down large trees, it is using five cigarettes rolled using betel leaves and five stems using dried banana leaves (finde), the use of betel is intended for female supernatural creatures, while finde or dried banana leaves rolled for male supernatural beings - because the belief of the Muna people, trees that will be cut down in the garden area have occupants so the purpose is to move the inhabitants of large trees, so that they do not live in field or land, including in the expanse, so as not to disturb.

4. Desula (Burning)

After the leaves of the trees that are felled dry, it is then come to the burning (desula) step. Before burning the tree branches that have been cut down, first conduct deliberations between farmers and parika about when a good day to burn, and again Parika who has the knowledge is given the power to determine the good day of burning. Fire is carried out if the farmer is right really sure that the branches of the trees are safe to burn, in the sense that they will not harm or cause harm to other people.

5. Derangka (Cleaning Combustion Remnants)

After the combustion is complete, the next day the farmers begin to clean up the remnants of combustion or known as the term derangka. The remain remnants of tree branches were collected and then burned, besides being burned, the tree branches is also used as firewood in household.

6. Dekatondo/Deghala (Fencing)

After the land has been cleared, the next activity is fencing (Dekatondo/Deghala). In the Muna ethnic community in the Barangka District, the fencing process is known as two terms, namely dekatondo and deghala. Dekatondo means sticking a log that has been prepared to the ground and lined up one by one in such a way that it is estimated that wild animals in the forest cannot enter the garden. While the deghala is that the wood is not plugged in, but the prepared logs are laid and arranged with both ends tied so as not to fall.

7. Kaago-Ago (Welcoming the Planting Season)

The kaago-ago ritual was carried out after the community cleaned the land and the land was ready to be planted with corn. Before the Kaago-ago implemented, a meeting was held to determine the implementation day, which was led by Parika which was poured into the location of the stretch of land. In the meeting, an agreement will be reached when the implementation is adjusted to the good day. The selection of a good day is intended so that the implementation of the event does not get obstacles in the process of planting. Some equipment that must be prepared in the kaago-ago ceremony such as machetes, hoes, pieces, sickles, axes, chicken eggs that have been boiled one grain, water, wood that has been tapered, a piece of white cloth (katandai), offerings (rice, tobacco, betel leaf, areca nut).

8. Detisa (Planting)

After passing the seven rituals, it is then the time to plant or what is called Detisa. The process of corn planting on a large area presents the farmer's relatives and neighbors to help make, but if the land is not too large they are sufficiently assisted by relatives or close relatives. The important thing is the relationship that farmers have to build with other communities in corn farming, for this activity cannot be done individually.

9. Defenomi (Weeding)

After planting activities, the farmers do not forget to do the maintenance of corn plants or in West Muna known as defenomi. Defenomi activities are carried out when the corn plant is approximately seven days old. In this activity, the farmers check the corn that has been planted by carrying corn seeds stored in a container such as a basket or bucket. Farmers surround the garden and if corn is found that does not grow, it will be replaced by planting new seeds. Not only that, sometimes there are some holes found by the farmer not containing corn, so the corn seeds that were brought earlier will be filled into the empty hole.

10. Depasele (Small Corn Harvest / Children of Corn)

Harvesting is the most anticipated activity by farmers, even in West Muna not only farmers, even people who do not farm look forward to the harvest. In Barangka District, West Muna Regency recognizes three harvest seasons in corn plants, one of which is depasele.

11. Defolimba (Young Corn Harvest)

When the corn is sixty days old, another harvesting process is carried out, namely harvesting young corn or Muna ethnicity known as defolimba. At the time of defolimba, taking the first corn starts from the defematai site or the first corn plant placed by Parika, after which corn harvesting can be done by other people. When defolimba, not all corn fruits will be taken, usually on the first day of defolimba, only taking a few corns to serve as offerings to the spirits of deceased ancestors.

12. Detongka (Old Corn Harvest)

After the defolimba activities were completed, when the age of corn reached approximately seventy days, then the old corn harvesting activities were carried out (detongka). Detongka activity is the last harvest process in the tradition of corn planting in Muna ethnic in Barangka District. Before the detachment is carried out, farmers still need parika to organize or count good days when the detachment must be carried out. Based on local knowledge possessed by a parika by looking at the natural phenomena of the moon in the sky, and calculating using the parika's calendar, it is able to know a good day to carry out harvesting.

13. Kasaraka (Gathering Corn in the Place provided)

In the kasaraka ritual, there is no prominent difference from the previous stage. In this ritual there are several things that must be prepared as conditions and equipment in the rough rituals. Equipment in kasaraka rituals is not any ordinary good. The objects in question are; sio and leaves, small stones which are hard one seed, tulangkani, roonodadara and kariwu-riwu.

14. Detotowi / Kantotowi (Cleanse Corn and Sort Separate Small and Medium Size Corns)

In the Muna community, especially in the Barangka District community, small corn is called kantotowi. Besides that, in the separation of large maize with this small one, there is a bhoka, which is a corn fruit whose contents are protruding from the skin. That corn must be used first compared to kantotowi corn because it is prone to attack by corn-eating insects.

15. Depanto (Saving Corn in Attic / Granary)
Depanto activities are things that must be done by farmers in Barangka, because these activities are a way for farmers to regulate their food availability. But in Depanto activities there is also a ritual that must be done so that the corn stored in the attic does not get a pest that can damage the stored corn. The farmers tend to cover their food until the next planting season, because if only relying on government program of free padi is not enough and farmers are reluctant to use it for they also have to spend money to get it.

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V. CONCLUSION

In the implementation of the ritual practice of defembula kahitela, there are fifteen stages that must be passed by the farmers, namely: 1) detambori, 2) dewei, 3) tughori, 4) desula, 5) derangka, 6) dekatondo / deghala, 7) Kaago-ago, 8) detisa, 9) defenomi, 10) depasele, 11) defolimba, 12) detongka, 13) kasaraka, 14) detotowi, and 15) depanto. From the fifteen stages, each has a ritual in its implementation which aims to ask for the safety of the farmers and the fertility of the corn planted awake, so that they can get better results. The ritual implementation must be led by a traditional practitioner (parika). For the Muna ethnic group in Barangka District, Parika is believed to have deep knowledge compared to the peasants, namely he is able to communicate with supernatural beings.

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