

## COMMODIFICATION OF CULTURE HERITAGE : HEALING TRADITION OF MALAY SERDANG

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### ABSTRACT:

Traditional beliefs have been revived due to the need to continue and adapt it to modern context. This research was conducted to analyze and make an interpretation of the *Healing Tradition of Malay Serdang* traditional way. An ethnographic study was carried out to seek the meaning of Commodification of Healing Tradition of Ethnic Malay Serdang in North Sumatra. Data obtained revealed that Healing Tradition was adapted and created the new way of this *Healing Tradition* ritual. It found that the commodification effort contributes to the medicinal function is for whole community members; utilization of the *Healing Tradition* ritual for treatment and tourism sector which invite outsiders to visit the location to see the Healing Tradition.

**Keywords:** Ethnomedicine; Ethnic Malay Serdang; *Healing Tradition* .

### INTRODUCTION

The cultural heritage now contributes much to the sustainable development (Auwera and Schramme, 2014). Additionally, cultural heritage is the noble value that exists in the revival of tradition in commodification as the guidance of the community. It should be admitted that the noble value of the ancestors may not be entirely relevant to present-day life, and perhaps even something that is contrary to the present life. Nonetheless, some parts of cultural values are still relevant to be utilized to organize a community for the social life wisely. Therefore, the revival of tradition in commodification that contains wisdom needs to be done inheritance to be applied and taught to the young generation now for the sake of the creation of peace and increase the prosperity of the nation in the future.

An effort to protect and preserve the ethnic cultural tradition; especially revival of tradition in commodification from various threats of extinction, i.e., resulting from global cultural flow penetrating into local culture play an important role. Each tradition has a cultural value that is largely utilized in the present generation for

a prosperous and dignified future, so it takes an expert who can discover, interpret, and apply the cultural values appropriately. The revival of healing tradition of Malay Serdang of Indonesia involve commodification efforts.(Add 3 refs about COMMODIFICATION OF HERITAGE)

It is believed that the revival of tradition in commodification will not live if it does not undergo a transformation where there is an adaptation between tradition and modernization, which is fairness, because culture is an aspect that has dynamics. It is reasonable to explore the broadly involving the application of scientific methods for mapping out the change, thus, analysing materials, protecting them from decay, and consolidating vulnerable components (Jones et al, 2016). This ethnography work was carried out to observe the Malay community of Pantai Labu in getting the sustained the Healing Tradition ritual ; it covered the efforts for; (1) empowerment, (2) documentation and (3) development.

*Ethnographic Integrates In Functional Approach*

The first ethnographic invention of a field study in the Trobriand Islands in southeastern Papua New Guinea, called *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), has attracted a wide audience, not only among anthropologists but also among sociologists and laypeople. The point of depiction is a system of trade between the inhabitants of the Trobriand Islands or Boyowa, the Amphlett Islands, the Dentrasteaux or Dobu islands, St. Aignau or Misima and Wood Lark or Murua islands, all of which lie to the east of the tip of New Guinea Southeast Papua. With only small rugged boats and with a crew of ten to fifteen people, the people of Trobriand and the other islands dare to cross the open sea to sail from island to island for hundreds of miles away. The objects are traded by way of exchange (Barter) in the form of various kinds of foodstuff, craft and fishery, plantation and household, but besides that in every transaction is held exchange of two kinds of jewelry objects which are considered to have a very high value, namely the shell necklaces (*sulava*) that circulate in one direction follow the clockwise direction and bracelets shells (*mwali*) circulating in the opposite direction. The trading system is called the *Kula* system.

A very unique feature of Malinowski's ethnography, which other ethnographers have never done before, is the Malinowski way of describing relationships between the *Kula* system and the natural environment around the islands as well as the various elements of the culture and society of the inhabitants, the physical characteristics of the environment the nature of each island, the beauty of its sea of shells, the various colors of the flora, the settlement patterns of the communities and the gardens, the natural meanings of the islands for the materials for making boats, as well as goods traded, kinship systems and their relation with cooperation in the *Kula* system, the village leadership system and the *Kula* leadership, the boat's proprietary system, the ways of exertion and the crew for the hula, the

technique of making a ceramic boat, the occult invention relating to the making and sailing of *Kula*, feasts and ceremonies - religious ceremonies before and after travel, the attitude of the inhabitants to the decorative objects *sulava* and *mwali*, various ways and tactics to compete for the *sulava* and *mwali* which are highly documented and therefore the highest value, the way to compete for social standing and prestige when it comes to obtaining it and so forth. The ingredients are described in a very fluid and alluring style, so that the whole activity of the *Trobriand* villagers' life seems to be looming before our eyes as a functionally integrated social system.

The way of composing ethnography like that of Malinowski is indeed a unique new way of writing ethnographic methods at that time. But he himself seemed at first intentional to introduce a new anthropological method but after receiving such a broad reaction and response, his thinking developed into methods for describing the various functional links of cultural elements in a living social system.

Closely concerned with careful observational research, he requires attempts to discipline and regularly fill out a diary, inter alia with the intention of self-evaluating as a researcher. With in-depth observation research Malinowski also requires field experts to train themselves to achieve skills in analytical research, ie to explain the background and function of customary human behavior and social institutions in society. Finally he does not forget to require the collection of quantitative data that can be evaluated objectively.

Malinowski's idea of the terms of the functionally integrated ethnographic method includes :

1. The social function of a custom, social order or cultural element at the first level of abstraction of its influence or effect on customs, human behavior and other social institutions in society;

2. The social function of a custom, social order or cultural element in the second stage of abstraction concerning its influence or effect on the needs of a custom or other institution to achieve its purpose as conceptualized by the citizen concerned;

The social function of a custom or social order at a third level of abstraction of its effect or effect on the absolute necessity for the integrated operation of a particular social system.

Another important stance of Malinowski is about the mythology or set of sacred tales in the Trobriand society in particular and Malinowski also in all societies in general. This method of mythological analysis has actually been suggested by Sir James Frazer. Malinowski's founding of the mythology is described in an essay titled *Myth in Primitive Psychology* (1984), which he presented to Frazer, and which was later published with some of his other essays into a potpourri titled *Magic, science and Religion and Other Essays*. The distinctive feature of Malinowski's method of distinguishing him from other scholars who have analyzed mythology is that he observes these sacred tales in the reality of life, and not only from texts or texts separate from his social relations. In that case, Malinowski observes that among the various other tales in the Trobriand society there is a set of sacred tales that the Trobriand also recognizes as a special category, which they call *Liliu*.

As a scholar who had studied psychology, Malinowski certainly also pay attention to the psychological aspects of the life of the society of his research object. This appears to be included in the *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* where he attacks the theory of psychoanalysis experts. Freud, the theory of Oedipus Complex, which is an instinctive impulse from a male anal to hate his father and love his mother, but who is suppressed

by his will, so that the urge becomes so hard that it is difficult to suppress the tension within the individual soul that can be transformed into various kinds of mental illness. Freud certainly developed that idea from the experiences of mental hospitals in Germany, but Malinowski doubted whether such instinctive instincts were also present in individuals who did not live in a society like Germany. He assumes that the Oedipus complex is the result of the family life environment in Germany where the father figure is perceived by family members as their protector, but on the other hand as a very authoritative leader and guardian.

### ***The Functional Theory of Culture***

Malinowski's penchant for psychology was also visible when he visited Yale University in the United States for a year, in 1935. As mentioned above, he met psychologists such as J. Dollard who was developing a series of research on learning. According to the Yale University scholar, the basis of the learning process is nothing but a repetition of the reactions of an organism to its external phenomena, occurring in such a way that one of the instinct's needs of the organism can be satisfied. This theory of learning is very interested in Malinowski, so it is used to provide an exact basis for his thoughts on the functioning relationships of elements of a culture.

As mentioned above, when Malinowski first wrote articles on various aspects of the Trobriand society as unanimity, he inadvertently introduced new insights into anthropology. But the reaction of the sciences gave him the impetus to develop a theory about the functioning of the elements of human culture. Thus, by using learning theory as the basis, Malinowski developed his functionalism theory, which was published only after he died. Malinowski developed a theory about the function of elements of very complex culture. But the essence of that theory is the stance that all the

activities of the hunger actually intend to satisfy a series of a number of needs of human instincts associated with all his life. Science also arises because the need for human instinct to know. But many cultural activities also occur because of the combination of several kinds of human needs. With that understanding, says Malinowski, a researcher can analyze and explain many problems in people's lives and human culture.

## RESEARCH METHOD

A fieldwork research, like Malinowski's functional ethnography, assumes that all elements of culture are beneficial to the society in which it is present. In other words, the view of functionalism towards culture maintains that every pattern of behavior that has become the habit of every belief and behave that the pattern of behavior has become a habit. Any beliefs and attitudes that are part of the culture within a society fulfill some fundamental functions in the pertinent culture. The function of a cultural element is its ability to meet some basic needs or some needs arising from the basic needs of secondary needs of the citizens of a society. The basic necessities are like food, reproduction (childbirth) bodily comfort, safety, relaxation of movement and growth. Some aspects of culture fulfill those basic needs.

Malinowski believes that a functional approach has an important practical value. Understanding of it can be exploited by those who associate with primitive societies. Malinowski describes it as follows: "The practical value of the theory (theory of functionalism) is that it teaches us about the relative importance of these diverse customs. How these habits depend on each other, how religious broadcasters must deal with, by the colonial rulers and by those who economically exploit the trade and labor of primitive peoples.

A major objection to Malinowski's functional theory is that this theory cannot explain the existence of various human cultures. The needs

identified, all of which are somewhat universal, such as the need for food that all societies have to think about if they want to live. Thus, the functional approach can indeed explain that all societies need the management of getting food, but this theory cannot explain why different societies manage their food procurement. In other words, the theory of functionalism does not explain why certain cultural patterns arise to satisfy a need that can actually be fulfilled in another way that can be selected from a number of alternatives and perhaps that way more easily.

## FINDINGS

Empowering the given revival of tradition in commodification in society is very important. It is noted that therevival of tradition in commodification has been continuously used a source of local wisdom; it was excavated from the values and cultural norms possessed. The position of revival of tradition in commodification has a function as a means of transmitting knowledge and information that revives the history and culture of the community in popular and entertaining form. Ethnic community now needs to make the cultural empowerment; it means making something powerful from local values. It is mentioned that the the term of power (Hofstede in Khan and Rasli, 2015) refers to the extent to which culture members accept an unequal distribution of power. Empowerment referred to in this research is an effort to give freedom to the community supporters of the tradition to utilize cultural capital in the form of "Ward off Misfortune" ritual of Ethnic Malay Serdang to serve as a valuable cultural product to improve the standard of living of the community.

Ethnic Malay Serdang has made use the culture and identity as important aspects of empowerment. Integration of culture and identity (Williams et al, 2003) has been seen to have the strong influence of globalization. It is in the field

of human life as if global values and ideologies undermine all social order derived from the traditions and culture of their ancestors. It should be noted in mind that the value of nobility that comes from the tradition of ancestral culture, then it is upheld as a powerful customary rule in improving and maintaining harmony in human life confronted with practical thoughts such as global pop culture and anti-tradition.

Tradition has made a value that can be functioned in social life of Ethnic Malay Serdang of North Sumatra. Basically the tradition is considered an element of antiquity which makes society more to ethnic identity. This raises concerns about the value of ancestral traditions will undergo an extinction that gradually members may leave it. It encourages the stake holders of Ethnic Malay Serdang are concerning the cultural preservation supporters to make efforts in preservation of local traditions both oral and written to be maintained and empowered in contemporary culture. Moreover, the growing modern culture is inevitable in the development of local culture and it must be realized together that culture will continue to get dynamics towards the level of modern human civilization. revival of tradition in commodification has always undergone a transformation due to the development of the times and due to its adaptation to the context of the times (Sibarani, 2012: 3). Additionally, the tradition will live in a transformation as a form of adjustment of revival of tradition in commodification with the element of modernization thus creating a cultural dynamism.

In Ethnic Malay Serdang of North Sumatra the ritual of *Healing Tradition* is observed a form of ceremony that contains the belief of treating the village. This ritual is a symbolic behavior or an act as well as a form of expression of their soul in a relationship with the inhabitants of the unseen world (Hasbula et al, 2017). Related to this ritual,

the revival of tradition in commodification of ethnic Malays society of Pantai Labu which is currently undergoing transformation from element of sacred toward profane is part of influence of global capitalism practice. As an ancestral cultural heritage of Malay ethnic community in Bagan Serdang, Pantai Labu District is still trying to maintain its sanctity, because it is considered something percussion that should not be abused except in the proper corridor (treatment). On the other hand, new ideas arise from some of the supporting societies to utilize the potentials passed on by the ancestors to be empowered in an effort to preserve and elevate the culture of the performance stage. The conservation efforts to avoid extinction in Malay Serdang were done to sustain it and attract the young people of today who are less interested in learning the history of ancestral traditions. The existence of socialization and cultivation of cultural values since childhood needs to be invested as well as efforts in empowering community supporters of culture for the sake of the preservation of traditions and cultural values. In the observation, Healing Tradition ritual was disclosed by Tok Sokbi (76 years), as an informant, as follows:

*"We are aware of the sacredness of the ritual of reinforcement which for us has a powerful supernatural power in terms of treatment. Thoughts of supernatural value in medicine make us; Malay community in Pantai Labu is fragmented to make this ritual as a form of traditional medicine. Most of people in here do not want it but some agree (interview 17 October 2016)".*

The above statement shows the awareness of the importance of the ritual of reinforcement rejoined into a form of traditional medicine is not just happening, but there is a difference of opinion from the party supporting the tradition with those who want profane changes. The reason of the two sides has the power to preserve the traditions of

the people from their ancestors. Due the culture is a component that has been very meaningful for a nation it is such the glue of the nation and become the hallmark of a country. With the culture of a country can be distinguished from others.

*Healing Tradition Ritual* as cultural property belonging to Ethnic Malay in Pantai Labu District has been partly empowered as well as meditation rituals in the public health sector. Therefore, by empowering the *Healing Tradition Ritual* ritual of the Ethnic Malay group in Bagan Serdang Village, Pantai Labu Sub-District means was sustaining the traditions from the onslaught of cultural globalization which seeks to cripple and even destroy various kinds of tradition including the ritual of Healing Tradition (Ward off Misfortune) with modern culture which is more practical and economical in present life.

Empowering the Healing Tradition ritual with the supporting community actually aims to preserve and improve the level of prosperity of ethnic Malay community Bagan Serdang Village, Pantai Labu sub-District. Malay community held a "Healing Tradition" (ward off misfortune) ritual in anticipation of some of the diseases caused by disorders of supernatural beings (Sutikno, 2017). One of the forms of empowering the tradition of "Ward off Misfortune" ritual is by doing *disease treatment* and encourages the business of disease treatment services in the ritual of Ward off Misfortune. As expressed by Datuk Amiruddin (66 Years)- as second informant, as follows: "One of the empowering "Ward off Misfortune" rituals conducted by the Malay community, Pantai Labu District is done by carrying out disease treatment". (an interview was done in October 17, 2016). Based on the statement above, it is known that with creativity capital the hands of the people are able to create a ritual display reject the precious reinforcements that contain guidance and values so high. With the increasing of ritual empowerment by presenting it as a form of treatment known by the wider community and the

younger, generation of Malays ethnic in the village of Bagan Serdang, Pantai Labu District increasingly recognize its traditions and be able to inherit the ritual in the future.

As a ritual passed down from generation to generation, there must be influential agencies in this regard the Healing Tradition ritual to be people treatment. In Ethnic Malay of the Bagan Serdang, Pantai Labu District it was seen how the role of power possessed by the leader with the knowledge and ability of the discourse that will be built always to be believed and developed by the Ethnic Malay community of Bagan Serdang, Pantai Labu Deli Serdang District. Although now it is not an easy thing to empower the ritual of reinforcement in improving the health and welfare of Malay ethnic community in Bagan Serdang, Pantai Labu District, there have been supervision and assistance, so that the objectives of the community supporting the Healing Tradition ritual can be achieved every year.

In the documentation process of valuable objects and sites, studying and planning the needs of the project and other influential factors have to be done to guarantee the usefulness of the project (Hasani, F. 2015). The collection of information and storing data related to the ritual of reinforcement is a form of effort in saving the ethnic Malay in Bagan Serdang, Pantai Labu District. One of the steps done by the leader was that every time the Healing Tradition ritual was enactment, the patient was asked to follow the procession from beginning till end. At this moment the observation to document the ritual procession from beginning to end such as videotape or (photos), so the research archive or documentation. It becomes the concrete evidence for Malay community, Bagan Serdang District of Pantai Labu to future generations. As told by Tok Sokbi (75 years) as follows:

*"If there is implementation of 'Healing Tradition' ritual requested by the family of patients, I always*

*say that can be covered or photographed, because I myself also want to see the course of this ritual. Also for the grip for me, the family and the community in Bagan Serdang as often people come to see how the ritual is "(an interview, October 17, 2016)*

The above statement seems that the master ceremony of the Healing Tradition ritual has made an effort to document the ritual in the future if the family or the community wants to see the ritual, it can be shown through the previous documentation in the form of a video record or a photo. As far as the researcher see the field, the result of documenting this ritual was still far from perfect as a modern library. The photographs of the road ritual repulsed reinforcements were only stored in the rest of the photo album used as home decoration so that if people or interested people want to see the documentation of the Healing Tradition ritual can be directly seen. This ethnography lets the readers to know the Healing Tradition ritual for the treatment of disease. However, the Healing Tradition ritual for diseases now is lack of human resources. There seems to be a lack of regeneration of the medicinal agent in this case, the prospective master ceremony has been rarely found. The proof of the implementation of the Healing Tradition ritual for the treatment of the disease only enacted once a year. Thus, only a particular master ceremony who was assigned, no new ones appear. Secondly, the trust in some parts of society for the modern medicine system increased. The third, taking long hours of ritual processions; for patients who are domiciled outside of Pantai Labu, Deli Serdang District found it difficult to make ritual observance. Basically they are aware of the limitations in various matters related to the implementation of the ritual of reinforcements for the treatment of diseases they have been involved in so far.

Treatment groups are aware of their

weaknesses in the aspects of treatment management. For example, lack of planning in treatment. If they get treatment jobs, they usually cannot maximize the number of patients because the cost of ritual treatment is high enough. Generally they do marketing or in the form of advertising to local communities or outside communities. In addition, the training or inheritance of the prospective leader is usually through the family and not the direct appointment to the prospective leader outside the family.

Furthermore, the ritual leader rejecting reinforcements for the treatment of illness also feels an imbalance between medication goals and personal goals. For example, the ritual leader rejects reinforcements for the treatment of the disease pursuing profit only because of the pressing need of the economy. However, it is also necessary to improve the economic quality of the leaders. Ideally, management is established or determined to link the purpose of the Healing Tradition ritual for the treatment of the disease as a container of public health and personal goals in such a way. Thus, the purpose of Healing Tradition ritual for the treatment of illness and personal goals can be balanced.

Thus, several aspects of performing the ritual for the treatment of diseases:

- 1) The length of travel time may be shortened in less than 1 hour's journey when the ritual practice of Ward off Misfortune for the treatment of diseases opens a practice site in another region.
- 2) It is necessary to keep books of spells of Ward off Misfortune ritual for the treatment of diseases especially for the sake of conservation.
- 3) It is necessary to have a teacher or coach who can give interpretation and color to the role

and implementation of the ritual of Ward off Misfortune for the treatment of disease.

- 4) There is a need for a special place of practice that supports the implementation of the ritual of Ward off Misfortune for the treatment of disease.
- 5) It is necessary to inherit a prospective leader based on talent even though they are not family heirs.
- 6) Documentation is required on every ritual implementation for the treatment of diseases in patients.
- 7) Need regular patient on an ongoing basis.

### Discussion : Healing Tradition Revival

The Healing Tradition ritual as the object of a cultural heritage for Ethnic Malay Serdang in Pantai Labu District of North Sumatra in the era of modernization needs the Cultural development policy. In the present context therevival of tradition in commodification of ritual must be able to make improvements; no need to undermine the value and meaning contained therein, but the Healing Tradition ritual must be able to be developed in a dynamic process. Maintaining tradition purely or traditionally means separation; so the tradition must be created in order to create a new style that is in accordance with the context of the age so as to have value for the unity of the tradition. Therefore, the development of therevival of tradition in commodification of the ritual of reinforcement must be reconstructed towards the better, more efficient, and the society is able to absorb what is in therevival of tradition in commodification of traditional care. Certainly with the development of therevival of tradition in commodification of Healing Tradition ritual must be done with a high awareness without eliminating the roots of Ethnic Malay in Pantai Labu District and its identity; so that the concept,

form and function of the tradition would be still illustrated with different touch. New mode of enactment was developed with high creativity in the presentation; so that the community was interested in and taking the initiative to preserve ritual annually. Thus, the cultural heritage is no exception therevival of tradition in commodification, whether intangible should be in dynamics, not dormant, nonetheless, Healing Tradition ritual should be continued to be grown and developed in a healthy climate.

### CONCLUSIONS

Data interpretation gives two conclusions:

1. The enactment of Healing Tradition ritual for the treatment of disease was still revived in the Ethnic Malay community of Pantai Labu District. Supporters think it is necessary to restore efforts with innovation to the Healing Tradition ritual for the treatment of the disease itself. There is a concern that the ritual for the treatment of disease persists conventionally, the ritual of for the treatment of disease will be abandoned by society.
2. Thus, commodification of the treatment of the disease in an effort to revive the ritual for the healing tradition involved the Malay society from various parties; namely traditional cultural, leader, and the younger generation made the researcher suggested the restoration efforts related to the following elements for cultural sustainability.

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