



RITUAL COMMUNICATION IN THE TRADITION OF NGASUH GUMI EFFORTS TO REJECT BALA AMONG THE PEOPLE OF TANJUNG DISTRICT, NORTH LOMBOK REGENCY

Abstract

This research examines the practice of ritual communication in the ngasuh gumi tradition and the meaning of the ngasuh gumi tradition in the Tanjung District community. This study aims to determine the stages of the ritual communication process in the ngasuh gumi tradition, as well as the meaning of the ngasuh gumi ritual for the people of Tanjung District. In other words, the research is aimed at describing the process of implementing the ngasuh gumi ritual through the lens of ritual/transcendental communication theory. This research includes qualitative research with an ethnographic approach to communication. The data collection technique is carried out with interviews and field observations. The results showed that ritual communication practices in the ngasuh gumi tradition include communication that means gathering, friendship, and ownership of common beliefs; the process that occurs in ritual communication is not centered on the transmission of information, but rather prioritizes sharing about common culture; communication is a sacred and sacred activity; the use of language in ritual communication is carried out artificially and symbolically; and it requires communicants to take part jointly.

Keywords: Ritual Communication, Ethnography of Communication, Ngasuh Gumi, Tanjung Society

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A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia consists of a wide variety of ethnicities, which makes it rich in cultural diversity. This cultural diversity becomes local wisdom for the community groups that adhere to it. The word "ritual" can be interpreted as a

series of physical activities to acquire a specific purpose or objective. Rituals can consist of physical activity or symbolic behavior, but they can also be accompanied by certain utterances or mantras. According to Winnick¹ is: "a set or series of acts, usually involving religion or magic, with the sequence determined by tradition; they frequently arise from daily life." A ritual is a set of actions that always involve religious or magical elements and are established through tradition. Ritual is not exactly the same as worship because ritual is an act of a daily nature. While Thohir (1999)² defines ritual as a form of creating or organizing relationships between man and the supernatural, man's relationship with others, and man's relationship with his environment. In this sense, "ritual" means a process of communication that seeks to convey certain messages where the message is packaged in the form of symbols accompanied by the cultural values of the community related to.

Ritual processions are closely related to symbolic communication because, in them, many use certain denominations as a form of representing the intention to be achieved. The development certainly has an intention that wants to be conveyed to other people or the surrounding environment. Symbolic activities in a ritual are not infrequently mystical or occult, intended also to convey intentions, expectations, supplications, or do'a. This can be directed at a certain object (the concept of animism) or to the Almighty Dzat, i.e., Allah Swt. In the context of communication, expression, or form of action, communication closely correlates with ritual or ritual communication that is usually carried out collectively in a particular community of society. A community often performs different rituals throughout the year and throughout life that anthropologists refer to as "rites of passage,"³ whether related to joy or prevention (repulsion) due to the disturbance or condemnation of nature

¹ Winnick, dalam Ismail Arifuddin, *Agama Nelayan*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2012), hal. 16.

² Thohir (1999), dalam Ismail Arifuddin, *Agama Nelayan, ...*, hal. 16.

³ Deddy Mulyana. *Ilmu Komunikasi Suatu Pengantar*, (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2001), hal 27.

(natural in nature) or because of deliberate deeds made by man himself (*artificial*).

There are several forms of rituals (ceremonies) found in the life cycle of the people of North Lombok, such as the *selamet asuh* ritual, the *selamet segara* ritual, the mountain *ngasuh* ritual, the ton down alms ritual (*tek daya* and *tek laside* dishes), the *gawe urip* ritual, the *gawe pati* ritual, the *bisoq menik* ritual, the *pegawe gumi* ritual, and so on. Other types of rituals that are often found in the community (*adat*) in North Lombok, such as the *safar bath* ritual, the *nyunatang* ritual, the *puja taon* and *puja balit* rituals, the *ngaponin* (heirloom consecration ritual), and the *muja wali* ritual, are also types of ritual communication. In the course of these events, people speak words or display symbolic behaviors. People who participate in such forms of ritual communication reaffirm their commitment to their family traditions, communities, tribes, nations, countries, ideologies, or religions.⁴ Rituals do seem mystical at times and may be difficult for people outside of certain communities or groups of people to understand. This is reasonable considering that it interprets a ritual based on the socio-cultural system of the person or human community that carries out the ritual. Rituals are carried out based on the understanding of the people who are within the community and on the basis of certain interests. Ritual activities allow their participants to share emotional commitments.

Ceremonies or rituals that are often performed by a community are included in the belief system adopted by that community. Each procession of the ceremony has its own meaning that is sometimes unacceptable to the common sense of people who come from outside the community. because rituals are always synonymous with customs or routines. Couldry (2005)⁵

⁴ *Ibid*, hal. 27.

⁵ Couldry (2005), dalam Sri Handayani, *Agriculture and Ritual: Pola Komunikasi Ritual Slametan Musim Tanam Padi di Ngemplak, Sambikerep, Surabaya, Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi (J-IKA)* Vol. V No. 1 April 2018, hal. 43.

Consider ritual to be a habitual action, a formal action, and one containing transcendental values. This defines ritual as an organized and patterned behavior that is passed down from generation to generation. Looking at the views that have emerged in society, it is understood that rituals related to voluntary performances that society performs for generations (based on habits) concern patterned behavior. The show aims to symbolize an influence on social life. As Andung views (2010)⁶ that ritual activities are one of the cultural traditions that have taken root in the activities of an indigenous group. Ritual activities contain elements of custom that sometimes do not make sense.

While ngasuh bumi itself comes from the basic word "ngasuh," which means to love. The ritual practice is a form of affection for the natural environment and all its contents (visible or invisible to the naked eye). For the indigenous people of Sokong, Tanjung District in particular, and North Lombok in general, the natural environment and forests are a source of livelihood needed by humans and other living things, so they need to be preserved. Preserving nature is not only done by going down to plant trees but also through sacred rites such as raising the earth so that people have an awareness of protecting nature and its ecology. Nature's sustainability (ecology) itself has a great influence on the lives of people in North Lombok and Lombok Island in a broad sense, because many store the source of livelihood needed by the community. That is the reason why our ancestors have always looked at and treated nature like humans, could dialogue, and talked.

Indigenous peoples are one of the components of development that have a deep understanding of the physical and social environment as a place to live today. That's why indigenous peoples are an important part of and partner with the government in an effort to advance the region by sticking to cultural

⁶ Andung (2010), dalam K.S. Maifianti, dkk, Komunikasi Ritual Kanuri Blang sebagai Bentuk Kebersamaan Masyarakat Tani Kecamatan Samatiga Kabupaten Aceh Barat Provinsi Aceh, *Jurnal Komunikasi Pembangunan*, Juli 2014, Vol.12, No. 2, hal. 1.

customs and local wisdom. These ritual activities are good to be continued as reminders and lessons for the younger generation regarding the importance of man's reciprocal relationship with the universe as an embodiment of sustainable development that is environmentally sound.

Similarly, the people of Tanjung District, North Lombok Regency, who gather in indigenous communities, have a special tradition of caring for harmonization with the universe and its contents by preserving nature. The ancestral heritage ritual that lasts for generations is known as the Ngasuh Gumi tradition. This tradition is carried out by indigenous peoples in several regions in North Lombok, one of which is Sokong Village in Tanjung District. This ritual is one of the sacred rites of the community, characterized by the slaughter of buffaloes or cows as sacrificial animals. Once cut, the meat is then cooked and eaten together.

Rituals that are carried out look at the situation of society due to natural disasters or human actions (artificially) that damage people's lives. By carrying out this ritual, the indigenous people of Sokong Tanjung District seek to harmonize relations with God, the natural environment, fellow humans, and creatures whose level is below that of humans. The ngasuh gumi ritual is a type of rite that requires effective communication in its implementation so as to create a common understanding of the essence of the ritual both in terms of morals and events. In the course of events, the residents performed a joint prayer led by the kiyai and the traditional elders in the traditional bale. They offered praises and prayers to Allah Almighty, the Creator of the universe. Furthermore, residents led by traditional elders walked to the place of the culmination of the ngasuh gumi ritual as a form of concern for nature.

Based on the main thoughts above, the problem studied in this article is how the communication practices and ritual stages of the ngasuh gumi tradition and the meaning of the ngasuh gumi (preserving the earth) tradition are practiced in the Tanjung District Community. Meanwhile, the purpose of

this study is to determine the practice of communication and the stages of the ritual process in the tradition of ngasuh gumi, as well as the meaning of the ngasuh gumi ritual to the people of Tanjung District.

B. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with an ethnographic design of communication. Denzin and Lincoln (in Neuman, 2013)⁷ A qualitative approach to explaining aims to explore and understand cultural significance and focuses on interactive processes and events. This is in line with the purpose of the research to be carried out, namely to find out the stages of the ritual process in the tradition of ngasuh gumi, as well as the function and meaning of the ngasuh gumi ritual to the people of Tanjung District, North Lombok Regency. While ethnographic studies of communication are used in order to investigate and observe a cultural group, in this case, the Indigenous People of Sokong Tanjung District, As Neuman (2013) stated, ethnography is a type of field research that focuses on providing a thick description of a particular culture from an insider's point of view to facilitate understanding of the problem under study. While the subject of this study was the indigenous community of Sokong Village Community, Tanjung District, North Lombok Regency,

As for data collection techniques with interviews and field observations, To help researchers understand the meaning and function of this ngasuh gumi ritual, researchers use an insider's perspective (a practitioner of the ngasuh gumi ritual). To fully understand the ngasuh gumi rituals, interviews were conducted with a number of indigenous people who had been enculturated with the local culture. In addition, informants in this ethnographic study of communication were selected based on several considerations, including whether they were natives and/or those who have been enculturated, able to explain matters related to the research topic, and willing to take the time to

⁷ Denzin dan Lincoln (dalam Neuman, 2013), dalam Sri Handayani, *Agriculture and Ritual*, hal. 43.

assist researchers in reading the ritual behavior investigated. Observations are made in order to obtain a complete picture of ritual events (ngasuh gumi).

C. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Looking Back at the History of the Ngasuh Gumi Tradition

Based on historical glimpses, the time setting when the tradition of ngasuh gumi infiltrated North Lombok society in general is inseparable from the dynamics of people's past lives in the era of "unity" decades ago. However, it is not yet known exactly in what year the tradition of ngasuh gumi was first sparked or initiated. The reason is that long before the era of two units, namely Bayan unity and Sokong unity, even before Gajah Mada came to Lombok Island, kedaduan already existed, because when Gajah Mada came, the first areas he visited were Bayan, Sokong, and surrounding areas. If referring to the historical perspective, the ngasuh gumi ritual began to be held around the 16th century, at which time the name "Bayan" was coined. However, before the name Bayan appeared, it was first known as "Negara Suwung" until the guardians of Islamic propagators visited Lombok in the 16th century, which gave rise to the name "Bayan." The procession of the ngasuh gumi tradition began around this time. The context is the ngasuh gumi ritual in Sokong (the peak on Mount Malang Pusuk), and on November 1, 2021, the Sokong traditional stakeholders notified the traditional stakeholders in Bayan. The statement was then responded to positively. As stated by Raden Sutagede, one of the traditional leaders of the Tanjung District community,

"We tell the family in Bayan about the existence of this "ngasuh gumi" celebration. Alhamdulillah, it was responded by the family in Bayan. They also did not accept that the implementation of widening the road did not confirm the existence of such an activity because their ancestors also participated first in the process of opening the first time (Romusha era used to be), their ancestors were one of them also who was there (Pusuk) helped open the way, we also had an event, until we made a ritual of ngasuh gumi."

It used to have many fiefdoms during the colonial period, such as Sembalun in the east and Mambalan in the west. The historical facts of Sokong Kembang Dangar reflect the vastness of oneness. Sokong is divided into two (wet) regions: wet from the Sokong River to Selelos, known as Sokong Belimbing. Then, to the west, from the Sokong River to Mambalan, there is a region known as Sokong Kembang Dangar. Basically, Sokong used to be one; the center was in Bebekeq (present-day Selelos), the forerunner of the Sokong Kingdom. But exactly when they split themselves into two is still unknown. The reason for the division is to facilitate the division of territory or regional management.⁸

The ritual of the ngasuh gumi tradition is carried out with consideration for the order of people's lives, which recently felt less conducive due to the emergence of disasters, so it is necessary to re-establish relations with nature. On the one hand, when viewed over the past few decades, the tradition of ngasuh gumi has indeed been forgotten by the local community due to the progress of the times. Considering that there are a number of natural disasters or man-made disasters, especially after the natural turmoil of the 2018 earthquake and the COVID-19 disaster, which began to spread at the beginning of 2020, On the other hand, the ngasuh gumi ritual is again celebrated to respond to the turmoil of nature in Pusuk due to the acidity of road widening. The impact occurred with the clearing of trees along the Pusuk Forest and the opening of hills around the road area. The road widening process initially had no confirmation from indigenous actors in indigenous communities in North Lombok. The traditional "mongers" realized that North Lombok still refers to matters related to the tradition of "civility" as a tool of local wisdom. So, for the time being, the local traditional leaders established communication with the implementers and the NTB Provincial government in

⁸ Interview with Raden Prawangsa Jaya Ningrat, one of the Mangku of the Sokong indigenous people, at his home on November 29, 2021.

order to halt development activities until the holding of customary rites. as stated by Raden Prawangsa Jaya Ningrat:⁹

"We tried to communicate with the NTB Provincial Government before the road widening was continued so that it was temporarily stopped. We convey that in North Lombok there is a ritual procession like this (ngasuh gumi). This is important, at least asking for permission in advance (excuse us to the things that are there)".

Based on tracing during field observations, the traditional rite of ngasuh gumi as the last series of activities of the Great Work of Dayan Gunung is marked by the ritual of burying the "Head of the Buffalo" on Mount Malang Pusuk. This traditional ritual is held in connection with the road widening project, which has resulted in some trees falling around the road area. This ritual is actually carried out to prevent disasters (reject bala) on the road along the territory of Pusuk. This traditional ritual as a form of community concern in order to maintain nature and its surroundings is relevant to the meaning of the North Lombok symbol "Tioq Tata Tunaq"—growing, managing, maintaining, or cherishing. This indicates that the earth and its people are a shared responsibility to benefit road users and the wider community in general in the future. as Mangku Bajang Raden Prawangsa Jaya Ningrat argues:¹⁰

"In the future, the widening of the road is expected to have a good impact on all road users. We indigenous peoples support this development. Customs also need to be enforced. Because the indigenous people of Dayan Gunung still keep this Ngasuh Gumi traditional procession. That's why this traditional ritual needs to be held, and in the future it will be inherited to posterity. Our way to defend customs for the preservation of nature and ecology."

In that regard, the timing of the implementation of the ngasuh gumi ritual is not scheduled for sure and depends on the catastrophic events that hit the community. The timing of the gumi ritual still refers to disaster events, and there has been no change from the previous ancestors to the present.

⁹Interview with Raden Prawangsa Jaya Ningrat, one of the Mangku of the Sokong indigenous people, at his home on November 29, 2021.

¹⁰Interview with Mangku Bajang Raden Prawangsa Jaya Ningrat, one of the Mangku of the Sokong indigenous people, at his home on November 29, 2021.

Indigenous peoples continue to uphold the principle of "depending on disasters." In contrast to "time," the "place" of the implementation of the ngasuh gumi ritual is "dynamic," in the sense that it depends on where the disaster predicament occurs.

Then, the initial process of the gumi ritual begins with "proud," which is a kind of notification of road opening activities. Then all representatives of figures ranging from Bayan, Ganga, Tanjung, Kayangan, and the Winners carried out "Gundem Adat," which is a deliberation of consensus discussing the preparation and technicalities of the implementation of the ngasuh gumi ritual in Karang Anyar, Medana Village. Gundem Adat discusses the implementation of rituals, such as the technical implementation and various tools that need to be prepared, for example, the "seserahan" (which is handed over) at the peak of the ritual on Mount Malang. Seserahan became an important part of the gumi washing ritual because, due to tree felling activities and so on, the Pusuk area required some distribution as a substitute for the ecological arrangement that was cleared. In addition, the ceremony was an expression of gratitude for the sustenance that had been given by God.

Then it relates to the timing of the implementation of the ritual in sounding to the NTB Provincial PU Office as the leading implementing sector. Gundem Adat is held up to 3 (three) times due to several obstacles that must be cleared with the implementer. Traditional gundem participants are figures from Bayan, Kayangan, Ganga, Tanjung, Winner to Mambalan. They consist of traditional figures, pembekel, mangku, toaq lokaq, lebe and penghulu. Confirmation is an important part of being done to appreciate the customs that are still thick in North Lombok. In addition, to give the impression that the widening of the road is not effective in changing the order of life. So, the ritual of ngasuh gumi is determined by agreement in the customary gundem (deliberation of consensus).

Initially, the ngasuh gumi ritual was planned to be carried out in the Winner District (Menggala) with the consideration of being closest to the location of the ritual peak, namely Mount Malang. In addition, Menggala still holds two Bale Beleq, relics of the past including the relics of Gajah Mada. However, due to a number of obstacles, it was finally agreed to be carried out in Sokong, Tanjung District. The decision was one of the results of a gundem with a number of considerations such as easier communication and other considerations. As revealed by Putrawadi:¹¹

"Our hope is that initially this "ngasuh gumi" can be carried out by families in Menggala, just for the reason that there are no friends working until it is handed over the technical implementation in Sokong, because it is easier to communicate and so on until one of the decisions related to gundem is the location of the implementation until it is decided to be centered in Sokong."

2. Traditional Ritual Communication Practices Ngasuh Gumi

When interpreting the communication of traditions that are constructed through the tradition of ngasuh gumi, there are several practices of ritual communication in the celebration of the tradition of ngasuh bumi. To begin, communication is defined as activities such as sharing, partial, gathering, and friendly interactions. This means that ritual communication is better understood as the act of sharing, participating, gathering, friendship, and belonging to a group of people who share common beliefs.¹² The existence of ngasuh gumi is seated as one of the ritual ceremonies performed to gather among fellow citizens in the Sokong indigenous community in the practice of ritual communication. Indigenous people will try their best to attend and celebrate the tradition of ngasuh gumi peacefully and in harmony.

The Ngasuh Gumi tradition has truly become a cultural tradition that has taken root in the social life of the local community. This can be seen from the

¹¹ Interview with Putrawadi (Traditional Leader of Bentek Village) at His Home on December 2, 2021.

¹² James W Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*, (Routledge, Newyork, 1992), hal. 18.

fact that almost every natural turmoil, both natural and due to artificial actions, that occurs in the lives of residents will be carried out by gumi. Communication (delivery of ngasuh gumi), communion (celebration), and commonality (together), as Radford mentioned, are elements that cannot be separated in the ngasuh gumi tradition. The three elements of ritual communication are a requirement of the Gumi Ngasuh tradition. As a culture that has been embraced for generations, ngasuh gumi also has the ability to bind and strengthen kinship between residents. Therefore, when there are problems in common life, such as natural disasters or non-natural disasters, the tradition of ngasuh gumi is held as a means to make peace with nature so that daily life can get along well and harmoniously. They always believe that by carrying out the tradition of ngasuh gumi, the prahara of life can be conducive, no matter how complicated the steepness of social life is. The problem of living by itself is considered complete when the ritual of ngasuh gumi has been carried out. It is on the basis of this belief that local residents really live the tradition of ngasuh gumi, one of the many cultural rituals whose power is very powerful in various aspects of community life.

Then this habit of ngasuh gumi has been practiced for generations, although it was not held for several years. As Rapidan stated below:¹³

"The tradition of ngasuh gumi ene elek laek gati. Our ancestors lek laek wah ngawek jaok sedepokman kami arak kon over the world ene hereditary (ngasuh gumi we have been running since time immemorial. Our ancestors had done something like this long before we existed in this world for generations)."

This tradition of ngasuh gumi is indeed very closely correlated with the beliefs of the local community which is majority Islamic, in addition to being the embodiment of God's servants on earth. It is clearly described in the sasak language which is full of philosophical and is rooted in the teachings of the Islamic religion and the cultural traditions of the local people. Acculturation

¹³Interview with Rapidan, one of the Mangku people of Bentek Village, at his home on November 30, 2021.

between religion and culture further adds to the life force of this tradition in the community of its owner. In fact, the tradition of ngasuh gumi is still deeply rooted in the minds of local individuals. This means that it is indeed a collective obligation to always practice the law of love, which is to love nature, God and fellow human beings in carrying out daily life.

Second, Rothenbuhler and Coman,¹⁴ With reference to the views of James W. Carey, emphasizing one of the forms and models of social communication, the processes occurring in ritual communication are not centered on the transmission of information. On the contrary, it prioritizes communication about shared culture. This means that although there is a process of transmitting messages, it is not the main pressure in the process of ritual communication. Therefore, in the ritual of raising the earth, the message that is conveyed is inherent in the entire ritual process. The message conveyed is not clear given how deep the whole series of rituals is, but it requires the recitation of the do'a at the end of the ritual as an expression of gratitude to the owner of the universe for the implementation of the ngasuh gumi ritual. The presence of the ngasuh gumi tradition in its implementation tends to emphasize aspects of the ngasuh gumi process of sacredness as the actualization and confirmation of one's Islamic faith.

Finally, communication is regarded as a sacred and sacred activity. The reason is that the communication model in a ritual is like a sacred ceremony, where everyone involved in it participates in a collective part of communion. In addition to the apparent togetherness of fellow citizens, there is also the specificity of praying, along with its ceremonial meaning. The tradition of ngasuh gumi for the Sokong indigenous people is truly sacred, considering the belief in something sacred and the fact that it contains sacred auspicious

¹⁴ Rothenbuhler, Eric W, dan Mihai Coman, *The Promise of Media Anthropology*, dalam *Media Anthropology*, Editor: Eric W. Rothenbuhler dan Mihai Coman, (SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, 2005), hal. 4.

values. The Sokong community does give a very high value to the tradition of ngasuh gumi. As illustrated by the following story:¹⁵

" The Ngasuh Gumi tradition is a very sacred and sacred traditional event so that every Sokong and Tanjung people in general must be present at its implementation. If we don't follow it, we can say that we don't understand customs or don't understand the culture as a whole."

The Sokong indigenous people assumed the ngasuh gumi ritual as a joint do'a climb. In their view, the prayers were raised as a plea to God. In its function as a prayer, the power of ngasuh gumi is very sacred in the life of the Sokong community. They believe that Mangku's narrative in a certain context has enough power to solve the life problems at hand. Also, catastrophe will be a threat if harmonization with nature is not carried out through the ngasuh gumi rite, so that the ngasuh gumi ritual by local residents is considered sacred. Fourth, the use of language According to Carey, the use of language in ritual communication is done artificially and symbolically. In the tradition of ngasuh gumi, the speaker does not convey the core of the message explicitly. But he will translate the gist of his message using a barrage of traditional figurative language to convey it throughout the event. This means that a complete and thorough understanding is needed when interpreting the language conveyed. Fifth, communicant engagement From a ritual perspective, communication is like a sacred ceremony and requires communicants to take part together. Communicant involvement is like playing in a sacred play. The involvement of citizens (communicants) in the performance of the ngasuh gumi tradition is not only as spectators or observers but also as direct participants in the ngasuh gumi ritual event. This is related to the local community's understanding of ngasuh gumi as a common do'a climb. The presence of people other than Sokong indigenous people at the ngasuh gumi event is analogous to devotees taking part in a do'a

¹⁵ Interview with Mirep, a Selelos Traditional Figure, at his home on December 2, 2021 .

together. This means that they are present and allied to perform do'a in collectivity.

2. Stages of the Ngasuh Gumi Ritual

The stages of the ritual are intended to describe the practice of ritual communication. As understood in the school of ritualism, the practice of communication is constructed as a sacred ceremony school of ritualism, the practice of communication is constructed as a sacred ceremony. The series of ngasuh gumi rituals carried out by the indigenous people of Sokong Village, Tanjung District, consist of several tools or materials needed.

Information obtained from informants said that there are five stages to the series of rituals of raising the earth, namely "confirmation to Bale Beleq," "boasting," "notification to Bale Beleq," "yellowing maturation," and "planting of buffalo heads." The burial of the buffalo head is the core of the culmination of the gumi ngasuh ritual, which is carried out after the traditional elders consider nature to be friendly to life or not, and is carried out by the mangku, or traditional elders. Although this ritual does not always exist every year because it depends on the living conditions of residents who are felt to be less harmonious with the natural environment, or ecology, In the ritual tradition of ngasuh gumi on November 1, 2021, several stages have been carried out. First, it begins with a notification (confirmation) from Bale Beleq (the mansion) regarding the celebration of the gumi ngasuh ritual. Second, "proud," which is a notification of the location of the ritual peak, namely Mount Malang Pusuk. Third, before the culminating event, the ritual was restarted, and a notice was given to Bale Beleq with the aim of opening the event by confirming that the ritual was indeed ready to begin. All pre-summit processions are centered at Bale Beleq. Fourth, "maturity yellowing," which is followed by "boasting" for the second time.

The procession before the peak of the Ngasuh Gumi ritual takes two days with activities to make snacks and various other foods. At every time the

ngasuh gumi ritual is carried out, usually the indigenous people will donate rice, coconuts, firewood, and other materials for the event's needs. All kinds of indigenous kenaaan and even the amount of money needed to buy buffalo as the main condition for holding the gumi ngasuh ritual are discussed and agreed upon in the customary gudem. The next step was to mesilaq (invite) Mangku in Todo Bentek Village, Ganges District, to inform him of the culmination of the ngasuh gumi ritual in Pusuk Pas. As told by Mangku Bajang, Sokong Indigenous People:¹⁶

"First I went to Selelos looking for Amaq Mangku, only at that time he was unable to do so, until I was asked for confirmation to my parents in Anjah. After arriving in Anjah we told about the conditions at the time, asking who could replace Amaq Mangku Selelos. Our parents in Anjah finally told us to come to Mangku in Todo. Alhamdulillah we were able to meet him at his house."

The night before the D-day ritual (October 31), Mangku prepares three ritual tools, namely palu, banana, and lekok buak (betel leaf and betel nut). The three devices have their own functions. Hammer to mark the spot where the buffalo head will be planted. Bananas and buak lekok are the offerings where the buffalo head is planted. The three types of devices accompany the ritual procession of ngasuh gumi on Mount Malang. Fifth, the last stage is on the second day, which is the day of the culminating event of the ngasuh gumi ritual. Before going to Pusuk Pas, buffalo are slaughtered first. After the buffalo is slaughtered and cut into pieces, the meat is cooked, and the head is to be served at the ritual event of ngasuh gumi.

The indigenous people then accompany respected amaq lokak or traditional elders, pembekel, and pande (wali gumi or traditional elders) to Mount Malang Pusuk Pas to witness and follow the procession of ngasuh gumi ritual. After arriving at Mount Malang, Mangku searched for and determined the location where the right place to bury the buffalo's head was. After the location is found, it is continued with maturang (offering) offerings. Following

¹⁶ Wawancara dengan Mangku Bajang Raden Prawangsa Jaya Ningrat di rumahnya pada 29 November 2021.

that is the peak of the ritual, which is marked by planting or burying the "buffalo head" with all of its accompanying devices such as lekok, buak, and others. The planting of buffalo heads was carried out by Mangku Bajang Raden Prawangsa Jaya Ningrat with Datu Artadi (a North Lombok traditional figure). So, the peak of the gumi ritual is marked by burying the head of a buffalo on Mount Malang Pusuk Pas. All the processes and stages of the tradition of ngasuh gumi as a segment of traditional rituals are very thick with Islamic sharia. It always starts with climbing do'a, followed by the procession of slaughtering sacrificial animals (buffalo or cow). All stages are in accordance with the teachings of Islam. In fact, before the buffalo is slaughtered and glorified with do'a-do'a, as begins with the reading of the basmalah, the knife or dagger used is sharp and always clean. This ritual is a tangible manifestation of the fusion of local traditions with Islamic teachings.

D. THE MEANING OF NGASUH GUMI TRADITION RITUALS IN THE TANJUNG DISTRICT COMMUNITY

Philosophically, the ritual of ngasuh gumi is a form of relation between man and the universe—the relationship of unity—because man and nature are in principle one. This means that man can never survive in his existence without nature, and vice versa, nature would never exist without man. The reason is that only in front of humans can nature be located. Man is truly one with nature. This means that man is essentially one with all creation. But that unity will only be implemented in harmonious and symbolic ways. It necessitates human awareness that the state of the ecological soul is inextricably linked to the state of the spiritualist human soul as well as nature, which is also spiritualist in nature. ¹⁷

The people of Tanjung Lombok Utara District, which still have strong nuances of customs, live like their ancestors did in the past, who treated the

¹⁷ Yustinus Suhardi Ruman, <https://binus.ac.id/character-building/2019/06/alam-sebagai-entitas-spiritual>, diunduh pada 1 Desember 2021.

universe as part of the divine dimension. This passion then influenced their view of the existence of ecology in all of life. This means that when humans regard nature as sacred, it is man's responsibility to care for, guard, and protect it so that it is not easily damaged or even destroyed. Placing nature as a natural element that has an urgent meaning for people's lives. This means that whatever happens with nature and ecology depends on the actions of the humans inhabiting them. If man treats nature as something sacred, then it becomes something sacred and holy, entrusting man with a comprehensive understanding of ecology. This is in line with Putrawadi's thinking:¹⁸

"In order for us to understand the glory of all of God's creations, we must look in a respectful way, so that we understand the ins and outs of our relationship with ecology. The way it treats ecological habitats tolerantly. Likewise, if we want to understand the beauty of nature, we can do it by bowing our bodies respectfully."

The quote above means that when the situation in nature is felt to be less friendly to humans, it takes a refresher course in understanding to re-establish unity between man and nature. Among the paths that can be taken to strive for this unity is the application of "local wisdom" by means of implementing it through the paradigm of scientific development based on ecological knowledge.

The ritual practitioners interpret the tradition of ngasuh gumi as something important, so they still maintain the ritual. Even when there is one thing that forgets to be presented in the ritual of ngasuh gumi, it will bring up the presence of "something awkward" in the participants. They regard gumi as a duty to fulfill. This means that if it is not held, it will have implications for the turmoil of the "soul." The ritual of ngasuh gumi is important to do because of the value, meaning, and function contained in it. They interpret the ritual of ngasuh gumi as an expression of hope and gratitude for the gift given by Allah SWT.

¹⁸Interview with Putrawadi (Traditional Leader of Bentek Village) at His Home on December 2, 2021.

The whole series of gumi rituals has a meaning as a symbol of the "tri-relation of life" of human beings. In this case, the meaning of "ngasuh gumi" is an event of the dynamics of daily life, guarding and caring for ecological sustainability as well as an antidote to dangers that threaten human life. You have the meaning of caring for harmony and rejecting disasters as a guard. So, in the life of the Sasak people in general, ngasuh gumi has a philosophical meaning because it reflects man's relationship with God, others, and the environment. This relationship is in the form of an ethical relationship that has the nature of "should." The symbolic meaning of Ngasuh Gumi as a result of human creation, which has a function as one of the ritual media, is loaded with symbols of human life. That way, it can be concluded that a symbol is a sign that expresses something for humans to know and interpret, usually based on beliefs, habits, or customs.

E. MEANING OF RITUAL SYMBOLS

Among the basic needs of a man in his life is the need for symbolization or the use of symbols. Because humans are indeed the only animals that use symbols, and that is also what distinguishes humans from other creatures, Ernst Cassirer says that the superiority of human beings over other beings is their specialty as *animal symbolicum*.¹⁹ The symbol carries a statement and is given meaning by the recipient. Therefore, giving meaning to the symbols used in communicating is not an easy thing to do. The ngasuh gumi ritual on Mount Malang uses many symbols, both verbal and nonverbal.

G. Communication Symbol Selection The use of unique or distinctive communication symbols is a prominent feature in ritual communication. The communication symbols used were not selected but have been available for generations based on the cultural traditions in question.²⁰ There are several communication symbols used in the ngasuh gumi ritual, including hammers,

¹⁹ Ernst Cassirer dalam Deddy Mulyana, Ilmu Komunikasi Suatu Pengantar, (Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya, 2012), hal. 92.

²⁰ James W Carey, Communication as Culture...., hal. 54.

bananas, betel-betel nut leaves, betel-betel nut (pebuan) holders, and buffalo heads. Mangku and Pelingsir equipment, such as headbands (broomsticks), dodot sarongs, and traditional clothes. These symbols are always used in the implementation of ngasuh gumi. Each of these communication symbols contains its own meaning for the indigenous people of Sokong and North Lombok in general.

Each symbol in the ritual presentation of the gumi is not understood as a representation rather than its physical object but is culturally constructed to represent the object. In general, ritual participants do not understand exactly the meaning of a dish, but they have the same feelings for what they do. This is the so-called meaningfulness of collectivity. The ritual of ngasuh gumi becomes very meaningful because it is related to social memory in the sense of shared remembrance, in which people collectively construct their identity.

F. CONCLUSION

Departing from the discussion above, it can be concluded that the practice of ritual communication in the tradition of ngasuh gumi in the Sokong community of Tanjung District, North Lombok Regency, includes, first, communication meaning sharing, participating, gathering, friendship, and ownership of the same beliefs. The practice of ritual communication in the tradition of ngasuh gumi has truly become a cultural custom that has taken root in the social life of the local people. Second, the process that occurs in ritual communication is not centered on the transmission of information but rather prioritizes sharing about common culture. This means that although there is a process of transmitting messages, it is not the main pressure in the process of ritual communication. Therefore, in the ritual of raising the earth, the message that is conveyed is inherent in the entire ritual process. Third, communication as a sacred and sacred activity, because the design of communication in a ritual is similar to a sacred ceremony in which everyone involved contributes to collectivities' communion. In addition to the apparent

togetherness of fellow citizens, there is also the specificity of praying, along with its ceremonial meaning. Fourth, the use of language in ritual communication is carried out artificially and symbolically. In the tradition of ngasuh gumi, the speaker does not convey the core of the message explicitly, but it is translated using a barrage of traditional figurative language to be conveyed in the entire ngasuh gumi ritual. Fifth, the involvement of communicants from a ritual perspective: communication is like a sacred ceremony and requires communicants to take part together. The ngasuh gumi tradition has several stages, including confirmation to bale beleq, membangun, notification, ke bale beleq, maturing yellowing, and planting buffalo heads as the core of the gumi ngasuh ritual.

The meaning of the ngasuh gumi tradition in the Sokong Community of Tanjung District, namely the ngasuh gumi ritual, is a form of relationship between humans and the universe because humans and nature are in principle one. Man can never survive in his existence without nature, and vice versa, nature would never exist without man. This means that the entire series of gumi rituals has the meaning of the symbol of the "tri-relation of life" of human beings as a dynamic event of life in order to maintain ecological sustainability as well as an antidote to dangers that can threaten human life. In a nutshell, seeking harmony and rejecting the hosts of disasters (distress).

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LAINNYA

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- Wawancara dengan Raden Prawangsa Jaya Ningrat, Mangku Masyarakat Adat Sokong, di rumahnya pada 29 November 2021.
- Wawancara dengan Rapidan, salah satu Mangku masyarakat Desa Bentek, di rumahnya pada 30 November 2021.
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