

The Tradition of Engagement in Traditional Marriage in Pelayangan Sub-District 2012-2022

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Abstrak

Tradisi peminangan dalam adat pernikahan Melayu Jambi adalah aspek penting yang mencerminkan norma sosial, keagamaan, dan kultural yang diwariskan turun-temurun. Dalam budaya Melayu Jambi, peminangan bukan hanya prosesi awal menuju pernikahan tetapi juga mengukuhkan hubungan antar keluarga dan masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan menjelaskan asal-usul tradisi peminangan, prosesi, dan makna setiap tahapannya. Metode penelitian sejarah yang digunakan meliputi heuristik, kritik sumber, interpretasi, dan historiografi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tradisi peminangan dalam adat pernikahan Melayu Jambi mencakup berbagai prosesi resmi dan bermakna mendalam. Berdasarkan wawancara dengan tokoh adat, anggota masyarakat, dan analisis literatur, ditemukan bahwa tradisi ini diatur sesuai ajaran Islam, sebagaimana dalam pepatah Melayu Jambi "Adat menurun, Syarat mendaki, Adat bersendi syarak, Syarak bersendikan kitabullah." Ini menegaskan bahwa aturan adat dan syariat Islam berjalan seiring, dengan larangan agama juga menjadi larangan adat.

Kata kunci: tradisi, perminangan, adat.

Abstract

The tradition of proposing in Jambi Malay wedding customs is an important aspect that reflects social, religious, and cultural norms passed down through generations. In Jambi Malay culture, proposing is not only the initial process leading to marriage but also solidifies relationships between families and the community. This study aims to explain the origins of the proposing tradition, its processes, and the meaning of each stage. The historical research methods used include heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The results of the study show that the proposing tradition in Jambi Malay wedding customs includes various official processes with profound meanings. Based on interviews with traditional leaders, community members, and literature analysis, it was found that this tradition is regulated according to Islamic teachings, as expressed in the Jambi Malay proverb "Adat menurun, Syarat mendaki, Adat bersendi syarak, Syarak bersendikan kitabullah." This emphasizes that customary rules and Islamic law go hand in hand, with religious prohibitions also being customary prohibitions.

Keywords: tradition, proposal, custom.

INTRODUCTION

Culture is the identity of a nation that is important in shaping the character of the nation, formed from good habits that are passed down from generation to generation in society. Culture includes all human behavior that is organized and learned in community life. culture is a regular behavior that is carried out by the

community to make good habits and is passed down from generation to generation (Anny Wahyuni, 2022).

Traditions are material objects and ideas from the past that still exist today and have not been corrupted. Traditions are considered a valuable heritage of the past. Recurring traditions do not happen by chance, but have deep meaning. In

anthropology, traditions are the same as customs, which are religious habits in the lives of indigenous people that include interrelated cultural values, norms, laws and rules. Traditions form a steady and all-encompassing system of rules for regulating social action. Tradition can also shape culture in the community (Muhammad Adi Saputra, 2022).

An engagement, or what is often called a proposal, etymologically means asking someone to be one's wife, either for oneself or for someone else. Terminologically, an engagement is an attempt to establish an arranged marriage relationship between a man and a woman, in which a man asks a woman to be his wife through commonly accepted means in the community.

In the practice of marriage, the rules of customary law that have long been part of people's lives are very influential. Peminangan or proposal is a common pattern in the lives of indigenous people throughout Indonesia.

Each ethnic group or tribe in Indonesia has its own unique marriage traditions, reflecting its deep culture and history (Soekanto, 2020). Jambi Province, where the majority of the population is Muslim and from the Malay tribe, still carries out engagement based on Malay customs consistently.

Each stage in the engagement process has a distinctive meaning that distinguishes it from engagement customs

in other regions. The engagement procession in each region in Jambi is not the same, for example, the procession towards marriage in Kerinci customs, if in the Jambi Malay community the engagement is termed *antar tando* but in Kerinci it is called *Batuaik* (Eryanto & Fitriani, 2020).

However, over time and the development of the times, the community has experienced significant changes, including in the Jambi traditional marriage tradition, which has regulated the Jambi traditional marriage ceremony, for example in finding a mate to the wedding ceremony (Eko Wahyudi, 2019). The influx of culture from immigrants also influences local culture, because they bring their own traditions and interact with local people who have different cultures.

The origin of the tradition of engagement in the Jambi Malay community originated from the association of young people, which was previously carried out in the *Berselang* or *Ketalang Patang* activities (Datuk R.D. Ahyar, S. H. 2024).

These changes are interesting because marriage customs in Jambi society have undergone many changes, especially influenced by migrants. Inter-tribal marriages have led to changes in customary traditions. In fact, the way of proposing or the engagement process has also changed. Many young people in Jambi are no longer familiar with their own

traditional customs. They tend to follow a more modern engagement process, inspired by Western culture, rather than maintaining the long-established Jambi Malay engagement tradition.

The problems surrounding traditional engagement as stated above are very interesting discussions to be researched more deeply with the title "The Tradition of Engagement in Jambi Malay Marriage Customs in Pelayangan District 2012-2022"

METHODS

The research method applied in this study is a historical study, which is in accordance with the historical method. Historical method as a set of systematic principles and rules designed to assist in the collection of historical sources, critical evaluation, and presentation of the synthesis of the results achieved, generally in written form.

This method includes four main stages: collecting sources (heuristics), critiquing sources, interpreting sources, and writing history (historiography) (Kuntowijoyo, 2005).

The earliest stage is heuristics, researchers find primary sources and secondary sources through literature studies and interviews. After the heuristic stage is carried out, researchers conduct source criticism to determine the authenticity and credibility of the sources obtained, by critically examining the sources, information, and traces,

consisting of external criticism and internal criticism.

At the interpretation stage, researchers try to provide interpretations of the sources or data that have been obtained to determine the facts of the proposal tradition in the marriage customs of the Jambi Malay community. Then, the results of the interpretation of these facts are written into a harmonious historical story or this activity is called Historiography.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The origin of the proposal tradition in the marriage custom of the Jambi Malay Community

The people of Jambi City refer to the residents in the Seberang area (Pelayangan District) as the indigenous people of Jambi or Jambi Malay. Local culture is the result of development in the midst of local communities, including Jambi Malay culture which is part of the ethnic Malay culture in Jambi. The Jambi Malay community, the majority tribe in this region, still maintains a traditional social structure with the existence of a noble class from the descendants of past kings as well as respected figures in the community. This is reflected in the use of titles in their names.

The purpose of marriage is to maintain the dignity of the individuals involved as well as to preserve the honor of women. Racial diversity in Jambi

distinguishes Jambi Malay culture from Malay culture in other areas, so traditions such as engagement and marriage have different characteristics. The people in Seberang Jambi City, including Pelayangan Sub-district, are famous for their devotion to religion and high regard for local customs. This is reflected in the proverb that states “*Adat bersendi Sarak, Sarak Bersendi Kitabullah, Sarak mengato adat memakai, Sarak mendaki adat menurun*”.

In Jambi Malay tradition, the proposal procession is known as “anter tando”. This process begins with the bride making a rhyme to ask the intention of the male party's arrival, which is then answered by the male party also with a rhyme. Once the intention has been conveyed and the proposal accepted, the male party gives a binding sign. An engagement is a procession leading up to the wedding that takes place before the wedding itself. The preparation of the engagement procession begins with a meeting between the male and female parties. The male party visits the female party's house to meet both female parents to convey his intentions. This meeting results in an answer that determines whether or not the proposal is accepted. If the proposal is accepted, both parties will prepare when the engagement procession will be held, usually in the evening at the woman's house.

Once the time for the engagement is determined, both families must inform the

extended family and local village officials such as the neighborhood association (RT) and customary institutions. The aim is for community leaders to witness the engagement ceremony as witnesses. This is important to prevent slander in the community. The male party needs to prepare several things, including finances or an engagement fee that is used to buy items needed in the ceremony. This cost is usually agreed upon between the two families, although it is generally the responsibility of the male party. In addition, in Jambi Malay society, the sign of engagement consists of a ring and a sepulusan cloth. The ring symbolizes the seriousness of the couple in continuing the relationship to the next level. Sesorahan or hantaran is also an important part, tailored to the tastes or needs of the female party and can be in the form of various objects, but the mandatory ones are the ring, cloth sepulusan, and tepak sirih.

The woman also prepares the venue and the dishes to be served when welcoming the man. The venue is usually decorated to enhance the ambience and the dishes include cakes, heavy meals and drinks. The male party usually starts preparing everything a month before the engagement ceremony, while the female party prepares the venue and dishes one day before and on the day of the engagement (Assomady, 2019).

Engagement Procession in Jambi Malay Wedding Customs

A procession is a series of activities in a ceremony or tradition. The word “procession” comes from the English word “procession,” which means row, line, and procession. In the context of tradition and culture, a procession can be defined as a series of steps or rituals performed sequentially in a ceremony or event, which have certain meanings and symbolism for a particular society or group. It includes ceremonial actions that form an integral part of the event (Handyaningrat, 1988).

The *peminangan* tradition has stages that must be carried out by a couple before carrying out a marriage ceremony. These stages begin with a period of introduction and approach, which consists of “*Beusik Sirih Bergurau Pinang*” activities and mate selection. At the “*Beusik Sirih Bergurau Pinang*” stage, the man and woman meet in a community event, and if a relationship develops, the man must travel to the woman's house to declare his love in polite language, often using *seloko* or *pantun*. At the mate selection stage, parents play an important role in providing consideration, and once an agreement is reached, a representative from the man's side visits the woman's home to convey the intention of making an engagement.

The next stage is “*Tegak Betuik Duduk Batanyo*,” where the man makes

sure that the woman he wants to propose to is not tied to another man. This is done by sending a messenger to stay in touch and confirm that the two children are in a relationship. If the results are positive, then an agreement to carry out the engagement is made.

Next comes the formal engagement ceremony, where family and close relatives from both parties are present. This procession includes placing tokens such as rings and a graduated cloth, which symbolizes the seriousness of the relationship.

After the engagement, a procession of “*Ukur Antar Serah Terimo Adat*,” which usually takes place a few months after the engagement, is held. This procession aims to let the community know the couple's readiness for marriage and to maintain the family's dignity and self-respect. In this procession, the male party is obliged to fill the custom and hand it over to the female party, bringing equipment and items that have been agreed upon beforehand. The handover is done by a close relative or grandmother *mamak* as the spokesperson, and witnessed by the audience.

If one of the couples is not a native Jambi Malay, they still have to follow Jambi customs, in accordance with the saying “Where the earth treads, there the sky upholds.” Each ceremony has a procession as the initial stage of the start of the activity until the core and closing

events, with different rules according to local customs (Ronald Dison, 2022).

The meaning of each engagement procession in the marriage customs of the Jambi Malay community

The initiation tradition in the Jambi Malay marriage custom is an important element that includes various official processions. This tradition is organized based on the teachings of Islam, as reflected in the Jambi Malay proverb “Adat descends, Syarak climbs, Adat bersendi syarak, Syarak bersendikan kitabullah.” This proverb shows that the rules in the community come from the ancestors and are based on Islamic teachings, namely the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Datuk Ahyar emphasized that custom and Islamic law go hand in hand, with religious prohibitions also being prohibitions in custom. Engagement in Jambi Malay culture has several important meanings. First, as a symbol of serious agreement and commitment from both parties to continue the relationship to the level of marriage. This process provides an opportunity for both families to get to know each other and discuss marriage plans. For example, in the procession of “tegak betuik duduk batanyo,” the male family confirms the relationship between their children before proceeding to the engagement stage.

Secondly, the dowry is a sign of the seriousness and economic ability of the

man to marry the woman. It is usually in the form of money, gold, or other valuables agreed upon by both parties. Datuk Ahyar mentions that rings and women's graduated clothing are important parts of the dowry.

Third, *peminangan* involves a formal meeting between the two families to discuss various matters related to the marriage such as the date of the wedding and preparations for the ceremony. This meeting also strengthens the relationship between the two families. After the engagement, within three to six months there should be a “ukur antar serah terimo tando” to ensure that the man is ready to proceed to marriage.

Fourth, *peminangan* shows pride in cultural heritage and the importance of maintaining the sustainability of Jambi Malay traditions. Datuk Afrizal emphasized the importance of preserving the engagement custom as part of the local cultural heritage. Fifth, although a serious process, an engagement is also a moment of happiness for both families. It is the beginning of the journey towards marriage and brings hope and joy to all parties involved. Guru Pathi calls the engagement a happy moment because it marks a serious commitment that continues the relationship to the marriage stage, avoiding the slander of prolonged courtship.

The engagement tradition in Jambi Malay marriage customs reflects family

values, consent, commitment, and respect for cultural traditions. In addition to the main procession, each piece of equipment in the engagement procession also has a symbolic meaning. For example, “Beusik Sirih Bergurau Pinang” symbolizes the need for couples to get to know each other before marriage. The empty betel nut holder given by the female party as a sign of acceptance of the proposal shows a symbol of honor and approval. The betel nut tepak or cerana, which is always present in Malay traditional ceremonies, symbolizes a sign of honor and recognition to the guest. The contents of this tepak or cerana have symbolic meanings: betel nut symbolizes humility, areca nut symbolizes sincerity, lime symbolizes a white and sincere heart, gambier symbolizes determination, and tobacco symbolizes steadfastness and sacrifice.

In addition, the dulang or tray containing the kris or pending in the engagement procession also has a symbolic meaning. The kris symbolizes the male party coming, while the pending symbolizes the intended female party. Acceptance in the procession is marked by the giving of a token in the form of jewelry, indicating the agreement of both parties to proceed to the level of marriage.

CONCLUSION

The peminangan tradition in the Jambi Malay marriage ceremony is one of the

many rich and deep cultural heritages owned by the local community. This cultural heritage has been passed down from generation to generation from their ancestors, reflecting strong family, religious and community values. The main purpose of this betrothal tradition is to find a life partner who is not only physically and socially compatible, but also one who is grounded in Islamic teachings from the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. This includes values such as loyalty, mutual respect and responsibility in building a family.

Jambi Malay society recognizes various patterns in the matchmaking system. One common pattern is the selection of a mate based on one's own choice or through matchmaking conducted by parents. The first pattern, known as “berselang” or “ke talang patang”, used to be part of a traditional ceremony in agricultural activities such as working on other people's rice fields or gardens. This activity not only serves as communal work but also as an opportunity for young men and women to interact and get to know each other, which can be the beginning of a process of introduction and approach. The second pattern is arranged marriages arranged by parents or older relatives, which involves a meeting between the families of both parties to discuss the agreement and terms of marriage.

The engagement procession in the Jambi Malay tradition begins with a series

of ceremonies accompanied by special symbols and rituals. Beusik Sirih Bergurau Pinang is one of the first steps taken in conjunction with the selection of a mate, where the prospective groom's family visits the prospective bride's family to convey good intentions. Then, the Tegak Betuik Duduk Betanyo procession is carried out to ensure that the bride-to-be has not had a previous relationship with another man. After this procession, there is an engagement procession known as "meletak tando", in which the prospective groom places a ring and a graduated cloth in front of the prospective bride as a sign of the seriousness of the intention to marry.

Each stage of the engagement is filled with equipment that has a deep symbolic meaning. Tepak or cerana betel nut is always present as part of the procession, as a symbol of unity and harmony. The tray or dulang containing the kris and pending (belt) also contains symbolic meaning. Thus, the peminangan tradition in the Jambi Malay wedding ceremony is not only a formal ritual before the wedding, but also an important part of the marriage ceremony. It also contains cultural, religious and social values that are important for the continuity and sustainability of its society.

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