

Tifa Yanad Vat Masadin Duak e: *Wedding Tradition at Elaar Lamagorang, East Kei Kecil District*

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Abstract— Traditions and customs play an important role in society, more specifically the people who still uphold the principles of the hereditary life of *tete nene moyang* (ancestors). The same applies to Elaar Lamagorang village, East Kei Kecil District, Southeast Maluku Regency. The village has a special tradition of welcoming the bride. This tradition is called *Tifa Yanad Vat Masadin Duak e*. This tradition must be passed by every wife of men in the village. Even for those who have lived outside the village, this tradition is imposed when they return to the village. The purpose of this writing is to understand and explain the meaning of *Tifa Yanad vat masadin duak e* tradition. The method used was descriptive qualitative method. The results show that this tradition continues to be maintained as part of family education where married couples are taught to interpret marriage as a communion together in love, so there is mutual appreciation, respect and responsibility for the marriage.

Keywords— *wedding tradition, Elaar Lamagorang, Tifa Yanad, East Kei.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The transition period that is considered important by almost all people everywhere is the marriage period. [1] To enter the marriage level requires readiness. Thus, certain ceremonies are held to prepare the bride and groom to undergo the process of living together in the future.

The same applies to Elaar Lamagorang village, East Kei Kecil District, Southeast Maluku Regency. The village has a special tradition of welcoming the bride. This tradition is called *Tifa Yanad Vat Masadin Duak e*. This tradition must be passed by every wife of men in the village. Even for those who have lived outside the village, this tradition is imposed when they return to the village. For Kei community, a marriage has not been valid, even though the Christian marriage blessing ceremony has been held or they have been married in civil records, if *Tifa Yanad Vat Masadin Duak e* has not been held yet.

For the local community, without going through the tradition, the ancestors will not know the woman. Strictly

speaking, the validity of marriage is related to the introduction between the ancestors and the whole village. In this tradition there are various rituals carried out, in an effort to introduce the bride to the ancestors, to the family and the village community. That's why all people take part in this tradition.

Using various symbols, such as the sound of tifa with the chanting of songs in Kei language, called *Ngel-ngel* becomes a sign of the notice process, to all who are still alive (in this case the community), the land and ancestors that the woman referred to has become a part from the clan or the eyes of her husband's house. In addition, water, whether it is water on the beach, coconut water, or river water, is seen as a symbol of acceptance, sanctification and blessing from ancestors. Its function is to approve the existence of the woman in the village to be part of the village. By doing this tradition, woman coming from outside Elaar Lamagorang village becomes part of her husband's clan, part of the village, and part of *Rumkemuslaw*.

Rumkemuslaw is a name for Elaar women. *Rumkemuslaw* plays an important role in every situation, both within the community of Elaar Lamagorang village and people in other villages. *Rumkemuslaw's* existence symbolizes the fellowship of women from Elaar Lamagorang village. The responsibility of a *Rumkemuslaw* is no different from that of other women, only the existence of *Rumkemuslaw* is more desirable to build a fellowship of living together that helps each other in joy and sorrow, and keeps the honor of their family and village, wherever they are.

II. METHODOLOGY

The research was a field research with qualitative approach that is a form of research that directly sees the problem in research location, for example research about life, history, and behavior of someone, beside role of organization, social movement, or reciprocity. Data collection was done through

interviews and direct observation. [2] Research location was in Elaar Lamagorang village.

To help the research and writing process, the writer used data sources obtained from: key informants (traditional leaders, village heads, people who have gone through the tradition, village youth, and people from other village who have settled and participated in various traditions that apply in the village, including *Tifa yanad vat masadin duak e* tradition. Data were analyzed qualitatively by hermeneutic method.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Meaning of Marriage

In society organizations, kinship plays a dominant role.[3] This is also found in Elaar Lamagorang village, the location where the writer studied about marriage tradition taking place in the village. Humans, as God's creatures, are expected to obey God's rules. Provisions in the Old Testament (OT), for example about a husband's faithful promise to his wife and vice versa, are considered applicable to man in general, since they are part of God's rules for creation (based on Mat. 19:3, and so on.).[4] For Paul, marriage between men and women is natural. Paul advised Christians about marital holiness.[5] A key element in Paul's teaching about marriage is his belief that the end of world is near.[4] Therefore in 1 Corinthians 7: 16 Paul affirmed his teaching about the importance of marriage.

In Kei, marriage and death customs are two of the many forms of implementation of humanitarian appreciation and commemoration of the descendant relationship of Kei people. Both become part of a common life and have an order in the traditional procession.[6] Because of that those two aspects are very important and have relationship with one another.

Customary marriages are related to Law of *Larvul Ngabal*. Traditionally, marital affairs are not only micro-family affairs, but are affairs and responsibilities of all clans of the micro-families concerned. Customary marriage is an honor for parents and relatives because such a marriage is the dream of every Kei person.[6]

B. *Tifa Yanad Vat Masadin Duak e* Tradition and Meaning of Every Symbol Used In This Tradition As A Process Of Acceptance and Initiation In Christianity

The implementation of *Tifa Yanad vat masadin duak e* tradition in Elaar Lamagorang village marks the acceptance of a woman in the eyes of a family's house of the man whom she married to, and in the communion of the village community as the one who has been married and part of *Rumkemuslaw*.

A well-known anthropologist, Mircea Eliade explained initiation as an act of religion with classical or traditional principles. He defined initiation as a basic change in essential conditions, which liberates humans from the profane and historical times. Initiation embraces sacred history in the world. The essence is that the whole world is sanctified to become new and felt as a sacred work, called God's Creation.[7]

For Woro Aryandiri S, every ceremony carried out from whatever tradition it is, is a manifestation of the belief about the existence of a higher power than what humans have, therefore humans try to be able to communicate and relate to these forces.[8]

Speaking of how humans express their confidence, in Poso, it is expressed by ceremonies or rites and dogmas. Each of us has a way to talk about theology regarding the divine existence in our lives. Whatever rites or ways a person does to express their belief there, God works. Sometimes certain tradition that is carried out may be considered infidel for some people but actually in the ways performed in every tradition it is found that even before the society gets to know Christianity, they have known and believed that there is a higher power; it can be the power of the ancestors who according to them will always accompany the grandchildren and the power of historical places. Therefore, we still have to respect someone's beliefs, because when we introduce Christianity to them it will be easier to use concrete examples of what they have known from the start and what they believed as the one having power over them in this world.[9]

In Kei's ancestral beliefs, plants have magical powers, such as betel, areca nut, tobacco, coconut, walnuts, sweet potatoes and others. That is why every traditional ritual always uses these plants.[6]

Tifa Yanad vat masadin duak e tradition in Elaar Lamagorang village is proof of the belief in the highest power over humans believed by the villagers, so this tradition continues to be maintained until now. Each tradition describes how humans relate to nature. MC Boulan and Saul Sijauta, using the ancient Greek cosmologist and Plato's idealistic philosophy of thought schemes, showed that the totality of human existence in original Maluku is divided and differentiated into elements and functional arrangements in whole, dynamic and comprehensive ways.[10] This shows the inner attachment between *humanist and non-humanist realities*. In *Tifa Yanad vat masadin duak e* tradition carried out by Elaar Lamagorang people there is such picture of attachment; attachment between humans and fellow, nature and existence *tete nene moyang* or their ancestor.

In local culture of the tribes in NTT (specifically Meto, Rote, Sabu, and Sumba) there are cultural values related to the relationship of husband and wife in the family, and belief in life after death.[11] In *Tifa Yanad vat masadin duak e* tradition, there are also rituals performed, as a form of their belief in the existence of ancestors, by carrying the bride, to a stone called *vat ving letaw*, to introduce her to the ancestors and to ask for the protection of the ancestors for the woman as now she has been a part of the village.

Through rites, humans connect themselves with the divine.[12] In *Tifa Yanad vat masadin duak e* tradition a belief lives by carrying out such ritual, people will be avoided from any possible bad things and the people will also be protected from such bad stuff. Every rite that humans go through is a humans' effort to connect themselves with what is believed to have power over them. The same thing done by Elaar Lamagorang villagers through *Tifa Yanad vat masadin duak e*

tradition; the newly arrived person becomes part of the village community, and is known by ancestors who are believed to have the power to protect the children and grandchildren of the village. Because of that the newcomer is taken to a stone called *vat ving letaw*, which is believed to be the entrance to the village and the entrance to initiate a new life, in this case their domestic life.

The ritual implementation on the stone, called *vat vingletaw* was due to a story that formerly a migrant came and set foot on the stone, and due to division of Siuw buffalo, what Ellar villagers got at that time was the teeth of the buffalo which was believed in *vat vingletaw*. Therefore, there is a belief that the stone brings good luck. For the prospective bride who has performed the tradition should not step on the stone, because they can get sick or so forth. This can be called a myth as it be either trusted or not, but this story is also fact since some women admit to get sick from standing on the stone before performing the tradition.

Daniel J. Adams, in his book entitled *Cross Cultural Theology*, showed that every tradition or culture certainly has theological meaning and God works in every culture, before humans know religion. The belief in the existence of supreme power over human life has previously existed in early beliefs that may be for some people today are considered infidels, but that is a manifestation of someone's faith we ought to value. From every myth or folklore that seems to glorify the power of nature, that is the manifestation of one's beliefs, and that is one's understanding of theology, which is how they reflect on God in their culture or tradition. [13]

For Lothar Schreiner, custom ensures life in three multifaceted facets, myths, rites, and genealogical groups (clans). For customs originating in myths, their power has natural nomisms (such as the power of natural law), which aims for permanence and harmony between macro-cosmos and micro-cosmos. [14] Elaar Lamagorang society maintains the balance of nature, by keeping and preserving the tradition, in order to maintain balance with nature, by carrying out the required traditions, to legalize an immigrant, who is married to the village's son, so she becomes part of the village and her existence in the village does not have a negative impact on the entire village society.

The absence of the tradition is possible to trigger undesirable things, and this is the same as the life imbalance. For example, if an immigrant woman has not gone through this tradition, according to custom she cannot set foot in the village, because her presence will have a negative impact on her life, her family and the life of the village society. Negative things can be in the form of catastrophe and possible natural disasters in order to maintain the balance of nature. But if a wife cannot accompany her husband, this can also have a negative impact on the balance of their relationship, including the natural surroundings. For this reason, the implementation of this tradition certainly needs to be done. Custom is a concrete whole form of a tribal religion which connects humans who are visible living beings and the dead, who are invisible living beings, as well as the customs which are the village order. [14]

C. Meaning of Contextual Theological Approach in *Tifa Yanad Vat Masadin Duak e* Tradition

Talking about tradition means talking about context. Context with general meaning refers to the whole situation of the world conditions faced by humans. So, the current context includes all aspects of life around and within us, [15] including a tradition of customary marriage. This is the meaning behind the term contextualization. In the science of theology, contextualization means the activity or process of incorporating the biblical mandate with the situation of our condition. [15] From several models of contextual theology offered, the writer used translation model. Translation model is the process of adapting and accommodating text in a particular culture by emphasizing the evangelization as an unchanging proclamation.

According to Charles Kraft, the aim is to translate Christian proclamation into ever-changing and always particular contexts using the experience of the listeners in that context, in order to be understood without prejudice to the meaning of the gospel and for the listeners to successfully capture the soul of a text. Therefore, the translation should be idiomatic, or the translation must be done with a functional or dynamic equivalent. It is not only to provide understandable information, but also to make people feel its relevance (the element of feeling statement in communication), then be able to respond in real action (imperative function). The important thing in this model is the intrinsic proclamation of Christianity is superior in culture or in contextual. Basically context is seen as something good and must be appreciated.

With the translation model, every ritual in that tradition is tried to be translated and interpreted as an effort of God's revelation for humans in tradition. As Christians who still adhere to local customary traditions, Elaar Lamagorang villagers can understand God's purpose in *Tifa Yanad Vat Masadin Duak e* tradition, and make every local wisdom the main basic of a contextual theology.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Tifa yanad vat masadin duak e tradition is a manifestation of the gratitude of family and society to God, because a woman has become part of the family and the society of the village. This tradition continues to be preserved as part of family education where married couples are taught to interpret marriage as a communion together in love, so that there is mutual appreciation, respect and responsibility for the marriage..

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