***SA NGAZA***

**IN RELIGIOUS AND TRADITIONAL RITUALS**

**PERFORMED BY THE *NGADA* ETHNIC PEOPLE IN FLORES**

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**ABSTRACT**

This cultural study was conducted based on the primary data *kasa’o* (the traditional house bestowal of blessing) and *wo’soDewa* (the church bestowal of blessing). The study was intended to reveal the elements causing the oral tradition *Sa Ngaza* (TLS) in the traditional ritual ‘ritual adat’ (RA) are still performed in the religious ritual ‘ritual keagamaan’ (RKA), the function and meaning of TLS in RA and RKA, how it has been inherited. The study used the theory of formula, the theory of semiotics, and the theory of practice, especially the practice of capital. The data were collected using the techniques of observation, interview, and documentation.

*Sa Ngaza* is unique in regard to its pattern of formula in the same dimension in general and in the opening and closing formulas in particular. These formulas support the transmission of TLS, causing *mori Sa Ngaza* (the *Sa Ngaza* reporter) to be able to maintain the continuity of TLS and its growth in RA and RKA. The opening formula explains the identities of the characters. The thematic formula in RA and RKA reports different contents. TLS in RA emphasizes *patadela* (the ancestor’s massage); TLS in RKA emphasizes the Biblical massage. The meaning plurality in RA and RKA explains the acculturative relationship between the tradition and religion. In this relationship there is a shift in the identities of the characters, *sa’o* (the traditional house), and *patadela*. The hierarchy of leadership in the tradition and religion can save and hamper the oral tradition. Therefore, TLS can be generally inherited based on the role of leadership through families and society, religious institutions, and education.

Keywords: *SaNgaza*, *kasa’o*, *Wo’oSa’oDewa*, oral tradition of *Sa Ngaza*, traditional ritual, and religious ritual

**INTRODUCTION**

*Sa Ngaza* is one of the oral poems symbolizing the Ngada ethnic identity in Flores, East Nusa Tenggara. It is reported in the traditional ritual related to the identity of *sa’o* (the traditional house), *ngadhu*the sacrificed pole symbolizing the male ancestor), *bhaga* (the house symbolizing the female ancestor).

Apart from being part of the traditional ritual ‘Ritual Adat’ (RA), *Sa Ngaza* is also developed as part of the religious ritual ‘Ritual Keagamaan’ (RKA). As an illustration, it is also developed in the church bestowal of blessing ‘ *wo’oSa’oDewa* (WSD) ritual. WSD directly adopts the *kasa’o* traditional ritual (the traditional bestowal of blessing). The peak of the RA *kasa’o* and RKA WSD are performed using the enthroning symbol of *kawapere* (the shield, the thing against which one can lean) in the entrance of *sa’o* and what is referred to as ‘pintutabernakel’ (the Church’s inner part).

It is necessary to observe the relationship between tradition and religion by taking several things into consideration. *First*, the change which takes place in the verbal character of *Sa Ngaza*.*Second*, what is referred to as *patadela* in RA is replaced by the Biblical massage in RKA. *Third*, it is necessary to observe the relationship between tradition and religion whether the domination of religion over tradition results from either harmonization or disharmonization.

The problems which are discussed in the present study are: a) what elements cause the oral tradition of *Sa Ngaza* in RA to develop in RKA; b) what is the function of the oral tradition of *Sa Ngaza* in RA and RKA; c) what is the meaning of the oral tradition of *Sa Ngaza* in RA and RKA?; and d) how the oral tradition of *Sa Ngaza*has been inherited? The discussion is intended to answer the four problems above and how the inheritance of *Sa Ngaza* can be creatively and innovatively developed in RA and RKA. In theory, it is expected that the study can enrich the treasure of the oral traditional studies. In practice, it is expected that the study can enrich the treasure of the Ngada ethnic people’s knowledge of their identity as the traditional people and members of a religious community.

**METHOD**

The method used in the present study is the qualitative method focusing on the production exploration and the use of the map of cultural meanings. Therefore, the qualitative method used here highly depends on the quality of observation and the techniques of observation, interview, and documentation, meaning that the data which were observed are the primary data directly obtained from the field. The primary data include *TLS* in *WatuWeaRA kasa’o*(the traditional house bestowal of blessing) in *Wogo*on 27 and 28 June 2012 and *TLS*. In *RA kasa’o* there were 13 oral texts of *SaNgaza* (read: *Sa Ngaza*) made up of 5 *Sa Ngaza* reported by what is referred to as *moringalu* (the ritual owner), and 8 *SaNgaza* reported by *wailaki*(families of relatives) supporting the performance of *RA*.

**DISCUSSION**

Etymologically, *Sa Ngaza* consists of the word *sa*, meaning summoning, shouting out something, reporting, and the word *ngaza*, meaning name. *Sa Ngaza* is the poem reporting the identity of the mythological character and ancestor. It is orally reported in all big parties apart from in the *raba*party (the party held to celebrate New Year) and hunting – it is used to express appreciation to the ancestor by mentioning the most important characteristics (Arndt, 2009: 243); (Banda, 1996).

The opening formula of *Sa Ngaza* in RA contains the mythological character and *ebunusi* (the ancestor). In RKA the characters which are reported are *EmaDewa* (Allah Bapa), King Jesus Christ, Saint (the holy man) and the characters who are still alive on earth. The identity of the character cannot be neglected in reporting the opening of *SaNgaza*. Name is the recognition for humanity and existence (Danesi, 210: 146). As an illustration, the ancestor’s name *woe* (clan, sub ethnic) *TikoSawa*, namely *SawaPeraKela* (*SawaUlarSakti*). Name is a type of special word which can be referred to in communication (Barker in Mulyana, 2005). From the semiotic point of view, it is interesting as it directly relates its owner to the culture in which he/she was born (Danesi, 2010: 145). In the opening formula there is a shift of identity from the mythological character and ancestor in RA to Saint ‘Santo”, EmaDewa (God), and the Church’s hierarchical leader).

The thematic formula of TLS in RA *kasa’o* (the traditional house bestowing of blessing) explains three important themes; they are *kawapere* (the shield, something against which someone can lean), the traditional house as *sa’ongaza* (the house with a name) and *paladela* (the ancestor’s message). In *RKA wo’oSa’pDewa* (the Church bestowal of blessing), apart from *kawapere* and *Church* as *sa’ongaza*, the Biblical massage is also used as one of the three important themes. In the study conducted by Parry-Lord, it is stated that the formula system can also be found in the semantic structural level referred to as idea or theme (Lord, 1976: 68). Such a group of themes is also an important corpus for explaining TLS in RA and RKA.

*RA kaSa’o* is one of the habitus, where the reality internationalization and internality externalization take place. It is adjusted to the specific condition in which it is formed (Bourdieu, in Jenkins, 2010: 115), and such an attempt is consciously made in *bheikawapere*. It is enthroned at the entrance of *sa’o*(the traditional house) and *kasa’o* (the traditional house bestowal of blessing) and at the *tabernakel* door (the inner part of the Church). In RKA *wo’oSa’oDewa* (the Church bestowal of blessing) it is the new habitus. In *Sa Ngaza RKAkawapere* is implicitly revealed as *wipengatage go kawapere* (in order to enthrone *kawapere*, *kawapere kami noase’e* (*kawapere* against which we lean). From the semiotic point of view (Barthes, 2010: 3003; Hoed, 2011:45), the denotative meaning of *kawa*is pot, the denotative meaning of *pere* is the shield; connotatively, it means the shield, something against which someone can lean).The connotation of *kawapere* has become a myth and even an ideology for the Ngadha ethnic people. An established connotation can develop into a myth, and an established myth can develop into an ideology (Barker, 2009: 74). This is symbolized in the symbol of *kawapere*. Dillistone states that actually a symbol explains the collective awareness of a traditional community and religious community (Dillistone, translated by Widyamartaya, 2002: 196). Such a collective awareness can be observed in the change in function and meaning of *kawapere*, symbolizing the unity of *anasa’o* (the owner of the traditional house) and *woe* (clan, sub ethnic) into the unity of the religious community within the Church.

*Sa’o*(the traditional house) is the house which has name in Ngadha. It is different from *baru* (the common house) which does not have any name. Maintaining the traditional house is one of the physical forms of the attempts made to continue the ancestor’s tongue ‘*tukumumumnungalema*’. According to Rolland Barthes, the production of connotative meaning explains the history of a *sa’o* in the traditional domain in Ngadha. This concept includes the persistence of planning the personal and collective future (Bourdieu refers to group as class). One group in the social relation cannot be separated from another in the same domain in order to show its status, authority and legitimacy (Bourdieu, translated by FAuzi, 2009: 97—100) which contains philosophy, history, moral values, ethics, religion, traditional law, social organization, literature, and aesthetics (Juweng, 1998: 169). *Sa’o* as *sa’ongaza*is the traditional identity of the Ngadha ethnic people. The Church as *sa’ongaza* is the new identity for the Ngadha ethnic people who are Catholics.

*Pala dela* (the ancestor’s massage) in *RA kasa’o* is revealed in all the texts, both *Sa Ngaza* which is reported by *moringalu* (the ritual owner) and *wailaki* (families of relatives) supporting the ritual. *Wi mite mata raga witoro papa bhoko* (maintaining the ancestor’s prestige as *DewaSa’o*) *su’u papa suru, sa’a papa laka*(we have to help one another), *lobo papa tozotara papa dhaga* (growing together in order to achieve what is aimed at) illustrate this. However, in RA WSD, the thematic formula presents the Biblical massage in Ngadha language such as :*dheponono logo* (trailing) the messenger ‘Rasul’, *da dhepopataDewa Ana* (following the massage of Jesus Chrisst). *Patadela* in *RA* is entirely replaced by the Biblical massage in RKA.

The economic capital (money) is needed for performing *RA kasa’o*; the economic capital can be overcome if there are the social capital (the relationship with *wailaki, mosalak*i, the group of traditional leaders) and the cultural capital (the knowledge of the history of *sa’o*and *woe*). *RA kasa’o* is the habitus which has been internalized. It can be strengthened if there are the cultural capital, social capital, and economic capital in the traditional domain or religious domain. It is the balanced relationship between the habitus, capital and domain which can lead to the practice of *kasa’o* (the traditional house bestowal of blessing) with TLS used as the reporting media in order to strengthen identity.

What can be stated from the performances of *kasa’o* and *wo’oSa’oDewa* are as follows. It seems that the position of *patadela* was replaced by the Biblical massage. This justifies the opinion that enculturation frequently becomes a demand and has not expressed a fact yet, meaning that the deeper level has not been reached yet (Quack, Anton 1992, in Kirchberger, 1996: 157). What is global and what is local do not necessarily mean that they contrast with each other; in other words, they keep in contact with one another and lead to a number of possibilities (Putranto, Hendar, in Sutrisno, Mudji and HendarPutranto, 2005:255). It is possible that the traditional community pay less attention to rituals when they are searching out a new identity in *Sa’oDewa* (Church). This condition will make that the Catholic which is adhered to has not become Ngadha Catholic as stated by Boelaars (1955) in his book entitled *IndonesianisasidarigerejaKatolik di Indonesia MenjadiGerejaKatolik Indonesia* (the Indonesianization of the Catholic Churches in Indonesia into the Indonesian Catholic Churches).

The focus of what is reported in the *Sa Ngaza* text is the glorification of *ebunusi*(the ancestor). It is supported by what is believed by the Church that respecting ancestors is not identical with idolatry (Jebatu, 2009). However, this present study also proves what is proposed by Kang-San Tan through Kirchberger (1995) as to the multiple ownership of worshipping ancestors and Almighty God. They need to be selectively observed through the planned inheritance system.

**Conclusion and Suggestion**

First, in the opening formula there is a shift of identity from the mythological character and ancestors in *RA* into Saint, *EmaDewa*(God), and the Church’s hierarchical leadership in RKA. The function and meaning of *kawapere* symbolizing the unity of *anasa’o* (the traditional house owner) and *woe* (clan, sub ethnic) and the unity among people in the Church.

*Sa’o* as *sa’ongaza* is the traditional identity of the Ngadha ethic people and the Church as *sa’ongaza* as the religious identity which all appear later. In the thematic formula *patadela* in RA is entirely replaced by the Biblical message in RKA. The attention paid to the traditional tradition in general and *RA kasa’o* in particular tends to be getting weaker and the attention paid to the ownership of the new identity, that is, religion is getting stronger. *Ana sa’o* (the traditional house owner) and the traditional hierarchy of leadership should have the cultural capital, social capital, economic capital, and symbolic capital to maintain the new identity.

What is practically suggested in the present study is that the *dhorasua* tradition (helping one another with an obligation to do something for those who have done something for us) needs to be maintained as the implementation of the social solidarity in families. It is academically suggested that the oral poems and cultures should be explored from the economic point of view and the values and aesthetics of beauty point of view.

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