

Alexander Chelum¹, Mohamad Maulana Magiman², Mangai Tugau³, Mohd Sauffi⁴,
Semsolbahri Bokhari⁵ & Norhuda Salleh⁶

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The Nyangahant Ritual In The Culture Of Salako Community At Kampung Pueh Lundu, Sarawak.

Alexander Chelum¹, Mohamad Maulana Magiman², Mangai Tugau³, Mohd Sauffi⁴,
Semsolbahri Bokhari⁵ & Norhuda Salleh⁶

^{1,2,3,4 & 5}Universiti Putra Malaysia Bintulu Campus, Sarawak, Malaysia

⁶Universiti Malaysia Sabah

*Corresponding author email: mdmaulana@upm.edu.my

ABSTRACT

This research is about the *Nyangahant* ritual in the culture of the Salako community in Kampung Pueh, Lundu, Sarawak. The *Nyangahant* ritual is the main ritual in the culture of the Salako community. To ensure that the rituals performed achieve the purpose and goal, the *Nyangahant* ritual must be performed according to the prescribed process. The situation is for the purpose of perfection to assure that the wish requested can be accepted by *Jubata*, the god of the Salako community. The main focus of this research is to identify the meaning of every ritual performed in the *Nyangahant* ritual in the Salako community. This study uses ethnographic methods for data collection using an ethnographic interview technique that involves the informants who are experts on *Nyangahant* ritual ceremonies, which are *Tuha Adat*, *Nyangahant* craftsmen, headman, and village chief. In addition, observation methods are also widely used in this research to deeply understand the ritual ceremonies of *Nyangahant* in the studied community. The observation techniques are conducted before, during, and after the *Nyangahant* ritual ceremony. This study found that the *Nyangahant* ritual ceremony is the 'mother' of all rituals for the Salako community. It became a priority in the executed ritual or other festivals. Moreover, the ritual also a prayer in the praying ceremony to ask for well-being and prosperity spared from all problems, calamities, and misfortune. Although the culture and customs of the Salako community have evolved mainly through the process of modernity in terms of heritage, they still held the ritual as a lifeline in their community.

Keywords: *Nyangahant* Ritual, Salako Society, Culture, Prayer, Heritage

INTRODUCTION

The Salako community is a minority ethnic originated from Gunung Gajing, a mountainous area located around the Salako River (Sungai Selakau), and the location of Gunung Gajing is located not far from an area known as Singkawang district, in West Kalimantan, Indonesia (Mohamad Maulana et al., 2020). A large number of the Salako community migrated to Sarawak around the 1800s due to the political and geographical

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factors at that time. The migration and the process of settlement construction by the Salako community to Sarawak become easier because the geographical position in the district of Kalimantan, Indonesia, is very close to the state of Sarawak (Adelaar, 2005).

The first settlement of the Salako community in Sarawak was in the Sungai Pasir and Sungai Kayan areas. The impact of the first settlement has led to the existence of several Salako villages in Sarawak in this day (Chang, 2002). Most of the Salako villages in Sarawak are in the Lundu and Sematan districts. Among them are Kampung Pueh, Kampung Biawak, Kampung Selabat, and Kampung Sebako (Mohamad Maulana & Hazizy, 2020).

The tradition of the Salako community in Sarawak is they firmly adhere to the beliefs of animism. These traditional beliefs held since the ancient, thus become the basis for forming beliefs and way of life of the Salako community until today. Through this, they also believe in a god's existence and called the god a *Jubata*. In their beliefs, *Jubata* is the owner of the realm, including human beings, and responsible for managing it. (Awang Hasmadi, 1994).

Due to strong belief in *Jubata*, thus their lives until this day are still bound to the taboos that must be followed and obeyed to avoid the wickedness of *Jubata*. The Salako community believes that if the taboo is violated or disobey, it will cause harm to themselves or a community in the village such as *badi*, *idap*, and *tulah*. Hence, the respect and fear of *Jubata* are implemented through the performance of the *Nyangahant* ritual. The *Nyangahant* ritual will be performed to obtain permission and blessings from *Jubata* to execute an action and seek prosperity in carrying out the socialisation of their lives.

The word ritual is widely interpreted in the aspect of meaning in the field of social and cultural anthropological studies. Each interpretation is different according to the approach and method used for every research. In the early stages of anthropological research related to rituals, the anthropologists have provided interpretations of ritual as a religious behaviour used to understand the context of the belief systems and religions of primitive societies. The tradition in such interpretation was initiated by Edward (1871) in his writing, such as entitled *The Primitive*, Benson (2009), *Understanding Religion*, and several other anthropological researchers related to rituals in Europe in the late 19th century.

According to Nur Syam (2005), in the context of anthropological studies, two important aspects need to be observed in the study of rituals for society, which are rituals and ceremonial. According to Winnick (1977), a ritual is a tool of action that always involves religion or magic and has been strengthened by the society that owns the ritual practice through tradition. Meanwhile ceremonial is a fixed pattern as a result of human behaviour related to the variations in stages of life or for religious purposes. Moreover, based on Tugau, M. et al. (2020), the rituals performed are naturalisation in facing the demands of life and society to ensure a better life for the entire society that practices it. On the other hand, Sarra Jestika (2020), a form of ritual performed by the community of practitioners is due to the bond of social tradition that still has a gap in the practitioners' community. This is because even the ritual has been continuously distinguished, but the bond of tradition has caused the ceremony to still be carried out although not perfectly complete to avoid argument among the traditional generation. The understanding showed that the rituals are more appoint towards the reinforcing elements to the bond of social traditions and individuals with the social