

The Tulude Traditional Ceremony In Christian Perspective

Mychael Dimes Antameng¹

ABSTRACT

Culture, customs and traditions in people's lives, are no longer seen as taboo or should not be tampered with, because of culture, customs and traditions become a bridge in preaching the gospel. Even the Christian community or church is growing in the midst of customs, culture and traditions. Thus there is a role or fair share of culture in the growth of the gospel message. The gospel penetrates all lines of human life including culture, customs and traditions, because "Jesus Christ comes first in all things". Jesus Christ is superior to all cultures, traditions and customs in the community. God bestows culture, customs and traditions in human life to be able to introduce Himself to people who are very limited in understanding God, so that the gospel can be preached by means of culture, customs and traditions.

Keywords : Tulude, Christian Prespective

Introduction

Culture becomes essential in providing a picture of attitudes and norms in a community or region, like the Sangihe tribe in Nusa Utara region. There is still a preserved culture that gives a special feature of their lives, namely Tulude. The Sangihe people annually carry out this ceremony and never skip it since it has become a culture which is scheduled in regional government events.

Tulude traditional ceremony is held by the Sangihe community every January 31. In this ceremony, it is not only the elders who play roles, but also the church. The goal is for the development of the church quantitatively and qualitatively. This ceremony becomes an approaching tool in carrying out the mission instructed by the Lord Jesus as the head of the Church to make all the nations His disciples (Stephen Tong, 2004, 35).

Based on this, the writers tri to analyze the Tulude Traditional Ceremony in Christian Perspective with the expectation that it can contribute to the writers themselves, to the readers which are students, lecturers, the wider Christian community and the public that the intrinsic concept of this ceremony which is not related to Christian faith can be changed to be the tool of gospel. And finally the writers' and the readers' insights will be opened to re-discover culture as a means of gospel.

Method

This study used qualitative methods. The main source is the data and the writers are the key instruments in collecting and interpreting data (Bogdan and Bilklen, in Williams, 1988). The activities were observing the surrounding environment by interacting with the Sangihe people and trying to use their language and interpretation about the world around them. From these activities, the writers obtained descriptive data in written and oral forms from the public/interviewees and documentation data of the Sangihe tribe life.

Based on the social phenomena found in the life of the Sangihe tribe, it is expected that by using a qualitative descriptive approach, the writers can provide a more detailed explanation about the social symptoms as intended in the research problem (Manase Malo, 1985).

Results And Discussion

Sangihe Community Life

In this section, the writers will discuss the life of the sangihe community in several descriptions, namely the geographical condition, the state of the population, and the religion of the indigenous people.

The Geographical Conditions

The Sangihe and Talaud Islands lie between the Sulawesi sea and the Pacific ocean. It consists of 70

¹ Program Studi Musik Gereja, Fakultas Seni dan Ilmu Sosial Keagamaan, Institut Agama Negeri Manado, Jalan Bougenville Tateli 1 Mandolang, Minahasa E-mail: mychaclantameng123456@gmail.com

islands. They are like an island bridge connecting Minahasa with the northern part of Sulawesi and Mindanao, the largest island of the Philippine islands. The islands in Sangihe and Talaud are the group of Tagulandang islands, consisting of Tagulandang Island, Ruang Island, Pasige Island and Biaro Island; Siau island group, which consists of Buhias Island, Pahepa Island, Makalehi Island, Mahangetang Island; Sangihe Island group, which consists of Sangihe Island and Morore Island; and groups of Talaud islands, which consist of Kabaruan Island, Salibabu Island, Karakelang Island, Karatung Island, Miangas Island, Marampit Island, Kakorotan Island.

The State of Population

The origin is unknown but it is including the Malay-Polynesian or Austronesian tribes. In folklore, both Tarnate and Mindanao are referred to as their native land. There are even stories that describe family relationships with angels who come to the world to bathe and one of them is arrested to be a bride (D. Brilman, 2000, 25). However, most of their appearance is mixed but cannot be ascertained. These islands were discovered by Ferdinand de Magelhaesn in his famous discovery voyage in 1521 and have been in contact with westerners and since then the relationship have been maintained.

They were also in contact with the whalers in America. Since a long time ago, the Chinese and the Arabs have started trading with the residents and marrying indigenous women. As brave sailors, the residents of Sangihe and Talaud islands have migrated by boats to various parts of the archipelago since centuries ago.

The Sangihe language is used by the people who live in Sangihe and the Talaud language is used by the people who live in Talaud. These two languages are included in the Filipino and Austronesian language groups with a slightly different dialect. Beside these languages, they also use Malay language

The population is not divided into tribes but families. The head of the family, the father, is very respected. It is kinship that makes the Sangihe people attached to each other, although they are already in another region. They have a long pedigree list and they memorize it well so that the family line will be easily found. Palose in Sangihe language meaning cooperation and continuity becomes the basic principle for them in building houses, in holding parties and even in griving . Kinship binds

the Sangihe and Talaud people to care and help each other.

Indigenous Religion

In ancient times, the inhabitants of the Sangihe Talaud islands had animistic beliefs or a mixture of "mana" beliefs, the worship of the dead, and the beliefs in spirits and gods.

"Mana" belief

"Mana" is a Melanesian word stating the power of secret magic. The Sangihe Talaud people believe that nature, humans, animals, trees and plants and everything can bring both happiness and disaster. Therefore, it is very important to prevent this power from causing disaster to humans, such as drought and damage to plants and even death. There are certain people having amulets considered to be able to fight these powers. However, if this power is already working, the people must stay at home and only do important work.

The worship of the Dead.

In the past, the people of Sangihe and Talaud believed that people who have died, their spirits are considered always in the environment of people who are still alive. Fear of the spirits of the deceased dominates the entire scope of their lives especially when they want to build a house, to start farming, to start a long journey, and to get married. So whatever they want to do, it is always adjusted with the will of the dead.

When there are sickness and disaster, various sacrificial offerings are held to calm the spirits of the dead. If it does not work, the shamanism practice is done by communicating with the spirits of the dead to find out the cause of the suffering experienced.

The belief in spirits and gods

The spirits are recognized as having a great influence in the good and bad of life of the nature and humans. However, the volcano eruption, the high waves, the earthquakes, are caused by the power of the gods. Among these gods, there are good ones who can be asked for help in hardships and there are evil ones that need to be known.

Tulude Traditional Ceremony

Background

Long ago, the ancestors of the Sangihe and Talaud people believed in the existence of the spirits (the creatures), such as the spirits of the dead and the watchmen. They believed that every place has spirits (creatures) as its keeper. The spirit becomes a friend and even a protector if its needs are nurtured and his existence is respected. If not, the spirits will be angry and wreaking disaster for the population. Therefore, the spirits are offered food, valuable things, sometimes animals and even humans (Semuel Muhaling, 2010, 1). Thereafter, come Christianity which changes the direction of this worship to Almighty God by devoting a whole life to serve God, as the object of worship Tulude ceremony.

Tradition and culture are still thick in the life of the Sangihe community when modernization and globalization continue to pound the national culture. The noble values of the ancestors are still preserved. One of them is the Tulude Traditional Ceremony, which is held annually at the beginning of the year. The meaning of the word 'tulude or menulude' which comes from the word 'suhude' is reject. In a broad sense Tulude means refusing to continue to depend on the past and prepare to face the next year. Tulude is a thanksgiving to Almighty God for the abundance of blessings that He has given over the past year.

Tulude is not only held in the Sangihe Islands Regency, but also in other Regencies in North Sulawesi where the Sangir Tribe located, such as in Bitung, Manado, Gorontalo, and other regions. In the Sangihe Islands Regency, Tulude is held on January 31. Tulude in Beeng Darat is usually held every two years on an even year. A week before the performance, the Beeng Darat community had worked together to prepare a semi-permanent bamboo building at Lapangan Pasir as the center of the activity. The first day is began with tulude worship at the church. After that, the village officials, traditional bodies and the community headed to the house of Kapitalaung (the term for the village head) to pick him up to the place of the ceremony. The pickup of the Kapitalaung was accompanied by Upase Dance, Tagonggong music, and the Sangir traditional song. Upase dance illustrates the readiness of the king's escort in each battle. In the Tulude ceremony, some people wore traditional Sangir clothing called Lakutepu . After picking up Kapitalaung, the event is continued with Cakalele dance played by two people in turn. The

Cakalele dance is also a war dance, dancers carrying machetes and handkerchiefs (lenso) which symbolize the dignity of the population that must be guarded. The Cakalele dance is more lively with the accompaniment of the drum of Tagonggong music.

In the evening, the community picked up the Tamo Cake at the house of one of the elders to be brought to the ceremony location. The Tamo cake is the symbol of the Tulude ceremony. It will be cut the next day. The pickup of the Tamo Cake is continued with the Gunde Dance all night long. The next day is the highlight of the Tulude ceremony which is the cutting of the Tamo Cake. It is in cone shape and it is made of rice, tubers, sugar and coconut oil. At the end of it, there is an egg symbolizing new life. A Sangir Culturist, Alffian Walukow explained that the most important part in making the Tamo Cake is the "memoto tamo" ritual.

The person assigned to cut the tamo cake must deliver sasalamate called tamo sasalamate. The contents of the tamo salamalamate are about tamo itself and messages or advice about kindness to many people. The series of Tulude ceremony in Beeng Darat Island is closed with the Four Wayer dance which was followed by all people. The Four Wayer Dance is a mass folk dance because it involves many dancers who will form a big circle. The Four Wayer dance movements are adopted from the daily activities of Sangir people, for example picking cloves, fishing, and so on. The existence of Tulude Ceremony revealed that Indonesia is prosperous in culture. In the corner of this country, local wisdom still continues growing and preserving.

b. The Tradition, Tulude Traditional Ceremony, of the Nusa Utara community in the Sangihe, Talaud and Sitaro Islands today.

The "Tulude" traditional ceremony is an annual celebration inherited by the ancestors of the Nusa Utara people (the Sangihe, Talaud and Siau Tagulandang Biaro islands) in the northern tip of North Sulawesi. This sacred and religious ceremony has been carried out for centuries by the Sangihe and Talaud ethnic communities, so that it cannot be eliminated or forgotten by any generation. This tradition has been embedded in the treasure of customs, traditions and culture of the Nusa Utara community. Moreover, this cultural tradition is slowly and surely beginning to be accepted generally as a cultural tradition of the people in North Sulawesi and Indonesia, because where there is a Sangihe-Talaud ethnic community, surely there will be a Tulude ceremony.

Tulude is essentially a thanksgiving ceremony for Mawu Ruata Ghenggonu Langi (The Almighty God) for His blessings on humans during the past year. However, for the practical implementation, many community groups do not fully hold it as a ceremony, but in the form of thanksgiving worships at the RT level, the neighborhood, the village, congregations, harmonious organizations and other community groups. However, whatever form it takes, the nature of Tulude itself remains the basis for its implementation every year. Centuries ago, the Tulude traditional ceremony was held on December 31, where it is the end of the year and a perfect time to carry out the Tulude ceremony.

Definition of Tulude is refusing the old year and welcoming the new year. In the pagan tradition of the Sangihe and Talaud ancestors, the rejecting year event was manifested by a seaside ceremony by refusing, pushing or releasing a small boat made of latolang wood (a type of wood that grows straight without branching) with a certain load. The boat is pushed released or washed by the elders into the sea as a symbol of everything bad in the past year is thrown away or washed into the sea so that it no longer happened to the local villagers in the new year. If the boat is carried by the ocean currents and stranded on the beach or neighboring village, the person who finds it must reject and wash it back into the sea, because it is believed that if it is not washed away, then all the disaster and illnesses happened at the community where the boat from, will move to the place where the boat is stranded.

When Christianity and Islam came in the territory of Sangihe and Talaud in 19th century, the Tulude traditional ceremony was loaded with evangelistic contents and the pagan traditions gradually began to be destroyed. As a matter of fact, the day of its implementation, which is usually on December 31, by the convention agreement, was changed to January 31 of the following year. It was done because December 31 is the busiest time for the Christians in Sangihe and Talaud. A week before, they have been busy with the Christmas Eve service, then on December 31, they are busy with the end of the year worship and the preparations to welcome the new year. Due to the overcrowding and busyness of these worships and to keep the worship uninterrupted by the Tulude ceremony, the implementation date was changed to January 31. Moreover, in 1995, the DPRD and government of the Sangihe-Talaud island regency, established with the Regional Regulation that January 31 is the anniversary of the Sangihe Talaud and the main event is the Tulude ceremony. In this ceremony,

there are various traditional contents held. First, the Tamo traditional cake is made at the house of an elder at the night before the ceremony. Then, some preparations are made for the troop escort, the dancers of Gunde dance, salo dance, kakalumpang dance, Four Wayer dance, masamper singing group, the establishment of elders as the Tamo cake cutter, the preparation of elders for carrying the Tatahulending BANUA, the salvation prayer, a leader of the ceremony called Mayore Labo, and the preparation of the presence of Tembonang u Banua (the leader of the country according to the level of government at the flag ceremony such as the village head, sub-district head, regent/mayor or governor) and Wawu Boki (the wife of the country's leader) and the invitations distribution to all members of the community to attend and bring food for the Saliwangu Banua (The people's party for eating together) event.

The Tulude traditional ceremony is held in the afternoon until in the evening for about 4 hours. The 4 hour time is calculated starting from the Tamo traditional cake pickup at the manufacturing house and then carried around the village or around the city to be brought into the ceremony location. Before the Tamo cake is brought in, Tembonang u Banua (the Village Head, sub-district head, Mayor/Regent/Governor) must be in the main ward to pick up the arrival of the cake).

The Purpose of the Tulude Traditional Ceremony

To be thankful for God's guidance in the past year. Gratitude is the content of the Tulude ceremony because one year has been spent together with God. God helps and preserves life, gives blessings through their work, the harvesting and the fishing which are the occupations of the Sangihe Talaud community.

To Refuse disasters that come to damage the stability of human life. In the Tulude ceremony, the people united in rejecting all kinds of disasters. There are no harvest failures due to crop pests or damage from wild boar, mice and others. Likewise, there is no failure catching the fish in the sea. They also reject all kinds of diseases, accidents. Both pestilence and pain, their accidents refused to befall the community. They want health, peace and prosperity to accompany their life journey in the new year.

To Ask God to provide sustenance in struggling for life next year. The Sangihe Talaud people ask

God to bless them in every effort and work they do. Everything they do will be abundant. In the Tulude traditional ceremony, they asked God to not let them fail in whatever they do, but to be successful because God help and preserve their lives. They believe that only with God's help they will succeed.

1. Tulude Traditional Ceremony viewed From Christian perspective

a. Gratitude for God's inclusion and protection

Basically the Tulude ceremony aims to give thanks to the "genggona langi" as the supreme god living in the supreme sky. The society strongly believes in the preservation of this supreme deity. However, because of the Gospel, this concept turned into a gratitude to Almighty God in Jesus Christ.

God's people give thanks to Him not for what they hope to be happened in their lives, but to give thanks and praise Him for whatever situation they are in. "For God is the King of all the earth; praise Him with understanding" (Merlin R. Carothers, t.th, 12). It is only in the light of God's word that the Tulude ceremony is preserved because culture is also part of God's representative. Thus, from this culture, God is glorified and it also eliminates idolatry due to human ignorance caused by sin.

b. Rejecting the destruction that comes to damage the stability of life.

The second aspect of the Tulude traditional ceremony conducted by the Sangihe and Talaud people is to reject the destruction disrupting the stability of their lives. They believe it can be done because they have been given authority or power as children of God. Authority can be called "power without power" because the person who does it has no power within himself. There are various authorities, such as the local police officers have authority, so do the ministers and the president. However, their power is not equal and also they do not have the same quality.

At the beginning, the ceremony is without the knowledge of Jesus, so that this culture expects to be avoided from disaster to the gods who are the idols worship. The object of this request must be straightened out and given a new concept that asking to avoiding disaster is a request that can be granted by God who is present in Jesus. All requests are only for Jesus, and Jesus who is in power and has given power to the believers to grant their wishes to avoid disaster, because Jesus do not give disaster to His people who fear in Him and it takes faith to believe in the power of Jesus, "Christians must be optimist

because the Holy Spirit shows the fact that God is guiding" (David Mc Kenna, 2000, 226). The Holy Spirit who is God living in the lives of His people will be able to reveal God's kindness and to give power for avoiding disaster.

c. Ask God to give His blessings

The Tulude ceremony also contains a request to God through prayer. The content of the prayer is to ask for blessings both for personal and for all the family and even for the society in general, the future generations and for the change of the world. This is the same as the prayer of Jabez in I Chronicles 4:10, which is "may you bless me abundantly and expand my territory and may your hand be with me and protect me from disaster, so that pain does not trouble me". Jabez' prayer is a call for God to bless him so that he can bless others, change his generation and change the world (Bruce Wilkinson, 2002, 1).

Prayer in a holy duty

"Prayer is the way God gives us to get what we need from Him" (James Boyce, 2002, 646). Prayer is a form of human communication with God. Prayer is a sacred duty, so God's people must pray. Prayer is a privilege that has no equal. They can bring all their needs, burdens and requests to Him through prayer. They must pray constantly with no fatigue since praying is a sacred duty given by God. The obligation to pray is a task and responsibility as great as the other tasks that must be done. Just like the God's people must give, love, live righteously and help others so does prayer.

Prayer is a progressive need

Prayer is a progressive need that is why God's people must keep praying. "Keep on praying" (I Thessalonians 5:17). The word "keep" means in every state of life. It means nothing valuable and important in their lives outside the circle of prayer. They must pray for every need. God can help them as an answer to prayer. In the Tulude ceremony prayer is a principle and never be lost. Therefore, prayer is an important point to convey all the needs to God without interruption.

Conclusion

Culture can not be separated from human life. It becomes the color and characteristics of the society in which it is located. Nevertheless, culture needs to be enlightened with God's Word, thus it can be a glory to God. The conclusions given are:

Culture or customs which is not opposite the Word of God can be accepted and carried out as a tool in the community about a living God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, the Word became flesh. Thus, many people will kneel and confess that Jesus is the Lord and Savior. Culture is contextualized to show who is the true God (Jesus Christ).

The Tulude ceremony held by the Sangihe and Talaud people can be specifically said as a tool to declare God's supremacy over the universe. That He has the authority in this universe. There is no other God and He is the only supremacy on heaven and earth and all its contents.

In the Tulude traditional ceremony, they expressed gratitude for God's guidance throughout the year. They praise and exalt His name because He always expresses kindness and loyalty to them.

In the Tulude traditional ceremony, they want to practice the power or authority that God has given them. They want to practice the power or authority that God has given them. They want to bind and reject every strategy of Satan who wants to obstruct the blessings God has given them. They reject any disruption in their business such as in agriculture sector, in fishery sector, etc. They even resisting sickness and disaster planned by the devil.

Tulude ceremony becomes a tool for them to pray for their prosperity. They pray to God to bless them in all their work and effort throughout the new years.

Reference

- Boyce James: *Menanggapi Tuhan Dalam Doa*. Gandum Mas Malang. pp. 646 (2002)
- Brilman D.: *Kabar Baik di Bibir Pasifik*. PT Remaja Rosdakarya Jakarta. pp. 25. (2000)
- Carothers R Merlin: *Kuasa Dalam Pengucapan Syukur*. Mimerti Press Sukabumi. Pp. 12 (t.th)
- Kenna Mc David: *Tugas-Tugas Roh Kudus*. Gandum Mas Malang. pp. 226 (2000)
- Muhaling Samuel. *Sekilas Tentang Upacara Tulude*. t.p Bitung. pp.1 (2010)
- Tong Stephen: *Dosa dan Kebudayaan*. Lembaga Reformed Injili Indonesia Jakarta. pp. 35 (2004)
- Wilkinson Bruce: *Doa Yabes Untuk Remaja*. Interaksara Batam. pp. 1 (2002)