

# Pali Ritual as a Portrait of Dayaknese Local Wisdom at Borneo Island in Treatment of Nature

Evi Feronika Elbaar  
University of Palangka Raya  
evi.elbaar@yahoo.co.id

Misrita  
University of Palangka Raya  
misrita@for.upr.ac.id

**Abstract.** *One of traditional attitude of Dayaknese heritage is how people treat the forest. Dayaknese put a tree or forest as a subject which stands in a linear fashion with a man. Hence, trees do not become objects of exploitation but the tree will be able to place itself as a determinant of which also affects human behaviour in the surrounding area. Excessive treatment of both trees and on his own human will impact on global life. This wisdom certainly provides a new offer of modern society in anticipation the global warming phenomenon. In several forests, conservation activities and efforts of the Dayaknese can be seen in aspects of culture, arts, and religion. One of the rituals firmly held by Dayaknese is Pali ritual which means abstaining to cut down a tree within a year. The better quality of the tree that is cut then the longer fasting slaughtered. In the "fast cut", Dayak gives a sense of empathy and opportunity to restore and nurture the forest to be used again in the best possible by humans. In addition of cultural Pali there are also lofty thoughts to preserve and respect the forest as an integral part of Dayak people who give each other. In an effort to understand and explore the meaning of social phenomenon, cultural and religious, the author uses inductive reasoning-naturalistic paradigm. In Dayak community tree has not only one reality dimension of life but he also lived on transcendental dimension. Batang Garing symbol of tree and sharp mage details have philosophical meanings that form the basis on how Dayak tribe in treating the forest. Pali ritual is not an impossible one to solve the global warming problem with sensible approaches as the Dayak tribe in Borneo.*

*Keywords: Pali, Dayaknese, Borneo, Forest, Batang garing.*

## Introduction

Kalimantan is the largest island in the Indonesian archipelago after Papua. Kalimantan island two and a half times the big British, Scotland and Ireland. Total area of Kalimantan island 740 km<sup>2</sup> with a length of 1375 km while the width is 110 km. With such a broad island of Kalimantan, four and a half times the island of Java, or 28% of the total area of the State of Indonesia. One part of Borneo is the point coordinates of the equator. Almost all flat and slightly undulating terrain.

Kalimantan islands has many great rivers, length, and many branch in a small tributary of countless, such as: Mahakam River in East Kalimantan, Barito river which divides the Central Kalimantan and South Kalimantan, Kapuas River and Kahayan rivers in Central Kalimantan, Kapuas Hulu rivers in West Kalimantan. Kapuas River has a length of 102,000 km<sup>2</sup> which is almost equal to the island of Java. Meanwhile Solo River that is the greatest length river in Java is only 540 km.

In terms of irrigation that is clear that Kalimantan is relatively abundant areas. When rain comes from mountain-water gliding by the swift and often ask the victim. It is told that not a few souls from among the people who live around the river flow become the victims. In low-lying areas recorded rates sometimes 10 meters above the normal threshold.

In almost all areas in Kalimantan such as South Kalimantan, Central, East and West each have incredible

abundant natural resources. In South Kalimantan precisely in Martapura lands that lie vast reserves of both mines diamonds, and other precious stones. So the region has long been a well-known city in the archipelago and in other parts of the world for its rich diamond mines. Everywhere stood where scrub and semi-permanent huts as temporary lodgings diamonds and diamond miners. In addition, there is a stretch of land containing precious rocks in South Kalimantan, there are also carpet the ground namely vast coal mines as one of the mineral oil substitute.

As the area is very spacious and has natural resources needed by almost all Indonesian people ranging from pepper, candles, fish, rice, honey, resins, rubber can be found in Kalimantan, especially in South Kalimantan. With a wealth of Borneo, the Dutch colonial sure-fire and English vying to send trade missions.

## Literature Review

Dayak relations with nature

So far we only know the nature and man as the relationship between subject and object. Nature with all its contents is considered as an object such as a forest that can be used as desired by humans as subjects. Forests are exploited only for human economic interests. In a wise idea that the relationship of this kind of subject and object can no longer be maintained. As has been

proven many wreak havoc caused by the arbitrariness of human beings as the protagonists.

In order to understand how the importance of nature and human relations, a moment we look back at a local knowledge that has been growing for centuries in a forest community as human Dayak in Kalimantan. The author uses inductive reasoning-naturalistic paradigm (Cresswell, 2014; Wilson, 1977).

The reasoning allows author observe, and to further straightly describe emic perspective that is rich in nuance and interpretation hermeneutic (Burgess, 1985).

Forests in the eyes of the Dayak has become a bond that cannot be released because Dayaks who have thousands and thousands of years of living in the jungle interior. So that the forest is no longer as objects to be exploited but have more value that is different from the capitalists who only see the forest as a money machine.

Relations between the Dayaks and nature is a relationship of mutual influence that apply continuously. The relationship between Dayak and natural in modern *ecological* theory is a reciprocal relationship. Where humans are not only positioned at the level of the subject alone, especially in treating their forests but here nature can also be subjects which affect the human behavior in the vicinity.

Model of the interrelationships between humans and nature is not only found in Borneo. Other tribes in Indonesia such as, Hindu Tengger tribe in Bromo Mountains, Batak in Sumatra, the original religion of the Toraja *Parmalim* and who inhabit the mountainous area north of South Sulawesi province also has some similarities in their natural treat. In the texts of oral tradition, the Toraja construct a social life, one of them is to regulate relations between man and nature. The main objectives of the Toraja in the reconstruction it is a social ideal to achieve ecological life of harmony between man and nature. People have to understand how nature should be treated so helpful to each other (Sandrarupa, Kompas October 5, 2007).

Dayak people close relationship with nature can be seen in the telling of the creation mythology of the universe as quoted from the book *Panaturan* following:

*“ Dragon sustainer of the earth is created from gold sandals of human*

*Land of the earth, seas, rivers, fish and plants derived from headgear*

*Batang Garing (tree of life) was born from nature glory*

*Large islands born of nature authority*

*Sipa (ground nut) turned into a bird Tingang*

*Rukun Tarahan (cigarette from palm leaves) belonging Mahatala changed to cover the earth (the sky)”.*

This perspective says romance between the Dayak with the natural environment. Depicted earth, sky and sea were created from the properties and objects such as *sandals*, *sipa* and *rukun Tarahan* are always attached to the human body.

A sense of continuity with nature is also found in the mythology of the tree which is very interesting because it

is anatomically regarded as the personification of human beings who have hair, hands, feet, blood, bone, a layer of meat, breathing, and others. So, the tree is considered as an older brother because it created used to be before men. Trees in various Dayak cultural life are believed to have strength as a clue giver of life, the giver of shade, giving protection.

In view of the Dayak, the subject of a standing tree is in a linear fashion with a man, so forest consists of various kinds of trees into a bond that cannot be released. Man and the forest are the two subjects with the capacity of each. Man not only positioned at the level of the subject alone, especially in treats its forests but here nature can also be subjects which affect the human behaviour in the vicinity.

Trees in the Dayak tribe considered that life-giving tree and then symbolized as a tree of life or *Batang Garing*. If traced from the historical aspect of the tree of life first appeared on the inscription kingdom of Kutai in East Kalimantan within Mulawarman as the king. In this inscription the tree of life is referred to as *kalpataru* the other terms of the activity giving alms. *Kalpataru* or alms giver interpreted as a symbol of life because of the giving or charity that someone will be able to connect his life on the following day onwards.

The term *Batang Garing* if analysed in a linguistic *stem* word itself comes from the Malay language meaning 'certain parts of the tree' while the word *haring* or *aring* in the Java language dictionary is the name of a tree in the sense of an intact and living trees (see Prawiroatmojo, 1980:17). Through a wide range of linguistic processes *stem aring* later became known as *Batang Garing* now. So that whole notion of *Batang Garing* is a tree trunk or the whole of life. *Batang Garing* symbol tree is also a symbol of greatness and oneness of God with a pointed tip top in divinity. Depictions of *Batang Garing* tree is usually filled with a variety of symbols such as spears, gong, whole trees, fruits, twigs jewels, stars, pot.

Ritual *pali* and its relation with the forest conservation

*Pali* ritual is basically only a fraction of the many other rituals contained in the Dayak tribe. Nevertheless, ritual *Pali* has advantages because it has a direct relation with forest conservation to support the life of the Dayak tribe in general.

If further analysis is basically *Pali* rituals are rituals that are not officially implemented as rituals generally. Because in line with its own *Pali* term that comes from the Malay language which means poor or in other terms unethical or taboo. Because *Pali* is basically teaching manners between the owners (read: God) with humans. So if the rules are violated the harmony of nature would be disturbed, the impact can hurt many people and even entire villages will be affected as a result is usually a natural disaster, such as floods, fire or other types of man-made disasters.

*Pali* itself in Dayaknese applied in several matters relating to the social life of the Dayak themselves and also to do with the creator. *Pali* is the first ritual fasting

for not cutting down trees. This is true when building a new home, where many trees are cut down, then the Dayaks over one year have to implement *Pali*, atone for sins by not cutting down trees. If the type of trees felled to the home of ironwood (*tabalien*) the prohibition or anesthetized it can be lived much longer up to three years.

*Pali* rituals because cutting down trees for a year the second is not allowed to kill animals that can be eaten like bears, cats, tigers, snakes and others. If the type of trees harvested is *tabalien* then a three-year fasting on variety of good food.

Why if the cut trees *tabalien*, *pali* ritual carried longer because *tabalien* are tree species that are difficult to grow and take a long time to grow back, but *tabalien* also have high economic value because it has the strength like iron that are not fragile by the weather.

### Conclusion

From the explanation above, it is clear that forest preservation is directly related to global warming phenomena and it is the only best solution. Ritual *Pali* in the Dayak in Borneo is the heritage of tradition that gives for the Dayaks to maintain their forests well within the rules or restrictions that apply in the community one of which is the ritual of *Pali*. Thus the rules in the *Pali* ritual is a great contribution in the preservation of forests in the Dayak community itself and the forest as a whole so that this can be useful for the survival of mankind in the world including reduce exhaust emissions as the cause of global warming disaster.

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