



Mantras in The Kapontasu Ritual as An Oral Tradition in Rice Field Farming and Rice Agribusiness Performance in Maintaining Family Food Availability in West Muna Regency

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ABSTRACT

Mantras in the Kapontasu ritual are one of the oral farming traditions led directly by a *parika* (agricultural shaman) when cultivating rice fields in the Muna ethnic community. These mantras are considered to have the power to increase crop yields, thereby being able to maintaining the availability of family food. Mantras in the Kapontasu ritual are categorized as an oral tradition because, in its implementation, they have aspects of movement/action and utterance in the form of mantras (*bhatata*) spoken by a *parika*. The mantras (*bhatata*) contain deep meanings and moral messages that must be followed by farmers. These moral messages are related to the basics of farming activities and the behavior of farmers in agribusiness to get abundant harvests, which eventually becomes a pillar of family food availability. This study aimed at identifying the form of the mantras in the Kapontasu ritual and investigating its function in the community related to rice farming activities in maintaining the availability of family food. In this study, the researchers applied a qualitative-historical approach with a descriptive method. Data were collected using observation, interview, and documentation techniques. Results showed that the mantras in the Kapontasu ritual consist of (1) a mantra for the embedding of initial tugal, the placement of rice seed (*owine*), and the arrangement of offerings, (2) a mantra for planting rice in the fields, (3) a mantra for maintaining rice plants, (4) a mantra for repelling rice plant pests, and (5) a mantra for harvesting rice plants. These mantras serve to increase crop yields and ensure the availability of food for farmers' families. Furthermore, the function of the mantras (*bhatata*) as the foundation of agribusiness is to maintain the availability of family food. In addition, these mantras serve to make the following things happen: (1) Soil nutrients become abundant and sunlight and rainfall fertilize the rice plants; (2) Allah SWT blesses farmers' efforts in agricultural activities; (3) Rice is growing well as farmers expect in ensuring the availability of food for the family; (4) The seeds planted provide blessings so that the production process runs smoothly; (5) Rice plants are protected from various diseases and pests; (6) Sown seeds produce abundant yields; (7) What farmers do in farming is blessed by Allah SWT.

Keywords: Oral Tradition, Mantras in the Kapontasu Ritual, Rice Agribusiness, Field Rice, Family Food.

I. INTRODUCTION

A mantra is one of the oldest oral traditions in Indonesia and its inheritance takes place by word of mouth and is passed on from generation to generation. Every socio-cultural activity of the Muna community is usually inseparable from the recitation of mantras. One of the traditional ceremonies that contain the recitation of mantras in its process is the ritual of planting rice in the fields to maintain the availability of family food. Before farmers from the Muna community plant rice, they usually first carry out a traditional ceremony, namely the *Kapontasu* ritual which has a section of the recitation of mantras. These mantras are categorized as an oral tradition because, besides performing specific movement/action, the *parika* (agricultural shaman) also utters mantras (*bhatata*) during the ritual. These

mantras have deep meanings and moral messages that must be followed by farmers so that the harvest is abundant and guarantees the availability of food for the family. These moral messages have a significant function in the lives of those implementing them (Hafidzoh, 2021; Mutmainah, 2021). Those moral messages are related to the basics of farming activities and the behavior that farmers must do in agribusiness in ensuring the availability of food for the family. Currently, this ritual is still carried out by some Muna people when planting rice in the fields.

This ritual has been practiced since ancient times and has become a traditional belief to this day. Hardin (2012:172) states that the *Kapontasu* ritual is one of the oral traditions possessed by the Muna community which is practiced when planting rice in the fields in ensuring the availability of food for the family. The *Kapontasu* ritual is led by a *parika* (agricultural shaman) who is believed by the Muna community to have knowledge related to the mantras for the *Kapontasu* ritual. The Muna people consider the recitation of mantras in the *Kapontasu* ritual highly important when planting rice. This ritual is carried out to avoid disturbances from evil spirits (supernatural beings) that may interfere with rice plants, to increase crop yields, to ensure food availability for families, and to prevent farmers from problems that may threaten their safety, such as a disease.

The Muna people believe that the recitation of mantras in the *Kapontasu* ritual is intended as a transcendental communication with supernatural inhabitants that are believed to be the ruler of the area where rice planting is carried out so that they do not disturb the plants. Because mantras in the *Kapontasu* ritual recited by *parika* are sacred and have religious values, the implementation of the ritual has certain conditions and procedures that must be followed and fulfilled. The ritual can only be carried out if the required special offerings have been fulfilled. This is because the ritual materials required by the *parika* in the *Kapontasu* ritual are important supporting aspects. Soedjijono (1987:91) states that several conditions must be met in the recitation of a mantra, including the place, time, actors, equipment, clothes, events, and procedures. In the life of rural communities, mantras are used to ward off and persuade evil spirits or creatures that have supernatural powers. The recitation of a mantra must be accompanied by ceremonies or rituals according to its function as a method of conquering supernatural powers. Therefore, mantras should not be uttered by anyone. They should only be recited by certain people, such as shamans. In other words, mantras are words that contain wisdom and magical power. Not everyone is allowed to chant a mantra because an error in pronouncing it, according to belief, can bring danger (Badudu, 1986:6).

The recitation of mantras in the *Kapontasu* ritual when planting rice in the fields has been practiced by the Muna community for a long time in preventing plant diseases and pests so that the harvest is successful and ensures the availability of food for the family. Currently, some of the Muna people are still doing this although some other people have abandoned the *Kapontasu* ritual when planting rice. The people who abandon this ritual are dominantly from the younger generation. They think that the ritual is against Islamic law (*shirk*). However, the ritual also gives a positive value to those who carry it out (Hadirman, 2022). The Muna people believe that mantras in the *Kapontasu* ritual are very sacred and serve as a means of transcendental communication to establish a vertical relationship between them and the supernatural and the natural surroundings. The implementation of the *Kapontasu* ritual in cultivating rice in the fields has become a habit of the Muna community because it is believed to have mystical and sacred values. This is marked by the presence of stanzas in the mantras recited by a *parika* that contain solemnity and possess supernatural powers. In addition, this ritual is intended as a means of supplication to God to give them a fortune with satisfactory results and to be kept away from all plant diseases when they are farming so that the harvest is abundant and can ensure the availability of food for the family. Furthermore, it also serves to ask permission from the land authorities (unseen creatures) to not disturb the farmers and the rice plants.

In this study, the researchers attempted to take the mantras that exist in the Muna community, namely the mantras in the *Kapontasu* ritual as agribusiness performance to ensure the availability of family food. This study is highly important to get an overview or understanding of the form and function of the mantras in the *Kapontasu* ritual in supporting the development of agricultural businesses in the West Muna community in ensuring the availability of family food in West Muna Regency.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of ritual, as put forward by Abdullah (2008), is a condensation of group and community values which can be responded to as a statement about the priority values or things that are considered ideal and important in a society. Kottak (1999) asserts the theory of rituals as a representation and articulation of religion that contains verbal and non-verbal elements. Verbal elements of rituals are the recitation of mantras, myths, and teachings of the wisdom of life in the form of utterances in rituals, which contain theological and moral statements related to the natural environment, humans, and God. Meanwhile, non-verbal elements of rituals can be found in the process of its implementation in the form of the facilities presented, offerings, ritual materials, and the time & place to actualize the ritual which is attended by the ceremonial leaders, their assistants, and the concerned people.

The *Kapontasu* ritual is a ceremony carried out by the Muna ethnic community when planting rice fields led by a *parika* (ritual leader). The Muna ethnic community considers this ritual important because it is believed to be a means

of transcendental communication by a *parika* to supernatural beings so that the rice planted by farmers can be successfully harvested and does not experience disturbances from supernatural beings (jinns). The community considers the *Kapontasu* ritual to be a form of special ceremony that is sacred as a form of expression of their soul in establishing a vertical communication relationship with the supernatural world and the surrounding environment. The *Kapontasu* ritual is a habit of cultivating rice fields for the Muna ethnic community who are still bound by mystical nature (Hardin, 2016).

Several studies have examined the rituals practiced by ethnic groups in Indonesia related to food security. Some of them are related to local wisdom in growing rice. One of those studies is a study conducted by Nindatu *et al.* (2018), which indicates that the Suhu tribe in West Halmahera Regency still uses local wisdom in planting rice fields in the form of *rionrion* (helping each other) and *orom sasadu* (eating) rituals. To date, these people are still practicing planting rice fields so that their staple food (rice) is still available to welcome the guests.

Another study is research conducted by Martingingsih (2012) focusing on the *subak* system implemented by the Balinese people to ensure the availability of family food. This study examined the involvement of local knowledge of Subak Wangaya Betan in Bali to encourage public awareness of environmental issues and sustainable agriculture. In addition, Derby (2013) conducted a study of local knowledge in agricultural practices. His study is related to local knowledge which can be used in the implementation and practice of sustainable agriculture and cultivation.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the researchers applied a qualitative-historical method. A qualitative method is a research procedure that explores descriptive historical data in the form of written and oral data obtained from the people observed. In collecting data, the researchers carried out observation, interviews, and document searches. The considerations in taking the qualitative method are that (a) the qualitative method can be carried out easily when dealing with multiple realities, (b) the qualitative method can be carried out directly between researchers and informants in the field, and (c) the qualitative method has sharp sensitivity and can adapt to many value patterns encountered in the field (Maleong, 2004:9). Data in this study were the mantras obtained from *parika* (agricultural shamans). Furthermore, the population and samples were all farmers who become *parika* in West Muna Regency.

There were two sources of data in this study: primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained through observation and in-depth interviews with informants in the field. Meanwhile, secondary data were explored through written notes or documents related to research topics that have been published in the form of journals, papers, books, and other relevant types of written documents for supporting primary data (Endraswara, 2003:208). In this study, the researchers also employed a qualitative-interpretive analysis approach. This approach was chosen to organize and sort the data into patterns, categories, and units of description to produce a finding or conclusion based on the research objectives. The data analysis process began by examining all data obtained through various sources, both primary and secondary data sources, consisting of interviews, observations & recordings, field notes, and written documents (Maleong, 2004:190).

In analyzing the collected data, the researchers applied qualitative data analysis through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles Huberman & Saldana, 2014). The reliability and validity of the data were carried out through checking transcripts related to the data codes created and conducting triangulation towards informants to check the righteousness of the collected data (Creswell, 2016).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mantras in the *Kapontasu* ritual are an oral farming tradition serving as the foundation of rice field agribusiness from the Muna people. The form and function of those mantras are described in the following.

4.1 The Mantra for the Placement of *Kafematai*

Before carrying out the *Kapontasu* ritual, farmers from the Muna community first recite the *kaefongkaraha wine* mantra while placing *kafematai*. In short, *kafematai* is defined as a stakeout of farming before placing seeds, *tugalan*, and offerings of production facilities in the performance of the *Kapontasu* or *Katisa* rituals. *Kefematai* is usually placed in the middle of the field by taking into account the range of the guardians of the 4 corners of the field. Placing *kefematai* is the initial pillar of the farming business or agricultural business based on what is exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. This activity defines freedom in the school of nature, the learning process from nature, and the utilization of natural resources to meet human needs (Monif & Kamaluddin, 2014; Lapanga, 2016). The following are the stanzas of the mantra for the placement of *kafematai* recited by a *parika*:

“*Allahumma Syaliallah Muhammad, Wa Allah Ali Syayiddina Muhammad* (Allahumma Sholli Ala Sayyidina Muhammad Wa Ala Ali Sayyidina Muhammad); *Inodi ini dawuno kaawu limaku, dawuno kaawu ghagheku*; (This is my hand and this is my foot); *Maighono guru a guru, bhahi sala dodai ane sikadhi*; (I am coming to teacher and teacher so that I am not bad-minded); *Daodaiaane kamondoku ini, daeghabu-ghabu dae ghefi-ghefi*; (To deviate from this

feeling is shattering me pieces to pieces); *Tabea ambano damura kanaue kasemie-miehano kawasano ompu* ;(Unless it is seen by God Almighty); *Panaki sorumatono sokumabaru-baruno nekafembulaku ini* ;(A coming disease may have evil intentions on these plants of mine); *Aitu nandomu kawasano ompu soghomondo-ghondo kanaue*;(When the time comes, I have SWT who will see and take care of them); *Allah Akbar...3X* (Allah Akbar ... 3x)

4.2 The Mantra for the Placement of Tugal, Seeds, and Offerings

The *Kapontasu* ritual, in practice, cannot be separated from the mantras that are recited. In the process, the *parika* (the agricultural shaman) will recite special incantations when planting rice to ward off diseases that will attack rice and prevent supernatural beings from disturbing rice plants and farmers. The chanting of mantras in the *Kapontasu* ritual cannot be done at any place. It must be carried out at predetermined places. The determination of the place is conducted by the *parika*. The *parika* and rice farmers believe that not all places are considered good. Only certain places can be used as a location for conducting the *Kapontasu* ritual. The *Kapontasu* ritual is usually carried out in five places, namely the four corners and the middle of the field. The center point of the field is believed to be a shelter for supernatural beings. Meanwhile, the determination of the four corners of the field as the place for the *Kapontasu* ritual is because these locations are believed to be able to avoid all disturbances that come from all directions that will interfere with the lives of farmers.

Hardin (2012:89) states that several offerings in carrying out the *Kapontasu* ritual must be prepared, consisting of *katumbu* (ground corn wrapped in old corn husk), *ghunteli* (egg), *tabhako* (cigarette), *kaempanaha* (*kinangan*), *kalembungo* (young coconut), *wineno pae* (paddy seeds), *roono karo* (betel leaves), *padamalala* (lemongrass stalks), and others. These offerings must be present in the ritual. The Muna community considers the implementation of the *Kapontasu* ritual to be a tribute to supernatural beings so that these creatures do not interfere with rice plants. In addition, it is also to make farmers and plants be protected from various diseases. This can be seen from the mantras (*bhahata*) recited by the *parika* when leading the process of the *Kapontasu* ritual. The *parika* will recite a mantra when he/she has finished sticking a piece of wood in the ground and keeps the offerings above his/her jaw. The mantra is as follows.

“*Allahumma Syaliallah Muhammad, Wa Allah Ali Syayiddina Muhammad*;(Allahumma Sholli Ala Sayyidina; Muhammad Wa Ala Ali Sayyidina Muhammad); *Inodi ini dawuno kaawu limaku, dawuno kaawu ghagheku*;(This is my hand and this is my foot); *Maighono guru a guru, bhahi sala dodai ane sikadhi*;(I am coming to teacher and teacher so that I am not bad-minded); *Daodaia ane kamondoku ini, daeghabu-ghabu dae ghefi-ghefi*;(To deviate from this feeling is shattering me pieces to pieces); *Tabea ambano damura kanaue kasemie-miehano kawasano ompu*;(Unless it is seen by God Almighty); *Panaki sorumatono sokumabaru-baruno nekafembulaku ini*;(A coming disease may have evil intentions on these plants of mine); *Aitu nandomu kawasano ompu soghomondo-ghondo kanaue*;(When the time comes, I have SWT who will see and take care of them) *Allah Akbar...3X* (Allah Akbar ... 3x); *Amangkoomu mepana, amangkoomu mesoso*;(I will give you betel leaves to eat; I will give cigarettes to smoke); *Ihintumu kohakuno, kudasano, kopehano, kokapenganano*;(You are rightful to this territory); *Bhahi sala dokabaru-baru anehintuumu*;(But do not destroy these plants) *Kohakuno, kudasano nekafembulaku ini*;(These plants are mine); *Dadi nandoomu nehintuumu somandeha ane*;(So, it is up to you); *Inodi dawuno kaawu limaku, dawuno kaawu ghagheku*;(I just employ my hands and feet); *Soano ambakua wambano guru a guru fitu tapino*;(These words are not mine; They are what my teachers said, the seven teachers); *Tana ombamu bhe surumatono sokumabaru-baruno nekafembulaku ini*;(If something comes and intends to damage my plants); *Ihintuumu kohakuno sodhumaganie*;(Please, protect my plants); *Awangkomu mepana, awangkomu mesoso*;(I will give you betel leaves to eat and cigarettes to smoke); *Aesalo ane kakesa nehintuumu* (I ask good things from you); *Aesalo ane sometahaano nehintuumu* (I only ask for good things); *Ane sohumalano kangkaha nekafembulaku ini* (If something goes wrong on my (rice) plants); *Aitu nelatemu nehintuumu* ;(It is up to you); *Inodi dawuno kaawu limaku, dawuno kaawu ghagheku* (I just employ my hands and feet); *Ihintuumu kohakuno, pada awangkomu mepana, awangkomu mesoso*;(You have the right but I have given you betel and cigarettes); *Aitu nandomu ini kamondoku*;(Right now, that is all I can do); *Sampe surue panakiini, surue gholeo, surue alo koise bhesitagahanoa* (Do not let diseases, heat, and night break my plants); *Rampahano inodi aesalo ane maafu nehintuumu kohakuno*;(Because I have apologized to you who have the right); *Awangkomu mepana, awangkomu mesoso*;(I give you betel leaves to eat and cigarettes to smoke); *Odhumaganie kanauemu kafembulaku ini*;(So, you take care of my plants); *Konotikinia kafembulaku, ane natokini ihintuumu kohakuno*;(Do not let the plants decrease because you have rights in this plant too); *Tapedamu daduma-dadaie hakuntomo intaidiimu*;(We have common rights to guard the plants against the destroyers); *Inodi dawuno kaawu limaku, dawuno kaawu ghagheku* ;(I just employ my hands and feet); *Afembulae satadumadigho seta-setaghu* (I plant for my life every year); *Dihanomu aitu ingka padamu adhati kaetamu itua*;(So, I already respect you); *Nandoomu atorontomu wutontomu naewine naefua*;(It is up to our arrangements tomorrow or the day after); *Inodi tabasa kaetamu kaetaha bhari-bharie kaetamu*;(I only pray for our common good); *Allahumma Syaliallah Muhammad, Wa Allah Ali Syayiddina Muhammad* ;(Allahumma Sholli Ala Sayyidina Muhammad Wa Ala Ali Sayyidina Muhammad);(Reciting Q.S. Al-Fatiha) (Reciting Q.S. Al-Ikhlash)

Assalamu 'Alaikum

(Assalamu 'Alaikum) (then reciting the salam 4 times)

Apadamu abasa kaetamu dhoo aitu intaidiomu. (I have prayed for all of us)

Dhadhi arumato amalae kafembulaku ini.

(When I harvest my rice plants)

Bhahi sala taongkai-ngkaiane, bhahi takosaki-sakiane.

(Do not let us be attacked by any disease)

Bhahi tano ala wuumani koise notoginia nasetangke.

(Or take our souls)

Aesalo ane maafu insaidi neihintuumu kohakuno, kudasano.

(I apologize to all of you who live in this place) *Mandehauno ntobu aini.*

(You who rules this territory)

Bhahi sala nowurae wuu, tano rondoane mata.

(Do not let our plants be seen by evil spirits; Make their vision go dark)

Sala nowurae sia, tonu wurae loli, bhahi tonokontula-ntula ane buku.

(Do not let our plants be seen by ants and loli; Do not let our rice plants be broken)

Aitu aesaloane maafu, padamu afetapa ane nehintuumu kudasano.

(At this moment, I apologize to you who live in this place)

Alhamdulillah

(Alhamdulillah) (then reciting the salam 4 times)

Pedamu dua kanando ntoomu.

(It is the same with our existence)

Nandoini somokaeno, fosampe kaetamu intaidimu. (If something is not enough, keep it for yourself)

Kudasano, kohakuno, kopehano atoro kaetamu.

(To you living and having rights of this land, take care of our dwellings)

Intaidimu somandehaane.

(You know the best)

Allahumma Syaliallah Muhammad, Wa Allah Ali Syayiddina Muhammad.

(Allahumma Sholli Ala Sayyidina Muhammad Wa Ala Ali Sayyidina Muhammad)

Allahu Akbar

(Allahu Akbar) (then reciting the takbir 4 times)

Nasumampu minano lani, nahumende minano wite.

(Please, drop the sky oil (rain) and fertilize our land (humus))

Nasumampu neparakano kafembulaku ini.

(Drop them at the root of my plants)

Penaki soni kadampaku, penaki soni rungkuku.

(Get rid of disease from our plants; Show us the treatment)

Naembali intan, naemabli bulawa.

(Let it be a diamond, be a gold)

Allahu Akbar

(Allah Akbar) (then reciting the takbir 4 times)

Bisimillah

(Bismillah)

Aitu nehintuumu kohakuno, barangka ahumalae welo ratoku ini.

(To you having rights on this land, if something goes wrong in our arrival)

Welo kahalaku ini ihintuumu mandeha ane.

(In this mistake of mine, only you know)

Somokapo kanaue, soku manando kanaue ihintuumu kohakuno.

(And only you who will suffice)

Ingka padamu afokanando angkoemu, aesalo angkoomu. (I have prepared for you; I have asked for you)

Padamu awangkoomu ofumaamu, foroghuumu, mepanaamu mesosomu aitu.

(I have given food, drink, betel leaves, and cigarettes)

Nanumando sonikantibhaku datubhari kanaue.

(If there is anything that makes me right, I beg your blessing)

Sonihalaku damokantibha kanaue.

(If I am wrong, please correct me)

Barangka nahumala pogauku itu narumatomu naitu

(If I say something wrong, please forgive me) (*Parika's* head is facing to the left)

Barangka nameta metahano pogauku aitu narumatomo naitu

(If it is good, it is to you) (*Parika's* head is facing to the right)

Awuragho kanandohiku, bhahi tonokae.

(Let us see what we have so that we have no shortage of food)

Aitu aesalo ane maafu nehintuumu kohakuno.

(At this moment, I apologize to you who have the rights on this land)

Insaidi dawuno kaawu lima mani.

(We are just moving our hands to find food)

Dawuno kaawu ghaghe mani.

(We are just moving our feet to find food)

Tafokanandoe ihintuumu kohakuno, kudasano somandehaane.

(Fulfill our needs; You definitely know exactly what we need)

Aamiin...

(Aamiin)

The recitation of the mantra (*bhatata*) above serves (a) to ask permission from the God or the guardian of the region (supernatural beings), (b) to make supernatural beings not interfere with community activities when cultivating their fields, (c) to make supernatural beings living in the field not demand recompense because their region is cultivated by the farmers, and (d) to make rice that has been harvested not cause diseases when consumed, such as stomachache, fever, and other illnesses that can cause death.

The Muna ethnic community in West Muna Regency has always believed in the power of certain symbols. Therefore, these symbols are presented during the *Kapontasu* ritual. To date, this belief is still maintained by the Muna people. This is a manifestation and embodiment of belief in something that is considered a tradition. For this reason, in the *Kapontasu* ritual, we can find many symbols that are believed to have magical powers. The offerings in the *Kapontasu* ritual that must be prepared by farmers are *ghunteli seghonu* (one egg) and *kaempaha bhe kaesosoha* (betel leaves and cigarettes). An egg is believed to be food for supernatural beings. The egg is stored by the *parika* at the location of the *Kapontasu* ritual, specifically in the middle of the field in a storage container for offerings. When the egg is laid, a mantra will be recited. The mantra is as follows.

Allahu Masyiallah sayyidina Muhammad wa alli Muhammad

Soano ambaku ambano guru fitutapino

Inodi dawuno kaawu limaku ini

Saku-Kutughuno Wambano Anabi Muhammad

Bismillah.

Besides an egg, offerings becoming the sacred symbols are *kaempaha* (*kinangan*) and *kaesosoha* (cigarettes). These offerings are considered important in the *Kapontasu* ritual and are intended for female and male supernatural beings (jinn). *Kaempaha* is for the female jinn, while *kaesosoha* is for the male jinn. The provision of these offerings is to make the supernatural beings not disturb the plants and the lives of the farmers. Because if farmers do not carry out a ritual in planting rice in their fields, they will usually experience disease problems and their rice plants will be attacked by pests. In the process, *kaempaha* and *kaesosoha* will be placed by a *parika* on *karaha-raha* (ritual table) and followed by the recitation of the mantra below.

Waanko mepana, waangko mesoso.

(I give you betel leaves; I give you cigarettes) *Waangko furoghu, bhahi tonowurae wuu.*

(I give you a drink, do not let my plants be seen by evil spirits)

Tono wurae sia kafembulaku ini, (Do not let them be seen by ants)

Bhetano wurae loli kafembulaku ini. (Do not let them be seen by *loli*)

Tanaombamo dua dakumabaru-baruane. (Do not let people with bad intentions break them)

Welo kafembulaku ini, aesalo ane maafu.

(For these plants of mine, I apologize)

Welohintuumu kohakuno. (To you who have the rights)

Bismillah.

(Bismillah) (Hardin, 2016)

The provision of the offerings referred to above is intended for supernatural beings (jinn) who rule the agricultural area. It symbolizes that, by giving those offerings, the supernatural beings who inhabit the area do not disturb the farmers. Meanwhile, the recitation of the above mantra performed by *parika* aims to prevent farmers from all kinds of disease. In addition, the ritual is also intended to ask permission from the supernatural beings (jinns) who occupy the area to not disturb the people who grow rice in that place. This is in line with the statement of Saputra (2007:96) that the recitation of the mantra is to gain strength because the mantra contains persuasion so that those supernatural beings do not do anything that can harm farmers. In the context of occult ceremonies, humans will try to treat high and supernatural powers well so that what they are doing can go according to what they expect.

4.3 The *Pontasu/Detisa Pae Wuna Mantra (Planting Rice in the Fields)*

After the field has been cleared, fenced, and ready to be planted, the farmers from the Muna community will consult with the *parika* to determine a good day for planting. After the good day has been determined, the *parika* will perform the *Kapontasu* ritual. This ritual is a must for people who grow rice because it is believed that if they do not conduct the *Kapontasu* ritual, supernatural beings may interfere with the rice plants. Therefore, to avoid the disturbances from various diseases that come to interfere with the production of rice fields, the *parika* will recite a mantra before planting rice. The mantra is recited by a *parika* while taking a handful of rice. The mantra is as follows.

Soano inodia ini
(It is not me)
Tawula hundungi
(*Tawula hundungi*)
Tawulake bua
(Tawulake bua)
Meda katugha
(Like a lush forest) *Meda tangiemba*
(Like a *tangiemba*)
Bismillah
(Bismillah) (Sumaria, 2013)

After the *parika* recites the mantra above, she/he then recites “*Assalamu Alaikum Tabea Waku Adhamu*” (*Assalamu Alaikum*, I am sorry; I am Adam) and immediately swallows the ground. Next, the *parika* plants some of the rice seeds in the holes that have been made while reciting the mantra below.

Ei ... Amako ndawea neghabu mopana.
(Ei ... Amako ndawea in the hot dust)
Nematano oe
(In the spring of water)
Newite tumodo
(On hard ground)
Bismillah
(Bismillah) (Sumaria, 2013)

After reciting the mantra and inserting the rice seeds in the holes, the *parika* continues reciting the mantra for the fertility of rice plants to ensure the availability of food for the family. The recitation of this mantra is intended to prevent plant disease to attack rice plants that can interfere with production yields. The mantra recited by the *parika* for the fertility of rice plants is as follows.

Wite wawondu-wawondu, tumbuhano kafembula.
(Wawondu-wawondu land is where plants grow)
Lamba woi namaimu, napotala ntisa lalo.
(Come *lamba woi*; Stand beside the center pillar of the house)
Ato-ato kutikae, kutikano mori-mori. (*Antar-antar kutika, kutikanya mori-mori*)
Mori-morino dhoa, dhoa malaria. (*Mori-morinya doa, doa malaria*)
Tinda malaria. (*Takik malaria*)
Bismillah.
(Bismillah)

The recitation of the mantra above serves: (a) oil from the ground goes up (making soil nutrients available) and oil from the sky goes down (sunlight and rainfall) to fertilize the rice plants, (b) the rice plants can thrive as expected, (c) the rice plants can be protected from all kinds of diseases, (d) farmers get a bountiful harvest, and (e) farmers get blessings from God Almighty. The recitation of the mantras above is believed to bring fertility and keep the plants away from pests and diseases so that production results may increase and ensure the availability of food for the family.

4.4 The Mantra for Maintaining Rice Plants

Rice plants planted by farmers are sometimes attacked by pests, such as rats, birds, and others. In addition, the plants can also be attacked by plant diseases, such as rice panicle blanking. The Muna people believe that these diseases originate from the disturbance of supernatural beings. To prevent these diseases, farmers usually call the *parika* to recite mantras. When reciting the mantra, the *parika* recites it silently – no one else hears his/her voice. The mantra that is recited by *parika* is as follows.

Bilisi pingka naitu

(The devil stays there)

Tikaililino

(Those who will humiliate)

Ntimerikino

(Those to be feared)

Tika tehi-tehino

(Those to be afraid of) (Sumaria, 2013)

The meaning of the mantra recited by a *parika* above illustrates those supernatural beings, such as demons, are greatly feared by farmers, both rice farmers and other types of farmers. Therefore, rice farmers usually ask a *parika* for help to perform the *Kapontasu* ritual before planting rice plants. Farmers hope that, by performing the *Kapontasu* ritual, their rice plants can thrive, not easily collapse during high winds, not easily be broken during the rainy season, and be protected from various diseases so that the harvest can be abundant and the availability of food for the family is maintained.

4.5 The Mantra for Repelling Rice Plant Pests

This mantra is recited after planting the rice plants. This step is taken to ward off various sources of disease that threaten the safety of the rice plants and the farmers themselves. There are several diseases that can threaten and attack farmers' rice plants which may result in crop failures, such as *wangkabu*, (a type of rice plant disease that damages stem and root), *orone*

(sparrows), *wulawo* (rats), and *kapunda* (grasshoppers). For this reason, to prevent and treat diseases in rice plants, farmers use the services of a *parika* to perform a mantra recitation. In the process, a *parika* prepares medicinal water and stores it in a bottle or bucket. She/he then begins to sprinkle it on the rice plants from the middle of the garden and ended on those located at the four corners of the field. This process is carried out for four nights. In practice, the *parika* holds four pieces of corn husk and mixes them with kitchen ashes, dips them in the medicinal water, and then sprinkles it on the rice plants. On the first night, it is started by the *parika*. Furthermore, on the following nights, it can be continued by the farmers themselves.

In making the medicinal water as an antidote for diseases attacking rice plants, the *parika* recites a certain mantra. The mantra is recited to the water stored in the prepared bottle or bucket. The mantra is as follows.

Hangkui-hangkui.

(*Hangkui-hangkui*)

Sitani ibilisi (The devils)

Koangka naini.

(Do not pass by) *Angka Welosanku.* (Pass by in *Wesolangku*) *Sokakalahamu.*

(The place where you go) *Bismilah.*

(Bismillah)

Kasumpuno mbanga-mbanga. (The antidote is *mbanga-mbaga*)

kasumpuno bhete kompo. (The antidote is *bhete kompo*)

kasumpuno la tua-tuake. (The antidote is *la tua-tuake*)

kasumpuno lakapute. (The antidote is *lakapute*)

kasumpuno lakadea. (The antidote to *lakadea*)

kasumpuno lakaghito. (The antidote is *lakaghito*)

Bismillah.

(Bismillah)

The recitation of the mantra above shows that rice farmers in the Muna community have a belief that they must perform the *Kapontasu* ritual in field rice farming. Rice plants that have been sprinkled with water that has been enchanted by the *parika* usually have been protected from all kinds of diseases, such as *lakupute*, *lakadea*, and *lakaghito* diseases. These diseases are often experienced by farmers who do not perform the *Kapontasu* ritual when starting to plant, which eventually results in crop failure. This is in line with the statement of Saputra (2007:95-96) that a mantra is a word or utterance that can bring magical power or composition of words containing poetry which is considered to have supernatural powers and is usually spoken by a *parika* to fight against other supernatural powers.

4.6 The *Tobheha* Mantra (Rice Harvest)

Before doing a *tobheha* activity, the farmers with the *parika* first determine a good day or a good time (*kutika*). In general, what is harvested (*ditobhe*) is the final product of the plants cultivated. In this case, it is rice. Rice harvesting is done when the planting period has been completed based on the calculations of *notahamo* (has been ripe) and *notughamo* (already overripe). This is in line with what has been mentioned in the Quran, specifically QS. Ibrahim (14) verse 25 that “The tree always yields its fruit in every season by the Will of its Lord. This is how Allah sets forth parables for the people, so perhaps they will be mindful.” It means that, based on good timing and certainty of rice production, there are parable symbols that provide an overview of safety, sustenance, and obstacles/challenges. The same thing occurs when farmers harvest rice in which they always take into account the good and right time. A good time to carry out *tobheha* (harvest) should be considered carefully. This is because it is closely related to human safety, health, the blessing of the harvest, and its abundance to ensure the availability of food for the family. In the Muna community, the determination of auspicious days is carried out in all agricultural activities, such as land clearing, planting, and harvesting (Marianti, 2019:43).

The practice of *tobheha* involves the *parika*, the owner of the field, and the surrounding people who will participate in harvesting. In this event, the *parika* takes on the role of leader of the *tobheha* by conveying intentions and expectations during the harvest process. The *parika* is the first person who will start the *tobheha* process because before starting the *tobheha*, she/he will recite a mantra on the rice plants to be harvested. The *parika* is believed by the community that she/he can communicate with supernatural beings. On this occasion, the *parika* through reciting a mantra will ask the supernatural beings inhabiting the area to not disturb the people who participate in the rice harvest.

In the process, the *parika* first collects some knives (kitchen knives) from the participating people. Then, she/he sprinkles the kitchen ashes on the knives while reciting a mantra. The kitchen ashes sprinkled on the knives serve as a guard for the participants. By sprinkling the kitchen ashes, supernatural beings are expected to not dare to disturb the participants. After that, the *parika* distributes the knives to their owners. Next, the *parika* escorts the participants into the garden to start harvesting. Before the farmer starts the rice harvest, the *parika* recites the mantra below.

Amalaemu paeku ini. (I will harvest my rice plants) *Amokapoemu.*

(I will complete the age of my plants) *Paeno guunu rumbia.*

(The rice is *guunu rumbia*) *Nopesua nekadampaku ini.*

(This is my expertise)

Paeno wasabha mpolulu. (The rice is *wasabha mpolulu*)

Nopesua nekadampaku ini. (This is my expertise)

Bismillah.

(Bismillah) (Marianti, 2019)

With abundant harvests, the availability of family food can be fulfilled. The recitation of the mantra above aims to prevent the rice harvest from any threat, such as being eaten by caterpillars, termites, ants, and others. A *parika* knows that the results of farming possessed by humans belong to Allah SWT. Humans are only mandated to manage it for the prosperity of their lives. Therefore, humans have no right to take or use the property/products of the plant carelessly. They must follow the instructions outlined by the *parika* as representatives of Allah SWT on earth (Khamisa, 2011). The impact is abundant harvests and the availability of food for the family can be maintained. By reciting the mantra above, farmers usually get abundant harvests and their plants are protected from pests. In the recitation of the mantra, the *parika* asked Allah SWT for health, fortune, and safety.

4.7 Discussion

Mantras in the *Kapontasu* Ritual for the Muna ethnic community in West Muna Regency are strictly adhered to and implemented by the supporting community as a guide in field rice agribusiness. Compliance in the implementation

of the *Kapontasu* ritual is an illustration that the mantras in this ritual are very rich in meaning and function in increasing plant fertility and keeping away disturbances from rice plant pests. The final purpose of the implementation of this ritual is an abundant yield that can fulfill the food availability for families in West Muna. Sutawan (2008) revealed that rituals in agriculture can be used as cultural capital to maintain agriculture so that family food security can be maintained.

The *Kapontasu* ritual in the Muna ethnic community is local wisdom that is sourced from local knowledge. The ritual serves as an effort to ward off plant-disturbing organisms. In this regard, before controlling plant-disturbing organisms, the farmers need to implement the *Kapontasu* ritual and recite its mantras to anticipate plant pest disturbances and obtain abundant results to maintain the food security for the Muna ethnic family in West Muna.

This local wisdom can be identified in the stages of implementing the *Kapontasu* ritual in the recitation of the mantra for the embedding of initial *tugal*, the placement of rice seed (*owine*), and the arrangement of offerings, the mantra for planting rice in the fields, the mantra for maintaining rice plants, the mantra for repelling rice plant pests, and the mantra for harvesting rice plants. These mantras serve to increase crop yields and ensure the availability of food for farmers' families. This is related to the local knowledge possessed by the Muna ethnic community. This is in line with a study conducted by Norken *et al.* (2015) that local wisdom or intelligence possessed by local communities is very useful to achieving family food security.

The mantras in the *Kapontasu* ritual relate to the basics of farming in the form of placing rice seeds, embedding *tugal*, and providing offerings, which are rich in symbols as stated by Agus (2006) that rituals are in the form of expressions and symbols. In the *Kapontasu* ritual, specific actions are performed by the *parika*, which are carried out at each stage. These actions are to ask God for help and build harmony with supernatural beings (demons or devils) who inhabit the community's cultivation area. Dhavamony (2006) states that ritual is religion in action.

The mantras in the *Kapontasu* ritual are related to the submission to a higher power. In other words, what the *parika* is doing is only asking for help from Allah SWT. Likewise, if someone has bad intentions (e.g., devils), the ritual is to ask Allah for supervision. Therefore, those supernatural beings, after the implementation of the *Kapontasu* ritual, do not interfere anymore because they are treated well by being given food (betel leaves) and cigarettes. Cigarettes for male supernatural beings and betel leaves (*kampanaha*) for female supernatural beings. The Muna people believe that the life of supernatural beings is almost the same as human life, in which they also eat, drink, smoke for men, and consume betel leaves for women. Cigarettes and betel leaves (*kampanaha*) symbolize brotherhood which aims to prevent supernatural beings from disturbing the people who inhabit the area. Cigarettes are intended for male supernatural beings and betel leaves for their female counterparts (Hesni & Wa Kuasa, 2018). Likewise, those that have been harvested with abundant yields are expected to have blessings and be able to maintain family food security.

The *Kapontasu* ritual has various functions, namely asking God for help, moving the inhabitants of supernatural beings in the area where rice is grown, protecting the harvest, and others. This shows that the ritual has its respective purpose and function. This is in line with the view that each ritual has a different function but the goal is the same, namely to ask God for salvation (Koderi, 1991).

In the midst of diminishing public confidence in the meaning and function of rituals in the field of cultivation, it turns out that the Muna ethnic community in West Muna still considers the *Kapontasu* ritual as an obligation that must be carried out to keep plant diseases away, keep the dangers away from disturbances from the evil supernatural beings, and bring fertility to ensure family food security.

V. CONCLUSION

The *Kapontasu* ritual has an important position as a ritual that must be carried out by rice farmers in West Muna. The negligence in this ritual is often regarded as the cause of crop failure and the emergence of various diseases that attack paddy fields. For this reason, the Muna ethnic community in West Muna is obedient to carrying it out.

Mantras in the *Kapontasu* ritual are one of the oral traditions of the Muna ethnic community. These mantras are practiced by the people of Muna when they plant rice in their fields. The mantras can be only recited by a *parika*. However, on some occasions, farmers are allowed to recite the mantras. The recitation of the mantras is carried out when starting planting the rice in the field, preventing plant diseases, and harvesting, which the process is led by a *parika*. It is conducted in the hope the farmers' rice yields are in line with what is expected. From the results of this study, we found that there are five identified mantras in the *Kapontasu* ritual: (a) a mantra for the embedding of initial *tugal*, the placement of rice seed (*owine*), and the arrangement of offerings, (b) the *detisa pae wuna* mantra (planting rice in the fields), (c) a mantra for maintaining rice plants, (d) a mantra for repelling rice plant pests, and (e) the *tobheha* mantra (rice harvest). Furthermore, the functions of the recitation of the mantras are (a) to ask God Almighty to grant farmers rice plants that are protected from diseases and result in abundant harvests, (b) to move the supernatural beings that inhabit the area, (c) to make supernatural beings living in the field not demand recompense because their region is cultivated by the farmers, and (d) to make rice that has been harvested not cause diseases when consumed, such as stomachache, fever, and other illnesses that can cause death.

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