

Songka Bala: Reflection of the tenth Muharram Tradition for the Tenro Community

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Abstract—This article discusses the results of research on a ritual performed routinely by one of the community groups in South Sulawesi i.e the Tenro community in the Selayar Islands Regency. The ceremony or ritual ceremony is held in every tenth of Muharram month commonly called *Asyura*. For the Tenro community, this ritual is called by the ritual name *songka bala* or in the Indonesian language is called *tolak bala*. The ritual is a manifestation of society to reconcile with nature that is believed to have magic power. With these rituals, the people of Tenro hope to be spared from various problems, disasters, angry danger, disease outbreaks and all forms of evil. This research aims to reveal the value of local wisdom contained in *songka bala* ritual. The method used for primary data collection is field research using several techniques. Observation, recording, interview, and transcription techniques are the main techniques used in primary data collection. The result of this research shows that the ritual procession of *songka bala* involves all layers of Tenro community. The offerings which are prepared very simply consists of *onde-onde*, *kalasa*, and drinking water. The ritual is led directly by a custom leader, accompanied by three members. The core of this ritual is the request of prayer to the Almighty that the citizens of Tenro as a whole are always in His protection. There is no place to plead and ask except to the Almighty. In addition, the value of simplicity, togetherness, obedience, respect for the Patriarch, and Sincerest Attitude to the Almighty is an important point in the *songka bala* ritual. All of which can be integrated to become local wisdom. Local wisdom not only owned by the Tenro community, but will belong to this nation.

Keywords: ritual, *songkabala*, local wisdom

I. INTRODUCTION

As it is known that humans in life and life are often faced with various problems, both individually and in groups or communities. In solving the problem, the various ways it does, including their belief in the supernatural powers that surround it. One of them is at peace with nature through a series of rituals or ceremonies. For those rituals or ceremonies that are performed aim to achieve a peaceful, safe, peaceful and prosperous life (Hasbullah et al, 2017).

Before Islam had become a role model for the Indonesian community already had beliefs or religions inherited by their ancestors. Trust or religion is held tightly by them as the inheritors of ancestors. Beliefs or religions that they profess differ in every region or ethnic. That also happens to the community of South Sulawesi. South Sulawesi is known to embrace Islam in the 17th century around 1605 AD (Sewang, 2003). Before the period, the community was known to embrace the beliefs or religions of their ancestors.

Trust or religion passed down from hereditary is of course inherent in various aspects of life. Even when Islam has become their religion, that belief or religion is totally rotted can be eliminated. So it is not surprising that some groups of people who unconsciously adapt between them, namely religion and tradition.

One of the rituals that is related to religion and still implemented by most of society in South Sulawesi is tenth of *Muharram* tradition. The society of South Sulawesi, especially Bugis and Makassar people celebrate the 10th anniversary of *Muharram* in various ways. In general, in South Sulawesi, especially in one of the sub-villages of Tenro, Bontolempangan village, Buki Sub-district, Selayar Islands Regency, there is still a tradition associated with religion that is *Muharram* tradition more precisely the tenth of *Muharram* tradition. The society of South Sulawesi in welcoming tenth of *Muharram* or known as

Ashura will find various rituals. In general, the people of the Bugis and Makassar make porridge which consists of a minimum of seven kinds. In addition, there is also a tradition of shopping, household appliances and jewelry in the tenth of *Muharram*. So sometimes in welcoming the tenth of *Muharram* impressed wastage. However, the behavior of rituals or traditions that they do is basically a manifestation, of their prayers for the future given more luck.

The Tenro community in the Selayar Islands as part of the Makassar community have different traditions as mentioned above. In welcoming the tenth of *Muharram* they have their own rituals which they call *songka bala*. This ritual is far from luxurious because it is not accompanied by shopping but is impressed very simply, but unpretentious. This ritual is done very simple but rich with nuance of value. The Tenro sub-village is located in one of the regencies in South Sulawesi, namely Selayar Islands Regency. The Tenro sub-village is within the Buki Sub-district of Bontolempangan Village. The Tenro sub-village is known as one of the hamlets that still maintain the customs and traditions of their ancestors, including rituals performed on the moon of *Muharram*, and for that a song is created with title "*Tenro Tanah Adat*" (Dafirah, 2013).

It is important to look further at the messages and values contained in the rituals performed by the Tenro community. Because the message and the value will be useful not only for the Tenro community, or South Sulawesi, but will become a global value for the Indonesian community. The values and messages contained in this ritual are a source of local wisdom. Calling moral ethics originating from local religions and cultures leads Indonesians into various things, including in maintaining balance and harmony among peers, maintaining balance and harmony with the environment, maintaining balance and harmony in social relations, work ethic, mutual cooperation, and of course ideology and philosophy of life.

II. METHODOLOGY

Qualitative method is the method used in this research because it is considered basically descriptive without any quantification or statistical data.

These researchers selected the location in Tenro sub-village, Bontolempangan Village, Buki Sub-district of the Selayar Islands Regency. This is based on the view that members of the village community are still performing ritual/*songka bala* ceremony on a regular basis every year.

Primary data collection is done by using several techniques including: 1) observation or commonly called direct observation in the field. The type of observation used is passive participants, meaning that researchers come to the place of activities conducted the objectives of observation, but not participate in these activities (Sarwono, 2009); 2) Interview, that is by making direct contact with informants; interview technique is an unstructured interview using only interview guidance aid (not questionnaire); 3) **Recording**, recording is done by recording using handycame instruments, photo cameras, and voice recorder.

The data obtained from the recording and then transcribed in the form of written discourse. Then the data are analyzed based on socio-cultural concepts.

III. DISCUSSION

Songka Bala Ritual Implementation Process

Songka bala ritual is a ritual known by the society of Makassar that aims to reject *bala*. *Songka bala* reinforced in the Indonesian language with the word rejection or salvation to God Almighty (Rismawati, 2014). Furthermore Rismawati (2014) mentions that the tradition of *songka bala* is a tradition of society born from the activities of society a few centuries ago that exist coloring human culture. The timing of *songka* ritual performance in Makassar society is different based on the beliefs and habits inherited from his ancestors. Selayar Islands, *Songka bala* ritual is held every tenth of *Muharram* month.

As elsewhere with different communities, the execution of a ritual is always accompanied by submission of offerings. Because according to Sutikno (2017) offerings are basically the actualization of the mind, desire, and feelings of the perpetrator to get closer to God. In *songka bala* rituals in Tenro making offerings are individual, only representatives of each household.

The ritual activity begins with the preparation of offerings at each home. Each household prepares the material in the form of *ketupat* (Selayar *kalasa* language), and *onde-onde*. Making *kalasa* begins the day before the ritual because it takes a long time to cook it. While *onde-onde* creation done at night. Basic materials made *onde-onde* in general shredded cassava and then given the contents and then fried. The content language is made from grated coconut cooked with palm sugar/red.

Submission of offerings made on the morning of the exact date of 10th *Muharram* around 06.00 am. The offerings (individuals) are then handed over to custom figures who have been waiting under a banyan tree. Under the tree is also a grave believed to be the grave of one of their ancestors. Outside the banyan tree, fence Tenro community stretched mats as where they sit doing ritual.



Figure 1. Banyan tree as the center of ritual execution

The offerings brought by each household are *onde-onde* (made from cassava and also from glutinous rice flour), *kalasa* (*ketupat* in the form of an octagon and water).



Figure 2. Offerings



Figure 3. *Onde-onde* cassava



Figure 4. *Kalasa* (*ketupat*)



Figure 5. Drinking water

Onde-onde and *kalasa* are then each collected in a larger container (basin), as shown in figure 6.



Figure 6. Collection of *kalasa* and *onde-onde*

After all residents are expected, the ritual leaders, in this case the Judge (as a custom figure as well as former-priest of Tenro sub-district) began to greet the residents by asking whether all was present, and affirmed by the residents. Then the ritual leader took a position facing the tree and was accompanied by three other indigenous figures. The four sat cross-legged and in front of him each had a tray containing incense, betel leaves, and *banno* (popcorn) and a *bengki* (jug from clay).

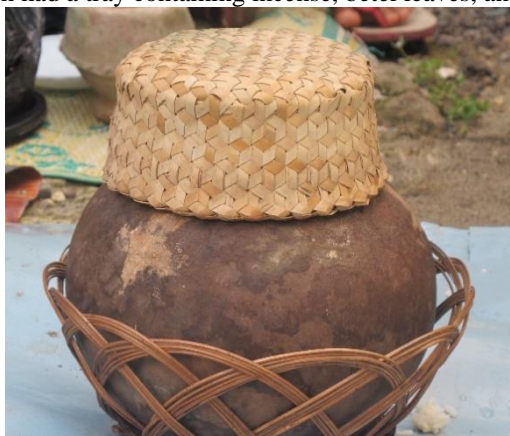


Figure 7. Bengke



Figure 8. Betel Leaf

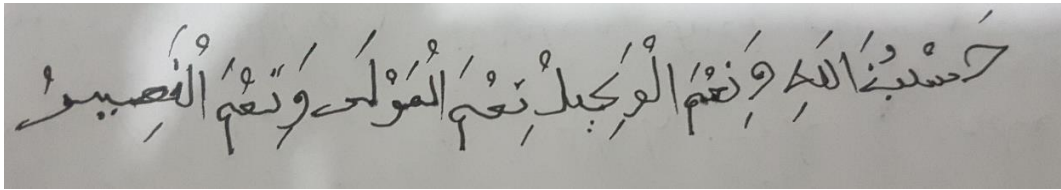


Figure 9. Banno



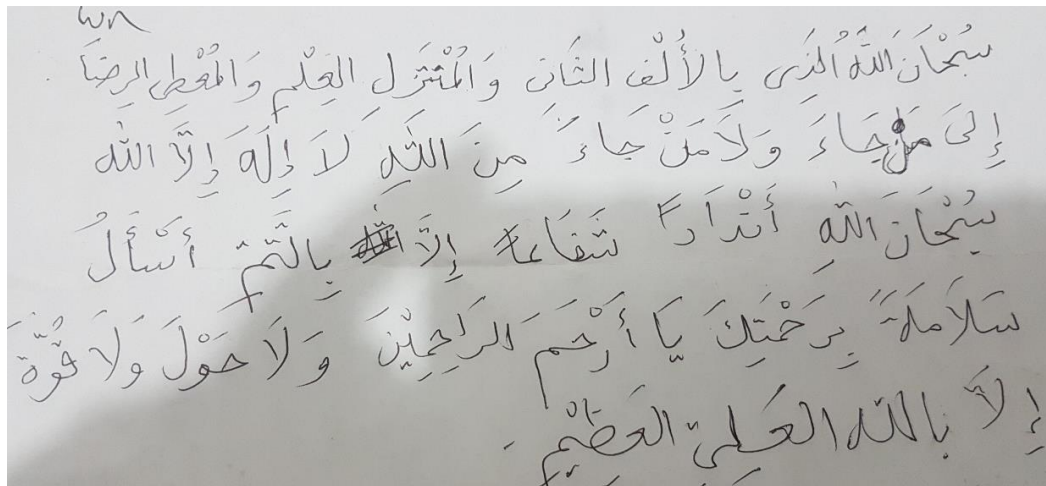
Figure 10. Incense

The peak of the ritual is started by the ritual leader by first casting water on the jade in front of him. The same is done by his three companions. After water heating, proceed with the reading of several prayers as follows:



("Allah alone is our place to be, as best as the protector and as best of our helper.")

The above prayer is pronounced seventy times by the ritual leaders. While the second prayer as below is quoted 7 times.



“Subhanallahu lazii bilulfilzani walmuntazalil ilmi; wamu’tiridha ilaa manjaa wala manjaa minallahi lailaha illallahu subhanallahu andada syafaang illaa bitammaa as’aluka salamatang birahmatika yaa arhamarrahiming walahaula wala kuwwata illaa billahil aliyyil alim. Hasbunallahu wani’mal wakil ni’mal maula wani’mal nasir”

("Blessed be Allah who makes praise and sends knowledge and giver to those who come and who does not come, from God, there is no god but Allah, All holy God, health except perfectly, I crave with Your gracious Mercy Merciful. And there are no power and power except with God Almighty and Supreme. Suffice God to be our place of self, as best as a protector and as best as our helper. ")



Figure 11. The ritual leader is reading prayers and to mantra the water

The ritual procession ends with re-spelling the water that is inside the *bengki* while blowing it as well as entering the betel leaf and some *banno* grains. Water spelling is done repeatedly and then taken a little water to sprinkle to residents to the front, back, left side, and right side. After the series of prayer and water readings have been completed, then the offerings are divided to the people present and eaten together at the venue. While eating and drinking, usually community leaders either head of the hamlet, hamlet priests, or village chiefs convey information that is considered important to the community. Because ritual procession *songka bala* is a ritual that still has continued, but a different name and time, then on this occasion also used to puncture the next ritual plan.

Local Wisdom Contained in the *Songka Bala* Ritual

As previously mentioned, the *songka bala* ritual performed in Tenro sub-village is a very simple ritual. But behind its intelligence it contains a value called local wisdom. Here is exposure to some local wisdom found in *songka bala* ritual.

Simplicity

One of the local wisdom found in *songka bala* rituals is simplicity. It is reflected in the menus (offerings) prepared by them. What they bring is a picture of their daily lives. Cassava and rice are to eat their staple and that is what is given as an offering.

Togetherness

There seems to be a high level of togetherness in this *songka bala* ritual. The society with their own consciousness without being sent an invitation or message together to attend the ritual. This attitude is based on the thought that the rituals they are doing are a common property so there is no need to invite and invite.

In addition, for a togetherness they are willing to leave all their activities respectively. At the time of the ritual there is no important matter besides attending the *songka bala* ritual. That is, the Tenro society still maintain the attitude of putting the common interest above personal interests.

As it is known that tenth of *Muharram* does not always fall on holidays, but sometimes falls on a working day. When it falls on a working day, the citizens of Tenro first ask permission to to attend *songka bala* event. Likewise farmers and traders all delayed his activities to attend their rituals.

Obedience

The Tenro community is a society that adheres to its culture and traditions. *Onde-onde*, *kalasa*, and water are menu offerings inherited from their ancestors, and until now still well preserved. No one tried to make any updates in preparing the

offerings. Bringing *onde-onde*, *kalasa*, and water does not mean they cannot prepare sponge cakes, syrup or warm tea, but they keep their ancestral heritage.

The form of obedience can also be seen in their attitudes while following the ritual. When the division of the *onde-onde* and *kalasa* and water does not occur the commotion and does not happen to fight each other. Younger mothers try to serve the aged as well as the men. And if still society who have not enjoyed the dishes prepared quickly their share.

The Tenro community also includes residents who adhere to the mandate of custom leaders and community leaders with the government. The rules of both the custom and the government are used as guidance in running the wheel of their lives.

This attitude needs to be disseminated to be a frame to the national level. One of the factors that can create peace and tranquility in the society is obedience. If the government together with the community collectively comply with what has become the norm or rule there will be no misuse of authority. All will run on their respective rails without any diversion. This is certainly needed in the life of the state and the nation especially in Indonesia.

Respect to Head of the Ancestors

For the Tenro community, their ancestors were the cause of their presence on earth, especially in Tenro. Without ancestors, they would never be named Tenro citizens. By it, in every breath and in every behavior they never forget their ancestors. The performance of the *songka bala* ritual under the banyan tree and on the grave side of one of their ancestors (the founder of Tenro's village) is an implementation of their honor to the ancestors. A belief that even though their ancestors were gone, but there was an unseen force served as a source of strength by them.

Based on the above, the captured message that appreciates the merits of others is a commendable attitude. No matter how small the services of good people to others or to the nation should be appreciated.

Surrender to God Almighty

The Tenro community also believes that there is no other place to hide and ask except for God Almighty. To Him man surrenders. This can be seen in the prayers pronounced during the ritual.

Songka bala/reject bala which is an attempt to prevent any angry danger, disaster and calamity impossible can be realized without the permission of the Almighty. Man is limited to prayer media and all decisions and certainty is in God.

IV. CONCLUSION

The *songka bala* ritual represses an effort of Tenro society to make peace with nature in order to be able to conquer the supernatural powers that exist. The *songka bala* ritual is manifested in the form of offerings and supplication of prayers to the Almighty that is neatly combined. In the pronunciation of prayers led by their custom leaders is a picture of the belief that there is no place to ask and ask except to Allah alone. In addition, only to Allah also all power and protection is obtained.

Simplicity becomes an important point that colors the ritual of *songka bala*. The simplicity that is understated and full of familiarity and a sense of kinship. Togetherness ties them firmly in a family bond. Togetherness between them is able to eliminate all kinds of differences both in terms of material or social stratification. Obedience to customary rules and norms gives birth to mutual respect among people. They will know the boundaries between rights and duties. Likewise honors to the ancestors gave birth to the attitude of appreciation to each other in everyday life. And as a man of God's creation is deservedly surrendered to the Almighty. This attitude will give birth to a humble nature and away from pride and arrogance.

The values that begin to become local wisdom as described above are expected not only to color the life and life of the Tenro community. But it can be a color in building the life of the nation and the state.

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