

THE FUNCTIONS AND THE SYMBOLIC MEANING OF PENTI
TRADITION FOR THE COMMUNITY OF PERAK VILLAGE,
CIBAL DISTRICT, MANGGARAI REGENCY-NTT

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Abstract

This study aims to explain the function of the penti tradition in the Manggarai community of Perak village and describe the symbolic meaning of the penti tradition in the Manggarai village of Perak. This type of qualitative descriptive research. The data sources used are primary data sources and secondary data sources. Data collection techniques used are observation, interviews and documentation. The data analysis method used is data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. The data validity method used is source triangulation. The results obtained from the function of the penti tradition are asking for soil fertility before Mori Jari Dedek (God the Creator) and the penti ceremony as social solidarity. While the meaning of the penti tradition symbols are barong wae (spring source), takung pa'ang (respect to the village gatekeeper), compang takung (a place to store offerings), teing hang one mbaru gendang (giving offerings to ancestors), and penti (thanksgiving).

Keywords: Function, Importance, Meaning of Symbols, Penti Tradition

1. INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian nation is an archipelagic nation. As an archipelagic nation, almost every island has its own characteristics, culture and customs. There were many ethnic groups living throughout the Indonesian archipelago (Agus et al., 2018). Each tribes have their own culture, language, traditional rites, traditional dances, food, traditional houses and so on.

The Indonesian people who are diverse in ethnicity, culture, language and customs have their own way of expressing gratitude for each form of success in the hope of the integrity of their respective territories (Bagul, 2008). They are aware of this gratitude and they are grateful to God Almighty for all gifts, such as: gratitude for the birth of a child, gratitude for a bountiful harvest and so on (Nggoro, 2013). In Manggarai, especially in Perak village, Manggarai district (Flores, East Nusa Tenggara), there is a kind of traditional ceremony called the Penti Ceremony (Dahuradi, 2018). This ceremony is a sign of traditional gratitude for all that has been achieved, especially for the abundant harvest (Dahus, 2017).

Not only grateful for the abundant harvest, this *pent*i ritual also has full meaning in the life of the indigenous people of Manggarai. Indigenous people often perform this penti ritual, one of which takes place in the village of Boncukode, Perak Village, Cibal District, Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara.

Penti is a form of oral literature that lives and develops among the Manggarai customs. Basically, *pent*i is a traditional Manggarai rite in the form of thanksgiving and offerings to

ancestors or supernatural spirits and especially to the highest form, namely: Mori Kraeng (God Almighty). This traditional ceremony, performed by a group of indigenous people, in a solemn and happy atmosphere.

There are many stages of interrelated ceremonial rites such as: the barong wae ritual (a rite of thanks to the ancestors who guard drinking water). This rite takes place in the drinking water area. *Takung Pa'ang* Ritual (Ritual to the ancestors of the village gatekeepers). *Compang Takung* ritual or a kind of Altar or Place of Worship located in the middle of the village. It is a ritual offering to the spirits of the ancestors who guard the village. The *Teing Hang One Mbaru Gendang* Ritual and the Penti Peak Ritual held the following morning. The ritual above is the stages of the whole series of important rituals. Before starting the penti ceremony, the community sings the song *renggas*, *roèng* as a cry of gratitude (in the form of a song) to God as the protector and guardian of the village.

The *pent*i ceremony is an effort that is reflected in a Manggarai literary work called “*go'et*” which expresses gratitude for the harvest and for the inclusion of the Supreme Being in life during the year that will soon be passed and welcoming the new year. Therefore, Penti is often called *pent*i *weki neki ranga manga*. This tradition is the gratitude of all villagers or villagers to God and ancestors as rulers or timers of human life (Ngare, 2014).

Penti also strengthens community land rights obtained through the division of *tua teno* (customary elders who are authorized to divide garden land or *lingko-lingko*). *Tua Teno* has a moral obligation to guard and protect the garden land from other parties who want to seize or claim the garden land as their property (Parli et al., 2019). *Penti* has a social aspect because through the Penti ceremony, all family members are involved. This tradition is a kind of big family reunion at the moment of letting go of the old year and welcoming the new year.

The development of science and technology erodes many of the noble meanings of Penti. The egocentrism of individuals and groups is prioritized and diminishes the social value of Penti. Many young people do not appreciate the important rituals and ritual language as ancestral heritage. Young people often do not understand the meaning of symbols of the Penti rite such as: Barong *Waè*, *Takung Pa'ang*, *Takung Compang*, *Teing Hang On*, *Mbaru Gendang*. *Penti*, which is held every year, can undoubtedly be a medium or means to ward off the negative attitudes and behaviors mentioned above. Based on the description above, the author carried out a research on “The Function and Meaning of the Symbols of the Penti Tradition for the Villager of Perak, Cibal District, Manggarai Regency, NTT.” This study aims to explain the function of the penti tradition in the Manggarai community of Perak Village.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

In solving the problem, the researcher uses a qualitative descriptive approach (Lexy, 2012). The data and data sources in the study are primary data. Primary data are data obtained directly from studies of individuals, groups and organizations. In this case, what is meant by direct data sources are data obtained through interviews, observations and documentation. In this study, secondary data sources are books, journals, articles related to the title of this research, namely the Function and Meaning of the Symbols of the Penti Tradition for the People of Perak Village, Cibal District, Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara (Endraswara, 2009, 2013). Data collection methods used are observation, interviews and

documentation. Data analysis techniques used are data collection, data reduction, data presentation and conclusions. The data validity technique used is source triangulation.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. History of the Penti Ceremony

The *pent*i ceremony is an expression of gratitude to God (*Mori Jari Dedek*) and to the ancestors for all the blessings given to be enjoyed. This ceremony is also used as a sign that the change of seasons and the turn of the year (*celung celung wali ntaung*). This ceremony takes place when the harvest has been completed around August and September. The implementation of this ceremony depends on the ability of the community or not. However, if they are not able to do so it will be implemented in a few years (every five years). In this event, the community invites their relatives to participate in the ceremony. The *pent*i ceremony takes place in the afternoon and in the morning there is a ritual performed by the community, namely the *Podo Tenggang* ceremony (poor offerings). This ceremony is intended to prevent disasters such as famine and keep people away. In this ceremony, the animals offered are black pigs and chickens, as well as equipment that has been damaged or unused to the location of the ceremony, namely the *cunga* or the meeting place of two rivers. After arriving at the river, the customary head said a prayer, namely: “*ho'o lami ela miteng agu manuk miteng, kudut Kacas sangged laros, kudut wur sangged rucuk agu ringnggang landing toe ita hang ciwal, toe haeng hang mane, prong ngger laus hentet, ngger ce'e mbhok, kudut one waes laud one lesos saled*” (we offer a pig and a hen with black hair as a sign to ward off hunger. May all hunger be swept away by the river water and set like the sun.) Next, pigs and chickens were killed and hung in a branch of branched wood and tied up in place.

3.2. Penti Ceremony Series

1) Deliberations

Traditional deliberations in the Perak Village are usually led by traditional elders and representatives of the local community who play an important role in the harvest ceremony. All villagers or tribesmen are also involved in the deliberations. In deliberation, usually things that need to be agreed upon include: the leader of the ceremony, the animal to be sacrificed and other offerings.

2) Preparation of sacrificial animals

In the *pent*i ceremony, the animals that are most often sacrificed are boars and chickens. In principle, the selection of sacrificial animals in every traditional ceremony, especially the *pent*i ceremony for the Manggarai community in Boncukode village, Perak village has the following meanings:

- a) Male pigs: male pigs were chosen as sacrificial animals because according to the Manggarai people's belief, the “male” pig is a symbol of the strength of a man who is the key or the main mover in cultivating the garden.
- b) Rooster: before the people of Manggarai know about technology, knowing when an activity will start depends on nature, such as: the appearance of a crescent moon which indicates that the planting season is near, when the sun sets then gardening activities must be stopped, the rooster crows as a sign of the day it's over.

3.3. Functions of the Penti Ceremony Tradition

3.3.1. Pray for the Fertility of the Land in front of Mori Jari Dedek (God the Creator)

The *pent*i ceremony is an expression and prayer of gratitude and petition that is offered by the Manggarai community to their ancestors for the fertility of the managed land. The people of Manggarai believe it was all a gift from Mori Jari Dedek (God the Creator). Gratitude for the blessings and grace of God or the Supreme Being is carried out in the traditional Penti rite. Through the *pent*i ceremony, the people of Manggarai ask *Mori Kraeng* (God Most High) to give their land fertility. Gratitude for the harvest that occurs every year. The gratitude is not only directed to *Mori Kraeng* (God the Creator of all things) but to other intermediaries, such as: *Ceki* or *Empo* (the spirits of the ancestors).

3.3.2. Penti Ceremony as Social Solidarity

The *pent*i ritual provides meaning with values for the Manggarai community as a whole. This meaning is clearly born from considerations that describe the characteristics of the Manggarai community and their existence as they are carried out in relation to the atmosphere of other people's lives. That is, deep Manggarai meditation. this life, in all its dynamism, brings about a true self-understanding and its presence in the union of others.

This important ritual teaches the human community in meditation the Manggarai philosophy is not only about respecting people, what is needed, but more about exploring community as something that supports people. People cannot stand alone, as he needs someone else, he is always found somewhere else.

3.4. The meaning of symbols in the rite of *pent*i

3.4.1. *Barong Wae* (Springs)

In summary, the meaning of the *barong wae* rite (the rite of the spring) is:

- 1) Thank God as the source of life, the fountain of life.
- 2) Thank God who determines the length of human life
- 3) Be grateful to God who protects, preserves and gives freshness to humans and keeps people away from all forms of accidents.

3.4.2. *Takung Pa,ang* (respect to the Village Gatekeeper)

The meaning of the *Takung Pa,ang* rite was:

- 1) Inviting *Ceki Wae*, *Ceki Wejang* together to go to ragged taking
- 2) Pray to God who guards the village gate to give you abundant fortune and protect all residents of the village from evil.

3.4.3. *Compang takung* (place to store offerings)

The meaning of the *Compang takung* rite was :

- 1) Thank God, as a protector and guardian of the village
- 2) Asking for the sustenance of life for all the villagers
- 3) Asking for the grace of forgiveness, unity and brotherhood
- 4) Protecting the villagers from enemy attacks, extreme weather, and all kinds of evil spirit disturbances.

3.4.4. *Teing Hang One Mbaru Gendang* (giving offerings to ancestors)

The meaning of the meaning of prayer when *Teing Hang One Mbaru Gendang*:

- 1) Respect the *Ceki Telu* (*Ceki Wejang, Ceki Pa, Ang, Ceki Compang*)
- 2) Respect God as the source of the water of life, guard the village gate, protect all villagers from evil
- 3) Asking God to obtain various kinds of sustenance such as mental and physical health, giving food for life, protecting all villagers from all evil.

3.4.5. *Penti* (harvest thanksgiving ceremony)

The meaning of the *torok penti*:

- 1) Prayers let go of the old year and welcome the new year
- 2) Hear, O God, the God of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of the rising and setting of the sun, the maker of directions, the creator of the earth and the sky.
- 3) It's time to let go of the old year and welcome the new year. Our supplication is symbolized by the chicken and the pig. We ask God, the creator of water, village gatekeepers and village guards, to be with us humans who are still alive to let go of the old year and welcome the new year. This is the chicken and pig as a symbol of the event to let go of the old year and welcome the new year.
- 4) On this special occasion, we make a request as follows: that we may have many offspring, be blessed with blessings on our pets, good mental and physical health. If we work in the garden, give us abundant fruit, the grace of unity and brotherhood. Put a mark on the hearts of these chickens and pigs so that we can avoid holding grudges and acquire the nature and attitude of forgiving each other, because You are the Lord who strengthens us throughout this life. After all, we ask that our words match our actions. These are the chickens and pigs that we offer as a sign of our respect and devotion to You, O Allah, as the giver of water, and the keeper of the village gates.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings described in the previous chapters, several things can be concluded as follows:

- 1) The function of *pent*i in the Manggarai community, namely:
 - a) Ask for soil fertility in front of *Mori Jari Dedek* (God the Creator) an expression of gratitude and petition made by the Manggarai community to their ancestors for the fertility of the managed land. The people of Manggarai believe it was all a gift from *Mori Jari Dedek* (God the Creator). Through the *pent*i ceremony, the Manggarai people ask *Mori Kraeng* (God Most High) so that their land is given fertility.
 - b) *Penti* ceremony as social solidarity. In the *pent*i ritual, the role of each individual is determined by the social status in the village or family. However, cooperation is still needed to start the process of carrying out the rite. As a result, a sense of solidarity becomes an expressive sense of brotherhood for the Manggarai community

- 2) The meaning of symbols in the rite of *pent*i. In the *pent*i rite there are five main symbols
 - a) *Barong Wae* (Source of the Spring) which has the meaning of being grateful to God as the source of life and the source of the fountain of life, being grateful to God who determines the length of human life, being grateful to God who protects, preserves and gives freshness to humans and keeps people away from all forms of accidents.
 - b) *Takung Pa'ang* (Respect to the Village Gate Keeper) which means Inviting *Ceki Wae*, *Ceki Wejang* to go together to *Compang Takung*, asking God who guards the village gate to provide abundant fortune and protect all the villagers from evil.
 - c) *Compang Takung* (A place to store offerings) has the meaning of being grateful to God, as a protector and guardian of the village, asking for the sustenance of life for all villagers, asking for forgiveness, unity and brotherhood, protecting the villagers from enemy attacks, extreme weather, and all kinds of evil spirits.
 - d) *Teing Hang One Mbaru Gendang* (Giving offerings to ancestors) has the meaning of Respecting *Ceki Telu* (*Ceki Wejang*, *Ceki Pa*, *Ang*, *Ceki Compang*) Respecting God as the source of the water of life, guardian of the village gate, protector of all villagers from evil. sustenance such as mental and physical health, providing food for life, protecting all villagers from all evil.
 - e) *Penti* (Harvest Thanksgiving Ceremony) has the meaning of Prayer to let go of the old year and welcome the new year. Listen, O God, creator of the heavens and the earth, God as the determinant of the rising and setting of the sun, determining direction, creator of the land and sky, this is the time to let go of the old year and welcome the new year. Our supplication is symbolized by the chicken and the pig. We ask God, the creator of water, village gatekeepers and village guards, to be with us humans who are still alive to let go of the old year and welcome the new year. This is the chicken and the pig as a symbol of the event to let go of the old year and welcome the new year. On this special occasion, we make a request as follows: that we have many offspring, bestowed blessings on our pets, mental and physical health.

Because the *pent*i ceremony is one of the cultures passed down from generation to generation from ancestors that contains functions, and symbols that are very important for the survival of the Manggarai people, especially the people of Perak village, it will be very unfortunate if the culture is lost due to the times. For this reason, the author proposes several suggestions, namely:

- 1) To the traditional elders and community leaders, to carry out cultural socialization to the younger generation related to Manggarai culture, specifically the *pent*i ceremony so that it continues to be preserved.
- 2) To the government, in order to understand the process of carrying out the *pent*i ceremony as a function and symbol or symbol of gratitude to God Almighty.
- 3) For further researchers who want to research about culture, specifically the *pent*i ceremony, the analysis can be carried out more deeply.
- 4) For the people of Perak village, both young and old, they must maintain their culture.

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