

Inheriting Tradition: Acculturation at the Naek Ayun Ceremony of Kutai Community in Kutai Kartanegara Regency

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Abstract

The Naek Ayun ceremony which is thought to be a legacy of pre-Islamic traditions is still practiced by the Kutai people in Kutai Kartanegara Regency, who are generally Muslim. The continuity of the pre-Islamic tradition to date is the result of negotiations and acculturation between pre-existing cultures and Islam. This study was conducted to see the forms of cultural crossing or acculturation that occurred and the meaning of the ceremony for the participants in the present. The field research was conducted in Tenggarong District, Kutai Kartanegara Regency, using a qualitative descriptive method. Based on the results of this study, it can be predicted that the existence of the Naek Ayun ceremony which has its roots in pre-Islamic times will continue in the future. The procession and meaning of the Naek Ayun ceremony are inherited by the new generation dynamically through the stages of being processed, created, and renewed with the tasmiyah ceremony. The general meaning behind the series of activities and symbols of the Naek Ayun ceremony is an expression of gratitude to God for the grace that has been bestowed upon the society. In addition, the Naek Ayun ceremony means maintaining good relations between humans and their environment.

Keywords

tradition, acculturation; naek ayun; Kutai Kartanegara



I. Introduction

Traditional ceremonies related to human life cycle -from birth to death- are still maintained by modern society today. Ceremonies or rituals are patterns of behavior that humans carry out for certain beliefs they hold. One of the ceremonies that continues to develop is the ceremony related to the birth and development of baby. Tradition is something that is passed down from the heritage of the ancestors to the next generation in a relay descends performed by the indigenous communities that have become deeply entrenched the culture in life. (Purba, N. 2020)

The Kutai people in Kutai Kartanegara Regency recognizes a ceremony called naekayun, which is the ceremony to start the baby's stage of being put in a cradle to be swung. The people of Kutai ethnic group both who live in rural and urban areas still practice the naekayun ceremony. Even now, many businesses provide rental services for naekdaun ceremony equipment packages with varying shapes and prices. The emergence and development of the naekayun ceremony equipment rental business is a sign that the tradition still gets many requests or supporters, of course with all its modifications.

It is not known exactly when the Naek Ayun ceremony began. Kutai people in Kutai Kartanegara Regency believe that the ceremony has existed since before Islam entered East Kalimantan. Thus, this ceremony has become a tradition in the culture of the Kutai people, in the sense that it has been patterned and has been practiced for generations (Ahimsa-

Putra, 2016). This ceremony is still maintained by the people of Kutai who are generally Muslim.

The advent of Islam in various regions of the archipelago took place over a long period of time or in different periods (Daulay, 2007). The entry of Islam in East Kalimantan is estimated to have occurred during the reign of Aji Raja Mahkota (1525-1600 AD). According to some sources, the entry of Islam in Kalimantan in the 15th century was brought by scholars named Sheikh Yusuf and Sheikh Abdul Makmur. Sheikh Yusuf is known as Tuan Haji TunggangParangan who comes from West Sumatra, while the cleric Sheikh Abdul Makmur has the title of RI Bandang (TuandiBandang) from Malacca (Disdikbud Kukar, 2021; Septiawati, 2019; Salasilah Kutai, tt). As a ruler, Aji Raja Mahkota who had accepted Islam pioneered and developed Islam in his territory so that it was finally accepted by the wider community.

Based on the assumption that the NaekAyun tradition existed before the Kutai people embraced Islam, then this tradition has been going on for hundreds of years. However, inheriting the tradition does not mean following the whole form of the previous ceremony. Traditions are actively passed on by adding, subtracting, or synthesizing them based on the socio-cultural dynamics of the heir generation. The heirs of tradition will create existing traditions with other cultures -- new, foreign, and different -- that they face and accept. Many studies have shown how Islam is accepted and practiced without leaving the local culture that has developed previously.

This is clearly seen, among others, from studies by Roibin (2010), Miharja (2014), Sodiman (2018), Muara & Ajmin (2020), which show acculturation forms of acceptance of Islam in society. The entry of Islam in Java, for example, was accepted by cross-cultural or blending with pre-existing habits or customs. Various slametans are still practiced in the life of the Javanese people until now without obscuring their Islamic religious identity. Slametan is a ritual performed by the Javanese as a form of gratitude to the creator for a gift received. Likewise, Islam in Sundanese society, where aspects of life typical of Sundanese people reflect the values of Islamic teachings (Miharja (2014). Sodiman (2018) shows that the Tolaki ethnic community in Konawe Regency still maintains a belief system in ombu (God), and sangia (ancestral spirits living in the sky) even though the Tolaki people are Muslims. The meeting of local culture in the archipelago with Islam resulted in a blend of various aspects, both political, social, artistic, etc. It is not unusual when cultural features in the Hindu-Buddhist phase can still be found. Therefore, religious practice is unique and typical because it blends with the cultural style of the local community, while this religious practice does not eliminate the main values of Islamic teachings (Astuti, 2017).

Not many studies have been done related to the Kutai people's NaekAyun ceremony. Among the few in number, there is a fairly representative study conducted by Septiawati (2019). Septiawati studied the values of Islamic teachings contained in the Naek Ayun ceremony in the community in Mangkurawang Village, Kutai Kartanegara. The rest, several other writings only provide a glimpse, namely the writings of Hardjanto et al. (undated) and Rachim (1984). The studies that have been carried out are still only a glimpse or brief description. There has been no study that reviews the value and meaning of the Naek Ayun ceremony in more depth from the perspective of the research community.

This study aims to describe the procession and meaning of the Naek Ayun ceremony, to see the cross-cultural form that occurs. In addition, this study is also important to know the current practice and existence of the Naek Ayun ceremony of the Kutai community. The choice of focus is part of a larger framework for documenting or inventorying regional traditions, in order to support the efforts to promote culture in accordance with the mandate of Law No. 5 of 2017.

II. Research Method

The field research was conducted in the Tenggarong District, Kutai Kartanegara Regency. The location of this research was chosen because the population is considered appropriate to represent the Kutai community as traditional actors. This study is a qualitative descriptive study to describe the current practice of the Naek Ayun ceremony. The process of collecting data using library research and field studies. Bibliography is used to find the history of traditions, processions, and the practice of Naek Ayun that may have been written by previous authors. The field study uses observation techniques and in-depth interviews. Observation techniques are carried out to collect data by observing attitudes, behavior, and the atmosphere of implementation during the Naek Ayun procession. The structured interview technique was implemented to collect data about the views and meanings of the Naek Ayun tradition according to the actors. Data collection was carried out by means of individual interviews, as well as in the form of guided discussions.

The informants selected were ethnic Kutai people, both from the general public and among palace relatives. The emic perspective is used in this study, to explore knowledge, experience, understanding, appreciation and meaning about the Naek Ayun tradition from the perspective of the actor/researcher. The data obtained at the initial stage were presented in a focused discussion forum or focus group discussion (FGD). The goal is to confirm the initial data, and at the same time get more in-depth information. The analysis stage is carried out from the initial stage of data collection until the data collection stage is considered sufficient and final. The final stage of this study is the writing of the results in the form of descriptive writing, as a representation of the tradition of the Naek Ayun ceremony of the Kutai community.

III. Result and Discussion

3.1 The Existence of the Naek Ayun Tradition

Is it true that the Naek Ayun ceremony is still generally practiced by the Kutai people? The results of this study indicate that the tradition is still carried out by the community in general and among the sultan's relatives. Based on this study, it can be predicted that the tradition will persist in the future. There are at least four factors that perpetuate the practice of *Naek Ayun*. First, strong Islamic values attached to the *Naek Ayun* ceremony. In this case, when the Kutai people practice the Naek Ayun tradition, it also means strengthening the religious values they adhere to. The values attached to this ceremony are in line with or not against the values in Islamic teachings. The results of Septiawati's study (2019) confirm it, namely the strong values of faith, morality, and togetherness in social life at the ceremony. She shows that the educational values contained in Naek Ayun are the values of obedience to the teachings of Islam, in addition to social and togetherness values. The reading of the verses of the Qur'an is one of the mandatory events in the series of *Naek Ayun* ceremonies which is interpreted as habituation of Islamic educational values, namely the values of faith, morality, worship and social.

Second, the habit of swinging a baby in the daily parenting pattern of the Kutai people. Almost every baby in the Kutai community is cared for by swinging. Usually, the cradle swing is rocked until the baby falls asleep. The purpose of putting a baby to sleep in a cradle is to make the sleep sounder and longer. With this condition, the parents or the baby's mother will have time to do daily homework. The cradle is in the form of a long cloth that is hung on a pole in the house that allows for a baby to swing. Because the habit

of babysitting by swinging is still being practiced, the *Naek Ayun* ceremony as a ceremony to enter the swinging stage needs to be done.

Third, belief in supernatural powers outside of humans. *Naek Ayun*, a kind of initiation ceremony entering the baby stage, can be swung in their daily lives. The ceremony needs to be practiced related to belief in supernatural beings or forces outside of humans that can harm the baby. For the Kutai people, there are taboos called *pamali* to put the baby to sleep in the cradle before the swing is done. Violating these taboos is feared to cause unwanted things to the baby, for example, the baby is shocked, falls, gets sick, or other dangers. It is these beliefs and concerns that perpetuate the tradition.

If it is absolutely necessary that the *Naek Ayun* ceremony cannot be held for a certain reason, then there is a substitute mechanism called *curiayun* or *nempong*. *Curi ayun* (literally stealing the swing) or *nempong* is an action that needs to be done by the baby's parents with the intention of asking permission for their child to be swung on a cradle before the *Naek Ayun* ceremony is carried out. *Curi ayun* is a traditional solution mechanism for people who have not been able or have not had time to perform the *Naek Ayun* ceremony, even though the time is reached for the child to be swung in a cradle. Ideally, the *Naek Ayun* ceremony is performed when the baby's age is between about 40 days to two months (60 days). The facts about *curiayun* or *nempong* show that the *Naek Ayun* ceremony is mandatory for the Kutai people.

Fourth, actors from various circles. Based on the results of the study, the actors or supporters of the practice of *Naek Ayun* came from the general public as well as from the relatives of the Kutai sultanate. The ceremonial processions carried out by ordinary people and among the sultan's relatives were relatively the same, although the atmosphere of the ceremony, the equipment used, and the details of the procession could be different. Traditions that are still practiced jointly by both ordinary people and also relatives of the palace are a strengthening element for its sustainability. The sultan's relatives can be said to be an elite group who are the guardians of the great tradition, a tradition that is seen as more refined and sublime.

3.2 *Naek Ayun* and *Tasmiyah* Ceremonies: A Cultural Cross

Based on field studies, it was found that in practice the *Naek Ayun* ceremony is inseparable from *tasmiyah*. *Tasmiyah* and also *aqikah* are ceremonies that must be practiced based on the guidance of Islamic teachings, while *Naek Ayun* is carried out as a legacy of the ancestral traditions of the Kutai community. Although it comes from different sources of provisions, the *Naek Ayun* ceremony is not abandoned when the people of Kutai practice Islam. There was a cultural cross that was evident from the *Naek Ayun* and *tasmiyah* ceremony processions. Following Marzali (2016), ceremonies/rituals and beliefs are the substance of the notion of religion. Each ceremony is full of symbols and meanings that function on psychological, cultural, and social aspects.

The informants acknowledged that *Naek Ayun* is not part of the teachings of Islam, but its implementation can be combined. There are almost no Kutai people who do *Naek Ayun* specifically/separately, apart from *tasmiyah* and or *aqikah*. *Tasmiyah* is the ceremony of giving name to the baby, so it must be done according to Islamic teachings. The essence of this procession is to give, declare, or say a name for the baby in unity with the prayers and good wishes offered for the baby. While *aqikah* is a ceremony of slaughtering animals (can be goats, sheep, or cows) according to Islamic religious provisions.

There are three combined patterns of performing the *Naek Ayun*, *tasmiyah* and *aqikah* ceremonies based on field findings, namely: a) *Tasmiyah*, *aqikah*, and *Naek Ayun*, b) *Tasmiyah* and *Naek Ayun*, c) *Aqikah* and *Naek Ayun*. The first combination is the most

preferred/ideal for the Kutai people, because the obligation of parents to carry out the ceremony for the baby is carried out at once on one day of celebration. However, if the funds are not sufficient, then the second and third combination is the solution that can be chosen. The third combination is rarely chosen because aqiqah does not have a special procession involving the baby. The choice of the second combination, namely tasmiyah and Naek Ayun is the most commonly chosen by the Kutai people.

3.3 Naek Ayun Procession: Meaning and Value

Ahimsa-Putra (2015) said that tradition is a symbolic device that is inherited from generation to generation. The symbol has two aspects, namely, the aspect of the symbol itself (*pelambang*) and the meaning aspect of the symbol (*linambang*). The nature of the two aspects is arbitrary, in the sense that there is no intrinsic relationship between the symbol and the symbol. The meaning of a symbol depends on mutual/public agreement (Ahimsa-Putra, 2020). Symbols in the form of actions or objects become a means of communication and transmission of the concepts of beliefs, values, and meanings between members of the community/society, including between generations.

The symbols and meanings contained in the stages of the *Naek Ayun* and *tasmiyah* ceremonies are presented in Table 1. Cultural crossings can be seen from the combination of elements of tradition and religion at the stages/ceremonial processions which are seen on three sides, namely the presence of prayer and *sholawat* or praise, the priest/ustad as the master the main ceremony, a new meaning that is in line with Islam. Most of the *tasmiyah* and *Naek Ayun* ceremonies are accompanied by prayers and sholawat or praises according to Islam. The main master of the ceremony is an imam/ustad, thus adding to the strong dimension of the Islamic religion in the whole ceremony. Usually, the priest is accompanied by someone, usually a woman, who specifically guides the *Naek Ayun* session. In addition, the content of the lecture and the meaning of the symbols in the whole ceremony are generally constructed from the perspective of religious teachings. Thus, it can be said that religion is capable of dominantly synthesizing and wrapping the entire implementation of the *Naek Ayun* ceremony with increasingly strong religious styles and values.

Table 1. Stages of the Naek Ayun Ceremony, Meaning, and Performers

No	Activity/symbol	Purpose/goal/meaning	Actor
1	Preparation	Deciding the master of the ceremony, inviting guests, preparing paraphernalia, and so on, for the success of the event.	Parents and relatives, kins, and neighbors.
2	Reading of prayer/ <i>sholawat</i> (prayer chant) / <i>barzanji</i> (reading of prophet Mohammad's life history)	Chanting praises, gratitude for the presence of a baby as a blessing from the creator, and offering prayers/hopes for the safety of the baby to adulthood.	Barjanzi group, ustadz (priest), all visitors.
2	Preaching	The substance of the preach generally reminds parents of their responsibilities towards their children.	Priest (<i>imam</i>)
3	Alternately inserting the baby in the cradles wing & taking the cloth	Marking the start of the baby can be rocked.	Relatives of senior people.

	mat (<i>lapik</i>).		
4	Hair cutting.	Carrying out the guidance in the holy book, called <i>bertahlul</i> . The hair cut is done for every baby at the time of giving the name (<i>tasmiyah</i>).	Relatives
5	Spreading plain flour. Done every time people cut the baby's hair.	Following the sunnah of the Prophet SAW. A baby is sprinkled with perfume (<i>jafarat</i> oil). Symboling life that spreads the fragrance that people like.	Relatives are in charge of cutting hair.
6	Sprinkle yellow rice.	Symbol of joy and gratitude for the fortune with those around him	Relatives.
7	Touching coin onto eyes.	Reminding the child to seek fortune.	Relatives,
8	Releasing a chick.	Symbolizing that the child will be free, mingle, and become part of society.	Relatives, ceremony master (a woman).
9	<i>Becerak lilin</i> Candle soot is put on the baby.	Introducing and reminding the child of light (brightness), something good (not darkness).	Relatives, ceremony master (a woman).
10	Feeding the baby.	Introducing a variety of foods. Introducing objects that symbolize life's obstacles that the child must face in the future with enthusiasm.	The baby's parents.
11	Setting foot on the ground and rock.	Symbolizing that the baby is a part of soil and earth, or the things to step on.	Relatives, ceremony master (a woman).
12	<i>Batumbang apam</i> .	Red and white <i>apam</i> bread are inserted onto a banana tree and then the breads are tasted on the baby. Meanwhile a candle stick lighted and held on top the banana leaves. This is a symbol gratitude and hope for light in life.	Baby's parents.
13	<i>Betimbang</i> . (Special process for a child who is born in the <i>Sapar</i> month).	The baby is weighed with the Holy Quran and other objects that are considered necessary in life, with the intention that the baby is protected by God and is able to meet the needs of life in the future.	Ceremony master and parents.
14	<i>Ketikai lepas</i> .	Releasing of things made from coconut leaves; sign of excitement and the end of the ceremony.	Master of ceremony.

Source: field results

Aside from the afore mentioned symbols, details of paraphernalia, materials, and equipments used in the ceremony also symbolize certain meanings. Paraphernalia used in Naek Ayun and Tasmiyah processions are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Paraphernalia, form, and meaning

No	Paraphernalia(symbol)	Form	Meaning (<i>linambang</i>)
1	Cradleswing & accessories To make a baby sleep.	The cradle swing consists of two poles with a wooden cross on top, wrapped in a yellow cloth that dangles. Cradle fruit (flower), Hair Fruit (ring).	Cradle swing is used to put the baby in and thanit is swung. Yellow color of the swing symbolizes prosperity. Cradle swing fruits: ornament of cradle/symbol of beauty. Ring: used for hair cut/symbol of prosperity.
2	<i>Tepong tawar.</i>	Water mixed with powder, perfume. Water mixed with yellow rice flour, perfume.	Symbolizing humans should spread kindness.
3	<i>Beras kuning</i> (yellowed rice).	Rice colored yellow.	Symbol of fortune and shares fortune with others.
4	<i>Piduduk</i>	Food and paraphernalia packaging, containing rice, bananas, coconut, coins, money, sugar, thread, needle, areca nut, betel.	Substitution of self, symbolizing the whole being of a person who is prayed for to be protected and free from danger.
5	Food	<i>Apam, pulut, kinca</i>	Food material/daily food.
6	Cloth	Cloth used as a base.	Symbol of level/layer.
7	Baby's shirt.	Cloth inscribed with the word Allah (Arabic letters) .	Symbol of protection for body and soul.
8	<i>Mandau</i> (a kind of traditional weapon used in Borneo).	<i>Mandau.</i>	Self-strength/self-protection.
9	Soil and rock.	Soil and rock.	Symbol of earth, nature, and environment
10	<i>Penjaga ayun</i> (cradle swing guard).	Iron in dragon shape.	Symbol of power that guard the cradle and the baby (only used for palace relatives).

Source: Filed results

As stated above, the meaning of the *Naek Ayun* ceremony at this time is more directed at expressing gratitude and at the same time asking for protection to God. Gratitude for the gift received in the form of the birth of a baby, is manifested by singing praises, and sharing fortune in the form of food and/or goods. Sharing here does not mean giving charity to people who are in need, but means sharing joy and fortune with neighbors and relatives. In this case, the *Naek Ayun* ceremony means reaffirming the vertical relationship between humans and God.

In addition, if viewed in more detail from the symbols used, the Naek Ayun ceremony itself can be meaningful as an acknowledgment or statement (in the form of action) of belief that humans are part of a large natural environment. It is realized that the baby will be part of the universe, so he or she must be able to establish a harmonious relationship with nature and everything in his life. Natural symbols such as water, soil, stones in ceremonies have the meaning that humans are part of nature. Setting foot on the ground and stone is a symbol that the baby is introduced to the earth on which to stand, where to live, and hope that there will be no disturbance during the journey of life on earth. Here, there is an awareness of the Kutai people about the relationship that must be maintained between humans and nature and all that is in it for the benefit of mutual survival.

The meaning of maintaining good relations between humans and the natural environment contained in the symbols of the *Naek Ayun* ceremony is starting to fade and tends to be hidden by some members of the community at this time. This meaning relates to the belief in the existence of creatures and forces other than humans on earth. This meaning is actually a local value that has a wise or positive value for the sake of creating environmental sustainability. This is in line with the findings of other studies, for example the study of Soehadha (2012) which shows how the belief system in the case of the Loksado people is full of wisdom values, which are very likely to be useful for efforts to improve environmental sustainability.

Based on the explanation above, several important values can be drawn from the series of Naek Ayun practices as follows.

a. religious values

Expression of deep gratitude to the creator is seen in all activities and processions. The presence of a baby and the process of its growth to adulthood is always interpreted as a gift from the creator. In addition to thanks giving, the Kutai people offer prayers and good wishes to the creator for the safety of the baby to adulthood. The community interprets the presence of a baby as a grace, gift, deposit and a form of trust from God given to the baby's parents. A baby born is not merely a matter of the form of human biological reproduction, but involves the creator or the giver of human life as a whole. From this point of view, it will have implications for the emergence of responsibilities that must be borne by both parents for the trust they receive in God. A form of gratitude to God for babies as a gift as well as a deposit from the Creator, is manifested in the responsibility of parents to protect, care for, and educate children so that they are able to be independent.

From there reflected the good expectations of parents for the child. Expectations about health and physical and personality development in children. From birth, that hope is said in prayers and reproduced in everyday life. Hopes and prayers for the baby are raised by both parents, relatives, and friends of community members. Very strong religious values are reflected in every procession carried out.

b. social value

Very strong social values can be seen from the beginning of the procession, namely, the involvement of relatives and kins from the preparation stage to the final stage. *Naek Ayun* is a vehicle to reunite with extended family, which involves two or three generations. Giving certain roles in the procession can be interpreted as respect for relatives and recognition of more real kinship. For example, the role of putting a baby into a cradle is given to relatives from the older group, while cutting hair is given to relatives who are younger.

The Naek Ayun procession is also a form of socialization for small children who usually attend *Naek Ayun* activities. They see the procession and social relations between

relatives, so they can see how social organization, the division of roles and responsibilities, and also the norms in interacting. Social values are taught through traditional events like this.

c. Value of physical / material welfare

Another value that is considered important by the Kutai people is material welfare. The baby is prayed for and is expected to meet the needs of his or her life so that he or she can live a prosperous life. The symbols that contain the meaning of prosperity can be seen from the yellow cloth used for cradles, and also gold for cutting hair. Overall, the Kutai people have the value of maintaining a balance in achieving economic and social welfare.

IV. Conclusion

The conclusion that can be drawn from this study is the occurrence of cultural cross/acclturation between Islam and local culture in the Naek Ayun tradition. The results of these negotiations and acculturation were able to preserve the ongoing Naek Ayun ceremony to this day. The main meaning contained is an expression of gratitude and praise to God for the blessings received. In other words, this ceremony is a confirmation of the vertical relationship between humans and the Creator. In addition, Naek Ayun implies maintaining good relations with the natural environment in which humans live. Although the latter meaning is not dominant, the concept of value maintaining a relationship with nature can be seen as a positive asset when directed to create a sustainable natural environment.

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