

OPPO, A DEATH RITUAL OF TABA PEOPLE IN MAKIAN ISLAND NORTH MALUKU: BETWEEN EXPRESSION OF CONDOLENCES AND CONSUMPTION HYSTERIA

Santri Sahar¹, Supriadi Hamdat², Mungsi Lampe³ & Muhammad Basir⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Hasanuddin
INDONESIA

Corresponding Author: santrisahar@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In general, the ritual of death is constructed as a transition so that the spirit can be integrated with its new world, the afterlife. In the present era, a shift of symbolic meaning begins to occur. The Oppo ritual of Taba people in Makian Island is performed ceremonially from grief to joy. From the interviews and analysis of the content of the data shows that there is a change that has implications for the greater costs that must be borne by the family with a debt scheme so that the social status in the community does not decline. The movement for change began with educated people but met with resistance from mothers. Using the Symbolic Interpretive perspective, this paper presents the views of certain groups so that the ritual is simplified without eliminating the substance, both from the number of participants and the duration of time in order to save costs and energy..

Keywords: Taba People, *Oppo*Ritual, Consumption, Prestige, Modification.

A. INTRODUCTION

Ritual is understood as religious human expression to connect itself with the supernatural powers which consists of rites of passage, namely transitional rituals about the stages in the cycle of human life and rites of intensification, which are rituals held when human life experiences a critical period⁵. Like *Oppo*, the ritual of death carried out by the Taba People in Makian Island, North Maluku. Local people gather to help families who are grieving as a form of social cohesion. But in its development the *Oppo* ritual actually increased the cost to more than sixty million rupiah. This caused the grieving family to overcome it with a debt scheme in order to maintain their social prestige in society. Later an attempt was made to simplify, but certain groups in the community were resisting so that the ceremonial *Oppo* rituals continued as usual.

Those involved in the implementation of the *Oppo* consist of *Leleyani*, *hajat* and the local community. *Leleyani* is the participation of the village community in charge of preparing food offerings. *Leleyani* group had been in the funeral home from morning until late at night. *Hajat* is a ritual participant between 60-90 people consisting of *Bobato akhirat* (priest, preacher and modim), community leaders and men who are already married. The group went home after the ritual was held. While the villagers who are concerned about coming can enjoy eating, drinking and smoking for free.

¹ Anthropology Doctoral Program, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia

²Department of Anthropology, Hasanuddin University Makassar, Indonesia

³ Department of Anthropology, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia

⁴Department of Anthropology, Hasanuddin University Makassar, Indonesia

⁵William A. Haviland. 1985 Anthropology. Terj. R.G. Soekadijo. Antropologi, 2nd ed. Jakarta, Erlangga. page 207

In Indonesia a study related to ethnic death rituals was conducted by Wjayanto (2018), the ritual of death for the Javanese served as a medium of dialogue with ancestral spirits⁶. Tangdilintin (2014)⁷, the ceremony of the death of the Torajanese *Rambu Solo* so that one's social position is maintained as he still lives in the world. Mashadi (2017) Gorontalo ethnic death ritual as a form of Islamic dialectics and local culture⁸. Anggariani and Sahar (2018) *Oppo* rituals of the death of the Taba people as a medium of separation, transition and integration of spirits into their new realms, the afterlife⁹. In contrast to this study, it is intended to show the reasons for certain groups in the community who want the *Oppo* ritual to be held royally in the face of other groups who wish to simplify the ritual.

This study aims to find out: a) how the *Oppo* ritual costs more than sixty million rupiahs, b) why certain groups want to maintain the ceremonial *Oppo* ritual and c) what other groups want to simplify.

B. Literature Review: *Oppo* Ritual, A Symbolic Interpretative Perspective

Rituals are essentially human expressions of his astonishment at the power of Supra Natural and a resigned attitude to the natural conditions around him. However, its manifestation as a religious being does not stand alone but is connected to three important things, namely the Unseen, the Natural Environment and the Social Environment. The study of anthropologists about rituals is also inseparable from the three aspects which are represented in various forms of symbols.

Turner defines the symbol as something that is considered, by mutual agreement, as something that gives nature or represents or recalls by having the same quality, or imagining in reality or thought¹⁰. So in a symbolic view, symbols with their social context provide meaning and interpretation for human actions and behavior¹¹. Turner refers to the three dimensions of symbol meaning in terms of the interpreting actor, namely the exegetical first, namely the range of interpretations given by the original informant to the researcher, so interpretations must be classified according to the social characteristics and qualifications of the informant. Both operational dimensions, this dimension cannot include verbal interpretations, but what is shown to observers and researchers, and third, positional dimensions, that the symbols are related to other symbols, so the relationship with certain ritual symbols is emphasized, while at other times aren't emphasized at all¹².

Meanwhile Geertz developed a model of cultural studies specifically religion that emphasizes the form of symbols. That culture consists of two elements, namely culture as a system of

⁶Wijayanto. 2018. Tradisi Upacara Kematian dalam Kejawan Urip Sejati di Desa Jeruk Widul, Kec. Guri Subo, Kab. Gunung Kidul. Page 19

⁷Tangdilintin, LT. 2014. Toraja dan Kebudayaanya. Makassar. Body of Study and Writing of South Sulawesi History.

⁸Mashadi. Shades of Mysticism in Tradition Religious Ceremony (Anthropological Studies against Islamic Phenomenn in the City of Gorontalo). International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, Volume 6, Issue12, Desember 2016.

⁹Dewi Angariani & Santri Sahar. 2018. Oppo: Ritual Kematian Orang Taba di Pulau Makian Maluku Utara. Makassar. Research and Publishing Center LP2M UIN Alauddin Makassar

¹⁰Victor Turner. 1982.. The Forest of Symbols, Aspects of Ndembu Ritual. Ithaca dan London: Cornell University Press. page 19

¹¹Ahmad F Saifuddin 2005. Antropologi Kontemporer: Suatu Pengantar Kritis Mengenai Paradigma. Jakarta, Kneccana. page 294

¹²Y.W. Wartaya Winangun. 1990. Masyarakat Bebas Struktur: Liminalitas dan Kemonitas Menurut Victor Turner. Jakarta, Kanisius. page 20

cognition or system of knowledge and culture as a system of values or evaluative systems. Cognitive systems or systems of knowledge are representations of patterns or models of, whereas value systems or evaluative systems are representations of patterns for or models for. If the pattern of is a representation of reality as a real form of everyday human behavior, then the pattern for is the representation of what is a guidance for humans to take action¹³. The problem then is how to connect the model of and the model for that. Geertz then offered a symbol system. The symbol system mediates the relationship between knowledge and value, from the symbol it is possible to find meaning systems, meaning systems by means of interpretation¹⁴. Thus through a system of meanings as intermediaries, a symbol can translate knowledge into value and translate value into knowledge¹⁵.

Symbolic cultural theory and cultural interpretation are understood as symbolic interpretive perspectives. The symbolic interpretation is used to study the symbol of the *Oppo* ritual which is understood and interpreted by the *Taba* both for spiritual and practical purposes.

C. Research Method

1. Research Location

This research was conducted in Sangapati Village, Pulau Makian Subdistrict, South Halmahera Regency, North Maluku Province. This location was chosen because first, there is religious education from kindergarten to high school. Second, there are 31 families returning from post-conflict refugees after more than 20 years and thirdly, the *Oppo* ritual is consistently performed in this village.

2. Sources and Types of Data

The type of research used is descriptive qualitative. The data obtained is presented in narrative form. The type of data consists of primers obtained through observation and interviews. Secondary data were obtained from books, journals, articles and sources from online media.

3. Data Collection Techniques: Observation, Interview and Documents Study

Observation was carried out by observing the *Oppo* ritual regarding equipment, actors involved and activities carried out, researchers were also involved as both *meneyani* and *hajat*. Interviews were conducted with informants in the form of regular question and answer then continued with in-depth interviews, discussions and confirmations. As a completeness of data collection, the results of observations and interviews are documented.

4. Techniques for determining informants:

Informants are deliberately chosen based on their knowledge and participation in the *Oppo* represented by priests, educators, religious leaders, traditional leaders and ordinary people.

5. Research instruments.

Researchers as the main instrument, equipped with a cellphone camera to record the results of interviews and take pictures.

6. Data Analysis: Sorting, serving and concluding

The results of the study were arranged from the start of the study to completion by: First, categorizing the data according to the research questions. Second, write a report by narrating according to the data obtained, and third make a conclusion.

¹³Clifford Geertz. 1974. *The Interpretation of Culture: Selected Essays*. Terj. Fransico B Hardiman. 1992. *Kebudayaan dan Agama*. Yogyakarta, Kreasi Wacana. page 7

¹⁴Ibid .hal 9

¹⁵Ignas Kleden dalam (Clifford Geeertz. 1995. *After the Fact: Two Countries, Four Decades, One Anthropologist*. Ter Landung Smatupang. *After The Fact: Dua Negeri, Empat Dasawarsa, Satu Antroplogi*, 1998. Yogyakarta, LkiS, page xv

D. Results

Oppo is the ritual of the death of the Taba People which is carried out from the first day until the fortieth day. The first day to the ninth day was carried out in a row, divided into two models, namely the odd day *Oppo Lolo* and the even day *Oppo Kutu*. *Oppo Lolo* is served steamed rice cone steamed rice and *Oppo Kutu* is served *wohapoda ninonak* in the form of cakes and drinks tea and coffee. The only food that is enjoyed is only a small amount termed on sariat, the rest is wrapped to take home. *Leleyani* and the people who were present were more than half of the village population so there was an expression "the number could not be predicted". *Leleyani* must be served breakfast, lunch and ritual serving food. Meanwhile, other than serving food, must be given galgalas namely the sincerity of the host for fifty thousand each person, plus the budget of cigarettes that can reach tens of millions.

The number of male and village participants can reach more than half of the village population. All must be treated to eat tiaga times a day. Services provided by the host satisfactorily in order to get social prestige, the members needed could reach more than sixty million rupiah. The host is obliged to bear the costs from the first day to the eighth day, while the ninth day is the responsibility of the village community. For this reason, in addition to raising funds from families and relatives, it must be sufficient with a debt scheme, the amount of debt will be announced on the tenth day of palpolas (repayment). The less debt is valued as an honorable family, on the contrary the more debt will be denounced by the village community. In fact, many debts are not publicized, and will be paid in installments for years. When it was realized that the cost of the ritual oppo was complained of because it was a burden on families who were grieving, religious leaders from Muhammadiyah backgrounds together with community leaders and educators held a discussion. The result was decided that the *Oppo* ritual should be carried out simply so that it could save up to 75% in costs. But local mothers came equipped with kitchen utensils while sounding rejecting the results of the meeting, with the famous statement "we are busy, struggling in the kitchen, you only prepare raw materials and then sit, eat, drink coffee, smoke and walk up legs, so it is not appropriate to simplify *Oppo* rhythm ". Finally, the ceremony of the *Oppo* ritual continues today.

Efforts are now being made by groups in the Sangapati village community consisting of educators, religious leaders, community leaders, youth leaders and traders so that the *Oppo* is carried out simply without negating the substance of the ritual itself. Simplified oppo includes, the amount of interest, intention, time and place. The socialization was carried out on students in schools, mothers of majelis taklim and discussions between traders and village youth.

E. DISCUSSION

The women, especially the *Leleyani* mothers, have been in the funeral home since morning. The host is obliged to provide breakfast, in the form of cakes, betel nuts, clove cigarettes, coffee drinks and tea. After that they will group between 8-10 people according to the instructions from the coordinator who has been appointed by the host based on jobs, such as the rice filter group, the rice cooker group, side dishes etc. After lunch, activities are focused on cooking and preparing ritual offerings. The ritual food is served in the form of *dadan* (cone-shaped rice) four people each every *dadan*. After making sure enough for a celebration, the next meal is intended for the khalyak, the men to eat at the funeral home and take it home. In the local phrase "eat as much as you want and wrap it up, you can still tell the shortcomings of the host, let alone ignored".

The *Leleyani* besides social solidarity and emotional similarity, one of the things they do is to joke, gossip to the production of stories that embarrass themselves and their families. For example, unconsciously, a mother who made a confession before the *Leleyani* that "the child she was carrying was not the result of a relationship with a legitimate husband". This case developed and caused the two to divorce and now each has a new partner. Likewise also with the story of a father who made the pilgrimage to the holy land of Mecca but was displaced since leaving until returning to his homeland actually happened in front of his own wife so felt very humiliated. There is a famous phrase "if you want to know all the good and bad information in this village, come to the *Oppo* ritual as *Leleyani*".

In addition to the fun of gathering, *Leleyani* is actually used as a place of escape, because it can divert the food and drink needs of the family during the *Oppo* ritual at the funeral home. This happens because every time you come, you can enjoy breakfast, lunch and eat food. Not only he himself as a *Leleyani*, every meal can also include all his family. Likewise, the food is wrapped for family at home.

Now, socialization has begun to be carried out by groups of educators and religious leaders, so that the implementation of the ritual of oppo is carried out simply without having to eliminate its substance. Namely first, *Leleyani* enough among close relatives. Both intentions are limited to only the *bobato afterlife* (priests, preachers, and modim), community leaders and educator figures. Third, the duration of the *Oppo* is sufficient to be carried out only four times, namely the odd third day, the fifth united, the seventh and the ninth put together. Then even the second and fourth days were put together, the sixth and the eighth were put together. The four times and places were held in the mosque after the Asr prayer. From this scheme, it can be estimated that the cost required is not more than fifteen million rupiah so that it is easily addressed by family and close relatives. This effort began to reap results, as evidenced in 2019, there were two *Oppo* rituals shortened by the duration of the term termed *lalolo* (reduction).

F. CONCLUSION

1. Oppo rituals are now used by rural communities as a place to eat for free.
2. Oppo rituals are used by mothers as new kitchens and gossip production.
3. There is an educated group that wants the oppo to be simplified, both the amount of interest and intention and the duration of time.

REFERENCES

- Anggariani, D. and Sahar, S. 2018. *Oppo: Ritual Kematian Orang Taba di Pulau Makian Maluku Utara*. Makassar. Research and Publishing Center LP2M UIN Alauddin Makassar.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1995. *After the Fact: Two Countries, Four Decades, One Anthropologist*. Terj. L. Simatupang. 1998. *After The Fact: Dua Negeri, Empat Dasawarsa, Satu Antropologi*. Yogyakarta: LkiS.
- , 1974.. *The Interpretation of Culture: Selected Essays.*, Terj. Francisco Budi Hardiman. 1992. *Tafsir Kebudayaan*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.
- 1974. *The Interpretation of Culture: Selected Essays*. Terj. Francisco Budi Hardiman. 1992. *Kebudayaan dan Agama*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.
- Haviland, A. William. 1985. *Anthropology*. Terj. R.G. Soekadijo. 1988. *Antropologi, Jilid 2*. Jakarta. Erlangga.

- Kleden, Ignas. *Kata Pengantar*. Dalam Geertz Clifford. 1995. *After the Fact: Two Countries, Four Decades, One Anthropologist*. Terj. L. Simatupang. 1998. *After The Fact: Dua Negeri, Empat Dasawarsa, Satu Antropologi*. Yogyakarta: LkiS
- Mashadi. 2016. Shades of Mysticism in Tradition Religious Ceremony (Anthropological Studies Against Islamic Phenomenon In the City of Gorontalo). *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publication*, Volume 6, Issue 12 December 2016.
- Tangdilintin, L.T. 2104. *Toraja dan Kebudayaanya*. Makassar. Body of Study and Writing of South Sulawesi History.
- Turner, Victor. 1982. *The Forest of Symbols, Aspect of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca dan London. Ornell University Press.
- Wijayanto. 2018. *Tradisi Upacara Kematian dalam Kejawean Urip Sejati di Desa Jeruk Widul, Kec. Guri Subo Kb. Gunung Kidul*. Hal.
- Winangun, Y.W Wartaya. 1990. *Masyarakat Bebas Struktur : Liminalitas dan Komonitas menurut Victor Turner*. Yogyakarta. Kanisius