

CULTURAL BELIEF OF PETANG MEGANG RITUAL WITH SELF ACTUALIZATION ON MALAY COMMUNITY, PEKANBARU CITY - RIAU

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Abstract *Petang Megang* is a ritual known as *mandi balimau*, *Balimau Kasai*, *Potang Balimau*, *Potang Mogang*, *Balimau*, *Belangiran*, or *Pangir*. It is conducted to greet the holy month of Ramadan in Malay community in Riau. The cultural belief of the Malay population in Pekanbaru towards the *Petang Megang* ritual can be linked to self-actualization, which can form the Malay community's character. As a cross-disciplined research, this study is qualitative based on structured interviews and observations about cultural ideas and self-actualization. Moreover, it has been linked to several fields such as anthropology, cultural studies, and religion. Based on the interview and observation conducted during the data collection process, it is known that *Petang Megang* involves many people starting from the bath preparation process to food serving after visiting the graves. This comprises qualities that characterize Malay society's actualization, such as unity, mutual collaboration, inventiveness, low self-esteem, ethics, and tolerance. Furthermore, this ritual has a psychological impact on the Malay community of Pekanbaru City with an attitude of humility, help, cooperation, and a sense of togetherness and tolerance. The Malay culture's belief in the *Petang Megang* ritual has a meaning as well as a philosophical value that characterizes the character as the Malay's actualization.

Keywords: *Cultural Belief, Malay Community, Petang Megang Ritual, Self-Actualization.*

I. INTRODUCTION¹

There are traditions and rituals in culture, and cultural beliefs are also referred to as cultural beliefs. Malay community in Riau has an activity of swimming in a river or bathing in a public bathroom called *Petang Megang* to greet the holy month of Ramadan. *Petang Megang* (*mandi balimau*, *Balimau Kasai*, *Potang Balimau*, *Potang Mogang*, *Balimau*, *Belangiran*, *Pangir* Javanese communities name it *Dugderan* or *Padusan*) is to bring the Malay community together and build bonds of brotherhood, as well as to serve as a kind of self-actualization.

Petang Megang is a symbol of self-purification which is part of a culture that requires an understanding of hereditary heritage, where cultural beliefs require the presence of humans with religious concepts rather than cultural concepts. (Beyers, 2017) Cultural belief is often applied in various fields, such as economic studies (Marini, 2016), medical studies, and treatment in medical science. (Saptandari, 2016). Belief in cultural values could change people's behavior and patterns towards certain objects (Machmud, Medison, & Yani, 2020). However, it could make individual that does the ritual feel calmer and wiser (Rais, Sendow, Manajemen, Sam, & Manado, 2018). *Petang Megang* is a self-cleaning ritual before the month of Ramadan (Fatma & Lukito, 2021) and as an expression of gratitude for the entry of the holy month of Ramadan as well

as a symbol of purification and self-cleaning (Moekahar, 2018). *Petang Megang* ritual is a form of self-actualization (Bornstein, 2018) for Malay community in Pekanbaru which can cause feelings of joy and a sense of togetherness without feeling self-conscious (Özaslan, 2018).

Petang Megang ritual in Pekanbaru has a lot of meaning and various aspects of character value as self-actualization of the Malay communities itself which can form the cultural belief of the Malay community. The belief in *Petang Megang* ritual can be connected with self-actualization which can shape the character of the Malay community. Therefore *Petang Megang* practice has a very significant impact on Malay community in Pekanbaru City.

II. METHODS

This research is connected by cross-disciplines of social sciences, humanities, with raising phenomena in the field. Additionally, this study has been linked to several fields such as anthropology, cultural studies, and religion, however, there is a related issue towards historical values in *Petang Megang* ritual. It is qualitative research, where data collection focuses more on structured interviews and observations related to cultural belief and self-actualization.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The history of *Petang Megang* Ritual in Malay community has existed since the spread of Hinduism in the archipelago. The ritual itself was adapted similarly to the *Makara Sankranti* ceremony in Hinduism, which is an activity of bathing in the river to worship Gods and goddesses for a certain period using boiled or squeezed orange (lime) and traditional ingredients such as rice, turmeric, *pandan* leaves, and flowers or any ingredients that make the body fragrant. The context of self-actualization in this ritual is a form of philosophy in which the sins of individuals who participate in this ritual are lost with the flow of river water. This was stated by one of the Malay community members who attended every ritual.

"Petang Megang has a history that has existed since the entry of Hinduism in Indonesia, which used to be a ritual for Hindu worshipers, since the entry of Islam, it is used to welcome the month of fasting"

Petang Megang ritual has existed in an era of Malay kingdoms. After the entry of Islamic teachings in the archipelago, *Petang Megang* was carried out the day before the entry of the fasting month, namely as an overflow of joy for the entry of the holy month of Ramadan as well as a symbol of self-cleaning. *Petang Megang* Ritual is not included in *Sunnah* of the Prophet (in Islamic rules or *sunnah*) but is a tradition for the Malay community in Pekanbaru, neither a belief nor faith. This is following the customary motto based on "*adat bersendikan syara'*

(Islamic rules) Syara' bersendikan kitabullah" means, the culture is based on Islamic rules, and Islamic rules are based on *kitabullah* (Book of Allah). However, the philosophical values contained in *Petang Megang* ritual do not conflict with the teachings of Islam.

This is under the opinion of Malay community leaders;

"Evening holding does not have a naqli' argument, but this ritual or event is based on syara' or Islamic law, syara' is based on the book of Allah, but we only remind that we have a hereditary tradition that has been passed down from our parents"

Petang Megang ritual of holding in the Malay community of Pekanbaru has a systematic process that must be prepared before the ritual begins as an annual ritual event. This event is held the day before the fasting month, where the Malay community holds an event in the afternoon or evening. The ingredients which are used for bathing in *Petang Megang* such as lime (orange, lime, and *kapas* lime) as a mixture of water, scrubs (rice and turmeric), *pandan* leaves, and flowers as a smoothing agent for the face and skin on other parts of the body. The belief of the Malay community in *Petang Megang* ritual has something to do with the ingredients needed, one of which is lime (lime), in this case, it is symbolized as self-purification.

"The use of oranges or limes has a symbol of self-purification. In the past there was no soap, so they used oranges and flowers to clean the body because now there is shampoo and soap, so the use of oranges is only for legal requirements"

Petang Megang involves many people, such as preparing materials for showering so that this actualization gives rise to a message of cooperation that prioritizes social values and high brotherhood values in society which takes place every year. The character of self-actualization is reflected in the cooperation attitude which has a high feeling of empathy for the Malay communities. That is shown when preparing the materials and some utensils for bathing in the evening.

Petang Megang ritual is carried out by the Malay community. It usually begins with a pilgrimage to the graves of *Marhums* (*Batin* or Leader of Villages who founded Pekanbaru) which are located not far from the Siak River. After a pilgrimage to the tomb then proceed with a parade or walk to the next place, Mr. Khadi's House (the Sultan's father-in-law's house). In the house, various Malay specialties have been served, such as *Hasidah*, yellow rice, *Kemojo* cake, and other market snacks that have been prepared by adult women. The mothers voluntarily bring food as a concern by carrying out the ritual without any coercion. The consideration of bringing food that is given to other human needs in the human environment is always carried out by the community.

The time of *Petang Megang* coincides with welcoming the holy month of Ramadan. The Pekanbaru

Malay community went to the river and took a bath together (yet still separate the men and women) to purify themselves from sins committed in the afternoon or evening. In addition to purification, this ritual also takes an important role in bringing the community together (usually on the banks of the Siak river located in Senapelan District, Pekanbaru City) to build the bond of brotherhood. More importantly, as the people try to serve the self-actualization (as the main purpose of this ritual) the sense of equality and belonging may emerge, and the moral of the community members may strengthen. This is due to the positive values embraced within this ritual for years.

The self-actualization may come in several indicators. The first one is the feeling of unrestricted individuals who live it; this is illustrated by the custom in *Petang Megang* where everyone gets the same opportunity to perform this ritual. Without any different treatment either when bathing together or getting a meal together. Another one is the aspects of self-acceptance, where individuals understand themselves and do not feel ashamed, guilty, and different in terms of social status, this is illustrated in the *Petang Megang* ritual because there are no boundaries or groups in this ritual. In spite of the non-boundaries, it does not mean that the ritual permits men and women to bath together. Since this ritual holds and is based on the Islamic law, the groups of men and women are carried out separately. This also reflects morals in Malay culture stating that unmarried men and women cannot touch and see each other in this ritual. This idea is justified by the religious leaders through the following statement:

"After the entry of Islamic teachings, the ritual is used to welcome the month of fasting and in the implementation of bathing there are still restrictions for men and women according to Islamic law and usually religious leaders who start activities by bathing the children as a symbol"

Actualization has a meaning where individuals see the positive and negative sides that can be sorted. In this aspect, the moral message of the Malay community will be to bathe together but based on Islamic law, groups of men and women will be carried out separately; this is moral in Malay culture because unmarried men and women cannot touch and see one another. Other in this ritual, Children are bathed first as well as traditional leaders who are highly respected in this activity so that the behavior of prioritizing the young and old or the elder becomes a priority so that it reflects the personality of the Malay community. The ethical aspects of individuals are reflected in respecting the elders or traditional leaders. It can be described in the actualization through *Petang Megang* ritual that has aspects of self-acceptance where individuals understand themselves and do

not feel ashamed, guilty, and different in terms of social status, this is illustrated apart from being the humble nature of the traditional leaders together in the ritual. This can be seen from the time of the grave pilgrimage, bathing and eating together in one room.

Before the *Petang Megang* ended, those who are present shook hands and apologized before fasting the next day. This illustrates the aspect of peace or avoiding division and describes the character of the Malay community respecting one another in the surrounding environment. So, with existing problems, individuals can solve the issues without creating new problems.

"Usually at this ritual, after the event is over, people will start shaking hands and forgiving each other, to welcome the month of Ramadan. However, that what we do becomes a blessing later."

Petang Megang has a strong meaning in Malay culture in Pekanbaru City, the values contained in it describe the actualization, and therefore the Pekanbaru City Malay community appreciates the process in *Petang Megang* ritual. This is what was stated that culture is something complex with multiple interpretations, conceptual using various research methods with various points of view (Hudelson, 2004). Culture reflects behaviors and beliefs that are learned and passed down from generation to generation by their predecessors and practiced in society (Suroyo, 2019). The belief of Malay community in Pekanbaru towards the *Petang Megang* contains various aspects, meanings, and values that describe the character of the Malay community as the self-actualization of the community. *Petang Megang* ritual makes individuals feel happy, without being anxious or ashamed of their social status and able to control their negative feelings. Furthermore, this ritual becomes an actualization that describes two dimensions of openness (insight, empathy, healthy relationships) (Ordun & Akün, 2017) and self-reflection (understanding, self-esteem, cognitive and emotional expression) (Frese, 2015).

IV. CONCLUSION

Petang Megang ritual has a psychological impact on the Malay community of Pekanbaru City with an attitude of humility, help, cooperation, and a sense of togetherness and tolerance. Malay culture belief towards the *Petang Megang* ritual has a meaning as well as a philosophical value that describe the character as an actualization itself. Self-actualization that is in the individual by carrying out the *Petang Megang* ritual can be used as a role model for the next generation that the understanding of actualization can be done through a cultural approach. The teaching value in

Malay customs contains positive meanings in *Petang Megang* ritual.

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