

Community Empowerment and Symbolic Messages of the Pemung Bangen Lepa Ajau Traditional Ceremony in Teras Nawang Village

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Abstract. *The tradition of traditional ceremonies that are always carried out in a society is an ancestral heritage that is given or transmitted from generation to generation. In this case, the community receives various messages from their ancestors through the traditional ceremony. As we can see in a traditional ceremony of a post-harvest party in Teras Nawang village, Bulungan district, North Kalimantan Province. Pemung Bangen Leppa Ajau is a traditional tradition of the Dayak Kenyah Lepu' Tau tribe which is one of the indigenous tribes in Bulungan Regency, North Kalimantan Province. The Pemung Bangen Lepa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony contains symbolic messages that are depicted in the 4 elements in the Traditional Ceremony. The decorative elements and ornaments in the Lamin Customary Hall of Uyau I'ot. These decorations and ornaments provide symbolic messages of life for the community. The second element is the Dance performed in the Pemung Bangen Lepa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony. The third element is the Communal Pre-Event Activities and Traditional Food. The fourth element is the traditional clothing used in the Pemung Bangen Lepa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony. These four elements are important points in Pemung Bangen Lepa' Ajau. Through these elements, the community will gain a cultural experience that implies symbolic messages in the procession of the ceremony.*

Keywords: *Pemung Bangen Lepa Ajau, Symbolic Message, Dayak Kenyah Lepu Tau*

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INTRODUCTION

The relationship between humans and nature is an inevitable necessity. As creatures who have power, creativity, feeling and will, humans perform rituals or traditional ceremonies to give symbols of respect and gratitude to God's grace. Symbolic actions in traditional ceremonies are a very important part and cannot be abandoned (Bloch, 1974). Humans must do something that symbolizes communication with God. In addition to religion, customs are also very prominent in their symbolism, traditional ceremonies which are a legacy passed down from the older generation to the younger generation (Ndoen et al., 2022; Priatma et al., 2023; Wolin & Bennett, 1984). The tradition of Traditional Ceremonies that are always carried out in a society is a legacy from ancestors that is given or transmitted from generation to generation. In this case, the community receives various messages from their ancestors through these traditional ceremonies. Pemung Bangen Leppa Ajau is a traditional tradition of the Dayak Kenyah Lepu' Tau tribe which is one of the indigenous tribes in Bulungan Regency, North Kalimantan Province. The traditional ceremony after the harvest "Pemung Bangen Leppa Ajau" is a traditional ceremony held after the harvest or post-harvest, especially the rice harvest as the main commodity in Teras Nawang Village, Tanjung Palas District. The Pemung Bangen Leppa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony is held once a year and is usually held at the beginning of the year around January - March. After the

harvest season is over, the residents have finished the harvesting and drying process, they will bring the harvest to the church as a form of gratitude and prayer ritual. The amount of harvest brought to the church is usually regulated by an agreement with the traditional community (Plieninger et al., 2023; da Silva Medina et al., 2022; Simanjuntak, 2015; Idi & Labobar, 2023; Posey & Dutfield, 1996; Grabbatin et al., 2011). Pemung Bangen Leppa Ajau is held at the Teras Nawang Village Traditional Hall which has long been a place to gather and perform traditional rituals and weddings. The Pemung Bangen Leppa Ajau Traditional Ceremony uses various equipment such as mandau, kelempit / shield, necklace, kulintang, kelebu, gong, anjat, traditional boat. In this traditional ritual, a dance will be performed accompanied by music and which is known as the "tunggal" dance. The series of rituals in Pemung Bangen Leppa Ajau today have undergone several adjustments to the conditions of the surrounding community.

Through the traditional ceremony procession after the harvest of Pemung Bangen Leppa Ajau, it is hoped that the symbols that appear and the messages from these symbols in the Pemung Bangen Leppa Ajau traditional ceremony will be known. Traditional ceremonies that are still carried out among the community are part of a culture of the community (Pajarianto et al., 2022; Ilhami et al., 2022; Setyawan & Saddhono, 2017). The cultural symbols of the Dayak Kenyah Lepu' Tau indigenous tribe that come from the actions or from the legacy of ancestral traditions have been able to survive until now because of the response from the Dayak indigenous people. These efforts and responses can be seen from the intentions and interests of the Dayak indigenous people in interpreting and maintaining culture until now (Thomson, 2000; Putra, 2017; Usop & Perdana, 2021). Symbols in culture have good messages for both the sender and the recipient of the message.

METHODS

In this study, the researcher used the Mix Method approach. Mix method is a research approach that is carried out by combining quantitative research methods and qualitative research methods. This method is used to answer the problem formulation in this study (Östlund et al., 2011). Qualitative research methods are used to answer the first problem formulation, while quantitative research methods are used to answer the second problem formulation. The researcher used the ethnomethodology method in this study (Emirbayer & Maynard, 2011). The ethnomethodology method is considered the most appropriate in conducting further studies that can provide an understanding of the symbolic messages in the Pemung Bangen Leppa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony in Teras Nawang Village, Bulungan Regency, North Kalimantan Province. The Ethnomethodology method is a field research conducted by digging up information directly from the source of information, or in this case cultural actors. Ethnomethodology studies are part of qualitative research studies. With this research study, researchers can produce a written work about a phenomenon or situation based on what is heard and observed. Ethnomethodology research studies seek to understand the perspectives of individuals who have various expertise and try to solve problems and interact and how individuals behave in a social environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pemung Bangen Leppa Ajau has 4 (four) elements that are the key to creating symbolic messages that are expected to be conveyed to the Dayak Kenyah Lepu' Tau tribe. In the implementation of the Pemung Bangen Leppa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony, it is indeed full of interactions between the people who participate in the ceremony. As we all know, in the implementation of this ceremony, individuals in society form meaning through interactions with other residents and interactions with symbols that appear in the traditional ceremony.

Based on the findings in the study, researchers can describe the relationship between the theory of symbolic interaction and the implementation of the Pemung Bangen Leppa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony which can send symbolic messages to the Teras Nawang village community. In the context of traditional ceremonies, various elements such as clothing, movements, rituals and certain objects have deep symbolic meanings or messages. We can see this, for example, in traditional clothing or ornaments used in a ceremony often have historical

and cultural meanings that represent group or community identity, social values or relationships with ancestors.

This is in line with the findings in this study, namely that there are 4 elements that are the key to the emergence of symbolic messages in the Pemung Bangen Lepa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony. The 4 (four) elements that form symbolic messages in the Pemung Bangen Lepa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony include:

Decorations in the Traditional Hall of Lamin Adat Uyau I'ot

Based on the findings of the research results, there are many decorations or ornaments in the traditional hall used for the implementation of Pemung Bangen Lepa' Ajau. The carved ornaments on the walls of the traditional hall also have symbolic messages as follows :

Hornbill Motif

This motif has a symbolic message as a reminder of the unity between the Dayak Kenyah Lepu' Tau people. The community must remember and maintain their traditions and characteristics amidst the many influences from outside.

Crocodile Motif

This motif has a symbolic message that symbolizes the underworld, this motif is believed to have magical powers and is the incarnation of gods or ancestral spirits. The symbolic message of this crocodile motif is a symbol of the underwater world, fertility and supernatural powers. This crocodile ornament teaches hunting skills in the past. In addition, the crocodile motif also has a symbolic message as a symbol of strength and supernatural powers.

Tiger Motif

This tiger motif symbolizes courage, authority and agility. The tiger is also a symbol of nobility or social status of a person in the Dayak Kenyah Lepu' Tau community. The tiger is also a symbol of leadership, strength, heroism, courage and warding off disaster among the Dayak Kenyah Lepu' Tau community. This tiger motif may only be used by kings and nobles when worn on clothing.

Human Motif The depiction of a human figure is used as a reminder of the ancestors and also has a symbolic message which is considered to protect the Dayak Kenyah Lepu Tau community from misfortune and evil • Urn and gong motif The urn and gong motif has a symbolic message about wealth. Jars and gongs are a legacy from their ancestors which are a symbol of the wealth of the Dayak Kenyah Lepu Tau community and are also a symbol of respect for their ancestors.

Curved and circular ornaments Curved and circular ornaments take basic plant motifs. In denotational meaning, curved lines are like ferns in the form of tendrils. This ornament has a symbolic message that symbolizes the unbroken lineage of the Dayak Kenyah Lepu Tau community and can unite the Dayak Kenyah Lepu Tau community. Meanwhile, the circle ornament symbolizes each Dayak tribal and sub-tribe chief in Kalimantan. These curved and circular ornaments also symbolize brotherhood.

Sang Leaf

Sang leaves are believed to have magical powers to summon ancestral spirits. Sang leaves are installed to add magical value to the traditional hall and also from the beauty aspect. These sang leaves symbolize the love of the Dayak Kenyah Lepu' Tau tribe for their ancestors.

Kerbu

Kerbu are installed along the road in the village of Teras Nawang towards the Lamin Adat Uyau I'ot Traditional Hall. This Kerbu is a symbol of the joy of the community.

Dances performed in the Pemung Bangen Lepa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony

Based on the findings of the research results, there are many decorations or ornaments in the traditional hall used for the implementation of Pemung Bangen Lepa' Ajau. The dances performed in the Pemung Bangen Lepa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony also have the following symbolic messages:

Hudoq Dance

This dance is often danced at the beginning of the planting process because this dance has a symbolic message as an expression of gratitude and is believed to be a means of communication with the supernatural (Hanna, 1987). The costumes in this dance also have a symbolic message, namely a good and harmonious relationship between humans and nature, and also symbolizes the guardian of plants and agricultural products.

Gerak Sama Dance

This dance symbolizes the joy and togetherness of the Dayak Kenyah Lepu' Tau tribe. Because this dance is performed together, the symbolic message of this dance is the closeness of brotherhood and unity among the Dayak Kenyah Lepu' Tau tribe.

Kancet Julut Dance

This dance is a dance used to welcome guests of honor and also as a form of gratitude for the harvest.

Communal activities before the event and traditional food

Some communal activities such as joint harvesting, thanksgiving ceremonies, processing of harvested crops, eating together, cultural performances, games and competitions as well as agricultural exhibitions have symbolic messages that they want to convey, namely togetherness and close friendship in the Dayak Kenyah Lepu' Tau community. In addition to communal activities, in the Pemung Bangen Lepa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony, there are also traditional foods that are served and have symbolic messages, including:

Fern Vegetable

Fern vegetable whose basic form is tendrils depicts the unbroken lineage of the Dayak tribe and becomes new generations in the Dayak tribe

Manuk Pansuh

Pansuh chicken cooked using various spices and put into bamboo covered with banana leaves. This has a symbolic message about the diversity of the Dayak tribe which is strengthened by nature. And also has a symbolic meaning about the close relationship between the Dayak tribe and the surrounding nature.

Lemang

Lemang is made from sticky rice which has a sticky texture and has a symbolic message about the closeness of brotherhood in the Dayak Kenyah leppu tau tribe. Likewise, the way of cooking using bamboo as a container for the lemang has a symbolic message that it wants to convey, namely about the closeness of the relationship with the surrounding nature.

Kue Hau

Kue hau is a Dayak snack made from sticky rice which is given various colors and fried. These various colors show the diversity of the Dayak tribe itself.

Boiled food

Boiled food which is the harvest of the community is served as an expression of gratitude for the abundant harvest.

Glutinous Rice

Glutty rice wrapped in ncuk leaves is a typical rice served in Pemung Bangen Leppa Ajau. Ncuk leaves are chosen because they are leaves that are considered to have spiritual value for the Dayak community and are often used for medicine, and by using ncuk leaves it is hoped that it can provide health to the wrapped food.

Traditional clothing used

The Pemung Bangen Leppa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony is one of the traditional rituals of the Dayak Kenyah tribe in Bulungan Regency, North Kalimantan Province. In the Pemung Bangen Leppa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony, the community wears the traditional clothing they have, and of course the clothes they wear have several philosophical meanings. All the elements of the event in the Pemung Bangen Leppa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony also wear traditional Dayak Kenyah clothing, and of course the use of these traditional clothes contains certain symbolic meanings. The following are some of the philosophies contained in the traditional clothing of the Dayak tribe:

Symbolism of nature and environment

The designs and motifs on Dayak traditional clothing often contain symbolism related to nature and the surrounding environment. This reflects the closeness and dependence of the Dayak people on nature.

Spiritual Beliefs

Some ornaments on Dayak traditional clothing have spiritual connotations and traditional beliefs. For example, the tanggui (headdress) worn on the head can have sacred meaning and is a symbol of spiritual strength.

Social status

The type and details of Dayak traditional clothing can also reflect a person's social status in society. Some ornaments, such as lelung (long necklace), often symbolize certain achievements or statuses.

Balance and harmony

The patterns and colors of Dayak traditional clothing are often designed to create balance and harmony. This reflects the philosophy of harmony between humans and nature, as well as good relationships between members of society.

Symbol of Pride and Identity

Dayak traditional clothing also functions as a symbol of pride and tribal identity. The distinctive ornaments on the clothing help distinguish the Dayak tribe from other ethnic groups.

Cultural Heritage

Dayak traditional clothing carries with it a cultural heritage that has been passed down from generation to generation. Wearing traditional clothing is a way to maintain and celebrate their cultural identity.

Protection and well-being

Some Dayak traditional clothing has protective elements, such as the traditional "dulang" coat, which can protect against certain weather or environmental conditions. This reflects a concern for the physical well-being of community members.

The traditional clothing and accessories of Dayak Kenyah women are as follows:

Bluko'

Usually this hat is made of strong and impact-resistant rattan, then this hat is decorated with tiger and tiger fangs, given beads and goat fur on top of it in white or red. The white color symbolizes the purity of the mind and the red color symbolizes the courage of the Dayak tribe, in addition, the fangs and animal fur decorations that are attached are interpreted as the closeness of the relationship between humans and other creatures of God. Then on the back of this hat is also decorated with hornbill feathers (tebengang) and pegun feathers (a type of hornbill but its tusks are short and its tail feathers are very long). In ancient times, bluko' had magical and religious elements, bluko' was believed to be able to influence the wearer's suggestions. • Sabau-sabau

Sabau-sabau are earrings made of beads and worn on the ears of Dayak Kenyah women. In ancient times, Dayak Kenyah women did not wear earrings made of beads but made of silver or brass. In addition to sabau-sabau, Dayak women also still wear the long ear tradition where the number of earrings in their ears reflects their age.

Ulung-uleng

Ulung-uleng is a beaded necklace commonly worn by Dayak Kenyah women as a complement and sweetener to their traditional clothing.

Leko lengen

Leko' Lengen is a bracelet that is always worn by Dayak Kenyah women to enhance their beauty.

Beteng

Beteng is a belt, usually made of stone beads used by the Dayak Kenyah people.

Kirip

Kirip is a hornbill feather that is made into a circle and placed on the finger of a Dayak Kenyah woman. This kirip is usually used as a property when dancing. Kirip is made from hornbill feathers which have a symbolic message, namely not to forget the characteristics of the Dayak Kenyah Lepu' Tau tribe.

Ta'a

Ta'a is the lower cloth of the traditional clothing of Dayak Kenyah women. This bottom cloth is decorated with typical Dayak carvings and beads. The black color on the Ta'a reflects the mystical elements of the Dayak tribe and also authority, the king and orange colors depict cheerfulness and joy, the blue color symbolizes the prosperity of the Dayak tribe, the green color depicts the harmonious relationship of the Dayak tribe with the environment. The curved motif in the Ta'a depicts tendrils that depict the unbroken lineage of the Dayak tribe, as well as the dragon motif that depicts the strength of the Dayak tribe.

Sapai

Sapai / Sapei is a dress worn by Dayak Kenyah women and is also one of the properties / costumes for dancing Dayak Kenyah women. This dress is shaped like a vest decorated with beads.

Tapung

In addition to using Bluko, Dayak Kenyah women also wear Tapung. Tapung is one of the hats used for dancing and in traditional events.

The traditional clothing and accessories of Dayak Kenyah women are as follows:

Bluko'

Bluko' has a symbolic message as a form of authority and also the love of the Dayak Kenyah Lepu' Atu tribe for their ancestors. Bluko' is also a protector.

Leko' Lengen and Leko' Bate'

Usually these bracelets are worn by men on the arms and calves, so that their hands and feet do not cramp easily when fighting for a long time.

Besunung

Besunung is a war shirt that must be worn when going to war. In addition to being used when going to war, this shirt is also used in Traditional Ceremonies, traditional meetings and other traditional events. In ancient times, this Besunung was made of animal skin such as bears, mouse deer, tigers, and goats. This was intended so that the mandau would not penetrate during war. Nowadays, Besunung is no longer made of animal skin, but is made of velvet material with animal patterns. Basically, the motif of this traditional clothing has 3 different motifs, namely the Hornbill motif, the Tiger or other animal motif, and the Plant Motif. For hornbill and tiger motifs, they may only be used by the nobility, while plant motifs can be worn by ordinary people.

Abet

These are pants worn by men when dancing, decorated with a cloth that is longer on the front and back than their pants and the bottom of the cloth is decorated with beads. This abet is worn by Dayak Kenyah men when dancing. Nowadays, Dayak Kenyah men wear long pants with a vest / Sapai / Sapei during traditional events.

Kelempit

Kelempit is a shield that functions to ward off and protect against attacks from enemies. Kelempit is one of the attributes in dancing, in the form of a long shield about 1 meter long with a width of approximately 30 cm, made of wood that is shaped and given carvings or motifs on the front and also given color.

Baing Puk / Mandau

Baing Puk is one of the complementary accessories in the traditional clothing of Dayak Kenyah men. In addition, Baing puk is also one of the attributes in dancing, baing puk or parang dance is almost the same as a regular parang, but the difference is that baing puk has decorations on the handle or hilt in the form of hair and carvings. And on the cover it also has decorations in the form of hair and carvings too. This baing puk symbolizes the strength and courage of a Dayak man.

This study was conducted to answer 2 (two) problem formulations, namely about symbolic messages in the Pemung Bangen Lepa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony and also the level of Community Understanding of symbolic messages in the Pemung Bangen Lepa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony. Traditional ceremonies often involve interactions between various community members. Through this interaction, the symbolic meaning of each element of the ceremony is conveyed and understood by the participants. According to studies in the theory of symbolic interaction, meaning or message is not fixed but is formed through the process of interaction. Therefore, the symbolic messages in the Pemung Bangen Lepa' Ajau traditional ceremony can vary in being accepted by the Teras Nawang village community. This is because it depends on how individuals understand and interpret them. Based on the data obtained in the study with a quantitative approach, it is explained that the level of community knowledge about the symbolic messages of the Pemung Bangen Lepa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony is not yet significant. This is evidenced by the level of understanding that does not reach 50% of the community. The level of community understanding of the symbolic messages of the Traditional Ceremony, especially Pemung Bangen Lepa' Ajau, can vary depending on several factors such as cultural background, education and involvement in the tradition. From the points above, researchers can conclude that

the symbolic messages of the Pemung Bangen Lepa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony will not be conveyed properly if there is no support from the surrounding environment. From the results of the questionnaire conducted by the researcher, it can be concluded that there are many symbolic messages created, but the level of understanding is still relatively low. This can be seen from the lack of understanding of the younger generation to be able to explain the symbolic messages of everything related to the Pemung Bangen Lepa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony. Therefore, it can be concluded that according to the qualitative and quantitative tests, it explains that the level of understanding of the Teras Nawang village community regarding the Symbolic Messages in the Pemung Bangen Lepa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony is still low.

CONCLUSION

The Pemung Bangen Leppa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony held at Teras Nawang is a cultural heritage of the Kenyah Dayak tribe which is indeed a harvest festival as a place to express gratitude to God Almighty. The shift in the era and the entry of religion into the Dayak community have caused changes in the rituals carried out, but this does not reduce the religious meanings and cultural meanings in the Pemung Bangen Leppa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony itself. From the entire procession of the Pemung Bangen Leppa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony, it can be explained that there are 4 things that are the objects of creating symbolic messages, where these symbolic messages will be a means to convey messages to all people who follow or witness the Pemung Bangen Leppa' Ajau Traditional Ceremony. In the 4 elements of the traditional ceremony, there are several life and cultural lessons that are conveyed symbolically.

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