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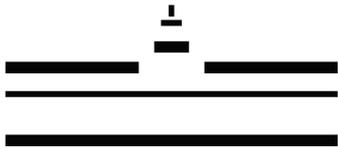
# The Ritual Calendar of South Acèh, Indonesia

Abdul Manan



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“*Adat* is where you are; wherever you walk on this earth it is under this sky that you live”.

“The people who have no *adat* resemble a ship that has no a captain”.

“The law of religion without *adat* is tasteless, *adat* without religion does not exist”.

Jamee elders



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# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

### Background to the research

Islam can be divided into two forms: normative Islam and historic Islam. Normative Islam is what is described in the Qur'ān (the revelation of Allāh), the *ḥadīth* or *sunnah*,<sup>1</sup> the '*ulamā*' (Islamic scholars) interpretation of the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*. Historic Islam is what has been practiced by Muslims at ritual and social levels in various societies (Denny 1985:77; Rahman 1985:189; Nur 1996:3). Different terms are employed to indicate this distinction. Eickelman (1976) used the term "formal" for normative Islam and "informal" for historic Islam. Waardenburg (1979) employed the term "official" for normative Islam and "popular Islam" for historic Islam. Normative Islam may also be called "universal" or orthodox Islam, while "local" or "heterodox" Islam are terms which refer to historic Islam.

In general, "formal Islam" is understood to include beliefs and practices which are validated in Islamic law and which refer to the "reflective" or "explicit" ideology of the educated as articulated by religious scholars. Beliefs and practices which deviate from Islamic law are labelled "informal Islam" and refer to "unreflective" or "implicit" ideologies of the mostly uneducated masses (Butelaar 1993; Nur 1996). The two manifestations of Islam can be explained by the fact that Islamic scholars are concerned with the Qur'ān, the *sunnah* and their interpretation at the expense of everyday religious understanding and practices. The main topic of discussion for them is the question of how to understand the texts of religious tradition properly: the Qur'ān, the *ḥadīth* and the commentaries on each (Nur 1996:3).

Unlike Islamic scholars, anthropologists who study Islam focus on locally distinctive traditions and less on the religiously shared traditions. The anthropologists who are concerned with local forms of culture study what is quintes-

---

1 *Ḥadīth* is a traditional collection of stories relating words or deeds of the Prophet Muḥammad. It is the chief source of guidance for understanding religious questions, while *sunnah* refers, in common, to the normative example of the Prophet Muḥammad, as recorded in traditions known as *ḥadīth* about his speech, his actions, his acquiescence to the words and actions of others, and his personal characteristics. Based on this definition, it is clear that *sunnah* is a broader field than *ḥadīth*.

entially characteristic of a particular people or region, such as the rites, myths and the representations (Bowen 1993:5). The anthropologists refer to the way of life of people, in all its variations, as their culture; they translate cultures and their premises to make them understandable in terms anthropologists' ideas (Rosman & Rubel 2004:1). They generally show a preference for the uniqueness in Islamic cultures, paying particular attention to religious practices and views which deviate from doctrinal prescriptions (Denny 1985). They also attempt to juxtapose the particular cultures in order to show the variability and mutability of religious ideas across the Muslim world, as in Geertz's (1968) comparison of very different forms taken by Islamic mysticism in Java and Morocco. He has placed in the forefront the features of cultural life that distinguish between these cultures and their religion. Ritual activities such as acts of prayer, sacrifice, fasting etc are by and large left to those specialists interested in the "high culture" of Islam. "The point of departure for many anthropologists has been the social life of religious discourse: how written texts and oral traditions are produced, read and reread to close the gap between the decontextualized reading of normative texts, on the one hand, and an ethnographic approach that paid close attention to the social life of texts, on the other" (Bowen 1993:7).

Rituals (Jamee [Jam] *kanduri*; Acèhnese [Ach] *khanduri*)<sup>2</sup>, religious ceremonies consisting of a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order, are the core of the social identity of all communities. Every society will vary in its view of what is ritual and what is not. Ritual is defined with the emphasis on the ceremonial aspect, with attention to emotional meaning, with regard to repetitions (Rappaport 1999), or formalized activities without words while words without action are myths (Parkin 1994:18). Rituals are about the expression of a wish or a fact in symbolic form. In other words, "they refer to another reality behind the directly observable one". "Rituals are a form of communication about deeper values, norms and relationships. Rituals bring society together as they manifest with each individual the feeling of the dependence and strength gained from membership and participation in the social group" (Durkheim 1915). To broadly summarise the theory on ritual, the schol-

---

2 The Acèhnese sometimes say *kenduri*, *kanduri*, *kawuri*, *kauri*, *kenuri* and *kanuri* instead of the word *khanduri*. *Khanduri* (Indonesian [Indon] *kenduri*) is a popular Islamic term in Southeast Asia, indicating a ritual meal given for a number of occasions. Islamic prayers and blessings are often part of the *khanduri* and include Islamic elements to the ritual meal in order to make it essentially an Islamic festivity (Federspiel 1995:125).

ars note rituals as communicating [ritual says something to its participants] and clarifying social reality, as well as actually establishing it.

In the anthropological study of religion, the expressive power of ritual symbolism has become a popular theme. Turner (1968), for example, is mainly interested in the instrumental aspects of symbols. He considers rituals as periodic restatements of the terms in which men of a particular culture must interact if there is to be any kind of a coherent social life. “It actually creates or re-creates the categories through which men perceive reality” (Turner 1968:6-7). Furthermore, he argues that “it is the strength of religious symbols which enables integration and establishes unification. In his analysis of symbols, he concentrates on what symbols refer to and how they facilitate social change such as in rites of life crisis”. Geertz considers rituals as symbols that “sum up ... what is known about the way the world is, the quality of emotional life it supports and the way one ought to behave while in it” (Geertz 1973b:127). He characterizes the religious perspective in terms of commitment and faith, arguing that the acceptance of authority that underlies the religious perspective that the ritual embodies flows from the enactment of ritual itself (Geertz 1973a:113). In line with this, Ortner (1978:2-5) suggests that ritual performances “dramatize basic assumption of fact and value in the culture...shaping actors in such a way that they wind up appropriating cultural meaning as personally held orientation”.

Any ritual can be placed in one of two major categories: calendrical rites and life-crisis rites (Alland 1980:468). The calendrical rites follow a fixed schedule, whereas life-crisis rites simply occur when the need arises. Based on the ideal that “the study of ritual is the study of actual behaviour as it is the mastery of ideal form” (Denny 1985:77; Nur 1996:4), I attempt in this ethnographic research to convey the ideas and values expressed by the Aneuk Jamee Muslims in performing Islamic calendrical rituals in South Acèh.<sup>3</sup> I observe that these rituals were more rigorously performed after the tsunami had struck Acèh on December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2004.<sup>4</sup> I argue that the close observation and compara-

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3 Nanggroe Acèh Darussalam is divided governmentally into eighteen regencies: Kotamadya Banda Acèh, Kotamadya Sabang, Pidie, Bireuen, North Acèh, East Acèh, Acèh Tamiang, Central Acèh, Gayo Lues, Southeast Acèh, Acèh Besar, Acèh Jaya, West Acèh, Nagan Raya, Southwest Acèh, South Acèh, Acèh Singkil and Simeulue (see map of Acèh province). The capital city of this province is Banda Acèh.

4 The western coastal areas of Acèh, including the cities of Banda Acèh, Calang and Meulaboh, were among the areas hardest-hit by the tsunami resulting from the Indian

tive analysis of these rituals enable us to interpret the ways in which the Aneuk Jamee society in West Labuhan Haji district react upon and valorize the historical and contemporary events that occur amongst them.

The population in Acèh consists of several groups: Acèhnese, Gayo, Tamiang, Alas, Simeulue, Kluet and Aneuk Jamee. They have all adopted the Islamic religion. Nevertheless, the Hindu/Buddhist religion strongly influenced the culture long before the arrival of Islam. As a result Islam in Acèh has been malleable, tentative, multi voiced, resembling “a marbled layer cake” (*Ach kuwe lapéh marmèr*); witness the various religious beliefs expressed in certain ritual performances. It is correct to say that not all religious activities in Acèh today are based on normative Islam; and some clearly belong to the historic Islam. This fact has inspired me to conduct a social-anthropological research in Acèh, North Sumatra, which is known as The Verandah of Mecca (*Ach seuramo Mekkah*).

The early history of Acèh was influenced by India. Snouck Hurgronje (1906) speculated that it was indeed more than probable that Acèh, like other countries of the Indonesian Archipelago, was influenced by both Muslims and Hindu Indian traders (*kléng*). As a result, the representations from the cultures of the various people in the Middle East and India were mixed with the indigenous (animistic and Hinduised) beliefs and practices (Noer 1973:301). The “heterodox mysticism” of Shams al-Dīn al-Sumātrānī in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and its forerunner Hamzah al-Fansūrī might have come from India. The greatest ruler of Acèh, Iskandar Muda, who ruled from 1607 to 1636, supported Shams al-Dīn al-Sumātrānī, but his successor, Iskandar Thani (1636-41) banished these mystics from his court and burned their books.<sup>5</sup> Thereupon the Acèhnese Islam mainly followed the “orthodox tradition”. However, today some pre-Islamic influences can still be encountered in current ritual ceremonies, arts, customs, and everyday life even though the Islamic reforms, especially advocated by the modernist movements are still being propagated in Acèh province.

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Ocean earthquake on December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2004. While estimates vary, about 230,000 people were killed and 500,000 were left homeless in Acèh (Apridar 2005).

5 The history of mysticism in Acèh in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century can be found in Snouck Hurgronje. He stated that not all the books which embody Hamzah al-Fansūrī’s teaching were burnt, but many of his books escaped the flames (Snouck Hurgronje (1906 II:12-3).

## Research focus

This social anthropological research focuses on ways in which Islam manifests itself in the culturally specific representations and actions of the society of South Acèh. Several scholars conducted their research in Acèh (e.g. Snouck Hurgronje (1906), Siegel (1969), Jayawardena (1977), Bowen (1993)), no attention, however, has been paid so far to the region of South Acèh. This research explores the relations between the so-called normative Islam - as laid down in the canonical texts of the Qur'ān and *hadīth* - and the ways in which these normative ideas, preceptions and values are expressed in rituals in the society concerned. It pays particular attention to the ways in which the latter forms of ritual expression entail a culturally specific adaptation and valorisation of the trans-cultural representations laid down in these Islamic text corpora and to the ways in which - according to local understanding and exegesis - these ritual actions generate a reproduction of the social relationships and their moral foundation in the society concerned. To answer these research questions requires a meticulous observation of the ritual actions. The latter entail the performance of certain series of actions, the enactment of transfers of gifts, commodities, words and gestures, and the mobilisation of particular social and religious relations. It also requires conducting in-depth discussions with the participants about the symbols, meanings and values, which they attach to these actions as to their effectiveness in achieving particular social, religious, political and moral aims. In addition, a systematic survey of relevant published sources has complemented this field research.

The calendrical rituals on which this research focuses are the following: 1) The ritual of *'āsyūrā*, lasting for one to three days, and taking place at the beginning of the Islamic New Year, Muharram. 2) The ritual of *tulak bala* lasting one day in the month of Safar. 3) The ritual of *mò'lōt*, one to seven days in the month of Rabiul Awwal or Rabiul Akhir or Jumadil Awwal. 4) The ritual of *khanduri bungong kayèë*, performed for one to three days in the month of Jumadil Akhir. 5) The ritual of *khanduri apam* on the night of the *israk mikrāj* celebration, conducted for one to seven days in the month of Ra'jab. 6) The ritual of *khanduri bu* performed during the month of Sya'ban, including *khanduri beureu'at*, *peugléh meunasah*, *meugang* and *pajoeh-pajoeh*. 7) The ritual of Ramadhan in the whole month of Ramadhan. 8) The ritual of *uroe raya puasa*, lasting one to three days in the beginning of Syawwal. In addition,

the ritual of *teumuntuak* is also discussed in this context, and finally 9) The ritual of *uroe raya haji* performed for one to three days in the month of Zulhijjah, the last month of the Islamic year (see figure 1).

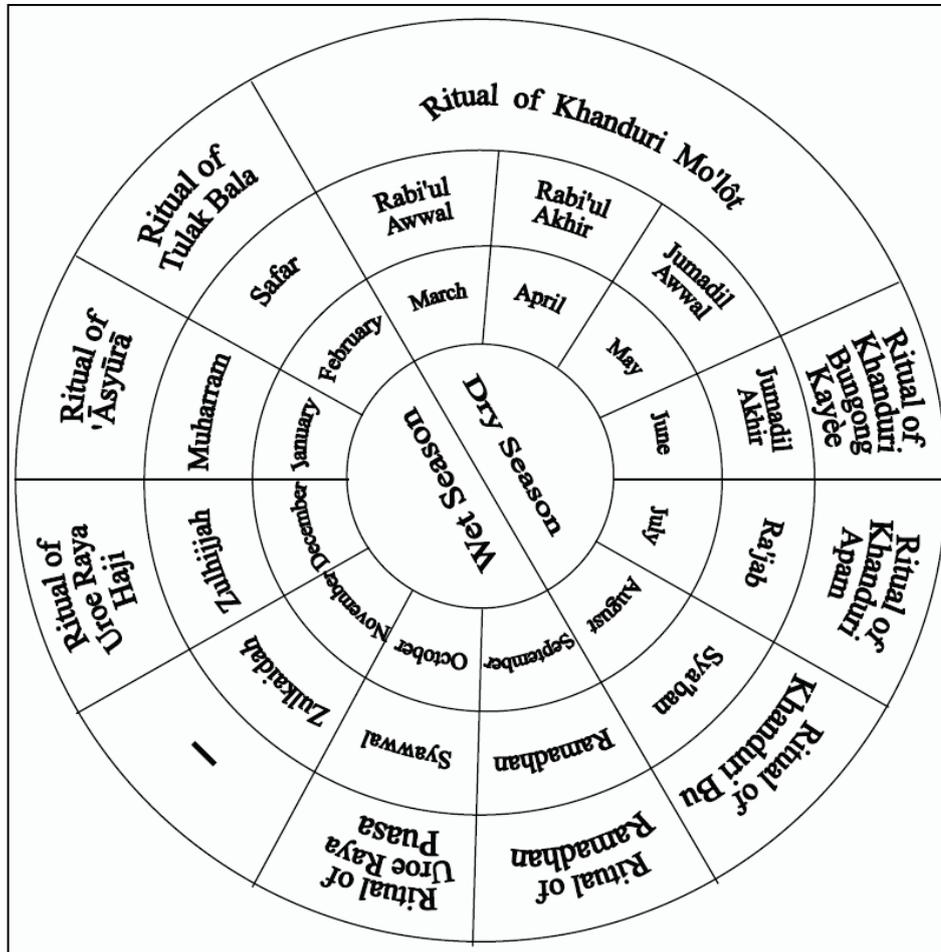


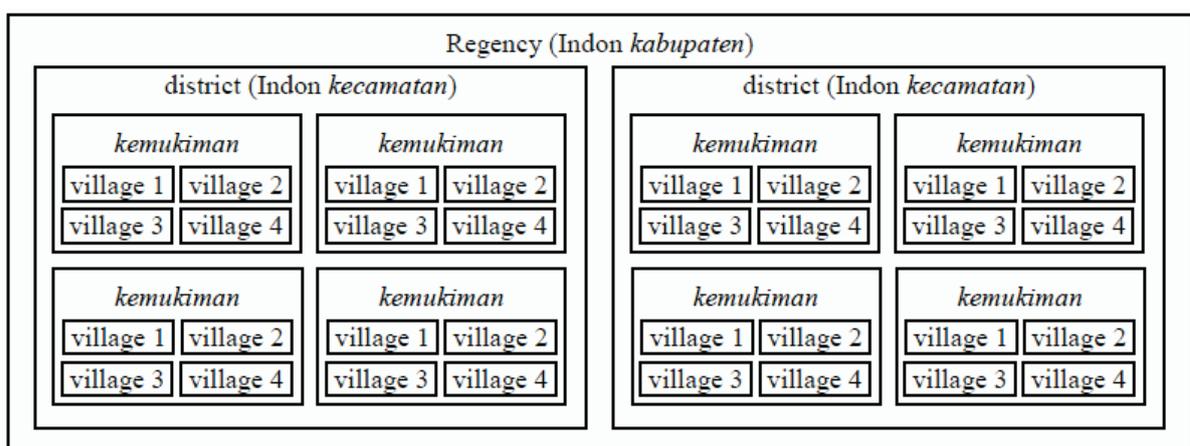
Figure 1. The ritual calendar of South Acèh

Figure 1 shows a concordance between the lunar and the solar calendar due to the fact that in the years 2007-2008 they coincided. These rituals constitute in their totality the annual ritual cycle and are the foundation of the socio-religious order of the society of South Acèh. Although Muslims in all Islamic societies recognise these rituals, to some extent, the meaning of such rituals varies from one society to another, and this variation, of course, is related to the socio-cultural background of each society.

To conduct such a research, the unity of time and place of the rituals performed is a basic methodological requirement. Rituals in Southeast Asian societies form part of systems. Their periodicity is defined either in terms of overall

temporal and/or religious cycles - usually organised on an annual basis - or in terms of the lifecycle of individual persons - hence ranging from pregnancy and birth to death and ancestral rituals. To analyse the significance of any such particular ritual, it is of utmost importance to be able to assess it in its relations to the other rituals constituting such overall ritual cycles (Barraud & Platenkamp 1990). Moreover, such individual rituals need to be studied within the same population in order to explore their interdependence. The observation of partial rituals observed in different places hampers an integral understanding of such interrelationships.

In order to fulfil these methodological requirements a field research was conducted, lasting from the beginning of March 2007 when the ritual of *mò'lōt* is performed until the end of February 2008, when the ritual of *'āsyūrā* is conducted. In this way, the entire calendrical cycle of rituals in West Labuhan Haji district, South Acèh could be systematically studied. The requirement to study all rituals among the same research population was met by selecting a single village, that is, Blangporoh as a focal community, in which the ritual cycles in their totality were studied. This village is part of a group of villages, including Blangbaru and Kutaiboh in the district (Indonesian [Indon] *kecamatan*) of West Labuhan Haji, in the regency (Indon *kecamatan*) of South Acèh (see figure 2), whose populations constitute a single culturally homogeneous group. In these other villages the insights gained from the field research in Blangporoh were counterchecked as well.



**Figure 2. The social structure**

## Methodology

The field researches were conducted by means of participant observation as the principal method of this empirical study. Participant observation method means that the researcher is involved directly with the community in order to observe and document people's activities. Besides a meticulous observation of the ritual actions and the library research mentioned earlier, I also used in-depth interviews, discussions, recording and audio-visual registrations with the main protagonists of the ritual performance as an instrument to gather information. All interviews were conducted in the Acèhnese language (my mother tongue), Indonesian (my national language), and the Jamee language (local language). For interviews conducted in Jamee language-spoken by some members of the population the assistance of a local interpreter had to be solicited. The interviews and discussions enabled me to communicate with a large number of people in West Labuhan Haji district, and to explore the meanings, symbols, and values people attach to these calendrical rituals, the ways in which their ritual practices are embedded in the local world view.

In exploring the ritual question, I followed Brown's perspectives (Brown 1979:51-2) in studying and understanding rituals. He develops three considerations for analysing a ritual: (1) consideration of the purpose or reason for the rite; (2) consideration of ritual meaning or symbolism; and (3) consideration of the effect of the rites, both individual and social. As to the selection of samples, I chose the method of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is "the assembling of a sample by intentionally seeking individuals or situations likely to yield new instances and greater understanding of a dimension or concept of interest" (Krathwohl 1993:690). The power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. This type of nonprobability sampling<sup>6</sup> is most often used in qualitative research. I intentionally chose certain villages in West Labuhan Haji district, South Acèh as my sample; the village of Blangporoh (see map 4), Blangbaru (see map 5) and Kutaiboh (see map 6) because these villages could provide information-rich cases for the in-depth study I envisaged.

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6 Nonprobability samples are those that do not involve random sampling at some stages in the process.

## Sociography of Blangporoh village

West Labuhan Haji district (Indon *kecamatan*) consists of three sub-districts (Indon *kemukiman*): Blangbaru, Blangkeujèrèn and Kutatrieng. Blangporoh village is one of the villages in the subdistrict Blangbaru. The territory of this village is 7 km<sup>2</sup> inhabited by 330 families. The number of inhabitants is 1866: 1086 are male (including many students of the boarding school) and 781 are female. The Blangporoh village is divided into four ‘clusters’ (Indon *dusun*): Dusun Darussalam, Dusun Gaya Baru, Dusun Tengah, and Dusun Ujung (table 1). To the north the village is bordered by the village of Madatpaya, to the east by the village of Kutaiboh, to the south by the Indian Ocean, and to the west by the village of Blangbaru.<sup>7</sup>

No	Names of Dusun	Family	Male	Female	Male + Female
1	Dusun Tengah	77	160	174	334
2	Dusun Darussalam	109	596	267	863
3	Dusun Gaya Baru	96	210	218	428
4	Dusun Ujung	48	119	122	241
		330	1086	781	1866

**Table 1. The inhabitants of Blangporoh village in 2007**

Blangporoh village comprises a number of houses gathered closely together and separated by paths, one mosque and two ‘prayer houses’ (Ach *meunasah*), rice fields, gardens, and bush woods. The villagers have different jobs; fishermen, farmers, gardeners, civil servants, tailors, fishmongers, sellers, healers, peddlers of toys and goods, traders etc. In general, their jobs can be divided into two groups: farmers and fishermen.

From an economic perspective, Blangporoh village is a strategic area because it is flanked by mountains and the sea. Between these lie fertile rice fields allowing residents to earn a living and in the mountains they can grow various types of crops, but mostly nutmeg. In their paddy fields they grow rice and peanuts while at sea they can catch fish and shrimps. Men work at sea, in paddy fields and gardens, and in the mountains. Females also work in the paddy fields and gardens. However, there are lands that have not been cultivated.

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<sup>7</sup> See map of Blangporoh village.

Blangporoh village's population of 1,866 inhabitants does not match the minimum number of 2500 required by the Village Administration Law according to a decree of the Minister of Internal Affairs (Sulaiman 1997). As a consequence, national branch offices such as the Public Health Service (*Pusat Kesehatan Masyarakat*), banks specializing in a small low interest loans for farmers and fishermen (*BRI Unit Desa*), the cooperation specializing for the farmers and fishermen (*Koperasi Unit Desa*), and national representatives such as Instructors for Agricultural Extension (*Penyuluhan Pertanian Lapangan*) only exist in the principal town of the district of Labuhan Haji. The main activities in the village take place in the mosque and 'prayer house' (*Jam surau; Ach meunasah*) located strategically in the middle of the village. In the mosque complex, there is a pavilion called *Balai Pemberdayaan dan Kesejahteraan Keluarga* (Family Welfare Empowerment). The mosque functions, firstly, as the place where the people of the village perform ritual prayers, particularly the five daily prayers and the *tarawih* (non-obligatory evening prayers during the month of Ramadhan), and the annual *idul fitri* and *idul adha* prayers, Secondly, it is the place where young women recite the *barzanji*-prayer every Friday night and young men recite the *dalaél khairat*-prayer together every Saturday night. Thirdly, it is the place where religious teaching is taught at noon, where all people in the village share religious sentiments with each other. Thus the mosque and 'prayer house' function as the places for worship and education. A religious atmosphere pervades in Blangporoh village. Stage entertainment and cinema are absent. Such places are still considered taboo. This does not mean that the Blangporoh communities do not need entertainment. They can entertain themselves by watching television at home or visit coffee shops.

In addition, the mosque and 'prayer house' also function as places where the people of the village perform the social and government activities. The mosque and 'prayer house' are places where the people of the village assemble to perform rituals at the village level. It also functions as a place where the representatives of the national or local government give instructions about matters pertaining to the government program of development. In consequence, the mosque and 'prayer house' are places where the entire villagers share their communal life and sentiments with the each other.

The inhabitants of Blangporoh village do not descend from ancestors so that its community does not have a genealogical character but there has been intermarriage among its inhabitants or between its inhabitants and those of the

neighbouring villages. There is still a household descending from a noble family. The villagers respect the members of this family although they now no longer hold the power in the village. The inter-marriage among its inhabitant has strengthened the integration of the village (see Ch.4). This is shown by the fact that Blangporoh people practice matrilineal principles which certainly have an effect on the formation of groups and socialization. Therefore, a village is divided among groups based on female relatives, while children are closer and more familiar with their mother's relatives than their father's relatives (see Ch.3).

Besides the medium of kinship, the integration process takes place through the *adat*<sup>8</sup> (from an Arabic term *'adat*) and *reusam* institutions. *Adat*, signifying 'custom', are sets of rules or norms that must be adhered to, respected, and become a framework. The *adat* has two senses. In one sense it represents all regulation already recognized by the rulers that have judicial effect. In another sense, the *adat* covers all rules or habits concerning the 'custom tax' (Sulaiman 1997). The *reusam* represents all the ways in which a villager behaves during village activities such as agricultural and religious, activities, the life-cycle rituals and calendrical rituals based on the principles of reciprocity. The *adat* and *reusam* characterize the social process of the people in the village. As Muslims, Islam also plays an important role in integrating the people of the village. Its role reflects not only through the values of the *adat* and *reusam* but also through any rituals performed in the mosque and 'prayer house'. These rituals give people a common orientation that in turn can strengthen village solidarity.

The village integration of *adat* and *reusam*, the religious and the kinship solidarity does not mean that the villagers are isolated from the outside world. Certain media play an important role in connecting a village with neighbouring villages and other regions. Syafiite law school for instance, demands that 40 adult male followers perform the *shalat jum'at* (communal prayer obligatory for men every Friday noon) and this made some neighbouring villages join together in a *mukim* administration based round a mosque. This federation is naturally strengthened by the fact that the people of those villages have the

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8 The term *adat* is in fact an Arabic term *'adat* which means "custom". Through his works of the late nineteenth-century, Snouck Hurgronje had used the Arabic word *adat*, signifying 'custom' in order to discriminate between the Islamic law (*syarī'ah*) and the 'customary law' (*adat*) in Acèh.

same language and culture. Besides the Jamee world, the religious solidarity associates the people of the village with the Muslim world such an association is tied by religious brotherhood (*ummat*) and the common orientation to Mecca as ‘the mother of the country’ (Ach *mak nanggroe*) while worshipping Allāh. Thus a villager has solidarity with the village where he or she lives and at the same time he or she also has solidarity with the outside world through the *mukim* solidarity or religious solidarity. The solidarity with the other regions is often strengthened by the intermarriage between villages.

The Aneuk Jamee way of life, based on the *adat*, *reusam*, and Islam, are also reflected in the social structure of the village. The village, which in Jamee is called *kampung* (from Ach *gampōng* and Indon *kampung* or *désa*) is the smallest administrative territory led by *kapalo kampung* (Ach *keuchik/geuchik*). The *kapalo kampung* means the village headman who is selected and trusted by the community and is officially appointed by the district government to lead the *kampung*. He takes care of the daily administrative affairs in the village. Although the *kapalo kampung* is the *adat* elite, he also has authority over the various activities in the village and defends his jurisdiction interests against the outsider. The Aneuk Jamee, therefore, values the *kapalo kampung*’s position like a father (Jam *ayah*) in the household. The code of the *kapalo kampung* in executing his tasks is naturally based on the Aneuk Jamee way of life, namely *adat*, *reusam* and Islam. He also consults with his superiors in rank, namely the *imeuem mukim*,<sup>9</sup> the head of *mukim* level of administration and *adat* judiciaries (Indon *pemangku adat*). In addition, the *kapalo kampung* is responsible for everything related to the administration of the *kampung*. For *khanduri*, for instance, he mobilizes the people to participate and bring various food and amounts of money.

In executing his daily tasks in term of religious matters in the village, the *kapalo kampung* is assisted by *tuangku imam* (Ach *teungku imuem*). The *tuangku/teungku* literally means ‘my lord’ and comprises of *tuangku imam mesjid* who manages the mosque and *tuangku imam meunasah* who manages a *meunasah* ‘prayer house’. The *tuangku imam mesjid* has the duty of organizing the *jum’at* prayer and all rituals in the mosque’s jurisdiction, while the *tuangku imam meunasah* acts as religious leader organizing the congregation and rituals. The Aneuk Jamee, therefore, value the *tuangku*’s position like a mother

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9 A leader of a collection of several villages is called Imuem Mukim.

(Jam *umak*) in the household. He is the person who is responsible for leading community activities at *kampung* level related to enforcement of *syari'ah* law and any ritual performances in the village. In *khanduri*, for instance, he guides the people in the recitation of *do'a*. The village's mosque has the grounds (land) for these religious ceremonies called *tanoh wakeuh* or *umong meusara*. These grounds are cultivated by the *tuangku imam mesjid/teungku imam meunasah* and other mosque staff such as the preacher (*khatib*), the one who calls to prayer (*bileu*), and the mosque's cleaning service (*khadam*).<sup>10</sup> In addition, *tuangku imam* also receives gifts and great respect from those who have enjoyed their services in the village.

In executing his daily tasks beyond religious matters, the *kapalo kampung* is assisted by a number of personnel: they are 1) *wakil* "the deputy" he is the *kapalo kampung*'s assistant. He has the duty of delivering the messages to the villages or assisting *kapalo kampung* in mobilizing the villages for all village activities. 2) *sekretaris kampung* "the secretary of the village", he is the village head's "employee" providing administration services to the head of the village. 3) *keujruen blang* "the surveyor of the rice field" or "rice [ritual] specialist", he manages the village irrigation. 4) *panglima laôt* "the inspector of the sea" takes charge of the customs and traditional practices concerning fishing, including fishing areas and settling disputes. 5) *tuwo ampèk* (Ach *tuwu peut*) is the body at *kampung* level comprising of religious leaders, *adat* leaders, community leaders and scholars. *Tuwo ampèk* is responsible for providing advice to the *kapalo kampung* and *imuem mukim* in the fields of governance, *adat* law, customs and community practice as well settling disputes at *kampung* and *mukim* level. And 6) *haria peukan* is the person responsible for order, security, market hygiene and for collecting the market fee.<sup>11</sup>

As an agent of village bureaucratization, *kapalo kampung* has been charged with new duties, the duty of tax collection, population registration,

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10 In Blangporoh village, there are 16 *arèe* [32 liters] of the grounds (land) for religious purposes (Ach *tanoh wakeuh*). 4 *arèe* for *tuangku imam mesjid*, 4 *arèe* [8 liters] for preacher (Jam *tuangku khatib*), 4 *arèe* for a person who calls to prayer (Jam *tuangku bilal*), and 4 *arèe* for the mosque's cleaning service (Jam *tuangku khadam*).

11 Other *adat* institutions such as *tuwo delapèn (tuha lapan)* "the body at *kampung* and *mukim* level comprising of the government, religious leaders, *adat* leaders, community leaders, scholars, the youth/women and people organisation groups"; *peutua seuneubok* "the leader in regulating land use and land clearing for agriculture/plantation". *Syahbanda* "the person responsible for leading and managing boat mooring posts and boat traffic in sea, river and lake transportation" is not found in Blangporoh village.

signing the various civil certificates, and helping the national administration representative in implementing the various development projects in his village. He obtains various remunerations in return for his services including the honorarium (Indon *uang jerih payah*) from the government. Therefore, the *kapalo kampung* plays a double role; as an agent of the national administration and as a traditional leader. Owing to his duties, the people still call him *kapalo kampung* although officially his new post is called *kepala désa* (Sulaiman 1997:7).

Blangporoh village has its own cultural patterns taken from many elements, not only from the elements of Acèhnese but also from outside Acèh, such from Minangkabau, West Sumatra. Although the influence of the outside culture is so strong, the Blangporoh villagers maintain their local culture that has been handed down from one generation to the next. For instance, the culture of *khanduri* is still conducted at each birth and death; at the beginning of each year when they cultivate the rice fields and at harvest time. The religious chanting such as reciting *shamadiyah*, *wirid*, *yāsīn* and *barzanji*, *dalaél khairat* is still held at night in the mosque (Ach *meuseugid*), prayer house (Ach *meunasah*) and boarding school (Ach *dayah*). In addition, the calendrical rituals are also held on a large scale in the village. The ritual events are often filled with didactic lectures they are also accompanied by the Qur'ān recital competition, *dalaél* recital competition and so forth.

The presence of pupils in the elementary and at the boarding school in Blangporoh has not entirely changed the social process in the village. They only follow the rules given by the national government when they are at school. On the other hand, when they are interacting with their relatives or neighbours, they must adapt their conduct to the village way of life in order to avoid the *adat* or social sanctions. It is apparent that in Blangporoh the so-called changes have only taken place on paper and not really. The *kapalo kampung* still preserves his traditional role particularly in settling the conflicts among the people of the village and in organizing the various activities and ceremonies of the villages. If there are unresolved disputes at the village level, they can be submitted to *mukim* level as an appeal to be settled by the *imuem mukim*. At *mukim* level, disputes are generally settled peacefully. This is especially applicable for civil cases. Parties who feel dissatisfied by the resolution can take the case to court but taking it to court takes a considerable amount of time and money.

The real change that has been taking place in Blangporoh due to the development program can be observed through the improvement and presence of new media communication. Blangporoh village is not only no longer isolated, but is also integrated with Tapak Tuan, South Acèh and other places in the Archipelago. The better conditions and the transportation network have certainly facilitated the social economic mobility of the people of the village. Most people from the village travel everyday by bus, motor cycle, or bicycle between their village, selling their commodities or shopping, or going to school. These do not mean that the central government does not have authority on the people of the village. The people of the village always have contacted with national power through its representatives on each administrative level. The presence of the national power in the people's eyes is certainly strengthened by the monetary and the political parties having a branch on village.

The presence of new media has made Blangporoh village more open to the outside world. The people soon know what is happening outside the village, on national and international issues, fashion, music, songs, etc. Their presence, however, does not mean that they have completely changed the social values and the local culture. The local media also promotes the local culture through its programs. For example, a government radio program from South Acèh quite often plays songs in the Aneuk Jamee language. In such a way this new media of communication has also become an important means to strengthen the local culture. Besides that, Blangporoh village still preserves the various traditional communications, such as holding religious teaching in the mosque or *meunasah*, the life-cycle rituals and ritual calendar. These institutions preserve and socialize the traditional values based on sentiment and togetherness.

Blangporoh villagers are religious people. It can thus be ascertained that the whole population is Muslim. Dichotomy of understanding and religious practices, however, is still prominent in the neighboring villages. On the east of the village, that is the Tutong village and Pantan Pawoh, there are groups of reformists or modernists while in the west the villages of Blangporoh, Kutaiboh, Ujongpadang, Pulo Ie are dominated by a group of traditionalists or conservatives. These two groups differ in their understanding of Islam. Consequently, its implementation is different too. Reformist groups named themselves the reformers. That is, the group seeks to purify Islam from the influence of superstitious teachings and heresy, and return to the Qur'ān and *hadīth*. The group calls itself a defender of traditional *aqidah ahlussunnah waljama'a* (fol-

lowers of *sunnah* of the apostle and his companions). The most fundamental difference between them is that the reformists do not subscribe to one of the four schools (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali) (Basri 1998:14). This group refers directly to the Qur'ān and the *hadīth* of the Prophet, whereas the traditional groups tend to adopt one of the four schools (*mazhab*). In this case, they embrace the school of Shafi'i. Because of this disagreement two major organizations have emerged; first Muhammadiyah with reformist ideas, and second Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (Perti) with traditional understanding.

Among the traditionalist group, respect for “religious teachers” (Arabic [Arb] *'ulamā'*) is still strongly felt. The *santri* (students) at the *dayah* (boarding school) stand to honor their teachers when the teachers walk in front of them and they kiss their hands of teachers when greeting them. For Blangporoh society, especially for those who are traditionalists, the gestures, clothing, and behaviour associated with Islam are important. In everyday life, there are strong differences between *santri* for ordinary people. The *santri* tend to wear a cap or turban, a shirt and sarong. This type of dress is considered to be characteristic of ‘pious people’ (Indon *orang taat*) although sometimes the people who wear it are not pious. A ‘clerical person’ (Indon *keulamaan*) is also marked by the clothes he wears (Basri 1998:15). This is in marked contrast to the reformists who prefer unseen but practiced and constant inner piety to the obvious outer accoutrements and attributes of a Muslim. Dress code characteristic of ‘pious Muslims’, especially at Dayah Darussalam, has begun to disappear. There are even students who wear jeans with T-shirts (*ibid*). For the reformists, clothing is not important. Pious Muslims may wear any clothes but must be clean and covered *aurat*.<sup>12</sup> Characteristics of the *'ulamā'* in terms of outward appearance are not a criterion in this group.

## The pervasive influence of Islam

This district is situated in the western-most coastal area of Sumatra Island, about 500 km south of Banda Acèh, and consists of 14 villages.<sup>13</sup> It is said that in the past, the town of Labuhan Haji had a glorious history as a port city, through which pilgrims travelled to and from Mecca. Every year this city

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12 The part of the human body that is to be covered when a person is outside the confines of the family.

13 See map of West Labuhan Haji district.

was visited by many pilgrims from various regions. To commemorate this, the city is called Labuhan Haji “the port of pilgrims”. Historically, the kingdom of Acèh had opened this harbour for pilgrimages not only from the western coastal areas of Sumatra: “We must remember that before sailing ships were replaced by steamers as a means of conveyance of visitants to Mecca, Aceh formed a great halting-place for almost all the pilgrims from the Eastern Archipelago” (Snouck Hurgronje II 1906:19). That is why the Acèhnese used to speak of their country with some pride as ‘the gate of the Holy Land’ (Indon *pintu gerbang tanah suci*). Many Acèhnese pilgrims remained in Mecca a considerable time to study Islamic teaching, among which Sufism became prominent; some Acèhnese even settled there as traders or teachers for the remainder of their lives. This direct contact with Mecca as the spiritual centre of Islam was very important in the late nineteenth century. As men who had been to the Holy Land, they had a direct opportunity to improve communication with the rest of the Islamic world.

The number of Acèhnese and pilgrims from other parts of the Indonesian archipelago performing the *hajj* steadily increased. Some two thousand Indonesian pilgrims had departed by 1860, ten thousand by 1880, and fifty thousand by 1926 (Geertz 1968:67). These pilgrims became aware of the developments in other parts of the Muslim world, particularly the expansion of European imperialism and the political and intellectual responses this provoked: *jihād*, *mahdi-ism* and later, the Islamic reform movement (van Bruinessen 1990:151). Upon their return, they founded religious boarding schools in their home region to instruct young men in what they had learned in Mecca. They became *teungku* in Acèh, *kyai* in Java and the leaders of *santri* communities all over Indonesia (Geertz 1968:67). Some of the returning *hajji* fiercely opposed the Dutch rule and called for disobedience; that is why the Dutch Indies authorities became increasingly suspicious of the *hajj*.

Through this port city, Islamic values were quickly absorbed and disseminated in the surrounding community. It is there that the religious organization of Nahdlatul Ulama “old group” and Muhammadiyah “young group” originated (Waly 1997:56). The west coast area of Sumatra consisted of many socio-ethno linguistic groups and southern Acèh absorbed many culture elements of immigrants from various regions. As a result the Islamic culture in southern Acèh has become a “beautiful rainbow of cultures” (Hasjmy 1989:10).

The Aneuk Jamee people live along the southern and western coast of Acèh (see the map of the distribution of the Aneuk Jamee population in the southern and the western coast of Aceh). Based on narratives from senior village people, Aneuk Jamee originated from the regions of Minangkabau, Rao, Pariaman, Lubuk Sikaping, Pasaman, Indrapura, Painan, Pariaman and Padang Panjang and Barus [now Middle Tapanuli] and Natal [now South Tapanuli]. Minangkabau migrants came to the southern and western coast of Acèh at the end of the 17th century (Sulaiman 1978:1). Zainuddin (1961:211), however, mentions that Minangkabau people moved to the southern and western coast of Acèh in the wake of the Padri war led by Tuanku Imam Bonjol (1805-1836). To escape from the disasters of war, many Minangkabau fled by sailing down the western coast of Sumatra to the southern and western coast of Acèh. They then opened a new residential area in the fertile lowlands that were hardly cultivated by local residents. They planted pepper, nutmeg and other garden produce. Many of them who lived at the coastal areas worked as fishermen. They settled along the coastal districts of Labuhan Haji, Tapak Tuan, Susoh, Manggèng, and Samadua. People of Minangkabau descent also live in some villages on the southern and western coast of Acèh for instance in Kuala Baro, Singkil and in the coastal area of Meulaboh (West Acèh) (Sulaiman 1978:2).<sup>14</sup> Many Acèhnese also live in these Aneuk Jamee areas. In fact immigrants were regarded as guests (Ach *jamee*), who eventually assimilated with the local Acèhnese community members. This assimilation process went smoothly because ‘hosts’ and ‘guests’ shared the same religions (Islam). As a result of this assimilation process, the people identify themselves neither as Minangkabau nor as Acèhnese, but as Aneuk Jamee meaning “children of guests”, having their own language and culture. Their mother tongue is Aneuk Jamee, but they can understand Acèhnese.

There are several striking features of West Labuhan Haji district. There is a shrine of Syeikh Muda Waly (1917-1961) in Blangporoh village. This Syeikh is regarded as a person who received the ‘blessing’ (Arb *barakah*) from Allāh (Ach *ureuëng keuramat* -from Indon *orang keramat*) because of his obedience to and knowledge of Islam. He was the founder of a large traditional boarding school (Ach *dayah*) in South Acèh and a guide (*mursyid*) of the

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14 See map of the distribution of Aneuk Jamee population on the southern and western coast of Acèh.

*Nakhsabandiyah* order (*tharīqah Nakhsabandiyah*) in Acèh (Baihaqi 1983:149). In addition, he was a highly respected ‘*ulamā*’ in Acèh. Many of his students have now become ‘*ulamā*’ and the leader of many *dayah* in Acèh and in other places in Indonesia.

Like the tomb of saints in other Islamic societies, the tomb of this Syeikh is deemed to be a good place to seek ‘blessing’. Therefore, many men and women perform a ‘pilgrimage’ (*ziarah*) to the Syeikh’s tomb in order to enrich their lives both spiritually and socially and to receive spiritual strength from it. Many people with different intentions come to his tomb, not only from South Acèh but also from other parts of Acèh to take the ‘spiritual vows’ (Ach *peuleh kaoy*) and to pray at his tomb to be protected from disasters.<sup>15</sup> Because of the strength of this tradition rooted in the community in West Labuhan Haji district, the visitors deem the Syeikh’s tomb as that of a ‘spiritual teacher’ (Indon *guru spiritual*) (Basri 1998:14).

In almost all Islamic societies, the saints whilst alive and their tombs are deemed as a source of ‘blessing’ (Evans Pritchard 1973; Trimmingham 1971; Nur 1996:7). Visiting tombs is therefore a common practice in all Islamic societies; the social and religious meaning of visiting the tomb of a saint varies from one society to another and is shaped by everyday life experiences. In Indonesia it is generally accepted that visiting a saint’s tomb brings the saint’s blessing, since this is regarded as a remedy for various kind of illness (Jamhari 1994; Nur 1996:7).

The tomb of the Syeikh is located near the mosque in the *dayah* complex of the village, and is easily reached by any visitors. Performing a ‘pilgrimage’ to the Syeikh’s tomb touches the realm of belief and assumptions about the way the world is constituted. Men and women who visit the tomb share the faith and their sympathy.

Historically, in the nineteenth century many Acèhnese on the *hajj* in Mecca joined the standard *tharīqah* orders of the Qādiriyyah and Naqshbandiyyah.<sup>16</sup> They had a direct contact with the spiritual centre of Islam after the Suez

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15 Many Acèhnese people also perform the same also at the shrine of Poteu Meurehom Daya in Lamno district, Acèh Jaya (see Nur 1996: 7), Teungku Syeikh ‘Abd Al-Ra’ūf Al-Singkīlī in Syiahkuala, Banda Acèh and so forth. They consider these Teungku as people who received the ‘blessing’ (Arb *barakah*) from Allāh.

16 This kind of *Sūfī* order can also found in east Java (Geertz 1976), in Minangkabau, west Sumatra (Young 1994). The history of early Sumatran *Sūfī* in the highland, Gayo, Cen-

Canal (which changed shipping routes) was opened in 1869. This contact became the most important in the late nineteenth century because it coincided with the rise of modernism in the Middle East- a vital movement of reform and doctrinal renovation.<sup>17</sup> Famous Muslim teachers like Muhammad Abduh and Jamal Ad-Din Al-Afghani were turning away from what they saw as religious obscurantism; instead they advocated the pursuit of learning and science, confident that rigorous pursuit of modern thought could only uphold the religious truth of Islam (Geertz 1968:67). Although two different Sufi sects have penetrated Acèh, the one of major importance in South Acèh, especially in Labuhan Haji is the Naqshabandi (*Naqshbandiyya*)<sup>18</sup> Sufi order. Sheikh Muda Waly developed this *tharīqah* in 1939, he founded a traditional boarding school called Dayah Darussalam in Blangporoh village. He obtained the *tharīqah* from a great ‘ulamā’ in Batu Bersurat, Kampar, West Sumatra, Sheikh Haji Abdul Ghani al-Kamfari. Since then Blangporoh has become an important region and ritual center. Practitioners of the Sufi ritual (*suluk*) go to Bangporoh every Ramadhan month from their homes, bringing their own food, sharing everything together, engaging in mystical repetition and preparing for the death.

Another important element of the dynamics of Islam in West Labuhan Haji district is the existence of several *dayah* (Islamic boarding schools) with their *teungku* (religious leaders). *Dayah* with its *teungku* in the past still has a great influence within Acèhnese society, not only in dealing with religious matters, but also in solving social problems (Siegel 1969:11). In the wars of the colonial era, for instance, the military leadership of the Acèhnese passed into the hands of religious leaders. Therefore, Snouck Hurgronje (1906) argued that the Dutch should suppress the *teungku* and confine their activities only to religious matters.

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tral Acèh can be found in Bowen (1993:124). In the lowland of Acèh can be found in Snouck Hurgronje II (1906:311-12), and in van Bruinessen (1990:143-146).

17 The government believed that the Naqshbandiyah *ulama* had contact in Mecca with religious teachers of pan-Islamic sympathy. Through pilgrims moving to and from Mecca, they were certainly in contact with the *ulama* of Acèh with who the Dutch were at war. Even allowing for the prejudices of government personnel, the colonial regime had reason to be worried about these trends (Young 1994:118).

18 The word Naqshbandi is Persian, taken from the name of the order, Baha -ud- Din Naqshband (d.1389) who lived in Mawarannahr, central Asia region west of the Pamirs (Gladney 1999:119).

*Dayah* or *rangkang*<sup>19</sup> in Acèh or *pondok* or *pesantrén* in Java, or *surau* in West Sumatra, is composed of teachers to-be, who disdain rather than desire office, or of those whose parents set a value thorough course of religious instruction (Snouck Hurgronje II 1906:24). There are several *dayah* in West Labuhan Haji district. The largest one is the Dayah Darussalam in Blangporoh village. This *dayah* observes a traditional form of education and only follow *mazhab*, Syafi'i and other *dayah* in West Labuhan Haji district are also the same. The founder of this *dayah* was the Syeikh himself and he was highly appreciated by the Indonesian government as he was a convinced nationalist who never opposed the government during his life. The alumni of this *dayah* have spread into many regions in Acèh. The Dayah Darussalam has successfully educated thousands of *santri* to become *teungku* ('*ulamā*') among them, and the leaders of *dayah* in Acèh: Teungku Adnan Mahmud in Bakongan, South Acèh; Teungku Muhammad Daud Zamzami in Acèh Besar, Great Acèh; Teungku Abdul Azis Saleh Mesjid in Samalanga, North Aceh; Teungku Muhammad Amin (Tu Min) in Blangbadeh, Bireun; and other religious leaders in Acèh.<sup>20</sup>

Many *santri* from this *dayah* went on labour migration (Indon *merantau*) to Makassar (Sulawesi), Padang Panjang (West Sumatra) Barus, Java, Madura and even to Malaysia and Brunai Darussalam. There, they also founded the same types of *dayah* continuing to teach the Arabic language (*balaghah*),<sup>21</sup> jurisprudence (*ushul fiqih*) from various Islamic books, the science of *mustalhah hadīth*, the science of Prophet tradition (Arb *hadīth*), Quranic exegesis (Arb *tafsir*), and the science of rhetoric (Arb *mantiq*), literature (*a'rudh*), and Sufism (Arb *tasawwuf*).<sup>22</sup> One thing that makes these *dayah* different from

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19 A *rangkang* is built in the form of a dwelling-house, but with less care; instead of three levels of different elevations/heights. It has only one level throughout, and is divided on either side of the central passage into smaller chambers, each of which serves as a dwelling-place for from one to three *santri* (students).

20 See the website of Pondok Pesantrén Dayah Darussalam, [http://www.al-shia.com/html/id/service/Info Hauzah/Dayah%20Darussalam.htm](http://www.al-shia.com/html/id/service/Info%20Hauzah/Dayah%20Darussalam.htm).

21 Arabic language (Arb *balaghah*) teaching consists of the science of the form of language (*ma'ani*), the science of translating meaning with different methods (*bayan*), poem/story related in verse form-using (*badi*).

22 The great Muslim father, al-Ghazali (1058-1111) describes the study of the law (Ach *pikah*) as the indispensable bread of life of the believers, the dogmatic teaching (*usuy*) being the medicine of mankind, threatened with all manner of heresy and unbelief, is constrained to use as preventive and as cure. Moreover, he considered mysticism (Ach *teusawōh*) the highest and most important element in man's spiritual education, since it

other *dayah* in Acèh is that there is a teaching of *Naqshbandiyya*'s order. This mystical teaching is still performed by many *santri* and thousands of other followers.<sup>23</sup>

Dayah Darussalam is now led by Teungku Ruslan Waly, a son of the Syeikh, and a person who has a strong influence within West Labuhan Haji district and is widely respected by the people. He also holds 'religious discussions' (Indon *pengajian*) each week in the Blangporoh mosque. In these discussions, people can meet him, kiss his hand and ask him questions about specific religious problems. The importance of his influence within the district is also evident from his eminent role in determining the first day of the month of Ramadhan. During the last few days of Sya'ban, predicting when Ramadhan will begin is a favourite discussion among West Labuhan Haji people: sometimes the decision of the State Department of Religious Affairs is contradicted by what is decided by several *teungku* in Acèh. His decision is eagerly awaited as definitive by most people in West Labuhan Haji district. The maintenance of the tomb of the Syeikh, the practice of *suluk* "Sufism" as well as the existence of many *dayah* in West Labuhan Haji district provides evidence that this society is strongly influenced by Islamic tradition.

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serves to digest the bread of life and the medicine, that a true knowledge of God and of the community of mankind with the Creator may spring there from (Snouck Hurgronje II 1906:9).

- 23 Like other *pesantrén* in Indonesia, Dayah Darussalam use two education systems, (1) *Qadim* method, means traditional system with the emphasis of mastering religious books (Indon *kitab-kitab agama*) such as Nawawi's *Minhāj Attālibīn* (Ach *mènhot*) and various commentaries such as the *Fath al-Wahhāb* (Ach *peuthōwahab*), the *Tuhfah* (Ach *tupah*) and *Mahalli* (Ach *mahali*). In this method, a *santri* must finish learning religious books. In the process of learning, the *santri* not only know how to read religious books but also know to translate and understand the meaning in them. (2) *Madrasah*, means lecturing method in the class room with the emphasis of finishing learning religious books and more discussion in order to have in depth understanding on the given materials. And the main purpose of learning at this *dayah* is the *syari'ah* law as revealed through Muḥammad in the Qur'ān and his *sunnah*, and as in the lapse of time (with the help of *Qiyās* or reasoning by analogy) confirmed and certified by the general consensus (*ijmā'*) of the Muslim community. Apart from teaching the religious books, the *tharīqah* Naqsyabandiyah is also introduced to the *santri* and to the surrounding community. Currently, therefore, the *tharīqah* Naqsyabandiyah is carried out by many adherents in Acèh. This *dayah* is thus as center of teaching as well as for practice of the *tharīqah* Naqsyabandiyah's sciences (see Waly 1997 and see also <http://www.al-shia.com/html/id/service/InfoHauzah/Dayah%20Darussalam.htm>).

## CHAPTER 2

### The Aneuk Jamee cosmology

The Aneuk Jamee cosmology reflects the people's history, social, moral values and religious beliefs. Their cosmology has been deeply influenced by Islam which is considered the fundamental source of knowledge and morality. It also contains myths about the creation, and origin of the universe as well as that of humankind. One acknowledges the reality of Allāh, but the cosmology does not define Him, one believes that the universe consists of two interconnected levels: the visible and the invisible. Human beings live on the visible level, while Allāh and spiritual beings (*malaikat* (angels), *iblis* (devils), *syètan* (satan) and *jinn* (genies)) exist on the invisible one. This chapter describes these two interrelated levels.

### Allāh

The Aneuk Jamee believe that Allāh whom they worship is the same God worshipped by Jews and Christians. It is the God of Abraham whose self-revelation was given through the prophets, beginning with Adam and continuing through Moses, Jesus, and finally Muḥammad. In speaking about God, Aneuk Jamee use the two phrases, "I bear witness that there is no God but Allāh and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His messenger". In the first phrase God's unity (Arab *tawḥīd*) is emphasized. God is one and has no companion. God is not begotten and does not beget (QS 112:3). The unity of God asserts the transcendence of God as the creator of the world. Nothing can be compared to God. Nothing is like God (QS 112:4). The greatest sin in Islam is *shirk*, "association". All idolatry is rejected. To abrogate the unity of God is to deny that God is the Omnipotent, Omniscient creator, and the Lord and Sovereign ruler of all worlds. The second phrase about the Prophet Muḥammad emphasises that he is the founder of the Islamic religion and is regarded by Muslims as a messenger of God, the last and the greatest law-bearer in the series of Islamic prophets as taught by the Qur'ān. The first phrase is called *syahadat tauhid* "confession of faith of God's unity" and the second phrase is called *syahadat rasul* "the confession of faith of the apostle". The formal recitation of *syahadat* takes place at particularly crucial moments of the life-cycle ritual that is, at the time of circumcision and marriage.

There are two obligatory requirements of these *syahadat*: 1) declaring with the tongue and 2) affirming with the heart. These must be added to two other requirements to show a full understanding; that is the one who utters *syahadat* must know through knowledge both rational arguments and arguments that refer to relevant passages of the Qur'ān and must be convinced in his heart and then be able to ratify the essence, attributes, and the work of Allāh as well as the trueness of Muḥammad. Ignoring these elements is said to mar the recital of *syahadat* and makes one only a superficial Muslim. If one denies that one is created by Allāh and does not confirm this, his or her *syahadat* is destroyed. Uttering *syahadat* is the declaration of allegiance of every Islamic adherent and one must declare this belief out loud. After finishing reciting *syahadat*, one automatically becomes a Muslim. But a mere pronouncement of *syahadat* and performing prayers five times a day is not enough to become a good Muslim. A deeper awareness in the reciter's heart and a good relationship among human beings are also required to form the required balance in human behaviour.

To the question who Allāh is, the Aneuk Jamee give various answers. One says that Allāh is the Being who created heaven and earth together with their contents. Others answer that Allāh is the Creator and Sustainer of the sky and the earth and all things within them. Besides Allāh as the Creator (*maha pencipta*), the villagers also regard Allāh as the Sovereign (*maha kuasa*) whose sovereignty is absolute and omnipotent as well as the Ruler (*maha pengatur*). These ideas are consistent with the ideas of Allāh's absolute omnipotence over men on the one hand, and men's total dependence on Him on the other. Everything is totally under His control and nothing in the universe is unseen to Him. He is All-powerful and Omniscient and the source of Divine will and decree. Allāh says: "Verily; We have created all things with *qadar* (Divine Preordainments of all things before their creation as written in the Book of Decree) (QS 54:49).

The dependency relation of Creator-created is deeply imprinted in the cosmology; it manifests itself for example in oral traditions, and more apparently, in exclamations. When one begins to perform a task, it is traditional to recite *bismillāhirrahmanir rahīm* ('in the name of Allāh, the beneficent, the merciful'). When something good happens (facing desirable things, the response is *alhamdulillah* ('praise be to Allāh')). In contrast, when something bad or unwanted happens or when one is frightened, one will spontaneously respond: *illallāh* ('except Allāh'), *Allāh Tuhan, Muḥammad Nabi* ('Allāh is God,

Muhammad is the Prophet'), even sometimes with the full recital of the *syahadat* ; or *masya Allāh*, ('that is not Allāh's will') or *astaghfirullāhal'adhīm* ('I beg Allāh the Greatest's pardon') or *la hawla walaquwwata illa billahil'aliyyil'adhīm* ('there is no power and strength except from Allāh the Greatest'). Similarly, these expressions are used when one is shocked by something or has an accident. In a more serious situation, when hearing that someone has died one will exclaim *inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un* ('lo, we belong to Allāh and lo, unto Him we return'). Although these expressions do not necessarily reflect religiosity, in the sense that users need not necessarily be devout, they are indications that Islam has indeed penetrated deeply into the traditions of the Aneuk Jamee social life in West Labuhan Haji district.

Allāh cannot be reached by thought or vision but He knows everything. Islām prohibits its followers from thinking about the substance of God or imagining His essence. He cannot be compared with anything. One informant said "we are created without having the software to understand His essence". They are told to think about His creatures in order to understand Him. Questions such as, "What does Allāh look like?" are strictly discouraged as it is beyond the reach of the human understanding. Any attempt to describe Allāh will result in the identification of His names in term of attributes called 'Allāh's attributes' (*sifat sifat Allāh*). These include 'the "must"-attributes' (*sifat wajib*), 'the "must not"-attributes' (*sifat mustahil*) and 'the "may" attributes' (*sifat jaiz*). 'The "must"-attributes' (*sifat wajib*) correspond to an affirmation of divine perfection, qualities that must be ascribed to Allāh. There are twenty of these and hence they are known as 'the twenty attributes' (*sifat duo puluh*). Thirteen of them are said to be unanimously agreed on by theologians, while the other seven were added later by others (Muhaimin 2004:46). The thirteen attributes are: 'existence' (*wujud*), 'eternal' (*qidam*), 'permanence' (*baqa*), 'dissimilarity with the created' (*mukhalafatu lihawaditsi*), 'self-subsistence' (*qiyamuhu binafsihi*), 'oneness' (*wahdaniyat*), 'power' (*qudrat*), 'will' (*iradat*), 'knowledge' (*ilmu*), 'life' (*hayat*), 'hearing' (*sama*), 'vision' (*bashar*), 'speech' (*kalam*). The other attributes do not intrinsically describe Allāh's essence; they designate what Allāh can do and usually does, they are *kaunuhu* (He is in a state of being): 'powerful' (*qadiran*), 'willing' (*muridan*), 'knowing' (*aliman*), 'alive' (*hayyan*), 'hearing' (*sami'an*), 'seeing' (*basiran*), 'speaking' (*mutakalliman*). 'The "must not"-attributes' (*sifat mustahil*) correspond to the negation of any defective qualities and, therefore, must not be ascribed to Allāh. There are also

twenty ‘the “must not”-attributes’: ‘non-existence’ (*‘adam*), ‘recency’ (*huduts*), ‘perishability’ (*fana’*), ‘similarity with the created’ (*mumatsalatu lilhawaditsi*), ‘non-self-sufficiency’ (*ikhtiyaju bighairihi*), ‘plurality’ (*ta’addud*), ‘weakness’ (*‘ajzu*), ‘unwillingness’ (*karahah*), ‘ignorance’ (*jahlu*), ‘unanimated’ (*mawtu*), ‘deafness’ (*ashammu*), ‘blindness’ (*a’ma*), ‘speechlessness’ (*bukmun*). He, who or that which could be in a state of being: ‘powerless’ (*‘ajizan*), ‘unwilling’ (*karihan*), ‘ignorant’ (*jahilan*), ‘dead’ (*mayyitan*), ‘deaf’ (*ashamman*), ‘blind’ (*a’man*), and ‘non-speaking’ (*abkaman*). There is, however, only one “may”-attribute’ (*sifat jaiz*): Allāh’s prerogative to do or not to do something.<sup>24</sup> Besides describing Allāh in terms of these attributes, He can also be described in terms of the ‘most Beautiful Names’ called *Asma ul Husna*. The phrase *Asma ul Husna*, made up of the word *asma*, the plural form for “name”, and *husna*, meaning “beautiful”. There are ninety-nine names of Allāh in total and these can be found in the Qur’ān and the *hadīth*.<sup>25</sup>

It is the *teungku* among Aneuk Jamee, who command this knowledge and instruct the people. Thus to fully understand the depth and meaning of all of these beautiful names, one *teungku* said that one really needs to ponder and think about them. For example, Allāh is the All-Hearer (*al-Basir*). Think about it - Allāh hears everything, from the buzz of a mosquito’s wings to the rustle of the wind. Every conversation spoken, every thought that you keep to yourself, etc is known by Him as language and there is no barrier for Allāh to understand all. Understanding Him through His attributes and names, realizing His Omnipotence and Majesty is said to make us humble. Such information indicates that the Aneuk Jamee’s concept of God derives entirely from Islam.

## Spiritual beings

There is a general agreement among the Aneuk Jamee on the existence of spiritual beings, although the details of these beings are perceived differently

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24 There is a similarity how the Aneuk Jamee describe Allāh among Muslims in Cirebon, a region in the north-coast of eastern West Java, see Muhaimin (2004:46-47).

25 For Allāh’s Beautiful Name, see Qur’ān in Sūrah Al -A’raf, verse 180, Sūrah Al-Isra, verse 110; Sūrah At-Taha, verse 8 and Sūrah Al-Hashr, verse 22-24. The *imām* said that ninety-three of the names that were mentioned in the *hadīth* were also in the Qur’ān, while the meanings of the other six names had been attributed to Allāh with different words. According to a *hadīth* narrated in Bukhari and Muslim, Prophet Muḥammad said the following about the *Asma ul Husna*: “Allāh has 99 names. Whoever memorizes and embraces these qualities will enter Paradise.”

from one individual to another. The existence of spiritual beings is seen as a corollary of the existence of physical beings. As physical beings exist, non-physical or spiritual beings also exist. The commonly known spiritual beings are: ‘angel’ (*malaikat*), ‘devils’ (*iblis*), ‘satan’ (*syètan*) and ‘genies’ (*jinn*). However, detailed information about these beings is incomplete and speculative. Their nature, essence and actions are described differently by various people. The six Decrees of Creed are: the belief in Allāh, His angels, His Books, His messengers and the Last Day, and the belief that destiny<sup>26</sup>, both good and evil, comes from Allāh. The villagers in Blangporoh know that they constitute the Decrees of Creed. In relation to the fourth belief, all village *teungku* say that Muslims should believe that there are so many messengers (prophets) of Allāh it is impossible to count them. Nevertheless, every single Muslim should know twenty-five of prophets.<sup>27</sup> The villagers know the prophets’ names and many of them name their children after the prophets’ names<sup>28</sup>. Nonetheless, a number of them cannot remember the prophets’ names in the correct order. Some, however, can list the names perfectly.

There are four Holy Books (Scriptures) that Allāh has already revealed to the chosen prophets: Zabur to the Prophet Dawud, Taurat to the Prophet Musa, Injil to the Prophet Isa, and Qur’ān to the last apostle, the Prophet Muḥammad. There will not be any apostles after the Prophet Muḥammad. Muslims believe that of the three preceding Holy Books, Qur’ān<sup>29</sup> is the perfect one as it provides a conclusion of everything already revealed in the previous Scriptures and contains the exact words, recorded and transmitted without error as they were revealed. The others Holy Books have been corrupted by people over centuries with some parts added, some deleted, and some changed.

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26 The Arabic word for destiny ‘*qadar*’ implies the measuring out of something or fixing a limit to it. Thus, in a technical sense, destiny is the divine decree in its fixing limits for existent things, or its measuring out the being of things. See Gardet (1980:366).

27 The name of the prophets are Adam, Idris, Nuh, Hud, Saleh, Ibrahim, Luth, Ismail, Ishaq, Ya’qub, Yusuf, Ayub, Zulkifli, Syu’aib, Musa, Harun, Daud, Sulaiman, Ilyas, Ilyasa, Yunus, Zakaria, Yahya, Isa, Muḥammad. See for example: Salim (1987).

28 I find one family in the village whose children’s names are Muḥammad, Zakaria and Yahya.

29 The Qur’ān, as a holy book, consists of 114 chapters or *sūrah*. Each *sūrah* contains verses called *ayat* or “sign” of Allāh. The *sūrah* are not in order in which the revelation was received. In general, the longer *sūrah* were revealed in Medina; the shorter in Mecca. It is Allāh’s miracle. It is incapable of being imitated and sublime in its form and content.

## Malaikat

One class of the commonly known spiritual beings is that of *malaikat*. *Malaikat* were created from light (Arb *nūr*) by Allāh to serve and worship Him. They belong to a level of existence beyond the perceptible called *alam gaib* (Arb '*alam al-Ghayb*). *Malaikat* carry out Allāh's commandments in nature and the universe. The 'forces of nature' become active because of the presence of *malaikat* behind them, working at the command of Allāh. Belief in the existence of *malaikat* is one of the Decrees of Creed (Ach *rukun*<sup>30</sup> *iman*) in Islam.

The word *malaikat* known by the villagers comes from *malak*, the Arabic plural form of *malāikah*. This term refers to the heavenly creatures, the servants of Allāh acting as intermediaries between the divine world and the human world, carrying out His commands and praising Him. The village *teungku* explains that *malaikat* are different from human beings. They are intangible, sentient entities, who do not possess free will. They were created for the sole purpose of serving Allāh. Being made of light, they can assume almost any form, and can travel as fast as light or faster. In addition, *malaikat* are neither male nor female, and do not need food and drink. They are not born nor do they give birth, do not marry or have children and are free from all appetites and selfish desires. However, they are always loyal to Allāh, do what Allāh wishes and never sleep, forget anything nor feel tired. This idea is based on the Qur'ān (66:6) "...the angels do not disobey Allāh in what He commends them but do what they are commended". They are perfect in carrying out their tasks because there is nothing in their nature that would make them disobedient to Allāh.

The *teungku* further articulate this. Thus one of them explains the number of *malaikat* is countless and they number more than humans. Hence only Allāh knows how many they are. They have many different tasks and roles. There are some *malaikat* worshipping Allāh, idolizing Him and never raising their heads. Some guard and protect-they are called 'guardian *malaikat*'. Some accompany each person and pray for him. Others travel around and seek out those who remember Allāh so they can receive special blessings. Every Muslim should know at least ten of them". The *teungku* named the following: Jibril, Mikail,

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30 The word '*rukun*' is derived from Arabic word '*rukn*' (pl *arkan*) meaning 'pillar'. It is used in such reference as the pillar of faith (Ach *rukun iman*), the pillar of Islam (Ach *rukun Islam*), the pillar of prayers (Ach *rukun seumayang*), the pillar of ablution (Ach *rukun wudhu*'), the pillar of hajj (Ach *rukun haji*), the pillar of fasting (Ach *rukun puasa*) etc.

Israfil, Izrail, Raqib, ‘Atib, Munkar, Nankir, Malik Zabaniyah, and Malik Ridwan. The first four are called *malaikat mukarrabun*.<sup>31</sup> Each of these has a specific duty with many other *malaikat* acting as his subordinates. Lay people in Blangporoh offer their own exegesis of this class of being. One rice seller argued “the world is also like a state on a small scale. The state should have a president and there are many ministers helping the president to manage it. The owner of the world is Allāh acting as president and the ten angels are His ministers who are always loyal to Him and do what He wishes to manage the world”. Jibril’s duty, for instance, is to convey revelations to the prophets, verse by verse. He is known as *malaikat* who communicates with (all of) the prophets. Another *teungku* argued “as far as he could remember from the *kitāb* (books or written sources of *santri* reference), Jibril has revealed divine revelations (*wahyu*) to the Prophet Adam twelve times, the Prophet Idris four times, the Prophet Ibrahim forty times, the Prophet Ja’cub four times, the Prophet Musa forty hundred, the Prophet Ayyub three times, and the Prophet Muḥammad twenty-four thousand times”.<sup>32</sup> Mikail has the duty to control rain, thunder, giving livelihood to all living things both in the sea and on the earth such as food, nourishment and knowledge to all living creatures, particularly to human beings whether they are believers or unbelievers. Everything available in sea, on earth and in the earth which are useful for sustaining for all living creatures are said to be under the control of Mikail. The livelihood for all living creatures has already been determined by Allāh but human beings and animals have to make an effort to obtain it. In other words, human beings and animals must work hard first; their livelihood will then be secured, but its amount has already been determined by Allāh through Mikail.

Israfil blows his huge trumpet (Ach *terompèt* < Dutch *trompet*) on two occasions: the first blow will signal the coming of Judgement Day, the world will vanish altogether. The second blow will bring all human beings back to life again from their graves, explains one *teungku*.<sup>33</sup> He adds that after resurrection

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31 *Malaikat mukarrabun* (Arb *al-Malak al-Muqarrabūn*) means that these *malaikat* are always close to Allāh and their duties are harder than others. *Muqarrabūn* is also the highest degree from Allāh to *malaikat*. Some *teungku* in Blangporoh village say that these *malaikat* became the witnesses as Adam and Eve got married in paradise.

32 See also Effendie (1979:26).

33 Israfil’s trumpet will be blown in the Judgement Day three times. The first blow is to die all civilization. The second blow is to flatten the world so that it all becomes land. The third blow is to resurrect all human beings and to revive them (Effendie 1979:27).

from their graves, every human being will have his or her ‘soul’ (Jam *nyawo*) and body again but no clothes at all. All are naked and will stand/wait 40 years besides their graves while waiting for a command from Allāh to go to the gathering place on the Day of Resurrection. All human beings will then be truly thirsty as the sun will only be an inch over their heads. Only people who observe the fasting in the month of Ramadhān and other recommended fasting<sup>34</sup> during their life will receive water from Allāh. It is said that now Israfil is still waiting for the command from Allāh to blow his trumpet.

Izrail, ‘the *malaikat* of death’ acts as a ‘king’ of all *malaikat* of death and is responsible for separating the ‘soul’ (*nyawa*) of all human beings from their bodies. When the time comes, no one can escape death or postpone it even for a second. The actual process of separating the ‘soul’ from the body depends on the person’s record of good and bad deeds. For righteous persons who live according to the Qur’ān and *hadīth*, Izrail cannot take their ‘soul’ without first permission from Allāh. Teungku Alimi in Blangporoh village says that as Izrail wants to take out the ‘soul’ from a righteous person, he first appears at his head. The head would say to Izrail “there is no entrance here”. Izrail then goes to the eyes, nose, mouth, hands, and feet. All parts of the body give the same answer to Izrail. Izrail reports to Allāh that he cannot take out the ‘soul’. After hearing this, Allāh asks Izrail to go to paradise to take a shining fruit called *boh nafal* on which is written ‘in the name of Allāh’ (*bismillāh*). Izrail then shows this fruit to the righteous and faithful person whose ‘soul’ he wants to take. Only after showing this fruit can Izrail separate the ‘soul’ from the body quickly like a “drop of water dripping from glass” while he or she is looking at this fruit. The *malaikat* of death have “a most pleasant appearance” when he comes for the ‘souls’ of good people, so that the deceased’s face looks happy. In contrast, Izrail recklessly takes out the ‘soul’ of non-righteous people from any part of his or her body. This person will truly feel pain,<sup>35</sup> thirst and hunger. In this

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Muhaimin (2004:54) also wrote that Israfil will blow his trumpet on three occasions: Firstly to signal the calamity, secondly, when the earthly world has vanished altogether, and finally, on the day when the dead are resurrected to receive the Final Judgement.

34 The recommended fasting, such as fasting 6 days in Syawwal lunar month, fasting on the day of Arafah (a day in which pilgrims gather together in Arafah field in Mecca), fasting on day of ‘*āsyūrā*’ (the tenth day of the month of Muharram), fasting on every Monday and Thursday.

35 Some villagers in Blangporoh village say that when Izrail rips the ‘soul’ (Ach *nyawong*) out from the body it is truly painful. They say, “it is like a goat which is skinned while it

case the *malaikat* of death will look like “a “terrifying beast or demon” so that the deceased’s face looks nervous as if afraid of something. According to Teungku Alimi, Izrail and his many subordinates control a tree in paradise called *sidratul muntaha*. On every leaf of this tree has been written the name and life-span of every human being on earth as well as the time and place of his death. If a person’s leaf turns yellow, that person will die soon. As one’s time to die arrives (*Ach katroh ajai*), the yellow leaf falls from its stalk. Another *malaikat* who helps Izrail brings the leaf to him then he asks his subordinate to take the ‘soul’.

The *malaikat* Raqib and ‘Atid<sup>36</sup> record the human activities: words, actions and intentions whether good or bad. Everyone has these two *malaikat* at their sides: Raqib is on the right side -some said on the right shoulder- and ‘Atid is on the left side or the left shoulder. Raqib records good deeds while ‘Atid records the bad ones. Raqib and ‘Atid will first begin recording human activities when men begin to produce sperm and women have their first menstruation. From then on people will be responsible for what they do till they die. It is said that people with good intentions are credited with “a minor good point” by Allāh; “a full point” is given when an intention is turned into action; this will be recorded by Raqib. By virtue of Allāh’s mercy, there are “no minor points” for bad intentions; “a full bad point” is given only when a bad deed is performed.<sup>37</sup> In this case, ‘Atid judges whether a person who does something bad is aware of this. If this is the case he utters ‘I ask Allāh for pardon’ (*astagfirullāhal‘azīm*) and not to do that anymore for instance, giving back someone else’s stolen belongings, ‘Atid will then not record this as a bad deed. On Judgment Day the one whose bad deeds surpass his good ones will receive a written record from ‘Atid in his or her left hand, meaning this person will have “a bad ending” (Jam *celoko* from Indon *celaka*) and will be thrown into hell. In contrast, the one who has done more good than bad deeds will receive a record from ‘Atid in his or her right hand, meaning this person will have “a happy ending” (Jam *bahagio*;Indon *bahagia*) and eventually will be sent to paradise.

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is still alive” (*Ach lagée kamèng gepulik udép-udép lagèe nyan keuh sakét nyawong geuhila*).

36 Some villagers also said Malaikat Kirāman instead of Malaikat Raqib and Malaikat Kātibīn instead of Malaikat ‘Atid.

37 See also Muhaimin (2004:55).

Two more *malaikat* are Munkar and Nakir. Munkar -some villagers say Mangkaron- is an angel that interrogates the dead in their graves about the Islamic catechism reminding the deceased of the basic tenets of his or her religion. If these questions can be answered, ‘mercy of the grave’ (Ach *nikmat kubu*) will be rewarded by Allāh. If the dead cannot answer Munkar’s questions, he or she will be beaten by Nakir until the Day of Resurrection. Finally there are Malik Ridwan and Malik Zabaniyah. Malik Ridwan is the head of the benevolent *malaikat* responsible for controlling paradise, assisted by a large number of subordinate *malaikat*. According to the *imām* of Blangporoh village, Teungku Hasbi, the righteous and faithful people who fear Allāh will enter paradise; its keepers are happy and say, “Peace be upon you; you have become pure; so enter it to abide eternally therein”. In contrast, Malik Zabaniyah is the head of malevolent *malaikat* responsible for guarding hell, assisted by a large number of subordinate *malaikat*. Those who disbelieve in Allāh will enter hell, and its keepers say “Have not messengers come to you, reciting the verses of Allāh and warning of this meeting on this Day (Resurrection Day). They say, “Yes, the word of punishment has come into affect upon the disbelievers”. The *imām*’s exegesis is in accordance with Qur’anic ideas (QS 39:71 and 73).

## **Iblis, syètan and makhluk halus**

Blangporoh, Blangbaru and Kutaiboh villagers employ the term *syètan* (‘Satan’) to refer to any kind of bad spirits who induce people to sin. The villagers often classify *syètan* further as: *iblis*, *syètan*, *makhluk halus*, and *jinn*.

### **1. Iblis and syètan**

Blangporoh *imām* and *teungku* relate how before Allāh created the world he created angels out of light (Arb *nūr*). Before creating man, Allāh created the earth as a place for man to live. The earth and the natural world with its contents were made out of nothing. After creating the world,<sup>38</sup> Allāh created Adam from the soil (Ach *tanoh*), then He created Eve, “the first beautiful woman”

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38 It is said “On Sunday, Allāh created the earth. On Monday, He created mountains. On Tuesday, He created trees, plants and animals. On Wednesday He created the sky. On Thursday He created the sun, the moon and stars. On Friday He created angels, and on Saturday He created Adam. All are created from nothing except Adam created from clay”.

from Adam's rib.<sup>39</sup> At first, Adam and Eve lived in paradise in the company of *malaikat*. After creating Adam, Allāh called all angels to honour Adam by bowing down to him. He also told them that He intended to make Adam a *khalifah*<sup>40</sup> on earth. The *malaikat*, however, protested if the man is placed on earth, there will only be bloodshed and destruction because man has carnal desires; he will not be perfectly faithful to Allāh. Allāh then said "Indeed, I know what you do not know". Allāh taught Adam the names and purpose of things but He did not teach the *malaikat* these. Adam recited the names and the purpose of things on earth, and thus demonstrated the superiority of man to the *malaikat*. After hearing Allāh's explanation, the *malaikat* understood and were no longer doubtful why man, and not they, would become *khalifah* on earth.

In one 'religious discussion' (Indon *pengajian*)<sup>41</sup> I attended in Blangporoh village, Teungku Alimi explained that man is superior to *malaikat* because he has intellect (Ach *akai*) and has better adapted himself to earth as he has carnal desires. That was why all *malaikat* honoured Adam. *Iblis*<sup>42</sup> who also lived in paradise, however, was reluctant and arrogant. He refused to bow down to Adam for three reasons: (1) compared to Adam, he was a senior dweller of paradise having been created by Allāh (2) *iblis* was superior to Adam, since the latter was created from clay while *iblis* was created from fire and fire should rank higher than clay (3) *iblis* had already worshipped Allāh for years before Allāh created Adam. *Iblis* was full of envious resentment as he felt that he had more dignity than Adam. *Iblis*, therefore, thought that bowing down to Adam would negate his own dignity. Allāh then said, "Descend from paradise, for it is not for you to be arrogant therein. So get out; indeed, you are of the debased (QS 7:12)." Since then *iblis* was no longer allowed to live in paradise. Yet Allāh still granted *iblis*'s requests when he begged Him to postpone his punishment till the day of resurrection, prior to which he would lead his rival Adam astray and his human descendants till the end of the world. *Iblis* will tempt

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39 Some Blangporoh villagers argue that Eve was created from Adam's left rib; hence she has more sensitive feelings than a man.

40 *Khalifah* (Arb *khalīfah*) is the title of rulers in Islam.

41 *Pengajian* consists of a formal instruction, followed by question and answer on the subjects discussed.

42 It is said that the name of *iblis* that did not want to bow down to Adam is Izzazil or 'Azazil, the '*iblis*'s king'. He added that this *iblis* also got the title *muqarrabūn* as he was the leader of all *malaikat* in the sky. Due to *iblis*'s disobedience to Allāh, *iblis* then lost his title and later on he was called *syètan*.

Adam's descendants on all sides (at front, behind, their right and their left sides). Furthermore, *iblis* will sit in wait for humans on Allāh's straight path and mislead them all except for Allāh's most pious servants performing sincere religious service in His honour. Allāh said that those who fell into *iblis*'s trap would become his followers, and after the Day of Judgement they would stay together with him in hell. *Iblis* did not waste any time after Allāh approved his requests and immediately started working. The first victim was Adam himself and his wife, Eve, who were tempted while they were still in paradise.

In another 'religious discussion' in the village, Teungku Yunus related how Adam and Eve fell into *iblis*'s trap. At first, *iblis* came from the first layer of the earth to paradise through the seven layers of sky but *iblis* could not enter as its door was locked by a *malaikat* while Adam and Eve were therein. *Iblis* cried loudly while standing in front of Paradise's door. The *iblis*' cries were heard by a snake. The snake in paradise then lifted up its head and looked at *iblis* through a hole in paradise. *Iblis* said to the snake "I cannot enter into paradise without your help, I want to go to the *khuldi* tree, the 'eternity tree' (Arb *syajarah al-khuld*) in paradise". The snake then helped *iblis* by showing its mouth through a hole in paradise then the *iblis* immediately jumped into the snake's mouth and entered paradise. There, meeting Adam and Eve, *iblis* told them confidently that Allāh placed Adam and Eve in a bad position. *Iblis* pretended that he was very sad and sorry. Adam and Eve, therefore asked, "Why are you so sad? *Iblis* answered: "I was so sad and deeply concerned about your problem. I heard that Allāh prohibited both of you (Adam and Eve) to approach the *khuldi* tree, if you did you would have to leave paradise. I was so worried that you would approach the tree as your God did not forbid you to eat the *khuldi* fruit. But if you eat the *khuldi*'s fruit, you would become immortal or *malaikat* and then you could stay in paradise forever". *Iblis* swore to Adam and Eve that "he was a sincere advisor". Allāh instead banned them from paradise and was going to make them live on earth where life would be hard. He then insisted that the only thing that might help would be to pick and to eat the *khuldi* fruit secretly without Allāh knowing so that they would not be driven out from paradise.

Hearing this, Adam and particularly Eve felt that *iblis*'s words were sensible and asked him if there was any way to stay in paradise forever and to avoid staying on earth. *Iblis* was pleased that his deception had worked. Tempted by his insistence, Eve and Adam approached the *khuldi* tree, picked its fruit and

ate them. One fruit eaten by Adam became stuck inside his throat as *malaikat*'s hands wrapped around his throat. This later became his 'Adam's Apple' (Ach *aneuk tok*) as a sign of a mature male. Another fruit swallowed earlier by Eve did not become stuck and went out through Eve's vagina. This later became menstruation each month as a sign of a mature female.<sup>43</sup> At that moment, Allāh called to Adam and Eve, "Did I not forbid you to eat from that tree and tell you Iblis is a clear enemy". Their clothes from their bodies disappeared as they had already transgressed the first of Allāh's prohibition; that is, eating the *khuldi* fruit. They were sinful and paradise is only for the 'holy' people. Adam and Eve were then chased away to different places on earth far from each other. On earth they covered their body with leaves of the trees. Only after a long search did they get together again in an Arafah field<sup>44</sup> field in Mecca.

In the other 'religious discussion' in the village, Teungku Usman explained that the word '*khuldi* fruit' (Ach *boh khuldi*) in the Qur'ān is a metaphor. He contends that all fruits are not on their stalks forever, they all fall down except the 'fruit' the human being has. What Allāh prohibited in paradise was not the fruit of *khuldi* tree but the 'eternity fruit'. Teungku Usman quoted from the Qur'ān, Allāh said "...when they tasted of the tree, their private parts became apparent to them..." (QS 7:22). From this verse, it is clear Allāh said "*Dzāqasysyajarata*" or "felt the trunk of tree" and Allāh did not say "*Dzāqats-samarata*" or "the fruit was eaten" but it was only felt by the body. Teungku Usman concluded that Adam was prohibited to have sexual intercourse with Eve in paradise but could do so on earth with the aim of creating men and women. The problem here is not Adam having sexual intercourse but why he followed *iblis*'s temptation; not that Allāh's prohibition was not followed.

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43 Another version said that two *khuldi* fruit were eaten and swallowed even earlier by Eve then became stuck inside her breast and they turned into breasts, a sign of a mature female (Muhaimin 2004:57). Teungku Sa'dan argued that several symbols of women's character are based on Eve's behaviour as she ate and swallowed the *khuldi* fruit ('prohibited fruit'): first, women are easy to be persuaded by anyone. Second, women cannot stand keeping secrets for long even though she tries hard, (eventually it will be proved) and third, women cannot restrain their desires. When I discussed this to several village women, some really did not agree with these ideas claiming that the characteristics of men were the same as those of women but some others said "let the myth continue as it is."

44 Arafah means "knowing again" or "meeting again" after such a long search. It is located in Mecca and till now used by pilgrims as the place to gather (Arb *wuquf*) there. *Wuquf* in Arafah field is one of the pillars of *hajj*. When pilgrims do not perform *wuquf* in the Arafah field at the appointed time in the pilgrimage season, their *hajj* is not valid.

Allāh has already told Adam not to approach the *khuldi* tree. If he did so, he became a sinner. Adam and Eve realized that they had already made a mistake and repented to Allāh as follows: “Our Lord, we have wronged (ourselves); and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers” (QS 8:23). Allāh granted His forgiveness to Adam, but time could not be turned back; Adam and Eve had to continue living a hard life on the earth.

Teungku Usman proceeded: whereas *iblis* was banished from paradise for his disobedience and generated his descendants called *syètan* (‘Satan’),<sup>45</sup> Adam and Eve’s descendants were called *manusia* (‘human beings’). Unlike human beings, however, none of *iblis*’s descendants are mortal. Both *iblis* and *syètan* still exist. Their number has multiplied tremendously as they only die at the end of world. It is not clear whether *iblis* and *syètan* are differentiated by gender. From the time *iblis* had persuaded Adam and Eve to follow his advice, *iblis* and his descendants, *syètan*, have been zealous, working hand in hand and using all their power, intelligence and experience to lead Adam’s descendants astray.<sup>46</sup> Their daily task is to tempt and to trap human beings to follow their path so as to increase the numbers of their followers and worshippers among the doomed who will share their fate. They know that their destination is fire and they take human beings out of envy, hatred, disbelief and stubbornness with them.

According to Teungku Usman, *iblis* and *syètan* often try to ‘steal’ information from *laukh makhfudz*<sup>47</sup> by spying on the scenarios in the universe, especially those relating to individual human’s lives and using them effectively to establish cooperation with fortune tellers, black magicians etc in order to lead human beings astray.<sup>48</sup> It is believed that fortune telling, black magic and astrology and other possible astral projections are all affected by or involved in the powers and knowledge of *iblis* and *syètan* and can often be used by them for their own purposes. In addition, it is said that *iblis* or *syètan* can mislead people through their dreams, whereas many dreams are mainly the product of people’s minds and these are just confused and easily forgotten. Opposing *iblis*

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45 It was said that on the day Allāh banished *iblis* from paradise. *Iblis* changed its form into a *syètan*. *Iblis* was at first the leader of *malaikat*. Because he transgressed Allāh’s command, his prior religious service to Allāh was no longer accepted. Allāh cut off His mercy to him because of his disobedience.

46 See also Muhaimin (2004:57).

47 *Laukh makhfudz* refers to the tablet where the record of decisions of the divine are preserved.

48 The same idea found in Cirebon, see Muhaimin (2004:58).

or *syètan*'s methods, Angels guarding and protecting human beings called 'guardian angels' may take harsh measures against *iblis* and *syètan* and beat them so severely so that they take on weird shapes called *makhluk halus*.

## 2. Makhluk halus

Of all the spiritual beings in which the Aneuk Jamèe believe in, *makhluk halus* is the most vaguely defined. Not deriving from Qur'anic sources, *makhluk halus* is believed to be a type of malevolent spirit that disturbs human beings. Unlike the terms *malaikat*, *iblis*, *syètan* and *jinn* which all derive from Arabic, *makhluk halus* is an Indonesian construct meaning 'delicate creature' that cannot be seen with the naked eye as they have a 'very tiny body'. The villagers know many kinds of *makhluk halus*:

1. *Buruang tujuh* likes disturbing children. If a child is possessed, his eyes will be wide open and he is unconscious. Soon after a healer has cured the child its consciousness is an indication that this 'delicate creature' is no longer in the child's body.
2. *Balum beudé* usually makes a sound to bother human beings. One says that it can be found along coasts or in a river. If this 'delicate creature' shows himself, it will most likely be as a red mat spread out. Therefore, it is often called 'the rolled mat' (Ach *gulong ingka*).
3. *Geunteut* is black. It often shows itself on the streets walking with a long stride and going into bushes on the road side. It is said that it often disturbs a person by taking him or her into bushes or taking someone far away from crowded places.
4. *Beuno* prefers bothering those sleeping by choking a person in his dream. This often happens to those who do not recite 'prayer' as they want to sleep.
5. *Buruang punjuik* is found at night wrapped in white clothes and is believed to derive from a woman who died in childbirth; people who buried that woman have forgotten to open the ropes that tied her enshrouding cloth.<sup>49</sup>
6. *Tulang tagak* is like a 'standing bone' (Ach *tuleueng dong*). It is said to be found on a dark rainy night on street crossroads.
7. *Hantu buru* possesses hunted animals i.e. deer, antelopes etc. It revives dead animals for a moment. For example a deer is caught in net traps. Before it is slaughtered, *pawang rusa*,<sup>50</sup> a man who is an expert at catching deer has to recite a spell. Failing to do so, the deer becomes wild and difficult to slaughter as *hantu*

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49 See also Snouck Hurgronje I (1906:412).

50 One says that if one wants to hunt deer in forests, he must be accompanied by others and led by a *pawang rusa* who has magic powers so that all deer hunters are safe and will not be disturbed by *hantu buru*.

*buru* still occupies the deer's body. In addition, it is said that if a spell is not recited, the deer's fur will 'stand on end' like wire (Indon *kawat*).

8. *Hantu panasaran*, it is believed to derive from a person who died because of accident or torture. Some said it is a kind of 'delicate creature' from a woman who died from losing too much blood in childbirth. Others say that *hantu panasaran* can be from a dead person who committed suicide. His or her 'soul' becomes a ghost as he or she does not believe in Allāh and performs religious services when he or she was alive. Having died, his or her 'soul' (Ach *aruwah*) is disappointed. It often appears like a human being and wants to talk and follows the people in the area where it stays.
9. *Buruang* stays on the roofs of houses or trees at night. It sometimes possesses animals in trees. It sounds like a person crying with a sad sympathetic melody. Sometimes its sound is similar to that of a fowl or children. It is believed that *buruang* is derived from the 'soul' (Ach *roh*) of a woman who died from losing too much blood at childbirth. It cries to let the people know that it is sad in order to attract attention.
10. *Urang bunian* lives in a forest. Someone looking for rattan or resin of certain trees for trade in the forest will sometimes be kidnapped by *urang bunian* for several days. And other people will know only after the person is released.<sup>51</sup>
11. *Sanai*, it is an illness caused by a 'delicate creature' that sits on dead wood floating and drifting in swamps, rivers, lakes, and estuaries where water does not flow. Some villagers say that if one step on these dead trees, one's feet will be swollen and painful;<sup>52</sup> if one touches them with one's hands, his or her hands become bent and stiff. Others say that *sanai* perches on floating wood. If someone touches it, he will be sick.
12. *Panunggu* is occupying swamps and other haunted places. If one wants to enter those places, one has to ask for permission first. Failing to do so, *panunggu* will ruin a person who goes there.<sup>53</sup>

Aneuk Jamee distinguish 'diseases' caused by 'delicate creatures' and other 'roaming souls' (Indon *roh yang bergentayangan*) such as *tasapo*, *marampot*, *kemasukan*, *sijundai* and *pohon lumbè*.

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51 An example of a person who has been affected by *urang bunian* can be seen in Emtas (2008:49-53).

52 See also Snouck Hurgronje I (1906:409).

53 The *khanduri* for *makluk halus* "delicate creature" are often held when a bridge is built and when the land is made available for agriculture in the mountain. Some say that the aim of this *khanduri* is to ask permission to *makluk halus* living around the location so that the workers do not come to any harm. Some say that its aim is to ask *malaikat* to tell the workers in their dreams whether they can continue building the bridge/cultivating the land and some others say its aim is to remove *makluk halus* to its site and claim ownership of these locations.

1. *Tasapo* afflicts someone who has met a ‘delicate creature’ that is angry with him or her. Some say *syètan*’s child has been stepped on so that its parents are angry with the person who did it. As a result, he or she falls ill. Others say that *tasapo* can be also caused by a ‘roaming soul’ encountered on walks or during a visit to the grave. A dead person addresses him or her without his or her knowing it, and such contact of an earthly nature with the subtler one which appertains to the realms of the dead, is sure to have evil consequences (Snouck Hurgronje I 1906:412). A healer has to be invited to heal this person.
2. *Meurampot*, it is believed that *meurampot* is caused by ‘delicate creatures’ when one goes to places where ‘delicate creatures’ live. To heal this illness, the leaves of the tree where that person is believed to have become sick are taken. The leaves of the tree are then milled and placed on the sick person’s forehead after being spelt.
3. *Kemasukan* is a ‘roaming soul’ that permeates one’s ‘soul’ (*Jam jiwo*) when his or her ‘soul’ is weak. It is said that the ‘roaming souls’ are from people who die improperly. Their ‘souls’ want to occupy the body of the living. The behaviour of a person is similar to that of the dead person when he or she was alive. Such a person can be healed by a *teungku* reciting Qur’anic verses and a healer reciting spells. The victim’s affliction depends on the ability of the healer to ward off the ‘delicate creature’ from the victim’s body.
4. *Sijundai* is a kind of ‘disease’ causing a person to lose his or her ‘healthy mind’ (Indon *akal sehat*). It is said that it usually happens to a woman who has just given birth. Her body becomes hot and she does not talk much. Her strange actions such as climbing a high tree, climbing a house roof while crying sadly or singing melodiously which are not acceptable.<sup>54</sup>
5. *Pohon lumbè* is a kind of tree in which ‘delicate creatures’ often stay and make their nest. If someone drinks water from the root of these trees, his neck will swell up under his chin. This disease is called *penyakit chukong* (‘goitre’). Meanwhile a person’s hands or feet will also swell up if he makes contact with water coming from the root of this tree.<sup>55</sup>

### 3. Jinn

The word *jinn* is derived from the root word *janna* meaning ‘hidden, closed or unseen’. *Malaikat*, according to *jahiliyah*,<sup>56</sup> are also included in the category of *jinn* as they cannot be seen (Labib & Ali 2003:7). The villagers believe another form of life exists created by Allāh before human beings were created, which is unseen called *jinn*. According to the Qur’ān, *jinn* is another type of spiritual being made out from scorching fire (QS 15:27) or the smoke-

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54 An example of a person who has been affected by *sijundai* can be seen in Emtas (2008:55-56).

55 See also Snouck Hurgronje I (1906:412).

56 “Age of pagan ignorance preceding the Islamic era”.

less flames of a fire (QS 55:15). They were created before Adam. Nothing, however, is mentioned about when the *jinn* were created. Some *teungku* say that *jinn* have some qualities like human beings; intellect, discrimination, freedom, and the power to choose between right and wrong, between true and false, and between good and bad. In addition, it is said that they can change their forms and can travel very fast over great distances, including through what human beings perceive to be solid objects. This enables them to obtain knowledge that is not normally available to human beings. They can communicate with human beings and interact with them sometimes and can permeate the bodies of humans and animals.

It is said that *jinn* are like human beings; drinking, getting married and having children but their ways are not known to us. Human beings are only able to know if it is Allāh's will. *Jinn* are also said to be aware of revelations, angels, prophets, and messenger from Allāh and have free-will to decide between good and evil. Villagers argue that they can be 'Muslim' (good) and 'non Muslims' (bad). Those *jinn* that are good, pious and faithful are called 'Islamic *jinn*' (Ach *jén Islam*) or 'faithful *jinn*' (Ach *jén mukmin*). Good *jinn* are benevolent to human beings. They make friends with human beings and help them do hard work and magical acts. It is said that good *jinn* always look for the truth, provide guidance and perform good deeds and help human beings in critical situations. When the tsunami in December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2004 hit Acèh, 'Islamic *jinn*' are said to have guarded mosques by warding off the blows of gigantic waves toward the mosques. As a result, many mosques lying near the sea coast of Acèh province were not destroyed and could still be used as places of worship. Some people, however, said that the mosques were guarded by angels called guardian angels not by 'Islamic *jinn*'. Some others said that 'Islamic *jinn*' together with guardian angels as 'the army of Allāh' guarded mosques from the powerful earthquake and giant waves. In addition, it is said that they saved people by floating wood on the water so that they could hang on until they reached the branches of the trees and remain there until the tsunami subsided. All such 'rescuers' then disappeared. Many people contended that Allāh helped save people, animals and children through 'Islamic *jinn*' resembling 'rescuers' and many other forms so that a number of people were saved as the tsunami swept over the Acèh province. The 'faithful *jinn*' or benevolent *jinn* can be taken as servants of the one who masters the mystery of *jinn* and learns about the mysterious world (Ach *ileume gaeb*). My informant says that some *teungku*

in the Blangporoh, Blangbaru and Kutaiboh village are known to have mastered this.

Meanwhile malevolent *jinn* are called ‘infidel *jinn*’ and are companions of *iblis*. ‘Infidel *jinn*’ tempt human beings and the ‘faithful *jinn*’. They always disturb and try to mislead human beings from the right path and during the period of death. It is said that ‘bad’ *jinn* that always disturb children are often called Ruh. When *jinn* act arrogantly they are named Marid. *Jinn* that have a strong imagination are named Ifrit and if they do bad things as well as misleading human beings they are called *syètan*. Many *teungku* argue that the ‘doors’ that ‘infidel *jinn*’ come to human being through are: 1) Carnal desires, as a man responds to his carnal desires, he is driven by an ‘infidel *jinn*’ and will be lead away from Allāh. 2) Stupidity, a stupid man can make his heart ‘blind’. The stupid man, therefore, becomes the main object of ‘infidel *jinn*’ 3) Anger is a big door for ‘infidel *jinn*’. Anger will influence the mouth of person. One will say something without thinking first due to thoughtlessness. In addition, anger will also influence other parts of the body such as the hands to beat or to kill and the heart of a person to feel jealousy, envy, and revenge.

It is believed that there are more *jinn* than human beings in the world. As they have very tiny bodies, *jinn* cannot be seen. Many villagers say that if they could be seen, human beings would be in trouble as the world is full of *jinn*. “*Jinn* live on the earth close together with human beings but their world is different from that of human beings. For example, many *jinn*’s houses and their place of business” are found in drainage ditches (Indon *combèran*)”. *Jinn* are also said to have ‘faith’ and ‘religion’. They also learn and help each other. They can fly and change their forms to those of human beings, cattle and other form of animals such as a snake, dog, camel, cow, goat, lion, donkey and cat etc as they wish. Many of them have strong faith, good conduct and are very confident etc. Nonetheless, there are also those that are stupid and weak. Some believe in Allāh but many of them do not believe in Allāh. *Jinn* can live in all places and establish societies and have kings. Azrak is said to refer to a *jinn* country although no one knows where it is.<sup>57</sup> *Jinn* prefer living in dirty and dark places to which human beings rarely go. They occupy and establish centers of their government in water. There are also centers of their government in oceans, rivers, and estuaries. In addition they also occupy wide and isolated

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57 See also Muhaimin (2004:60).

deserts, forests, including deep caves in forests, long unoccupied houses, ruins, rubbish tips, toilets, cemeteries and other frightening and silent places which are far from human beings. Some of them even live in the houses or roofs of houses. Teungku Yunus says “for those who enter their houses mentioning the name of Allāh, the ‘infidel *jinn*’ cannot stay over night in that house. Similarly, if people of the house mention the name of Allāh before eating the ‘infidel *jinn*’ will then not be able to eat with them”.

According to the villagers, there are three categories of *jinn*. 1) *Jinn* that can fly. 2) *Jinn* that is like a snake and dog. 3) *Jinn* that dress up and always travel. They are all created from fire; their foods are steam and smell. A person who makes a ‘friend’ with *jinn* usually burns incense to call them before continuing the friendship. One *teungku* says that bones and dried dirt are among their food, that is why human beings are not allowed to ‘perform the ritual of washing clean’ (Arb *istinjā*) with bones and dried dirt. He adds further that if *jinn* pass away, they will return to their origin, to fire. They, therefore, do not have graves, whereas when human beings pass away, they will return to earth as they are created from it. In addition, *jinn* are usually totally black. Black is believed to be better at accumulating the power of the ‘infidel *jinn*’ compared to other colours as black contains the heat. “Killing or beating such a pseudo-animal is risky enough because their friends or kin may take deadly revenge. The risk is more serious than when someone is merely disturbing or destroying their places” (Muhaimin 2004:61).

These *jinn* can be chased away by reciting Qur’anic verses. To protect oneself, one should recite verses from the Qur’ān, thus *jinn* can be avoided and their power can be nullified after hearing someone recite certain verses of Qur’ān. Teungku Juned, for example, explained “the one who recites talismans cannot be scared nor possessed by them”. Verses and *sūrah* for talismans considered most effective are: *Ayat kursi* or “the verse of the Throne” (QS 2:55), *Qulhu* (al-Ikhlās, QS 112), *Qula ‘udzu birabbinnās* (an-Nās QS 114) and *Alhamdulillah* (al-Fātihah QS 1). For this practical purpose, Teungku Juned adds that it is advisable that everyone has some knowledge of some of these verses or *sūrah*. Recital of the *bismillāh* (‘in the name of Allāh’) before doing something or going somewhere is one way to avoid the possibility of their interference. He adds further that performing ‘the call to prayer’ (Arb *adhān*) is also another way to ward off ‘infidel *jinn*’, ‘delicate creatures’, *syètan*, and *iblis*

(see Ch.6) and they all will bow down (Ach *tundok*) before human beings if the verses of Qur'ān are recited.

## Conclusion

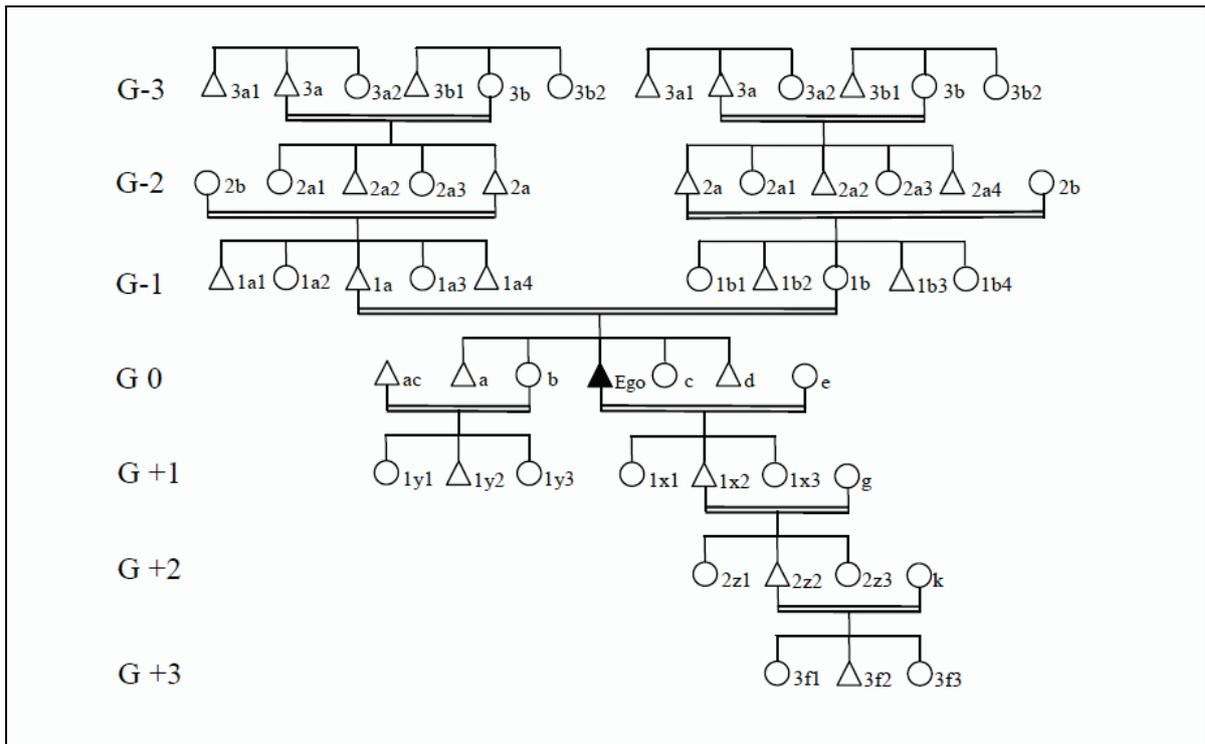
The Aneuk Jamee believes that the universe consists of two interconnected domains: the visible and the invisible. Human beings live on the visible level, while God and spiritual beings; *malaikat* (angel), *iblis* (devil), *syètan* (Satan) and *jinn* (genies) exist on the invisible level. Both levels are interrelated and they interact through belief in and rules given by Allāh. The Aneuk Jamee idea of God derives entirely from Islam. The essence of the Aneuk Jamee's theology is its monotheism - the belief in Allāh as the creator of all things. Nothing has happened or shall happen without His knowledge or His will. He is the only everlasting and unique reality, the eternal and absolute, to whom alone all worship is due.

Meanwhile *malaikat* are believed to act as intermediaries between the divine world and the human world, working at the command of Allāh. Belief in *malaikat* is closely connected to a belief in other spiritual being such as *iblis*, *jinn*, *syètan* and *makhluk halus*. The two realms are opposed but complementary so that each makes the other understandable and acceptable. *Malaikat*, *iblis*, *jinn*, *syètan* have their original roots in the Qur'ān but *makhluk halus* do not. The Aneuk Jamee believe that *makhluk halus* are part of the spirits that have their original roots in the Qur'ān. These beliefs are maintained and derived from a pre-Islamic Aneuk Jamee culture of religion. It has been integrated into the local Muslim belief system. As detailed information about these spiritual beings is incomplete and speculative, their nature, essence and actions are described differently by different people. The Aneuk Jamee thus integrate many non-Muslim ideas into this belief system, the Qur'ān and the Prophet's tradition tend to be cited to add value and authority to these ideas.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Aneuk Jamee kinship

This chapter examines the Aneuk Jamee system of kinship in Blangporoh village. Like other indigenous peoples in the region of Acèh, the Aneuk Jamee recognize kinship as one of the most basic principles for organizing individuals into social groups, roles, and categories. Through this system, family relations can be presented concretely or abstractly as degrees of relations. When a social role is played by one of the family members vis-a-vis other members, such roles are obligatory. As a consequence, the social relation forms an intricate part of what Murdock (1949) identified as reciprocal behavior characterizing relationships between kin. The analysis of the Aneuk Jamee kinship here is oriented on Platenkamp's analysis of the Tobelo kin terminology system (Platenkamp 2001). His analysis of Tobelo society reveals that it is the brother-sister relation that is able to encompass such incompatible and oppositional categories such as alliance-descent, alive-dead, affinity-consanguinity and so forth. These relations encompass the difference between relations among the living which are classified as temporary and gendered, and those relations with those no longer living, which are valued as timeless and not gendered. The kinship system is analyzed by means of the consanguineal relationships between parents and their children, siblings (Sb), parents'siblings (PSb) and siblings'children (SbCh), parents'siblings'children (PSbCh), as well as the relations between the second and third ascending and descending generations. In addition, the affinal relations are analyzed as well. These include the relation between spouses (Sp) and their affinal kin as well as between their parents (SpP) and their spouses' siblings (SpSb) (diagram 1).



**Diagram 1. Interpersonal relationships**

**Explanation**

△	= male	1a	= ayah
○	= female	1b	= umak
Ego	= self	1a1	= pak (t) uwo
⎓	= marriage	1a2	= mak tengah/mamak
	= lineage/descent line	1a3	= ètèk/makcik/mak lot
⎓	= siblings	1a4	= bapak/mamak/pak kètèk/pak cik/ayah lôt
ac	= tamudo/ubang/udo	1b1	= mak (t)uwo, mak unieng
a	= ubang/udo/uwo	1b2	= pak tengah
b	= unieng/kakak	1b3	= the same term of address with 1a4
c and d	= adiak and calls ubang to Ego	1b4	= the same term of address with 1a3
e	= binie/urang rumah	2b	= manèk/uci
1y1,1y2,1y3	= kamanakan	2a	= andueng/ondong/nènèk/ayah nèk
1x1,1x2,1x3	= anak	2a1,2a3	= nènèk/manèk/uci
2z1,2z2, 2z3	= cucu	2a2,2a4	= nènèk
3f1,3f2, 3f3	= buyut	3a and 3b	= muyang/moyang
g	= minantu padusi	3a1 and 3a2	= muyang/moyang
k	= cucu padusi	3b1 and 3b2	= muyang/moyang

The Aneuk Jamee society is structured by a system of interpersonal relationships which include a framework of kinship terminology. It reflects the principle of gender differences, age and status within the family. This system is not only concerned with one's relationship with relatives but also involves the

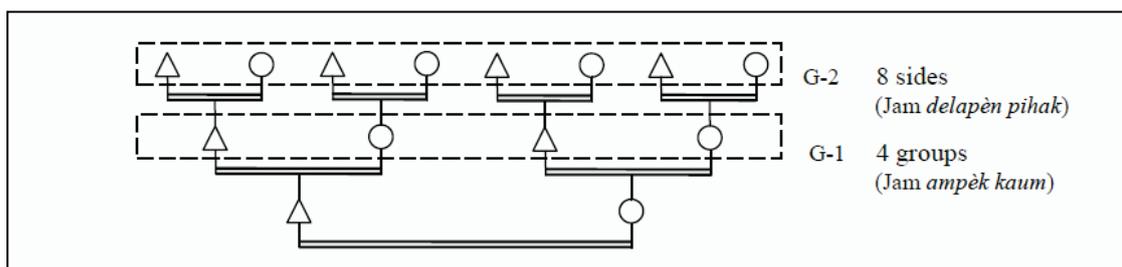
relationship with one's wife or her husband's relatives. In an interpersonal relation system one uses a variety of terms of address (diagram 1 above). The interpersonal relation system can sometimes be vague or confusing if the repetition of marriage takes place so that the terms used to address or greet someone may sound funny. For example, one who is older is addressed as *paman* (uncle) or *bibik* (aunt) by a person who is younger. This is due to the fact that the Aneuk Jamee society does not embrace exogamy apart from showing respect for the older level of marriage which is called *tuwo bibit* "old seed".

The social stratification in the Aneuk Jamee society is now not so firmly stressed. In the days before independence, the social stratification was strongly felt. For instance, on the top level were the *datuk* group and their relatives. This group practiced endogamy marriage. The second level was the group *hulubalang* who had authority below the *datuk*, then followed by the group of 'ulamā' (including *tuangku*, *imām* and *kadhi*) and at the bottom were the common people (Sulaiman 1978:7-8). Besides these groups, there is also the group of *sayéd* claiming to be from Quraish's tribe. Nowadays the social stratification in Aneuk Jamee society is said to be based on wealth, education and power (*ibid*). Unlike in the past which demonstrated that social stratification in the Aneuk Jamee society was based more on the descent, today's stratification in the Aneuk Jamee society is no longer so rigid, one can become respected by the society if he or she obtains a higher education or appears affluent. The *datuk* group no longer practices endogamy marriage. It is different with the *sayéd*'s group; they now practice exogamy marriage although there is a small group of *sayéd* that still maintains the practice of endogamy marriage.

## **The Aneuk Jamee kinship**

In the Aneuk Jamee language, there is no special word to address family but two or more people living in one house designate each other as *sabuah pariuk* "one rice pot". The rice pot is located inside the house, so that this constructs metaphorically belonging in one's house. Another term to address family is *rumah tanggo* "household", which consists of parents and their children sharing living quarters as a nuclear family. Sex is not distinguished in the children's generation but one's own children are distinguished from one's sibling's children by the term *kamanakan*. Relatives on the mother's side are called *nin-iaik mamak* while the relatives on the father's side are called *wali hukum* (see below). General term for the relatedness as kin is *dusanak* "sibling". In addi-

tion, it is also said that *dusanak* are descendants of *muyang* or *moyang* “ancestors” but their names and identities may be forgotten. A colloquial form of the question “are you kin?” is *apo kito badusanak* - “are we siblings?” Close relatives (affinal or consanguineal) are designated as “close *dusanak*” (Jam *dusanak dakèk*), meanwhile non-related neighbors are designated as “village *dusanak*” (Jam *dusanak kampuang*). Kin are commonly distinguished as *dakèk* (near) or *jauh* (far), but seldom with precision. The descendants of a single grandparent usually regard one another as near, but the descendants of siblings of grandparents are distant and can be forgotten. First the nature of the links, then their very existence disappears from memory. In life-cycle rituals such as weddings, circumcisions, and funeral rituals, *kamanakan*, *wali hukum* and *dusanak* are invited to attend the meeting of *niniak mamak*. Through these meetings, the kinship connections are known. In addition, *hari rayo idul fitri*, the celebration at the end of the fasting month of Ramadhan and *hari rayo haji*, the celebration of the “feast of sacrifice” are the media through which kinship is acknowledged as well. In life cycle rituals, ‘four groups’ (Jam *ampèk kaum*) and ‘eight sides’ (Jam *delapèn pihak*) must be invited. Should these kin groups be unable to attend, the rituals are cancelled. They are the mother (M), the mother’s mother (MM), the mother’s father (MF) and the father (F), the father’s father (FF), the father’s mother (FM) from the groom’s side and M, MM, MF and F, FF, FM from the bride’s side. The concept of *ampèk kaum* (four groups) and *delapèn pihak* (eight sides) is the same as that of the Acèhnese called *peut kawôm* and *lapan pihak* (diagram 2).



**Diagram 2. *Ampèk kaum* (four groups) and *delapèn pihak* (eight sides)**

# The Aneuk Jamee's kinship terminology

**Table 2. The Aneuk Jamee's kinship terminology**

## Generation +3

Gloss	Kin type	Term of address	Term of reference
father's father's father	FFF	<i>muyang/moyang</i>	<i>muyang/moyang</i>
mother's father's father	MFF	<i>muyang/moyang</i>	<i>muyang/moyang</i>
father's mother's mother	FMM	<i>muyang/moyang</i>	<i>muyang/moyang</i>
mother's mother's mother	MMM	<i>muyang/moyang</i>	<i>muyang/moyang</i>

## Generation +2

father's father	FF	<i>ndong/yah nèk</i>	<i>ondong/ayah nék</i>
mother's father	MF	<i>nèk/ci</i>	<i>nènèk/manèk/uci</i>
father's mother	FM	<i>ndong/nèk/yah nèk</i>	<i>ondong/nènèk/ayah nék</i>
mother's mother	MM	<i>nèk/ci</i>	<i>nènèk/manèk/uci</i>

## Generation +1

father	F	<i>yah</i>	<i>ayah</i>
mother	M	<i>umak</i>	<i>umak/mandé</i>
father's elder brother	FeB	<i>uwo</i>	<i>pak (t)uwo/mamak</i>
father's elder sister	FeZ	<i>ngah</i>	<i>mak tangah</i>
father's younger sister	FyZ	<i>cik/lôt</i>	<i>mak cik/mak lôl/ètèk</i>
father's younger brother	FyB	<i>kètèk/cik/lôt</i>	<i>pak kètèk/pak cik/pak lôl</i>
mother's elder sister	MeZ	<i>uwo/unieng</i>	<i>mak (t)uwo/mak unieng</i>
mother's elder brother	MeB	<i>ngah</i>	<i>pak tangah/mamak</i>
mother's younger brother	MyB	<i>kètèk/cik/lôt</i>	<i>pak kètèk/pak cik/pak lôl</i>
mother's younger sister	MyZ	<i>cik/lôt/bundo/ètèk</i>	<i>mak cik/mak lôl/bundo/ètèk</i>
father's brother's wife	FBW	<i>uwo</i>	<i>pak(u)wo</i>
father's sister's husband	FZH	<i>uwo</i>	<i>mak (u)wo</i>
mother's brother's wife	MBW	<i>cik/tèk</i>	<i>mak cik/mak tèk</i>
mother's sister's husband	MZH	<i>cik/pak uwo</i>	<i>pak cik/pak uwo</i>

### Generation 0

elder brother	eB	<i>ubang/uda</i>	<i>ubang/uda</i>
younger brother	yB	<i>diak</i>	<i>adiak/diak</i>
elder sister	eZ	<i>kak/unieng</i>	<i>kakak/unieng</i>
younger sister	yZ	<i>diak</i>	<i>adiak/diak</i>
father's brother's son	FBS	<i>ubang/diak</i>	<i>ubang/adiak</i>
father's brother's daughter	FBD	<i>kak/diak</i>	<i>kakak/adiak</i>
father's sister's son	FZS	<i>ubang/diak</i>	<i>ubang/adiak</i>
father's sister's daughter	FZD	<i>kak/diak</i>	<i>kakak/adiak</i>
mother's brother's son	MBS	<i>ubang/diak</i>	<i>ubang/adiak</i>
mother's brother's daughter	MBD	<i>kak/diak</i>	<i>kakak/adiak</i>
mother's sister's son	MZS	<i>ubang/diak</i>	<i>ubang/adiak</i>
mother's sister's daughter	MZD	<i>kak/diak</i>	<i>kakak/adiak</i>

### Generation -1

son	S	<i>nak</i>	<i>anak laki-laki</i>
daughter	D	<i>nak</i>	<i>anak padusi</i>
brother's son	BS	<i>nakan</i>	<i>kamanakan laki-laki</i>
brother's daughter	BD	<i>nakan</i>	<i>kamanakan padusi</i>
sister's son	ZS	<i>nakan</i>	<i>kamanakan laki-laki</i>
sister's daughter	ZD	<i>nakan</i>	<i>kamanakan padusi</i>

### Generation -2

son's son	SS	<i>cu</i>	<i>cucu laki-laki</i>
daughter's son	DS	<i>cu</i>	<i>cucu padusi</i>
daughter's daughter	DD	<i>cu</i>	<i>cucu padusi</i>
son's daughter	SD	<i>cu</i>	<i>cucu laki-laki</i>

### Generation -3

son's son's son	SSS	<i>buyut</i>	<i>buyut</i>
daughter's son's son	DSS	<i>buyut</i>	<i>buyut</i>
daughter's daughter's daughter	DDD	<i>buyut</i>	<i>buyut</i>
son's daughter's daughter	SDD	<i>buyut</i>	<i>buyut</i>

### Affinal kinterms

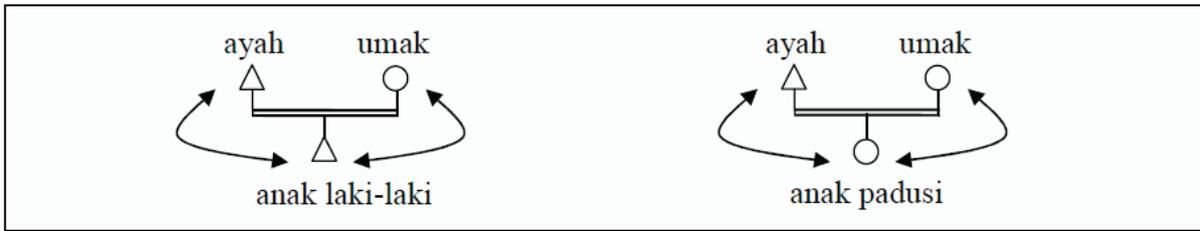
Gloss	Kin type	Term of address	Term of reference
daughter's husband	DH	<i>minantu/name</i>	<i>minantu laki-laki</i>
daughter's husband's father	DHF	<i>bisan</i>	<i>bisan laki-laki</i>
daughter's husband's brother	DHB	<i>ipa/name</i>	<i>ipa padusi</i>
son's wife's father	SWF	<i>bisan</i>	<i>bisan laki-laki</i>
so's wife's mother	SWM	<i>bisan</i>	<i>bisan padusi</i>
son's wife's brother	SWB	<i>ipa/name</i>	<i>ipa laki-laki</i>
daughter's husband's mother	DHM	<i>bisan</i>	<i>bisan padusi</i>
son's wife	SW	<i>minantu/name</i>	<i>minantu padusi</i>
son's wife's mother	SWM	<i>bisan</i>	<i>bisan padusi</i>
husband	H	<i>laki/ilén</i>	<i>laki/ilén</i>
husband's father	HF	<i>yah</i>	<i>ayah tuan</i>
husband's mother	HM	<i>umak</i>	<i>umak tuan</i>
husband's younger brother	HyB	<i>diak ipa/name</i>	<i>adiak ipa</i>
husband's elder brother	HeB	<i>uban/name</i>	<i>ubang ipa</i>
husband's younger sister	HyZ	<i>diak ipa/name</i>	<i>adiak ipa</i>
husband's younger sister	HyZ	<i>kakak/name</i>	<i>kakak ipa</i>
husband's brother's wife	HBW	<i>kak/udo</i>	<i>kakak/udo</i>
wife	W	<i>binie/urangrumah</i>	<i>binie/urang rumah</i>
wife's father	WF	<i>yah</i>	<i>ayah tuan</i>
wife's younger brother	WyB	<i>diak/name</i>	<i>adiak ipa</i>
wife's younger sister	WyZ	<i>diak/name</i>	<i>adiak ipa</i>
wife's brother's son	WBS	<i>nakan/name</i>	<i>kamanakan laki-laki</i>
wife's brother's son's son	WBSS	<i>cu</i>	<i>cucu laki-laki</i>
wife's father's brother	WFB	<i>uwo</i>	<i>pak (u)wo/mamak</i>
wife's mother	WM	<i>umak</i>	<i>umak tuan</i>
wife's sister	WZ	<i>kak/diak</i>	<i>kakak/adiak</i>
wife's sister's husband	WZH	<i>ubang/udo</i>	<i>ubang ipa/udo</i>
sister's husband	ZH	<i>ubang</i>	<i>ubang ipa</i>
sister's husband's father	ZHF	<i>pak/cik</i>	<i>bapak/pak cik</i>
sister's husband's bother	ZHB	<i>ubang/diak</i>	<i>ubang/adiak</i>
sister's husband's brother's	ZHBZS	<i>nakan/name</i>	<i>kamanakan laki-laki</i>
sister's son			
brother's wife's father	BWF	<i>pak/cik</i>	<i>bapak/pak cik</i>
brother's wife's brother	BWB	<i>ubang/diak</i>	<i>ubang/adiak</i>
brother's wife's brother's son	BWBS	<i>nakan/name</i>	<i>kamanakan laki-laki</i>
sister's husband's mother	ZHM	<i>cik/tèk</i>	<i>mak cik/mak tèk</i>
sister's husband's sister	ZWM	<i>kak/diak</i>	<i>kakak/adiak</i>
brother's wife's mother	BWM	<i>kak/diak</i>	<i>kakak/adiak</i>
brother's wife's sister	BWZ	<i>kak/diak</i>	<i>kakak/adiak</i>
mother's sister's husband	MZH	<i>cik/uwo</i>	<i>pak cik/pak uwo</i>
mother's brother's wife	MBW	<i>cik/tèk</i>	<i>mak cik/mak tèk</i>
father's sister's husband	FZH	<i>cik/uwo</i>	<i>pak cik/pak uwo</i>
father's brother's wife	FBW	<i>cik/tèk</i>	<i>mak cik/mak tèk</i>
sister's son's wife	ZSW	<i>nakan/name</i>	<i>kamanakan padusi</i>
sister's daughter's husband	ZDH	<i>nakan/name</i>	<i>kamanakan laki-laki</i>
brother's son's wife	BSW	<i>nakan/name</i>	<i>kamanakan padusi</i>
brother's daughter's husband	BDH	<i>nakan/name</i>	<i>kamanakan laki-laki</i>

The kinship terms of address are essential guides to social behavior, placing people into categories and assigning them status and roles. The terms of address reflect one's own generation as well as between generations. The order of birth is recognized in these terms as long as the person addressed is older than the speaker (see term generation 0). In the same way the Aneuk Jamee distinguish between age and sex. The greater elaboration is in ego's generation in which discrimination is made between older and younger and sometimes between intermediate positions in the order of birth. The terminology is enriched by a variety of synonyms. The recognition of kin is limited to three descending and three ascending generations. There are the parents'parents's parents (PPP), parents'parents (PP), parents (P), Ego, and children (Ch), children's children (ChCh), and children's children's children (ChChCh). Beyond these boundaries, kin are not terminologically acknowledged. In this category fall all who are more than three ascending and descending generations removed from Ego. In some cases, however, the kinship, reaching back even four or five generations through the father's side, is remembered more scrupulously than the kinship through the mother. But this depth exists only in the aristocratic stratum, *ulama's* families and *datuk* or when there is a prospect of inheriting valuable property. The fourth or the fifth generations in such special cases are designated by the terms *muyang muyang/moyang moyang* for the ascending generation and the term *buyut buyut* for the descending one.

## **Consanguineal relationships**

### **1. P and Ch relationships**

A man addresses his son *anak laki-laki*. The term *anak* meaning 'child' and the term *laki-laki* refers to his sex, meaning 'male' (diagram 3.1). Reciprocally the son designates his father by the term *ayah*. The father addresses his daughter by the term *anak padusi*. The term *padusi* refers to her sex, meaning 'female' (diagram 3.2). She calls her father by the same terms as her brother *ayah*. A woman uses the same term to address her son and daughter. Here three criteria are found; first, there is an absolute distinction between generations, second, there is no relative age among the children and third, there is no sex identity assigned.



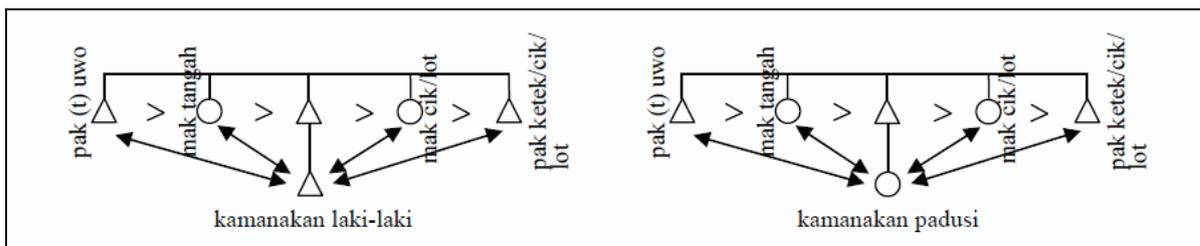
**Diagram 3.1. Parents son relationships**

**Diagram 3.2. Parents daughter relationships**

## 2. PSb and SbCh relationships

### A. FSb - SbCh relationships

The parents' brothers (PB) are designated by different terms of address. A child designates his/her father's elder brother (FeB) with the term *pak (t) uwo*. The word *pak tuwo* consist of the word *pak* meaning father and the word *tuwo* meaning old. In the literal sense of the word it means "old father" or "superior father". The reciprocal term for the younger sibling's son (ySbS) is *kamanakan laki-laki* (diagram 4.1) and for younger sibling's daughter (ySbD) is *kamanakan padusi*. For the father's elder sister (FeZ), one designates *mak tengah*. *Mak* or *umak* is a synonym of mother and the word *tengah* used as a suffix means middle. The word *mak tengah* literally means the "middle mother" and she also reciprocally addresses her ySbS as *kamanakan laki-laki* and ySbD *kamanakan padusi*. In addition, a child designates his/her father's younger sister (FyZ) with the term *mak cik/mak lôt*. The word *cik* used as a suffix means 'small' or the suffix *lôt* means 'the last'. In the literal sense of the word *mak cik/mak lôt* means the "small mother" or the mother who is inferior. Father's younger brother (FyB) is addressed as *pak kètèk/pak cik/pak (yah) lôt*. The word *kètèk* means 'small'. Literally *pak kètèk/pak cik/pak (yah) lôt* means the "small father" or the father who is inferior. FyZ addres their elder brother's children (eBCh) in the same way the FyB does, with the term; *kamanakan laki-laki* for ySbS and *kamanakan padusi* for ySbD (diagram 4.2).

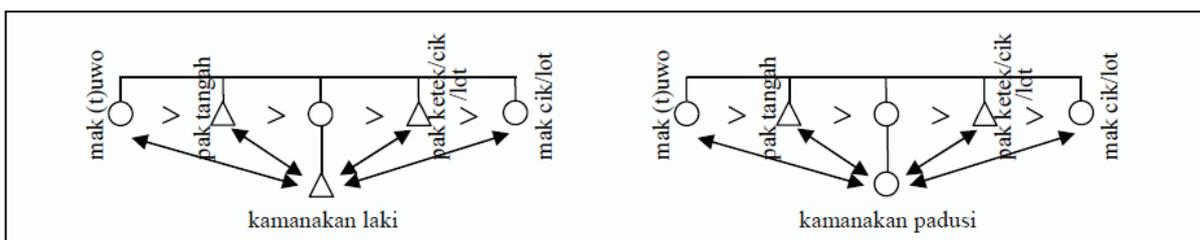


**Diagram 4.1. PSb - male SbCh relationships**

**Diagram 4.2. PSb - female SbCh relationships**

## B. MB- ZbCh relationships

Mother's elder sister (MeZ) and mother's elder brother (MeB) are addressed differently. MeZ is addressed *mak (t)uwo*<sup>58</sup> by her younger sister's son (yZS). The word *mak* meaning 'mother' and *(t)uwo* means 'old'. In the literal sense of the word it means the 'old mother' or 'superior mother'. Meanwhile MeB is addressed as *pak tangah*. The word *pak* meaning 'father' and *tangah* means 'middle'. Literally it means the "middle father". In addition, mother's younger brother (MyB) addresses the same term used by FyB above, *pak kètèk/pak cik/pak (yah) lôt*. The mother's younger sister (MyZ) is addressed with the same term used by FyZ above, *mak cik/mak lôt*.<sup>59</sup> She reciprocally addresses eSbS or ySbS as *kamanakan laki-laki* (diagram 5.1) and eSbD or ySbD as *kamanakan padusi* as well (diagram 5.2).



**Diagram 5.1. MSb - male SbCh relationships**

**Diagram 5.2. MSb - female SbCh relationships**

The relationships between PSb [FeB, FeZ, FyZ, FyB and MeZ, MeB, MyB, MyZ] and SbCh show that there are sex and age distinctions in the upper generations. These are the distinctions between *pak* 'father' and *mak* 'mother'

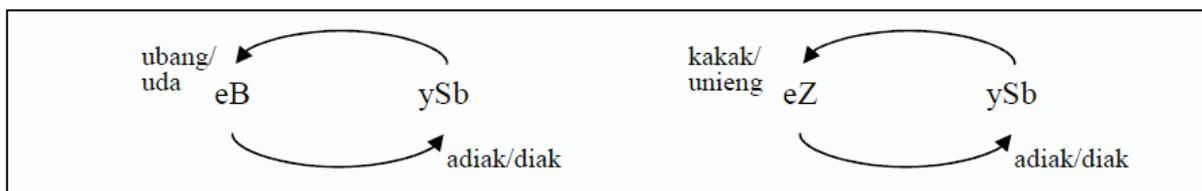
58 Sometimes mother's elder sister (MeZ) is also addressed *mak unieng*.

59 Sometimes father's younger sister (FyS) and mother's younger sister (MyZ) are addressed *ètèk* or *bundo*.

and the distinctions between (*t*)*uwo* ‘old’, *tangah* ‘middle’ and *kètèk/lôt* ‘small’. Thus children designate their parents’ siblings according to their relative age and respect the order of birth of their parents’ generation. Hence the orientation in time is a main characteristic of their relationship. Not only is the relative age important to this relationship, a sex specific distinction is made clear as well. There is a terminological distinction as to the question whether it is a woman who is a younger or older sister of the parents or whether it is a man who is an older or younger brother of the parents. Meanwhile for the lower generation there is a sex but no age distinction assigned. Siblings’ children (SbCh) are not designated by the same term; SbS is addressed as *kamanakan laki-laki* while SbD is addressed as *kamanakan padusi*. From the perspective of their PSb, they do not have the same status and are not considered as identical. One distinguishes terminologically whether it is the male or female child of their younger or older sibling.

### 3. Sibling relationships

A man addresses his brothers as *ubang/uda*. The latter reciprocally addresses his *adiak* (yB) or just *diak* (diagram 6.1). A younger brother (yB) addresses her elder sisters (eZ) by the term *kakak/unieng*. Reciprocally she addresses him with the same term used by her elder brother (eB), *adiak/diak*. A sister designates her eZ in the same way a brother addresses his eZ, *kakak/unieng*. She also calls her *adiak/diak* (diagram 6.2). In addition, a sister addresses her elder brother (eB) by the term *ubang/uda* and he calls her *adiak/diak* as well.



**Diagram 6.1. Terms of address of male sibling**

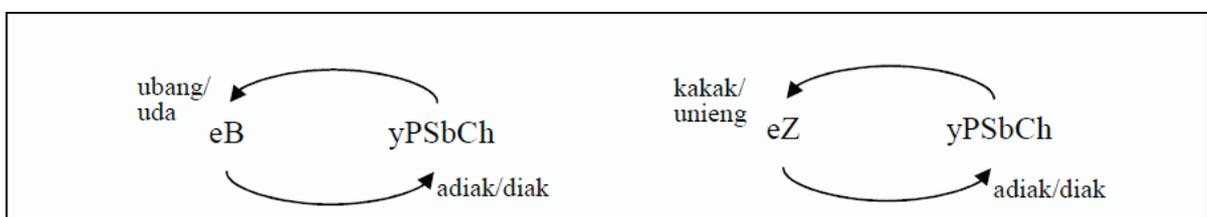
**Diagram 6.2. Terms of address of female sibling**

This diagram shows that younger siblings are not distinguished by sex. They are all addressed as younger siblings. They are not assigned a gender identity through their respective terms of address. Reciprocally, however, this gender distinction is made. The terms employed already indicate that the person

addressed is older and one knows whether the person addressed is male or female. This shows that the attribute of sex is subordinated to the ordering principle of relative age. Among elder siblings this gender distinction is made but among younger siblings it is not as in the case in the relationships described above, the order of birth is an important principle for the relationships between siblings. The orientation according to time is a main characteristic of the relations among siblings.

#### 4. PSbCh relationships

In the Aneuk Jamee society, the relation with one's sibling's children (SbCh) is not distinguished from those of one's siblings. Sibling's children designate each other in the same way as siblings do. The birth order determines the way in which the relations between the respective children are oriented over time. A man denotes his parents' sibling's son (PSbS) as *adiak/diak* when he is older than that PSbS. It is their relative age that orders their relationships. Reciprocally, the parent's siblings'son denotes him as *ubang/uda* (diagram 7.1). Likewise, a woman addresses her PSbD as 'eZ' as *kakak/unieng* if the latter is older, and as *adiak/diak* if the latter is younger than the speaker (diagram 7.2). This indicates not only that the orientation of the relationship in time is significant, but also that children's absolute order of birth is not subordinated to the order of birth of their respective parents. The absolute age of PSbCh is important here. Therefore, this principle cannot be spoken of as an inherited one. The children do not take on their respective parents' birth order and are not subordinated under their parents' age but depend on the order of their birth. Absolute age can, therefore, be identified as a main structuring principle for the relationships among PSbCh.

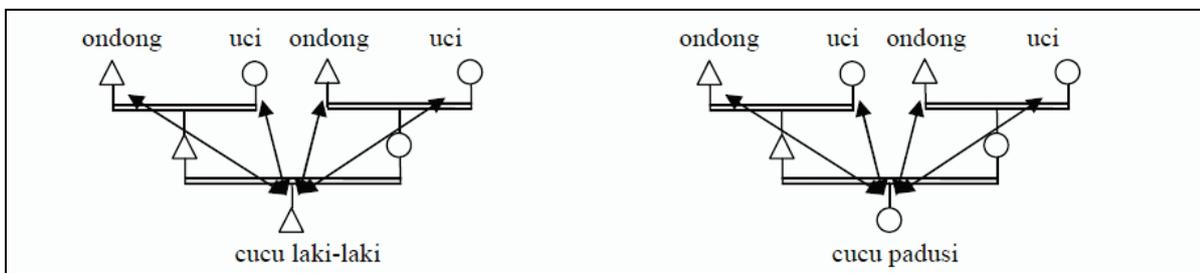


**Diagram 7.1. Terms of address of male PSbCh**

**Diagram 7.2. Terms of address of female PSbCh**

## 5. The second ascending and descending generation relationships

The second ascending (+2) and descending (-2) generations are differentiated by various terms. Father's father (FF) is designated as *ndong/ayah nèk* and father's mother is designated as *nènèk/manèk/uci*. Reciprocally, they address their child's son (ChS) with the term *cucu laki-laki* (diagram 8.1) and their child daughter's son (ChD) with the term *cucu padusi* (diagram 8.2). Here there is also a gender specification assigned in the descending direction and in the ascending one. In other words, PF or PM qualifies *cucu* as either male or female but there is no gender assigned for the lower generation. So what we have here is an absolute sex identity in generation +2 and -2. No relative gender specific and absolute distinctions in generation are assigned.

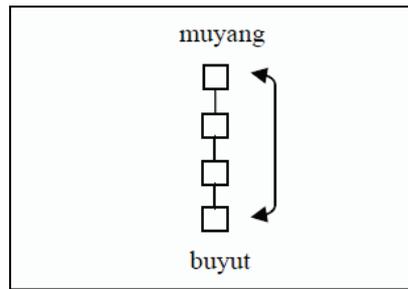


**Diagram 8.1. PP [PF +PM] - ChS relationships**

**Diagram 8.2. PP [PF +PM] - ChD relationships**

## 6. The third ascending and descending generation relationships

The third ascending (+3) and descending (-3) generations are not differentiated by sex or relative age. All great grand parents is called *muyang* or *moyang*. The word *moyang* comes from the Malay word *nènèk moyang* meaning 'ancestor'. All great grand children (ChChCh) are called *buyut* (diagram 9). Here there is no gender identity assigned, neither in the ascending nor in the descending generation. In addition, no distinctions are made between paternal and maternal relatives. Only the membership in the third ascending or descending generation is stressed. In explaining a distant link, an individual traces the connection until a sibling relationship at the third ascending generation and stops there. The farthest back the kinship reckoning goes is to say that "our *muyang/moyang* are siblings", rather than identifying the relationship between persons as descendants of a linking ancestor. In other words, what the Aneuk Jamee tend to say is that, "We descend from siblings".



**Diagram 9. PPP [PPF+PPM] - ChChCh relationships**

This diagram shows that there is no terminological distinction made between matrilineal parents' parents' parents and patrilineal parents' parents' parents nor between the collateral members of the same generation: the term *muyang/moyang* is also used to address the siblings of the mothers' parent's parents (MPPSb) as well as the siblings of the fathers' parent's parents (FPPSb). The terms do not indicate whether the person addressed is male or female or belongs to one's mothers' side or to one's fathers' side. Reciprocally, the term *buyut* designates a member in the third descending generation. The members of the third descending generation are not distinguished by own children's children's children (ChChCh) or sibling's children's children's children (SbChChCh) nor do they indicate whether this child is male or female. The recognition of kinship is thus "horizontal" rather than "vertical", in that an apical ancestor is not the point of orientation of kinship, rather it is sibblingship.

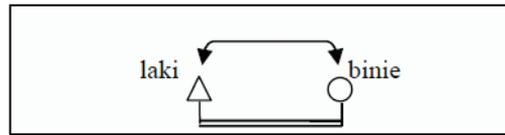
## **Affinal relationships**

### **1. Spouse relationships**

A man denotes his wife as *binie*,<sup>60</sup> a woman denotes her husband as *laki/ilén* (diagram 10). As these terms are not reciprocal, it indicates a relationship between non-identical positions.

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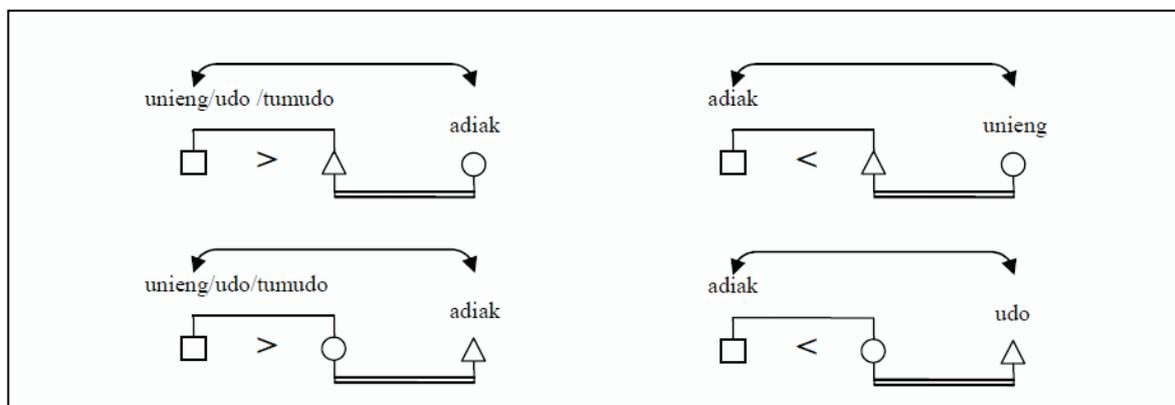
60 In the Aneuk Jamee speaking area a wife is also sometimes addressed by her husband with the term *urang rumah*. The term *urang rumah* is similar to the Acèhnese term *peurumoh*, originally 'po rumoh' and can be translated as the "person who owns the house" or the "owner of the house" and is, therefore, acting as the first indication for the special relation between women and house.



**Diagram 10. Relationship between spouses**

### A. SbSp and SpSb relationships

The social network between spouses and their affinal kin differs from that among consanguineals. They, therefore, distinguish them terminologically. A sister's husband (ZH) is addressed as *unieng* by the wife's brother (WB) and wife's sister (WZ) (diagram 11.1). The spouse acquires the same relative age or 'status' as that of its spouse. If the spouse is an elder sibling (eSb), then the husband/wife is addressed as an eSb. If the spouse is younger sibling (ySb), then the husband/wife is addressed by his/her husband/wife's siblings as a ySb. In addition, it is quite often that *tumudo* is also denoted as *ubang* or *udo* although the affinal relations are subject to rules of avoidance. This term is the same for his/her own elder brother. The affinal relative is reciprocally taking over his spouses' kin terms of address. Accordingly the term for the spouses' younger sibling (SpySb) as well as for the spouse's youngest siblings are *adiak/diak* which are those for a younger brother or younger sister. The same absorption principle is valid for relations between younger siblings and their spouses. A younger sibling's spouse (ySbSp) is also addressed as *adiak/diak*. Reciprocally the spouse addresses his spouses' sibling as *ubang/udo* for an elder brother (SpeB) and as *kakak/unieng* for an elder sister (SpeZ) (diagram 11.2).



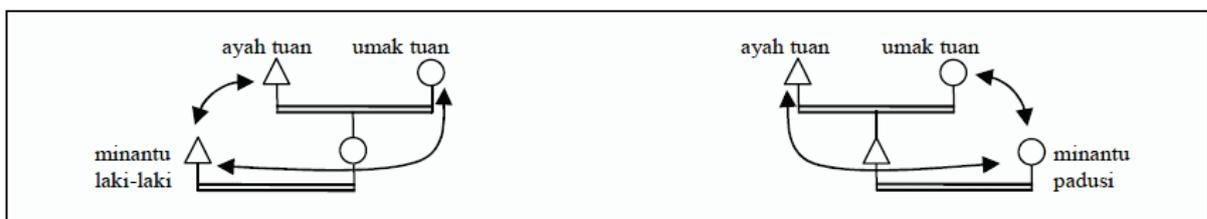
**Diagram 11.1. Sp - eSbSp relationship**

**Diagram 11.2. Sp - ySbSp relationships**

The older siblings' spouses (eSbSp) are addressed in a different way from the younger sibling spouses (ySbSp). By using these terms a person knows that the person addressed is the spouse of an older or younger sibling. These relations stress the absorption of social relations through affines. This is because the Aneuk Jamee society has an uxorilocal residence principle whereby the husband takes up residence in the parental home of his wife. As the husband moves into the house of wife's parents, he adopts his wife's terminological systems. In other words, affines are incorporated terminologically as consanguines or the affinal relation is subordinated under the consanguine. Affinity is subordinated under the order of birth and thus relative age. Affinity is negated since one also calls one's sister's husband, *uda/ubang*, instead of *tamudo*. Only here it becomes clear why the absorption of kin terms is valid in one direction i.e. from the affine to the spouses' consanguines.

## B. SpP and ChSp relationships

Parents designate their children's spouses (ChSp) by the term *minantu*. The reciprocal term for spouses' parents (SpP) or parents-in-law is *tuan*. The word *tuan* means 'superior' being. It describes someone with a high social position and to whom tribute/respect is paid. The term of address for a spouses' father (SpF) in the Jamee is *ayah tuan* and for the mother (SpM) *umak tuan*. This term is used when ChSp does not address SpP. When greeting each other one calls one's mother-in-law *umak* for mother-in-law and one's father-in-law *bapak/ayah*. Reciprocally, parents-in-law refers to their son-in-law as *minantu laki-laki* (diagram 12.1) but address him as *laki si anu* "the husband of so-and-so" or call *ayah si anu* "the father of so-and-so" if he already has a child. They call their daughter-in-law *minantu padusi* (diagram 12.2) when they do not address each other. If they face each other, they call *binie si anu* "the wife of that so-and-so" or *umak si anu* "the mother of that so-and-so" if she already has a child. The usage of these terms indicates a relation of high respect between ChSp and SpP.



**Diagram 12.1. SpP - male ChSp relationships**

**Diagram 12.2. SpP - female ChSp relationships**

This diagram shows that SpP qualify *minantu* as either male or female. Similarly, ChSp also qualify their SpP either male or female. In other words, the gender of the person addressed is significant but here no age distinction is made.

## 2. The Aneuk Jamee system of kin categories

### A. The nuclear family

The nuclear family in the Aneuk Jamee community is called *rumah tango* “house + ladder”, with the semantic meaning ‘household’, which consists of a father and a mother and their children who share living quarters. It is sometimes found that a husband has more than one wife (polygamy). In the sense of nuclear family in the Aneuk Jamee society it also includes the newly married daughter who stays together with her parents before the ritual of “separation of the cooking pot” (*Jam paasing pariuk*) is performed (Ch.4). The nuclear family is a unit of economy and *adat*. The members of the family group meet their individual members’ basic needs; and available resources are divided among them. The role of the nuclear family is explicitly divided in daily life although in practice the family members can help and advise each other. A husband is considered to be more responsible for his family. He is the legal and economic authority in the family. His tasks are outside the house, focusing more on responsibilities of a business nature and community relations while the tasks of a wife are in the house. Her responsibility is raising children and educating them, preparing food, keeping the house clean, acting as mediator between children and their father as well as helping the husband in many other jobs such as in financial matters and house activities.

In the household division of labor, male children help their father. They are potential additional support for a father in everyday life. Their help is expected in domestic life, for instance, raising the domestic animals after school hours. If the household economic situation is not good, they will fish (*Jam malauik*), peddle goods (*Jam manggalèh*) or conduct regular trade (*Jam baniago*) for a living to support the household’s needs. But many affluent parents do not want to disturb their children's education. The parents hope that their sons succeed in their education and get a job and position in society so that they can elevate their family status, protect and care for their parents when they are old. In addition, the male children especially the first son is the father’s

representative in his absence and his confidant. As the family guardian, the first son is expected to assume external responsibilities until the younger siblings can stand on their own feet.

Meanwhile the tasks of the female children are more household chores after school hours. They help their mother do the laundry and cooking for the family under her guidance, they are also trained for motherhood. The eldest daughter feeds and looks after her young siblings. The basic norm of behavior of sisters towards one another is that of affection and mutual assistance in almost every daily task, especially in domestic work. They exchange clothes and trinkets and also advise each other during menstruation. In farming (*Jam basawah*) and gardening (*Jam bakabun*) activities all family members participate in accordance with their capabilities and skills. In addition, the daughter spends more time with her mother and the mother is the closest person for her in the family so that she orients herself towards her mother rather than towards her father. From the mother she learns feminine skills and also takes on her character.

Both father and mother pass on physical and mental attributes to the children. However, the mother is considered more trustworthy as she gives birth, raises and educates the children. Not only because of the belief that “heaven is under a mothers’ feet” (Indon *syurga dibawah telapak kaki ibu*) but also because the mother is the person responsible for managing both household and financial activities. In addition, since the father spends much time away from the house, the mother has much time with the children so that the relation between children and a mother is closer than the relation between children and a father. Although the Aneuk Jamee society appreciates the position of a woman, a boy occupies a more important position within the kinship system because the boy is an heir and ‘successor of the degree of his descendants’ (Indon *penerus gelar keturunan*) in his family in addition to acting as a *wali hukum* (guardian or protector) for his female brothers if his father dies.

In everyday social life, the household is led by a father. Sometimes it is led by a mother or an eldest son when there is a divorce or the father dies. There is a code of conduct which has to be followed by all family members; for instance, it is considered impolite if a child says his/her parents’ name directly. The children feel hesitant talking with their father. If they have a wish, it is enough to say it to the mother. Conversation between parents-in-law and a son-in-law is not desired and even impolite. The relation between the son-in-law

and the parents-in-law is limited. The son-in-law feels *malu* “ashamed” with his parents-in-law. According to *adat*, the son-in-law who just gets married is only allowed to go back to his wife’s house at night, during the day he should be at other places. Because he seldom goes back during the day and seldom meets his parents-in-law and his wife’s relatives, their relationship is superficial, behavioral weaknesses are not apparent and they are able to maintain a good relationship. In addition, it is common for the son-in-law to earn money outside the home called *marautau* and he returns home at irregular intervals. When he returns home he signalizes his arrival through loud coughing so that the parents-in-law have the opportunity to leave the house (Snouck Hurgronje 1906; Siegel 1969). During his stay, the wife’s parents and the son-in-law usually do not cross each other’s paths. If he wants to say something to his parents-in-law, he quite often delivers a message through his wife. Although this relationship does not seem so close, it does not mean that they do not pay attention to each other and love each other. They are merely maintaining a relationship of great respect between the children’s spouse (ChSp) and spouse parents (SpP).

Children are forbidden to scold their parents using impolite words. If they do so, they are labeled as not knowing their manners and even as rebellious children (Indon *anak durhaka*). Between brother and younger brother, there is a distance, for example; if a brother is in a coffee/rice stall, and at the same time the younger brother appears, the younger brother will not go in because there is a feeling that brother and younger brother sitting together is “unpleasant” (Indon *tidak enak*). In general this situation is the same as that in the Acèhnese in which a man is *malu* “ashamed” with all his male consanguine and affine, while a woman is free and close to all her female consanguine and affine (Jayawardena 1977). The closest relationship in the Aneuk Jamee kinship is between female consanguine of the same generation.

The Aneuk Jamee society has the uxorilocal residence principle in which newlywed couples settle or reside in the house of the wife’s parents. The husband staying at the house of his wife’s parents is regarded as *urang samando* “a person who marries into a family” by the family of the wife. As such, he is respected by the other family members when he behaves himself in such a way that meets the traditional norms and attitudes agreed on in the family and the community life. The husband may not make an excessive joke in the presence of the wife’s family. He attends any ritual held by his wife’s family, warmly greets and welcomes his wife relatives when they pay a visit to the house. Al-

though he is bound by customary norms in maintaining the respect of his wife's relatives, it does not mean all the rights and obligations within his own family are discarded because as a boy he had a close relationship with his own parents and brothers. Equally, the wife also has to show the similar attitudes that fit the traditional norms in order that her husband and his family respect her. During the festive days, for example, on the day of *meugang*, the wife pays a visit and presents certain gifts such as *lomang* and *juadah* to the husband's parents to strengthen the family relationships (see Ch.10).

At his wife's parents' house, the husband has no responsibility for the household. The wife's parents are responsible for this. This situation continues until the ceremony of "separating the cooking pot" (*Jam paasing pariuk*) is performed. After performing this ceremony, it does not necessarily mean that the couples leave the wife's parents house, this is dependent on their economic situation. When the couples can stand on their own feet, they will move and build a house on land given by the wife's parents in the form of inheritance. Nonetheless, they often remain at the wife's parents' house if the wife is the only daughter in the family and the husband can cultivate the rice fields owned by his wife.

In the Aneuk Jamee kinship context, *wali hukum* and *niniak mamak* are used. They live together as an extended family and feel a greater security and belonging. This is an advantage of an extended family because this family contains more people to serve as resources during a crisis and provides more role models for behavior or values.

## B. *Wali hukum*

*Wali hukum* consists of two words; *wali* and *hukum*. *Wali* is an Arabic word *walī* meaning guardian, protector or heir. *Hukum* is an Indonesian word meaning law, but in the Aneuk Jamee and the Acèhnese it refers to the *syari'a*, the religious law derived from the Qur'ān and the *hadīth*. *Wali hukum* are said to be the relatives on one's father's side. The indigenous concept of *wali hukum* refers to all male collateral patrilineal descendents in the direct line of a common male ancestor. This Arab Islamic notion of *wali hukum* correspond to the *kaum* mentioned by Snouck Hurgronje (1906:145-53) although in practice they are restricted to patrilineal kins. *Wali hukum* members (diagram 13) have the authority to marry off the young girls. They are the persons who arrange the marriage contract and sign it in the name of the respective girl. In addition, they

also become the guardians of those whose fathers are deceased. The *wali hukum* are (see diagram 13):

Father (F) (*ayah*)

Grandfather (FF) (*kakèk*)

Brother (B) (*saudara laki-laki seibu seayah*)

Brother from the same father (*saudara laki-laki seayah*)

Son from B of the same F and M (*anak laki-laki dari saudara laki-laki seibu seayah*)

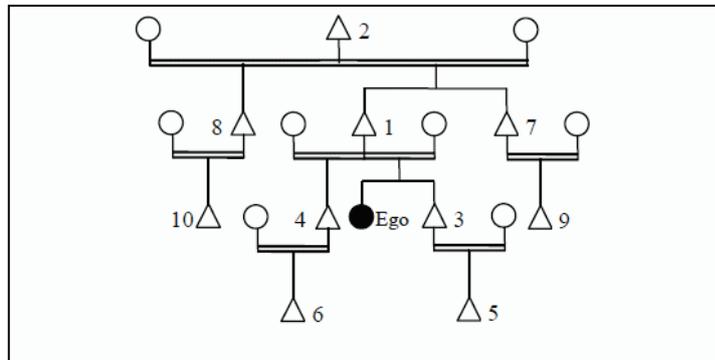
Son from B of the same F (*anak laki-laki dari saudara laki-laki seayah*)

Brother from same M + F from F (*saudara laki-laki seibu seayah dari ayah*)

Brother, the same father from F (*saudara laki-laki seayah dari ayah*)

Son of B, the same M + F from F (*anak-laki dari saudara laki-laki seibu seayah dari ayah*)

Son of B, same F from F (*anak laki-laki dari saudara laki-laki seayah dari ayah*).



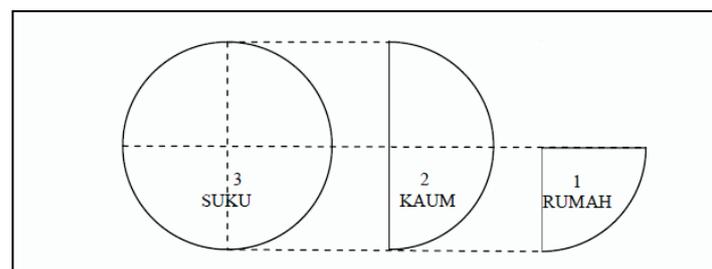
**Diagram 13. The members of *wali hukum***

These people are patrilineal relatives and are also designated as *wali nasab* meaning guardian that has a blood relationship. The father is known as *wali aqrab* meaning ‘the closest *wali* of the married daughter’. If the father is dead, the grandfather then becomes the *wali aqrab* and the rest (no.3-10) is called *wali ab’ad*. Meanwhile *wali mujbir* are the *wali* who have a special authority (Indon *hak istimewa*). They are the father and the grandfather who may marry off their virgin daughter/grand daughter without asking her permission. The marriage is valid as long as there is no hostility between the *wali mujbir* and the virgin girl. Also, there should be no hostility between the prospective groom and the virgin girl. If there are no *wali hukum* or *wali nasab*, a judge of a religious court (Arb *qadī*; Indon *kadhi*) which is designated as *wali hakim* can replace the *wali hukum* or *wali nasab* to marry off one’s daughter.

In addition, *wali hukum* exact vengeance if an individual is killed, enforce compensation for injury, or pursue a dispute in the courts. These functions are not now as important as they were in pre-colonial time, yet they have not vanished and received a valued obligation. There are still ambushes and assaults to balance a wrongdoing, and prosecution in courts is common (Jayawardena 1977). The *wali hukum* are also the guardians of those whose fathers are deceased, especially nubile girls and are responsible for taking care of and educating the orphans and gaining permission from the deceased. In reality, not all *wali hukum* carry out their tasks well, such as educating the orphans, although they know their position as the heir of the deceased's wealth. It could be because of poverty.

### C. *Niniak mamak*

*Niniak mamak* consists of two words; *niniak* and *mamak*. *Niniak* is a Minangkabau word meaning grandparent. *Mamak* is also a Minangkabau word meaning mother's brother. *Niniak mamak* is the male *adat* leader (*Indon penghulu*) from matrilineal descent who are appointed to become a tribe leader (Rusmali 198:1985). *Niniak mamak* consists of a man's maternal kin as well as his wife's maternal kin. In the past it is said that the *niniak mamak* consisted of *mamak rumah* who were sometimes called *tungganai*, male siblings on the mother's side, *mamak kaum*, who was one of the selected *mamak rumah* and *mamak suku* who became a leader of the tribe. On the kinship level, *mamak suku* is said to play an important role both in the level of *kaum* and in communities (figure 3).



**Figure 3. The composition of *niniak mamak***

Nowadays, this composition of *niniak mamak* is no longer found in the Aneuk Jamee society in Blangporoh village. They address *niniak mamak* as all the relatives on one's mother's side.

In the traditional order of the Aneuk Jamee society, *niniak mamak* has a big role, especially for sisters' daughters (Jam *kamanakan padusi*). *Niniak mamak*'s role covers most areas of life. They are the persons who are said to "whiten" and "blacken" their *kamanakan* [sisters' daughters] in all areas of life (Emtas 2005:122). They are fully responsible for their *kamanakan* in addition to their own families. Their position is personified in the following proverb, "*Niniak mamak* is like a banyan tree in the middle of a city, its trunk is a place to lean on, its leaves are a place for sheltering and its roots are a place to sit. If one wants to go/leave, they are the people to ask. If one returns, they are the people where the news is brought". Every life and death ritual of a household must be discussed and negotiated first with the *niniak mamak*; for instance, when one of the nieces is engaged to a young man by her parents. The girl's father may not talk about it with others including the members of her male collateral patrilineal kins (see *wali hukum* above). Should the father consult other people before he consults *niniak mamak* about this, an *adat* sanction will be imposed on him. (Emtas 2005:124). In addition, when a *kamanakan* wants to build a house, he or she should first consult his or her *niniak mamak*. In the past it was said that it was an obligation for *niniak mamak* to take care of their *kamanakan* in building a house even though their *kamanakan* had to have bought their own land (*ibid*). The decisional performances of the life and the death-cycle are thus in the hands of the *niniak mamak*. Their functions in the field of social security are the same as those of *wali hukum* in the Acèhnese society. The *niniak mamak* are the people who guarantee peace and are responsible for their *kamanakan* (Soelaiman 1989:114). If new land is made available, the *kamanakan* who do not have land yet will be given some first. If the members of *kamanakan* are in trouble, the members of *niniak mamak* will help them so that one feels more secure if he or she is in the middle of his/her *niniak mamak* because the security and safety of a person is the responsibility of all members of the *niniak mamak*. It is important to note, however, that even though the indigenous Aneuk Jamee area are familiar with the institutions of *niniak mamak* such as in the words *niniak mamak* or *rapat niniak mamak* (the meeting of *niniak mamak*), the understanding of *niniak mamak* in this area has been much changed from its original form of Minangkabau, in West Sumatra. *Niniak mamak* here are not just limited to the male brothers from the mother's side but also include *wali hukum* which are similar to *kaum* in the Acèhnese

society into the members of *niniak mamak* but *wali hukum* do not play a dominant role when the life-cycle and mortuary rituals are performed.

Relatives on the side of the mother and father are a single entity for the children but since the nuclear family in the Aneuk Jamee society is on the mother's side, the role of *niniak mamak* has a huge social aspect. Like the roles of *wali adat* "relatives on one's mother's side" in the Acèhnese society, the roles of *niniak mamak* in the Aneuk Jamee society are also protectors for they are the people there on the spot when trouble arises. Sometimes they are referred to as the people who gather in the kitchen during trouble and take the first necessary steps including informing the *wali hukum*. In addition, they are described as the people who give help without hoping to inherit property. A well-known maxim containing a satire on the society is as follows, "*karông bak iku jingki, wali yang tueng hareuta*", meaning "*karông* is at the "tail of the rice pounder" and *wali* receives the wealth". The mother's relatives are burdened with work and the relatives on the father's side get the inheritance. In other words, the *niniak mamak* in the Aneuk Jamee society are not the inheritors of one's property. Moreover, because residence of *niniak mamak* is matrilineal, they are the people one lives with so that the joys and sorrows of a family are shared by the *niniak mamak* as compared to the *wali hukum*. Like *wali adat* in the Acèhnese society (Jayawardena 1977), the *niniak mamak* are the people with whom an individual is closer to and from whom he or she requests favors, loans, and daily companionship.

In addition, the *niniak mamak* takes the role of a middle man in divorce and remarriage and reconcile them in marriage again.<sup>61</sup> If he succeeds, they will rejoin in marriage through a *rujuk* (remarriage) procession before the period of grace, *idah* for the wife is over. If the husband has consciously uttered the

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61 The practiced custom of marriage, divorce and remarriage in the Aneuk Jamee is very much in line with the teaching of Islam. *Talak* and *pasah* are two types of divorce commonly occurring in the community. The former is when a man deliberately and consciously utters the intended divorce, be it the first, the second or the third divorce, to the wife either in written or verbal expression. Whereas the latter has to do with a woman pleading to divorce her husband to the district religious office (Indon *kantor urusan agama kecamatan*) or court of law (Indon *mahkamah syari'ah*). This matter is under the jurisdiction of Islamic court. There are many reasons leading to dissolution of marriage. In the *talak* cases, the reasons are, among others; the wife is incapable of procreating, irreconcilable dispute among the man and woman and dispute with the spouse's parents etc. In the *pasah* case, however, the causing factors are that the husband is leaving his wife behind without fulfilling his rights as a husband and his whereabouts is unknown, or the husband suffers an infectious incurable disease, or the husband is crazy.

third expression of *talak* and wants to remarry his wife, the proceedings are rather complicated, the wife has to undergo a so-called *bacino buto* (a wife has to marry any person she likes and then she is divorced by her new husband) so that her former husband can possibly remarry her after the grace period of her *idah* is over. Otherwise, she is totally prohibited to remarry her former husband (Sulaiman 1978:38). In the case of unsolved dispute and the divorce did occur, their possessions during the time of marriage which are called *harto sapancaharian* or *harto duo ka duo* would be divided and equally distributed amongst them. Their children are offered the right to stay in the mother's house. They are both responsible for looking after their children, as usual.

## Conclusion

The Aneuk Jamee kinship becomes apparent in life-cycle rituals such as weddings, circumcisions, and funeral rituals. In addition, *hari rayo idul fitri*, the celebration at the end of the fasting month of Ramadhan and *hari rayo haji*, the celebration of the “feast of sacrifice” are the media through which kinship connections are acknowledged. The recognition of kin is limited to three descending and three ascending generations. Beyond these boundaries, kin are not terminologically acknowledged. In addition, the recognition of kinship is “horizontal” rather than “vertical”, in that an apical ancestor is not the point of orientation of kinship, and rather it is siblingship. Kin are commonly distinguished as near or far, but seldom with precision. The descendants of a single grandparent usually regard one another as near, but the descendants of siblings of the grandparents are distant and can be forgotten. In explaining a distant link, an individual traces the connection until a sibling relationship at the third ascending generation and stops there. The farthest back the kinship reckoning goes is to say that “our *muyang/moyang* are siblings”, rather than identifying the relationship between persons as descendants of a linking ancestor. In other words, what the Aneuk Jamee tend to say is that, “We descend from siblings”.

The order of birth is an important principle for the relationships between siblings and orientation according to time is a main category for the relations among siblings. The children's absolute order of birth is not subordinated to the order of birth of their respective parents. Therefore, this principle cannot be spoken of as an inherited one. The children do not take on their respective parents' birth order and are not subordinated under their parents' age but depend on the order of their birth. Absolute age can, therefore, be identified as a main

structuring principle for the relationships among parents' siblings' children. The children designate their parents' siblings according to their relative age and respect the order of birth of their parents' generation. Hence the orientation in time is a main characteristic of their relationship. Not only is the relative age important to this relationship, a sex specific distinction is made clear as well.

Blangporoh people practice the uxori-local principles which certainly have an effect on the formation of groups and socialization. Therefore, a village is divided among some groups based on daughterly relatives, where children are closer and more familiar with their mother's relatives (*niniak mamak*) than their father's relatives (*wali hukum*). In addition, in the traditional order of the An-euk Jamee society, *niniak mamak* (mother's relative) plays a big role, especially for sisters' daughters. *Niniak mamak's* role covers most areas of life. They are the persons who are said to "whiten" and "blacken" their *kamanakan* [sisters' daughters] in all areas of life.

## CHAPTER 4

### The ritual of marriage

This chapter explores the ritual of marriage in Blangporoh village. It also describes commonly practiced rituals before and after the wedding ceremony itself.

### An ideal marriage

In the Aneuk Jamee society, traditional marriages continue to be seen as ideal. Marriages occur among cousins and among those who occupy a similar socio-economic status. Marriage of a man with his matrilineal cross cousin is preferred by most parents although patrilineal cross cousin marriage is also permissible. This is evident from the following expression, “It is better to shelter one’s own salt than other people’s salt”.<sup>62</sup> This expression beautifully illustrates that it is advantageous to marry kin to keep property within the kin because their customs are known.<sup>63</sup> Many villagers said that in the past marriage within the village was preferable, the reasons being similar to those given for marrying kin.<sup>64</sup> Snouck Hurgronje I (1906:299) wrote that a man wishing to marry outside the village required the permission of the village head, and this was not readily given. Today this permission is freely given.

Parents in Aneuk Jamee society wish their son to marry a woman who is not only attractive in appearance but is also well behaved, as illustrated in the following expression, “Parents want a wife who is like a ‘flower’ for their son and a comfort for the parents-in-law”.<sup>65</sup> Today, however, marriages do not have to be endogamous. Modernization has paved the way to a rather flexible social structure that has inevitably brought about changes in the pattern of male-female interactions. Men and women find themselves interacting in different communities and with different people. As a result, the number of non-kin marriages has increased. Parents also prefer their daughters to marry a man working for the government as a civil servant, he should be affluent, or have honorable descendants (Indon *keturunan terpendang*) as they can sustain the

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62 Jamee, “*Dari pado manaduah garom urang labiah baik manaduh garom sandiri*”.

63 But some people say that it is foolish to do so because of the rupture it could cause if the marriage breaks up.

64 See also Jayawardena (1977).

65 Jamee, “*Nan kajadi disunting kan anaknyo, nan ka jadi pamaenan ka uwaik ayahnyo*”.

future life as well as improve the social status of their daughters. This was even more evident during the colonial period. Those who had a superior social status would not allow their daughters to marry men of an inferior one. They could not afford the children of aristocratic descent losing that status. In contrast, those of a lower social status would like to marry their daughters off to those of a higher status so that they could improve their social status as well.

Marriage restrictions are formulated in accordance with the teachings of Islam. Hence it is forbidden for a man to marry his mother and her sisters' father and his sisters, daughter's sisters, sister's daughters, 'sisters' by nursing and step-sisters. These relations are called *muhrim*. It is also forbidden to marry someone of a different belief unless he or she converts to Islam.

## **Pre-marriage ritual**

The traditional marriage procedure is divided into four main phases, namely *risiak*, *bisiak*, *dohai*, and *menendei*.

### **Risiak**

*Risiak* is an initial step where the prospective groom's side (Jam *pihak calon marapulai laki*) collects information (Ach *coh rhot*) about the prospective bride (Jam *calon marapulai pausi/nak daro*). In this process, a respected and wise man belonging to the groom's matrilineal kin (Jam *niniak mamak*) who is experienced in representing the prospective groom's side called *talangkai* (Ach *seulangkee*) is sent to seek information regarding the prospective bride's side. This mission is secret. The representative pretends as a guest and does not show any particular intention. His task is to obtain information from the parents and their closest kin. This mission is said to be "like looking for lice on the head where one combs the hair, going down each hair strand until the lice are found and removed". Afterwards the *talangkai* reports the results to the parents of the prospective groom.

After a prolonged thoughtful discussion between parents and their son in a 'meeting of the family members' (Jam *rapat bilik*), the parents then go and report the name of the prospective bride to a 'clever person' (Indon *orang pintar*) who is consulted about the character, habits and behaviour of the girl by looking at the 'habits' of nature and animals (Indon *kebiasaan alam dan binatang*) and predictions from the stars (Jam *mancaliak parajo*) and the precise auspicious date and month (Jam *mancaliak langkah*) for the engagement, mar-

rying and holding the *khanduri* for both candidates. The aim of *mancaliak parajo* is more or less the same as predicting the fate of both spouses after their wedding. One of the most important things in *mancaliak parajo* is the name of both candidates. The names of the man and the woman are also given an animal's name based on the last syllable (vowel) of their names in Arabic. For example; the name of a person is Mukhtar. The word ta (Arabic ت) is taken. The word ta (ت) means frog (Indon *kodok*). A frog has a bad character because it is fond of sticking out its tongue to catch insects and it likes kicking things with its legs.

The following formulas are used in *mancaliak parajo*: ا (alif) = moon, ب (ba) = sun, ت (ta) = frog, ج (jim) = plant/wood, ح (ha) = hen, خ (kha) = duck, د (dal) = buffalo, ذ (zal) = cow, ر (ra) = goat, ز (zo) = cow, س (sin) = scorpion, ش (syen) = centipede, ص (sha) = shrimp, ض (dha) = monkey, ع ('ain) = turtle, غ (ren) = goat, ف (fa) = grasshopper, ق (kha) = elephant, ك (ka) = deer, ل (lam) = snake, م (mim) = peacock, ن (nun) = eagle, و (waw) = river, ه (ha) = hen, and ي (ya) = horse. It is said that this stipulation is very important especially in choosing a marriage partner. When the names prove incompatible, it is believed that there will later be a bad influence on the household. For example, Munawar (ending with the vowel و (waw)) who has a river character (*Jam parajo sungai*) marries Lestari (ending the vowel ra (ر)) who has goat character (*Jam parajo kambing*). This marriage will not last long as this couple has contrasting and conflicting characters. If Munawar who has river character marries Masyitah who has a frog character (*Jam parajo kodok*), they will be happy because both of them have similar characters. It is like if Muntadhar who has a monkey character (*Jam parajo monyet*) gets married to Khatijah who has plant/wood characters (*Jam parajo kayu*). They are said to be compatible. Thus, the name is very important to determine the *parajo*. After knowing the *parajo*, the human characters and the destiny of the future household of the prospective spouse can be predicted. Therefore, if the parents find that their prospective son/daughter does not have compatible characters after uniting both prospective names, they look for alternatives, for instance, changing one of the prospective spouse's names, especially the last vowel of the name.

Names are believed to have a direct relation to character and fortune. In choosing a name, the chooser must know the science of names. The name is said to be like a prayer (Indon *do'a*). Any time a person is addressed by his or her name it means that people give a gift to Allāh so that a good name must be

chosen. It is said that after a prospective bride or groom's name is changed, the parents often offer glutinous rice to the men presiding over the ritual so that the name will 'sit well' with the bride or groom throughout their life. It is not surprising that the parents in the village often change their daughter's name or their son's name in order to render it suitable for the prediction of the *paraajo* at the marriage contract. Modernists, however, do not agree that predicting a name determines the destiny of the future household of the prospective spouse. They contend, "the future destiny is the secret of Allāh. If it is predicted, the human beings thus have preceded His secrecy. It thus deviates from Islamic teaching". The *imām* said that predicting the unseen such as predicting a mate, livelihood (Indon *rezeki*), and death and the Day of Judgement are supernatural problems, only Allāh can know them as He says, "Say, no one in the sky and on earth knows the unseen except Allāh, and they do not perceive when they will be resurrected"(QS 27:65). Added to this are fortune-tellers, witches, healers, astrologers, who all belong to one 'group'. They are the people who admit knowing unseen things (Indon *perkara gaib*), their acts are clearly unlawful and this makes them unbelievers. Should the names be considered compatible, the next phase in looking for the son's marriage partner can begin.

## **Bisiak**

*Bisiak* (Indon *berbisik*, to 'whisper') means sending a representative from the groom's side (Jam *talangkai*) to deliver news confidentially and quietly to the prospective parents of the bride's side. Here the representative plays a vital role in ensuring that the proposal is welcomed. Once he arrives at the house of the prospective bride, he explains the purposes of his presence and asks the parents graciously for their daughter's hand in marriage. If the parents do not accept the proposed marriage, they should refuse with a polite excuse, e.g., their daughter still wants to continue going to school or at the moment their daughter is not thinking about the marriage. The process is kept confidential as there is a possibility that the prospective bride's side may refuse the proposal. An expression articulates this in the following way, "Whispering in the water, walking in the earth, an ant does not know".<sup>66</sup>

If the prospective bride's parents agree to the proposal, they still need the consent of the other family members. As such, they would ask for some time to

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66 Jamee, "*Babisiak dalam ayie, bajalan dalam tanah, samuik saikue indak tau*".

put the proposal before their *niniak mamak*. The prospective bride's parents say diplomatically to the representative from the groom's side, "It is right that she is our daughter, but she is somebody's niece".<sup>67</sup> A meeting is then held with her matrilineal relatives. While waiting for this meeting, the representative from prospective bride's side is sent to the prospective groom's side to investigate the characters of the prospective groom, examining whether he can become a son-in-law in their family. After detailed information about the prospective groom is obtained by the representative of the prospective bride, the family of the prospective bride's side says to the representative of the prospective groom's side, "The door is now open and the prospective groom's side can come to our house". When the proposal is accepted, the next phase in looking for the son's marriage partner is then continued.

## Dohai

*Dohai* is a phase in which the parents of the groom and bride begin to make their consultations public. Although the parents have a more dominant role in deciding their children's marriage, the proposed marriage needs to be discussed with the entire family. The parents of the prospective groom invite *niniak mamak* (the relatives on the mother's side) and *wali hukum* (the relatives on the father's side) to attend a family gathering called *rapat niniak mamak* to let them know that *risiak* and *bisiak* have been performed. Before the meeting, the parents of the prospective groom ask one of the *niniak mamak* to lead the family meeting. In the meeting he says:

We are here on behalf on the *niniak mamak* to convey that we will soon search for our sister's son's (ZS), name..., marriage partner. Everything has been initiated by the *talangkai* of the family. Our party has tried to clear any branches blocking the way and to remove the intertwined roots.<sup>68</sup> Tonight we look for an agreement to take a sign (Jam *maantèk tando*) to the prospective bride. For this reason, we need to send an official representative of our families to the prospective bride's house. His task is to ask the prospective bride's side how much dowry (Jam *jinamu*) should be made, asking the prospective bride's side if they are willing to accept the prospective groom's side to take the 'mark' (Jam *maantèk tando*), and asking for other requirements of the engagement that must be presented by the prospective groom on the day of the engagement.

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67 Jamee, "Ini betul anak kami, tapi kemenakan di urang".

68 Jamee, "Pihak kami alah berusaha mengabuang kayu yang melintang, dan maratèh aka yang bajalin".

Through all stages of the ritual the *wali hukum*, the patrilineal kin are present and consulted the essential role in deciding and performing the ritual is in the hands of the *niniak mamak*, the matrilineal kin. This is not as elaborate as the *niniak mamak*, *wali hukum* and the other family members accept the decision made by the parents and their son, as expressed in the saying: “If the parents of the bride and the person who possesses the body [the bride] like the marriage, then we also like it”.<sup>69</sup> Having reached an agreement, the parents of the prospective groom will soon let the *talangkai* know about it and proceed to the next phase, *menendai*.

## Menendei

*Menendei* is the ceremony of engagement. In the past, it was held prior to announcing the intended marriage but now it is held on the same day. Like the Acèhnese *adat*, the marriage proposal is always made by the man’s family, never by the woman’s as the expression says, “The well never seeks the bucket” (Ach *hantom mon mita tima*). In the Aneuk Jamee *adat*, there is no term for *nikah bajapuit* “picking marriage” as found in Minangkabau, West Sumatra, in which the marriage proposal is made by the woman’s family. The group of *menendei* consisting of *niniak mamak*, *wali hukum*, *imām*, *keuchik* (village leader), and *tuwo ampék* (village elders) is sent by the groom’s family. They take betel leaves with them filling a tray of leaves (Indon *cerana sirih*) called *bungkusan adat* ‘the packing of tradition’ and a gold ring called *tando* ‘mark’ as a part of brideprice. In the bride’s house, they are warmly welcomed by old respected people and after a while the *menendei* ceremony begins. Afterwards, the groups are served with glutinous rice (Jam *nasi sipuluik*).

Soon after the *menendei* ceremony is performed, the ceremony of making a ‘sign of engagement’ (Jam *maulu tando*) to the prospective bride’s side takes place, showing that a girl is now traditionally ‘bound’ to a young man: “Trees are bound by their roots, promises are bound by signs”.<sup>70</sup> The *tando* is presented along with a tray containing betel leaves and is considered a part of the bride price to be completed at the marriage contract ritual.

There are two kinds of *tando* known in the Aneuk Jamee speaking areas in South Acèh; *tando dohai* and *tando suruk*. This classification refers to the

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69 Jamee, “*Kok umak ayahnyo dan nan punyo badan alah suka, kamipun suka pulo*”.

70 Jamee, “*Maikèk kayu samo aka, maikèk janji samo tando*”.

magnitude of the wedding ceremonies. If it is an extensive wedding ceremony, *tando dohai* is presented to the bride's side and it should be held during the day. If the wedding ceremony is a simple one, it is sufficient for the groom's side to merely present *tando suruk*. *Tando suruk* is usually held in the evening and no invitations are extended to the surrounding people. There are only several of the groom's kinsmen present without the presence of traditional leaders; the tray of betel leaves (*Jam jamba sirih*) is not used. The latter normally happens when the bride is a young girl or still attends school or because their parents do not have ample financial means for a huge wedding ceremony. People recognize the type of wedding ceremony from these two *tando*.<sup>71</sup>

The *tando* is performed when all requirements have been agreed upon by both sides, such as the sum of the bride price and the duration of engagement. Prior to the engagement ceremony, close relatives, neighbors, the *keuchik*, the *teungku imām*, the *khatib* (preacher) and *tuwo ampék* (village elders) are invited to the house of the groom at night to discuss who will go to the house of the bride on the day of engagement on behalf of the groom's side. That night all requirements for the engagement are prepared by several village women. These include making a metal traditional holder to place the betel leaves on called *cerano adat* "the tray of *adat*" and decorating a copper silver bowl with an ornamental piece of cloth to place gold in called *bungkusan adat* "the wrapping of *adat*". These will be brought to the bride's house the following day as a mark of engagement (Indon *tanda pertunangan*). The people who bring the *bungkusan adat* consist of the groom's matrilineal relatives, patrilineal relatives, *tuwo ampék*, a young man who holds a *cerano adat* and a wise man who is versed in diplomacy and rhetoric (usually the *talangkai*). Once they arrive at the bride's house, they are warmly welcomed by the bride's family, the village and religious leaders. The *bungkusan adat* containing a part of the agreed bride price and the *cerano adat* are handed over to the waiting group and religious leaders on the bride's side. During light conversation, they are served with coffee, tea and cakes. The official *menendei* ceremony then begins.<sup>72</sup> The

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71 See Sulaiman (1978:23).

72 At this ceremony, the groom is not required to be present. However, in *nikah gantung* marriage in which the sexual intercourse is suspended because the bride is still young in age, the groom has to be present because the marriage contract ceremony (*ijab qabul /akad nikah*) is also held on that day. A trusted religious leader usually stands for the parents of the bride to utter the oath of marriage. To affirm that the marriage is valid by

speaker for the groom's side sits facing the representative from the bride's side. He greets the audience and delivers a short speech, then offers a traditional poem (Indon *pantun*) which is soon answered by a representative of the bride (see Appendix 1).

After reciting the poem, the groom's side is served glutinous rice. Having handed over a part of the bride price, the bride has been officially 'tied' to the prospective groom's side. A prayer is then uttered by the *imām* invoking Allāh's blessings of the agreement between the bride as a 'flower' (Jam *bungo*/Ach *bungong*) and the groom as a 'beetle' (Jam/Ach/Indon *kumbang*). They are now officially engaged and any inappropriate behavior (Indon *penyelewengan*) will from now on be fined. In that case, the bride's side must return the gift (Jam *tando*) and pay compensation equal to the gift they received during the engagement ceremony, whereas the groom's side will lose the right to marry. The bride price is legally owned by the bride, as this ritual is witnessed by the *adat* elders, family, and matrilineal and patrilineal kin of both sides. During the engagement period, the prospective groom may not walk or travel with his prospective wife. If there is a life-cycle ritual (Ach *buét hudép*) or a mortuary ritual (Ach *buét matéé*) at the prospective groom's house,<sup>73</sup> the prospective bride may not be picked up by the prospective groom or come alone to the prospective groom's house except when there is a representative old woman accompanying her.

## Prerequisites for marriage

Prerequisites for marriage are a collection of norms regulating a matrimonial process which consists of certain procedures to be completed before the marriage contract ritual is undertaken to ensure that the marriage is lawful and valid. Among the prerequisites are physical and mental sound conditions. These prerequisites are in line with Islamic teaching because the populations of the Aneuk Jamee in West Labuhan Haji district are Muslim. As to the age, they do not particularly specify the minimum age requirement at which one is allowed

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law, however, they have to get a government official agreement (Indon *kantor urusan agama kecamatan*) prior to the marriage contract ceremony.

73 Life-cycle rituals (Ach *buét hudép*) include the ritual of birth, circumcision, marriage etc. The mortuary ritual (Ach *buét matéé*) is from one until seven days after the death of someone, the *khanduri* on day fourteen and on day forty, and on the hundredth day after death.

to marry. It is common practice that men are seen as eligible to marry when they have adequately acquired basic skills to engage in certain activities to support the family, such as having a knowledge of cultivation-related activities and fishery. Women, on the other hand, are eligible to wed once they have had their first menstruation and know how to cook. Older people say that the minimum age of marriage is legally after a girl's first menstruation (around 12 years old) and after a boy's first ejaculation during sleep (around 15 years old). Nowadays, however, people ignore this requirement. Men are mostly inclined to wed between 18 and 30 while women wed between 15 to 25 years old.

Furthermore mental and physical healths are necessary. They should not suffer from infectious diseases such as leprosy, tuberculosis and be sexually healthy. The bride price (Jam *jinamu*; Ach *jinamee*)<sup>74</sup> is assessed in measures of gold, due to the fluctuating value of money, and mostly presented in the form of a golden ring, bracelet or necklace. The bride price for the bride is jointly decided by the bride's family in a meeting with their matrilineal kin (Jam *rapat niniak mamak*). The amount of the bride price takes into account the current social and economic status of the bride's parents, which is well expressed in the saying, "If the bride price is high, what can be received in exchange" (Jam *kalo jinamu tinggi, apo yang bisa dipulangkan*).<sup>75</sup> The amount is negotiable once the families of the groom and the bride have reached an initial agreement about the marriage. Usually the amount expected for a bride is equivalent to that which was paid for her mother. The amount of the bride price can also serve a sign of refusal to a proposal of marriage. When the bride price demanded is unreasonably expensive, it conveys that the intended bride is reluctant to engage in the marriage.

## Wedding ceremony

When the day of the wedding ceremony approaches, the *niniak mamak* and *wali hukum* of both sides call a meeting to set the date. The Islamic calendar is referred to in deciding the month and the day. The marriage ritual may be performed in Sya'ban (i.e. August) (see Ch.10), the *mò'lōt* lunar months; Rabiul

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74 A word which, Snouck Hurgronje observed, derived from the word *jamee*, meaning guest, is based upon the idea of a husband as a guest in the house of his wife (Snouck Hurgronje I 1906:339).

75 In other words, "If the bride price is high, what has to be made to return home". If we ask a high bride price, what must we give in return? It is not wise to ask a high bride price because if it is too high, we have to give more back. This poem can be understood as a warning against asking for a too high bride price.

Awwal (i.e. March), Rabiul Akhir (i.e. April) or Jumadil Awwal (i.e. May) (see Ch.7) but never in the Safar (i.e. February) lunar month as this is the month to “ward off calamities” (see Ch.6) days. The ceremony is often held in the period of time when the moon is ascending (the first day until the fifteenth day of a month) in Sya’ban or *Mò’lōt* lunar month.

Two weeks before the wedding day, both sides are busy with preparations. A meeting of *niniak mamak* is conducted in her house to discuss thoroughly any problems relating to the preparation work. The meeting is led by respected male members of *niniak mamak*. They specify any kind of help which might be provided by *niniak mamak* and *wali hukum* to support the wedding celebration. The meeting provides a well planned traditional agenda and indicates the processions for the wedding ceremony.

A week before the wedding day, another meeting is held at night at the bride’s house. This is a village level meeting called *pakat rami*. Unlike the *pakat niniak mamak*’s meeting which is only attended by close family, *pakat rami*’s meeting is not only attended by close family and neighbors but also open to the entire population of the village. To this meeting, the male participants bring sugar (a half or one kilogram) or a little money while the women bring cakes to the family of the bride to show a sense of brotherhood and togetherness. At this time the meeting is led by the *keuchik* on the behalf of the bride or groom’s family. The *keuchik* informs those attending about the wedding day, about sending the groom to the bride’s house called *maantra marapulai* as well as sending the bride to the groom’s house called *menjelang*.<sup>76</sup> This is expressed in the saying, “When the moon appears, when the promise should be fulfilled, the debtor is waiting for repayment and the debtor is ready to pay”.<sup>77</sup> The representative of the bride’s family asks the people to attend the ritual and to make it successful by saying, “If vegetables have a skin, we peel them together. If they are still raw, we cook them together. After being cooked, we eat them together”.<sup>78</sup> After this, the workers are served ‘light food’ (Indon *makan ringan*) such as cakes with coffee and tea. The bride’s family then asks the traditional leaders for their authorization to conduct the ritual. Then an informal

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76 In Susoh, another district of Aneuk Jamee speaking area, it is called *pengaling suruit* (Sulaiman 1978:25).

77 Jamee, “*Kok bulèn alah nampak, kok janjipun alah pulo sampai, nan bapiutang alah manunggu nan berutangpun nandak mambayie*”.

78 Jamee, “*Kok nan bakuliek samo-samo dikubak, kok nan mantah samo samo dimasak alah masak samo- samo pula disantap*”.

meeting between the bride's family and the traditional as well as religious leaders is held. This meeting is called *rapat menduduekkan keuchik meminta adat dan tampèk* "seating the village head, asking about *adat* and place". Having been granted the authorization, the bride's family requests the traditional leaders as well as the head of the village youth to set up a committee that is responsible for performing the ceremony.

The preparation continues at the bride's house. The bride's family cleans and repairs the house to honour the coming of the groom. This expresses the respect of the bride's family towards the groom, as well as the last responsibility of a father toward his daughter since after marriage a woman obtains legal possession of the house, in accordance to the matrilineal marriage tradition of Aneuk Jamee (see Ch.10). Neighbours and kinsmen also come to the bride's house to fix and prepare things needed for the wedding reception.

Three days preceding the wedding day, the ends of the bride's hair (Indon *rambut kecil*) are cut (Jam/Ach *meandam*) and her nails are cut. *Bainai* (heena), a traditional process of dyeing the hands and the feet of the bride with heena is conducted in the evening. The bride wears a traditional dress and an old woman sprays the water of *tepuōng taweu*<sup>79</sup> onto the bride's hands and forehead and scatters husked (Jam *barèh*) and unhusked rice (Jam *padi*) over her from right to left. The bride is then asked to lay down on the mattress. Heena paste is applied in patterns on the palm, back of her hands, the fingernails and tips of her fingers as well as on the bride's feet. After a few hours elaborated patterns in red appear. In the past, the groom was also dyed with heena, but nowadays this practice has been mostly abandoned.

From the night of *bainai* onwards people are busy preparing for the ceremony. One group of women fixes and decorates the house and the dais (Indon *pelaminan*). Others cook the rice. They chop onions, garlic, ginger and other ingredients. This work is called *ricieh-maricieh*. Another group of women collect utensils from the neighbors and make sure that the plates, cups, glasses, forks and spoons and other utensils are clean and ready for the wedding day. Men do the heavy work. Some men set up the tents and arrange the tables and chairs for the guests. Others take firewood and make a fireplace; others collect jackfruit (Ach *boh panah*) and the hearts of the banana palms (Ach *haté bak*

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79 The water of *tepuōng taweu* consists of water and the rice flour. Sometimes the Acèhese say tasteless flour (Ach *tepuōng tabeu*) instead of *tepuōng taweu*.

*pisang*) for vegetables. Some fish in the river or at sea, others cut firewood and erect a hall for the audience called *balairong*. At the same time, various traditional narratives are recited such as *kaba* (*kaba ungeh-bambam* and *kaba dangderia*), *rantak kudo* and *badampieng* to entertain the men and women who are occupied with their respective tasks. In certain places, modern music performances such as orchestras and *gambus* are also shown.<sup>80</sup> The duration and extent of the performances depends on the social and economic status of the bride or groom's family.

In the early morning of the day preceding the wedding, the bride performs the ritual of *mandi balimau* "bathing with citrus fruit" to make her body fragrant. It is done by mixing several kinds of fragrant flowers (including the leaves of civet cat's *pandanus*) in water to be used as a shampoo. In addition, she drinks boiled water from various kinds of leaves and plants that make her breath fragrant as well. During the day, the *khanduri* takes place in the bride's house. In the early morning, two goats are slaughtered and the meat has been mixed with the hearts of banana trunks (*Jam hati batang pisang*). Men who are unable to help with the physical work present gifts such as fish, chicken, rice, money and some other goods while women present cloth gifts or cosmetic products to the bride's house. The male guests give money placed in an envelope and the female guests bring gifts that have been wrapped in colorful paper containing clothes called *kado*.<sup>81</sup> The villagers are the first to taste the *khanduri* and the invited guests follow.

## **Maantra marapulai**

At night the *maantra marapulai* ritual takes place.<sup>82</sup> *Maantra marapulai* is a ritual of taking the groom to the bride's house for the inauguration of the marriage. The groom is escorted by the *keuchik*, *imām*, *ninik mamak*, *wali hukum*, *tuwo ampèk*, neighbors, and male and female friends of the groom.

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80 See Sulaiman (1978:26).

81 The word *kado*, coming from the French word *cadeau*, is used here rather than its more traditional meaning in Arabic equivalent with *hadiya*.

82 This is a tradition that has been widely practiced since the Dutch colonization period. Later, during Japanese colonization this had changed somewhat because of the economic recession and unstable and escalated political turmoil. The people, therefore, held it on the day for economical and security reasons (Sulaiman 1978:27). Now again in West Labuha Haji district and other neighboring districts conduct the ritual of sending the groom to the bride's house at about 8 at night.

Before the groom and the group escorting him arrive at the bride's house, the bride is dressed and adorned. She wears a long black embroidered golden trousers and *kebaya* dress (Indon *baju kebaya*) with a scarf (Indon *selèmpang*) and the *panduo* cloth (Jam *kain panduo*), a cloth embroidered with golden thread, which is worn over the shoulder or diagonally across the body. *Kulahkama* (Indon *mahkota*), a crown made of either metal or golden gilt, is worn on the bride's head. A necklace and a bracelet are also put on the neck and the hand respectively. Afterwards the bride is seated at the gaily decorated dais, usually set up in the living room next to a window. The beautiful bride is fit for a 'king' (Jam *rajo*; Indon *raja*) and is now ready for the groom to arrive.

The groom also wears the traditional wedding dress. He wears a long white sleeved shirt and a black coat. *Panduo* cloth made of *silungkang* with embroidered golden thread is put on arounds hips. The *rencong* "dagger" is inserted at his waist. The *kupiah meuketop*<sup>83</sup> "head cloth" is fitted on his head. After this has been done, the *imām* delivers a short speech as the last advice to free the groom from his parents. The groom then deliberately comes forward to his parents seeking their 'blessing' and asking their consent to leave the house for the bride's house. Here emotion is strongly felt by the parents, especially the groom's mother. She kisses, embraces her son and then cries inconsolably whilst liberating (Indon *melepaskan*) him as the married son to go to live with the family of his wife and only sometimes visit his own parents. A 'cooling' ritual (Ach *peupon taweue*) is then performed. An old woman sprays the water of *teupōng taweue* onto the groom, and scatters husked (Jam *barèh*) and unhusked (Jam *padi*) over his head. The groom now may leave from the house. In front of the house, the *imām* utters, 'O Allāh, call down blessing on our leader, Muḥammad' (Arb *Allāhumma shalli 'alā saiyidinā Muḥammad*) three times and all people answer, 'peace be on him' (Arb *shallu 'alaihi*) in chorus. The groom accompanied by his old and young relatives, religious leaders, invited guests, old men and women as well as by a group of *pencak silat* "martial arts specialists" players are then ready to leave for the bride's house.<sup>84</sup> The number of accompanying people is decided beforehand and has been agreed on by both

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83 *Kupiah meuketop* is a kind of Turkish headband which is worn by the groom.

84 In the capital city of South Acèh, Tapak Tuan, *pencak silat* players, groups of *zikir rebana* and *gendang salusin* are invited into the group, especially in *berhanta-hanta* marriage. On the way to the bride's house they beat drum while humming religious songs reflecting the greatness of Allāh and His messenger (Sulaiman 1978:29).

sides. They leave for the bride's house after the 'night prayer' (Ach *sembahyang isya*) at about 8 pm. One of his best friends shades the groom with a gold colored wedding umbrella. The groom then confidently moves to the bride's house. This group brings along the following market goods (Ach *dabeh keudè*) as gifts to the bride's family:

1. Bride price placed in a decorated copper silver bowl (Jam *carano*)
2. Betel leaves heaped up high on a rounded tray ( Jam *jamba sirih*)<sup>85</sup>
3. Toiletries on a rounded tray
4. Cloth and cosmetic products in a suitcase
5. Onions, garlic, ginger, greens, chili and other food ingredients for the dishes are placed in a *sanggèn* (Ach *ambèn*) which is made of wood connected with small irons to prevent the dishes from falling when it is moved (see Ch.7).

In addition, the following garden produce is also presented as gifts for the bride's family:

1. A bunch of young coconuts. It is said that this is a symbol that the groom is still young.
2. Straight sweet sugarcanes (Ach *teubè mameh teupat*) together with their leaves. They are said to be a symbol of male fertility. The couple hope to have children and grandchildren like the shoots of the sugarcane plants.

All these gifts are called *hantaran* (Ach *peunuwo*). Once they are about to reach the bride's house, the *imām* again utters, 'O Allāh, call down blessing on our leader, Muḥammad' (Arb *Allāhumma shalli 'alā saiyidinā Muḥammad*) three times and all people answer, 'peace be on him' (Arb *shallu 'alaihi*) in chorus. This uttering is a sign that the groom's group will soon arrive. The group stops once they are about to step into the front yard of the bride's house. Now the two groups are standing face to face. The *pencak silat* group of the bride's side puts on their best performance. They stop right away when a traditional leader puts the tray of betel leaves right in between the two groups. The village leader of the bride's side greets the groom's group by saying, "Are all present?" (Jam *ado hadir kasadonya?*) which is soon answered; "yes" (Jam

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85 Betel leaves (Jam *jamba sirih*) are presented only when there is no engagement ceremony or in a suspended marriage (Jam/Indon *nikah gantung*).

*ado*), by a traditional leader on the groom's side. Then the two shake hands and the host hospitably invite them to step into the house. Once the groom reaches the feet of the house ladder, the traditional leaders come in front of the door's house to greet the groom (*Jam menyapo marapulai*) with traditional poem (see Appendix 2). The old women of the host spray the water of *teupōng taweu* onto the groom and scatter husked and unhusked rice over his head. The groom is then guided by an old woman called *peunganjue/mak pangapit* into the house and sits on a mattress called *kasue pandak* which is placed on the verandah of the house. The women of the visiting group sit in the main hall where the dais stands and the men sit outside the house. After a while, the group leader of the groom recites a traditional poem (see Appendix 3) to express the handing over of the groom to the bride's side which is responded to by the representative of the bride. Afterwards, the village head of the groom's side stands in front of the men's group and delivers a traditional speech expressing the purpose of their presence and formally hands over the groom to become a new member of the house and the village. This is immediately replied to by the village head of the bride accompanied by the *imām*, *niniak mamak*, *wali hukum* affirming that they have warmly welcomed the groom into the house and the community.<sup>86</sup> Afterwards, the *keuchik* of the groom's village hands over all the gifts mentioned above to the bride's side by symbolically presenting the bride price in the decorated copper silver bowl. The *keuchik* of the bride's side receives the copper silver bowl and, after a while, uncovers it to allow people to see it.

All requirements have now been fulfilled. The uttering of the marriage contract (the reciting of *akad nikah*)<sup>87</sup> can be soon conducted so that the groom and the bride are then deemed husband and wife. The *niniak mamak* of the groom side says, "Where is the *tuangku* whose guidance we follow? We have

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86 The speech of handing over the groom is intentionally held before eating so that everyone listens to it.

87 The marriage contract (Indon *akad nikah*) consists of the *ijab* and *kabul*, shortened into *ijab kabul*. *Ijab* is the utterance of the *wali* or *kadhi* of the behalf of the *wali*, starting that he marries the bride to the groom; the words may be like this: "Brother so and so (he mentions the name of the groom), I marry the girl named so and so (he mentions the name of the bride) to you with the bride price consisting of such and such (he mentions the amount, volume and value of the bride price), paid in cash (or debt). *Kabul*, on the other hand, is the groom's response to the *ijab*, saying that he accepts the marriage of the bride to him with the marriage gift as stated by the *wali* or *kadhi*. This marriage contract is attested by two witnesses who are usually the village leader and the *imām* or other elders from the bride's village.

cleared the blocked branches, so as to follow the *Shari'ah* law, the cutting up of the three *marieh*<sup>88</sup> is up to you".<sup>89</sup> The authorized religious officer (Jam *tuangku imam/kadhi*) replies with a succinct response, 'if Allāh wills it' (Arb *insya Allāh*). He, therefore, presides over the marriage contract ceremony in the presence of several witnesses from both parties to ensure the contract meets religious requirements.<sup>90</sup>

The contract is signed by the bride's father and the prospective groom and the bride price is paid then or at a stipulated date. Furthermore, he delivers a short marriage sermon (Indon *khutbah nikah*) that advises the groom on the duties as a husband and vice versa, and of the consequences should the husband leave his wife. The advice given is meant to ensure that the husband becomes a good husband and takes his responsibility as head of a family seriously. A moment later, while holding the groom's right hand, the *imām* pronounces the marriage contract based on the Islamic requirement and rules which must be immediately and succinctly replied by the groom. If the witnesses agree that the word of acceptance (the groom's utterance) has been made clearly and are acceptable to them and proclaim it adequate, the *imām* then recites the *do'a* and wishing the newly married couple a happy life. To end the ceremony, the groom is then asked to sign all the necessary statutory documents of marriage making them valid and legal by law of the state.

The groom is now called a husband (Jam *laki*) and bride is now called a wife (Jam *binie*). The groom is carefully led to the dais on which the bride is waiting. On the floor leading to the dais, a traditional cloth called *kain jajakan* is laid. The old *penganjue*<sup>91</sup> guides the bride to move forward to traditionally welcome the husband into the house at the other end of the *kain jajakan* where the groom stands still with the *penganjue*. The bride then wipes the feet of the husband with flowered water already prepared in a bowl. The two shake each other hands during which the groom presents a monetary gift to the bride. The

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88 *Marieh* is the buffalo's neck consisting of veins of the neck, artery and respiratory vessel.

89 In Jamee, "*Mano tuangku nan ikutan kami, kok samak nan bajalin alah kami tateh, mako untuk menjalankan hukum, mamatuih marieh nan tigo, kami pulangkan kepada tuangku kadhi*".

90 The *tuangku imam/kadhi* marries the girl here because her *wali* has already asked him in advance. A woman's *wali* is her closest agnate, usually her father or father's father. If her father or father's father is dead, it falls onto his brothers, sons, brothers' son, etc., to assume the position in order of agnatic distance.

91 It is called *induk inang* in the capital city of South Acèh, Tapak Tuan (Manaf 1977:25).

groom then walks with the bride to the dais with the guidance of the *penganjue*. The two take a seat on the dais. This ritual is called *bersandiang duo*, which can be translated as ‘sitting together side by side’. At the same time the invited guests in the yard and the group of the groom's side in the house taste the various kinds of foods served.

There is a special rice with dishes on a round tray (Jam *daluang*) called *nasi bisan* which is particularly prepared for the groom's parents (Jam *urang seumando*). If this special rice is eaten by other persons of the groom's side, they must place some money on the round tray. It is a sign that the eaters are the people who know the *adat* rules or they are ‘cultured people’ (Emtas 2008:208). This ritual is preceded by the newly married couple eating together for the first time the food prepared on a special table in front of the dais. Watched playfully by the others, the couple, nervous and joyful, feed one another (Indon *saling suap*) the food and drinks seven times. This ritual is called *bertimbang basawok* and symbolizes togetherness, reciprocal understanding and a sense of responsibility towards one another.<sup>92</sup>

The invited guests and the group from the groom's side leave the bride's house after the *batimbang basawok* ritual is finished. A friend of the groom remains with the groom during the ritual of *basandiang duo* “sitting together with bride on the dais” which is the climax of the wedding ceremony. When all guests have left the house, the ceremony is soon concluded. The groom and the bride are allowed to leave the dais. He with his friend takes a rest on the verandah which has already been prepared. In another room, the relatives of the bride and a number of distinguished traditional leaders open up and display the gifts from the groom to all family members. The bride's family then distributes some cooked rice with various side dishes to the *niniak mamak* and *wali hukum*. Some betel leaves and some straight sweet sugarcane are distributed to the neighboring families. At night the groom and the bride are guided into a room by the *penganjue*. The room has been prepared with a red curtain (Jam *tabia*), a reddish palanguin (Jam *langik-langik*), and tiered pillows (Jam *banta basusuen*) which have been adorned with a reddish and embroidered golden thread (Jam *kasab*). The couples take off their traditional wedding dress and sleep on the wedding bed (Jam *peratèh*) which is covered with a decorated mosquito net

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92 See also Soelaiman (1989:141).

(*Jam caradie*) also embroidered in golden thread.<sup>93</sup> In the past, the ritual of sending the couples to the wedding bed was performed by the *penganjue* at midnight. During the ritual she played a decisive role in ensuring a warm and intimate feeling prevail between the two. She would suggest any necessary advice if she finds the couples are shy with each other (Sulaiman 1987:31). Now this ritual is no longer often practiced as many couples have already known each other before they get married.

At dawn on the following day, the groom and his friend go back to his house as in the afternoon he, accompanied by an old woman, has to come back to the bride's house. In that very day, the *menjelang* ritual takes place.

## Menjelang

*Menjelang* is a ritual of taking the bride (*Ach antat darabaro*) to the groom's house escorted by a group of respected old men and women. At around 3 o'clock in the afternoon, this group arrives at the groom's house and presents the following garden produce as reciprocal gifts and market goods to the groom's family:

1. *Idang nasi kunyit/jamba* filled up with the cooked yellow glutinous rice which is heaped up high like a pyramid form on a quadrangle made of wood with four legs and a long rounded wooden pole in the middle (*Ach capah idang*) and covered with thin sweet cakes called *tumpi* (*Ach tumpo*)<sup>94</sup> In addition, there are traditional cakes attached to it such as, *keukarah*, *kamaloyang*, *seupét* and *juadah talue*, the same *idang* as at the *khanduri mò'lôt* ritual (see Ch.7). Sometimes on top of *nasi kunyit/jamba*, there is toasted chicken.
2. Special traditional cakes such as *dodoi*, *meuseukat* and *wajéb* are placed in a rounded tray.
3. A special packet of food with various side dishes filled in many sets of stacked containers for transporting food called *rantang*. Some *rantang* are filled with the ordinary cooked rice and some others are filled with side dishes such as cooked vegetables, cooked fish together with their broth, cooked meat with their broth, toasted and fried chicken, meat, and fish including boiled eggs and salted eggs, the same side dishes are used for the *khanduri mò'lôt* ritual (see Ch.7).

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93 For aristocratic and religious leaders' families such as the family of the '*ulamā*', *sayéd* etc, the room, curtain, tiered pillows, dais etc are adorned with a yellow embroidered golden thread whilst the marriage ritual takes place.

94 How *tumpi* (*Ach tumpo*) is made, see Ch.7.

Arriving at the groom's house, the group places these gifts on the front verandah of the house. They are then asked to step into the house and are served with betel leaves while having a chat with the groom's family. The ceremony of giving these gifts to the groom's family is then held. One of the gift bringers on behalf the bride's side says, "Where are "our parents" in this house? We bring a shipful of rice, even if it is mushy, or not perfect. It is understandable we, old people cook it, whether it is salty or not. This is what we have and bring for our elder sister in this house".<sup>95</sup> The host group answers, "Our younger sister's gifts are not seen as mushy/uncooked but we hold up our heads. The mountain is smaller; our younger sister's gifts are bigger."<sup>96</sup> "We highly appreciate our younger sister's gifts. We believe that these are the best gifts ever given". Here there is the situation in which the gift exchange takes place between two parties, the bride's side (*Jam pihak laki*) and the groom's side (*Jam pihak padusi*) but they talk about these parties as if they were elder and younger sister in the context in which the bride is presented to the groom.

Right after the ceremony of giving these gifts has finished, another group of women called *menjelang* escorts the bride to the groom's house. The groom's side has already been well prepared for their arrival. Unlike the group who escorts the groom which consists of men and women, the group of *menjelang* consists of only women. The bride is shaded with a wedding umbrella by the *penganjue*. The bride's side is waiting for the visiting group in the front yard when the *menjelang* group is about to arrive. Once they arrive, an old woman warmly greets and welcomes them by presenting *carano sirih*. She asks the group, "Are all present?" (*Jam ada datang kasadonyo*) which is soon replied by the group with a brief answer, "yes" (*Jam ado*). The group is then asked to go into the house. When the bride and the groom step in, the two are sprayed with the water of rice flour on their hands and foreheads and sprinkled with husked and unhusked rice from right to left. Afterwards, the bride and the groom are again guided toward the dais where they take a seat and the others taste the foods served.

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95 Jamee, "Mano dusanak nan urang tuo kami dirumahko, kami ko ado membawok sakapa nasi, antah lambiak, antah baratah, maklumlah buatan kami nan tuo-tuo, kok antah asin, antah hamba, ikolah nan ado kami bawok dakèk kakak di rumahko" (see Sulaiman 1978: 32).

96 Jamee, "Pembawok adikko, dikami indak kami pandang mantah, melainkan kami junjung diatèh kepala kami, kètèk gunung, gadang pambawok adik kami ko" (see Sulaiman 1978:32).

After the meal, the bride, guided by an old woman, is then introduced and she shakes hands with the parents and *niniak mamak* of the groom. The parents and *niniak mamak* give a monetary gift to the bride amounting to Rp 1,000 to Rp.50,000. This ritual is called *teumuntuak* (see Ch.12). It is then continued by ‘giving the bride’ (Jam *mamulangan anak daro*) to the host of the groom’s side. This is performed by an old woman as the representative of the bride’s side who delivers a traditional speech. The ritual of giving the food plates to the bride by the groom's side then follows (Jam *memulangan pinggan makan*). This ritual symbolizes that the bride carries an obligation to look after the groom’s property. The visiting group then leaves the house in the evening. Before leaving, the parents of the groom, through an old woman, presents another cloth and monetary gift called *paragieh* to the bride. The old woman says, “This is what his mother [groom’s mother] has for you (Jam *ini lah nan ado dari umaknya*). It is replied with a grateful expression, “All praise and thanks be to Allāh” (Arb *alhamdulillah*).

## **Rituals after the wedding ceremony**

At about two to five days after the day of sending the bride to the groom’s house, the “ritual of tracing back” (Jam *maulang jajak*) is held. In this ritual, the bride accompanied by several old women pay a visit to the groom’s parents in the early morning. They bring along a present made up of glutinous rice. The bride does not wear the traditional wedding dress. The purpose of this visit is to get to know each other (Indon *beramah tamah*) and strengthen the already established relationship between the bride and the groom’s families. They stay in the groom’s house for a few hours. When leaving, the groom’s families give a gift of cloth to them.<sup>97</sup>

Although the ‘tracing back’ ritual has finished, this does not mean that all *adat* interaction between both sides is over. The established relationship be-

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97 In the capital city of South Acèh, Tapak Tuan, however, the ritual of fetching the bride (Jam *manjapuik anak daro*) is performed prior to the ‘ritual of tracing back’ (Jam *maulang jajak*). In the ritual of fetching the bride, the parents of the groom ask several old women to bring *carano sirih* to the bride’s house which signifies a traditional endorsement of the invitation to the bride to pay a visit to her husband’s parents. To comply with the invitation, the bride moves to the house of the groom’s parents. She stays there for a night enjoying a warm welcome from the groom's family. Music and art performance such as *kaba unggèh bamban* and *rentak kudo* is presented to thoroughly entertain the bride (Sulaiman 1978:34).

tween the two families through the traditional ceremony and ritual procedures continues. By custom, in fact, the traditional procedures are seen to be finished after one year of marriage after the bride delivers her first baby. For instance, two days before the celebration of the end of Ramadhan (Arb *'īd al-Fitr*) and the celebration on the tenth day of Dzulhijjah (Arb *'īd al-adhā*), that is the day of *meugang*, the parents of the groom will send some needed materials such as meat, coconut oil, coconut, glutinous rice, etc including the materials for the making of traditional cakes for celebrating *meugang* days to the bride's house. In return, on the same day and on the day of *'īd al-Fitr* and *'īd al-adhā* the bride presents the groom's parents with cakes such as *lomang* and *juadah*. Again, the parents of the groom reciprocate the gift by putting money in the place where the bride had placed the gift to them earlier (see Ch.10). This ritual, too, applies when the bride is pregnant and when giving birth. During the days of pregnancy, for instance, the parents of the groom send required materials such as coconut, coconut oil, rice, glutinous rice, betel leaves, cooking spices etc to the bride's house to conduct the ritual of "giving rice to the midwife" (Jam *kanduri maagieh nasi biden*). On the day of delivery, the husband's mother will send presents (a cradle, bedclothes, and jewelry) to the daughter-in-law in preparation of the bathing ritual (Ach *peutron bak ie*) for the newborn baby.

The spouses stay in 'one kitchen' (Indon *satu dapur*) for a year or more or until they are seen as capable of financially and socially running their own family. When they have decided to live on their own, a ritual of "separation of the cooking pot" (Jam *paasieng periuk*) is held. It is intentionally conducted to indicate the readiness of the spouses to live on their own. In the ceremony, the wife's parents hand over needed wealth such as rice fields, garden, livestock, and domestic equipment for continuing their life to the spouse. These gifts are called *panulang* or *peunulang*. Although this ritual marks a separation of the responsibility, it does not necessarily mean a separation of house. They remain in the same house until they can afford a house of their own. If the wife is the only child or her siblings have acquired their own houses, the wife's parents' house is destined for them so that the daughter inherits the house. See the following summary of stages in the establishment of affinity (table 3).

Phases	Names	Actions	Relations: kinship + others
<i>Risiak</i>	<i>Talangkai</i>	Seeking information regarding the prospective bride's side	<i>Niniak mamak</i> (MB)
<i>Bisiak</i>	<i>Talangkai</i>	Negotiating with the prospective parents of the bride's side in marriage	<i>Niniak mamak</i> (MB)
<i>Dohai</i>	Both parents of the groom and bride, <i>niniak mamak</i> and <i>wali hukum</i>	Beginning to make their consultation public by inviting <i>niniak mamak</i> and <i>wali hukum</i> . This meeting is called <i>rapat niniak mamak</i>	Parents of the groom and bride, <i>niniak mamak</i> and <i>wali hukum</i>
<i>Menendei</i>	<i>Keuchik</i> , <i>imām</i> , <i>niniak mamak</i> and <i>wali hukum</i>	Presenting a 'mark of engagement' to the prospective bride's side.	<i>Niniak mamak</i> , <i>wali hukum</i> and <i>keuchik</i> , <i>imām</i> .
Wedding ceremony	<i>Niniak mamak</i> and <i>wali hukum</i> , <i>tuwo ampèk</i> , <i>keuchik imām</i> , <i>tuwo ampèk</i> and neighbours.	Calling a meeting to set the date and discussing thoroughly problems relating to the preparation work led male members of <i>niniak mamak</i> .	<i>Niniak mamak</i> , <i>wali hukum</i> , <i>keuchik</i> , <i>imām</i> , <i>tuwo ampèk</i> and neighbours.
<i>Maantra marapulai</i>	<i>Keuchik</i> , <i>imām</i> , <i>niniak mamak</i> , <i>wali hukum</i> , <i>tuwo ampek</i> , neighbours, male and female friends of the groom	Transferring the groom to the bride's house and giving the market goods and garden produce to the bride's family.	<i>Keuchik</i> , <i>imām</i> , <i>niniak mamak</i> , <i>wali hukum</i> , village elders, neighbours, male and female friends of the groom
	<i>Keuchik</i>	Handing over gifts to the bride's side	<i>Keuchik</i>
	<i>Imām/kadhi</i>	Uttering of marriage conducted for the groom and the bride	<i>Imām/kadhi</i>
	The father of the bride	Signing the contract of marriage	<i>Wali hukum</i> (FB)
	<i>Tuwo ampèk</i>	Paying the bride price	<i>Tuwo ampèk</i> of the groom's side
<i>Menjelang</i>	<i>Keuchik</i> , <i>imām</i> , <i>niniak mamak</i> , <i>wali hukum</i> , <i>tuwo ampèk</i> , neighbour, male and female friends	Transferring the bride to the groom's house	<i>Keuchik</i> , <i>imām</i> , <i>tuwo ampèk</i> , <i>niniak mamak</i> , <i>wali hukum</i> , neighbours, male and female friends of the bride
	An old respected woman	Giving the cooked market goods and garden produce to the groom's side.	A female representative of the bride's side
	An old respected woman	'Giving the bride' to the host of the groom	A female representative of the bride's side
	An old respected woman	Giving the foodplates by the groom's side to the bride	A female representative of the groom's side

**Table 3. Stages in establishing affinity**

## Conclusion

In Aneuk Jamee society, men play a more active role in finding a match than women. That is why men are personified as “beetle” while women are passive and await the “coming beetle” and are personified as “flower”. Men propose a marriage while women cannot, but they have the right to agree or disagree to the proposed marriage. Even so, the final decision is in the hands of the parents who first decide and, thus, arrange whom their children are to marry. Parents ask their son’s agreement prior to proposing a woman and conversely, the agreement of the woman is more often neglected. Modernization has inevitably led to changes in the cultural and structural system of traditional society and in the traditional society of the Aneuk Jamee. Women and men are currently inclined to be more independent of their parents’ choice in deciding their match. Thus, parents now have fewer roles in choosing their son’s marriage partner.

The engagement ceremony carries the sign of intended marriage that a woman has been traditionally ‘bound’ to a man. The prerequisite for marriage is respecting the norms regulating the matrimonial processes. It consists of certain procedures to be completed before the *ijab qabul* ritual is undertaken to ensure that the marriage is lawful and valid. Among the prerequisites are health (both physical and mental) and wealth (bride price). These prerequisites are all in line with Islamic teaching. In all phases of the Aneuk Jamee marriage ritual, the group who negotiate, decide, perform the ritual, exchange gifts are defined or recruited on the basis of kinship and affinity; they are all the nuclear family of the bride and the groom, *niniak mamak*, *wali hukum* and in terms of authority in local organizations such the *keuchik*, the *imām*, *tuwo ampèk*, neighbour, and male and female friends of the bride and the groom (see summary above). The whole ritual culminates in the establishment of affinity. These people are in terms of Shari’ah law represented by the *imām*, in terms of *adat* they are represented by *keuchik* (the village head), in terms of the village elders they are represented by *tuwo ampèk* and so on. However, the whole single image is that authority in conducting a marriage relationship does not derive from the patrilineal relatives but from the matrilineal ones. Any time we look at negotiation, exchange, gifts, it is the *niniak mamak* that presides. On the one hand, there is a concept of patrilineal kinship which stresses patrilineal descent, that is *wali hukum* and on the other hand, there is a Minangkabau concept of kinship which

stresses matrilineal descent in constructing the marriage relationship. *Wali hukum* do not seem to play many significant roles in the establishment of affinity. The role of the bride's father as *wali hukum* in this ritual is signing the contract of the marriage. Another role, that is uttering the marriage contract conducted for the bride and the groom is not performed by him but by *tuangku imām/kadhi*. Most parts of the ritual are performed by both *niniak mamak* of the bride and groom. Never are a bride and groom represented by *wali hukum*. *Niniak mamak* is responsible in marriage; most transactions are performed by *niniak mamak* in the rituals. The sibling of the bride and groom are not given any formal roles in the wedding ceremony.

The Aneuk Jamee's wedding is accompanied by an elaborate series of gift exchanges between the groom and the bride's parents. Apart from the exchange of money and jewelry, the gifts given from the groom's side to the bride's called *hantaran* are the market goods such as cloth, cosmetic products, fruit, toilet articles, trinkets, etc. These gifts are reciprocated by the bride's side to the groom's side and are not distinguished by special terms but consist of cooked food which is prepared by women in the kitchen. The notion of marriage in the Aneuk Jamee is, therefore, of some theoretical significance in understanding the domestic life of the Aneuk Jamee society. In the complex web of the reciprocal gift exchange that characterizes the Aneuk Jamee wedding and in the definition of the domestic roles in the household that are about to be established, the wife provides the home as well the cooked food for the husband. This exchange is conceptualized as a relation between the host (wife) and the guest (husband).

## CHAPTER 5

### The ritual of ‘*āsyrā*’

This chapter explores the ritual of *khanduri* ‘*āsyrā*’ in the month of Muḥarram (the first Islamic lunar month, January). The month of Muḥarram and the days of ‘*āsyrā*’ have to be seen in a mythical context because this period of time is given meaning through *teungku*. People talk about and remember the Prophet Nuh (Noah), the war between Muawiyah and Ali, the killing of Husén, all these things happened in this month and so give a certain meaning to this period. They give a different aspect or dimension because they refer back to events in the past that are true for believers. However, the mythical context given by different informants and put forward as explanations of the meaning of the ritual ‘*āsyrā*’ are very diverse.

### The mythical valorization of the month and the days

#### The month of Muḥarram

Prior to the coming of Islam, Muḥarram was known as a ‘holy month’ (Indon *bulan suci*) when it was prohibited to wage war and shed blood. The number of lunar months, according to the Qur’ān, is twelve, and there are four lunar months classified as ‘holy’ (Indon *suci*). They are Muḥarram, Ra’jab, Dzulkaidah, and Dzulhijjah (QS 9:36). This does not mean that other lunar months do not have great importance. There is the month of Ramadhan, the month dedicated to fasting, which is considered the ‘holiest month’ of the year. My informants insist that basically every lunar month is the same, but Allāh has greatness and His wish is to choose a special month when He sends down His mercy to all human beings.

In Acèh, the lunar month of Muḥarram is classified as ‘the month of Hasan Husén’ (Ach *buleuen Asan Usén* or *buleuen Hasan Husén*). Hasan is venerated as a saint and the ‘*āsyrā*’ ritual bears his name and that of his brother Husén. In addition, the Muḥarram month in Acèh is also called the ‘fire-month’ (Ach *buleuen apui*). The first ten days are regarded as inauspicious and the whole month is regarded as a ‘sad month’ (Jam *bulèn ibo*; Ach *buleuen seudéh*), as so many tragic events are believed to have happened in this month, such as the battle between Ali and Muawiyah, between Husén and Yazid, it is the time when the people did not have enough food to eat after leaving the ark that the

Prophet Noah had built on the hill of Judyy in the eastern area of Turkey. They had run aground about after seven months of floating. This month, therefore, is inauspicious for starting activities such as trading, cultivating, building houses, getting married, digging wells etc. If the villagers start something, the results will turn out badly. One village *teungku* gave two examples: Abu Adnan in Bakongan, South Acèh held the marriage ceremony for her daughter in the Muḥarram month, but three months later her daughter was divorced by her husband. The *teungku* also cited the case of Ustad Budi who began building his house during Muḥarram month but soon after the house was built, it burnt down. However, it is said that doing something bad such as stealing, gambling, murdering meets with the right punishment produces the intended results in this month.

In this lunar month Acèhnese people perform a ritual called the ritual ‘*āsyūrā*. According to Abu Dasyah, a charismatic ‘*ulamā*’ in West Labuhan Haji district, the ritual of ‘*āsyūrā*’ was initiated when the deluge subsided after Allāh had ordered the earth to reduce its water and the sky to withhold its rain. The eighty followers of the Prophet Noah were safe on the ark. They were all hungry as they did not have enough food to eat. There were only the remains of some rice, corn, yams, potatoes, cassavas, squashes, etc. They made porridge with the last remaining things so that all those saved could eat.

During a ‘religious discussion’ (Indon *pengajian*) at his house, Teungku Sulaiman in Blangporoh village related that when the deluge had stopped, there were eighty people on the ark. Forty were male and forty were female, four of them were the children of Noah; they are Samma or Abu Arabi, Ham or Abu Saudani, and Yafits or Abu Narki.<sup>98</sup> Kan’an, another of Noah’s son and his wife did not survive because they did not board the ark. Even though Noah called them saying “O my wife and son, come aboard with us and do not stay with the disbelievers”, “there are no safe places today except on the ark”, and “there is no protector from the decree of Allāh, except for whom He gives mercy”, they disobeyed Noah. They refused Noah’s plea and fled to the mountain

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98 Ham or Abu Saudani descended the nation of Habsyi and Zangi that have black skin. Sam descended the Roman Arab and Ajam, and Yafits or Abu Narki descended the nation of Barbar Turkish, Mongol, Ya’juj and Ma’juj. Another history version says that Noah only had two son; Ham and Yafits. Ham became a king in Egypt and Yafits became a king in Hindustan (India) (Effendie1979:139).

instead. The waves came and they later drowned together with other unbelievers because the flood was higher than the mountains.<sup>99</sup>

In his Friday sermon in the month of Muḥarram in Blangporoh mosque, a preacher said that the length of the ark was three hundreds *zira'ah*<sup>100</sup> (about 150 meters), the width of the ark is thirty *zira'ah* (about 15 meters), the breadth of the ark is fifty *zira'ah* (about 25 meters). The ark consists of three levels. The lower level is for animals, the middle level for human beings, and the upper level for birds. The ark floated from the tenth day of Ra'jab (i.e. July) and came aground on the hill of Jūdy in eastern Turkey on the tenth day of Muḥarram, “away from the wrongdoing people”. The deluge took place over seven months, from Raj'ab to Muḥarram. After the deluge dried up, Prophet Noah ordered the people who were on the ark to collect all the remaining food supplies (Ach *bekai*). The types of food remaining were; 1) a handful of *khinthah* (wheat), 2) a handful of *'adas* (a kind of peanut), 3) a handful of *ful* (a kind of bean), 4) a handful of *himmason* (yellow beans), 5) a handful of *bur* (rice), 6) a handful of *raz* (also a kind of rice), 7) and a handful of *ma'asyi* (a kind of seed plant).<sup>101</sup> The Prophet Noah himself named these seven remaining food supplies *'asyūrā*. They were then cooked by him for the eighty survivors. All eighty survivors were full after eating the porridge cooked by Prophet Noah although it was not much. This is deemed the origin of the *'āsyūrā* porridge.

### **The day of *'āsyūrā***

The tenth day of the Muḥarram lunar month is called the day of *'āsyūrā*. Before this day comes Blangporoh villagers start talking about it a week earlier, at the beginning of the Islamic year (the first day of Muḥarram). Welcoming the Islamic New Year in Blangporoh is by performing *do'a* to Allāh and praising the Prophet and his family (Ach *seulawet*) at mosques and in homes. The villagers pray that Acèh will always be in peace and that (after the tsunami) no more catastrophes will occur. When the celebration of welcoming the Islamic New Year at Blangporoh's mosque takes place, people talk about the *'āsyūrā*

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99 Related to this story, see the Qur'ān (11:41-48).

100 *Zira'ah* is an Arabic term means 'cubic'. One *zira'ah* is about a half meter.

101 The explanation of these seven sorts of food supplies can be found in *kitāb (santri reference book) I'anaḥ at-Thalibīn* Vol. II". In some parts of Acèh, the *'āsyūrā* porridge is prepared in seven colors because when the flood subsided, the remaining food consisted of seven sorts of food supplies.

day and say “We are nearing the ‘*āsyūrā* day” (Jam *kito alah dakèk hari ‘āsyūrā*) and are happy about it.

According to local belief, the day of ‘*āsyūrā* recalls a number of important events and a prodigious number of other important miraculous events. Some informants said that on the day of ‘*āsyūrā*, the Prophet Adam was created and sent down to earth; Allāh created His holy seat (Arb ‘*arash*) and the tablet on which the record of the decision of the divine are preserved (Arb *laukh makhfudz*); Allāh gave His grace to Adam and Eve when they sought repentance (Ach *tobat*) after being thrown out of paradise; Allāh received the repentance of Adam; Prophet Ibrahim was born, and Allāh received Prophet Abraham’s repentance; Saidina Ali, the fourth companion of Prophet Muḥammad was martyred; the Prophet Noah and his followers touched land safely with their ark; Prophet Idris was endowed by Allāh with a noble position and ascended into the sky; Allāh saved Prophet Abraham from the fire after being burnt by King Namrud of Babylon; Moses received a revelation directly from Allāh on the Sinai Hill; Prophet Yusuf was set free from jail and his name was cleared of having raped Zulaikha, the Egyptian king’s wife. The Prophet Yacob recovered from a serious eye disease; the Prophet Yunus emerged safely from the stomach of a giant fish. The day of ‘*āsyūrā* also coincided with the recovery of the Prophet Ayyub from a serious cholera; it was the reunion of Jacob and Joseph after their separation for forty years; it was the birth day of Jesus and his ascension to heaven. The sin of the Prophet Dawud was forgiven by Allāh; Prophet Sulaiman was endowed by Allah with a noble position and given a kingdom. Prophet Muḥammad’s sin was forgiven. It was the first day that Allāh created the world and sent down rain to the earth. Gabriel was created. Prophet Muḥammad married Khadijah; it was the day of the creation of heaven, the earth, the pen (Arb *qalam*), Adam, and Eve. Furthermore, it was the first time that Allāh bestowed His grace onto the earth and it is even also said that the Judgment Day will happen on the day of ‘*āsyūrā*.<sup>102</sup>

Other informants said that on the tenth day of the Muḥarram month, Saidina Husén who held the power inherited by his brother Hasan was martyred. The *imām* relates that at the end of the war between Ali and Muawi-

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102 In deep discussions with several village old men, most of these ideas here are the same as found in Cirebon (see Muhaimin (2004:170).

yah,<sup>103</sup> there was reconciliation and they were united. But then they divided into two groups called Khawarij Ali and Khawarij Muawiyah respectively. The Khawarij Muawiyah came to oppose Husén bin Ali, the war was waged on the Karbala field in Iraq. Husén was killed on the tenth day of Muharram, that is on the ‘*āsyūrā*’ day. Husén was then beheaded; his head kicked around like a ball. This is said to be the origin of football (Ach *asai usui meuèn bola*), for this reason in the past, the Acèhnese ‘*ulamā*’ prohibited football in Acèh.<sup>104</sup> The motivation behind the event was that Yazid bin Muawiyah wanted to take power from Husén because he felt entitled to become a *khalifah*. In the narrative (Indon *hikayat*) of Hasan-Husén, one of the verses (Indon *bait*) about the martyrdom of Husén runs as follows:

<i>Bak siploh huroe buleuen Muharram</i>	On the tenth of Muharram
<i>Kesudahan Husén Jamali</i>	That is the last day for Husén
<i>Peu na mudah ta khanduri</i>	What we have for the <i>khanduri</i>
<i>Pota Allāh bri pahla dudoe</i>	Allāh will give religious merit later

Before the martyrdom of Husén, Hasan had been poisoned by his own wife, “Laila Majnun” on the orders of Yazid bin Muawiyah. After that Husén was killed as described in the following song of Hasan Hisén.

<i>Lheueh syahid Hasan ji prang lom Husén</i>	After Hasan was martyred, now it is Husen's turn
<i>Ji neuk poh bandum cuco Saiyidina</i>	They want to kill all the Prophet’s grandsons
<i>Ji krah pasukan bandum di yue tron</i>	All troops are ready to mobilize
<i>Leungkap ban ban dum alat senjata</i>	All complete with weapons

In relation to the ‘*āsyūrā*’ day, Snouck Hurgronje I (1906:205) wrote the following:

The noisy celebrations of these festivals, which may now be witnessed year by year at Kuta Raja [now Banda Acèh] are for the most part celebrated by the Padang people who have settled there. Some Kling and Hindus take part, but the Achehnese act merely as spectators. Wherever in

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103 The war between Ali and Mu’awiyah is known as Shiffin (Arb *siffin*) war, the site of a battle in 657 between the forces of Ali and Mu’awiyah both claiming the caliphate. During the battle Mu’awiyah’s forces placed the pages of the Qur’ān on their swords and lances which caused the forces of Ali great consternation and led to their failure to press the battle. Mu’awiyah’s success allowed him to consolidate the Umawi kingdom over the Muslim community (Federspiel 1995:239).

104 This is the reason when I was at elementary school; I was chased by an *imām* in my village because I played football. He said that playing football was forbidden (Arb *ḥarām*). He suggested that it was better for me to look for the fern leaves (Ach *on paku*), cook and then eat them.

Acheh or its dependencies many Kling or other Indian Muslims had settled, the *tābūt* procession always took place, but the participation of the native people in these festivals is undoubtedly a later phenomenon.

It is believed that the the *tābūt* processions have their origins from Indian Muslims, and Indian traders called Kléng and Hindu brought it to Acèh. The precise origin of the *tābūt*, however, is not certain but it can be traced in several cultural areas throughout the Muslim world. The Qur’ān mentions the word *tābūt* twice, but its significance is not the same as that of the present-day festival. *Al-tābūt* is first appears in the Qur’ān (QS 2:248),<sup>105</sup> where it is cited in relation to the great ark constructed by Noah to escape the deluge. Elsewhere this same term designates the vessel in which the infant Moses was placed to float down the river in safety from the Pharaoh (QS 20:39).<sup>106</sup> Yet *tābūt* is best understood with specific reference to Muḥarram observances, which commemorate the martyrdom of Husén. The other informants said that the tenth day of the Muḥarram month is the day of the victory of the Prophet Moses over Pharaoh. An old man in Blangporoh remembers the day of ‘*āsyūrā* as follows:

<p>‘<i>Āsyūrā siproh Muḥarram</i>  <i>Fir’un karam lam laôt raya</i>  <i>Musa ngon kawom Tuhan peuleupah</i>  <i>le laôt bekah rot jalan Musa</i></p>	<p>‘<i>Āsyūrā</i> is the tenth of Muḥarram  The Pharaoh sank in the big sea  Allāh saved Moses and his followers  The sea water was split when Moses passed</p>
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Based on the diversity of the mythical contexts the meaning and the value of the ritual ‘*āsyūrā* are derived and the Blangporoh villagers cook the porridge and celebrate having been saved from the deluge by Allāh. This ritual consists of several activities: 1) Preparing the ‘*āsyūrā* porridge commemorating the first meal consumed after the ark ran aground. 2) Observing the *tasu’a* (fasting on the ninth day) and the ‘*āsyūrā* (fasting on the tenth day) of the Muḥarram month. 3) *Rahop ulèe* of the orphan and 4) performing the ‘*āsyūrā* prayer.

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105 QS 2: 248, “And their Prophet said to them. Indeed, a sign of his kingship is that the chest will come to you in which is assurance from your Lord and a remnant left by the family of Aaron carried by the angels. This is indeed a sign for you, if you are believers.”

106 QS 20:39, “[Saying], Cast him into the chest and cast it into the river, and the river will throw it onto the bank; the river will bring him as an enemy to Me and an enemy to him. And I bestowed upon you my love so that you would be brought up under My eye [i.e., observation and care]”.

## The ritual of 'ās̄yūrā

### 1. Preparing the 'ās̄yūrā porridge

On the ninth day of Muḥarram, the leader of group of housewives willingly comes to every Blangporoh store and the houses near them to ask for donations to cook the 'ās̄yūrā porridge called *kanji 'ās̄yūrā* on the ninth day of Muḥarram. One of the house wives asks for a donation but she does not determine how much money or how many things the shopkeepers and the villagers should donate. They ask how much the villagers sincerely want to give (Indon *seikhlasnya*) for the ritual. The 'ās̄yūrā porridge consists of sticky rice (Jam *barèh sipuluit*; Ach *breuh leukat*), coconut milk (Jam *santèn karambi*; Ach *santan u*), sugar (Jam *gulo*; Ach *saka*) and salt (Jam *garom*; Ach *sira*) mixed with various fruit cut into small pieces; such as cassavas (Ach *bòh ubi*), squashes (Ach *bòh labu*), yams (Ach *bòh keutila*) etc.

All the food for making the 'ās̄yūrā porridge are from villagers' donations. One store keeper gives green beans (Ach *kacang ijo*), another one gives squashes (Ach *bòh labu*), another one gives cassavas (Ach *bòh ubi*), or yams (Ach *bòh keutila*), jackfruits (Ach *bòh panah*), sticky rice (Jam *barèh sipuluit*; Ach *breuh leukat*), coconuts (Ach *bòh u*), sugar (Ach *saka*), salt (Ach *sira*), civet cat's *pandanus* (Ach *on seukè musang*), bananas (Ach *pisang wak* or *bòh pisang panah*). Other food such as corn (Ach *bòh jagong*) and creeping edible tubers (Ach *bòh gadong*) that are not found in the market at Blangporoh, are bought by one of the committee members from a market at Manggéng, and another district near West Labuhan Haji district.

The villagers who live near the store donate money for the ritual of 'ās̄yūrā, and the villagers who have nothing to contribute, come and help wash and peel all the ingredients used for making the 'ās̄yūrā. Several women come in the morning to wash and to peel vegetables. Some young men help peel the coconuts and placing the cooking stones (Ach *sinungkèe*). In the early afternoon, someone begins cooking in front of the village stores on behalf of the village as a whole.<sup>107</sup> The food is usually cooked in a very large iron pot called

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107 In the past the ritual of 'ās̄yūrā was usually held in a 'prayer house' (Ach *meunasah*). Every family brought food and after the praying led by the leader of the 'prayer house' ate together. The orphans and the poor received good meat, fish and other side dishes. During the 'ās̄yūrā day in some parts of Acèh, several verses from the tale of Hasan-Husén were read. Many Acèhnese spectators cried, because they remembered the trage-

*kancah*. Housewives from other ‘clusters’ areas (Indon *dusun*) of the village also come and help cook. While cooking, the housewives talk and joke and laugh. At about four o’clock in the afternoon, the ‘*āsyūrā* porridge is cooked.

It is then distributed. The leader of the women’s group first takes the hot porridge with a ladle and places it into containers presented by children. Some children eat it on the spot and others take it home. Cooked porridge is also put in plastic bags and given to each store and house for breaking the fast on that day, “This is the *khanduri* for breaking the ‘*āsyūrā* fast” (Jam *iko kandurie untok buko puaso ‘āsyūrā*). One woman explained, “the ‘*āsyūrā* porridge is cooked and given to the whole community, especially to those who observed the fast on this day (‘*āsyūrā* day), the poor, and the orphans, guests who have come from other areas as well as for those passing through our village by chance today”.<sup>108</sup> It is also given to the students of *dayah* (boarding school) and to Abu Ruslan Waly, the head of *dayah* in Blangporoh. One says that in the past, the ‘*āsyūrā* porridge was also placed in a coconut shell (Ach *bruek u*; Indon *tempurung*) hanging at the junction of the village path (Ach *babah jurong*) and the main road, so that people who wanted to visit their families or returned home could easily take it. This gift of porridge is, therefore, called the *khanduri babah jurong* “*khanduri* of the junction where the village path meets the main road”.

At about six o’clock in the afternoon, all the cooked porridge has been distributed; those who helped cooking and washing up receive some extra porridge from their fellow-villagers. When they have finished the women return the cooking utensils to their owners and return home.

## 2. Observing the fasting of *tasu ’ā* and ‘*āsyūrā*

Every devout person especially old men, old women including the majority of students at the *dayah* of Syeikh Muda Waly observe the fast on the ninth day of Muḥarram called *puasa tasu ’a*<sup>109</sup> and the tenth day of Muḥarram called *puasa ‘āsyūrā*.<sup>110</sup> Observing fast on these days is voluntary.

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dy that befell the family of the Prophet Muḥammad on the ‘*āsyūrā* day (Serambi Indonesia, December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007).

108 Jamee, *kanji ‘āsyūrā yang alah masak diagih kepada seluruh masyarakat, terutama pado urang yang puaso pado hariko (‘āsyūrā), urang-urang miskin, anak yatim, tamu yang baru datang dari daerah jugo dan pado urang-urang yang kebetulen lewat ka kampung kito pado hariko.*

109 *Tasu ’ā* is from the Arabic word *tis ’āton* means *nine*.

110 ‘*Āsyūrā* from the Arabic word *asyāraton* means *ten*.

There are different opinions about the required observance of the fast. One housewife says “Observing fast on the ninth day of Muḥarram is to differentiate between Muslims and Jews. The Jews only observe the fast on the tenth day of Muḥarram but we here in Blangporoh observe the fast on the ninth and the tenth day of Muḥarram or the tenth and the eleventh day of Muḥarram”.<sup>111</sup> Another housewife also observes the fast of *tasu’ a*. She says that she is not so sure that the day of ‘*āsyūrā* is on the tenth day of Muḥarram even though many Islamic scholars say so. It could be that ‘*āsyūrā* falls on the ninth day of Muḥarram.<sup>112</sup> In order to ensure that she fasts on the day of ‘*āsyūrā* thereby receives religious merit, she observes the fast both on the ninth and tenth day of Muḥarram. The Blangporoh *imām* also observes the fast of *tasu’ a* and ‘*āsyūrā*. He strongly insists that a law (Ach *hukom*) of observing a fast only on the day of ‘*āsyūrā* is forbidden (Arb *ḥarām*)<sup>113</sup> as the Jewish people only observe the fast on the day of ‘*āsyūrā*. Should a Muslim only observe the fast on the tenth day of Muḥarram, this is not acceptable as it coincides with the fasting days in Jewish tradition; this is seen to be in contradiction to Islam. The Kutaiboh *imām* also has the same opinion. He says that observing fasting *tasu’ a* and followed with the fast of ‘*āsyūrā* is done in order not to resemble (Arb *tasyabbuh*) the Jews who only observe fast of ‘*āsyūrā*. It, therefore, is recommended to observe the fast on two days either on the ninth day and the tenth day of Muḥarram or the tenth day and eleventh day of Muḥarram. One village old man, however, is of a different opinion; he says that if a Muslim only observes the fast on the tenth day of Muḥarram, the law has not been broken but is considered to be *makruh*.<sup>114</sup> Nonetheless, another old villager has another argument. He says that if one observes fast on the day of ‘*āsyūrā*, it is as if he or she has observed the fast for a full year. Besides observing the fast, a number of Blangporoh villagers prepare more food for their family on the ‘*āsyūrā* day.

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111 The Prophet Moses observed the fast on the day of ‘*āsyūrā* as can be seen in a *hadīth* narrated by Imam Bukhari in Ash-Shaum chapter 69. Moses and his followers fasted on the day of ‘*āsyūrā* when they were saved from the Pharaoh’s pursuit.

112 This idea fits with Ibn ‘Abbas School (Indon *madhhab*); the ‘*āsyūrā* falls on the ninth day of Muḥarram. See an-Nablusi (2004:156).

113 *Haram* is a category of behavior which absolutely should not be undertaken by the believers, performing such action constitutes a sin.

114 *Makruh*, relating to an act which does not yield merit but the performance of which is not considered to be sinful.

Many Blangporoh villagers observe the fast of *tasu'a* and *'āsyūrā* even though some of them do not know why they fast on that day. Some female sellers at the village store state that observing fast and making the *'āsyūrā* porridge on the day of *'āsyūrā* is a tradition passed on from one generation to another but they say nothing about the history of the *'āsyūrā* fast. My informant points out that the *'āsyūrā* day has been the day of recommended fasting since the Prophet Noah, Moses and Muḥammad fasted on this day. For this, one would obtain religious merit equivalent to *kafarat* (prayer to Allāh for forgiveness) for a year. One old fish monger in Blangporoh provides the *'āsyūrā* porridge and drinks to the children on the day of *'āsyūrā* in order that Allāh will give food and drinks for him in the after life. Meanwhile one incense seller has another argument; he says that whoever gives water to the people on the day of *'āsyūrā*, will be prevented from engaging in immoral acts by Allāh. He further adds that whoever takes a bath on the day of *'āsyūrā*, will not be sick for a year. One *imām* in Kutaiboh, the neighbouring village, says that if someone dies on the day of *'āsyūrā*, it is the same as if she or he dies in the Ramadhan month, he or she will not be tormented by the two angels, Munkar and Nakir in the grave. Moreover one *teungku* say “if someone visits a sick person on the day of *'āsyūrā*, it is as if he or she has been visiting sick people since Adam's time”. All these arguments have one thing in common; the extraordinarily high value of the acts performed on this day. This day is like one year, this day is like all time since Adam.

### 3. *Rahop ulèe* of the orphans

*Rahop ulèe* is the Acèhnese term meaning to carress an orphan's head (Ach *ulèe*) in slow motion. *Teungku* said that slowly stroking the head of the orphan (Ach *rahop ulèe aneuk yatim*) with the right hand on the *'āsyūrā* day is suggested by the Islamic religion. The orphans whose fathers have passed away are called *aneuk yatim* and the orphans whose mothers have passed away are called *aneuk mentui*. Those orphans whose father and mother have passed away are called *aneuk yatim piyatu*. It is suggested *aneuk yatim*'s head should be slowly stroked from the top of their head down to their face, while the head of *aneuk mentui* should be slowly stroked from the top of their head down to their nape. Meanwhile the head of *aneuk yatim piyatu* should be slowly stroked from the top of their head down to their face and one more time from the top of the head then down to the nape of the neck.

As has been observed on the day of ‘*āsyūrā*, several villagers stroke the heads of *aneuk yatim*. Some say that stroking the head of the orphan slowly is one of the ways to show respect to the orphans. Some others, however, contend that stroking the head of the orphan is the Prophet’s *sunnah*.<sup>115</sup> Respecting the orphans is the “same as respecting the Prophet Muḥammad”. Stroking the face of the orphans is the “same as stroking the face of the Prophet Muḥammad”. This is preferably done on the ‘*āsyūrā* day because Hasan and Husén were also orphans. On ‘*āsyūrā* day the people should stroke the head of the orphan with their right hand and all the hair that has been touched will ask Allāh to forgive the person’s sins. In addition, it is said that whoever slowly strokes the head of the orphan with right hand and sympathizes with them, this is as if he or she has already done something good for all orphans since the time of Prophet Adam. According to one *teungku*, by slowly stroking the head of the orphans one will receive religious merit, but one will receive even more religious merit, if he or she gives alms to the orphans. The *teungku* contends that stroking the head of the orphan is one of the ways to make the orphans feel close to us all and they feel that attention is paid to them. He believes the ‘blessing’ (Ach *beureukat*) that is received when orphans receive attention from someone.

Slowly stroking the top of the head down to the face symbolizes that the orphans have no fathers, meaning no one stands in front of them for their further life and education. Slowly stroking from the top head down to the nape of the neck signifies that the orphans have no mothers meaning that there is no one standing behind them to bring them up. Meanwhile slowly stroking the top of their head down to their face and then again from the top of their head down to the nape of their neck symbolizes that there is no one who stands in front of them and behind them. In this case, all Muslims in the village, especially their *niniak mamak* and *wali hukum* have to be responsible for their further life and education.

#### 4. The ‘*āsyūrā* prayer

A number of students at *dayah* (boarding school) Blangporoh including teachers perform a voluntary ‘*āsyūrā* prayer (Ach *semayang sunat ‘āsyūrā*) in the *dayah* mosque during the night of ‘*āsyūrā* in Blangporoh village but they do not do it together. They arrive at the mosque late at night, make the usual

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115 *Sunah* (Arb *sunnah*) is ‘ways of the Prophet’, describing the style of life of the Prophet Muḥammad, especially his belief, his behavior and observance of religious obligations.

two cycles (Indon *raka'at*)<sup>116</sup> of prayer which is called *semayang sunek masjid* in respect for the mosque, then seat themselves on praying mats facing the direction of Mecca (Indon *kiblat*) while uttering *istighfār*<sup>117</sup> to ask Allāh's forgiveness. I am interested in Teungku Sulaiman who was once a student and now he is one of the teachers for the seventh class of the *dayah*. He represents the other *teungku* performing the 'āsyūrā prayer on this night. Teungku Sulaiman performs a four-cycle of special recommended prayer alone that continues follows; he stands up straight.<sup>118</sup> He then says the intention (Jam *nièt*; Ach/Indon *niat*) of prayer while standing; his two hands are raised to his ears with the fingers open and the palms of his hands facing towards each other. While doing this he says 'Allāh is the most greatest' (Arb *Allāhu Akbar*). He then folds his hands over his waist, the right over the left, while the *sūrah* of the opening of the Qur'ān (the *sūrah al-Fātiḥah*)<sup>119</sup> is recited:

*Bismillāhirrah̄mā nirrah̄m*

In the name of Allāh, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially merciful

*Alḥamdulillāhirabbil 'alamīn*

[All] praise is [due] to Allāh, Lord of the worlds.

*Arrah̄mānirrah̄īm*

The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful

*Mālikiyaumiddīn*

Sovereign of the Day of Recompensing

*Iyyākanak budu waiyyākanas ta'īn*

It is You we worship and You we ask for help

*Iḥdīnashshirāthal mustaqīm*

Guide us to the straight path

*Sirāthallazī na an'am ta'alaihim*

The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor,

*Rairil maghzū bi alaihim*

not of those who have evoked [Your] anger

*Walladhdhāllīn*

or of those who are astray.

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116 The essential unit of the prayer ritual, consisting of bows and prostrations performed a number of times as prescribed.

117 *Istighfār* is uttering *astaghfirullāh hal'adhīm* (I beg the pardon of Allāh the Greatest).

118 An incorrectly struck posture invalidates the prayer.

119 *Al-Fātiḥah*: The opening of the Qur'ān. *Sūrah* titles are not an integral part of the Qur'ān. A distinguishing word in a particular *surāh* or a word defining its subject matter often becomes a common means of identification among the Prophet's companion and later scholars. Although some names, such as *al-Fātiḥah*, were used by the Prophet in reference to particular *sūrah*, they were not specifically designated by him as titles (the Qur'ān 1997:1).

After the *sūrah al-Fātiḥah* is recited, and he then continues reciting the *sūrah* of the purification of faith (the *sūrah al-Ikhlās*)<sup>120</sup> which he said after the prayer.

*Khulhuwallāhu aḥad*

*Allāhushshamad*

*Lam yalid walam yulad*

*Walam yakullahu kufuwan aḥad*

Say, “He is Allāh, [Who is] One,

Allāh, the Eternal Refuge.

He neither begets nor is born,

Nor is there any equivalent to Him.”

After that a bow is then made from the waist while saying *Allāhu Akbar*. Then the two hands are again raised, as were done at the beginning of the prayer. When his back is bent over to the ground he places his two hands on his knees and his face is turned to the ground. Then he says, ‘Allāh is the greatest and is the purest’ (Arb *subhāna rabbiyal ‘azīmi wabiḥamdih*). After this he stands up again. While rising he says ‘Allāh hears those who praise Him’ (Arb *sami ‘allāhu liman ḥamidah*). When fully straight, he lets his arms rest beside him and continues saying ‘praise belongs to Allāh, our praise fills heaven and earth and anything else You wish’ (Arb *rabbānā lakal ḥamdu milussamā wāti wamil ul ardhī wamil umā syiktā min syai im ba’du*). After this he makes a full bow by lowering himself first to his knees, and then putting his two hands on the ground palms down and lowering his nose and forehead to the ground. In this position he says ‘Allāh the highest and the purest’ (Arb *subhāna rabbiyal ‘aklā wabiḥamdih*).<sup>121</sup> The bow is repeated during the first *raka’at*. He kneels between the two bows and in this sitting position his hands and his feet are crossed; his left foot is under his right while his right is perpendicular to the ground. His back is straight and his hands are placed over his knees. While kneeling he says *Allāhu akbar* and then he utters:

*Rabbighfirlī, Warhamnī*

*Wajburnī, Warfaknī*

*Warzuqnī, Wahdinī*

*Wa’āfinī, Wa’fuannī*

O Allāh forgive me, be merciful to me

Correct my weakness and raise my sight

Give me livelihood and guide me

Give me health and pardon my mistakes

This is one *raka’at*. Teungku Sulaiman then repeats this another three times with the same words and movements. He then ends the prayer with the confession of faith and the pronouncement of the greeting *assalāmu alaikum waraḥmatullāh*, one time to the right side first and then to the left side. After

120 In narration by Bukhārī and Aḥmad, the Prophet described this *sūrah* as being equivalent to one third of the Qur’ān.

121 This phrase is recommended but not obligatory; it may be repeated until three times.

finishing four cycles of prayer, he holds up his hands and recites the *do'a*; the contents of the *do'a* recited by him consist of five parts. In the first part, he praises Allāh and prays for the Prophet and his family.<sup>122</sup> In the second, he seeks Allāh's forgiveness for their teachers, parents, grandparents, neighbors, and friends and all Muslims in the world who are still alive and those who have passed away. In the third part, he recites a special *do'a* on the night of 'āsyūrā as follows:

O Allāh, a sinful person has come to You, and You have ordered forgiveness of the sinful men. You are good and I am sinful, with the superiority of the night of 'āsyūrā please forgive the bad things I have done with Your mercy. O Allāh, please give Your goodness for me and make me rich from Your goodness.<sup>123</sup>

Here is a clear distinction between Normative and Historic Islam. The *teungku* practices the Historic Islam because he did not take his ideas from the Qur'ān, that is why he prays in Jamee. That is originally cultur specific because *teungku* switched his prayer from Arabic to Jamee but when the *teungku* takes his ideas directly from the Qur'ān, they pray in Arabic<sup>124</sup> In the fourth part, he beseeches Allāh to prevent all disasters, and requests Allāh's perpetual blessing. In the fifth part, he asks Allāh's goodness in this world and the hereafter and to keep him safe from the fire of the hell on the Judgement Day.

On the early morning of the 'āsyūrā day on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008, I go to Teungku Sulaiman's house asking why he performs the special religious service (Indon *ibadat kusus*) on the night of 'āsyūrā. He answers that performing the religious service (Ach *ibadat*) on the night of 'āsyūrā, is the same as if he or she performed the religious service like the 'owners of the sky' (Indon *ahli langit*)<sup>125</sup> did. He says further that whoever performs a four-cycle of recommended prayer and recites the first chapter of the Qur'ān (the *sūrah al-Fātiḥah*)

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122 My informant says that praising Allāh and the Prophet Muḥammad must be uttered first before asking Allāh for something otherwise the recited *do'a* is rejected.

123 Jamee, "Ya Allāh alah pa i kepada Angkau urang yang badoso dan Angkau alah manyuruh untuk mengampuni urang badoso. Angkau yang rancak dan ambo urang yang badoso, maka dengan kelebihan malam asyurako ampunilah keburukan yang ambo pabuek ngen kebaikan dari sisi Angkau. Ya Allāh agihlah kebaikan Angkau kepada ambo dan kayokan ambo dari kebaikan Angkau"

124 There is something similar in Lao, if a ritual is purely Theravada Buddhism, a priest prays in Pali. But if it is a non-Buddhist ritual, the priest prays in Lao.

125 *Ahli langit* "sky beings", according to Teungku Sulaiman, are the *malaikat* who always observe religious service to Allāh in the sky.

and the *sūrah* purification of faith (the *sūrah al-Ikhlās*) in every cycle of prayer (Indon *raka'at*), will be forgiven for his sins by Allāh for fifty years.

## Interpretation of the meaning of the value

Aneuk Jamee and Acèhnese people as a whole, and especially Blangporoh villagers pay a deep respect to the '*āsyūrā* day because it is a great day and has a great virtue. Apparently the ritual of '*āsyūrā* in Blangporoh village is very lively as the village people perform it on one day and it has a very high value. The interpretation of the meaning and the value of distributing '*āsyūrā* porridge/performing the ritual of '*āsyūrā* has two aspects. The first the ritual has a social meaning and value of strengthening the community ties by cooking the '*āsyūrā* porridge and by sharing it. Basically it expresses the value of generosity. The villagers offer the '*āsyūrā* porridge to be distributed to neighbors, next-of-kin and those passing through the community on that day. They do it for their fellow people, for the community as a sort of charity and because Allāh saved Noah and his followers and Moses and his followers as explained at the beginning of the chapter. The second meaning is the religious meaning and value, that is the merit that one receives from Allāh when one performs the ritual of '*āsyūrā*, and the religious value is very high. One *teungku* said, “whoever observes the fast on the day of '*āsyūrā* will receive religious merit and the religious merit of the '*āsyūrā* fast is the same as that of the fasting of Noah with his followers and Moses with his followers”. Another *teungku* said, “those who give the '*āsyūrā* porridge to the fasting people on the day of '*āsyūrā* will receive the same religious merit as those who observe the fast on that day” and “the people who observe the fast on the day of *tasu'a* and '*āsyūrā* are the same as those who aided Husén bin Ali in opposing Yazid bin Muawiyah” and the other *teungku* said, “Those who make the '*āsyūrā* porridge on the day of '*āsyūrā* will receive great religious merit from Allāh” as the '*āsyūrā* porridge is a symbol of condolence because of the martyrdom of Husén and the religious merit received from holding the '*āsyūrā* porridge is destined for the deceased Hasan and Husén”. Villagers also pray to Allāh in order that He gives a “large grave” (Jam *lawèh kubur*)<sup>126</sup> to Hasan and Husén, and they get a good place behind Him as well as condemning Yazid bin Muawiyah who killed Husén.

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126 The term “wide grave” (Jam *luwèh kubur*) is quite often said by the villagers to invoke the dead. My informant says that the “wide grave” does not merely mean that the grave

The ‘*ās̄yūrā* porridge is the rice with coconut milk containing various ingredients. The message is clear enough. The ‘*ās̄yūrā* porridge itself, which is of a white color symbolizes the day of ‘*ās̄yūrā* as ‘holy’, whereas the various ingredients contained in the ‘*ās̄yūrā* porridge symbolize the various events that occurred on the day of ‘*ās̄yūrā*. The distribution of the ‘*ās̄yūrā* porridge on the ‘*ās̄yūrā* day represents the goodness of Moses and his followers who had been saved from the Pharaoh’s persecution, and Noah and the survivors of the deluge. The *khanduri* of the ‘*ās̄yūrā* porridge is said to be the symbol of safety (Indon *keselamatan*) of the Prophet Noah with his followers in the ark and of the Prophet Moses from the Pharaoh’s pursuit.

Offering the ‘*ās̄yūrā* porridge is considered good because it is charity and a good tradition. Some fairly knowledgeable and devout individuals suggests that the celebration of ‘*ās̄yūrā* would be better if it were accompanied by some devotional undertakings such as breaking fast together, praying together, reciting special invocations of ‘*ās̄yūrā* together, feeding and giving alms to the orphan and to the poor in the village . He contends that when it is performed together, the luster of the ‘*ās̄yūrā* celebration in the village can be really felt and clearly seen, besides performing these activities on the day of ‘*ās̄yūrā* brings religious merit.<sup>127</sup>

## Conclusion

In the month of Muḥarram, people perform the ritual of ‘*ās̄yūrā*. In Acèh, the lunar month of Muḥarram is classified as “the month of Hasan Husén”. The meaning of the month of Muḥarram and the days of ‘*ās̄yūrā* are in terms of mythical contexts. The people associate the events of Muḥarram and ‘*ās̄yūrā* with different mythical contexts. Some stress Husén, some stress Moses and Pharaoh and some others stress the ark of Noah and so forth. Particularly the

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is wide but most importantly is that the dead always receive the mercy of Allāh in the grave.

127 One fishmonger (Ach *mugèe unγκôt*) rarely does the prescribed prayers but he feels obliged to cook the ‘*ās̄yūrā* porridge. I witness that on the day of ‘*ās̄yūrā* he also cooks the ‘*ās̄yūrā* porridge in a medium cooking pot individually in front of his house. It consists of only usual rice (Ach *breuh bit*), coconut milk, sugar and salt. When I ask him why the porridge is not mixed with various fruit, he answers, “This is only what I have; sticky rice and fruit are currently costly” (Jam *iko yang ado ambo punyo, barèh sipuluit dan buah-buahan maha kiniko*). He then offers the cooked porridge to his neighbors and close relatives because he thinks it is easier and a more convenient way through which to express his religious obligation in order to celebrate the ‘*ās̄yūrā* day.

myth of Noah is important because it was deemed to be the occasion that the first porridge was cooked.

The first ten days of the month are regarded as inauspicious, the month as a whole is regarded as a 'sad month'. This refers to the episode in which "Husén, the grandson of the Prophet was martyred. The Khawarij Muawiyah came to oppose Husén bin Ali so that a war was waged on the Karbala field in Iraq. Husén was killed on the tenth day of Muḥarram, that is, on 'asyūrā day. Husén was then beheaded; his head was kicked around as a ball. This is said to be the origins of football, for this reason in the past, the Acèhnese 'ulamā' prohibited football in Acèh. However, there are also auspicious events believed to have taken place this month. One of these is the myth of the Prophet Noah and the deluge. People relate that how after seven months [from Ra'jab to Muḥarram] of floating; Noah's ark ran aground on the hill of Jūdy in eastern Turkey. The eighty followers of Noah were saved but they did not have enough food to eat. The only food left were bits of rice, corn, yams, potatoes, cassavas, and squashes. From these remains they cooked porridge for everyone to eat. This is deemed the origins of the 'āsyūrā porridge.

This day recalls a prodigious numbers of other important miraculous events in the Islamic tradition. These events include the creation by Allāh of heaven and earth, of His holy seat and of the tablet on which the records of the divine decisions are preserved (Arb *laukh makhfudz*); the creation of Adam and Eve; the bestowal of Allāh's grace upon Adam and Eve and later upon the Prophet Ibrahim after their repentance; the reception by Moses of the revelation from Allāh; the birth and ascension to heaven of Jesus; the Prophet Muḥammad being forgiven for his sins by Allāh, and so forth. On this day, Allāh bestows His grace upon the earth and it is even also said that the judgment day will be on this day. Based on this diversity of the mythical contexts, the meaning and the value of the 'āsyūrā ritual are derived.

The Blangporoh villagers cook the porridge and celebrate having been saved from the deluge by Allāh. This ritual consists of four activities: 1) Preparing the 'āsyūrā porridge commemorating the first meal consumed after the ark ran aground. 2) Observing the *tasu'a* (fasting on the ninth day) and the 'āsyūrā (fasting on the tenth day) of the Muḥarram month. 3) *Rahop ulèe* of the orphan and 4) performing the 'āsyūrā prayer.

The interpretation of the meaning and the value of distributing 'āsyūrā porridge/performing the ritual of 'āsyūrā are twofold. Firstly the ritual has a

social meaning and value, that is in strengthening the community ties by cooking the *‘āsyūrā* porridge and by sharing it; the villagers offer the *‘āsyūrā* porridge to be distributed to neighbors, next-of-kin and people who pass through the community on that day. The second meaning is the religious meaning and value, that is the merit that one receives from Allāh when one performs the ritual of *‘āsyūrā*. They do it for their fellow people, for the community on the one hand and because Allāh saved Noah and his followers and Moses and his followers on the other hand.

In addition, the people of Blangporoh commonly consider the martyrdom of Husén to be an extremely poignant and heartrending event and one of great historical importance but in the celebration, they do not involve Husén and his death [the *tābūt* procession] and do not ascribe creedal significance to it either. The religious merit received from performing this ritual is meant to be transferred to Hasan and Husén, the martyred grandchildren of the Prophet Muhammad, while begging Allāh to forgive their sins and allow them a “wide grave”, that is, to release them from their torment.

## CHAPTER 6

### The ritual of *tulak bala*

This chapter explores the ritual of ‘warding off a calamity’ (Ach *tulak bala*; also known as the ritual of *bòh alén*), this ritual is celebrated in Blangporoh village annually on the last Wednesday (Ach *rabu habéh*) of Safar (i.e. February), the second Muslim lunar month known as ‘the month to ward off calamity’ (Ach *buleuen tulak bala*). This ritual has two dimensions. On the one hand it wards off calamities by sending offerings to the sea where death, illness and calamities come from and at the same time it is an opportunity for boys and girls to meet so that they can select their marriage partners. This is a pre-Islamic foundation of *tulak bala*. The Islamic dimension is that death, illness and calamities do not come from Satan (Ach *syètan*), jinn and ‘delicate creature’ but everything is determined by Allāh. If one wants to protect oneself from death, calamities and illness, one has to invoke the protection of Allāh. Today the *tulak bala* contains both elements. On the one hand, all prayers, *do’a*, and *sūrah* that are uttered for Allāh are cited as accepting Allāh's power to protect people but on the other hand, people still do what they used to do and say that the calamities also come from the sea. Here there are two elements; people have to pray to Allāh and they have to make offerings to the sea.

### The ritual of *tulak bala*

The ritual was initiated by the Acèhnese ancestors (Indon *nénék moyang*) and is performed at several places.<sup>128</sup> The performance brings considerable prestige and (economic) benefits to the villagers. On this occasion, many people including a large number of young men and women under the watch of their families travel in groups by trucks and cars to the designated places. In fact, this festival has been not only commonly observed in low land Acèh and some other coastal areas of Indonesia but also in many parts of the Peninsula of Malaysia including Morib in the state of Selangor, Port Duckson in Negeri Sembilan, and Bagan Luar in Penang. It is carried out “with particular zest and on an

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128 For example at the river bank of Krueng Baru; the seashore of Blangporoh village in West Labuhan Haji district, South Acèh; the seashore of Calok in Sejahtera village, Manggég, Southwest Acèh.

elaborate scale” at Tanjong Kéling<sup>129</sup> about seven miles north of Mélaka (Malacca), and also on the neighbouring island of Pulau Besar.<sup>130</sup>

The Safar lunar month, especially the last Wednesday of this month (Ach *rabu habéh*), is considered inauspicious. During this period there is an interdiction/ban on house building, on performing marriage rituals, on rice sowing or planting and other forms of land cultivation, on visiting a sick man or woman, on travelling, etc. On that Wednesday farmers are not allowed to go to their rice field and fishermen are not allowed to go fishing. Should a marriage ritual be held on this day, the couple would incur many debts throughout their life. One relates as follows:

It is taboo to look after your livelihood on the day of *tulak bala*. Should someone plant seeds, they will be eaten by birds. If someone goes to the sea to fish, he will get no fish because a catastrophe will happen. If someone goes to his or her garden or field in the mountains, he or she will thus be bothered by wild animals. All village people are requested to go to the seashores or river banks for the *tulak bala* ritual.

On this day young men and women as well as the aged gather at the seashore or at the riverbanks. They bring various kinds of food with them. Having arrived they set up camp for a few days, they will entertain themselves by singing to the accompaniment of a guitar. On the actual day of the ritual, some young men play football, and then take a ceremonial bath in the river or in the sea called *manoe sapha*.<sup>131</sup> It serves to cleanse oneself of all misfortune or to release calamities (Ach *peulheueh bala*) that have come their way. The ritual of cleansing of the body on the day of ‘warding off calamities’ is believed to purify the ‘soul/mind’ (Indon *jiwa*) so that it cannot be harmed by Satan or other evil beings. It also serves to ‘call back’ one’s own *seumangat* (“soul/mind”) that may have “fled”. The body without a ‘soul/mind’ is considered especially vulnerable.

The accidents, bad luck, epidemics and disasters believed to occur, particularly on the last Wednesday of this month, are attributed to Satan and other evil supernatural beings attacking human beings and cattle. The ritual of *tulak*

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129 The term “Kéling” is the Malay form of ‘Kalinga’ and is a synonym for the people of South Indian origin. In Acèh the term “Kléng” refers to Indian traders still living in Acèh.

130 See Singaravelu (1986).

131 The use of the term *manoe* (Indon *mandi*) which means “bathing” especially in the sea or river as opposed to having water poured over oneself.

*bala* is therefore considered crucially important to ward off all such kinds of evil and misfortune by strengthening social relations among the people. One fisherman says that the ritual of *tulak bala* was first performed in 19<sup>th</sup> century by fishermen when the Dutch conquered Acèh. According to one *imām*, however, *tulak bala* has been practiced by the Acèhnese's ancestors since the 1940 in Acèh.<sup>132</sup> Several fishermen with whom I discussed this said that the performing of the ritual of *tulak bala* was based on the following events:

Fishermen often caught less fish during the 19th century. They were often intercepted by giant fish, huge waves, hurricanes etc causing many fisher boats to sink and therefore they assumed that the sea goddess (Ach *dewa laôt*) who lived in the sea had been furious (Indon *murka*) with human beings because they did not honor them nor give them the offerings (Indon *sesajén*). For this reason, human beings had to ask for forgiveness through offerings so that the sea goddess would behave well and not disturb human beings, especially fishermen. By doing so, the fishermen could go fishing without hindrance.

Village people quite often drowned in the river Krueng Baru which is close to Blangporoh village. The village people assume that the Krueng Baru river's keeper or "guardian" is furious at local dwellers as they quite often utilize the rivers to catch fish or as transportation for wood or rattan, and other needed household goods, but do not pay their respect to the river's keepers by offering food. The river keepers always take victims when floods occur. In order to prevent this situation, therefore, the offerings are made. The offering ritual is performed on Wednesday along the river bank of Krueng Baru and many other coastal areas of Acèh. Later on the festival day, the offerings are washed away from the river to the sea.

The villagers are afraid so they perform this ritual to ensure that the sea water spirits are not furious with them.<sup>133</sup>

In the *kitāb* Al-Bahjatul Mardhiyah, it is said that every year about 320,000 illnesses fall down to earth on the last Wednesday of Safar month (al-Fathani 1987:139). The head of 'ulamā' council in Southwest Acèh says that according to Syeikh Nusfi, a saint (Jam *aulia*; Arb *awlīyā'*) of Allāh, there are 12,000 calamities sent down to earth by Allāh from the tablet on which the records of the decisions of the divine are preserved (Arb *laukh makhfudz*) on the night of the last Wednesday of Safar month. In addition, it is said that the Prophet Zakaria and Yahya were killed by their followers on the last Wednesday of Safar. Therefore, this month is considered to be the unluckiest month in

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132 See Serambi Indonesia, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

133 See also Mawardi (2005:30).

the year. The word Safar means illness in the stomach. Safar also means a big caterpillar or maggot/mite. This mite is more savage than the scabies mite (al-Fathani 1987:140). It is said that every Safar lunar month Allāh allows Satan to come down from the sky, to the sea, the jungle and everywhere on the earth. He always tries to persuade people to do something bad to each other even though the angels always protect humans from this. When Satans are on earth, they always disturb people by bringing illnesses such as the “*tæun* disease” (Ach *penyakét tæun*)<sup>134</sup>, “pustular skin eruption” (Ach *nie*), and “epilepsy” (Ach *sawan*).

In order to avoid the misfortune on the last Wednesday of Safar lunar month, people go to the seashore or to the rivers to cleanse their bodies by taking a bath. Sometimes some villagers go to an *imām* asking for a *do'a* (prayer) to be written, especially the *do'a* of *tulak bala*. In return, they give one kilogram of sugar or a small amount of money to the *imām*. After that they go to the sea or rivers nearest to their houses. They take a bath together with the written *do'a*.<sup>135</sup> The aim of this ritual is not only to ward off illnesses affecting human beings but also to strengthen social solidarity. One says that if a baby is born on this day, it will be safe from calamity since Satan is no longer on earth at that moment and all calamities have been pushed off to sea.

It is believed that the Safar month is “pregnant” (Jam *buntieng*) with evil and illness. Therefore, the villagers are implored to take a bath with the intention (Indon *niat*), “I take a bath on the last Wednesday to remove a small state of uncleanness (Indon *hadas kecil*)”.<sup>136</sup> This is not obligatory (Ach *wajéb*) but voluntarily (Jam/Ach/Ind *sunat*). The idea is that the purification of one’s body is a sign of the ‘soul’s’ (*jiwa*) purification’ so as to ensure that they are not easily disturbed by Satan or other malevolent spirits. Bathing to ward off misfortune by calling back the *seumangat* “vital force” that may have “fled”. If one’s *seumangat* leaves the body, the body will be weak and can be easily harmed by Satan and other malevolent spirits.

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134 *Tæun* is a kind of epidemic that the Aneuk Jamee and the Acèhnese are really afraid of. This epidemic can attack human beings or animals causing them sudden death.

135 Snouck Hurgronje I (1906:207) also observed that the Acèhnese came with pieces of paper which consisted of certain verses of the Qur’ān to be mingled with the water on the day of *tulak bala* in Safar lunar month.

136 *Hadas* means ritual impurity. *Hadas kecil* means a state of ritual uncleanness which requires ablutions. *Hadas besar* means a state of ritual uncleanness which requires bathing. On the day of *tulak bala* or *rabu habéh*, one is required to take a bath although he or she does not have *hadas besar*.

## ***Tulak bala* at village level**

Before the arrival of Safar, Blangporoh people and other village people are busy preparing food, beverages and new clothes. This preparation is nearly the same when preparing for Ramadhan. Women are usually busier than men preparing food, cookies, drinks and fruit. People who live in the town or far away from the coast or river go and stay with their families who live near the sea or rivers so that they can then take a bath, eat, drink, and hold a social gathering. This social gathering is called *pajoh-pajoh* (see Ch.10). Sometimes it is called *meuramien* or *meurumok*.

A newlywed husband especially has to prepare new clothes for his wife for example, a long dress, shirt, shoes or sandals and a shawl. Face powder, perfumes, bathing soap and other cosmetics are placed in a box to be given to his wife on this day. People prepare various traditional cakes and some buy cakes at the bakery for guests that come to their house on that day. A number of villagers visit each other and bring the cakes to the seashore near Blangporoh village while others go the river bank of Krueng Baru together. On the night before the *tulak bala* day, the activities reach a peak. The villagers make the last minute preparations. Women make the following traditional cakes:

*Leumang*, made of glutinous rice, thick coconut milk and salt. It is then baked in young bamboo (Ach *buloh*) that is layered with young coconut leaves inside it.

*Keutupèk* (Indon *ketupat*) is made of glutinous rice and salt. It is then wrapped in a square young woven coconut leaves these are boiled in thick coconut milk. The *keutupèk* is fried in coconut oil after it is boiled to prevent spoiling.

*Leupèk* is a cylindrical sweet made of glutinous rice flour, salt and palm sugar. It is first wrapped with banana leaves, then cooked.

*Bada* (Indon *pisang gorèng*), fried banana, made of *pisang talon* banana (a kind of banana, liked by most villagers) mixed with ordinary rice flour and salt then it is fried in coconut oil.<sup>137</sup>

They also prepare cooked fish, beef and vegetables. Curry (Ach *gulè*), meat simmered in spices and coconut milk called *rendang* and other sorts of raw food are also prepared at home and later on cooked under the decorated tent at

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137 The information on how to make the traditional cakes is obtained from my female informant.

the seashore at Blangporoh village and at river bank of Krueng Baru.<sup>138</sup> The aroma pervades the atmosphere and spreads everywhere arousing the appetite.

The ritual of *tulak bala* begins at 8 o'clock in morning. After having had breakfast at their houses, people go to the mosque first; the members of the governing body of the village and staff of Blangporoh's mosque are waiting there. Soon after the villagers have gathered, the village leader tells them to queue up on the street in front of the mosque facing the direction of the sea. The *imām* stands in front of the queue and starts reciting *do'a ya lathief*. This begins with the words *ya lathief* ("o the softest") which is known as a prayer to chase away jinn (Ach *do'a let jén* or *do'a paroh jén*). It is taken up by all participants while walking to the seashore. The complete *do'a* is as follows (see Waly (2003), my translation):

<i>Ya lathief palah tazal</i>	Hai the softest
<i>Ultuf binā pimā nazal</i>	You always exist
<i>Innaka lathief lam tazal</i>	Please be kind to me and to the Muslim community
<i>Ulthuf binā wasmuslimīn</i>	When any kinds of disasters come
<i>Subhāna man 'azzawajal</i>	Exalted is He (Allāh) <i>azza wajalla</i>
<i>Wabari a minal wajal</i>	Holy from the character of anxiety
<i>Wa khadha likulli bil ajal</i>	He who determines all predestined hours of death
<i>Sairal khalqi ajmaīn</i>	For all living creatures
<i>Nasaluka raf'al bala</i>	Please keep disaster away
<i>Bisirri thamal mujtaba</i>	With the sacredness of the chosen Prophet
<i>Wal ali arbābil hijā</i>	The family of the Prophet who is clever
<i>Washahbihil Mujahidīn</i>	The Prophet's companions who are warriors
<i>Allāhumma yā kafiya balā i</i>	O Allāh who prevents disasters
<i>Ikfinal balā</i>	Keep the disasters away from us
<i>Krabla nezulihi minasamā i</i>	Before they are sent down from the sky
<i>Allāhumma yā kāfiya balā i</i>	O Allāh please keep disasters away
<i>I'nda nuzūlihi minassama i</i>	From us when they are sent down from the sky
<i>Allāhumma yā kāfiya balā i</i>	O Allāh who prevents disasters
<i>Ikfinal balā i</i>	Keep the disasters away from us
<i>Ba'danuzuulihi minassama i</i>	After they are sent down from sky

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138 In Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, on the last Wednesday of Safar lunar month (*rebo bontong*), besides bathing together in the sea to clean their soul, they make white and red porridge to indicate the life cycle of human beings. The white porridge symbolizes sperm and the red one symbolizes egg cells in which both these substances form the fetus in the mother's womb. See Kompas, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

Villagers led by the *imām* repeat this *do'a* up to seven times till they arrive at the seashore about nine hundreds metres from the mosque. Having rested, some villagers visit each others' tents. Some slaughter chickens and ducks that have been prepared a week before to be cooked at the seashore, while others help erect tents if those set up by the young men of the village the day before are not enough. Meanwhile the invited guests start arriving and sit in the main tent together with the members of the governing body of the village and staff of the mosque and other villagers who arrive later.

The people in the main tent are served with various cakes and beverages by the villagers; they also exchange the traditional cakes mentioned above and other market cakes, eating while waiting for lunch. They talk happily, laugh and smoke. Some boys play football while others look for more fire wood to cook the chickens and ducks. Meanwhile, some young girls help their mothers with the cooking and sometimes talk to other young women and men who come from other villages. Others take photos while waiting to invoke *do'a* together.

At about 10 o'clock in the main tent, the *imām* together with participants recite the *sūrah al-Yāsīn* (QS 36:1-83) and the *sūrah al-Kahfī* (QS 18: 1-110) from start to finish. One of the virtues of reciting these verses is that the reciter's sin will be forgiven and the verses will protect him from *taèn* illness (Ach *penyakét taèn*) that can strike someone dead. Other virtues are that the reciters will be protected by Allāh and angels from disasters. If they are recited when one has a severe illness, the virtues of these *sūrah* could heal that person if he or she still has a life time granted to him or her (Ach *mantong umu*).

After reciting these *sūrah*, people then continue to request pardon from Allāh. These are known as *istighfār* taken from the opening phrase: “*Astaqfirullāh....*; (I ask Allāh for pardon....). The *imām* then recites the phrase; the others join him repeating it three times. Next the *sūrah al-Ikhlās*<sup>139</sup> (QS 112:1-4) is recited together:

*Khulhuwallāhu aḥad*  
*Allāḥush shamad*  
*Lam yalid walam yulad*  
*Walam yakullahu kufurwan aḥad*

Say, “He is Allāh, [who is] One  
 Allāh, the Eternal Refuge  
 He neither begets nor is born  
 Nor is there any equivalent to him”

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139 *Al-Ikhlās* meaning purification.

Many villagers say that this *sūrah* is equivalent in merit to one-third of the Qur’ān, and that reciting it three times constitutes “completing the Qur’ān”. This *sūrah* is also efficacious in other ways. One old man says that those who fought in battle against the Dutch returning to Acèh in the late 1940s would use the *sūrah* as a spell and would not be “eaten” by bullets.<sup>140</sup> Next, they continue reciting the *sūrah al-Falaq*<sup>141</sup> (QS 113:1-5):

<i>Qul a’ūzu birabbil falaqi</i>	Say, “I seek refuge in the Lord of daybreak
<i>Min syarri mā khalaqa</i>	From the evil of that which He created
<i>Wamin syarri ghāqin izā waqaba</i>	And from the evil of darkness when it settles
<i>Wamin syarrin naffāsātifil ‘uqadi</i>	And from the evil of those who blow on knots
<i>Wamin syarri hā sidin izā hasada</i>	And from the evil of an envier when he envies

and then continue reciting with the *sūrah an-Nās*<sup>142</sup> (QS 114:1-6):

<i>Qul a’ūzu birabbīn nāsi</i>	Say, I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind
<i>Malikin nāsi</i>	The Sovereign of mankind
<i>Ilāhin nāsi</i>	The God of mankind
<i>Min syarril waswāsīl khannāsi</i>	From the evil of a retreating whisperer
<i>Allazī yuwaswisufī shudūrin nāsi</i>	Who whispers [evil] into the breast of mankind
<i>Minal jinnati wannāsi</i>	From among the jinn and mankind

It is believed that a devil that makes evil suggestions may be a person as well as a “non-believer jinn” (Ach *jèn kapé*). They will disappear when one remembers Allāh. It is said that both the *sūrah al-Falaq* and the *sūrah an-Nās* are very efficacious when seeking Allāh’s protection from any kinds of evil. The leader of the committee charged with organizing the *tulak bala* ritual asks the *imām* to invoke another special *do’a* of *tulak bala* to close the *do’a* session. The *imām* starts reciting this *do’a* by holding his hands up; all participants do the same and utter *āmīn* (“please accept o Allāh”) at every end of the following *do’a*:

<i>Allāhummad fa’ ‘annal ghalā’a</i>	O our God, please keep us from disaster
<i>Wal balā a wal wabā a wal fahsyā a</i>	Catastrophe and calamity, despicableness
<i>Walmungkarwas suyūfal mukhtalifata</i>	Ignored, any kind of quarrel
<i>Wasy syadā ida walmiḥan mā dhahara</i>	Cruel, war which can be seen
<i>Minhā wamā bathana mim baladinā khash</i>	Or can not be seen especially in our country
<i>Shah wamin buldānil muslimina ‘āmmah</i>	And generally in Islamic countries
<i>Innaka ‘alā kulli syai in qadir.</i>	Indeed, Allāh is competent over all things

140 See also Bowen (1993:265).

141 *Al-Falaq* meaning daybreak.

142 *An-Nās* meaning people or mankind.

In his *do'a*, the *imām* also asks Allāh to save the earth and the water to protect the village from floods, landslides and other calamities. After finishing reciting the above *do'a*, people have lunch together at midday. While having lunch, some committee members bring the water mixed with ordinary rice flour for cooling off, called *teupōng taweu*. One by one each participant is sprinkled with this water with the aim of preventing illness in the hope that Allāh will strengthen his or her inner and outer “soul/mind” (*Ach jiwa lahé dan batén*). Before returning to their houses, many villagers take a bath together in the sea to cleanse the body so that all kinds of illness are swept away and their inner and outer “soul/mind” remains healthy. All children who return from the Blangporoh seashore have a red coloured streak or cross<sup>143</sup> of betel juice (*Ach ie ranub*)<sup>144</sup> brushed on their forehead by the *adat* leaders to protect them from illness and jinn. The participants are not allowed to call their friends very loudly (*Ach teumawôuk*) after going back from the seashore because people are afraid that Satans could come back to earth again. Fishermen are not allowed to go fishing for three days but they are free to perform activities on land. These three days are called “prohibited days” (*Ach uroe pantang*).<sup>145</sup> This *adat* is not written but passed on from one generation to another.

## Other forms of ritual bathing

Other forms of ritual on this day of “warding off calamities” such as “bathing with the Qur’ān verses” (*Ach manoe ngon ayat Qur’ān*), and “flower bathing” (*Ach manoe bungong*) are performed individually. This too serves to purify the “soul” or to “call back” one’s own “soul” that may have “fled” before spirit attacks.

### 1. Bathing with the verses of the Qur’ān

In the Acèhnese cosmology the Safar lunar month is deemed a month in which to avoid any serious undertaking because it was in this month that the

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143 Red colour on the children’s forehead is a sign that the children have performed the ritual of *tulak bala* in Safar lunar month. Sometimes the sign is very much like a Christian cross on children’s forehead.

144 The ingredients of *raja seumapa* or *meurampot* used on that day comprise of betel vine (*Ach on ranub*), gambier (*Ach gambé*), lime (*Ach gapu*), betel nut (*Ach bòh pineng*), and tobacco (*Ach bakong*). They are then chewed and its juice is placed on the children’s forehead.

145 If fishermen go fishing on taboo or prohibited days, they will be fined.

Prophet Muḥammad had a grave illness. Moreover, my informants maintain that the ritual bathing at the end of the month of Safar is possibly connected with a feast held in memory of the Prophet Muḥammad's experience of some mitigation of his final illness through such ritual bathing. Therefore, on the last Wednesday, in order to avoid any misfortune, it is customary for some pious followers of Islam to go to the seashores or the river banks to clean their bodies by bathing with special written verses of the holy Qur'ān called *manoe ngon ayat Qur'ān* ("bathing with the verses of Qur'ān"). This bathing is performed with the seven verses of *salāmun* ("peace") as follows:

Peace, a word from a merciful Lord (QS 36:58).

Peace be upon Abraham. Indeed, we thus reward the doers of good (QS 37:109-110).

Peace be upon Noah among the worlds. Indeed, we thus reward the doers of good (QS 37:79-80).

Peace be upon Moses and Aaron: Indeed, we thus reward the doers of good (QS 37:120).

Peace be upon Elias. Indeed, we thus reward the doers of good (QS 37:130-131).

Peace be upon you; you have become pure; so enter Paradise to abide eternally (QS 39:73).

Peace it is until the emergence of dawn therein (QS 97:5).

The paper on which this *do'a* is written is sometimes put into seawater or river water where the people take a bath (before they immersed themselves into it). Some villagers also drink the water containing the *do'a* which they regard as sacred and thereby having a salutary effect on their bodies; it is also a charm against evil. Those who are unable to go the river or seaside should at least drink some of the water brought from the river or sea on this occasion to cleanse oneself of spiritual impurity and safeguard oneself against any misfortune in the future.<sup>146</sup> In addition, the following *do'a* is also often thrown into a common well<sup>147</sup> in the village on *tulak bala* day, the water of which is drunk by the village people:

*Yā syadīdal khawī*

*Yā 'azīzal 'uddati*

*Fījamī'il khal'ika*

*Akfinī'an jamī'il khalqika*

*Yā muhsin*

*Yā mukrim*

*Lāilaha illa anta*

O Allāh is the most courageous

O Allāh who has all preparations

To all creatures that are freed

Protect me from all Your creatures

O Allāh who always does good deeds

O Allāh who is the most sublime

There is no deity except You

146 See also Zainal Abidin (1949:103-104).

147 A common well can still be found in which there is one well for a group of households in the village. Cutting nails (both finger and toenails) on the last Wednesday is not allowed as it takes health from the body. However, it is good to cut nails every Friday because it is believed that sin (Jam *doso*; Ach *dēsya*) leaves the body and religious merit (Jam *pahalo*; Ach/Indon *pahala*) flows into the body.

<i>Allāhumma akhithnīmin juhdil balā i</i>	O Allāh help me from suffering
<i>Wadarkil syakhāi wasūil khadha i</i>	Appearance of misery, bad work
<i>Wasyammātatil ‘akdā i wa mautil fujā ati</i>	Cruelty of enemy, sudden death
<i>Wamin syarril sihri wamin darkis sāmi</i>	From black magic, the danger of poison
<i>Wal harami walbarashi</i>	Appearance of feebleness, discoloration of the skin
<i>Waljadmi wal aqāmi</i>	Leprosy and chronically illness
<i>Wamin jamī’il amrādhi</i>	As well as all kinds of illness
<i>Birahmatika yā arhamarrāhimīn</i>	With Your blessing o Allāh, the entirely merciful

The well water is drunk and taken to be sprinkled around the villagers’ houses, to protect them from various illnesses. Some villagers dissolve this *do’a* into a glass of water before they drink it; some others place this written *do’a* into a big pail containing water, then take a bath with it.

## 2. Flower bathing

Another way to purify the body of any dangerous spirits during *tulak bala* is by taking a ritual bath with flowers called *manoe bungong*. *Manoe bungong* is often performed for unlucky people. For example, they may be by infertile women, women who cannot find a husband, a man who cannot find a wife. These people should be bathed with flowers on the *tulak bala* day in order “to call back their *seumangat* that have left their bodies”. In the past, the ritual of *manoe bungong* on the day of *tulak bala* was quite often performed by a healer directly bathing them. Now this ritual is no longer often performed. “That is why there are many old virgins in the village”, says one man. Such old virgins who “have misfortune in their bodies” are implored to perform *manoe bungong* in order to find a marriage partner soon. Also, those who do not have offspring should take a bath on this day. It is important to note that parents in the village are very ashamed in front of their neighbours if they have old virgins who have not married yet. To conceal their embarrassment, they are often told to perform the ritual of *manoe bungong* on the day of *tulak bala*. In addition, they are usually told to move away and live with their families in town to avoid this embarrassment.

On the day I witnessed *tulak bala* in Blangporoh, however, I observed a ritual of *manoe bungong* performed not for old virgins but for an old sick man. One male farmer brought a bunch of areca nut flowers, several leaves and a rough-skinned lime to a female healer in Blangporoh to be cast as a spell for *manoe bungong* on the day of *tulak bala*. A week before he felt something wrong with his right leg causing him difficulties in walking. He said that it was as if there were some needles in his right knee. His right knee was red and

swollen. He was sure that someone else had given him this illness so that performing *manoe bungong* on the day of *tulak bala* is required in order to get rid of the illness.<sup>148</sup>

On his arrival at the female healer's house, he was told to take off his t-shirt and to turn his back to her. Between them, there was a medium sized shallow pail containing flowers, several leaves, and a slice of rough-skinned lime. The female healer covered herself with an additional cloth and looked at him from under the cloth over her face while chanting a spell. Her right hand kneaded the mixed areca nut flowers, leaves and sliced rough-skinned lime in the water in the pail and her left hand held it steady while casting spells in a very low voice. At the end of her chanting she blew upon the kneaded flowers and slowly moved her right hand that was wet with flower water from the top of his head down to his back hip seven times.<sup>149</sup> After that she gave the kneaded flower water which had the consistency of pineapple juice to him. Before leaving the old man gave her Rp 5,000 and she told him as follows:

Please bathe with this flower water at sunset, uttering *bismillāh* (in the name of Allāh) and facing the direction of Mecca (Indon *kiblat*).

Please let someone else clean the remainder of your flower bathing

Please return on two more afternoons and bring the same flowers: areca nut flowers, several tree leaves and rough-skinned limes.

Rough-skinned limes are often used in healing rituals. They are also quite often used as shampoo (Ach *limèe*) by women bathing after childbirth, at the end of menstruation, in the early morning of the festival of the fast breaking and the festival of the sacrifice, and on the last day preceding the Ramadhan month for men and women.<sup>150</sup> In addition, in Acèh, rough-skinned limes which have been sliced are brought and sprayed on the seedbed as well with the aim of calling therice's 'vital force' (Ach *seumangat padé*) so that the rice plants will be fertile and safe from rice pests. But they are not allowed to use it if one

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148 According to a village female healer, however, *manoe bungong* does not only aim at expelling the ill fortune and evil magic from the body but also at preventing disturbance from bad spirits and calling back *seumangat* and good luck (Ach *tuah*) that have "left the body".

149 Unfortunately the female healer is not willing to tell the spell she has chanted. On that day my recorder's battery is weak so that it does not record the female healer's chanting spell.

150 Meanwhile, in Perak, Malaysia, rough-skinned limes are rubbed on to the bodies instead of soaps for the "warding off calamities' bathing" (Ahmad 1949:41).

takes a bath in the river or sea, based on the belief that crocodiles would be angry and savage because rough-skinned limes resemble the protrusions on their head.

This practice is under attack from two different corners: modern science and normative Islam. Thus, a male Biology teacher at the junior high school argued that it is no problem at all to clean the body by using rough-skinned limes, flowers and leaves because soap and shampoo themselves are made of these substances. But, *manoe bungong* used in the hope of cleansing the “soul/mind” (*jiwa*) is not acceptable. The criticism from normative Islam argues:

The practice of *manoe bungong*, bathing with certain verses of the Qur’ān, and using talismans are *kurafat*<sup>151</sup> can reduce one’s faith and that will ultimately lead the performers to polytheism (Arb *syirk*). There is no good luck (Ach *untōng*) at this special time nor is it beneficial but disadvantageous in relation to certain actions. *Manoe bungong* is not only an old traditional Acèhnese *adat* but also Aneuk Jamee that has been mixed with pre-Islamic belief and “the popular Islam”. Belief in *manoe bungong* will reduce the faith of someone to *kadha*<sup>152</sup> (the power of Allāh to determine all events) and to the belief of *takdir* (recognition that all matters of creation are determined by Allāh) of Allāh. *Manoe bungong* must be rejected due to the mixing of superstition (Indon *tahayyul*), deviation (Indon *kurafat*) and innovation (Indon *bid’ah*) in religious belief. They strongly stress that one must guard against innovation and superstition.

These ideas are from local modernists arguing that *mano bungong* is not an intrinsic part of Islamic belief and practice but many villagers contend that *manoe bungong* is good in trying to “ward off calamities” and at the same time to call back the *seumangat* into the body. If a part of the body is emptied of its *seumangat*, the power of Satan will permeate into it causing a person misfortune in his or her life.

## ***Tulak bala* in Alupeunawa**

Epidemics attack not only human beings but also animals. These are said to appear especially in the Safar lunar month and to last from thirty to forty days. People, therefore, argue that they must take care during the Safar lunar

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151 *Kurafat* is a performed action which deviates from religious teaching.

152 *Kadha* is an explicit point in the Muslim creed that Allāh has such power. As recognition of that power, most Muslims in Blangporoh utter the term “*insya Allāh*”, i.e., “if Allāh wills”, when using the future tense.

month and pray to Allāh so they will not contract a ‘strange illness’ (Ach *peunyakét aneh*). In Alupenawa, one of the villages in Southwest Acèh, many water buffalos died in one particular Safar lunar month. Four villagers also passed away and nine fell ill. Four people suddenly died in Alupenawa village in February 2007. This made people afraid as there was no evidence that they were poisoned. It was said that the victims were dizzy first, then vomited and were short-winded after touching another victim. One woman admitted that she was suddenly dizzy after touching the first victim who died. On Wednesday she was unconscious. The same happened to another woman after helping the second victim and nine people got sick.

The rest of their food was sent to be examined at a medical facility. The results were negative.<sup>153</sup> The village people then became more afraid. They believe that the epidemic attacked both human beings and buffalos causing them a sudden death.<sup>154</sup> In order to drive off this frightening epidemic, the village people in Alupeunawa started to perform *tulak balak* rituals, by praying and reciting Qur’ān together.

From 2007 onwards they recite the *sūrah al-Yāsīn* and *al-Kahfi* three nights respectively in the last week of Safar lunar month. These *sūrah* are first recited in the village’s mosque on Thursday night, then in the boarding school Nurussalam on Friday night, and in all village clusters (Indon *dusun désa*) on Saturday, the last night, which occurs in the last week of Safar lunar month. After reciting these *sūrah*, requests were made to Allāh for pardon, known as the *istighfār* from the opening phrase: “*Astaqfirullāh...*; (I ask Allāh for pardon...). The prayer leader recites the phrase and then the others join him for three repetitions. Next the *sūrah al-Ikhlās* (QS 112:1-4) is recited:

<i>Khulhuwallāhu aḥad</i>	Say, “He is Allāh, [who is] One
<i>Allāḥush shamad</i>	Allāh, the Eternal Refuge
<i>Lam yalid walam yulad</i>	He neither begets nor is born
<i>Walam yakullahu kufiwan aḥad</i>	Nor is there any equivalent to Him”

This *sūrah* is recited 30 times and *tahlīl*<sup>155</sup> (the reciting of *la ilāha illallāh* - there is no deity but Allāh) 100 times altogether. Finally, the male villagers

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153 See Serambi Indonesia, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

154 See Serambi Indonesia, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

155 It is believed by Muslims that repetitive recitation of the *tahlīl* will cleanse a person and gain the reciter religious merit. It is also said that Allāh sent down the calamities and He is able to ward them off as long as the human beings sincerely chant the confession of

perform a torch procession (Ach *pawai tot culot*) around the village border facing the sea. This procession is led by local ‘*ulamā*’ and a local healer is asked to chase away the illness caused by bad jinn. One argued that fire must be opposed by fire as Satan, jinn, and ‘delicate creatures’ are made of fire. Thus, they are afraid of fire. In addition, the recitation of the verses of the Qur’ān and *tahlīl* makes them “hot” and so they retreat beneath the ocean waters. It is believed that the majority of malevolent spirits live under the sea. When they come on land, people will be attacked by many kinds of illnesses. It is said that “the ocean is larger than the earth, Satans must be chased there”. This ritual is similar to that performed in Simpang Keuramat, North Acèh in the past. There, all the village men gathered together at intersections of the village where they divided into four groups, the same as the number of clusters of the village. They walked around the village uttering one of the verses of the Qur’ān in *sūrah al-Isrā’* (QS 17:81): “And say, truth has come, and falsehood has departed. Indeed is falsehood, [by nature], ever bound to depart” (Arb *waquljā al haqqu wazahaqal bāthil innal bāthilakā na zahuqā*). As they arrived at the border of the village, one of them performed *azan* (calling to prayer) to ward off calamities or to rid themselves of danger in the village.<sup>156</sup>

## ***Tulak bala* in the past**

Villagers recall that in the past on the day of *tulak bala*, some members of the *tulak bala* committee first visited the sick men and women in the village. They addressed them as follows:

<i>Uroenyo uroe tulak bala</i>	Today is the day of <i>tulak bala</i>
<i>Teubit segala penyakèt dan minah u laôt</i>	May all sicknesses leave and move to the sea
<i>Bek ganggu lè ureueng sakét nyo</i>	May they no longer disturb this sick person

Some other committee members erected tents where the *imām* and other staff of the mosque rested and then recited the *do’a* of *tulak bala* at the sea-shore. The young village men led by a healer went to the haunted places where they believed that Satans stayed, such as cemeteries, jungle, woods, rocks, big trees, unoccupied houses, ruins and other frightening places. They said *do’a* of

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faith (Indon *berzikir*) as a form of worship. The reciting of *tahlīl* is also called *meuratéb* in Acèh.

156 Serambi Indonesia, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

*tulak bala*, *ya lathief*<sup>157</sup> together in order to chase them away from these places to the sea. The methods used were beating bushes with palm (leaf) stalks (Ach *puréh jok*) that had been struck by thunder (Ach *ka ditak le gelanteu*). This palm (leaf) stalk was believed to have a power that Satans were really afraid of. If this kind of palm (leaf) stalk was unavailable, the healers would use the stalks of green coconut palms that would also frighten the jinn. It is said that house windows and doors were closed during the ritual in order to stop Satan from entering the house. If the owner of the house at that time felt that Satan was still in his or her house then he or she took water and poured it into a pail. He then put his fingers in it and with his mouth near to the water began reciting the following verses of *sūrah as-Sāffāt* (QS 37:1-10).

<i>Washshaffatil Shaffā</i>	By those [angels] lined up in rows
<i>Falzaa jirātil zajrā</i>	And those who drive the [the clouds]
<i>Faltā liyati zikrā</i>	And those who recite the message
<i>Inna ilāhukum lawāhidun</i>	Indeed, your God is one
<i>Rabbussamā wāti walardhi wamā</i>	Lord of the heavens and the earth and
<i>Bainahuma warabbul masyāriqi</i>	That between them and Lord of the sunrises
<i>Inna zaiyannassamā addunyā</i>	Indeed, We have adorned the nearest heaven
<i>Biziinatil kawākibi</i>	With an adornment of stars.
<i>Wahifdhammingkulli syaithānim marīd</i>	And as protection against every rebellious devil
<i>Lā yassamma ‘ūna ilal malāil ‘aklā</i>	[So] they may not listen to the exalted assembly
<i>Wayuqthafūna mingkuli janīb</i>	(of angels) and are pelted from every side
<i>Du ‘uraw walahum ‘azābuw wāshīb</i>	Repelled; and for them there is a constant punishment
<i>Illaman khathifal khathfata</i>	Except one who snatches [some words] by theft
<i>Fātba’ahu shihābun sākhibūn</i>	but they are pursued by a burning flame, piercing [in brightness].

The chanted water was sprinkled in all house corners as well as around the house. By doing this, it is believed that Satan would leave one’s house.

In chasing Satan away on *tulak bala* day, people had “to say the *do’a* of *ya lathief* sincerely”, otherwise Satan would be angry and make the chasers sick. It is said that about 50 year ago one man fell ill, and then died after the ritual of *tulak bala* in Ujong Manggég, Manggég district. People believed that he did not follow the rules when he performed the *tulak bala* ritual causing him to be attacked by Satan.

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157 Blangporoh villagers are familiar with the *do’a* of *ya lathief* (‘*ya* the softest’). They know it as *do’a let jèn* (the *do’a* for chasing jinn). The work of chasing jinn (Ach *jèn*) on the day of *tulak bala* is called *jak meujalatéh* because the beginning of the *do’a* with the word *ya lathief*.

While waiting lunch, the village head advisors called *tuha peut* and young men made a raft from banana trees for the central act of the ritual. The banana raft measured 2x2 and a half meters in size to 3x3 and a half meters in size. A small dark red flower resembling a jasmine but with a bigger bud called *bun-gong ayeum gumbak jèn* was placed on the banana raft as a “flower for the *jinn* to play with”. It was believed that this flower enticed the *jinn* onto the banana raft and returned it to the sea. It is said that *jinn* like this particular flower and people who “befriend” *jinn* make use of these flowers.

After being decorated, the raft was filled with seven white rice packets and water. Sometimes a white cock was tied on the raft.<sup>158</sup> One of the healers interviewed said that the colour white is preferred as the queen of Satan requests that colour. Chicken’s blood, skin, head, feet, feather, and the rest of the food that they ate that day were also placed on the banana tree raft as offerings. It was hoped that afterwards Satan (some say malevolent spirits) would no longer attack the human beings.

No food is allowed to be brought back home that day. All the food must be eaten at the sea shore or river banks and the rest should be thrown into the water. The blood is said to symbolize impurity and since the Satan likes impure things, the food remainders are food for Satan, ‘delicate creatures’ and other malevolent spirits. This offering is especially for “non-believer *jinn*” living in the sea that eat the impure remainders human food. In addition, one says that during the reign of Raja Kanda in the 1930s, the villagers also sometimes bought a white buffalo and slaughtered it at the seashore. Its head was given as an offering for the sea water spirits. By doing so, the villagers hoped that ‘malevolent souls’ would no longer disturb them as they had been given their share of the meat. The offering of the white buffalo head and other offerings were placed on the banana tree raft on the day of *tulak bala*.

According to a village healer, *jinn* prefer white offerings such as white cocks, white water, white rice, white buffalo as they have a magic power (Indon *kekuatan magik*). Various kinds of traditional cakes such as *ketupèk*, *leupèk bada*, and *leumang* were also placed on the banana raft. The committee members then asked a religious leader or *imām* to recite *do’a* of *tulak bala*, the

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158 In Pontianak, West Kalimantan, the offerings prepared on the day of *tulak bala* were chicken, glutinous rice, yellow rice, and chicken’s blood. Those offerings are thrown in the sea in order that malevolent spirits would no longer attack human beings because they have received the offerings, see Serambi Indonesia, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

*sūrah* of *Yāsīn* and *al-Kahfi*. After that they had lunch together. While having lunch, some committee members brought the water of ordinary rice flour for a cooling ceremony (*Ach ie teupōng taweu*). One by one the participants were sprinkled with the cooling water to be protected from illness and with the hope that Allāh will strengthen their ‘inner and outer souls’. After lunch, the participants gathered around the tethered banana raft. *Do’a* again was invoked by the *imām* and all attendants. The above *do’a* of “chasing the jinn” (*Ach do’a let jét*) was recited seven times. The call to prayer (Arb *adhān*)<sup>159</sup> was then performed:

<i>Allāhu akbar 2x</i>	Allāh is the greatest
<i>Asyhaduallāilāha illallāh 2x</i>	I bear witness that there is no deity except Allāh
<i>Asyhadu anna Muḥammadar Rasulullāh 2x</i>	I bear witness that Muḥammad is His messenger
<i>Hai ya alash shalāh 2x</i>	Please make haste toward prayer
<i>Hai ya alash falāh 2x</i>	Please make haste toward welfare
<i>Allāhu akbar 1x</i>	Allāh is the most great
<i>Lāila haillallāh 1x</i>	There is no god except Allāh

Then the raft filled with offerings was ready to be pushed into the river or into the sea. The person to do so must be a *pawang laôt* (see Ch.1) as he “knew more about jinn than anyone else”. After performing the call to prayer, the smoke of burned incense started rising and the rope that tied the banana tree raft was cut. The *pawang laôt* said, “O guardian of the sea, this food is for you, please guard us so that we were safe to seek a livelihood” (Mawardi 2005:32). The banana tree raft was then pushed into the sea on the last Wednesday of Safar lunar month. The banana tree raft started floating away from the seashore and bobbed up and down on the surface of the sea. The moving banana tree raft was continuously observed by all participants with bated breath fearing that the raft might return to the shore. Every move on the sea surface had a meaning for the people.

If it returned to the seashore, it meant that the illnesses would stay longer in the village. If it capsized in the water it signalled that the illness would remain in the village. If it sank, this symbolized that there were still many Satans that would disturb the village people. If it did not break, jerk, sink nor return to shore, but rather moved smoothly on the sea's surface and far away from land, this was what was hoped for as it boded well for the people. All illnesses that had attacked the villagers and their animals were, at that moment, all taken by the wind to the bottom of the sea (Ahmad 1992:163).

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159 Although *azan* (the call to prayer) is usually used to call people for prayer, it is also performed on other various situations in Acèh such as when a tsunami occurs, when a fire breaks out, or when someone fights. I also witnessed someone performing the call to prayer in Lampulo, Banda Aceh when a human corpse was placed in the grave.

After launching the banana tree raft, the ritual of *tulak bala* was over. Before returning to their houses, all participants bathed in the sea to clean their bodies so that all diseases were taken away by the sea water. They then bathed with fresh water, performed an ablution and a prayer at the seashore asking Allāh to prevent any kind of illness asking that all participants remain healthy, both inwardly and outwardly (*Ach sehat lahé batén*).

Some informants argued from the perspective normative Islam that this ritual is a good ritual because it was first performed by Sheikh Abdul Wahab Sya'rani, a Sufi man in Egypt when he ordered his followers to perform the ritual of *tulak bala* to chase away all disasters that had caused people's deaths. At that time all the followers of the Syeikh chased calamities away with date (leaf) stalks (*Ach puréh on keureuma*) and continued by reciting *do'a*. The Syeikh saw *tæun* resembling jinn but his followers did not. Jinn then were chased till the estuary of the Nile River. There, his followers were told to make a raft from decayed woods. The wooden raft was filled with the rest of the food, skins, bones, dirt as food for the jinn. It was then freed to the Nile River while reciting *do'a*.

## Changing and debating

The performance of the ritual of *tulak bala* in Blangporoh village and in other villages at the coastal areas of West Labuhan Haji district has changed. In the coastal areas, society is more open and easily accepts foreign influence as compared to hinterland areas where society is more closed and suspicious towards innovations. Among the things that differ is the way the ritual is carried out. For the society that lives in the coastal area, the ritual is always connected with the sea or river. *Tulak bala* is currently seen more as an aspect of recreation. The change in opinion about bathing in the sea or river on *tulak bala* day brings problems to the society (which at first had value with philosophical messages). Now the members of the governing body of the village and the local district police are busier since fighting over little things often occurs at the river banks or seashore, example of these confrontations are brushing against each other, staring at each other whilst choosing their prospective partners or because one's girl friend is being annoyed. These disturbances start with shouting and then often result in violence. Boys and girls sometimes fall into the river; they are soon saved by the people bathing. Motor bike accidents are common when people go to the river bank or seashore. Therefore, nowadays a number of

old men in the village say that the current *tulak bala* ritual no longer has any meaning. What happens when the festival takes place is the opposite of *tulak bala*, people come into contact with calamities (Ach *mita bala*); such as fighting, drowning, having accidents, some people prohibit their children from taking part in this festival. Besides the ritual of *tulak bala* at the seashores or river banks “invites sin” (Ach *mita désya*) because men and women mix together freely. These people argue that all this activity is a *kurafat* deed. This is still practiced in the village because of the influence of pre-Islamic belief and historic Islam. The local modernists say that this belief will not only destroy the Islamic law but also a Muslim’s faith. Misfortune and calamities do not only occur in the Safar lunar month. This idea should not be accepted. Allāh states in the Qur’ān 9:51, “Never will we be struck except by what Allāh has decreed for us; He is our protector”. And let the believers rely upon Allāh. And the Prophet Muḥammad says that there is “no illness which is contagious, no prohibition in Safar month and no accident which is marked by night birds”. However, apart from being the subject of religious debate and an occasion for achieving spiritual purity, like in the *pajoh-pajoh* tradition (see Ch.10), the ritual of *tulak bala* is an opportunity for the marriageable young men and women to meet and talk and choose their prospective spouses. Soon after this ritual has been performed the traditional match-makers are busy in arranging marriage proposals with the parents of the interested parties in South Acèh.

## Conclusion

The ritual of *tulak bala* celebrated annually on the last Wednesday of the second lunar month of Safar, as it was known in the past and is still being observed by people today, brings considerable prestige and economic benefits to the villagers. On this occasion, many people including a large number of young men and women under the watchful of their own families travel in groups by trucks and cars to the places intended for the ritual.

The lunar month of Safar, and especially the last Wednesday of this month, is considered inauspicious. During this period there is an interdiction on house building, on performing marriage rituals and other ceremonies, on rice sowing or planting and other forms of land cultivation, on visiting a sick man or woman, on travelling, etc. On that Wednesday farmers are not allowed to go to their rice field and fishermen are not allowed to go fishing. If a marriage ritual were held on this day, the couple would collect many debts during

their life. In addition, accidents, and epidemics and disasters are believed to occur during this Safar lunar month and particularly on the last Wednesday. Such catastrophic events are attributed to Satans and other evil supernatural beings attacking human beings and cattle. The ritual of *tulak bala* performed during this Safar month is therefore considered crucially important to ward off all such kinds of evil and misfortune by strengthening the social relations among the people.

On this day young men and women as well as the elderly hold a social gathering at the seashore or at a river bank. They bring various kinds of food with them and entertain themselves by singing to the accompaniment of guitar music. On the actual day of the ritual, some young men play football, and then take a ceremonial bath in the river or in the sea called *manoe sapha*. This ceremonial bath seems to have originally been a secular bathing festivity for the purpose of providing an opportunity for young men and women to see and get to know each other during their joint participation in dancing and music and enjoyment in the river or the sea so that they can facilitate their future betrothal. It would also seem possible that such a festivity might have well been the result of the interaction of the Aneuk Jamee traditions with the old traditions before they were endowed with an Islamic significance.

As in other forms of ritual bathing such as “bathing with the verses of Qur’ān” and “flower bathing” the ritual cleansing of the body on this day of “warding off calamities” is believed to purify the “soul” so that it cannot be harmed by Satans or other evil beings. It also serves to “call back” one’s own “soul” that may have “fled” such attacks. The body without the “soul” is considered especially vulnerable.

There are two categories of *tulak bala*. First, *tulak bala* is with the help of Allāh, normative Islam, done through reciting certain Qur’anic verses such as *sūrah al-Falaq* and the *sūrah an-Nās*, *sūrah al-Isrā’*, *sūrah al-Yāsīn* etc, and reciting *tahlīl* with certain *do’a* such as the *do’a* of *tulak bala*, *ya lathief* seeking Allāh’s protection from all kinds of evil. These recitations are believed to rid oneself of danger in the village and makes Satans or evil beings “hot” so that they retreat to beneath the ocean waters right away. It is believed that the majority of Satans/evil beings live under the sea. Satan and other evil beings have to be chased away from particular sites, back to the deep sea where they live. It requires the marginalisation of the spirits (Satan and jinn) and demarcation of a socially ordered space that is placed under divine protection (Plat-

enkamp 2006:9). If they stay on land, the people will be attacked by many kinds of illnesses. In the past, while reciting *do'a* of *tulak bala* together, the villagers led by a healer went to haunted places where they believed that Satans and other evil beings stayed. They chased them away from these places to the sea by beating bushes around these places with palm (leaf) stalks that had previously been struck by thunder because these palm (leaf) stalks are believed to have a power that Satans are really afraid of. Second, *tulak bala* is an offering ritual. Offerings are brought to spirits (Satan and to jinn) to induce them to go back to the sea and these offerings have “codes”; the red offerings are for Satan and the white offerings are for the jinn. Here there is a systematic distinction; Satan is related to jinn as a husband to a wife. It relates to jinn as red to white, it relates to jinn as bad to good. *Tulak bala* is to push away harm and prevent calamities but it is also performed in two different ways. On the one hand, offerings are given and these offerings are red and white. They address two apparently different types of beings. Satan is addressed with the red and jinn are addressed with the white, both offerings of food are placed onto the constructed banana raft for the beings in the sea that bring calamities. Satans are given the impure offerings marked red, blood and so forth. Jinn are offered white gifts so that Satans and jinn retreat into the sea. Such practice, however, is now longer found in the villages.

Most performances of *tulak bala* ritual in Blangporoh and in other parts of coastal areas in South Acèh have changed as the culture in the coastal area is more open and now accepts foreign influences. This change is also caused by the rigorous criticism from the local modernists and ‘*ulamā*’ claiming that constructing a banana raft with offerings placed on it and then released to the sea on the day of *tulak bala* is a pre-Islamic act. Another reason is the number of accidents that happen during the rituals on the *tulak bala* day. Therefore, at present, the recreational aspect is stressed more than the ritual aspect.

## CHAPTER 7

### The ritual of *khanduri mò'lōt*

The celebration of the Prophet Muḥammad's birthday in Acèh is called *mò'lōt* (from the Arb *mawlid*) meaning "birthday". Although the Prophet is also believed to have died on the same day, his death is not significant to this ritual. During *mò'lōt* ritual, a "ritual meal" *khanduri mò'lōt* is held. This *khanduri* has become a cultural icon in Acèh. The characteristic of *khanduri* is food and drink. It is a taboo for the Acèhnese to pass the *mò'lōt* month without holding the ritual of *khanduri mò'lōt*. The preparations, for instance; fowls, ordinary rice, glutinous rice, coconuts, and cooking spices have been prepared several months before the arrival of *mò'lōt* month. This is done secretly so that everyone concentrates on the preparations for the *khanduri mò'lōt* postpones personal matters for after this celebration. In the past, a fine was given by "territorial chieftains" (Ach *ulèebalang*) to the headman of a village who did not provide for the yearly "ritual meal" in due time.

The *khanduri mò'lōt* is held in all villages either in the *mò'lōt* month (on or after the 12<sup>th</sup> day of Rabī' al-Awwal, i.e. March) or in one of the two following months of Rabī' al-Awwal. From this the two subsequent months derive their names of "younger brother *mò'lōt*" (Ach *adòe mò'lōt*) and "final *mò'lōt*" (Ach *mò'lōt aké*). During *mò'lōt*, a ritual meal called *khanduri mò'lōt* is prepared and consumed. Those who live in other villages belonging to the same *mukim* (a collection of several villages) are the guests of a single village and receive a formal invitation through a messenger of the head of the village. The *khanduri mò'lōt* ritual taking place at the family level is held individually in a house. The invitation to attend the *khanduri mò'lōt* at family level is extended to relatives, to the *imām*, the head of the village and to the orphans. Meanwhile the *khanduri mò'lōt* ritual at village level is held on behalf of the village community. The inhabitants of neighbouring villages are also invited. The villagers of the neighbouring villages will reciprocate with a counter invitation to their *khanduri mò'lōt* ritual in that or the following year. This practice is done by any village in Acèh, so that participating in village *khanduri mò'lōt* rituals is always done in pairs repaying each others' invitations. In addition, both levels of these "ritual meals" are not just perceived as a commemorative celebration but as a part of an exchange relationship. The villagers have a different valori-

zation of the ritual and various interpretations of the *diké mò'lōt* implicating broader issues of religion, society, and culture.

## The aim of *khanduri mò'lōt*

The *mò'lōt* celebration is held to commemorate the birth of the *saidina* (our leader)<sup>160</sup> that is the Prophet Muḥammad. The *khanduri mò'lōt* in Acèh is therefore often called *khanduri keu pang hulèe* or *khanduri keu saidina*.<sup>161</sup> The aim of the celebration of *khanduri mò'lōt* is to honor the Prophet by reciting *seulawet* (prayers) for him and for his family and at the same time to commemorate the service of the women who breastfed him. There were three women who breastfed him; Aminah (his own mother), Tsuaibah (a slave of Abu Lahab), and Halimah as Sa'diyah (a Bedouin wet nurse from Bani Sa'd Ibn Bark). Apart from his own mother, Aminah, these two women are called "Muḥammad's nursing mothers" (Indon *ibu susuan Muḥammad*). It is said that the celebration of the first or "old *mò'lōt*" is to commemorate the service of his mother Aminah. The intention of the "younger brother or middle *mò'lōt*" is to commemorate the service of Tsuaibah while the intention of the "last or final *mò'lōt*" is to commemorate the service of Halimah as Sa'diyah. It is emphasized that, "Without their help, Muḥammad would have died at that time".

The *imām* of Blangporoh village, Teungku Hasbi says that the aim of *khanduri mò'lōt* is to commemorate as well as to practice living a good life as the apostle of Allāh. He related a short history of the Prophet emphasizing his role as a reminder to follow his good example:

When he was still young, he had already received the title "*al-amīn*" (can be trusted) from his group for he never told a lie. When he was a trader who sold merchandise belonging to Khadijah before she became his wife, he never practiced dishonesty, deception, counterfeiting or disappointment in his trading. In heading his household after getting married, he was also praiseworthy. As a father, he treated his children fairly and did everything he could to make his wife happy. As a leader of the community of believers (Arb *ummah*), he had also praiseworthy qualities for he always prac-

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160 *Saidina* from the Arabic *sayyidināh* (Ach *panghulèe*) is a title meaning "our leader". The title is assigned to important personages in Muslim history, such as to the Prophet, his family and the righteous caliphs.

161 In Cirebon, Yogyakarta, and Surakarta, the celebration of *mò'lōt* is called *sekatèn* or *grebeg mulud*. This term is from the word *syahadatain* referring to the profession of faith: There is no deity other than Allāh and Muḥammad is His messenger (see Muhaimain 2004: 177).

tised what he preached. As the leader of war, he not only commanded, but he was also very brave at the frontline, attacking enemies. He was a true hero and never afraid of death. There was only one motto for him; “a martyr’s death for the sake of the religion of Allāh and the religion of Allāh’s teaching on the earth led by him”. He obviously had a good and noble character, high morality etc. All his fine qualities and behaviour are an exemplary model for believers because every aspect of his life is very admirable. He had brought people from the uneducated world (Indon *alam jahiliyah*) to the educated world (Indon *alam ilmu pengetahuan*). Due to his service to human beings, the *khanduri mò’lōt* ritual is, annually held to commemorate his struggle and his good service during his life time.

## Timing

Based on the Acèhnese calendar, “the month of the birth” (Ach *buleuen mò’lōt*) in Acèh lasts for three months: Rabi’ al-Awwal (the third month of the Islamic calendar or March), Rabi’ al-Akhir (the fourth month of the Islamic calendar or April) and Jumadil-Awwal (the fifth month of the Islamic calendar or May). Rabi’ al-Awwal is known as the first or “old *mò’lōt*” (Ach *mò’lōt awai* or *tuha*) started from 12 Rabi’ al-Awwal till the end of this lunar month. Rabi’ al-Akhir is known as “younger brother or middle *mò’lōt*” (Ach *adoe mò’lōt* or *mò’lōt tengoh*) started from the beginning till the end of this lunar month; and Jumada’l-Awwal is known as “the last or final *mò’lōt*” (Ach *mò’lōt aké*, *tulōt* or *keuneulheuäh*) started from the beginning till the end of this lunar month. These three months are called “the month of the birth” (Ach *buleuen mò’lōt*) within which the Aneuk Jamee and the Acèhnese hold a ritual called the ritual of *khanduri mò’lōt*.

The villagers have different opinions as to why the “the month of the birth” is held for three months. According to one informant, three months refers to the time needed to announce to the people that the Prophet Muḥammad was born. He added that after he was born, the Arab people who were very happy needed three months to report to other faithful people sailing with boats from other Middle Eastern lands. Other informants, however, have other opinions, saying that the Acèhnese choose three months for the *khanduri mò’lōt* in order to give the Acèhnese a longtime to choose when they want to hold the ceremony because all Acèhnese have a strong motivation to hold the “ritual meal” for the Prophet. If they cannot hold it due to their business or finance in the first phase, that is in the month of Rabi’ al-Awwal, they can postpone it and do it in the second phase, that is in the month of Rabi’ al-Akhir. If they still can not

hold it in the month of Rabī' al-Akhir, there is one more opportunity in the third phase that is in the month Jumadal-Awwal so that it rarely happens that the Acèhnese cannot hold it. If all people held the *khanduri mò'lōt* on 12 Rabī' al-Awwal only (the date of the Prophet's birth), no one would eat it because everyone is preparing on that day. The Aneuk Jamee and the Acèhnese may then freely choose whenever they want to hold the *khanduri mò'lōt* within the above three months. It is said that the one who holds the *khanduri mò'lōt* ritual outside "the month of the birth" (Ach *buleuen mò'lōt*) will receive no religious merit and people will laugh at him or her.

The *khanduri mò'lōt* held for the Prophet during the above three months is also called *mò'lōt sayéd* (from the word *saidina* ("our leader")). According to one informant, the term *mò'lōt sayéd* refers to the *khanduri mò'lōt* during the three months which is the best or which *khanduri mò'lōt* is the most satisfactory for the participants. Some young men in the village have different views about *mò'lōt sayéd*. Most of them contend that *mò'lōt sayéd* refers to any occasion when they get very good food without payment.

The *mò'lōt* celebration has been the subject of controversy from the start. It has always met with opposition from purist movements that condemn it as a *bid'ah*, a religious innovation that contradicts Tradition. Between the 12th and 15th centuries, a genre of *fiqh* (study of law pertaining to ritual obligation) specialized in the decision of *bid'ah* emerged. This genre, which first appeared among Mālikī scholars in Andalusia but spread throughout the Islamic world, became part of a debate that developed mainly between the supporters and opponents of Sufī rituals. The most prominent representative of this genre, although not its creator, was Aḥmad ibn Taymīya (d.728/1328), a highly controversial figure even in his lifetime.<sup>162</sup> Part of the current within Islamic scholarship devoted to the purification of ritual and morality, he followed the footsteps of earlier scholars such as at-Turtuṣī (d.520/1126), Ibn al-Ġawzī (d. 529/1200), Abū Šāma (d. 665/1268) at-Turkumānī (14th century and Ibn al-Hāġġ al-'Abdarī (d. 737/1336).<sup>163</sup> The topics and arguments developed in *kutub al-bid'ah* (the tractates against innovations) belong to a repertoire that became standard in the critique of ritual, and which gained new dynamics following the

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162 See al-'Azma, 'Azīz (Azis al-Azmeh) (2000) and Memon (1976).

163 Fierro, "The tractates against innovation", pp. 207-209.

revival of Ibn Taymiya's writings with the rise of Islamic reform movements at the beginning of the 18th century.

In Islam there are only two holidays: The festival of the fast breaking (Arb *'īd al-Fitr*) and the festival of the sacrifice (Arb *'īd al-Adhā*). Other festivals apart from these are *bida'ah*<sup>164</sup> for Muslims to be commemorated because there are no religious sources which are explicitly commanded by Allāh. Moreover, the Prophet never introduced and performed it when he was still alive, explains one modernist. When I discuss it with the village *imām*, he admits that the tradition of the *khanduri mò'lōt* ritual is *bida'ah*, yet it has been widely accepted as a legitimate activity in the villages. The *khanduri mò'lōt* ritual is, therefore, always performed in the villages. It takes place at the family level and at the village level including not only the proper birth ritual, but also the exchange relationship that becomes a part of its celebration.

### **The *khanduri mò'lōt* at family level**

The *khanduri mò'lōt* taking place at family level is held individually in a house. This kind of *khanduri mò'lōt* is called *mò'lōt nadzar* (Arb *nazr*)<sup>165</sup> or *mò'lōt kaôy* ("vow *mò'lōt*") to release individuals from a spiritual debt. It is held in order to bring about "the spiritual vow" because one has made a promise to Allāh if his or her will is granted with Allāh's help he or she will return this by doing a good deed. If the wish is fulfilled then he or she should pay it by providing food to other Muslims. That particular individual utters the vow verbally. The *imām* whom I discuss this with says that the law of uttering "the spiritual vow" is not prohibited (Jam *bulieh*; Ach *jeut*) although it is less preferred by the '*ulamā*' because behind it, there is a hidden behavior (which less good toward Allāh). For example; "If Allāh brings about my wish, I will be close to Him, if not, I will not be close". It is as if one performs a certain religious service (Ach *ibadat*) Allāh would grant whatever he or she desires. This person is identified as 'mean' (Ach *ureueng kriet*). Basically "the spiritual

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164 *Bid'ah* can be classified into two classifications; 1) *Bid'ah hasanah* meaning an innovation regarded as beneficial. 2) *Bid'ah madzmumah* meaning an innovation regarded as blameworthy. The *khanduri mò'lōt* celebration thus belongs to the first classification (Arb *bid'ah hasanah*), explained one *imām*.

165 *Nadzar* (Arb *nazr*) which means "offering", in its verbal form it means "to offer" or "to make a spiritual vow." *Nazr* is also used in Arabic in a totally different way also "to warn," that is not applicable in this context. The Qur'ān has used the word "nazr" in both meanings. I only use here the first usage which is of relevance to our discussion.

vow” must be paid, if it has been uttered (QS 22:29). It can no longer be cancelled because it is a promise to Allāh. This is proven by the story of Hazrat, Maryam (Mary of the Christian scriptures)’s mother. She had to give Maryam up to the temple even though she was a girl and it was against all accepted tradition to let a girl be a maid at the temple. The Qur’ān tells the story of Maryam’s mother in which her families fulfilled the “spiritual vow” as they had promised their Lord (QS 3:35).<sup>166</sup> Nevertheless, the “spiritual vow” may still be canceled if the promise has not yet come true. But cancellation after one knows that the request to Allāh has been granted is not allowed at all. If one does so, he has deceived Allāh and he has lied to himself, says the *imām*. The *imām* adds that if “the spiritual vow” contains wickedness, this kind of “spiritual vow” may not be paid. Vice versa, if there is a person who makes observes religious service for the sake of Allāh without any requirement, this kind of “spiritual vow” is not disliked by the Prophet. The “spiritual vow” itself is a religious service, which thus must be directed to Allāh and the person who brings about it is loved by Him. At the end of the discussion, however, the *imām* himself recommends that when you are facing a really difficult or distressing situation, it is better to make a “spiritual vow” but when the problem is over you have to offer special prayers or invite the poor or orphans for a meal for the sake of Allāh.

Even though it contains a hidden behavior less liked by Allāh, “the vow *mò’lōt*” is made by the villager at family level. The way to hold the *khanduri mò’lōt* at the family level is done with the “spiritual vow” that has been uttered at the beginning. If the “spiritual vow” is uttered with a sacrificial buffalo, one must slaughter it. Should the “vow” be uttered with a ram one must slaughter it and so on. In Blanporoh, the “village chickens”<sup>167</sup> which are more delicious in taste than others are killed to fulfill the “spiritual vow” because they are the

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166 In 5:27-31, the Qur’ān tells the story of the two sons of the prophet Adam (Habeel and Qabeel, Anglicized names: Able and Cain) who made an offering to their Lord. In 19:26, the Qur’ān relates the story when Prophet Jesus is born without a father and the Jews ask of Maryam about such an implausible situation. ‘So eat and drink and refresh the eye. Then if you see any mortal, say: Surely I have vowed to fast to the beneficent Allāh. So I shall not speak to any man today’. And in the first twelve verses of *sūrah* al-Dahr (*sūrah* 76) the Qur’ān tells the story of *nazr* performed by the Prophet Muḥammad’s family (Arb *ahlul bait*).

167 The “village chickens” (Jam *ayam kampung*; Ach *manok gampōng*) are chickens, which are raised without being purposely fed, which also known as ‘free range chicken’. They look for food by themselves but their owner provides a coop for them.

smallest animal that could be properly dedicated to Allāh by cutting its throat and pronouncing *bismillāh* meaning “in the name of Allāh”. A fish is too small and cheap and a ram would be too expensive for most people (see also Bowen, 1993).

Unlike a *khanduri mò'lōt* at village level, a *khanduri mò'lōt* at family level is performed during the day as well as at night and does not need the committee members and no special meeting is held as it does not involve many people. The one who has a dominant role here is the person who has made the “spiritual vow” and who is helped by his or her nuclear family: husband, wife and children, nephew, and niece. In relation to the “vow *mò'lōt*”, I witnessed one family who held the ritual of *khanduri mò'lōt* individually in the *mò'lōt* lunar month. Last year Muslém, the head of a household uttered the following vow, “If nothing befalls my rice plants and they have a good harvest next year, I will hold a *khanduri mò'lōt* for the *saidina*”. Eventually after he had a good harvest he performed the *khanduri mò'lōt* to redeem his “spiritual vow”. He fulfills it because based on his judgment Allāh has in fact rendered some assistance for his good harvest.

On March 13th, 2007, he went to a market and bought the required foodstuffs such as several “village chickens”, white glutinous rice (Ach *breueh leukat* or *pulôt*), white ordinary rice (Ach *breueh bit*), coconut (Ach *bòh u*), jackfruit (Ach *bòh panah*), yam (Ach *bòh ketila*), cassava (Ach *bòh ubi*), pumpkin (Ach *bòh labu*), salt (Ach *sira*), sugar (Ach *saka*), cooking spices (Ach *bumbu masakan*), and certain kinds of banana called *bòh pisang talōn* and brought them home after paying the seller at Manggég market. He did not purchase fish and vegetables on that day because he already had them at home. At home, his wife helped by his son and daughter cook the food for “the vow *mò'lōt*”. All the expense of this “ritual meal” is borne by him including the expense of preparing the servings and side dishes.

Two weeks before the ritual meal of “vow *mò'lōt*” occurs, he invited his parents and his wife’s parents. The invitation to attend his ritual meal would have also been extended to the grandfather and grandmother from both sides if they were still alive. In other words, the invitation is extended to both kin groups called “4 groups” (Ach *peuet kaôm*), generation -1 and “8 sides” (Ach *lapan pihak*), generation - 2 (see Ch.3). In addition, the religious leader in a village, the village leader and orphans who live near his house are also invited. There are only a small numbers of guests who are invited to eat this ‘ritual

meal' at his house. There are only 15 people. The orphans are invited in the afternoon and his parents, his wife's parents, the head of the village, and the religious leader are invited to his house at night.

## **Idang (the dishes)**

A special food with various side dishes are offered to the invited guests at his house called *idang*. There are two special kinds of *idang* prepared by the family head for collective consumption (Ach *pajoh sama-sama*) at the family level:

### **Idang buleukat kuwah tuhèe**

This *idang* is prepared for the orphans who live near his house. The glutinous rice is not cooked together with its broth (Ach *kuwah*). Only after it and its broth are cooked are they mixed together.<sup>168</sup> Its broth is made of coconut milk (Ach *santan u*), banana, salt, and sugar. Besides the cooked rice, a variety of side dishes are also served for the invited orphans.

### **Idang buleukat kuwah peungat**

This *idang* is prepared for his parents, his wife's parents, the religious leader, and the village leader. It is made of coconut milk mixed with a certain kind of banana called *pisang raja* ("king banana") or *pisang abin*, jackfruit, yam, cassava, salt and sugar. They are cooked together with glutinous rice that has been wrapped with banana leaves (Ach *on pisang*) in triangle form and tied with a palm leaf (Ach *puréh*). *Kuwah peungat* is nearly the same as *kolak* or *sènok*.<sup>169</sup> After they are cooked they are eaten with the cooked glutinous rice (Ach *bu leukat* or *pulôt*). I also observe a plate of cylindrical sweets (Ach *leupèk*) made of glutinous rice flour and palm sugar that night. They are wrapped with banana leaves then steamed. The banana leaves are wiped with a little coconut oil so that they do not fall apart before they are wrapped. In addition, there is a plate of fried banana (Ach *bada*) made of *pisang talōn* (a kind of

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168 In Tapak Tuan, the capital city of South Acèh, the glutinous rice mixed with its broth is called *nasi tuai*.

169 *Kolak* or *Sènok* is made of coconut milk (Ach *santan u*), jackfruit (Ach *bòh panah*), yam (Ach *bòh keutila*), and cassava (Ach *bòh ubi*), pumpkin (Ach *bòh labu*), salt (Ach *sira*) and sugar (Ach *saka*). The glutinous rice for making *kolak* or *sènok* is cooked together but it is not wrapped with a banana leaf.

banana, preferred by most villagers) first mixed with ordinary rice flour (Ach *teupōng breueh bit*) and salt then fried with coconut oil (Ach *minyeuk u*).<sup>170</sup> That night the ritual meal of “vow *mò'lōt*” is held. It consists of the recitation of Qur’anic verses and prayers followed by the enjoyment of the food. Before he begins to recite the *do’a*, the *imām* declares quietly in low voice that the *khanduri mò'lōt* is intended to fulfill the “vow” made earlier by the family head and host of the *khanduri*. The *teungku* invokes *do’a* and all participants follow it and intone *āmīn* (please accept o Allāh) at certain parts of the recited *do’a*. The collective recitation for the ritual meal of “vow *mò'lōt*” is not long, consisting of only twenty Qur’anic verses of *sūrah al-Baqarah* recited by the *teungku*. On this occasion the “ritual meal” emphasizes “the safety in the world and in the hereafter” (Ach *seulamat di dōnya dan akirat*), the words of dedication and the prayers for the Prophet Muḥammad’s welfare. But at other “ritual meals”, for instance: the “ritual meal” for the dead and for the farm, the collective recitation is central to the events. After finishing reciting *do’a*, the village leader welcomes the participants to eat by saying, “that which we have brought here must be finished, in the name of Allāh” (Ach *peu yang kana ta peuhabéh, bismillāh*). The following figure 4 shows the relation of *khanduri mò'lōt* at home/family level.

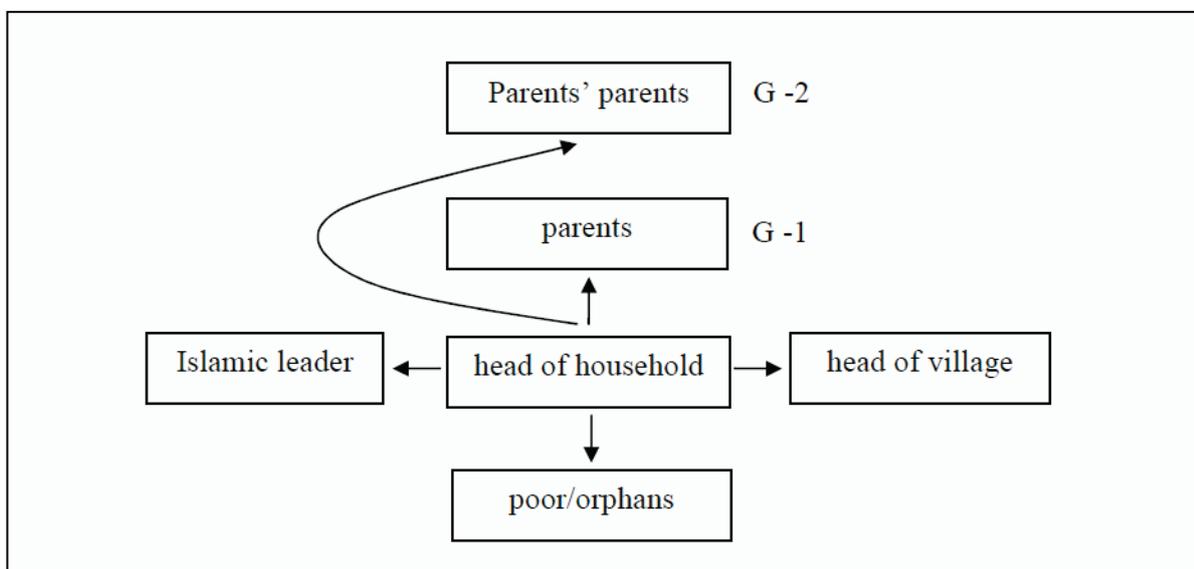
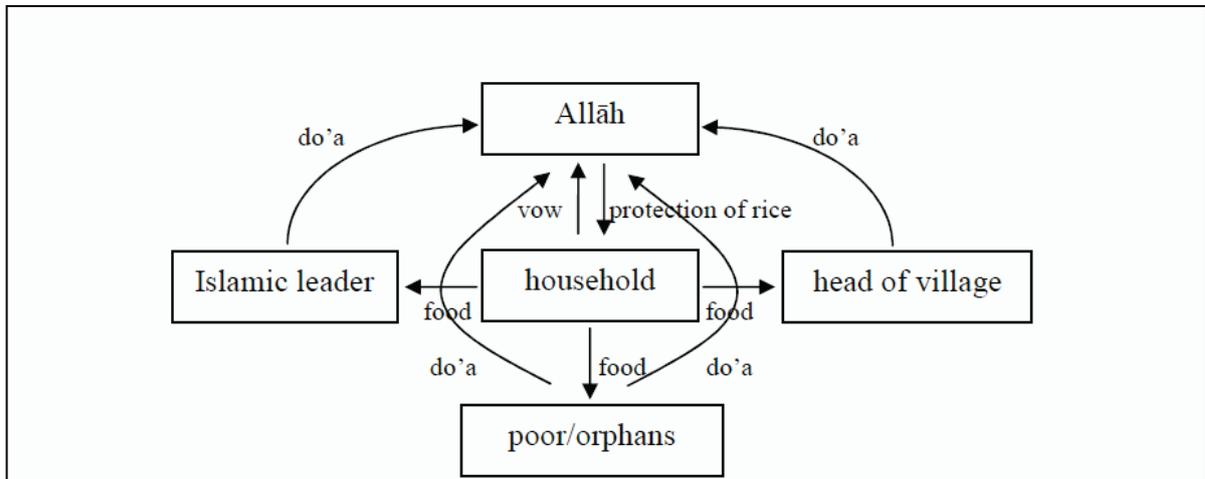


Figure 4. The relation of *khanduri mò'lōt* at home/family level

170 The information how to make idang buleukat kuwah tuhèe, idang buleukat kuwah peungat, kolak or sènok, leupèk and bada was obtained from a female informant.

The following figure 5 also shows the reciprocal relation of *khanduri mò'lōt* at home/family level:



**Figure 5. The exchanges of *khanduri mò'lōt***

*Nazr* is not an obligatory act in Islam. It is only done when a Muslim feels a need to do so. However, once a “spiritual vow” is taken by a Muslim, it becomes obligatory to complete the *nazr* if his or her wish is granted by Allāh. The basic concept of *nazr* is to offer something less valuable in the hope and expectation of receiving something of higher value. (The “value” does not have to be material. It could just be honour and dignity). In the case of *khanduri mò'lōt nazr* at family level in Blangporoh village, the head of the household who has made the “spiritual vow” invites not only both sides of his kin but also others (see figure 4). If he only invites his own kin for the *khanduri* it means that he kills something from his own belongings just for himself. This meal is considered to be no different from other meals because he shares his luck (the good harvest) only among his own kin and he does not make other people happy. There is no exchange relationship in this case as the luck is not shared with others.

Based on the assumption that he received a good harvest with aid of Allāh, he releases his spiritual debt by holding the *khanduri mò'lōt nazr* or *mò'lōt kaoy* because he received something from Allāh and now he has to give it back by killing the “village chicken” to constitute a relationship to Him and society. The meat of the killed chicken and the cooked rice with a variety of side dishes are given to the orphans, *teungku*, *keuchik*, and his parents and his parents’ parents for both sides (see figure 4), meanwhile the secret *do'a* recited by the

*teungku* and the chicken's "soul" (*nyawa*) are destined for Allāh. The exchange with Allāh is through the societal relations (i.e. sociability) as expressed by his relationship with others. By inviting the *teungku*, this *khanduri* is a cosmological representation of the pious people in the village in which the villagers regard the *teungku* as pious and close to Allāh and who becomes the intermediary in thanking Him through his recited *do'a* at the *khanduri*. By inviting the *keuchik*, this *khanduri* also has an *adat* relation in which *keuchik* is the head of the *adat* holder in the village. By inviting the orphan children, this *khanduri* also marks a social relationship. Children are like angels; they never commit sin and are innocent. Giving food to them is like giving money to the mosque because they are a part of the mosque. Rich people give money the mosque and the mosque gives money to the needy. By mobilizing those people, the household head brings his *khanduri* to the public sphere in order to show his personal happiness and at the same time to have witnesses that he has redeemed his "spiritual vow" although at the beginning it is made by him individually. All these people help the family head who uttered the "spiritual vow" to thank Allāh in the hope and expectation of receiving more mercy from Him and in keeping the social relationship with the others as expressed in figure 5 above.

### **The *khanduri mò'lōt* at village level**

On the second day of Rabī'al -Awwal, the *imām* looks in the direction where the moon rises. He says, "Welcoming the guest" (Arb *rabbi warab-bukallāh*) that is the *mò'lōt* lunar month. The *imām* then reports to the village leader. The village leader then reports to the council of "elders" called *ureueng tuha* "the men of experience" who are knowledgeable about *adat* in the village. The *imām*, village leader, and "the men of experience" and the components of the governing body of the village (Ach *perangkat gampōng*) determine when the meeting or "assembly" (Ach *meusapat* or *mupakat* from the Arb *muwāfakat*) for the *khanduri mò'lōt* will be held. The secretary of the village, Syarkani, then announces to the villagers using a microphone and loudspeaker that the meeting will take place on the Friday after *Jum'at* prayer (Ach *seumayang Jum'at*). The meeting is set for the *mò'lōt* ritual on Thursday night on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The fixed date of *mò'lōt* ritual is very important. It should not clash with village activities. Care is taken and they fix the date for *mò'lōt* ritual so that no two villages shall celebrate it on the same day or too close together because special villagers in the same *mukim* are invited to each other's village,

the members of the governing body of other villages in the same *mukim* are also invited to eat the *khanduri*.

The people who follow the meeting for *mò'lōt* ritual in Blangporoh are themselves members of the governing body of the village and some male villagers. The meeting is led by the village leader as the president of the assembly and *imām* at the men's house (Ach *meunasah*),<sup>171</sup> which is a stone's throw from Blangporoh's mosque. They exchange opinions and reach an agreement from all those attending. After getting an agreement from both sides; society and the representative of the governing body of the village who attend the meeting, they then decide how and when the *khanduri mò'lōt* will be carried out. The decision is then made as follows:

The *khanduri mò'lōt* starts at 14 o'clock and finishes at 18 o'clock.

The day of the *khanduri mò'lōt* falls on March 29th, 2007.

Blangporoh village invites the neighbour village that is Blangbaru village and all students (Ach *aneuk dayah*) of the boarding school in the village.

Every household is asked to contribute Rp 2000 and it is collected by each cluster leader (Ach *ketua duson*) for providing drinks.

These decisions are written down by the secretary of the village, Syarkani. The head of the village, Anasjuddin, hopes all participants will spread the news about the preparation of the *khanduri mò'lōt* at the end of the meeting that night as this event is as important as the timing of marriage rituals to all villagers. The period of preparation from the day of the meeting till the *khanduri* is held takes about a month. During this period the villagers prepare the needed materials, for instance; cooking spices (Indon *bumbu masakan*), ordinary rice (Ach *breueh bit*), glutinous rice (Ach *breueh leukat*), coconut oil (Ach *minyeuk u*), ordinary rice flour (Ach *teupōng breueh bit*), glutinous rice flour (Ach *teupōng breueh leukat*), and sugar flour (Ach *teupōng saka*); especially for those who do have them yet although many have prepared these ingredients long before the *mò'lōt* month comes.

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171 Formerly the *meunasah* (prayer house or the men's house) was the place in which mature youths gathered after sun down. At present it is now often used for this purpose and in many villages the *meunasah* are deserted. The building serves instead as a house of prayer, school, village guesthouse, meeting place or occasionally as a place to formalize important ceremonies such as signing of marriage contracts (Dall 1982:1).

## Invitation and the standing betel vine

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007, the following day after the meeting, a messenger from Blangporoh goes directly to meet the village leader and the *imām*, and the *imām* of Blangbaru village at their houses to invite them officially. This official invitation is called *meuròh*. The messenger brings with him an offering called *ranub baté*. *Ranub* (Jam/Indon *sirih*) and *baté* (Jam *carano*), a copper silver bowl covered with an ornamental piece of cloth contains several betel vines (Ach *on ranub*), several split areca nuts (Ach *bòh pineng teuplah*), several cloves (Ach *bòh lawang*), a gambier (Ach *gambé*), and wet lime (Ach *gapu basah*) in a tiny container, and several betel vines which already folded and contain the ingredients called “ripe betel vine” (Ach *ranub masak*), which is ready to be chewed.<sup>172</sup> Soon after the messenger arrives at the ritual specialist’s house, he greets him by saying *assalāmualaikum* (peace be unto you). The ritual specialist’s replies, *wa’alaikum salām warahmatullāhi wabarākātuh* (peace be unto you too and Allāh’s mercy and His blessing as well). The messenger says to the ritual specialist; “we request you on behalf of Blangporoh village that you come and take part in *khanduri mò’lòt* held by Blangporoh society on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007”. At the same time he gives a *ranub baté* to the ritual specialist who takes “the ripe *ranub*” from it and consumes it then he hands back while chewing it and answers “it is well” shaking his head a little bit meaning that he is counting how many people from his village will be able to come so that sufficient rice and meat can be prepared for the *khanduri mò’lòt* ritual. The messenger repeats the same phrases and gestures when he invites the *imām* of Blangbaru the Teungku, and the chairman of students at the boarding school (Ach *aneuk dayah*) in Blangporoh village. Although this official invitation is for the village leader and the religious leaders only, all the inhabitants of Blangbaru village and all students at the boarding school in Blangporoh are included.

Refusing the *ranub baté* means refusing an invitation which is considered anti-social and shameful. “The elongated betel vine is the male counterpart of the round areca nut with which together with lime is associated with fertility”

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172 The aim of preparing ‘ripe betel vine’ (Ach *ranub masak*) which already contains the ingredients of betel chewing and “raw betel vine” (Ach *ranub hana masak*) which does not contain the ingredients of betel chewing is to allow the invited guests to choose the betel vine offered freely in a copper silver bowl covered with an ornamental piece of cloth containing betel chewing ingredients (Ach *ranub baté*).

(Martin, 1992). The form of a betel quid (Ach *sugo ranub*) is a prerequisite to all social relationships. *Meuròh* with *ranub baté* is also primarily a sign of respecting guests, by accepting it the guests show that they are visitors with a good intention, trusting the host village, having no fear of poisoning. Refusing *ranub baté* means that the guests do not want to take part in the *khanduri* and considered to be an insult. In the past a refusal was the equivalent of a declaration of war.

The *meuròh* offering a *ranub baté* as a gift to officially invite other people is still an *adat* in Acèh. It is not only for the *khanduri mò'lōt* ritual but also for other life-cycle rituals; such as the ritual of *akikah* (Arb 'aqīqah), marriage, and circumcision which are performed by male and female villagers.<sup>173</sup> Meeting the ones who will be invited strengthens their personal relationships and sometimes the talks are extended. Nowadays, however, this tradition has become rare. Instead, the village people use a mobile phone to communicate directly because it saves time. The betel vine with its ingredients for betel chewing is also brought in *baté* to the mosque for the invited guests on the day of *khanduri mò'lōt* ritual. In the past, on the day of *khanduri mò'lōt*, piles of betel vines were heaped up high on a rounded food tray called *dalōng* with a detachable wooden standing in its midst and in between them sliced areca nut, cloves, gambier, and tobacco were placed. This gift is called 'standing betel vine' (Ach *ranub dong*).<sup>174</sup> The 'standing betel vine' is also presented in the same way as a betrothal gift (Indon *hadiah tunangan*).

Besides these invited guests, each individual has his own private guests or relatives who live elsewhere who are welcomed to take part in the *khanduri*. They come without invitation as according to *adat* they are at liberty to regard the *khanduri mò'lōt* provider as their own family. If there are many such guests to entertain, the expenses of the feast will be borne by their host since the *adat* directs that he should provide them with a complete separate meal and its various side dishes in addition to his contribution to the general feast (Snouck Hurgronje I 1906:211). This *adat* still exists in West Labuhan Haji district, South Acèh. The Blangporoh village as host village invites the Blangbaru village and in return the Blangbaru village invites the Blangporoh village reciprocating the

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173 *Meureòh* (an official invitation) with offerings of a *ranub baté* as a gift to the midwife (Ach *bideun*) of a woman in her fifth month pregnancy is also performed by husband's mother in the villages.

174 See also Snouck Hurgronje I (1906:210-211).

*idang* (gift) on another *khanduri mò'lōt* ritual in that or the following year. The same practice is performed by any villages in West Labuhan Haji district in which they invite each other to eat the *khanduri mò'lōt*. In other words, the *khanduri mò'lōt* is always performed in pairs.

Two days preceding the *khanduri mò'lōt* celebration is called “the day for buying fish” (Jam *hari bali lauk*; Ach *uroe bloe unγκôt*). Fish is bought by the head of the family. On this day, there are many fishmongers (Jam *panggalèh lauk*; Ach *mugèe unγκôt*) coming to sell fish. On that day the fish is more expensive as nearly all villagers purchase it. If the villagers want to acquire them for a cheaper rate they go directly to the port where the fishermen sell the fish directly to the buyers in that district. Fishmongering is a male job. A fishmonger said that during *mò'lōt* season (Ach *musém mò'lōt*) he is very happy as he sells a great quantity of fish. The villagers rarely say “fish is more expensive” (Jam *lauk maha*; Ach *unγκôt meuhai*) than on the other days. They do not care if the price is a little bit expensive as the money for buying fish has already been saved long before the arrival of the “the month of the birth”.

A day preceding *khanduri mò'lōt* celebration is called “the day of steaming the glutinous rice” (Jam *hari mangukus barèh sipuluik*; Ach *uroe seume ob*) in which glutinous rice is steamed (Jam *nasi sipuluik*; Ach *bu leukat*). It is done by housewives with the help of their female children. The glutinous rice is soaked and washed clean so it does not spoil quickly (Ach *bagah basi*) then it is mixed with pounded turmeric (Ach *kunyét*) before it is steamed. It is then mixed with coconut milk in a large metal vessel (Jam *dalom dandang*; Ach *lam dandang*). “The day for buying fish” and “the day of steaming the glutinous rice” are often done within a day preceding the ritual of *khanduri mò'lōt* if there are many family members helping cook the meat, fish, vegetables, ordinary rice and glutinous rice.

## **Kinds of *idang***

*Idang* is a parcel of prepared food with a variety of various side dishes brought to the mosque on the *khanduri mò'lōt* day. The *idang* is offered for collective consumption (Ach *pajoh sama-sama*) at the mosque and the rest is to be brought home right after the *khanduri* with the hope that the donations will procure merit for the donors on the ritual day. There are several kinds of *idang mò'lōt* offered to the guests at the village level: *daluang*, *sanggèn*, *idang nasi kunyik*, *idang gadang*, and *idang golèk*.

## *Daluang*

*Daluang* [a covered round tray] is used to place the cooked rice and side dishes. It is circled with twelve drinking glasses bordered with a cylindrical piece of tin or other metal called *glōng* which serves to prevent the various dishes in the drinking glasses from falling when it is moved. In the middle, the cooked rice is placed in cylindrical form and covered with the heated banana leaves. On the top, there are many heated banana leaves that have been folded as “plates” for eating. Its content is shared by four to six people. The whole stand of the rounded tray is decorated with a beautiful cover in the shape of a great truncated cone (Ach *kurucut*), the summit of which is sunk inwards so as to resemble a crater. This cover is called *sangè*. It is made of *pandan* leaves (Ach *on seukè*) and is adorned on the outside with colored threads and on the inside with gold leaf. It is said that the tray symbolizes unity and its cover symbolizes protection in life.

## *Sanggèn*

*Sanggèn* (Ach *ambèn*) is made of wood connected with small wire to prevent side dishes from falling as it is moved. It consists of seven layers with no less than thirty dishes. Each layer consists of glasses to place fried fish, cooked fish, baked fish, fried meat, cooked meat, boiled meat, and vegetables. In the middle is the unhusked rice<sup>175</sup> in a plastic bowl to infuse them with the *diké mò'lōt*, the plastic bowl is also used to stabilise the glasses. Between the connected *sanggèn*'s wood, there are ten to twelve boiled eggs (sometimes they are coloured) on the palm leaf rib stick (Ach *puréh on u*) which are the same height as the connected *sanggèn*'s wood. Each stick is decorated with different colour kite paper. Below its base the wood quadrangle is also decorated with different coloured papers. Its content is shared by seven to ten people.

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175 Soon after the *diké mò'lōt* has begun, the plastic bowl containing the unhusked rice is placed in the middle of the people who recite a *kitāb barzanji* called *ureueng mediké*. They take the container back after reciters finish reciting this *kitāb*. As they arrive at home they soon mix the rice seeds that have been brought to the mosque with other rice seeds at their houses. By doing so they believe that their rice seeds have contained *baraka* (a special blessing assigned by Allāh) from the recital of the *kitāb* at the mosque in order to keep danger away from rice plants that lead to a failed harvest.

### *Idang nasi kunyik*

*Idang nasi kunyik* or *jamba* is a small *idang* comprising of the cooked yellow glutinous rice (Jam *nasi sipuluit kunieng* or *nasi kunyik*; Ach *bu leukat kunéng*). It is heaped up high like a pyramid on a quadrangle made of wood with four legs and a long rounded wooden pole in the middle (Ach *capah idang*) and covered with sweet thinned cakes called *tumpo*. A *tumpo* is made of glutinous rice flour, egg and other ingredients then it is fried with coconut oil. It is covered again with banana leaves that have been heated (Ach *dilayu*) earlier in order to make them soft. Its content is shared by ten to fifteen people.

### *Idang gadang*

*Idang gadang* (Ach *idang rayeuk* or *raya*) or big *idang* consists of several layers. This *idang* is not often made by villagers. However, affluent villagers and the members of the governing body of the village make it. It consists of the steamed yellow glutinous rice that is also heaped up high on a quadrangle made of wood with four legs and a long rounded wooden pole in the middle of the pyramid form and covered with *tumpo*. There are several Acèhnese traditional cakes belonging to the *idang gadang*:

*Keukarah* is made of ordinary rice flour and glutinous rice flour mixed with warm water. Mixing is done in a coconut shell called *bruk takue* that has holes in the bottom. Through small holes from *bruk takue*, the mixed flour which is like threads falls over the heated coconut oil till it is cooked. *Kamaloyang*, made of ordinary rice flour mixed with coconut milk is fried with coconut oil. *Seupét* (crispy round flatted crackers), made of ordinary rice flour mixed with coconut milk and eggs is baked. *Juadah talue* (Ach *juadah bòh manok*) is made of glutinous rice flour mixed with eggs. They are fried first with coconut oil then sugar flour (Ach *teupōng saka*) is sprayed on them. They are also attached to every end of the rattans on the *idang*. Small *juadah talue* are also attached to every end of the rattans. Big *juadah talue* are also tied at the end of a stick made of bamboo then they are also attached to the *idang*. They are in the form of cocks, birds, and flowers. At the top is a bird as the official symbol of the Republic of Indonesia (Indon *burung garuda*). In addition, it is also decorated with various colours of small rounded fried flour called “necklaces” (Ach *manék-manék*) using the ingredients of *juadah talue*. They are connected with threads sewn the middle of them. Likewise various coloured flags made of kite paper are also tied at the end of the sticks. They are also stuck to the big *idang*.

This all takes a week to make. The villagers spend from twelve to sixteen litres of glutinous rice to make an *idang gadang*, the same *idang* as used at a marriage ritual placed before guests arrive called a “groom’s *idang*” (Ach *idang lintō*). It costs from Rp 500,000 to 800,000. One says that the bigger the *idang* brought to the mosque for *khanduri mò’lōt*, the bigger the religious merit (Jam *pahalo*) for the donors.

### *Idang golèk*

*Idang golèk* means an *idang* that is (“circulated”) passed round from one person to the next (Ach *golèk*). It is smaller than a *sanggèng* which is not included in the main *idang* but as a supplement on the *khanduri mò’lōt* day. They are only made by certain families that have young men (Ach *aneuk muda*) and young couples. On the day of *khanduri mò’lōt*, *idang golèk* are placed in a house near a mosque where the *khanduri* is held. After the *khanduri mò’lōt* is finished, they are given to the invited guests. This exchange is called “planting *idang*” (Ach *tanom idang*) to the invited guests. They are reciprocated in that or the next year of the *khanduri mò’lōt* season. However, the village *imām* condemns this reciprocity because it is no longer a sincere *khanduri* and can hamper the value of the *khanduri mò’lōt* ritual itself since the receivers have to give them back to their givers. He emphasizes that the given *khanduri* must be sincere if not it may not be called *khanduri*. No matter who will eat it, the giver will certainly get religious merit by providing it. Here is clear that the *idang* has direct reciprocity among the villagers, hence condemned by the *imām*. Even though the *imām* does not allow reciprocation, a number of villagers perform this exchange without the *imām*’s blessing because there are two advantages: 1) they are keen to prepare the *khanduri* on the *mò’lōt* day, and to reciprocate the received *idang golèk* and 2) the children at home will definitely get the *khanduri* on this day without trying to outdo (Ach *meurebôt*) each other.

Outdoing each other, particularly in eating the cooked meat, is done by children at the *khanduri mò’lōt* ritual. Some get more meat, some get less and some do not get any cooked meat at all. Meat which the villagers seldom eat on ordinary occasions is indispensable for the *idang mò’lōt*; the *khanduri* is preceded by slaughtering animals. Such general slaughterings take place on no other occasions except the last days of the eighth month (Ach *huroe or uroe makmeugang puasa*), Sya’ban and the last two days of the ninth month (Ach

*huroe makmeugang uroe raya puasa*), Ramadhan and at the “great” feast of the sacrifice on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the twelve month (Ach *uroe raya haji*), Zulhijjah.

## **A case of conflict**

Two years ago, there was a conflict concerning the *idang golèk*. During that *mò'lōt* season, the Blangporoh villagers were invited to eat the *khanduri mò'lōt* by the Kutaiboh village, a neighbouring village. Bang Dinpasi in Blangporoh received the returned *idang golèk* which according to him was not enough. The returned *idang golèk* was not the same amount and value of what he had already “planted” to M. Ali in Kutaiboh a year earlier. In other words, Bang Dinpasi received less than he gave to M. Ali so that he refused to accept it from the village Kutaiboh. He was angry and made noise in front of the crowd. This reciprocity becomes problematic because its value was not the same. M. Yusuf teased him by saying “that is enough, take it. It is still better than if M. Ali had given you no reply. Please see that the returned *idang golèk* which is not enough as a charitable act (Ach *seudekah*) so that you will feel ok about it and can also obtain religious merit from Allāh”. At the end the owner of the *idang*, M. Ali heard about it and felt really embarrassed. He together with other young men from the Kutaiboh village came to Bangdinpasi’s house and gave him clothes, sugar, coffee and cigarettes in order to conceal his embarrassment.

From this conflict up till now the Kutaiboh villagers no longer invites the Blangporoh village to the *khanduri mò'lōt*. The conflict experiences between the Kutaiboh village and Blangporoh village is because the exchange of *idang golèk* is not mutually satisfactory. The mutually satisfactory gift-exchange relations will arise from a balancing of “benefit” between parties. Because the returned *idang golèk* is inadequate, the relation between the giver and the receiver is threatened. The inadequacy of a returned *idang golèk* becomes a source of vile gossip “that can travel across the seas over hundred of miles to the home of the offender” so that some additional gifts have to be given to the receiver right away as a precondition to the continuation of the relation between the parties.

## Excursus

The reciprocity of *idang golèk* is just the same case as giving and receiving a henna tray (Ach *dalōng gaca*) performed by the village women. It seems that it has become an *adat* in the villages in South Acèh in which the village women prepare the henna tray for a family who holds *khanduri* (Ach *alèk*); such as, *akikah*, circumcision, and the marriage ritual. The henna tray consists of milled henna, clothes, cakes, 1 kilogram of sugar, half a kilogram of coffee, face powder, soap, perfume, a pair of sandals, a rimless cap for a male, headgear for a female, a mirror, scissors, a towel, a comb and so on. The receiver writes down the name of the givers. As the giver holds a party later, the henna tray receiver will give it back with the same contents and even more. The basic aim of the reciprocity of the henna tray is to strengthen the social life and to develop or maintain a social relationship between parties. In contrast, commodities are exchanged strictly in relation to other commodities without any implied residual obligations or relationships between the people involved (Gregory 1982). If the receiver does not return the henna tray, the village women will condemn the receiver and in the end none of them wants to attend her future celebration. Teungku Usman with whom I discuss the reciprocity of *idang golèk* and the henna tray contends that casually the reciprocity of these both exchanges is no different to the exchange of *salām* (Muslim's greeting) in which giving *salām* is voluntary but answering is obligatory. The people who receive *salām* are obliged to answer better or at least answer in a like manner to the *salām* giver<sup>176</sup>

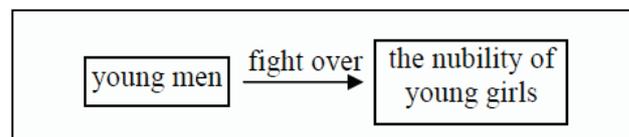
In the past, the *idang mò 'lōt*<sup>177</sup> brought to the village mosque consisted of several layers. The first layer was filled with oranges, sugarcanes, and bananas. The second layer was filled with cooked vegetables. The third layer was filled with cooked fish together with their broth. The fourth layer was filled with boiled eggs, salted eggs, and sunset eggs. The fifth layer was filled with fried fish, fried chicken, and roasted chicken. The sixth layer was filled with cooked meat with their broth and the seventh layer was filled with fried meat and baked meat. Every layer comprised of seven plates; six plates were placed around it and the other one was placed in the middle. The arrangement of such

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176 But unlike the reciprocity of *idang golèk* and the henna tray, saying *salām* is one of the Prophet's *sunnah*.

177 My informant does not specify which *idang* he means. I think the *idang* he means is *sanggèn*.

plates and layers were performed in order to be loved by the deceased persons (Ach *aruwah*) of the family. According to the head of Acèh Adat council of West Labuhan Haji district, Guru Budiman, such *idang* prepared for the *khanduri mò'lōt* ritual symbolizes a nubile girl (Ach *aneuk gadih yang ka jeut meukawén*) because young men fought over her. The nubile girl is very valuable and brings happiness to her parents. Parents who postpone marrying her are seen as objecting to the *khanduri mò'lōt*. This *khanduri* brings great religious merit from Allāh. This action is assumed less useful if the parents continuously refuse to marry her off. She certainly would become old and eventually a young man in the village would be reluctant to marry her because she is less attractive due to “less affection” (Ach *kureueng rasa*). As said in Haba Madja “*Idang meulapéh bèk tapeuthen, aké jameun ka kureueng rasa*”, means “the layered *idang* is not to be kept because later it will be less tasty”. The following figure 6 shows the young men fight over the nubility of young girls.



**Figure 6. Young men fight over the nubility of young girls**

## **The celebration of *khanduri mò'lōt***

Monday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at 14.00 pm the *khanduri mò'lōt* ritual in Blangporoh village is performed. Each head of the household brings his *idang* with Rp. 2,000 to the Blangporoh’s mosque and men and women together with children have gathered there. The students (Ach *aneuk dayah*) who are from the boarding school of Syeikh Muda Waly and the village’s orphans sit in the mosque, while the invited guests who are from Blangbaru village and strangers sit outside the mosque. The *imām* welcomes the invited guests using a microphone.

All *idang* are given to the *mò'lōt* committee members and placed on the terrace of the mosque. One said that the committee members take 5 *sanggèn* with the cooked rice and bring one to the children of the Syeikh: Abu Ruslan Waly’s house, to Abu Nasir Waly’s house, to Abu Abdurrauf Waly’s house, to Abu Amran Waly’s house and to Ummi Halimah Waly’s house in the complex of the boarding school which is not so far from the mosque where the ritual takes places. At any public *khanduri* held in Blangporoh village (and even

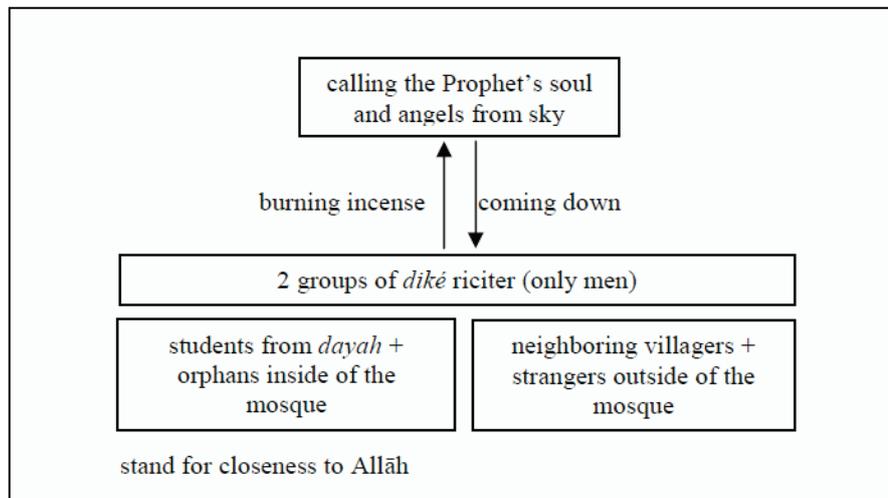
sometimes out of Blangporoh village) the villagers always give them food because they are charismatic ‘*ulamā*’ in the village and at the same time show their respect to them. The *idang* should be eaten first by them due to the villagers’ assumption that they are close to Allāh and have rendered services for the village mosque. I also see the same practice in Kutaiboh village in which the villagers also give an *idang* to Abu Hamid as a charismatic ‘*ulamā*’ in that village. Another one goes to Iskandar, the teacher who teaches Qur’ān in the mosque and the other one goes to a labourer, Ahmad who helps make the mosque. Every *khanduri mò’lōt*, each of these people is always given an *idang* for they have rendered a service (Jam *bajaso*; Ach *ka meujsa*) for the village. Both ‘*ulamā*’ and those who have rendered services to the mosque and the village are served the *idang mò’lōt* first.

Prior to reciting *diké mò’lōt*<sup>178</sup> in Blangporoh village, the *imām* as leaders of *diké* from Blangbaru village, Teungku Imran lights a small bit of white benzoin incense in a coconut shell in order to call the Prophet Muḥammad’s ‘soul’ (*roh* from Arb *rūh*) to be together with the people who recite *diké*. The villagers named a benzoin incense *keumeunyan* which is very important for healing in the village. In Acèhnese, *keumeunyan* means “that is what I want”. According to Teungku Jauhari, the word *keumeunyan* is from the Arabic word “*burru da`wāhum*” meaning “calling something”; for instance, the ‘soul’ of the Prophet at *khanduri mò’lōt* ritual, angels at any religious ceremony, and Satan (Ach *syètan*). Abu Baihaqi says that burning the benzoin incense at the *khanduri mò’lōt* ritual is to follow the Prophet’s interests. But Cut Mad says that burning it at the *khanduri mò’lōt* is also to call the Prophet’s “soul”, to call angels from the sky to take part in the feast then they will bring up the religious merit of *diké mò’lōt* (Ach *pahala mediké mò’lōt*) to Allāh. He adds that the angels themselves like the pleasant aroma provided by the benzoin

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178 Most *diké* recited are from *kitāb barzanji* in Arab Jawi (non Arab) and some are from Acèhnese as practiced in Blangporoh village. But in Blangmanggéng, another village in Manggéng district all *diké* recited are taken from this *kitāb* (book). *Diké* is not the same as *dzikir* (from Arb *dhikr*). *Dzikir* is the repetition of the names of Allāh and certain religious formulae as a means of demonstrating piety or, in the case of mystics, also to induce a mystical trance. In *zikir jahar*, the repetition is spoken aloud, while in *zikir khafi*, the repetition is done silently. The most frequent formula used is as follows: *Lā ilāha illal Lāh* (there is no deity but Allāh), *Allāhu Akbar* (Allāh is great), *Alḥamdulillāh* (all praise to Allāh), and *Subḥanallāh* (Allāh is holy) (Federspiel 1995:295)

incense. The following figure 7 shows that burning benzoin incense is to call the Prophet's 'soul' and angels from the sky.



**Figure 7. Calling the Prophet's 'soul' and angels**

There are two kinds of incense that are often burned: white incense (Ach *keumeunyan putéh*) and black incense (Ach *keumeunyan itam* or *hitam*). White incense is burned as a tool for prevention (Ach *peumuléh*) whereas black incense is burned as a destructive tool for bad purposes; for instance, for the aim of destroying, taking revenge, and killing. Burning black incense is often associated with mystical properties (Ach *meurajah*), which are connected with black magic (Ach *ileumè hitam*). A healer says that both white incense and black incense are from paradise then they were sent down to the earth together with Adam and Eve. The ritual of using incense directly came from the Prophet Muḥammad, who discovered benzoin's powers as he emigrated from Mecca to Madina on a camel with a flock of sheep driven behind them to cover their tracks. He and Abu Bakar hid in a cave in Mount Tsur (Arb *jabal tsur*) to elude their Mecca pursuers. In the cave, the Prophet Muḥammad picked up a piece of benzoin and, scratching it with his fingernails, released its characteristic smell. He said to the wood: "just as I am honest and straightforward, so you must carry straight to Allāh whatever is required by the people who burn you."<sup>179</sup> The wish that he not be discovered, upon which an acacia blocked the entrance, a spider web which was spun over the opening of the cave and a dove's nest with eggs in front of it. It seemed that no one had entered the cave. As his pursuers saw the large web

179 The same idea of using incense (Ach *keumeunyan*) found in Gayo, Central Acèh; see Bowen (1993:231).

and the dove's nest with eggs, they passed by without checking inside.<sup>180</sup> However, the local modernists avoid using the benzoin incense because of its implied function of transmitting requests to angels and other spirits.

## Diké mò'lōt

There are two groups of *diké* reciters. One group is from Blangbaru and the other group is from students of the Boarding School in Blangporoh. The *diké* reciters are recruited from students who have been well trained by their seniors at boarding school. Learning by heart the *diké mò'lōt* has become an additional course for many boarding schools (*Ach dayah* or *rangkang*) in Acèh province. The *mò'lōt* months for boarding school's students are the busiest month in the year. There are many invitations from other villagers to recite *diké mò'lōt* at their villages. In addition, the *mò'lōt* months bring them many advantages. The more invitations come, the more good food they will get. They rarely get good food at the boarding schools. The only opportunity to consume good food for them is during the *mò'lōt* seasons. Therefore, they call the *mò'lōt* months as “the month for repairing nutrients” (Indon *bulan perbaikan gizi*).<sup>181</sup>

The *diké* reciters sit on mats in rectangular formation facing each other. In front of the *diké* leader, there is a *kitāb barzanji*<sup>182</sup> placed on a pillow. Beside it there is a coconut shell with some charcoals in it. When the most respected *diké* reciters are present, the performance begins. There is a lack of formality but the solemnity is significant. As it is about to begin, a small white incense is burned and its fragrance helps intensify the spiritual atmosphere. The *sūrah al-Fātihah* is recited and its merit flows directly to the Prophet, his wives, his descendants, his companions his followers, those who are dead and still alive. As the white incense is burned at the opening of the *diké* at the *khanduri mò'lōt*, the following *do'a* is uttered:

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180 The history of his concealment in the cave is mentioned in the Qur'ān 9:40.

181 Not only Blangporoh village recruits students of boarding schools (*Ach aneuk rangkang* or *aneuk dayah*) to recite the *diké* on the *mò'lōt* day but also other villages in Acèh do the same thing. See Acèh daily newspaper, Serambi Indonesia on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

182 In Acèh, *kitāb barzanji* is used as the main source and it has already inspired the '*ulamā'* of the boarding school to write other similar works in the summary of *seulawet* and the biography of the Prophet Muhammad. The difference is that the summary works of the Prophet's birth is written in non Arabic (Arab Jawi). It is not the same as the original *kitāb* which is written in Arabic. The name of *barzanji* is taken from the writer of the *kitāb* (book). That is, Syekh Ja'far al- Barzanji bin Husén bin Abdul Karim.

<i>Bismillāhir-Rahmānir-Rahīm</i>	In the name of Allāh, the merciful, the especially merciful
<i>Hai kēmēnyan putiah, ambo tau asal mulo angkau</i>	Hai white incense, I know the origin of your creation
<i>Angkau jadi dari sir Allāh dan sir Muhammad</i>	You are created from the secretness of Allāh and Muhammad
<i>Angkaulah yang banamo burru da `wāhum</i>	You are named burru da`wahum (calling something).
<i>Angkaulah yang ambo imbau dan suruah sakatiko</i>	You are the one whom I call and ask for a moment.
<i>Angkaulah yang menyamapaikan niaik ambo.</i>	And you are the one who fulfils my intention.

Another *do`a* that is uttered when the incense is burnt is:

<i>Alief (Arb<sup>أ</sup>) nurullāh</i>	Alief (Arb <sup>أ</sup> ) is the light of Allāh
<i>Ba (Arb<sup>ب</sup>) kalamullāh,</i>	Ba (Arb <sup>ب</sup> ) is the word of Allāh
<i>Hai keumeunyan ambo paluah Rasulullāh</i>	Hai my incense, you are the sweat of the apostle of Allāh
<i>Angkaulah yang menyampaikan niaik ambo</i>	You is the one who fulfils my intention.

These *do`a* are deemed as the *do`a* for burning incense (Ach *do`a tot keumenyan*) The leader, Teungku Imran, who is well acquainted with *kitāb karzanji* and who has a good chanting voice takes several Arabic lyrics of verses from it. Each contains appeals to Allāh to give the highest dignity to the Prophet, his ancestors and his descendants and merit to his companions, his followers, participants and all Muslims. At the same time as the smoke of incense is billowing, the first *diké* is recited by the leader as follows:

<i>Astaghfirullāh</i>	I ask Allāh for pardon
<i>ya Allāh lanā walahū</i>	O Allāh, for us and the Prophet families (i)
<i>min zambinā wamin zambihī,</i>	from our sin and their (the Prophet families) sin

This *diké* is repeated by the *diké* reciters in chorus ten times; the same *diké* is chanted in response to the leader each time. As the recitation of the first *diké* is over, he then continues reciting the second *diké*:

<i>Astaghfirullāhal`adhīm</i>	I ask Allāh for pardon
<i>mingkulli zambil adhīm</i>	from every sin;
<i>Wal awwalau wal akhirau</i>	the previous and the latest sin (ii)
<i>waldhahirau wabathina,</i>	the outer and the inner sin

This *diké* is repeated in chorus ten times. As the followers repeat *diké*, their bodies and heads are shaken from the right to the left and their elbows are “locked” with each other; for instance, the elbow of the right hand of B is “locked” with the elbow of the left hand of C and the elbow of the left hand of

B is “locked” with the elbow of the right hand of A in order to strengthen their body and heads to be shaken at the same times (Ach *bak sabé lingkik*). The leader continues reciting the third *diké*:

*Allāhumma shalli ‘alā saidinā Muḥammad* O Allāh [please] exalt our leader, Muḥammad  
*Yā Rabbī shalli ‘alaihi wa sallīm* O Allāh [please] exalt him and give him peace (iii)

This *diké* is repeated in chorus ten times. At this point, the *diké* reciters are still shaking their bodies and heads but their voice keeps increasing. The spectators comprising of men, women and children of different ages are coming closer and closer to them. They are also very happy to see the *diké* reciters. The leader then continues reciting the fourth *diké*:

*Ya nabī salam ‘alaika,* O prophet peace be upon you  
*Ya rasul salam ‘alaika,* O apostle peace be upon you  
*Ya habibus salam ‘alaika,* O beloved peace be upon you (iv)  
*Salawatul Allāhi ‘alaika,* Allāh’s exaltation be upon you

This *diké* is repeated again and again in chorus for another ten times in response to the leader each time he chants the *diké* but the melody is not the same as the previous one. The leader then continues chanting the fifth *diké* in Acèhnese version which is not found in *kitāb barzanji*:

*Adam Nabi, Nabi Adam* The Prophet Adam, the Adam Prophet  
*Mula jadi Nabi Adam* The beginning of the Prophet Adam was created  
*Geyu sujud bak Nabi Adam* Asked to bow to the Prophet Adam (v)  
*Yang hantem sujud Iblis Syétan* Those who did not want to bow were *Iblis Satan*

This *diké* is repeated in chorus another ten times and the melody is different than the previous one. Sometimes a participant takes the initiative to change the melody. While standing solemnly then the leader starts with the sixth *diké* in a new melody:

*Marḥaban ya nur al-‘ain* Welcome the light of the eyes  
*Marḥaban jadd al-Husein* Welcome grandfather of Husein  
*Marḥaban ahla wa sahla* Welcome and best regards (vi)  
*Marḥaban ya khair al-da’i* Welcome the best propagator

This *diké* is repeated for another ten times. Then the last *diké* with another new melody is recited:

*Marḥaban ya marhaban* Welcome ya welcome  
*Umar, Usman* Umar, Usman (vii)  
*Ya Ali ya Abubakari* Ya Ali and ya Abubakar

This last *diké* is repeated ten times. The *diké* reciters recite it loudly while standing and jumping (Jam *ba ila* or *malompèk-lompèk*; Ach *grôp-grôp*) to show their spontaneous respect, honour and joy due to the Prophet's birth. They are all sweaty and some of them sometimes fall down then stand up again and jump again like other *diké* reciters. The *imām*, however, does not jump up and just stands near the jumping *diké* reciters while reciting the *diké*. Meanwhile, the spectators are coming closer and closer to them. After finishing reciting *diké* at about 17 o'clock, they sit on the floor again. The committee members give them lemonade.<sup>183</sup> While taking a rest for several minutes, some *diké* reciters say that they are tired due to reciting *diké* while fanning their bodies with their clothes and some say nothing while wiping their sweaty bodies with their small towels. Some are looking at the terrace of the mosque where all *idang* are placed. They are so happy (Ach/Indon *gembira*) because the *idang* together with their broths will be soon served for them. They sit in several straight rows like in group prayers but facing each other. There is space in the middle to place the *idang* later.

The last step is reciting *do'a* as the conclusion of *diké*. The *imām* recites it holding up his two hands followed by all participants and at the certain part of *do'a*, they intone with the word *āmīn* (please accept o Allāh). At the end of *do'a* the *imām* together with all participants intone together:

<i>Amīn āmīna yārabbal `alamīna</i>	Please granted our request oh Lord of the world
<i>Istajeb du `a anā kullanā ajma inā</i>	Please accept our <i>do'a</i> that we have already recited.

See the outlines below for the above ritual actions

*Idang* are brought to the terrace of the mosque  
 People assemble at the mosque  
 Incense is burned  
*Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* is recited  
*Do'a* for burning incense is recited  
*Diké mō'lot* is recited by the *diké* reciters  
     7 x 10 each = 70  
     + jumping up down to express happiness  
 Concluding *do'a* by the *imām* and all participants answer *āmīn* "please accept o Allāh" at every end of the recited *do'a*  
     *Imām* + participants  
     1 + 1 becomes 1

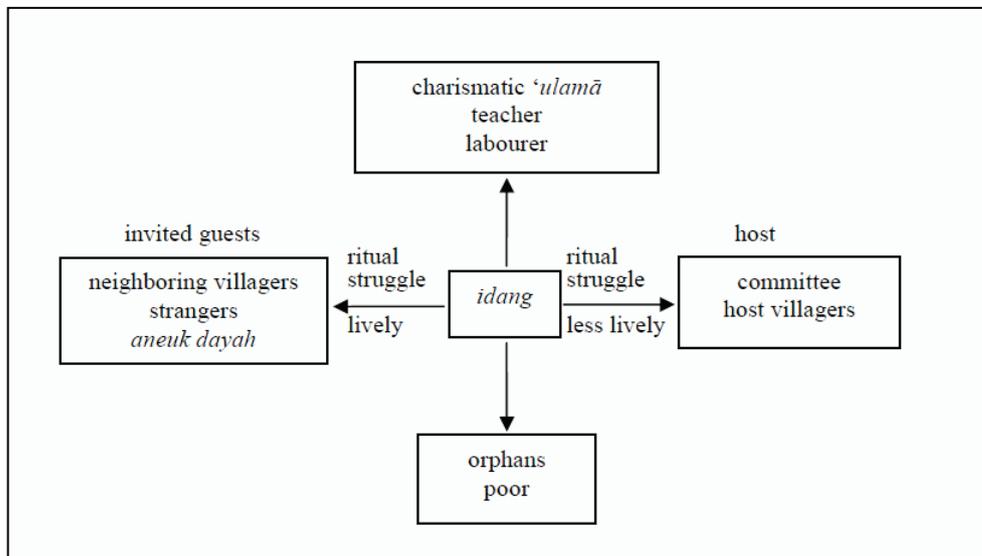
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183 The money for buying lemonades is taken from household heads who bring *idang* to the mosque.

The committee members are then busy taking the *idang* from the terrace of the mosque for all participants after the *diké* finishes and place them in front of the *diké* reciters. As all *idang* are ready in front of the *diké* reciters, Anasjudin, the village leader of Blangporoh village welcomes them to take and consume the *idang*. Most of them then struggle (Ach *mereubôt*) eagerly to get a portion of the cooked and fried meat, fish and boiled eggs from *sanggèn* and also glutinous rice from *idang nasi kunyik*, and *idang gadang* for collective consumption and bring the rest home. The situation is very noisy which is like “the sinking Chinese” (Ach *lagèe cina karam*), say the attendants. In such situations, M. Yamin says “This is the *khanduri* for our leader, eating fully and bringing the rest home” (Ach *nyo khanduri keu saidina, pajoh beu tro puwo beuna*). The committee then also eat together on the terrace of the mosque. Soon after the *khanduri mò'lôt* is over, the young leader of the village rechecks the orphans and the poor who are absent on that day, the committee members then bring meals and side dishes to their houses. There the committee members share ordinary rice with side dishes then they share the sticky rice. Vice versa, in Kutaiboh and Blangbaru village, the committee members share the sticky rice first then they share the ordinary rice together with side dishes.

Meanwhile big *idang* are served more for the governing body of the invited village than others in Blangbaru and Kutaiboh village, *idang gadang* is served more for the *diké* reciters and orphans than for others. These *idang* are less in Blangporoh village and Blangbaru village, but they are more in Kutaiboh village. In addition, there is no *daluang* there. The owners of *daluang*, *sanggèn*, *idang nasi kunyik* and *idang gadang* directly share them with the participants in Blangporoh and Kutaiboh village. Therefore, the situation at the time of eating *khanduri mò'lôt* is better. The interesting thing is that the *diké* reciters and the orphans in Blangbaru village are allowed to fight to get a portion (Ach *mereubôt*) of meat, fish, and glutinous rice. The *imām* of Blangbaru, Teungku Imran says on the day of *khanduri mò'lôt* celebration, “If the drinking glasses are broken due to fighting to take the portion of meat, fish and other side dishes, I will replace them for you all because today is a happy day”. He adds that fighting to take the portion of meal and side dishes is one of the expressions of happiness in commemorating the Prophet’s birth. In Blangbaru village, the people who share the meal and side dishes on that day are not the owners of the *idang* so that the participants are not reluctant to fight to take the served food with side dishes. “This situation makes *khanduri* livelier, and lets

them fight over the provided food”, say some old men who are watching the *diké* reciters with smiles. The following figure 8 is the distribution of the *idang mò'lōt* at village level:



**Figure 8. Distribution of *idang mò'lōt* at village level**

When the *khanduri mò'lōt* takes place in Blangporoh village, there are only several students of the boarding schools who go to the grave of Syeikh Muda Waly to perform a recommended prayer (Ach *seumayang sunat*) and recite *do'a* in order to get a blessing from him. They go there not in the context of *mò'lōt* celebration as is admitted by Teungku Mulyadi, rather they go there because of the students' habit of seeking their teachers' blessing (Ach *beureukat gurèe*). The boarding school students who are sometimes called *aneuk rangkang* or *aneuk dayah* by the villagers believe that the 'soul' (*roh*) of their deceased teacher (Ach *gurèe*) could guide their life to the right path so they go to the Syeikh's tomb to seek the teacher's "blessing" which they refer to to gain the supernatural powers and the special mystical powers for good fortune and protection (Arb *kāramāt*) of their former teacher is somehow transferred to them even though they now learn with his son, Abu Ruslan Waly at the boarding school.<sup>184</sup> However, Cut Hukom in Suak Berumbang Manggég, a neighbour

184 Unlike the *khanduri mò'lōt* ritual in Blangporoh village, in Banten thousands of people go to the complex of Agung mosque for doing *ziarah* (visiting tomb) at the grave of Sultan Hasanuddin by taking turn on the *mò'lōt* ritual day. A number of the visitors take a bath in Sultan's pond in order to get *baraka* "blessing". Some of them bring the pond water back to their homes as medicine. In Cirebon on 11-12 Rabī' al-Awwal, many Muslims go to the grave of Sunan Gunung Jati, one of the nine pious leaders (*wali son-*

district of West Labuhan Haji does something different on the night of the Prophet's birth in which he intercepts and retains the falling rain directly from the sky if it is raining that night. He adds that the raining water will be the best prevention (Ach *peunuléh*) for all sickness because the night of the Prophet Muḥammad's birth is a holy, blessed night, light night, valuable night, and a happy night for all Muslims and even the world is all submersed in light on the night of his birth.

## Discussion of *diké*

The *diké* recited at the *khanduri mò'lōt* ritual contains appeals to Allāh to give the highest dignity to the Prophet, his ancestors and his descendants and merit to his companions, his followers and to all participants and is the reaction to the historical events attached to it.

*Diké* 1 and 2 contain do'a called *istighfār* (asking forgiveness from Allāh). *Diké* 3 and 4 contain the prayer for the Prophet's welfare called *seulawet*. Reciting *istighfār* and *seulawet* respectively are the courtesy of a *do'a* and are a must before asking something else of Allāh, says the *imām*. The *diké* reciters shake their body and head while reciting *diké* 1, 2, 3 and 4. It is said that shaking the body and head while reciting *istighfār* at the *khanduri mò'lōt* is a symbol of happiness (Indon *kegembiraan*). It refers to the grand father of the Prophet, Abdul Muthalib who shook his body and head when he heard his grandson, Muḥammad was born. In addition, it also referred to Abu Lahab (the Prophet's father's brother) who also shook his body and head when he heard that the Prophet was born although he himself never acknowledged that Muḥammad was an apostle of Allāh. In addition, he set Tsuaibah free as his slave because she told him that Muḥammad was born on that day (12 Rabī' al-Awwal 571 M) as an expression of his happiness. Some villagers in Blangporoh, Blangbaru, and Kutaiboh village whom I discuss this with say that the torment for Abu Lahab in hell is lightened on every Monday because he was happy as the Prophet was born.

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go) who spreaded Islam in west Java, to get *baraka*. In all Keraton, the celebration of *panjang jimat* is performed on the day of the Prophet's birth. *Panjang jimat* means watering the Keraton's heirloom inherited by Sunan Gunung Jati. Many people fight over the water that has been used to wash the Keraton's heirloom because it is believed that the water will bring the luck for the users, see Harian Pikiran Rakyat, Bandung May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007.

*Diké 5* emphasizes that Satan is a clear enemy for Muslims (QS 2:208 and 35:5) from Adam's creation till the end of the world. It is believed that there is a devil upon each misguided path, calling people towards him. Satan is the one who is deprived from the mercy of Allāh and promised hell as an eternal dwelling. Satan said, "Because You have put me in errors, I will definitely sit in wait for them [i.e., mankind] on Your straight path)" (QS 7:16). He asked Allāh to give him respite and took it upon himself to misguide the offspring of Adam (QS 7:14). A participant comments that *diké 5* reminds us not to follow Satan and to always see him as an enemy who leads us away from Allāh.

*Diké 6* is livelier, in which the *diké* reciters are standing solemnly and start reciting loudly to welcome the Prophet's 'soul' (*roh*) to be together with them.

The last *diké* (*diké 7*) is very lively. The *diké* reciters are all happy (Indon *gembira*) and do it sincerely because they believe that the prophet's 'soul' (*roh*) and his four companions; Umar, Usman and Ali are together with them. They therefore do not mind being tired and sweaty. Some other *diké* reciters and a *mò'lōt* speech deliverer at the boarding school in Blangporoh contend that jumping up and down is an expression of happiness. It refers to the days of jubilation approaching his birth (see *mò'lōt* speech). Teuku Nyak Silan says that jumping up and down while reciting *diké* at *khanduri mò'lōt* celebration is also the expression of happiness but it refers to all creatures (*Ach lat batat kayèe batèe*) that are so happy that the Prophet was born except Satan. He adds, "Fish in the sea are jumping up and down; their hearts are so happy because they have their Prophet" (*Ach unγκôt dilaôt di grôp-grôp tunjak, haté jih galak nabi jih kana*). Abu A. Rahman Badar says that jumping up and down at *khanduri mò'lōt* celebration also refers to the tale of Tsuaibah<sup>185</sup> in which she ran and jumped to report to Abu Lahab. He adds, as a slave of Abu Lahab, Tsuaibah was always asked to accompany Aminah (the Prophet's mother) during her pregnancy every night. In the early morning of 12 Rabī'al Awwal 571 M, she ran happily to report to Abu Lahab that the Prophet Muhammad had just been born. According to many villagers, however, not only animals, like fish and other living creatures but also angels in the sky jumped up and down due to their happiness that the Prophet was born. It is also said that jumping up and down at *khanduri mò'lōt* when the last *diké* is recited is the influence of Syiah

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185 Tsuaibah was the slave of Abu Lahab and also the one who breastfed the Prophet after his own mother, Aminah, and then he was breastfed by Halimah as Sa'diyah. She is believed to become the queen of *bidadari* (fairy or a beautiful woman) in paradise.

Islam in Acèh. Many years ago Muslims in Trumon, another district in South Acèh, performed a dance and jumped up when they celebrated Hasan-Husén feasts round fires.<sup>186</sup> Nevertheless, according to Abu Nasir Waly, jumping up and down at a *khanduri mò'lōt* celebration is no indication of Syiah's influence but it is only a shanging history. People probably used to be (Ach *ureueng jamén*) so absorbed reciting *diké* that they jumped up and down. It does not mean that people are not allowed to recite *diké* like that but it has become acceptable for Blangporoh society, while Abu Dasyah, one of the charismatic '*ulamā*' in Panté Geulima, West Labuhan Haji district says that jumping up and down at *khanduri mò'lōt* celebration has no basis at all. If one wants to recite the *diké*, one is not allowed to jump up and down and even his or her body is not allowed to shake. He further says that he has no power to change what people do when the celebration of *khanduri mò'lōt* takes place.

The last episode of the *diké* is the most interesting for the spectators so that many of them comprising of men, women and children from the Blangporoh village and beyond, look at, and listen to *diké* reciters. One says that spectators are the symbol of angels as the Prophet was born because when he was born, there were so many angels from sky going down to earth to have a closer look at him. Many spectators become volunteers to fan (Ach *pôt-pôt*) their clothes in order to cool the *diké* reciters down and to motivate them jumping while reciting *diké*. When I ask one of the female spectators why she wants to come, look at, and listen to *diké* reciters, she answers that the recitation of *diké mò'lōt* will grant the listeners rewards not only worldly but heavenly as well. Worldly reward is that she has the opportunity to get to know people and afterwards the *khanduri mò'lōt* celebration occurs. This opportunity enables her not only to meet people casually but also to exchange ideas, and to help each other. Her small son also gets some wrapped glutinous rice from the *mò'lōt* committee members. Heavenly reward, according to her is that the *diké* reciters will get religious merit. According to the *imām*, however, heavenly reward is that the listeners will get 'help' (Ach *syeu feu at*) from the Prophet Muḥammad in the hereafter. *Syafā'ah* is the intercession of the Prophet Muḥammad on behalf of Muslims on the judgment day. The first *syafā'ah* from him is received when one passes a bridge called *titi sirathal mustaqīm* in the hereafter. Passing it is obligatory for all believers and Allāh will save those who fear Him and

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186 See also Snouck Hurgronje 1(1906:206).

those who pray (recited *seulawet*) for the Prophet's welfare as His messenger and will leave the wrongdoers within it.<sup>187</sup> Every person's good deeds will be weight by angels before passing this bridge. If the pair of scales (*Jam dacing*; Ach *céng*) is heavy on the left side, the Prophet will then add his own turban (Ach *seureuban*)<sup>188</sup> to the right side in order that the pair of scales will be heavy on the right side. The believer then will go to paradise, and if the pair of scales becomes heavy on the left side, the believer will go to hell. The Prophet Muḥammad will perform this only for the ones who have already prayed for him during their lifetime, says the *imām*. The biggest *syafā'ah* given by the Prophet to those who have already prayed for him on the day of judgement, according to my informants, is that he will pick the believers up in hell as other prophets have no power to help other believers in the hereafter. After a long discussion about *syafā'ah*, my informant says the following Acéhnese expression:

<i>Lepah geunaséh nabi Muḥammad</i>	The Prophet Muḥammad truly loves his <i>ummah</i>
<i>Geujak cok umat dalam nuraka</i>	He will pick his <i>ummah</i> up in hell
<i>Nuraka tutông hana geuingat</i>	He will not care about the heat of hell
<i>Nabi Muḥammad umat geumita</i>	The Prophet Muḥammad will look for his <i>ummah</i> .

This expression is quite often recited in Blangporoh's mosque, Blangbaru's mosque and Kutaiboh's mosque. The one who calls to prayer (Arb *muazzin*) uses a microphone to recite it after calling to prayer (Arb *azan*) and before praying together. This is considered the basic idea why Muslims in Blangporoh, Blangbaru and Kutaiboh village and other villagers in South Acèh are motivated to hold the *khanduri mò'lōt* and recites *diké* for the Prophet Muḥammad on the *khanduri mò'lōt* celebration day. The following figure 9 shows the location of the *khanduri mò'lōt* at the village level.

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187 The explanation that every Muslim will have to pass the bridge on the Last Days can found in the Qur'ān (19: 71 and 72).

188 Some villagers says that the Prophet Muḥammad will add his *jubah* (a cassock, often worn by saintly individuals among Muslims) for those who pray for him when his good deed will be weighed by angels before passing the bridge for the believers on the Last Day (Ach *titi nuraka* or *titi sirathal mustaqīm*).

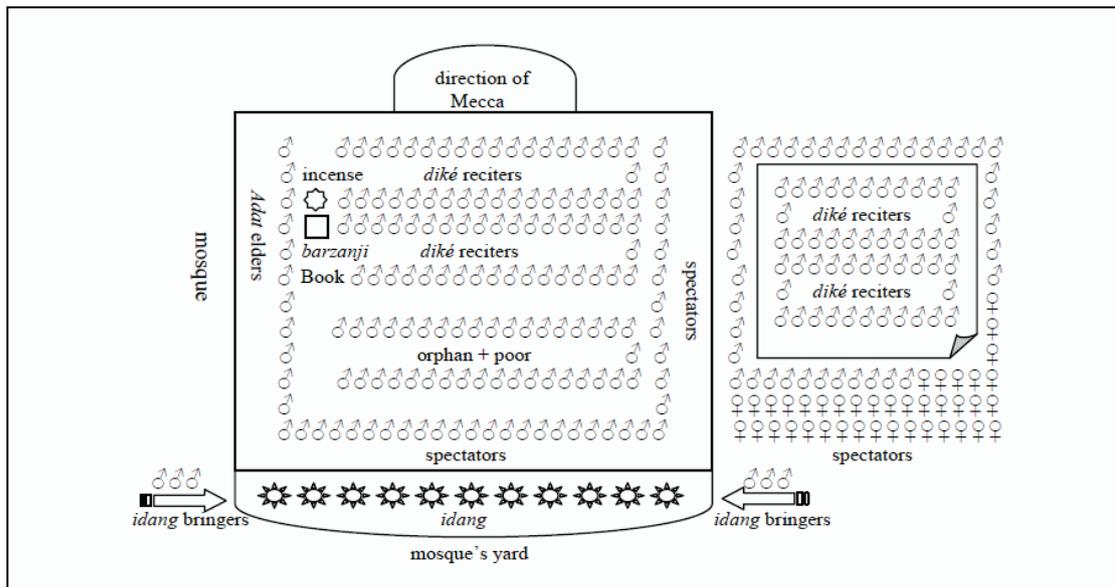


Figure 9. The location of the *khanduri mò'lõt* at the village level

## *Mò'lõt* speech

I have observed the *khanduri mò'lõt* three times in different villages; Blangporoh, Blangbaru, and Kutaiboh in West Labuhan Haji. The *khanduri mò'lõt* in Blangporoh village was the best attended that year. Unfortunately, I did not hear a *mò'lõt* speech or a *mò'lõt* lecture about the Prophet's birth before or after the *khanduri mò'lõt* in these three villages. It is only held at the boarding school in Blangporoh on March 30th, 2007.<sup>189</sup> It seems that *khanduri* is more important than a lecture at the three villages. The villagers assume that this ritual has become an obligation that has to be performed. Everyone whom I discuss this with agrees that it is held to commemorate the Prophet's birth. Some villagers add that the food's essence provided are also enjoyed by the angels who go down from the sky on the day of *khanduri mò'lõt*. For them, the central events in *khanduri mò'lõt* are setting out *daluang*, *sanggèng*, *idang nasi kunyik*, *idang gadang* and even *idang golèk* rather than listening to the lecturer. They see it more as a *khanduri* and the hosting of one village by another. Some other people whom I discuss this with, however, emphasize the importance of lectures and didactic discussions about the Prophet's life and find the *khanduri*

189 The *mò'lõt* speech held at boarding school in Blangporoh is sponsored by students (Ach *aneuk dayah*) and teachers (Ach *gurèe*) of that boarding school. There are more than five hundred people coming to listen to it. Most listeners come from out of Blangporoh village.

to be at cross-purposes with the holiday's commemorative events. For instance, Teungku Kamaruddin says that a lecture about *mò'lōt* is more important than a *khanduri mò'lōt* itself. A *mò'lōt* lecture shows the appropriate expression of love and honour for the Prophet which is by following him, obeying him, carrying out his commands, upholding and reviving his *sunnah* both inwardly and outwardly, spreading his message and striving in this, with the heart, the hand and the tongue. Such is the path of the companions who follow him.

Below I present excerpts from the *mò'lōt* speech at the boarding school in Blangporoh omitting mainly repetitive parts. The general flavour of the *mò'lōt* speech is the significance of the exchange *salām* (Muslim's greeting) as a part of the Prophet's teaching. Besides the information about the Prophet's histories, the social and spiritual purposes of *mò'lōt* ritual are addressed as well. It begins, after the customary Arabic formulae "I take refuge in Allāh from the accursed devils" and "In the name of Allāh the beneficent and merciful" with a qur'anic text, *sūrah al-Ambiyā'*:107 "And We have sent you, [O Muḥammad], except as a mercy to the worlds" and *sūrah al-Ahzāb*: 40 stated that Muḥammad, the messenger of Allāh is the last of the Prophet. The *mò'lōt* speech is then continued:

All "fathers" and "mothers" (Indon *bapak-bapak and ibu-ibu sekalian*), I wish Allāh would bless you all for having attended the *mò'lōt* celebration this night. The Qur'ān says that Prophet Muḥammad is the last messenger of Allāh. He has done mankind a great favour by sending the Prophet, who is also among the human beings. In another interpretation, Qur'ān also says that Allāh relieves you great relief by sending you the prophets for the benefit of all humanities. In this special context, therefore, the coming of the Prophet Muḥammad is seen as the seal of all the prophets (Arb *khātam nabiyyīn*) and must be regarded as a great mercy and a great comfort for mankind. This is because, if he were not to have been sent to this the earth, mankind would have still been living in "the world of darkness". As the various qur'anic verses repeatedly point out that the most fundamental task of the Prophet has been to guide humanities from "the world of darkness" to "the world of enlightenment".

Sadly, there are some people who are ready to show disrespect and their lack of knowledge in their expressive dishonesty and harmful references on the Prophet Muḥammad, as they often say: "He was a person just like any other person, whose life ended a long time ago, why we should waste our time commemorating his birthday? May Allāh forgive those people. This particular line of thinking is very dangerous because it can create some misunderstandings and ignorance. Even though the Prophet was chosen from among human beings, nonetheless, his unique human, moral, and spiritual qualities are very different from those of other human beings...

All “fathers” and “mothers”, the Prophet Muḥammad was born in 571 M in Mecca and died in 632 in Medina. His father was Abdullah, who died before the birth of his son. His mother was Aminah, and his grandfather was Abdul Muthalib. At the age of 25, he married Khadija who supported and protected him and his family and belonged to the clan of Hasyim, a branch of Quraysh tribe. Most importantly, many of his companions followed him, and knowing quite clearly that he was an individual and, above all, as said a human being like them. Just for the sake of argument, supposing Allāh did not send the Prophet, who was among the human beings like us, but, instead, if Allāh had sent us an angel to come to this earth to guide mankind, some people would not have accepted that angel, and they would have found all sorts of reasons to ridicule him, just as they did with the other prophets.

All “fathers” and “mothers”, the birth of the Prophet Muḥammad is a matter of great historical significance ever recorded in the history of all mankind. As in the days approaching his birth, there was such a loud proclamation of joy and jubilation from the heaven and from the earth just to welcome the apostle of Allāh, the Prophet Muḥammad. This great jubilation was of symbolic purpose intended to greet and to welcome the Prophet with such kindness and such pleasure, who was sent for the benefit of all humanity. If the *mò'lōt* ritual is organised in such a way that the participants do not know each other, or do not even greet each other with such joy and happiness, in this sense, then the real purpose and the significance of *mò'lōt* is lost.

All “fathers” and “mothers”, what is required for the *mò'lōt* celebration is therefore to bring together the community spirit and the unity of purpose within association. This, however, will enable people to have the opportunity not only to meet casually but also to get to know each other, and then exchange ideas, and help one another in creating this communal and spiritual atmosphere in order that we can fulfil the basic condition of love and affection for the Prophet Muḥammad. Therefore, it is of utmost important to bear in mind that we meet and organise *mò'lōt* celebration and indulge ourselves in such festivities, but if our hearts and minds are not-guided and influenced by his spiritual teaching, then in such a situation, I am afraid to say that we are just troubling ourselves for nothing.

All “fathers” and “mothers”, one of his spiritual teachings is saying *salām*. It is important to know the meaning and significance of Muslim’s greeting “*Assalāmu ‘alaikum [salām]*”. The *salām* greeting is in fact a superior supplication, and a declaration or announcement meaning that you will be safe from any harm by hands or tongues. To give *salām* greeting is voluntary but to answer it is obligatory. If someone is being greeted he or she has no choice but to respond by answering *wa alaikum salām* “peace be unto you too”. The person who receives *salām* is obliged to give a better answer or at least return the greeting in a like manner to the *salām* giver (QS 4:86). The Prophet Muḥammad has ordered us all to spread *salām* among people you know or do not know yet. It should be spread to chil-

dren, to women whether they are *muhrim*<sup>190</sup> or not or even to the meeting where there are non Muslims. Women are also allowed to say *salām* to men as already practiced by Ummu Hani. She uttered *salām* to the Prophet Muḥammad as the town of Mecca was opened (*fathu Mekkah*).

All “fathers” and “mothers”, the Prophet Muḥammad further guided us that: person riding should say *salām* to a person on foot. People walking should say *salām* to a sitting person. Smaller groups should say *salām* to a large group. The one departing should say *salām* to those who are staying. When leaving or entering your home, say *salām* even if nobody is at home because angels will answer it. If meeting again and again, say *salām* again and again. This *salām* is better than the other form of greeting of love. The reason is that it is not only an expression of love but also the reason and logic for this love expressed in the form of supplication by wishing that the people greeted be saved from all forms of grief. Most importantly when somebody says I pray that you are at peace, he or she is declaring and promising that you will be safe from her or his hand, tongue and she or he will respect, honour and dignify your life.

All “fathers” and “mothers”, it is clear that by saying *salām*, a Muslim is giving you safety and you have to give him this back in return. It is as if he says to you, “ I am giving you safety and security,” so you have to give him the same so that he does not get suspicious or think that the one to whom he has given *salām* is betraying him or ignoring him. The Prophet said that if Muslims ignore or forsake one another, this would end when one of them gives *salām*. The Prophet also said that it was not permissible for a Muslim to forsake his brothers for more than three days, each of them turning away from the other if they met. The better of them was the first one to say *salām*. Hence *salām* is a remembrance of Allāh and thus an expression of love between Muslims.

Let us follow and practise his *sunnah* because he is as an exemplary person whose life is of direct relevant to ours today. One of his *sunnah* is saying *salām* and do not forget to pray for him as much as possible in order to get *syafā’ah* from him in the hereafter.

## **The different valorizations of *khanduri mò’lōt***

Basically, the ritual of *khanduri mò’lōt* is the expression of love and is to honor the Prophet Muḥammad but these days this commemorative celebration has many elements to it so that it is celebrated based on the various intentions (*Jam niaik*; *Ach niet*) of the performers, for example, the case of Aḥmad in the

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190 Degree of consanguinity between a man and woman that renders marriage is impossible.

village of Kutaiboh as I interview him. He says that he feels embarrassed if he does not bring food to the mosque on *khanduri mò'lōt* ritual day because his all neighbours bring it on that day. The intention to hold the *khanduri mò'lōt* has already been talked about long time before it is held. Bang Sulaiman, a farmer in Blangporoh says that he has an intention for the *khanduri mò'lōt* when he plants rice. He says in his heart; if he gets a good harvest, he will hold the *khanduri* for “our leader” (Ach *keu pang ulèe* or *keu saidina*), that is the *khanduri mò'lōt*. Pak Yusuf, a fisherman in Kutaiboh also says that he has an intention for the *khanduri mò'lōt* if he catches a lot of fish. Ibu Laili, a seller in Blangporoh says that she will also hold the *khanduri* for the apostle of Allāh (Ach *keu rasulullāh*) if she gets benefits greatly from her selling. Other villagers say “when we make an intention like this; Allāh will usually accept our intentions because we try hard to earn money”. They add the first important thing is that one should have the intention. If it is for Allāh, He then will grant it.

As has been observed in Blangporoh, Blangbaru, and Kutaiboh village nearly all villagers hold the *khanduri mò'lōt* and even old men and widow also take part in the celebration. They bring their *khanduri* to the mosque even though they only have three or five parcels of wrapped rice (Ach *bu kulah*) with heated banana leaves and a set of stacked containers of side dishes. They say that if they do not take part in the *khanduri mò'lōt* it seems they do not agree with it and they feel that they are not in unity with society. Besides they argue that the celebration of *khanduri mò'lōt* has a blessing power. Its *baraka* (Ach *beureukat*) is acknowledged everywhere in the Muslim world. The recitation of *diké mò'lōt* will grant the listeners not only worldly but also heavenly reward. My informant says that some villagers even prepare the *khanduri mò'lōt* by borrowing money from other neighbors. The important thing for them is that they are able to bring the *khanduri* to the mosque on *khanduri mò'lōt* day.

The villagers in the above three villages are very enthusiastic about commemorating the Prophet Muḥammad’s birthday. This is because they have already known that the greatest mercy from Allāh in the world is the coming of the Prophet Muḥammad to the earth. He has the universal message of mercy for the whole world (Arb *rahmatan li al-'alamīn*). Welcoming the greatest mercy from Allāh with pleasure is strongly recommended by the Islamic religion. Any *khanduri* held for “receiving” of mercy Allāh, for instance the *khanduri mò'lōt* celebration is not against Islamic teaching, explains Abu Nasir Waly. Pak Salèh had a different opinion in relation to *khanduri mò'lōt*. He holds it every year

because the contents of *diké* read from the *kitāb barzanji* or recited through learning by heart by the *diké* reciters has a deep meaning to honour the Prophet Muḥammad and to praise Allāh who created the universe in order to avoid all dangers, both on the earth and in the hereafter. Teungku Sulaiman has another argument why the *khanduri mò'lōt* has to be held by Muslims because the Prophet Muḥammad has very good attributes; there are eight attributes of the Prophet. Four of these attributes are truthfulness (Arb *sidiq*), trustworthiness (Arb *amanah*), conveyence (Arb *tabligh*), and intelligence (Arb *fathanah*). All these “compulsory attributes” (Ach *sipheuet wajéb*) are attached to the Prophet. The other four are negation of these attributes (Ach *sipheuet mustahe*). They are false heartedness (Arb *kidzib*), betrayal (Arb *khianat*), corruption (Arb *kit-man*), and stupidity (Arb *baladah*).

All Muslims have to commemorate his birthday enthusiastically to exalt him because his soul called Nūr Muḥammad is believed to be an embryo of the complex universe from which everything emerges so that the ritual of *khanduri mò'lōt* must be performed, says Teungku Abubakar, a seller in Kutaiboh. On the day of *mò'lōt* he brings a big *idang* to the mosque. He spends Rp 700.000 on it. After giving the *idang* to the committee members of *mò'lōt* with Rp 5000 for drinks, he sits down beside me. He looks so glad that he forgets all his problems for the moment. I ask him, why is he so happy today? He answers, “I have to be happy because I am able to bring the *khanduri mò'lōt* to the mosque this year”. He says that he has heard once from a preacher who delivers a Friday sermon quoted from a *ḥadīth*, the preacher says “the one who makes the Prophet Muḥammad’s birthday “greater”, will be with him in paradise”. He further says that he wants to be with him in the hereafter so that he holds the *khanduri mò'lōt* every year. Pak Abu has another reason why he holds the *khanduri mò'lōt* every year. He says that holding the *khanduri mò'lōt* is an expression of love for the Prophet Muḥammad because he truly loves his *ummah*. He further says that the Prophet Muḥammad once said to Abubakar, the first caliph when he nearly passed away as follows:

*Hanlon sayang keu Fatimah, ke Aisyah  
han lon kira  
Yang na sayang cit keumat, oh lon ingat  
ro ie mata  
Sedang na lon matong jino, genap uro  
dalam dosa  
Oh tan ulon saleh pakri, oh ya Rabbi  
hukum Gata*

The Prophet did not love Fatimah as well as Aisyah  
His love is only for *ummah*, as I remembered them I cried  
When I was still alive, everyday my *ummah* committed sin  
No idea when I was not alive. O Lord, it is up to You

One old farmer in Blangporoh, Pak Daka has held the *khanduri mò'lōt* since the first time he planted rice plants. He likes holding the *khanduri* as it is like giving charity (Ach *seudeukah*) to help the less fortunate which is also the same as giving money to someone else. The power of charity could ward off the coming of disaster to us all. Therefore, the *khanduri mò'lōt* needs to be performed in order that disasters never happen and a heavenly reward can be obtained, that is religious merit from Allāh. One thing that one should have is sincerity, only for the sake of Allāh. He is truly sure that Allāh will reward this sacrifice. Ibu Syarifah in Kuta Iboh, however, says that she prefers giving the *khanduri mò'lōt* to the children because they have no sin yet, therefore we certainly get religious merit from Allāh". Teungku Jauhari says that the bigger *idang* the villagers bring to the mosque on the day of *khanduri mò'lōt* the higher feeling of the donors of honouring the Prophet's birth but others argue that the bigger *idang* the people provide, the bigger religious merit received from Allāh. Teungku Thaib contends that a person who has an intention for *khanduri mò'lōt* and then makes his intention reality will certainly receive great religious merit from Allāh. At least when one provides the *khanduri*, he will definitely receive two religious merits. One religious merit he will get because of the intention he utters in his heart and another religious merit he will get because he provides *khanduri*. He adds that providing *khanduri* to other people is the "perfectness" of the intention in the heart that has been turned to reality. It does not matter who will eat the *khanduri* but it must have a sincere intention. However, one devout woman has different perception about the *khanduri* and religious merit. She contends that Allāh only gives religious merits to those who give *khanduri* if he or she gives it to those who bring about the five pillars of Islam (Ach *rukôn Islam*); *syahadat* (profession of faith), *seumayang* (praying), *puasa* (fasting), *tithe jakeuet* (tithe), and *haji* (Hajj). She adds that at least, the *khanduri* should be given to those who prayed five times a day and fast in the Ramadhān month. In addition, it is also better to give the *khanduri* to the poor who are faithful and perform prayers and fasting. That is the reason why she does not want to bring the *khanduri mò'lōt* to the mosque because she will not know who will eat her *khanduri* since she has to hand it to the committee members of the *khanduri mò'lōt*. Instead, she gives directly to the faithful poor and the orphans in the village; otherwise she will not get religious merit from Allāh. It can be seen that Islam here defines the ritual exchange of community.

The vice village leader of Kutaiboh says that the *khanduri mò'lōt* is now no longer fair. It becomes like a competition. The villagers like showing off to everyone else that they are able to hold a *khanduri* so they bring a big *idang* on the day of *mò'lōt*. If the villagers bring a small *idang*, they will feel embarrassed. In this case, the sincerity is no longer considered important. One said that providing *idang gadang* and *sanggèn* are just to show the good thing (Ach *peuleumah gèt*) to the world or to show people that he or she has a lot of money. Holding *khanduri mò'lōt* in Acèh tends to be done with grandeur (Ach *meugagah-gagah*) to show people that they owe money for the *khanduri mò'lōt*. Actually the villagers are not able to hold it, but when the *khanduri* date is announced, they are all willing and look for money in various ways so that the *khanduri* can be held. Such *khanduri mò'lōt* is said as a symbol of materialism in which the Aneuk Jamee and the Acèhnese prioritize more their stomachs [eating] than others since there are more food stalls and coffee shops than book shops now in Acèh, while the Acèhnese remain stupid and will be left behind.

## Conclusion

The ritual celebrating the Prophet Muḥammad's birthday called *khanduri mò'lōt* is an innovation in Islam. It is disapproved of by conservative Muslims, but regarded as a 'praiseworthy innovation' (Arb *bid'ah ḥasanah*) and widely accepted in the villages. Although the Prophet Muḥammad is also believed to have died on the same day, his death is not of significance to this ritual. The *khanduri mò'lōt* is performed in all villages either in the *mò'lōt* month (on or after the 12<sup>th</sup> day of Rabī' al-Awwal - the third month of the year) or in one of the two following months. From this the two subsequent months derive their names of "younger brother *mò'lōt*" (Ach *adòë mò'lōt*) and "final *mò'lōt*" (Ach *mò'lōt aké*). During a *khanduri mò'lōt*, a 'ritual meal' is also prepared and consumed. Those who live in other villages belonging to the same collection of villages (Ach *mukim*) are the guests of a single village and receive a formal invitation through a messenger of the head of the village.

The *khanduri mò'lōt* that takes place at the family level is held individually in the family houses. It is called vow *mò'lōt* (*mò'lōt nadzar* or *mò'lōt kaōy*). On this occasion the invitation to attend is extended to relatives, the *imām*, the head of the village and the orphans. It aims at releasing individual persons from a spiritual debt. Such debts are incurred when a vow is made, that, in return for a request granted by Allāh, an "offering" (Ach *idang*) will be made. Although

uttering such a vow is not prohibited, the ‘*ulamā*’ are not in favour of it as it expresses “hidden behaviour” which is not pure.

The *khanduri mò’lōt* at the village level is held on behalf of the village community. The arrangement of an offering is governed by the same rules as those applying to the wedding ritual. The inhabitants of neighbouring villages are also invited. The latter will reciprocate with a counter invitation to their own *khanduri mò’lōt* celebration in that or the following year. This is practiced by all villages in Acèh, so that the participation in the *khanduri mò’lōt* is always done in pairs of villages, reciprocating each others’ invitations, and aimed at beginning or affirming ties of friendship.

In the course of my fieldwork, I have observed *khanduri mò’lōt* rituals in three different villages: Blangporoh, Blangbaru, and Kutaiboh in West Labuhan Haji. The *khanduri mò’lōt* in Blangporoh village was the best attended that year. All my informants agreed that the ritual is held to commemorate the Prophet’s birth. Some villagers added that the ‘essence’ (Indon *esensi*) of the food provided “is also consumed by the angels who descend from the sky on the occasion of *khanduri mò’lōt*”. For them, the core activity of the *khanduri mò’lōt* ritual is the preparation and display of the various foodstuffs (Ach *daluang*, *sanggèng*, *idang nasi kunyik*, *idang gadang*, *idang golèk*) offered to the guest villagers rather than listening to the Islamic lectures being delivered on this occasion. Others, however, emphasize the importance of the lectures and didactic discussions about the Prophet’s life.

In the ritual of *khanduri mò’lōt*, ideally, the whole village participates in all phases of the ritual. If this is the case the abundance of food displayed testifies to its success and to the joy it generates. The recitation of the *diké mò’lōt* stands out; it consists of appeals to Allāh to give the highest dignity (Indon *kemuliaan*) to the Prophet, his ancestors and descendants and merit to his companions, his followers, participants and to all Muslims. The *diké mò’lōt* is recited because people believe that the ‘spirit’ (Indon *roh*) of the Prophet and his companions are present with them. Reciting the *diké mò’lōt* is considered the same as praying for the Prophet Muḥammad’s well-being in order to get ‘help’ (Ach *syeufeuat*) from him in the hereafter in return. For these reasons, many villagers are willing to go into serious debt in order to be able to join in the communal meal and at the same time to celebrate the Prophet’s birth for the social commensality is always embedded in the wider cosmological frame. Nonetheless, the some modernists find the inclusion of any food on this occa-

sion to be a dangerous reminder misleading people into seeing religious events as self-interested spiritual transactions, when in fact they should be primarily an act of obedience to Allāh (see Bowen 1993:229).

In performing this ritual, on the various intentions of the performers may have different valorizations. The *khanduri mò'lōt* at the family and the village level are not just perceived as a commemorative celebration but also as a part of several exchange relationships and the villagers have different interpretations of the various parts of the ritual. These interpretations range from understanding their actions as prayers to Allāh, to generating merit for the 'soul' of deceased family members by bringing offerings to the mosque, to allowing angels to enjoy a meal offered on this occasion, etc. A number of modernists, however, object to these interpretations as they object indeed to the interpretation of *mò'lōt* as a *khanduri* as well, and in didactic lectures they may express disdain that the distribution and the consumption of food is included in the ritual. "In their view Muslim holidays are primarily about *remembering* and *celebrating* events in Islamic history, conforming to the historical example set by the Prophet and demonstrating obedience to Allāh through worship, fast, and sacrifice".

## CHAPTER 8

### The ritual of *khanduri bungong kayèe*

This chapter explores the ritual of *khanduri bungong kayèe*. It also describes the seasons, the winds, and their influence as well as the fertility of fruit-bearing trees.

### The seasons, the winds, and their influence

In Jumadil Akhir (the sixth Islamic lunar month, June), a ritual called a ‘*khanduri* of the tree blossom’ (Ach *bungong kayèe*) is performed; hence this month is called the ‘month of the *khanduri* of the tree blossoms’ (Ach *buleuen khanduri bungong kayèe*).<sup>191</sup> The *khanduri* is held for fruit-bearing trees, such as *nephelium* (Ach *bak rambôt*), *lansium* (Ach *bak langsat*), mango trees (Ach *bak mangga*), durian trees (Ach *bak drin*), *kuini* trees (Ach *bak kuini*), *mancang* trees (Ach *bak mancang*), clove trees (Ach *bak lawang*), pepper trees (Ach *bak lada*) and so forth. It aims to ensure that Allāh will ensure that the trees will bear fruit and their blossoms will not fade and fall onto the ground prematurely, that they will not be attacked by pests (Indon *hama*) so that they will contribute to the livelihood (Ach *reuseuki*) of human beings. It is said that the winds cause the tree to blossom (Ach *itebit bungong kayèe*). Such winds are classified into four types; the northern wind (Ach *angèn utara*) is regarded as “evil” (Ach *jahat*); the southern wind (Ach *angèn selatan*) is regarded as “hot” (Ach *su um*); the eastern wind (Ach *angén timu*) as “patient” (Ach *saba*)/“cold” (Ach *leupi*); and the western wind (Ach *angén barat*) as “strong” (Ach *angèn teuga*). Therefore, the villagers say that the “husband” of the trees is the western wind (Ach *lakô kayèe nakeh angén barat*) whereas the “husband” of the turtle is the

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191 In the ethnographic work of Snouck Hurgronje I (1906:216) on the Acèhnese in 1906, he mentioned that on Jumadil Akhir a *khanduri* of the tree fruit (Ach *khanduri bòh kayèe*) was held but not a *khanduri* of the tree blossom (Ach *khanduri bungong kayèe*). He wrote that the *khanduri bòh kayèe* owed its name to a custom common among the Acèhnese. “On one day of this month, they purchase fruit of every kind to be found in the market. These they bring as a *khanduri* or pious offering to the mosque or *meunasah*, where they are enjoyed by those of the faithful who are present in these places of worship, under the supervision of the attendants of the mosque or the *teungku*”. Nevertheless, after a year research done in Blangporoh and in other villages in the West Labuhan Haji district, South Acèh, the ritual of *khanduri bòh kayèe*, which is held on Jumadil Akhir, is not found at all. Rather, what I found on Jumadil Akhir is the ritual referred to the *khanduri bungong kayèe* (the *khanduri* of the tree blossoms).

southern wind (Ach *lakô punyi nakeh angèn selatan*) because if that wind blows the female turtles will lay eggs. Each wind has its own function for the trees. The eastern wind functions as fertilizer (Ach *pupok*) for the trees, the northern wind strengthens the tree roots, the western wind will make the trees bear blossom (Ach *bungong kayèe*) while the southern wind can make the tree blossom fade (Jam *layu*; Ach *layèe*;) and fall down (Jam *jatuh*; Ach *rot*). One rice specialist of Blangporoh village (Ach *keujruen blang*) says:

If the wind does not shake the trees, the trees will not blossom. When the western wind blows, the tree trunks shake and their branches rub each other. As a result the hollow spaces in the tree trunks are opened and the wind penetrates the tree trunks causing the trees to bloom. Therefore, the villagers say that the western wind is “the husband of the tree.”<sup>192</sup>

In fact, the western wind blows much stronger than the other ones. The western [wind] season (Ach *musém barat*) causes big waves at sea. The fish in the rivers swim into to the estuary to spawn. These eggs are then pushed by sea waves to the edge of the beach. The heat of the sands makes the fish eggs hatch. These are then flushed back into sea. That is why when the western wind blows there are many small fish in the river or in the sea.<sup>193</sup>

The eastern wind<sup>194</sup> “cannot oppose the western wind unless it is helped by the southern wind”. The western wind “makes friends with the northern wind”. The northern wind which is “helped” by the northwest wind (Ach *angén barat laut*) is “not a quiet wind” (Ach *angèn hana tenang*). When this wind blows, jaundice (Ach *penyakét kuneng*) will appear. The southern wind which is “helped” by the northeast wind (Ach *angén timur laut*) is the “hot wind”

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192 Acèhnese, “*Menyo hana diguncang le angén, kayèe han iteubit bungong. Watèe angèn barat dipot, kayèe meguncang dhen dan cabeng saling megesôk dengon dhen dan cabeng yang laén sehingga rongga kulet kayèe terbuka dan angén itamong lam bak kayèe meunyeabkan kayèe meubungong, makajih ureung-ureung gampōng geupegah angén barat nakeh lakô kayèe*”.

193 In the river of Krueng Baru in West Labuhan Haji it is the season of small fish called *ungkôt bungkuh* that go from the lower reaches to the upper reaches of rivers. In the sea it is the season of small shrimps called *musém udeung sabèe*. The villagers catch these fish for their own consumption and the rest are sold for income.

194 When the eastern wind (Ach *angèn timu*) blows, the sea is quiet. It is a good time for fishermen to sail and to catch fish or to drag their nets (Ach *pukat*). At night the eastern wind blows from the land to the sea and during the day time the eastern wind blows from sea to the land. The fishermen can quickly go to sea with the help of the eastern wind at night and can reach land quickly with the help of the eastern wind in the day time.

(Ach *angén su um*). When this wind blows, *pustular* skin eruptions (Ach *penyakét nie*) may appear. The southern wind is also regarded as the “red wind” (Ach *angèn mirah*) having a hot temperature. When this blows the leaves of the tree turn yellow and the tree blossom fades and falls down; the tree blossoms that have turned into fruit will not be sweet when they are ripe. If rice plants flower during this time, the seeds will have no contents (Ach *sanggong*).<sup>195</sup> It is said that if a farmer plants any seeds when the southern wind blows, they will not grow but decay. Not only the southern wind but also the reflection of lightning makes the trees’ blossoms fade and fall from the trees. In this case, the Acèhnese expression is appropriate, “the tree blossoms can not stay on their stems because of lightning, rain, and *keunong sa* (Ach *bungong kayèè hana meukemat sebab lé kilat hujan keunong sa*).<sup>196</sup> See the summary of a particular set of characteristics and functions of each wind in table 4 below.

northern wind	eastern wind	southern wind	western wind
“evil” wind strengthening tree roots	“cold”/“patient” wind making trees fertile	“red”/“hot” wind making tree blossom, fade and drop off	“strong” wind making trees blossom

**Table 4. A particular set of characteristics and functions of each wind**

In order to prevent this from happening and to secure the fruition of the trees the ritual of *khanduri bungong kayèè* ritual is performed. Whereas the southern wind may harm the fertility of the fruit-bearing trees, it also has positive effects. When it blows all sorts of driftwood and flotsam are pushed ashore. The driftwood is taken from along the seacoast of Pulo Ie, Blangbaru and Blangporoh for firewood by the villagers. Collecting it provides a family income for the villagers living near the seacoast of South Acèh. However, carcasses (Ach *bangké*) are also thrown up onto the coast and the villagers collect

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195 The southern wind is regarded as a dangerous wind (Jam *angin bahaya*; Ach *angen bahaya*) or “red wind” (Ach *angèn mirah*) for the tree blooms. The farmers often put *kala* trees (Ach *bak kala*) in the middle of their farm when the rice plants bear blooms to shield them from the southern wind (Ach *angèn selatan*).

196 *Keunong* or *keuneunong* “hitting” is the Acèhnese seasonal calendar. *Keunong sa* “hitting one” is from December, then the rain becomes heavier (Ach *ie raya*) followed by thunder and croaking frogs. Floods often occur at this time of “noisy wind” (Indon *angin ribut*) followed by heavy rain. At this moment, the fishermen cannot go fishing and remain on land to repair their fishing nets.

the bones of squid to be used for medicine. Some are sold and others are for one's own use.<sup>197</sup> Another positive effect of the southern wind is that the female sea turtles<sup>198</sup> crawl above the high tide line, using their front flippers to lay their eggs in the sand. The female turtles arrive on the beach during the six months of the eastern wind season (Ach *musém timu*), especially when the southern wind blows. People search for the turtle eggs (Jam *mancari talue tatuang*). The turtle egg seekers know when the female turtles arrive on the seacoast and lay eggs by looking for signs, such as the *pandan* trees (Ach *bak seukè*) and *dadap* trees (Ach *bak reudeup*) are blossoming. One experienced turtle egg seeker explains:

The turtles come ashore in order to lay their eggs when the moon is still young (Jam *bulèn mudo*; Ach *buleuen muda*), during the first 15 days [of the month]. The turtles will come ashore when the moon sets. When the moon has become "old" (Jam *bulén tuwo*; Ach *buleuen tuha*), during the second 15 days, the turtles will come ashore when the moon rises; usually one hour before the moon rises and one hour before the moon sets. The turtles come ashore with high tide (Ach *paseng diék*) both when the moon is still "young" and the moon has become "old".<sup>199</sup>

Another says that female turtles will surface at the coast when the southern wind blows heavily (Jam *angin selatan kuwèk*; Ach *angén selatan kasèk*) during the day time, and during the afternoon when the sun is red when it sets.

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197 One old village woman says that the bone of squid is good to make a boil painless and to make it smaller (Ach *bantôt*) as well. The bone of squid should be scraped at first then mixed with lemon juice before they are placed around the boil so that the boil will be not exploded. She does this when her grandsons has boils on their thighs. One housewife also says that the squid's bone is a good medicine (Ach *get keu u bat*) for those who have a high temperature. In addition, one doctor also says that the squid's bone is good to cure those suffering from whooping cough (Ach *batôk thō*). The squid's bone should also be scraped at first then mixed with the lemon juice before drinking it.

198 Besides the sea turtles, the villagers also know two other kinds of turtles: 1). Terrapins (Ach *baneng*) are fresh water turtles that stay in the water most of the time. They can be found in rivers, streams, lakes, estuaries, ponds and even in the ditches. 2). Tortoises (Jam/Indon *kura-kura darat*; Ach *baneng glée*) are turtles that can be found on land and usually in forests. They are very bad swimmers and are clumsy on land. Some people slaughter them and eat this kind of turtle to cure skin diseases.

199 Acèhnese, "Punyi diek u panté untuk dijak tōh bōh selama enam buleuen. Menyō buleuen muda dari tanggai sa troh tanggai limongblah, punyi diek u panté watèe buleuen dilop. Sebaliknya menyō buleuen tuha punyi diek u panté mulai dari tanggai namblah sampai tanggai lhèploh, punyi diek u panté watèe buleuen teubit. Biasajih sijeum seugoloh tebiet buleuen sampai sijeum setelah teubit buleuen. Punyi diek u panté watèe paseng ek, get watèe buleuen muda maupun bak buleuen tuha".

At night, the seashore is then like a market (Ach *lagè pasa*) because many turtle egg seekers come there. Sometimes the female turtles even come ashore during the day because “the stronger the southern wind blows, more female turtles come ashore to lay eggs due to the heat of the seawater”. For the same reason, more fish hide in the muddy water as well as in the coral reef. When the southern wind blows tigers in the mountains will often be savage (Indon *ganas*). The tigers will come to the village attracted by the fragrance of tree blossoms and by the presence of a whorl of hair on someone’s nape that is said to be a tiger’s whorl (Ach *pusa rimung*). The presence of a whorl of hair on someone’s forehead is called the wind’s whorl (Ach *pusa angén*). It is dangerous for someone who has the tiger’s whorl to go the mountains while for someone who has a whorl on the forehead it is dangerous to go to sea.

It is said that the tiger’s whorl is “ripe” at the time when the trees are blossoming. The combination of the smell of the tree blossoms (Jam *bungo kayu*; Ach *bungong kayèe*) and the tiger’s whorl “invites” the “grand mother” tiger (*nénék*)<sup>200</sup> to descend from the mountain to the village. The families whose children have the tiger’s whorl fear<sup>201</sup> that their child’s whorl may be also “ripe” during this season. On October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007, Muḥammad Amin was attacked and eaten by a tiger in Gunung Rotan, Labuhan Haji while he was looking for nutmegs (Ach *bòh pala*) in his garden.<sup>202</sup> The news of this tragedy quickly spread throughout Blangporoh society. School students at that time did not go to school because they were afraid of the tiger. Some villagers say that Allāh has already written in *laukh makhfudz*<sup>203</sup> that the life of Muḥammad Amin ends in the mouth of a tiger, so one should not worry about it, these things are predetermined. But others argue that Muḥammad Amin had a tiger’s whorl on his nape that he was not aware of and on the day of his death, the whorl on his nape was “ripe”. Tigers will also attack people when someone makes a vow that he shall be eaten by a tiger. The tiger will remember the vow

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200 When *khanduri* at the ‘head of the ditch’ (Jam *kapalo banda*; Ach *ulèe lhueng*) where the source of water comes out took place in *batèe meucanang*, West Labuahn Haji district in the past, some meat was placed on the front door of the cave of *batèe meucanang* for *ureueng pho tempat* “the owner of the place, that is a tiger.

201 I knew of one family whose son has a tiger’s whorl on his nape. The wife is complained to her husband and told him to cut it off and throw it away. She was afraid that when it became ripe, something bad might happen to their son.

202 See Serambi Indonesia, Acèh daily newspaper, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

203 *Laukh makhfudz* refers to the tablet on which the record of the decisions of the divine are preserved, see *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, pp. 287-288.

and then the one who utters it he will be eaten by a tiger; or when one of the family members kills a tiger. The tiger is a vengeful animal. When one tiger is killed, other tigers will take revenge.

The tiger's whorl belongs to a tiger not to humans. When the humans have it, tigers will be angry with them. Therefore the tiger's whorl must be pried off from someone's nape and a "ritual of cooling" (Ach *peusijuek*) must be performed. The blood flowing from the spot where the whorl was removed must be retrieved and placed on the tiger's claw while the following phrase is uttered "this is your livelihood and please do not disturb this person anymore" (Ach *nyo raseuki gata dan bèk neganggu lé ureueung nyo*). One village healer has performed this ritual four times so far. "After the tiger's whorl is pried off away, one will be safe and the tiger will no longer pursue him or her". In return the child's parents have to give him 5 grams of gold. One time he says that one of the sons' parents did not have 5 grams of gold. The healer asked them to borrow the gold from their neighbor to give him and later on the gold should be returned to its owner. By doing so the *do'a* to get rid of the tigers' whorl remains efficacious. Here it clearly shows that the act of exchange is more important than the object itself (see Platenkamp 1996).

Also the wind's whorl (Ach *pusa angén*) must also be pried off in order to cut the relation between that person and the wind. The ritual of prying off the wind's whorl and the "cooling ritual" has to be performed because the wind's whorl belongs to Sedang.<sup>204</sup> The retrieved blood is then thrown into the sea while the following phrase is uttered "This is your livelihood; please take care of this person when he goes to sea" (Ach *nyo raseuki gata dan neujaga ureueung nyo watèè dijak u laôt*). Whirlpools in sea resemble a whorl. A fisherman pulled down by whirlpools will not be able to survive even if he is a good swimmer.

The retrieved blood is given to Sedang Shalèh who takes care of the sea wave and whirlpools. Sedang Shalèh is part of a group of four Sedang spirits, each with their own domain. Thus Sedang Mukmin takes care of the surface of the sea water, Sedang Shalihin of the sub aquatic level and Sedang Tetap of the coast. After the wind's whorl has been pried off, one is safe from the wind and can look for a livelihood in the sea.

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204 People say Sedang is the name of a sea water spirit and a kind of jinn.

The question to what extent the various winds and whorl found on someone's nape should be accepted to determine one's fate and means of livelihood is often debated in Blangporoh village. "If there is no livelihood, anything that has been placed in the mouth will fall to the ground" [i.e. anything that is to be eaten can not be swallowed], and "good luck is divided among everyone". A young village man, who has just finished his BA program in Islamic studies in the capital city of Acèh, says that these "expressions" have a theological meaning; they show how the Aneuk Jamee people realize that their livelihood comes from Allāh. The first "expression" is more fatalistic in that it reflects a *jabariyah* ideology<sup>205</sup> deeming the livelihood of human beings to be determined by Allāh. The second expression assumes that the livelihood is truly from Allāh but the amount of it depends on someone's efforts. This thought tends to be more in line with a *qadariyah* ideology<sup>206</sup> as in the Qur'ān 13:11, "...indeed, Allāh will not change the condition of people until they change what is in themselves". Others argue that the first important thing in life is making every effort in order to get a better life. They relate:

<i>Menyo na ta useha</i>	If one has made an effort
<i>Adak han kaya taduk senang</i>	If not rich, at least one will live happily
<i>Menyo hana ta useha</i>	If no effort has been made to do something
<i>Pane teuka rô t dimanyang</i>	Impossible the livelihood falls down from the sky

One adds further that Allāh will give a livelihood to those who ask but one must work for it first. Every father is responsible for providing for his wife and children. Fulfilling this responsibility is obligatory (Ach *wajéb*) without which he will be committing a sin. Yet one also believes that it is better for the one who has a tiger's whorl not to go to the mountains and those who have a wind's whorl should not to go to sea. It is far better that a tiger's whorl or a wind's whorl is pried off from one's nape so that he or she can safely go anywhere to make the livelihood.

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205 *Jabariah* a historical group in Islam which holds that humans have no power over their own destinies, but Allāh's power preempts any such control on humans' part.

206 *Qadariyah* in Islam are adherents of the doctrine of free will and free actions. The word is derived from *qadr* (power, or rights). Adherents maintain that Allāh has given man free will and free actions. Without it, one could not be fully accountable for ones actions.

## The ritual of *khanduri bungong kayè*

On June 2007 I found three villages holding the *khanduri* for the tree blossoms: Ladang Tuhan II village, Teupinbatèe village in Manggèng district, and Blangporoh village in West Labuhan Haji district. The *khanduri* of the tree blossoms in Blangporoh and Ladang Tuha II were performed individually in the mango garden but in Teupinbatèe village it was performed on behalf of the village in the mosque. Here I shall describe the *khanduri* of the tree blossoms in these mentioned villages.

In Ladang Tuha II, a family head holds the *khanduri* of the blooms for his mango trees with his wife in his garden. First, he brings a medium-sized pot with rice and firewood. His wife brings coconut milk, sugar, salt, two big pails, and a gourd dipper. His son brings a tray containing ingredients for “cooling” and water vessels and plastic bowls and glasses. His daughter brings sitting mats, a handkerchief etc. He then cooks porridge (Ach *kanji*) in a medium-sized pot with the help of his wife and his two children in his mango garden.<sup>207</sup>

Unlike the ‘*asyūrā*’ porridge, the porridge for the *khanduri* of the tree blooms only consists of normal rice (Ach *breuh ubit*), coconut milk (Ach *santan u*) and water (Ach *ie*). This porridge is similar to that of the *khanduri* of the rice plants. They are mixed together in the pot then cooked. When the porridge has already cooked, it is poured into two containers. Sugar (Jam *gulo*; Ach *saka*) and salt (Jam *garom*; Ach *sira*), are added to the container for feeding the children, while the other container is left without sugar and salt. The invited children then come to his garden to eat the porridge that has been poured into many small containers for the village children by his wife. Before eating the porridge, the children sit in a circle (Ach *melingka*) and porridge with and without sugar and salt is placed in the centre. The family head chants *shamadiyah*<sup>208</sup> and recites several verses of the Qur’ān. Only children are allowed to take the porridge. I ask him why he only invites the children, he answers that children are like angels; they have never committed sin and are innocent. This is, therefore, one of the reasons why Allāh’s mercy (Indon *nikmat Allāh*) is sent down to earth. If children do something good then they get religious merit from Allāh,

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207 The porridge must be cooked in the garden, not at home or other places.

208 Reciting the *sūrah al-Fātiḥah* and *tahlīl*, he then continues reciting the *sūrah al-Ikhlās* thirty times, and after that continued reciting *tahlīl* 50 times. These recitations are called *shamadiyah*. The children follow the *shamadiyah*’s recitation performed in the mango garden.

and the religious merit will be given to their parents; that is why children have to be treated well. His wife, however, has another reason. She says that children smile and are happy when the porridge is served to them. The children's happy expression compensates for the work involved in making the *khanduri*. In addition, they will never protest by saying it is not delicious (Ach *hana mangat*) because she has tried her best to prepare it. Another reason Allāh sends His mercy to the earth for the old people whose characters are like children. Allāh will give religious merit to those who take care of their parents and who are really old (Ach *ka uzo*).<sup>209</sup> Another reason Allāh sends His mercy to the earth is because of the '*ulamā*' who are always close to Allāh and the other reason is for animals which have no intellect (Ach *akai*) and always receive their livelihood from Him.<sup>210</sup>

The second step is the invocation of *do'a* (Arb *du'ā'*). The recited *do'a* comprises of four parts. First, he praises Allāh and prays for the Prophet (Ach *seulawet ke nabi*) and his family. Second he asks for a good place in this world and the hereafter, beseeching that disaster be avoided, and requesting Allāh's perpetual blessing. Third, he seeks Allāh's forgiveness for the teachers, parents, grandparents, neighbors, and friends and all Muslims in the world who are still alive and those who have passed away. Fourth, he requests that Allāh listen and answer his *do'a* especially asking Him to prevent damage from southern wind effect and from lightning. At the end of each recited *do'a*, his wife and the children intone *āmīn* (please approve o Allāh).

The third step is pouring the porridge. The container with sugarless and saltless porridge is poured on the mango bases (Ach *utom mangga*) that are blooming. He says that this can be eaten by ants and other animals as alms (Ach *seudeukah*) but the primary significance is that the water of the porridge that contains the "blessing" can be taken in by the roots of the blooming mango trees. The water of the poured porridge goes from the roots through the trunk, through the branches up to the tree blossoms. It is believed that the porridge prevents the tree blossom from drying and dropping to the ground as verses of the Qur'ān and *shamadiyah* have been chanted in front of the cooked porridge so that the porridge contains the power to render the southern wind no longer poisonous. He refers to this power as *beureukat*, from the Arabic word *bārakā*,

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209 The old people who are feeble from weakness and illness.

210 One family head argues that because of children, old people, '*ulamā*', and animals that are on the earth, Allāh sends down His mercy to us all.

“blessing”. It is believed that this blessed porridge can take away the dangerous influence of the southern wind (Ach *pengaruh angèn selatan*). In this case another family head is also of the same opinion. He says “the poured porridge on the roots of the tree is a talisman (Ach *tangké*) against the southern wind so that the tree blossom will not fade and fall on the ground down on the earth”.<sup>211</sup>

The fourth step is “cooling” the trees. First, a handful of the yellow sticky rice (Ach *saboh gepai bu leukat kuneng*)<sup>212</sup> with coconut stir-fried with palm sugar (Ach *ue mieras*)<sup>213</sup> is taken on a plate from the tray containing the ingredients for “cooling”. He utters *bismillāh* “in the name of Allāh” then places it on the mango trees. At the same time he intones (Jam *baniet*; Ach *meniet*): “*Lagè bu lekatnyo mekeumat-keumat, bak mekeumatkeh bungong kayè lon*”, meaning “this sticky rice was sticky, so please stick and do not let my tree drop its blossom!” He then takes a bowl from the “cooling” tray containing several kinds of leaves; the leaves of an areca nut,<sup>214</sup> a stalk of the leaves of *manèk manoe*,<sup>215</sup> the leaves of *cocor bèbèk*,<sup>216</sup> a stalk of coarse grass with its root,<sup>217</sup> the leaves of *bayam tuba*,<sup>218</sup> the medicinal leaves<sup>219</sup> and the leaves of henna.<sup>220</sup> These leaves and plants are tied in a bunch that is used as a whisk to spray the

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211 In Acèhnese, “*kanji yang ka beureukat dan diro bak utom kayèe sebagai tangkai angèn selatan supaya bungong kayèe bèk layèe dan rôl bak tanoh*”.

212 The cooked sticky rice that has been colored with saffron flour is called *bu leukat kuneng*.

213 Coconut stir-fried with palm sugar (Ach *ue mieras*) symbolizes the completeness of life, sturdy and strong as coconut trees.

214 The villagers believe that this leaf is a talisman to shield the mangos’ blossom from the southern wind.

215 A kind of plant that usually grows at the edge of the farm, its leaves are silvery. This leaf is a symbol of fertility.

216 The leaves are green in color. This leaf symbolizes a cold condition.

217 A kind of grass that has a strong root and heavy leaves, the Acèhnese call this grass *naleng sambô* or *naleng pasak dônya*. This grass symbolizes a strong and sturdy life. The grass root is very strong and can be grown in any circumstances and climate. It can withstand any disturbance and disaster. It also symbolizes a strong faith and self confidence.

218 Amaranth is used as a vegetable. The roots are medicinal and its stem is thorny. This amaranth is also called the “wild amaranth” (Indon *bayam liar*) because people do not plant it but it grows by itself.

219 Medicinal leaves (Ach *on sitawa*) against fever.

220 This leaf is quite often used by the Acèhnese to color the bride and bride groom’s hands and feet before the day where the couples sit side by side. One old fisherman says that the bridal couples with henna on their feet and hands are not allowed to bathe in the sea because the smell of henna will attract sharks. He further says that the original history of henna and the blood of sharks are from Eve’s menstruation.

water of *teupōng taweu*<sup>221</sup> on the base of the tree, trunk, branches, leaves, and to the blossom of the trees. The last step is that he takes a glass from the tray which has been filled with the mixed rice and unhusked rice.<sup>222</sup> He scatters them at the base of a tree, on its trunk, branches, and blossoms of a tree, like when scattering rice to ‘cool’ a person. By doing so, he hopes that the tree blossom will become the livelihood for the mango trees’ owner and for the villagers and that the mango trees will not be attacked by disease. I also witness an old widower doing the same thing in Blangporoh village.

For the *khanduri* of the tree blossom performed on behalf of the village in the Teupinbatèe village the porridge is cooked in a large pot. Teupinbatèe villagers do not hold a social gathering (Ach *meuripè*) for the *khanduri*. Normal rice (Jam *barèh*; Ach *breuh ubit*), coconuts (Jam *karambi*; Ach *boh u*) and sugar (Jam *gulo*; Ach *saka*) are collected from villagers who have trees that are blossoming. While the committee was cooking porridge, the invited reciters who are able to recite the Qur’ān well recite the *sūrah al-Yā sīn* together then chant *shamadiyah* and end it with the *do’a*. Soon after finishing the recitation of the *do’a*, the porridge is ready. The cooked porridge with salt and sugar is placed on plates and is first served to the invited children then to the Qur’ānic reciters. After eating the porridge, the villagers whose trees are blossoming take the saltless and sugarless porridge and bring it to their respective gardens. In the garden they pour some porridge on blossoming tree bases. Some porridge is sprayed on tree trunks, branches, leaves, and even on the blossoms of the trees. The villagers refer to these actions as the “cooling of the tree trunk” (Ach *peuphon taweuebak kayèe* or *peusijuk bak kayèe*).

## Condition of fertility of fruit-bearing trees

People perform the ritual of *khanduri bungong kayèe* so that the fertility of the tree will be safeguarded but the fertility is dependent upon much more important factors than just the willingness of the individual family to perform the ritual. The fertility of the tree is dependent upon collective village performance, dependent upon respecting jinn, dependent upon just leadership and dependent upon *adat*, particularly regarding prohibition and incest.

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221 The water of *teupōng taweu* consists of water and rice flour. Sometimes the Acèhnese say tasteless flour (Ach *teupong tabeu*) in stead of *teupōng taweu*.

222 Rice and unhusked rice symbolize modesty and not arrogance; they also symbolize honor and glory.

Many villagers whom I interview lament that even though they perform the *khanduri* of the tree blossoms, the result is no longer satisfactory because many trees lose their blossoms and dry up before they become fruit. And sometimes the tree blossom that has become fruit also drops before they are ripe. They consider that it is because the *khanduri* of the tree blossom is not performed correctly and not performed collectively (Ach *secara rame-rame*; Indon *secara berjama'ah*). And some villages totally neglect this ritual. From a Muslim believers' point of view, Allāh's mercy (Indon *nikmat Allāh*) will be sent to people who do something collectively. For example if a prayer is performed collectively, twenty seven religious merits will be received from Allāh. If it is performed alone, only one religious merit will be received. One *imām* says "If we do something collectively, it means that we all have the same intention (Jam *samo niet*; Ach *sama nit*). Allāh will grant our request". Another example mentioned is prayer performed to ask for rain (Ach *seumayang lakè hujeun*) in the fields. Cattle should be brought to the place of prayer because the people all want the same thing; they therefore hope that Allāh will give rain. I argue that performing a ritual collectively strengthens social solidarity. If the social solidarity is strengthened, fertility will be there. That is the fertility which is dependent upon the social forces.

Apart from the aim of the *khanduri* for the tree blossoms to prevent their blossoms from falling and prevent their trees being attacked by diseases, it is also to make jinn (Ach *jén*) who look after the trees happy, says one *pawang laôt*. There are three kinds of jinn that look after the trees: Ibrahim Tunggai, a sort of jinn who looks after tree trunks, Ibrahim Bapa, a sort of jinn who looks after the trees' fruit and Pang Itam, a sort of jinn who looks after the tree tops.<sup>223</sup> These kinds of jinn are also sometimes called *hantuburu*. They will sometimes strike a human who enters the garden without uttering *do'a*. In addition, *hantuburu* can also kill the one who enters the garden without saying *do'a*. If someone goes to the forest (Ach *rimba*) which is full of blossoming trees, the following Acèhnese *do'a* must be uttered before entering the gardens:

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223 One *pawang laôt* says that if someone takes trees for a keel of boat (Jam *sampan*; Acèh *peraho*), he has to ask for permission from Ibrahim Tunggai, Ibrahim Bapa and Pang Itam by uttering, "please permit me to take this tree for the keel of a boat" (Ach *ne pe izin lon keneuk cok kayèe nyo ke tuleungrung bot*). When I ask him why we have to ask permission when we want to take trees for keels of a boat, or a canoe, he answers that if the fishermen are in trouble in the sea, for instance, a sudden storm or no fish [livelihood], they are "the people" to whom the fishermen report and seek help.

<i>Assalāmu’alaikom Ponikudandong</i>	Peace be on you, Ponikudandong <sup>224</sup>
<i>Gata ulon tung keu cédara</i>	You are accepted as my brother
<i>Ma gata kayèe ku gata batè</i>	Your mother is wood and your father is stone
<i>Gata meuteuntèe aneuk Naga</i>	You are the son of Naga
<i>Surot gata disino</i>	Please step back from here
<i>Nyo saleum nabi Sulaiman</i>	This is <i>saleum</i> from the Prophet Sulaiman <sup>225</sup>
<i>Yang yu jak lon keuno</i>	A person who wants me to come here
<i>Berkat kalimah lāilāhaillallāh</i>	With the “blessing” of the sentence of <i>lāilāhaillallāh</i>

This invocation is called *saleum* “peace”. This *saleum* has to be uttered for peace with human beings. The person who enters the garden will be safe because jinn have been announced as his brother. One says “if we hold the *khanduri* of the tree blossom, these jinn will be happy because jinn regard the trees as their belongings and humans as their companions. Human beings merely pick the fruit whereas trees are where they live”.

To the question why trees do not blossom at the same time, one *imām* supposes that now many trees will not blossom because as the leaders are not just (Ach *pimpinan hana adé*). The previous leader had *keuramat*<sup>226</sup> but today’s leader does not. One villager says that in the past kings were just (Ach *adé*). Therefore, all trees bore their fruit at the same time. Now the leaders are no longer just trees will not bear much blossom and will not bear fruit at the same time, adds the old man. In addition, there are not so many kinds of fruit in the villages as a number of people no longer take care of the orphans. They engage in illicit sex, gambling, stealing, being incestuous, illicit sex with their own daughter, corruption, etc. All these can cause trees not to bear their blossom at the same time and even some trees will bear no blossom at all. “We, the villagers believe that the blossoms are Allāh’s mercy”, explains one old man. “When people do not behave well, Allāh’s mercy will then not to be sent down to earth”, says one rice specialist. Bearing blossom is related to the justness of the leaders. The trees will bear blossom if the leaders are good. It is said that in 1940 when Raja Kanda was a king, there were so many kinds of fruit trees (Ach *bòh kayèe*) available in the villages. When he knew that one of his villagers were not able to pay tax to the Dutch colonial, the king would pay their taxes. The basic prosperity of the country is due to the leader. If the leader is

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224 Teungku Yunus says that *ponikudandong* is the name of the grandfather of jinn.

225 Prophet Sulaiman is said to know about the jinn and could ask jinn to do something.

226 *Keuramat* from the Arabic word *kāramā* means a miraculous gift and grace bestowed by Allāh and it is beyond the scope of human capabilities.

fair, the country will then be good. All trees will bear blossom in the same season. One rice specialist relates as follows:

<i>Salah tuha diboh ketua hana meusoso</i>	The elders' mistakes appoint a chairman without a clear identity
<i>Diboh keuchi' lagèe pik tan sago</i>	The appointed <i>keuchik</i> resembles a squash having no sides
<i>Diboh mukim lagèe sikin hana go</i>	The appointed <i>mukim</i> resembles a knife having no handle

It is believed that the tree blossom does not appear at the same time because the leaders are no longer from good families. Some are not clear about their origins. Sometimes the leaders the offspring of illicit sex (Ach *aneuk ranjadah* or *aneuk bajeung*). That is why it is difficult to make a living now. There is a shortage of fruit as the tree loses a lot of blossom, laments one old man. In Suak Udeung, Manggèng district, a pregnant woman was beaten by the village women because she is pregnant without a husband. That night, the pregnant woman has to be brought to another village for safety by one of her families. In the past in West Labuhan Haji district, a brother who engaged in illicit sex or adultery (Ach *mezina*) with his younger sister was also chased away from the village. About 10 years ago in Lhokpawoh, also in Manggèng district, a father engaged in illicit sex with his own daughter. All of them were chased away from their villages because they had already transgressed the *adat* rules (Ach *ka melangga hukom adat*; Indon *sudah melanggar hukum adat*). The leader of Acèhnese *adat* council of West Labuhan Haji district says that among cases transgressing the Acèhnese *adat* are engaging in illicit sex between a brother and younger sister, engaging in illicit sex between a father and daughter, killing a mother, and killing pregnant women. People doing this must be thrown out of the village because they invite disaster (Ach *bala*) for the village. Therefore, they are no longer allowed to live in their own village. This sanction is given because these people are regarded as the people who do not know the *adat* rules (Ach *ureueng han teupeu adat*), the people who have no morals (Ach *ureueng hana meakhlak*). They have rejected the authority of *adat*. Their actions clash with the foundations of the Aneuk Jamee's thinking. If there is any social activity in a village, these people are neither invited nor greeted. The villagers will not come if they hold a life-cycle ritual or a mortuary ritual (Ach *buèt hudép atawa buèt matéé*) in their house unless they have died. In addition, these people are expelled from the *adat*'s surroundings where they live. Their

social relations and *adat* are broken off for an unlimited time. Thus, if their mistakes have been shown to the other villagers, their families as well as their groups (Ach *kaôm*) will be embarrassed. Therefore the transgressors will live in the village as the following expression “Instead of living and seeing a corpse reflected in the mirror, it is better to die covered in soil” (Indon *dari pada hidup bercermin bangkai lebih baik mati berkalang tanah*). So it is better for them to leave their own village.

In 1988, a father (53 years) engaged in illicit sex with his own daughter was put in a canoe with his daughter by villagers. They did their daily activities on the canoe. When they stopped for a moment in their village, the villagers along the coast of Simpang Hilir refused to let them leave the canoeso that they had to go and look for another place to land where the people did not know their problems.<sup>227</sup> It is said that humans behaving as if they were animals (Ach *lagèe binatang*) such as gambling and fighting cocks, stealing, murdering and so on will truly invite disaster for the village (such as raping). One disasters given by Allāh is that most of the tree blossom will fade and drop before turning into fruit, and that which has turned into fruit will not be sweet when they are ripe. And it is even said that the tsunami disaster was connected to human behaviour. Human behaviour has to be taken into account because there is a connection between the fruit available and human actions. Bad behaviour is believed to influence trees and cause them not to bear their blossom at the same time; some trees will bear no blossom at all. In this context, a person’s bad behaviour [sin] does not only harm him or herself but also harms others including the fertility of the fruit-bearing trees since the concept of sin in the Aneuk Jame and in the Acèhnese society is always related to *hawa nafsu* (desire or passion). These sins take the form of drunkenness, illicit sex, or adultery, being incestuous, stealing, and gambling and so on which are regarded as a major infringement on community life.

## Conclusion

The *khanduri* ritual “of the tree blossom” is for flowering trees, and especially for trees bearing fruit such as *nephelium*, *lansium*, mango, durian, *kuini*, *mancang*, clove, pepper and so forth. It is performed to secure the fruition of

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227 See Waspada, North Sumatra daily newspaper, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1988.

the trees despite the southern wind and lightning and aims to ensure that Allāh will take care that the trees will bear fruit and the blossom will not fade and fall onto the ground prematurely; that their trees will not be attacked by diseases so that they will ensure a livelihood for humans. The ritual is closely connected with the idea that it is the winds that cause the trees to blossom. Such winds are classified into four kinds: the northern wind, regarded as “evil” wind; the southern wind regarded as “hot”; the eastern wind regarded as “patient”/“cold”; and the western wind as “strong”. Each wind has its own function for the trees. The eastern wind functions as fertilizer for the tree, northern wind strengthens the tree roots, the western wind will make the tree bear blossom while southern wind can make the blossom fade and drop off. If the wind does not shake the trees, the trees will not bear the blossom. When the western wind blows, the tree trunks shake and their branches rub each other. As a result the hollow spaces in tree trunks are opened and the wind penetrates the tree trunks causing the trees to blossom. Therefore, the villagers say that the western wind is the “husband of the tree”, just like the “husband of the turtle is the southern wind” because “if the southern wind blows the female turtles lay eggs”.

The western wind blows strongest. The eastern wind “cannot oppose the western wind unless it is “helped” by the southern wind”. The western wind “makes friends with the northern wind”. When the northern wind, “helped by northwest wind”, blows, jaundice will appear. When the “hot” southern wind “helped by the northeast wind” blows, pustular skin eruptions will appear. When the “red” southern wind blows the leaves of the tree turn yellow and the tree blossom fades and drops off; the blossom that has turned into fruit will not be sweet when they are ripe. If rice plants flower then, the seeds will have no contents. If a farmer plants any seeds when the southern wind blows, they will not grow but decay. Not only can the southern wind make blossom fade but lightning can have this effect as well.

Although the southern wind may harm the fertility of the fruit-bearing trees, it also has a positive effect. When it blows all sorts of driftwood and flotsam are pushed ashore along the coast of Labuhan Haji district. Driftwood is sold as firewood, and collecting it provides a family income for the villagers who live near the seacoast of South Acèh. But also the bones of squid that are used for medicine are collected. Likewise, in South Acèh when the southern wind blows during six months of the east season, female sea turtles crawl above the high tide line in order to lay their eggs in the sand.

Despite performing the ritual of *khanduri bungong kayèe*, it can still happen that the trees do not blossom, that is, the fertility of the fruit-bearing trees has not been safeguarded because there are several requirements for the fertility of the fruit-bearing trees: fertility is dependent upon social collective ritual action, upon the “mercy” (Arb *rahmah*) of Allāh, upon the king’s generosity, upon jinn, upon just political leadership, and upon respecting the *adat* rules particularly concerning exogamy and incest because they are the most serious crimes in *adat* law.

## CHAPTER 9

### The ritual of *khanduri apam*

The seventh month of the Islamic lunar calendar is Ra'jab (July). This month is regarded as one of the sacred months during which the Prophet Muḥammad forbade people to engage in battle. It is also a prelude to the month of Ramadhan, which follows after the intervening month of Sya'ban. The month of Ra'jab is called "the month of *khanduri apam*" (Ach *buleuen khanduri apam*) since during this period the *apam* cakes are baked in every house and distributed at the mosques or prayer houses. The term *apam* is said to derive from the word *afwan* "forgiveness". The Ra'jab lunar month is therefore called *buleuen afwan* or *buleuen apam*.<sup>228</sup> This chapter explores the story of *khanduri apam*, the individual *khanduri apam* on the fifth night of the dead and the collective *khanduri apam* in Ra'jab lunar month.

### The story of *khanduri apam*

According to some village people, the ritual of *khanduri apam* is performed to remind people of the initial days of the deluge during the Prophet Noah's time and to commemorate the Prophet Muḥammad's ascension to receive prayers (Ach *seumayang*) from Allāh, as both these events occurred on the 27th day of Ra'jab; the deluge lasted until the day of 'āsyūrā on the 10th of Muḥarram (see Ch.5). During the deluge, Prophet Noah's ark being lifted up by the rising floodwaters resembles Prophet Muḥammad being lifted by Allāh on his night journey (Arb *israk mikraj*). Others relate the *khanduri apam* to the construction of Noah's ark. On August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007, I attended a 'religious discussion' (*pengajian*) at Teungku Yunus's house in Suak, Tangan-Tangan. He said that the basic story of *khanduri apam* came from the story of 'Ud, a grandson

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228 According to the local *imām*, "Ra'jab is a month for cultivation, Sya'ban is the month for irrigating the fields, and the month of Ramadhan is a month for reaping and harvesting. Ra'jab is the month of Allāh. Sya'ban is the month of Muḥammad and Ramadhān is the month of his followers". It is said that when the Prophet Muḥammad sighted the moon of Ra'jab, he prayed the following words to Allāh : "O Allāh, make the months of Ra'jab and Sya'ban blessed for us, and let us reach the month of Ramadhan (i.e. prolong our life up to Ramadhan so that we may benefit from its merits and blessings)". It is said that whoever performs this ritual will receive more religious merit because this ritual is a way of thanking Allāh.

of Noah<sup>229</sup> when Allāh asked Noah to construct the huge ark. Below I present the story of *khanduri apam* I recorded from the ‘religious discussion’. The story goes as follows:

Noah was 950 years old. At the time of his prophethood, Noah was no longer able to remind his followers because they always disobeyed him. He had been telling his followers to return to the right path for almost 900 years but only 18 people embraced Islam including his family members so he reported to Allāh and asked Him how to remind his followers: Allāh said, “Please say to them that Allāh will cause the tide to rise (*Ach ie beuna*) and they will have to build a huge ark that can save all believers, animals, and seeds for crops!” After hearing the Allāh’s command, Noah went to find four craftsmen who were able to make the huge ark. In return the four craftsmen asked to marry Noah’s daughter because they did not have wives yet. Noah was then confused as he had only one daughter. Gabriel came and said to Noah, “Do not be confused, just say that you have four daughters”. This is Allāh’s will is able to do so”. Gabriel asked Noah to invite the four craftsmen to his house to see his daughter. When they were sitting at Noah’s house, Noah went to the kitchen to see his daughter. Then, there were four similar daughters. Noah then asked, which one was his daughter? All four daughters raised their hands and acknowledged that they were all the daughters of Noah. Noah was truly surprised and asked Gabriel, “Where did they come from?” Gabriel answered that you had three animals: a cat was in the kitchen, a dog was under the house, and a horse was in front of the house. Now those animals have become daughters. These four daughters were married off to the four craftsmen. After that they started constructing the huge ark. One of the craftsmen then reported that they needed a huge tree trunk. Noah then looked for the person who was able to provide the huge tree trunk. He remembered his grandson Ud and called and asked him to take the huge tree trunk from the bank of the river Nile. ‘Ud answered “I am ready. In return, a beautiful girl should be given to me”. Noah was again confused. Gabriel then came and said to Noah “Please do not be confused, you should simply call a sculptor to sculpt a stony mountain like a beautiful girl. After the sculptor was found, the stony mountain was shaped in the form of a beautiful girl. Noah slaughtered 100 horses and the meat of those horses was taken and placed in the sculpture’s vagina.<sup>230</sup> ‘Ud was invited to see the decorated stony mountain. When ‘Ud saw it, how happy he was! The sculpture was very beautiful and stirred his desire. ‘Ud could not withhold his desire and had sexual intercourse with the sculpture.<sup>231</sup> After that ‘Ud was tired and hun-

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229 ‘Ud was a father of Jut Makjut and a grand son of the Prophet Noah. It was said that ‘Ud was a giant human and he was not like a normal person.

230 See also Effendie (1979:137), “Berbagai Tafsiran tentang Ya’jut dan Ma’jud”, pp.136-138.

231 With the permission of Allāh, the sperm of ‘Ud that had spilled in the sculpture’s vagina mixed with the meat of the slaughtered horse then decayed and became maggots as big

gry, he went back to Noah and asked for food, that was *apam* cakes. ‘Ud would not be able to take the huge tree trunk to construct the ark if *apam* cakes were not given to him. Noah baked 100 *apam* cakes then invited ‘Ud to eat. ‘Ud said 100 *apam* cakes were not enough for him, adding, “If there were 1,000 *apam* cakes, I would be able to take the huge tree trunk”. Noah said if he wanted to he would bake 10, 000 *apam* cakes for him (but Ud should try to eat these cakes first by pronouncing *bismillāhirrahmānirrahīm* (in the name of Allāh, the entirely merciful, the especially merciful). ‘Ud uttered it then ate an *apam* cake. ‘Ud was only able to eat half then he felt so full due to the *baraka* “blessing” of the word of *bismillāhirrahmānirrahīm*. Only after that was ‘Ud able to take the huge tree trunk from the bank of the river Nile and bring it to the four craftsmen to build the huge ark for Noah.<sup>232</sup>

Before I discuss the collective *khanduri apam* celebrated in Ra’jab lunar month. I would first like to discuss the individual *khanduri apam* not in any particular month because a person does not have to die this particular month in order to understand the collective of the *khanduri apam*.

## The individual *khanduri apam*

It is quite conceivable that the custom of *khanduri apam* had its origins in the mortuary ritual. One woman in Kutaiboh relates that the *khanduri apam* resembles giving an umbrella to the deceased’s ‘soul’ in the Field of Gathering on the Day of Resurrection. The weather on that day will be too hot, because the sun “is only a hand span above the head”. One man in Cot Manee also says that the *khanduri apam* is held with the intention of providing an umbrella to the deceased, meanwhile the *khanduri cindoi*<sup>233</sup> after the death of a person aims

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as human bodies. The maggot became cocoons then they hatched becoming living creatures. Their names are Jut Ma’jut. They went out through the vagina of that sculpture to seek their food. They ate whatever they found especially cattle (Effendie 1979:137). Based on the local belief, Jut Ma’jut is still now in the mountain but the villagers do not know which mountain they live. They will come out on the day of hereafter. The Qur’ān says, “When [the dam of] Gog and Magog has been opened and they, from every elevation, descend” (QS 21:96).

232 I hear the same version about the origins of the *khanduri apam* from Teungku A. Rahman Badar, the leader of the council of Indonesia ‘*ulamā*’ in Southwest Acèh. He also states that the original story of holding the *khanduri apam* is from the story of constructing the huge ark of Noah and the *apam* cakes were the special food baked by the Noah for ‘Ud when he asked him to bring a huge tree trunk from the bank of the river Nile.

233 *Cindoi* is made of ordinary rice flour. The flour is first mixed with warm water so that it doesn't fall apart and then rubbed through a colander with small holes into the boiling water. Some forms of *cindoi* are straight and some others are like the handles of an umbrella. Its sauce (Ach *kuwah*) is made of coconut milk, sugar and salt.

at providing the handle of an umbrella to the deceased because its form resembles an umbrella handle. The rice cakes are associated with the 'soul' of the deceased person. The *khanduri apam* is performed as if the *apam* cakes were given to the deceased's 'soul' (Ach *aruwah*). They are shared among the living but their essence is given to the deceased's "soul" in the grave (Bowen 1993:233). At the burial in Isak Central Acèh three rice cakes are thrown in after the body "as food for the deceased" (Bowen 1993:259) although local modernists deny that one can send food to the 'soul'; they do value the food's naturally symbolic qualities (*ibid*). A number of people in Blangporoh whom I discussed this with say that the religious merit received from performing the *khanduri apam* is destined for the deceased's 'soul'.

The offering of *apam* cakes lessens the torment the deceased receives in the grave. Older villagers say that the *apam* have the inner property of warding off the clubs of the interrogating angels on the day of torment (Bowen 1993:259). Snouck Hurgronje I (1906:220) wrote about the *khanduri apam* in Acèh as follows:

The story goes that once up a time a certain Achehnese, possessed by curiosity as to what befalls man in the tomb, and especially as to the investigations of the angels of the grave, Munkar and Nakir, and the punishments they are supposed to inflict, feigned death and was buried alive. The two angels soon subjected him to an enquiry as to his faith and works, and as he was found wanting in many respects, they began to smite/hit him with their iron clubs. None of the blows, however, reached him. Something that he could not clearly distinguish in the darkness of the tomb, but which seemed to resemble the moon in its circular form, interposed itself as a shield and warded off the blows. He contrived to work his way out of his narrow prison and hastened to relatives, who received him with amazement. After relating his adventures he came to know what caused his merciful deliverance from flagellation by the ghostly clubs. At the very moment when the moon-shaped shield was giving him its shelter, the members of his family were in the act of preparing the *apam* cakes for a *kanduri* which are in fact round like the moon.<sup>234</sup>

The *apam* cake is also called *kuwè peutploh peut* (the 44 cakes). "The cooked rice stands for life as long as I still eat rice I am alive" and the 44 cakes are offered on the 44<sup>th</sup> day after a person's life finally ends" (Bowen 1993:233). The 44th day in Acèh is also the last day of confinement known as *madeueng*

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234 It is interestingly associated with the moon, something to do with fertility since the growth of the rice is very often related to the coolness of the moon.

or “warming” or “engaging in drying the infant’s mother over the fire”. On this day the infant and its mother are moved from the *madeueng*, that is, from the back verandah of the house (Ach *seuramoe likôt*) to the main house (Ach *rumoh inoeng*). Also on the 44th day, the young rice plants called *bijèh padé* are moved from the seedbed where they are then transferred to the fields. In addition, on the 44th day, the tombstones are placed at the head and the feet of the grave (are “planted”) which is also known as *pula batèe* replacing *recinus* plants (Ach *bak nawah*) these are put down as markers at the burial process. This discourse deals very much with fertility, growth and death. The number 44 is relevant because 44 relates to the newborn child, it deals with the growth of the rice. If the number 44 is connected to the growth of rice and a child, it make sense to offer the essence of the rice cakes to the dead because the dead take 44 days to decompose. In other words, 44 days refer both to the complete growing period for rice and to the completion of decay in human bodies. The number 44 thus symbolises both the period of growth for rice and humans and the period of decay for the body and the *apam* cake.

In Blangporoh village, the *khanduri* for the dead is held on the first, second, third, fourth, sixth, seventh, fourteenth, forty-fourth, and one hundredth evening of the dead.<sup>235</sup> Especially on the fifth night after death, it is always performed after “the prayer at sunset” (Ach *seumayang meugrèb*) at the deceased’s house. It is assumed that “essence” of the *apam* cakes served on that occasion provide sustenance for the dead. This *khanduri* is said to be especially favourable in influencing the fortune of the dead. The deceased’s ‘souls’ (spirit) remains near the household and “the ‘souls’ come when the rice is cooked”. “They consume the essence of the rice through the fragrance and the steam rising from the rice. The merit of providing *khanduri apam* cakes will lessen their torment in the grave and Allāh will give His mercy to the dead. The dead person “is like someone who is thrown to the sea without a life raft or any other help”, and a sincere *khanduri apam* held by the family adds to the deceased’s good deeds. The more good deeds the dead has, the happier he/she will be in the grave. One *imām* in Suakberumbang contends that besides adding religious merit for the dead, holding the *khanduri apam* on the fifth day after death is to remind the living that the corpse has now swollen like an *apam* cake. The con-

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235 The day of burial is counted as the first day. If the funeral is on Tuesday, the first *khanduri* falls on Wednesday night. The second is on Thursday night and so on, counted by the number of nights the corpse has lain in the grave.

dition of the dead body in the grave is as follows; the first night, the body is still normal, the second night, it starts to smell, the third night, it smells, the fourth night, it starts to swell, the fifth night, it swells, the sixth night, it nearly bursts, and the seventh night, it bursts”.<sup>236</sup> This condition is a lesson for the living that they will also die and their body will undergo the same process. The dead body will decompose and become earth again. The body is called *maté* (dead) because the *nyawa* ‘soul’ has left it. Although the body has decomposed, the *nyawa* never dies. It is believed that the *nyawa* that has left the body becomes *roh* (spirit) and will go back to his or her house from the first till the seventh night, and then on the fourteenth night, the forty-fourth night and the one hundredth night so that the deceased’s family members have to hold *khanduri* on those particular nights to make the deceased’s ‘soul’ (Ach *aruwah*) happy/to appease the deceased soul. Even the poorest family in the village hold the *khanduri* for the dead from the first till the seventh night and they will get into debt for the *khanduri* for the benefit of the deceased. The deceased’s family is afraid that his or her fellow villagers will say “the *khanduri* has not been held for the deceased”. This statement indicates how important the *khanduri* for the dead is whereby it is not merely for the benefit of the dead but also for the social life of the living.

The following description focuses only on the individual *khanduri apam* on the fifth night of the dead in Blangporoh village. The *apam* cakes were baked at the deceased’s house by his relatives with the help of the village women on the fourth day after death. The ingredients were the same as those of the *apam* cakes offered on the night of the Prophet’s ascension (see below). The next of kin of the dead and the neighbours donated the various ingredients needed to lessen the economic burden on the family. These relatives include the members of the household and the wider kin group, *niniak mamak* and *wali hukum*.

On March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2007 I attended the *khanduri apam* held for a deceased female. Before the prayer recital the *apam* cakes were served to the *shamadiyah*<sup>237</sup> reciters who voluntarily came to the deceased’s house. The *imām* of

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236 Compare to Snouck Hurgronje (1906 I: 430), “The third day the body smells (Ach *huròe lhèe-mubèe*), the fifth it swells (Ach *huròe limòng-keumòng*), the seventh it bursts (Ach *huròe tujòh-beureutòh*), the tenth the worms devoured it (Ach *huròe siplòh-ka ulat pajòh*)”.

237 The name of *shamadiyah* derives from the Arabic word *shamad*, meaning the one who is totally Self Sufficient, who is independent of all, all are dependent on Him; and He

Blangporoh, known for his melodious voice and ritual skills, led the recital of *shamadiyah* as the heart of the funeral *khanduri* at 7.30 after “the sunset prayers” at the deceased’s house.<sup>238</sup> The men gathered in the large front room and the women gathered in the back room. Both rooms had been cleared of furniture and brightly coloured *pandan* mats covered the floor. The assembled guests chanted the *shamadiyah* in Arabic, including repetitions of Qur’anic verses and the phrase *lā ilāha illa Allāh* “there is no deity but Allāh,” as well as long invocations to generate merit and destined for the deceased.

Before the *shamadiyah* was recited, a heap of white stones (Ach *batèe putéh*) bought from a seller at Kruengbaru River<sup>239</sup> were placed in front of each *shamadiyah* reciters by the deceased’s son. While the stones were distributed, the *imām* said to all attendants, “those who have not abluted themselves please do it now! We will recite *shamadiyah* and transfer its merit to the deceased”. As this was about to begin, small white incense in coconut shells was burnt with charcoal and the fragrance helped intensify the spiritual and solemn atmosphere. A working woman in the kitchen said to another working woman and children keep quiet and listen to the *shamadiyah* recitation. The *shamadiyah* started as the smoke of the burned incense was rising. As the same time the *imām* started the chants, he requested pardon from Allāh, known as the *istighfār* from the opening phrase: “Astaghfirullāh...”, meaning “I ask Allāh for pardon...”. [Reciting *istighfār* is a must at the beginning of any recited *do’a* as a means of enhancing the consciousness of Allāh and strengthening the relationship to Him because as it is uttered, the people turn to no one except to Allāh in repentance. *Istighfār* is one of the essences of the people’s servitude and submission to Allāh since the people confess their greatest errors, shortcomings, failures, and sins to Him. The *imām* recited the phrase slowly till the end and others joined them for three repetitions.

After *istighfār* came a prayer in praise of the Prophet called *shalawat*, a word of salutation and blessing upon Allāh’s messenger, the Prophet Muḥam-

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depends on no one for His existence, The Indivisible, The Everlasting refuge. The word itself appears in the second line of the *sūrah al-Ikhlās* (Qur’ān 112): “*Allāhus shamad*” (Allāh, the Everlasting Refuge).

238 If the child of the dead is also a religiously learned man (Ach *teungku*), the *shamadiyah* is led by him because a child of the deceased can be especially effective in transmitting the benefit of the recitation to the deceased’s ‘soul’ (Ach *roh*).

239 Many family members buy these stones to be placed on the grave of relatives after they are chanted with *shamadiyah*.

mad. It was chanted together once slowly. The *imām* said after the *khanduri* that *shalawat* was the second requirement of any chanted *do'a*. Whenever a person says it for the Prophet, an angel informs the Prophet's 'soul' and says, "so and so's son or so and so's daughter" of your follower sends his or her *salām* (peace) and prays for you. The *imām* recommended that *shalawat* for the Prophet be uttered as often as possible and even Allāh and the angels say *shalawat*, so we should too.<sup>240</sup> He added further that there could not be a greater honour for the believers than this, who had been favoured with a share in this divine action by Allāh and His angels. The honour and reverence shown to the Prophet Muḥammad is of a much greater degree than shown to the Prophet Adam to whom only angels were made to bow down in honour. For in honouring the Prophet Muḥammad, Allāh attributed this honour to Himself, whereas in the case of the Prophet Adam Allāh asked only the angels to show honour.

Then came the recitations of the *sūrah al-Ikhlās* [QS 112:1-4], "the Qul hu", from which its name derives. The *imām* and the *shamadiyah* reciters repeat the recitations as many times as the number of white stones that has been donated. Once they finished reciting this *sūrah*, they took a white stone and placed it next to their heap. They did this repeatedly while shaking their heads with their eyes shut till all the white stones were counted. They then put the stones in front of them till the recital of *shamadiyah* was over.<sup>241</sup> Reciting this *sūrah* is central to the *shamadiyah* session. One says that if the *sūrah al-Ikhlās* is sincerely recited ten-thousand times, the deceased's sins would be forgiven by Allāh and "the deceased's life in the grave would be eased as though their sins were like foam in the sea". In other words, repeating sincerely the *sūrah al-Ikhlās* ten thousand times, regardless of the actual number of recitations, is said to redeem the sins of the deceased completely. At first it was recited slowly then the recitation became faster and was then recited loudly to all white stones counted with this *sūrah*.

The previous *imām* of Blangporoh said that the *sūrah al-Ikhlās* completely erased any polytheism (Arb *shirk*) that the people were committing and that it

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240 What the *imām* said can be found in the *Qur'ān*, *sūrah al-Ahzāb*, verse 56 which says "Indeed, Allāh confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [Allāh to confer] blessing upon him and ask [Allāh to grant him] peace".

241 The *shamadiyah* was counted 40 times with the white stones. The participants who got more than 40 white stones gathered together the stones that had a spell cast on them. The *imām* also said that they also contained *beurekat* (Arb *baraka*), after *shamadiyah*.

moved Allāh away from the paganistic ideas and doctrines that had been ascribed to Him. It dealt essentially and exclusively with the unity of Allāh (Arb *tauḥid*). Many people in Blangporoh with whom I discussed the *shamadiyah* said that this *sūrah* was equivalent in merit to a third of the Qur’ān, and that reciting it three times constituted “completing the Qur’ān”.<sup>242</sup>

Next, two additional short *sūrah*; the *sūrah al-Falaq* [QS 113:1-5] and the *sūrah an-Nas* [QS 114:1-6] were recited together. Both *sūrah* are usually identified in such discussions by their first *ayat* (Arb *āyātun*) rather than by their titles. It is said that the *sūrah al-Ikhlās*, *al-Falaq*, and *an-Nās* should not be separated and each has different virtue: the ‘Qul hu’ [QS 112:1-4] states that “Allāh is one. He neither begets nor is born. Nor is there any equivalent to Him”; the “Qul a’ūdzu birabbil falaq’ [QS 113:1-5] asks Allāh’s protection from all kinds of evil; the ‘Qul a’ūdzu birabbīn nās’ [QS 114:1-6] asks Allāh to ward off devils who make evil suggestions and evil prompts that may come from men as well as from jinn. My respondent said that reciting these *sūrah* three times at dawn and dusk would suffice in all respects, meaning that one would not need any other recitations for the remembrance of Allāh. The most important virtue of this *sūrah* is that Allāh will protect the reciters from all danger. It is said that after lying in the bed, the Prophet used to recite these *sūrah*, then blow on his hands and rub his body where he could.

Only after this, the *imām* and the *shamadiyah* reciters continued reciting *tahlīl*, during which the participants chanted a *zikir* (Arb *dhikr*), a repetition of *lā ilāha illa Allāh* (there is no deity but Allāh) as the essence for *tahlīl* itself for one hundred repetitions. The recital of *tahlīl* is called *meuratéb*. The first three times of *tahlīl* was recited slowly together then somewhat more quickly, and in a loud voice with a different melody. The reciters shook their heads from right to left and then back again keeping their eyes shut. Sometimes a participant took the initiative to chant loudly. The louder their voice the faster their heads shook with their eyes closed, some people also do this without saying anything. The women gathered at the back divided their attention between the chanting

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242 Like in Gayo, Central Acèh, this is said to be based on the story of how Alī ibn Abī Tālib, the son in-law of the Prophet Muḥammad as well as the fourth caliph, first impressed the Prophet with this idea. The Prophet had asked his students to recite their way through the Qur’ān. As the others were just reciting to the next *sūrah*, ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib closed the Qur’ān said that he had finished reciting it. To the Prophet’s query, he replied that he had simply read the “Qul hu” three times till the end and thus completed the Qur’ān. The Prophet was pleased with this reply (see Bowen 1993:265).

and looking after the children, cooking the meal, baking *apam* and snacks. At the one hundredth recitation the *imām* clapped his hands in order to let the participants know they could stop chanting. After reciting *tahlīl*, the *imām* continued reciting *do'a* to send requests to Allāh for the well-being of the deceased and to channel the merit of the entire session to the deceased's soul.<sup>243</sup> The contents of *do'a* recited by the *imām* are as follows:

He praised Allāh and prayed for the Prophet and his family's well-being.  
He asked for a good place in this world and the hereafter, beseeching that all disaster be avoided, and requesting Allāh's perpetual blessing.  
He sought Allāh's forgiveness for their teachers, parents, grandparents, neighbors, and friends and all Muslims in the world, those who are still alive and those who have died.  
He requested Allāh to protect the living present and absent.  
He asked Allāh to protect the deceased, showing him mercy, keeping him in good condition, pardoning him, (honouring him, and enlargening his place of rest, washing him with water, and cleansing him from faults as a white cloth is cleaned of dirt (at this moment, he modulated his voice in a highly pleasant way and sometimes a tear-drop will roll down his face and then he takes a slight pause before resuming the *do'a*).  
He asked Allāh to send the blessing of *shamadiyah*, *tahlīl*, and *do'a* to the *aruwah* of the deceased directly (whilst saying this, he lowered his voice and said the deceased's name softly), to keep away the torment of the grave (*Ach siksa kubu*) experienced by the deceased's soul, release it from spiritual sins and the early debts and bestow on it as much of "the pleasure of grave" as possible.  
He asked Allāh to grant that whoever dies may die in faith. O Allāh! Do not deprive us of this reward and do not make us fall into a trial.  
He asked Allāh to bestow the happiness in the world and on the day of judgement upon the living.

At the end of each recited *do'a*, all *shamadiyah* reciters intoned *āmīn* (please approve oh Allāh) with individual prayers. He closed the *do'a* session with the collective chanting of verses of the *sūrah al-Fātiḥah* (QS 1:1-7) "which contains the essence of the entire Qur'ān".

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243 The role of the *imām* in the ritual of reciting *shamadiyah* is very significant. He does not just coordinate and lead the *shamadiyah* reciters in reciting *do'a* and verses. He is also responsible for transmitting their merits to Allāh. That is why the *imām* (the *do'a* leader) must act correctly otherwise the merit of *shamadiyah* will not be accepted, says one man. He adds that in this case the *imām* must have a strong *makripat* (Arb *ma'rifah*), the intuitive knowledge concerning the relationship of the worshippers to Allāh, the mystics consider this knowledge superior to any acquired knowledge.

After reciting *do'a*, the piles of white stones that had been counted with the *sūrah al-Ikhlās* in front of the *shamadiyah* reciters were mixed and put into a small sack by the deceased's son. The *apam* cakes were then served on plates to the *shamadiyah* reciters. Some other *shamadiyah* reciters who had quickly finished eating *apam* cakes smoked and drank coffee while waiting for others who were still eating. The son of the deceased inserted an envelope containing money into the pocket of each *shamadiyah* reciter, and the *khanduri apam* for the dead was over at about 9 pm.

The *imām* and other *shamadiyah* reciters argued that the recitation of *shamadiyah* where the villagers referred to the recitation of the *sūrah al-Ikhlās*, *tahlīl*, and *do'a* is to generate merit for the deceased. The merit of those recitations was aimed directly at the 'soul' (Ach *aruwah*) of the deceased and each word of the chanting was *do'a* to lighten his/her suffering. Some said that the merit was aimed at adding to the number of the deceased's good deeds (Ach *amai*) and redeeming his sins. If the recital of *shamadiyah* was not performed when a person died in the village, that person was shown no respect.

In the early morning on the days following March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007 the white stones were placed on the grave of the dead by the deceased's son. It is said that because both the *sūrah al-Ikhlās* and *tasbèh* are in praise of Allāh, jinn will not dare to approach the grave because of the white stones symbolizing holiness and will become witnesses on the Day of Resurrection. The white stones acknowledge that *shamadiyah* has been recited for the deceased in front of Allāh. The ritual of placing the white stones is said not to be heretic as the Prophet Muḥammad had asked his companions to collect small stones to be placed on the grave of his son, Ibrahim. The white stones that have been placed from the head to the foot of the grave are believed to be saying *tasbèh* (a prayer to the glory of Allāh) until the Day of Judgment and generate merit on the deceased's behalf after the grave has been left because at the beginning the *sūrah al-Ikhlās* and *tasbèh* have been chanted with these stones.

### **The collective *khanduri apam***

Since the collective *khanduri apam* was not held in Blangporoh village on the 27<sup>th</sup> night of Ra'jab lunar month in 2007, the following description refers to the collective *khanduri apam* held in Alurambot, the neighbouring village in Meunasahbarō's mosque. The collective *khanduri apam* is held for the collective dead. In this ritual collectively celebrated there two different discourses: the

*adat* discourse and the Islamic discourse. Both are used in order to explain why this ritual is performed. The villagers claim that the name of the month of Ra'jab (Ra-Ja-B) consists of the three Arabic letters ر (Ra), ج (J) and ب (B), substantiating the event of the Prophet's ascension from Mecca to Jerusalem. Each letter stands respectively for *R-asulullah* (the Messenger of Allāh), *J-ibril* (Gabriel) and *B-uraq* (the vehicle of ascension). Some people stress that the *apam* cakes which are served to the people on the 27<sup>th</sup> night of Ra'jab originate in Acèhnese custom because these are believed to have been the cakes that the Acèhnese ancestors consumed.<sup>244</sup> Some others said that the *khanduri apam* and their sauce (Ach *kuwah*) relates to the Prophet Muḥammad's journey to heaven. On the night of the Prophet's ascension, he was offered three kinds of drink by Gabriel: milk, honey and arrack. He took the milk and the honey. Milk is a symbol of *apam* cakes; honey a symbol of its sweet sauce. The Prophet did not take arrack and nor did he drink it when it was offered to him. That is why Muslims are not allowed to drink arrack and alcohol.<sup>245</sup> Some others say the *apam* symbolises the flesh of the body so when it is eaten, it must be made into a sauce symbolising the blood. Perhaps this interpretation is influenced by the Christian concept of Eucharist. They also stress that the essence of the *apam* cakes will be given to the ancestors as part of the *adat* discourse and at the same time the cakes also bring merit from Allāh as part of the Islamic discourse.

In Tangan-Tangan, the neighboring district of West Labuhan Haji, the villagers bring the *apam* cakes to the mosque on the night of the celebration of the Prophet's journey to heaven; they also bring the *apam* cakes to the mosque every Friday of the Ra'jab lunar month. After the Friday prayer, they eat together in the mosque in the hope that the donors and their deceased relatives will receive religious merit from preparing the *apam*. In the past *khanduri apam* was also performed after an earthquake occurred which was supposed to decompose the material remains of the deceased (Snouck Hurgronje I 1906:220). Part of the ritual is the baking of cakes in every house that are distributed at the mosques or prayer houses for the benefit of their ancestors and recently deceased relatives.

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244 Other cakes such as *seupèt*, *keutupèk* and *leumang* which are now made on certain occasions by the Aneuk Jamee and the Acèhnese belong to the Minangkabau people.

245 One said that the *khanduri apam* in Minangkabau, West Sumatra is held without sauce and, therefore, is called *apam serabi* as they do not see a relation between offering milk, honey and arrack and the ascension of the Prophet to heaven.

A week earlier, the village secretary announced to all followers of Friday communal prayer the following:

We are now in the middle of Ra'jab lunar month. It has become a custom that during every Ra'jab lunar month we will hold the *khanduri apam*. The members of the governing body of the village have decided that the *khanduri apam* will be held on Ra'jab 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007, that is on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007 and we hope every one will spread this news to all villagers. All families should bake *apam* cakes and bring them to the mosque at 8 pm. In addition, all villagers are invited to attend the *khanduri apam* and listen to the speech about the history of the Prophet's ascension (Ach *sejarah nabi jak mè'reuät*) to heaven.

At midday on Ra'jab 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007, the village women baked *apam* cakes at their home.<sup>246</sup> They are cakes made of lightly fermented rice flour and should be eaten with a sauce of coconut milk, sugar, salt, ripe *wak* banana, and the leaves of civet cat's *pandanus*. The surfaces of *apam* cakes have small holes on them, symbolizing the rain causing the deluge at the time of the Prophet Noah. The offering is meritorious as it is considered to be a form of charity as well as maintaining brotherhood and community bonds.

At 8 pm after 'night prayers' (Ach *seumayang isya*), the village men, women and children went to the mosque. Each family head brought the *apam* cakes in a set of stacked containers (Jam/Indon *rantang*) to the mosque and gave it with Rp 2,000 to the committee members. The committee members placed these containers in the back left corner of the mosque and received money from each household head to buy tea and coffee; other cakes were later given to the speech deliverer.

At about 8.30 pm the head of the committee members announced: Please come quickly to the mosque! Several minutes later the villagers arrived at the mosque. The men sit in lines at the front of the mosque; the women sit at the back. Some children sit with their fathers and some sit with their mothers and some others sit between men and women. The ceremony commenced promptly

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246 It was made of ordinary rice flour (Jam *tapuang bareh*; Ach *tepung breueh*), coconut milk (Jam *santèn karambi*; Ach *santan u*), and salt (Jam *garom*; Ach *sira*), and yeast (Ach *gis*). The crushed yeast is mixed with ordinary rice flour in order to make the *apam* cakes raise as they are baked. A female *apam* baker told me how to make the *apam* cakes. It as follows; firstly, the coconut milk is heated then mixed with ordinary rice flour, salt and the crushed yeast are added. It is then stirred before being baked in an iron pot (Ach *kuali beuso*). She also said that many years ago every household in the village kept a special iron pot for baking the *apam* cakes in the Ra'jab lunar month.

at 9 pm. First, a young boy recited verses 1 to 7 of the *sūrah al-Isrā'* in the mosque's pulpit so that the ceremony could be blessed. Then the head of the committee stood up in front of all those attending to thank everyone who had contributed help, ideas and money. The history of *israk mikraj* (Ach *iseurak mè'reuät*) was then recited. This speech consisted of a description of the ascension in rhyming prose and verse, similar to that about the birth of the Prophet (see Ch.7).

Below I present excerpts from the *israk mikraj* speech at Meunasahbaro's mosque I recorded this omitting just repetitive speech. It begins after the customary Arabic formulae "I take refuge in Allāh from the accursed devils", "In the name of Allāh the beneficent and merciful", with a Qur'anic verse, *sūrah al-Isrā'* (QS 17:1). This says "Exalted is He who took His servant [i.e., Prophet Muḥammad] by night from the Harām mosque to the Aqsā mosque whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing". The *israk mikraj* speech continues:

All 'fathers' (*bapak*) and 'mothers' (*ibu*), I wish that Allāh blesses you all for attending the *israk mikraj* celebration on this night. Before the story of *israk* and *mikraj* is told, it is important to know why our Prophet Muḥammad was taken from the Harām mosque in Mecca to the Aqsā mosque in Jerusalem, Palestine. He was then lifted up to the seventh layer in the sky, to Sidratul Muntaha and at the end to Mustawa. Historically, in the eleventh year of his prophethood, the "year of profound sorrow" (Ach *thon dukka cita*) occurred in which his beloved wife, Khadijah and his father's brother, Abi Thalib passed away. These losses affected him deeply because both his wife and uncle had supported his preaching from the beginning. At the same time the Quraisy group had increased their economic and political pressure on him and his followers. He and his followers really felt the ban imposed on them not to provide food or communication for around two years and that is why the year of *israk mikraj* was named as "the year of profound sorrow". In this condition, the scenario with Allāh took place. He was taken and lifted up to meet Allāh on the twenty seventh night of Rajab, about 18 months before "the flight" (Arb *hijrah*)<sup>247</sup> to Medina.

All 'fathers' and 'mothers', *israk* (Arb *isrā'*) was a miracle in which the Prophet Muḥammad was taken from the Harām mosque in Mecca at night by a winged steed called *buraq* to the Aqsā mosque in Jerusalem, Palestine. Before he was taken, his breast was at first operated on by Gabriel, one of the four archangels. He cleaned the Prophet Muḥammad's heart

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247 Hijrah, "the flight", because of persecution, the Prophet Muḥammad moved his community from Mecca to Medina in A. D 622. This marks the base date of the Muslim calendar.

three times with the Zamzam well's water. A part of his heart called Satan (Ach *syétan*), was taken and thrown away and replaced by Gabriel with wisdom, knowledge, faith, and strength in order to guarantee his physical and mental condition for a very long journey at night penetrating the atmosphere and air from one planet to another. After operating, the Prophet's breast was closed and sealed with a prophetic stamp.

All 'fathers' and 'mothers', Gabriel was the guide who that night brought a *buraq* from heaven for the Prophet. The vehicle named *buraq* meaning *flash of lightning* because it could fly as fast as a flash of lightning. The *buraq* has the face of a woman, the body of a horse with four legs, two wings like a bird, and a tail like a peacock. This image is not strange for Muslims. Sometimes this picture is hung in a house or on the door. The questions are: is it right that the Prophet Muhammad mounted on such a being when he was taken from the Harām mosque in Mecca to the Aqsā mosque in Palestine during the night. Who created such a picture? Such a picture is merely an imaginary picture created by Jews. The Jews created such a picture aimed at undermining the Prophet Muhammad. Buraq's face is like a woman's because he practised polygamy. The wings are like a bird because the Buraq wanted to fly over everyone. Having a body like a horse meant he had a strong sexual desire. The Prophet Muhammad did not ride in such a vehicle when he was taken from the Harām mosque in Mecca to the Aqsā mosque in Palestine.<sup>248</sup>

All 'fathers' and 'mothers', the Prophet Muhammad was brought from the Harām mosque by the *buraq* to a place where date trees grew. Gabriel told him that the place's name was Thayyibah (now Medina), the place where you would *hijrah* later. Again the *buraq* flew until they arrived at Madyan (now Ghaza). Flying again till they arrived at Thursina hill, the place where Allāh and Moses spoke. Flying again till they arrived at Baitullahmi, the place where the prophet Isa (Jesus) was born. As the *buraq* stopped at the above places, the Prophet Muhammad was asked to get off and to perform a two-cycle voluntary prayer (Ach *dua raka'at seumayang sunat*). Each time whilst flying with the *buraq*, Jinn Ifrit<sup>249</sup> went toward him with fire then Gabriel taught him the following *do'a* ; "I take shelter from Allāh with His perfect decrees which cannot be transgressed by pious or sinful men; from disasters falling from the sky, rising to the sky, happening on earth and something arising up from it, (such as slander during the day and at night) and other various events during the day and night except the events that bring goodness, o Allāh, the entirely merciful, the especially merciful". After uttering this *do'a* the fire was extinguished and jinn Ifrit fell down.

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248 Such statements about Jews are a part of general discourse among more general Islamic discourse in Indonesia, see "The Jew as a symbol in contemporary Muslim discourse in Indonesia" (see Dian 1994).

249 Ifrit (Arabic *'ifrīt*) is an evil jinn and is regarded as especially dangerous to humans.

All ‘fathers’ and ‘mothers’, the journey was again continued till the Prophet Muḥammad and Gabriel arrived at a group which were planting and harvesting on the same day. He asked Gabriel about it and he said “that is a symbol of people who strived to accomplish religious ends (Indon *berjihad*) for the sake of Allāh. Their goodness will be doubled by Allāh 700 times”. The Prophet Muḥammad smelt something fragrant; he then asked Gabriel about it. Gabriel said that this was the smell of Masyithah, a comber of the Pharaoh’s daughters’ hair who was thrown by Pharaoh into the bubbling oil because she did not acknowledge Pharaoh as a god. The Prophet Muḥammad also saw people who ate the decaying meat although they had fresh meat in front of them. He asked Gabriel about it and Gabriel answered that this was a symbol of people who had their own wives but liked sleeping with other women. The Prophet Muḥammad also saw people who swam in the bloody river. Gabriel said that this was a symbol of people who ate excessively. He also saw the people cutting their own tongues. This was a symbol of people who enjoy slander, said Gabriel.

All ‘fathers’ and ‘mothers’, the Prophet Muḥammad travelled till he arrived at Aqsā mosque in Palestine. He entered the mosque and became the *imām* of a two-cycle voluntary prayer. All souls of the earlier prophets and believers stood behind him and followed his prayers. After performing prayer, he was thirsty and Gabriel brought milk and arrack to him. The Prophet Muḥammad cleverly chose milk. Gabriel said, “You have made the right choice”. Milk is a symbol of Islam because it is good and the people drinking it will feel enjoyment. Gabriel further said, “If you chose arrack, your followers would be led astray (Ach *sisat*) and will follow their sexual desires and nobody would follow you”. The history of *mikraj* then continues.

All ‘fathers’ and ‘mothers’, *Mikraj* (Arab *mik’āj*) means a ladder (Ach *re-nyeyun*) on which Muḥammad ascended to heaven. It was brought from heaven. The Prophet and Gabriel stepped on the given ladder then they were lifted up to the door of the worldly sky. At the first layer of sky, he met the Prophet Adam. On the second layer of sky, he met the Prophet Isa, the third layer of sky he met the Prophet Yusuf, the fourth layer of sky, he met the Prophet Idris. On the fifth layer of sky, he met the Prophet Harun. On the sixth layer of sky, he met the Prophet Musa, and on the seventh layer sky, he met the Prophet Ibrahim. All earlier prophets he met uttered *salām* (Muslim’s greeting) to him and prayed for him so that Allāh would prolong his age. They said that Muḥammad was the best *khalifah* and he was the best visitor that ever came to the sky.

All ‘fathers’ and ‘mothers’, the Prophet Ibrahim said to the Prophet Muḥammad that his *ummat* were very weak (Ach *umat laèh*). He suggested that he prayed for them and asked them to plant trees in heaven with *tasbīh* (a prayer to the glory of Allāh) because the soil of heaven was very fertile and its water was fresh. *Tasbīh* consists of four phrases:

<i>Subhanallāh</i>	Allāh is Holy
<i>Wal hamdulillāh</i>	and all praise is due to Allāh
<i>Wālaillā haillallāh</i>	and there is no deity except Allāh
<i>Allāhu akbar</i>	Allāh is the greatest.

These phrases are for those who recited those sentences when they planted a tree and the more they recited these sentences the more trees they could plant in heaven. Their fruit would be picked later in the hereafter. After seeing many interesting events on his right hand (heaven) and sad events on his left hand (hell), he and Gabriel entered Baitul Makmur which was believed to be directly at Ka'bah in Mecca and performed a two-cycle voluntary prayer there.

All 'fathers' and 'mothers', the Prophet Muḥammad was lifted up alone without Gabriel to Sidratul Muntaha, a huge tree where the river of Kautsar flows to heaven from the base of its roots. The colour of its trunk was like a very beautiful jewel that could change colour by itself. The Prophet Muḥammad then entered into heaven. Heaven contained truly beautiful things; things that the eyes would have never seen, the ear would have never heard, and things that would have never crossed human's mind. Heaven is the place of happiness which is unexplainable for believers. He then went into *nūr* (light) right on the top of the Sidratul Muntaha tree. From there he was lifted up to Mustawa and he looked at a man whose tongue was wet from reciting *zikir* and whose heart was hung on the mosque as he had always obeyed and never insulted his parents. The Prophet Muḥammad then arrived at Hadhatul Qudus and Hadrat Rabbul-Arbab and looked Allāh directly in the eyes. He bowed in front of Him and then a conversation took place:

Allāh:	O Muḥammad
Muḥammad:	<i>Labbaik</i> (I come from my deep longing to fulfill your invitation)
Allāh:	Please lift your head up and ask Me, I shall grant your requests
Muḥammad:	Ya Allāh, You have taken Ibrahim as <i>khalilullāh</i> (the closest companion of Allāh) and given him a big kingdom. You had a conversation with Moses. You gave Dawud who could bend iron a big kingdom. You gave a big kingdom to Sulaiman. You gave him knowledge to master jinn, human beings, Satan, and air. You taught Isa Taurat and Injil (Gospel). With your permission, he could heal blind people and those with skin discolorations you brought someone back from the dead and protected him and his mother, Maryam from Satan.
Allāh:	I took you as <i>ḥabibullāh</i> (my beloved), I want to introduce you as the one who delivers the happy news and My command to your followers. I have opened your chest and

thrown your sin away. I made your followers the best ones. I gave them special treatment in the day after. I gave you and your followers 7 verses of *sūrah al-Fātiḥah* which I did not give to anyone who came before you. I gave you *liwaul hamdi* (banner) so that Adam and others will be under your banner in the day after, and I asked you and your followers to pray 50 times a day and at night.

All ‘fathers’ and ‘mothers’, after having the conversation, the Prophet Muḥammad went back to meet the Prophet Ibrahim and Musa and they asked the Prophet Muhammad to go back and asked Allāh to reduce the prayertimes because his followers are weak in body, breast, heart, sight and hearing. Following the advice of the Prophet Ibrahim and Musa, the Prophet Muḥammad went back to Allāh nine times that night. And each he went back to Him, He reduced the prayers by five and at the end He required 5 prayers a day which have the same value as praying fifty times. After *mikraj*, he went back to the worldly sky and from there to Baitul Maqdis with Gabriel then again riding the *buraq* to go back to Mecca on the same night with a prescription from Allāh for Muslims to observe five daily prayers.

All ‘fathers’ and ‘mothers’, the history of *israk mikraj* contains mysterious messages from which one can learn lessons. These are as follows: Operating on the chest of the Prophet Muḥammad before he was taken from Mecca to Jerusalem as preparation to meet the Holiest one, that is Allāh. This is a symbol of a wide chest sharpness of one’s inner self. In reality the principle of “broad chest” by using sharpness of one’s inner self with the society is very important. The agreements that have been made in our society may not be transgressed. A “broad chest”, modesty and the sharpness of one’s inner self practiced by the Prophet Muḥammad were very important in his prophetic mission in order to change the society to become more ideal. They function to lighten the physical burden and to raise optimism. The moment of *israk mikraj* is hoped for to attain a positive attitude in life. *Israk mikraj* teaches us to learn from other experienced people. Meetings and conversation between the Prophet Muḥammad and his seniors, Prophet Ibrahim and Musa and the questions and answers with Gabriel indicate that we should be modest and learn from success or failure taken from other people’s experiences. The experiences of the earlier prophets were very useful for the Prophet Muḥammad. For us, other people’s experience should provide inspiration to solve our problems.

The highest valued command, that is *salat* (prayer). The Prophet Muḥammad was directly lifted up to receive it while Allāh's other commands were only through revelations to him. *Salat* is one of the pillars of the Islamic religion. For those who perform it, he or she has chosen the Islamic religion and vice versa, for those who do not perform it, he or she

thus has discarded the Islamic religion. It is felt that Allāh controls our actions otherwise these actions will not work. *Israk mikraj* indicates a very important spiritual value for our lives visions. A moral philosophy reminds us that a community can become be eternal together through morality. If there is no morality, the community will be thus lost together.

After delivering the lessons that can be learnt from *israk mikraj*'s recitation, the session of the *israk mikraj* speech closed with a short *do'a* considered to be the noblest act before Allāh. While standing up in the mosque's pulpit and holding up his two hands with palms as high as his breast followed by everyone, the *imām* began the *do'a* by uttering 'in the name of Allāh, the entirely merciful, the especially merciful' (Arb *bismillāhirrahmānirrahīm*). He praised Allāh by uttering 'all praise is due to Allāh, Lord of the world' (Arb *alhamdulillahilillāhi rabbil 'ālamīn*) and prayed for the Prophet Muḥammad and his family by uttering 'Allāh, call down blessing on our leader Muḥammad, the illiterate Prophet, and on his family and companions, and greet them with peace' (Arb *allāhumma shalli 'alā saiyidinā Muḥammadin nabi al-ummi wa 'alā alihi wa ashābihi wa salam*). He requested Allāh as follows:

O Allāh, on this day; place us among those who seek forgiveness. Place us among Your righteous and obedient servants, and place us among Your close friends, by Your kindness, Ya the most Merciful.

O Allāh, on this day, do not let us abase ourselves by incurring Your disobedience, and do not strike us with the whip of Your punishment, keep us from the causes of Your anger, by Your kindness and Your power, Ya the ultimate wish of those who desire.

O Allāh please gives us the happiness in the world and in the hereafter, and keeps us away from hell's torment.

At the end of each recited *do'a*, all attendants intoned *āmīn* (please approve oh Allāh) and the *imām* closed the *do'a* session with the collective chanting of verses of the *sūrah al-Fatihah* (QS 1:1-7).

At about 10.30 pm at night, the speech was over. The children who slept on the floor during the speech were awoken; "get up", "get up, now eat *khanduri apam*". Most of the women went home although the head of the committee members said they should eat the *apam* cakes. The committee members mixed the stacked containers containing *apam* cakes and their sauce, placing them in front of the *imām* first, then in front of the preacher, the members of the governing body of the village and all attendants in the front part of the mosque, including in front of some of women who were waiting for their husbands and

children at the back of the mosque. It is imperative that the participants do not eat the *apam* cakes they brought themselves. “I bring the *apam* cakes with their sauce to the mosque for others. If I eat the *apam* that I bring that is no longer *khanduri*”. The point here is that people do not eat their own offerings.

At about 11 pm, eating the *khanduri apam* was over. Some *apam* cakes fell into the hands of the children that waited nearby and many were thrown away at the end because many of those attending went home after hearing the *israk mikraj* speech and some of the sauce was spoiled because it was not properly cooked. It was not surprising that the people who came to the mosque after the *khanduri apam* still suffered from the smell of the remains of the *apam* and sauce that were thrown out from the mosque’s window.<sup>250</sup>

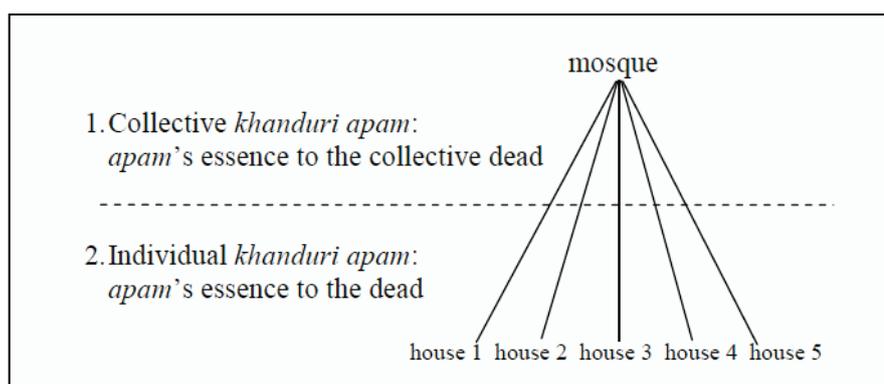
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250 The following day, on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007, I came to this village discussing with a number of people about the nature of the ascension in which the villagers claimed that the ascension involved the whole entity of Muḥammad’s human nature as a servant which therefore comprised of both his spiritual and physical elements. They considered the Muḥammad’s ascension as a test for all mankind. It was said that after the Prophet returned from the *israk mikraj*, the non-believers started to laugh at the Prophet and made a mockery of him because they found the incident humorous. For the believers, however, it was a trial; some of them accepted it and some had doubts. Those who accepted came to Abu Bakr, the first Caliph and related to him the *israk mikraj* of the Prophet. Abu Bakr said “By Allāh, if Muḥammad himself has said so then it is true because the story came from the Prophet and he has never told a lie”. From that day Abu Bakr was given the title of *as-Shidq* (true) by the Prophet (see Haikal 1976:146-147). The *imām* contended that *israk mikraj* was a special work of Allāh which could not be found in ordinary human beings. “It was a miracle, a kind of unusual work which could be found only on the Prophet with the permission of Allāh. His knowledge was the highest, thus nothing was impossible when He wished it. Many proponents used the achievement of advanced space technology, which was unthinkable a few decades or centuries ago, yet had now become reality, as support for the acceptability of the ascension” (Muhaimin 2004:182). The *imām* further contended that if the ascension involved the soul of the Prophet only, that was not special. Another *imām* also said that the *israk mikraj* was a physical journey. The Qur’ān (17:1) which says that Allāh took His servant [Muḥammad] from Mecca to Jerusalem at night is itself evidence of this. The word servant (Arb *‘abdi*) in this verse applies to the body and soul together. The soul itself is not called *‘abdi*. If the journey was a vision they did not deny it and the matter was not given such importance. Because in a vision one could go anywhere and see anything and no one could deny it or give importance to it. What had happened during the prophethood, it was said, could also happen now. The phenomenon was unthinkable and thus, beyond human rationality. In fact there was a disagreement among intellectuals on the nature of the ascension, whether it involved physical or spiritual ascension. The majority of Islamic scholars were of the opinion that the *israk mikraj* is not purely “spiritual”. They believed that the Prophet did it physically, in body and spirit. Any traditional discussion in the village, “takes the event for granted as a part of Islamic belief, including how the Prophet underwent a heart operation from Gabriel prior to his ascension, met with the previous prophets in the heaven during the journey and then went back to Mecca with a

## Conclusion

The seventh month of the Islamic lunar calendar is Ra'jab commemorated by means of the ritual of baking *apam* cakes. This month is regarded as one of the sacred months during which in the days of the Prophet Muḥammad it was forbidden to engage in battle. It is also a prelude to the month of Ramadhan because the latter follows after the intervening month of Sya'ban. The month of Ra'jab is called “the month of *khanduri apam*” since during this period the *apam* cakes are baked in every house and distributed at the mosques as special food in the interests of ancestors and recently deceased relatives. The *apam* cakes symbolize that someone is preserved/protected from torment and at the same time the cakes are seen as charity for those who come to the mosque and the deceased's house.

The ritual of *khanduri apam* is a communication ritual; it communicates with the living and ancestors, and also between the living and Allāh. This cake is taken as a symbol as it is made of rice and is thus of human origin. It is essentially a powerful symbol of human qualities. Perhaps for this reason the *apam* cake [rice] is considered especially effective in transmitting human desires to ancestors and recently deceased relatives. The ritual of *khanduri apam* is celebrated on two different occasions at two different settings: a) at the deceased person's house at his/her individual singular death; b) at the mosque, collectively for all those deceased that have become ancestors during the past year (figure 10).



**Figure 10. Two different occasions of *khanduri apam***

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prescription from Allāh for the Muslims to observe the five daily prayers” (Muhaimin 2004:182). However, many western commentators may find this hard to believe because it involved supernatural powers and it was technically impossible so that many images of Muḥammad as liar and fraud, deluded visionary, hysteric, epileptic Prophet were brought into play in the eighteen and nineteen centuries as possible explanations of the *israk mikraj* (see Almond 1989: 53-55).

The collective *khanduri apam* can only be celebrated after the individual *khanduri apam* has been performed for each ritual for the dead. The relation between the living and ancestors has been taken care of. This is indeed a way of mediation between the living and ancestors. The ritual has various dimensions. The first dimension is that it takes care of the dead, on both occasions they are nourished with the spiritual essence of the rice. To that end, the rice cake is cooked and the smell of the rice cakes attracts the deceased and it is nourishment as spiritual nourishment for the dead. The second dimension is that the act of the performance of the *khanduri apam* generates merit and it is the merit transferred to the deceased; it protects the deceased in the grave from the interrogating angels. *Khanduri apam* is redeemed by linking the offering of the rice cakes with the recitation of the *shamadiyah* consisting of the recitation of the *sūrah al-Ikhlās*, *tahlīl*, and *do'a*. They become the gift from Allāh to the performers and the third dimension is the modernists who reject the possibility of the living aiding the dead through *shamadiyah* recitation as reciting *shamadiyah* implied that one could produce merit for someone else. “The Prophet did say the *tasbēh* prayer, but we cannot just keep adding to that; that is heresy (Arb *bid'ah*)” (see also Bowen 1993:269). The person can only help him or herself directly in relation to Allāh. In addition, modernists denied that one can send food to the souls but they did value the food's natural qualities.

## CHAPTER 10

### The ritual of *khanduri bu*

Sya'ban is the eighth month of Islamic lunar month, which coincides with the month of August of the Gregorian calendar. During this month, an “atmosphere of joy” precedes the tasks of “committing oneself to the serious mood and demands” of the following month of Ramadhan. Sya'ban is “the month of the rice feast” (Ach *buleuen khanduri bu*). The authoritative warning pertaining to this celebrated occasion in Blangporoh village and other Acèhnese villages is believed to have been transmitted by the Acèhnese's ancestors (Ach *endatu* or Indon *nénék moyang*). The name of *khanduri bu* refers to the fact that rice forms the principal of all food dishes that are served to honour the dead and to take care of their “soul” (Ach *roh*; Arb *rūh*). This concern for the welfare of the dead exhibits itself in the giving of a religious feast. Hence the Sya'ban lunar month is also known as “the month of *khanduri* for the old people” (Ach *buleuen khanduri ke ureueng chi'*),<sup>251</sup> a name that also refers to the feasts offered to the ancestors. This term derives from the fact that one day during Sya'ban, every household prepares and serves a *khanduri bu* (“a rice feast”) in order to remember their ancestors and show them that they have not been forgotten. It is performed to invoke the deceased as an expression of gratitude to “spirits of the departed” (Snouck Hurgronje 1906: 222). The villagers say that the religious merit gained from *khanduri bu* is aimed at increasing the auspicious state of the ancestors, which the villagers themselves have procured by the “good deeds” (Ach *amai ureueng chi'*) that they have performed during their lifetime.

It is said that the month of Sya'bān consists of four Arabic letters ش (*syén*) ع (*a'in*) and ب (*ba*), أ (*alif*), and ن (*nun*). Each letter stands respectively for ش = *syaraf* (honour), ع = *izzah* (trust), ب = *bīr* (goodness), أ = *ulfa* (grace), and ن = *nūr* (light). Whoever pays respect to their ancestors by means of holding *khanduri bu*, reciting Qur'ān, and *do'a* will be trusted by others. When one receives trust, he or she will receive the goodness (Indon *kebaikan*). His or her life will

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251 The Acèhnese word of *ureung chi'* (Jam *urang tuwo*) literally means “old people”. The Acèhnese and the Jamee speaking people in Blangporoh do not make a distinction between the term to address for parents and ancestors. They are both called *ureung chi'*. In the context of *khanduri bu*, the word *ureueng chi'* refers to the ancestors or “spirits of the departed”.

be light. Be good to your ancestors otherwise your descendants later will not be good to you, says M. Nazar while smiling. *Khanduri bu* is regarded as a good way to invoke and to transmit the love of living people to ancestors. Through it, the performers communicate with the dead, particularly to obtain purity of the heart (Ach *peugleh haté*). Sya'ban lunar month is the month for cleansing the 'heart' (Ac *haté*) and Ramadhan lunar month is the month for cleansing the 'soul/mind' (Jam *jiwo*). In addition, *khanduri bu* must be performed with a very 'clean heart' (Ach *beureuséh haté*) for the *ureueng chi'* (ancestors) before people accomplish religious services during Ramadhan month to cleanse their 'soul/mind'.

In addition, the Sya'ban is one of the good months to hold wedding ceremonies. Hence, many wedding ceremonies take place in this month. Therefore, it is called the month of "wedding season" (Ach *buleuen musém meukawén*). Many couples who have agreed to get married that year prepare to do so before Ramadhan comes. Several reasons were given as why Sya'ban lunar month is preferably chosen for wedding ceremonies. First, there is a belief that the people who get married in this month will be happy. Second, the groom wants someone to prepare the breaking fast (Jam *buko puaso*; Ach *buka puasa*) for him. Third, Sya'ban is the blessed month so that it is very good time to get married. Fourth, the primary characteristic of Sya'ban is as a preparatory month to Ramadhan. Once one has decided to get married and to hold a big wedding, it is better to hold it before Ramadhan in order to "get it off one's mind and settle in with one's spouse". This shows that Sya'ban offers not only the last opportunity before Ramadhan to have a big feast but it is also the month during which all pending activities occupying their minds are completed before the fast begins. Fifth, it is good time on the festival of the fast breaking day or the day of *'idul fitri* (Ach *uroe raya puasa*) to introduce the newly married couple to both sides of the family as on this day both everyone returns home to celebrate the festival. It is said that Sya'ban lunar month is also a good month to build a house as it is believed that the people who live in the house built in this lunar month will have no difficulties with their life. The owner of the house will experience ease in life (Ach *mudah dalam hudép*) and on the Day of Judgment (Ach *uroe akhirat*).

## The aim of *khanduri bu*

The aim of the *khanduri bu* held in every Sya'ban lunar month is to thank ancestors who have already transferred well-being (Indon *kesejahteraan*) onto the living. This is regarded as an important obligation from the living to their ancestors. Several families say “they always hold the *khanduri bu* in Sya'ban lunar month in order to thank their *ureueng chi'* (ancestors)”. This ritual is not only for the benefit of the dead but also for that of the living whose prosperity, according to the popular belief, is directly dependent on the respect they pay to the dead (Snouck Hurgronje 1906:222). It is said that many villagers are now rich because they have received the benefits and the prosperity (ancestral gifts) called ‘the dead’s property’ (Ach *hareuta milék si matée [ureueng chi']*). Such ancestral gifts of prosperity to the living remain “the dead’s property”. This prosperity would diminish and eventually be lost altogether if the living did not perform the *khanduri bu* ritual in acknowledgement of these ancestral gifts.

Feeding the ‘souls’ (*roh*) of the ancestors is by distributing rice and other food dishes to the poor and orphans to commemorate the services of the *ureueng chi'* who have collected the wealth in the past. There are villagers who used to be rich with the inherited wealth but then they gradually lost their wealth as they and their descendants were condemned by their *ureueng chi'* (Ach *ka keunong seurapa le ureueng chi' jih*) or by ‘the dead’s property’. One’s wealth would, therefore, no longer be “blessed” (Ach *beureukat*) as descendants no longer thank their ancestors but neglect them. Thus, the food given to the poor and orphans is a social demonstration of the sincere devotion to Allāh ‘prevents calamities’ (Indon *meredam bala*). It testifies to the fact that the givers’ “heart is not hardened” (Ach *hana kreuh haté*) and he has not forgotten the ancestral origin of his well-being. His gifts, given in acknowledgement of these debts, are a means of ‘cleansing his soul/mind’ (Ach *peugleh jiwa*).

The ritual entails visits to the ancestral tombs (Ach *jak bak kubu ureueng chi'*) which have its roots in various traditions of the Prophet. One of the traditions, which is based on a story, is that one day the Prophet went to Baqi' (a grave complex in Medina) and prayed there intensely with his tears flowing. He asked for Allāh’s forgiveness for himself, for his *ureueng chi'* and for believers who might have sins. It is supposed that this tradition has been taken by villagers as an example that Sya'ban lunar month is the month of uttering *do'a* (pray-

er) for themselves and their *ureueng chi'*. They visit the graves of their *ureueng chi'* including the founder of the village. I also observed that there are several people visiting the tomb of Syeikh Muda Waly (Angku Mudo) in this lunar month. They explain that the Syeikh whose father is Syeikh Muḥammad Salim provided much service for the village. In the area of Blangporoh village, especially at the boarding school, there was brackish water in which there were many fish that were bloated (Jam *bunta*; Ach *bukum*) so that it is called *suak bunta* (an estuary that had many bloated fish). Because of the Syeikh's 'blessing' (Arb *baraka*), the village is now well known and many people come and learn there. One of the Syeikh's students from Blangporoh village says "Our coming to visit the Syeikh's tomb (called *kubah* after the *kubah* dome of the mosque) today is not on behalf of his students, but rather on behalf of the villagers to express thanks to him as the founding ancestor". This practice attributes religious merit both to the Syeikh and to living participants of the ritual.

The ritual of *khanduri bu* is performed at family and village levels. It serves not only to express gratitude to the "spirits of the departed" but also to generate religious merit (Jam *pahalo*; Ach/Indon *pahala*) to those who partake in it. In addition, it also further enhances that auspicious state of being of the ancestors, which they themselves had obtained by the 'good deeds' (Ach *amai ureueng chi'*) they had performed during their lifetime.

### ***Khanduri bu* at family level**

The *khanduri bu* taking place at family level is performed individually in a house in order to preserve and to strengthen the relation between the living and their *ureueng chi'*. The previous *imām* of Blangporoh, Teungku Aḥmad says that Muslims believe that the link between the living and the dead still exists, particularly between parents and their children. He says a *ḥadīth* which states that "When a descendant of Adam dies, all of his rewards are cut except for three; the reward of his alms (Ach *seudeukah*), the reward of his knowledge (Ach *ileumè*) which is preached to the people, and the reward from prayer of his worthy children (Ach *aneuk salèh*)". Based on this *ḥadīth*, the villagers believe that a descendant has an obligation to invoke for his ancestors since the best prayer is the prayer performed by his own descendants. The descendants who invoke Allāh in their prayers may indeed hear their prayers and descendants can be especially effective in transmitting the benefit of the recitations for the ancestors' 'soul'. Ustad Bustamam says that although the ancestors' bodies

died long ago, their ‘soul’ (Ach *roh*) still know their descendents because they will never die and require attention from their descendants. They will be very happy if they are commemorated through a special offering of the *khanduri bu* for them whether in Ra’jab lunar month or in other lunar months.

Unlike the *khanduri mò’lōt* (the feast for commemorating the birth of the Prophet) and *khanduri keu ureueng matée* (the feast for commemorating the dead), in which anyone in the village (Ach *gampōng*) and even outside the village can come without any invitation, *khanduri bu* during Sya’ban lunar month is a very special feast in held only for the poor and the orphans. Therefore, Sya’ban lunar month for the poor and orphans people, is “the month for regaining nutrients” (Ach *buleuen perbaikan gizi*) because the villagers invite them to take part in their *khanduri bu*. The way in which this *khanduri* is held is by sharing the cooked rice with its side dishes with the needy.

In the past, the *adat* required that *teungku meunasah* (the religiously learned man who leads the prayer house) be invited to this feast. At this moment, the family members with the invited guests recite some Qur’anic verses and *do’a* before having rice. I observed that several families still maintain these traditions and some others hold no Qur’anic recitations and *do’a*, but they only serve the invited poor and the orphans with the cooked rice, meat, fish and vegetables. No special food is served for the *khanduri bu*. Rather; the families just offer the usual subsistence foods (Indon *masakan biasa*). They provide some food to offer the invited guests. The poor and the orphans are invited to eat at their house in the afternoon and some money is given to them before they leave. Others, however, do not invite the poor and orphans to their houses but they bring the cooked rice, meat, fish and vegetables in a set of stacked containers for transporting food (Indon *rantang*; Ach *kèpa*) with some money directly to their houses.

On August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008, I observed a *khanduri bu* prepared by a family of the village. A special *idang* (special packet of food) was prepared on that day. It was said that the *khanduri bu* must be held for the *ureueng chi’* in Sya’ban lunar month. The *idang* which is also called *kawén nasi* or “friend of rice” is not considered to pose a problem. Rather the host said, “Whatever is easy to get or whatever we eat we give to the invited guests”. About 40 village orphans were invited but only half are able to come to the house, the rest did not come because they are also invited by other families on that day. Soon after they arrived they were invited to sit on the floor covered with the *pandan* mats in a

waiting room while waiting for the others to arrive. After a fifteen-minute waiting period, they are welcomed to consume the offered *khanduri bu*. An hour after that the *khanduri* was over. The invited orphans are given some money before they go home. The host also asks his son to give the *kahanduri bu* and some money as alms (Ach *seudeukah*) to the house of the invited orphans who are not able to come to his house on that day. No incense was burned, no *do'a* was recited and there was no special preparation of the glutinous rice either before or after the *khanduri*. The host insisted that invoking *do'a* is not important but this time the *khanduri bu* was performed differently. He said, "I only held the *khanduri bu* for the orphans. I did not invite the poor and the *imām* (Jam *tuangku imam*; Ach *teungku imum*) like the previous year". He further added that Allāh knew that his intention (Jam *niaik*) of holding this *khanduri bu* was sincere, and, therefore, the religious merit from offering this *khanduri* as well as the religious merit of giving money will reach where he intends it to, that is to his *ureueng chi'*. He emphasized that the intention is the most important thing as Allāh knows whatever people intend.

It was said that in the past, the invited *imām* burns the benzoin incense in a coconut shell (Ach *bruk u*) with the *do'a* of burning incense (see Ch.7 for this *do'a*) to call the ancestors' 'soul' before the food is consumed at the *khanduri bu* regardless of whether it is held during the day or at night. Some villagers say that burning incense is a tribute to the ancestors. Some say that burning incense is to call the angels to participate in the feast and send the prayers to Allāh and some others say that burning incense is to call the angels to take religious merit of the recited *do'a* to be given to the *ureueng chi'*'s 'soul'. Many village people believe that the 'soul' of their *ureueng chi'* will return home and take this tribute. The incense is burned prior to consuming the provided food. While the smoke of the burning incense is rising from the coconut shell, the *do'a* is then recited over the food.

On the following day, the tombs of *ureueng chi'* in the 'garden of the grave' (Ach *lampôh jeurat*) located in the backyard of the house are visited. Three small *Yāsīn* books are brought to be read at the graves. The wife brings a kettle (Ach *cèrèk ie*) containing fresh water mixed with flowers to be poured on the graves. The son brings small garden tools for cleaning the graves. As they enter the graveyard, the *do'a* of entering the graveyard (Ach *do'a tamong lampôh jeurat*) is uttered by the husband on behalf of the family as follows:

<i>Assala mu'alaikum</i>	Peace be upon you
<i>Ya dāral qaumin mukminīn</i>	Ya occupants of this faithful house
<i>Wa innā insyā Allāhu bikumul lāhiqūn</i>	We, if Allāh wills, will be with you later
<i>As-Alullāha lī walahum 'ātiyah</i>	I ask forgiveness for me and for you

As they arrived at the graves, they first clean the graves of their parents and their parents' parents' graves which lie on a north-south axis<sup>252</sup>. The flower-fragranced water (*Jem aie bungo*; *Acèh ie bungong*) is poured three times slowly from the head to the foot of each grave while uttering the *do'a* solemnly. The order of *do'a* for pouring the water on the graves (*Ach do'a siram ie ateuħ kubu*) is as follows:

- Reciting *bismillāh* (in the name of Allāh)
- Reciting *seulawet* (prayer to the prophet welfare)
- Reciting the *sūrah al-Kawthar* which consists of three verses:
  - Indeed, We have granted you, [O Muhammad], *al-Kawthar*
  - So pray your Lord and sacrifice [to Him alone]
  - Indeed, your [Muslim] enemy is the one cut off (from all good in this world and hereafter).

The wife continues to water the grave from top to bottom with fragrant water reciting this *do'a*. The son does not perform it because the flower water runs out; instead he just takes the flowers in the watering kettle and sprinkles them on each grave. It is said that “as one pours water on the graves, the deceased will be cooled and refreshed just as the water is cooling” and the sprinkled flowers will pray for the dead in the graves as long as they have not yet faded. After pouring the flower-fragranced water, the man sits by the heads of the grave, while the wife sits on the left of the grave, and the son sits on the right of the grave. They then recite the verses of the *sūrah Yāsīn* from the *Yāsīn* books brought from home.

After finishing reciting this *sūrah*, a short *do'a* is recited by the head of the household by holding up his two palm hands with his eyes shut. He begins his *do'a* by reciting *bismillāh* (the name of Allāh) and closes it by reciting the *sūrah al-Fātiħah* (QS 1:1-7) at the end of his recited *do'a*, the wife and son, seated on both sides of the graves, intone the word *amīn* (please accept o Allāh), also by holding up their hands. The *Allāhumma aushil tsawāba mā Qara'nāhu ilaihim* is then recited by the man which means “Ya Allāh, please

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252 All graves in Blangporoh lay on a north-south angle so that the heads face to the right as well as face *kiblat* (Mecca).

deliver the merit as what we have just recited to them!” One of the important *do’a* recited on the grave is to ask Allāh to bestow His mercy on their *ureueng chi’* so that their graves become “the park of paradise” (Jam *taman curugo*; Ach *taman syuruga*) as well as to ask Allāh not to let their graves becomes “the park of hell” (Jam *taman nurako*; Indon *taman neraka*).

In Blangporoh many graveyards, particularly the old tombs, can be found in the backyard or beside the houses. This indicates that the living do not want to be far from their ancestors.<sup>253</sup> Usually, all graves belong to one lineage and cannot be mixed with other lineages. Although the families can always visit their ancestors’ tombs every day to remind themselves about death (Ach *matée*) and the Day of Judgment (Ach *uroe kiamat*), a special visit should be made in the context of *khanduri bu* although the head of the council of *‘ūlamā* says that the best day for visiting graves is on Fridays in any lunar month.<sup>254</sup> Praying for the parents, parents’ parents or whoever who has passed away can only be performed at the graves. Other places are also permissible except prohibited places, i.e. in a bathroom. Reciting *do’a* is better at recommended places such as at Raudhah in the mosque of Nabawi in Medina, at Multazam near Ka’bah.<sup>255</sup> For many, however, reciting *do’a* for the *ureueng chi’* is preferably performed directly on their graves because when gazing at their graves, they feel deeply absorbed (Arb *khusyu’*) while reciting and remembered the deceased. One of the key factors that the recited *do’a* will be accepted is if it is recited in a deeply observant manner to Allāh. In other words, the one who recites *do’a* should have a strong intuitive knowledge called *ileumè makrifat*, the knowledge between the worshiper and Allāh.

Lately, there has been a shift in the way people perceive the importance of this *khanduri* and their way of performing it, although people continue holding the *khanduri bu* at family level. The fundamental nature of the feast as an expression of appreciation to the *ureueng chi’* has almost become lost. The *khanduri bu* remains only as an expression of gratitude to Allāh and happiness at the coming of Ramadhan. The evidence of this change can be seen in which some

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253 In every New Year of Islamic lunar month, Muḥarram, besides *khanduri asyura*, the “ritual feast” for the graves (Ach *khanduri jeurat*) is held in every village in West Labuhan Haji district and elsewhere in Acèh. The aim of *khanduri jeurat* is no different to that of *khanduri bu* as discussed here. However, its name is not given to the name of Acèhnese month.

254 See “Ziarah Kubur”, Serambi Indonesia, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

255 See “Ziarah Kubur”, Serambi Indonesia, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

people no longer prepare the special glutinous rice and burn incense when they hold this ‘ritual feast’. Even more critical to the changing religious significance on the *khanduri bu* is the fact that many families now no longer recite the *do’a* before or after eating the *khanduri*. Several families say that *khanduri bu* is only an *adat* (tradition), and it is no longer considered as a religious service (Indon *ibadat*). Nonetheless, the shift in the way some people perceive the importance of the *khanduri bu* in Blangporoh is not accompanied by a substantial change in the aspect of this feast. For the majority, they still talk about *khanduri bu* as a feast that is a symbolic expression of human purification in the holy month of Ramadhan as well as the symbolic expression of their appreciation of their ancestral gifts.

### ***Khanduri bu* at the village level**

On September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007, the *khanduri bu* was performed at 8 p.m at village level under the guidance of the *imām* and the village leader (Jam *kapalo kampung*; Ach *keuchik*). Each household head brought his packet of food including rice and a variety of side dishes (Jam/Ach *idang*) with Rp 20.000 of money as alms (Ach *seudeukah*) to the committee members at the Blangporoh’s mosque. The families who live near the mosque served the *idang* in trays (Jam *talom*; Ach *talam*) and those who live far from it brought the food in a *rantang*. These *idang* is meant to be shared with others at the mosque where all the invited poor, orphans, and villagers have already been assembled. The communal nature of the *khanduri* is expressed not just by the fact that everyone in the village participates, but also by the nature of their participation. The *khanduri* is performed on behalf of a community as a whole, and this ritual leads to a continuous, cooperative involvement in the various aspects of the *khanduri*. As a result a happy atmosphere is clearly evident and much pleasure is heard in the participants’ voices.

The *idang* are mixed in a *meunasah* near the mosque. One old woman who works there takes out the rice from *rantang* and mixes it in a big container called *kèna gadang* before they are served to all attendants. She then places the curry and the cooked vegetables or ‘the friends of rice’ (Ach *ngon bu*) on trays. When I ask her “why do you mix the rice? She answers “she mixes the rice so that it does not spoil quickly”. Another woman who sits beside the old woman answers, “in order to let all attendants taste all the different rice”. Another woman who had just arrived answered, “in order to avoid eating one’s own

rice”. Here there is an obligation to exchange. The “friends of rice” (Jam *kawen nasi*), however, is not mixed. The working women just open the lid of *rantang* containing the “friends of rice” a little bit so that it does not evaporate. She says, “Because some has just finished cooking, the lid of *rantang* should be opened. If not, it will evaporate.

Meanwhile at the mosque, all orphans have been gathered in the front right corner of the mosque. The village leader stands on the pulpit of mosque to begin the *khanduri bu* ritual and he thanks the committee members, the village people who have brought *khanduri* or *idang* and some money to the mosque. Several verses of Qur’ān are then incited by a young boy in order to receive “blessing” with the hope the ritual of the *khanduri bu* will run smoothly. Next, the speech of *khanduri bu* is delivered at about 9 pm by Teungku Iswadi from the boarding school in Blangporoh. The following is an extract:

The content of this speech is about the religious merit (Jam *pahalo*; Ach/Indon *pahala*) of giving charity (Ach *seudeukah*) to the orphans and to the poor. The orphans are those whose fathers have passed away and who have not yet reached the age of puberty (Arb *baligh*). The Prophet gave particular instructions regarding the care of the orphans’ life. There are many *hadīth*, stating that how noble are those who raise and sympathize with the orphans! Such as a *hadīth* narrated by Bukhari states “the people who raise the orphans will be in a paradise like this; the Prophet signed with his forefinger and middle finger”. Many Acèhnese’s children became orphans after the tsunami in December 26th, 2004. They are now in trouble as they lost their livelihood and the care and guidance of their parents. Islam has encouraged its adherents to have a noble character to give charity to the orphans or raising them is far better than giving charity to them.

The person who gives charity will get shelter on the Day of Judgment. Allāh will double the religious merit if one gives charity to the needy. It is as if one gives a loan to Him. Whoever helps to take on another person’s burdens can be sure that Allāh will help that person. The preacher reminds us that in our livelihood given by Allāh contains the right of the orphans and the poor. Please take and give it to them! Allāh will love you. If the orphans in the village are miserable, the villagers will no longer receive the mercy of Allāh and the livelihood is no longer “blessed”.

The religious merit of *khanduri bu* is written by the angels in the deed notebook (Indon *buku catatan amal*) as a good deed. What we give to the needy now is small and later will be big. If we give money as charity, the money will say, “Now you look after me, later I will look after you. Now I can be lost, later I will be eternal” so do not be ever tired of giving charity to the needy. The aim of the *khanduri bu* is for “feeding the deceased’s *roh* of our *ureueng chi*”. The preacher says that we cannot directly feed the

deceased who are already dead. “What we can do is to hold the *khanduri bu* for their *roh*; we give charity to the needy with the ‘intention’ (*niat*) for their *roh* as well as pray for them”. The *khanduri bu* is thus given to the orphans and the poor instead of “feeding the deceased’s *roh*”.

The speech goes on from one story to another, and at last, the preacher reminds all participants to participate actively in any social activities to help the needy. At last he reminds the participants to pray for themselves and for the deceased’s *roh* as charity from the living people as the expression of cleanliness of the ‘soul/mind’ (Indon *jiwa*) before the coming of Ramadhān month.

At 22.30, the speech is over. The *imām* recites a specific *do’a* [prayer] to end the ritual of *khanduri bu*. All invited orphans are told to stand up. All attention is centred on them. Each orphan receives charity (the money from the village donations) from the village elders. After receiving it, they sit down again. The orphans are invited to sit side by side in the front right of the mosque and the village participants sit side by side in the mosque and on the terrace, in a circular circle with their own *idang* in front of them. The participants of all communal feasts avoid eating their *idang*. It is regarded as shameful to eat one’s own offering. Before eating, Teungku Usman gives a portion of benzoin incense to be burned in a coconut shell at the right corner of the mosque. The *keuchik* (village chief) invites the participants to eat by saying, “that which we have brought here must be finished, in the name of Allāh” (*Ach peu yang kana ta peuhabe, bismillāh*). When the feast has finished, the participants collect their empty trays and food containers (Indon *rantang*) and talk among themselves before going home. Some rice with side dishes is taken home by the orphans and the students at the boarding school.

At last, when there are only three men still in the mosque I asked them their opinion about giving charity and the *khanduri bu*. One said that the religious merit from providing *khanduri bu* to the orphans and the poor is transferred to the deceased’s ‘soul’ of the *ureueng chi*’ as a gift from the living. Another one contended that giving charity to the orphans and the poor is to ‘prevent calamities’ (Indon *meredam bala*) that could fall on the village as well as to make the deceased’s ‘soul’ (*roh*) of the *ureueng chi*’ happy. The other suggested that “giving charity to the orphans at the occasion of the *khanduri bu* is to soften the giver’s heart and to commemorate the *ureueng chi*’ services”. The persons who have given charity (done good deeds) for the orphans are those who have let feelings of happiness into their hearts, said the preacher.

It may be argued that the secrecy of *khanduri bu* is still regarded as very important in the Acèhnese perception. Burning incense is still practiced before consuming rice and its side dishes but providing special glutinous rice on this night is not. This shift in Blangporoh is not accompanied by a substantial change in the aspect of this feast. For the majority, they still talk about *khanduri bu* as a feast that is an expression of appreciation and acknowledgement given by living people to their ancestors and it expresses a human's purification in dealing with the Muslim's holy month, Ramadhan. It is understandable, especially during Ramadhan, that purity of the 'soul/mind' is an important concern. Islamic connotations have been attached to people's interpretation of cleanliness. Therefore, at the level of people's interpretation, the *khanduri bu* both at family and village level is regarded as a thread connecting living people and their ancestors as well as among them. It is also an instrument to 'cleanse the soul/mind' (*Ach peugléh jiwa*). The ritual of *khanduri bu* at family and village level thus constitutes a complex asymmetrical process of exchange. It not only binds the ancestors to the living, and Allāh to the believers; it also connects the wealthy to the orphan and poor in gift-giving relations that are embedded in these ancestral exchange relationships. This demonstrates how the value of the *Aneuk Jamee/adat* in combination with that of Islam/*agama* is applied. If one follows the order of Allāh, one also has to follow the *adat* (traditional customary practices). The logic of exchange value can be clearly seen in the following figure:

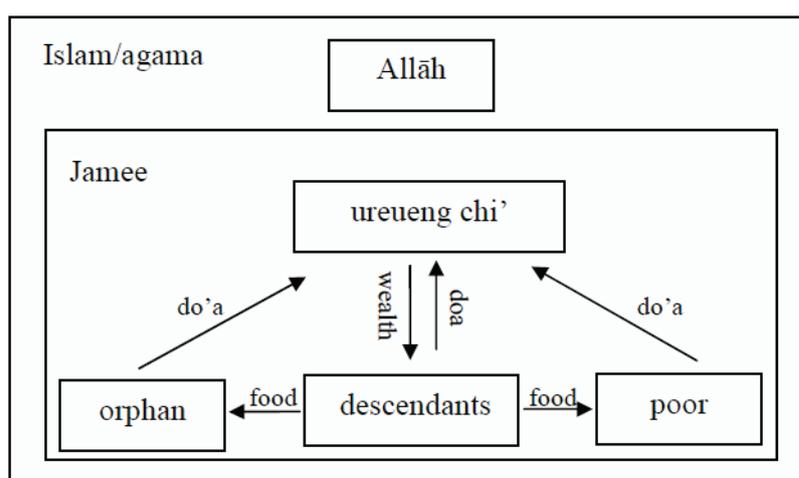


Figure 11. The logic of exchanges in *khanduri bu*

## **Khanduri beureu'at**

*Khaduri beureu'at* is another important *khanduri* held in the night in the middle of the month Sya'bān. This night is well known in Acèh as *malam beureu'at*, from the Arabic word *baraah* (the night of determination). In Arabic, the day and night in the middle of Sya'bān is called Nisfu Sya'ban. Nisfu means a half and Sya'ban is the eighth month in the Muslim calendar. In Blangporoh, Nisfu Sya'ban is usually held with the *khanduri beureu'at* and other religious services (Indon/Ach *ibadat*). *Khanduri beureu'at*, however, was no longer performed at the time of the field research but religious services are still performed by the villagers on this night.

Several years ago, however, on the night of Nisfu Sya'ban, *khanduri beureu'at* was held. This communal feast was held by all villagers in a prayer house (Ach *déyah*) or small mosque (Ach *meunasah*) or mosque (Ach *meuseujid*) under the direction of the Islamic leader (Jam *tuangku imam*; Ach *teungku imuem*). In this feast, all the families in the village came to the *meunasah* with their *idang* before sunset. After performing the 'sunset prayer' (Ach *seumayang magrèb*), the participants sat side by side in a large, circular circle with their *idang* in front of them. The *teungku* began by explaining the importance of celebrating the night of Nisfu Sya'ban. The speech proceeded from one story to the next, and at last, the *teungku* reminds all participants to take part in Nisfu Sya'ban's observances which would be held after the 'evening prayer' (Ach *seumayang isya'*) and to fast on the following day. In his speech, the *teungku* also mentioned the importance of Nisfu Sya'ban with regard to Ramadhan. The *teungku*, for instance, in his speech before the feast begins, advised the participant by saying "if we are still alive next year, Ramadhan is a good moment to renew our faith and our religious service". In his *do'a* (invocation), the *teungku* also asked Allāh to give all Muslims the opportunity to fast in the holy month of Ramadhan which would come soon. Furthermore, the *keuchik* (chief village) announced to all the feast's participants that in the morning of the last Friday of Sya'ban, all the villagers should take part in cleaning the mosque and *meunasah*. He emphasized this by saying "our great guest, Ramadhan, will arrive soon" (Jam *tamu gadang mau sampai*; Ach *jamèe rayeuk ka rap trouk*). When the feast has finished, the participants collected their empty trays and food containers and talked among themselves.

They then performed the *isyā*’ prayer and continue with Nisfu Sya’ban’s observances.

Although no *khanduri bereu’at* was performed in the night of Nisfu Sya’ban in the year of 2007 at Blangporoh’s mosque, I saw several people observing religious services in the mosque. Not many people come to the mosque that night because there was no *khanduri*. If there was *khanduri bereu’at*, many villagers would come as it is free of charge, said an informant. He added that he considered the *khanduri* to be important and observed that “although most people state that the *khanduri* is not important in the context of Nisfu Sya’ban, in fact, prayer and fasting which are regarded as the Prophet’s tradition are becoming less important than the *khanduri* itself”. He remarked if there was the *khanduri*, the night of Nisfu Sya’ban would be lively (Ach *hudép*) and the deceased’s ‘soul’ (*roh*) that returned would be very happy as well.

The *khanduri bereu’at* is not celebrated in Blangporoh, as the head of the village does not ask the villagers to celebrate it. Some villagers say that they want the *khanduri bu* to be held but some others say that *khanduri bereu’at* is not important but the religious service is the most important thing. When I asked the *imām* to why the *khanduri bereu’at* was no longer held, he replied that the *adat* head (Ach *keuchi’/geuchie*) had said nothing to him but the important things that needed to be told to the villagers on the Nisfu Sya’ban night had been said by a preacher on the first and the second Friday of Sya’ban. He added that even though no *khanduri bereu’at* is performed, the voluntary religious services (Ach/Indon *ibadat sunat*) are still carried out as it is a good time to observe religious services.

## **The local meaning of nisfu Sya’ban**

The middle night of Sya’ban (a half Sya’ban lunar month) is ‘noble’ (Ach/Indon *mulia*) night. It is said that on this night, daily human activities recorded in “the deed notebook” (Ach *buku catatan amai*) during the year are given to Allāh by two angels Raqib and ‘Atid.<sup>256</sup> Some villagers says that it is lifted up to the sky and is exchanged for a new one each year. The villagers believe that “the deed notebook” of all humans or the records of all human activities is exchanged every year. The middle of Sya’bān is the night of ex-

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256 As to how Raqib and ‘Atid record all daily human’s activities, words, action and event intention, see Ch.2.

change for each human which is sent down from *babul izzah* (the first layer sky) to the earth. “The deed notebook” is sent down and the old one is taken back by the angels (some say by Allāh). “The notebook of good deeds” (Indon *catatan amal baik*) of humans is happily handed by Raqib to other angels (some say to Allāh) and saved in the highest level of Paradise called *'illiyūn*. The Qur’ān in *sūrah at-Muthaffifīn*: 18-22 says “No! Indeed, the record of the righteous is in *'illiyūn*. And what can make you know what is *'illiyūn*? It is [their destination recorded in] a register inscribed which is witnessed by those brought near [to Allāh]. Whereas “the bad deed notebook” (Indon *catatan amal jelék*) of human being is handed angrily by ‘Atid to other angels (some say also to Allāh) and saved in the lowest level of hell called *sijjīn*. After handing “these deed notebooks” of human being to other angels (some say to Allāh), both angels receive the new one from Him for the next coming year.

The *imām* of Blangporoh says that the word of Sya’ban is from the word Syi’ab means “street on the mountain”. It is called Sya’ban because the various ways of getting “goodness” (Indon *kebaikan*) are found in Sya’ban lunar month. Many people with whom I discussed this said that in the night in the middle of Sya’bān, Allāh sends down some “goodness” for human beings who have performed good deeds (Ach *amai get*). On that night, “goodness” which is in the form of help (Arb *syafā’ah*), forgiveness (Arb *maghfirah*) and freedom from the ‘torment of the grave’ (*siksa kubu*) are sent down. The middle night of Sya’bān is, therefore, called the night of *aid, forgiveness, and freedom*.

In relation to aid (Arb *syafā’ah*), the *imām* quoted from al-Ghazali’s saying. Al-Ghazali (1058-1111) says that on the 13<sup>th</sup> night of the Sya’bān, Allāh gives one third of aid to His servant (Ach/Indon *hamba*), on the 14<sup>th</sup> night of Sya’bān, Allāh gives two thirds of aid to His servant, on the 15<sup>th</sup> night of Sya’bān, Allāh gives complete help to His servant. The people who do not get aid from Allāh are those who intentionally run from Him while they are doing the bad things (al-Ghazali 1979:80). The night of the middle of Sya’bān is called the night of forgiveness because on this night Allāh sends down His forgiveness to all inhabitants on the earth. In a *hadīth* transmitted by Ahmad “When the middle of Sya’bān arrives, Allāh will give His forgiveness to all inhabitants except to the people who turn away from Him and believe in more than one God”. Another *hadīth* transmitted by Tarmidzi states that “in the night of the middle of Sya’bān, Allāh descends to the lowest heaven and calls the mortals in order to grant them forgiveness”. The night in the middle of Sya’bān

is also called the night of freedom (Indon *malam pembebasan*) because in this night Allāh frees the deceased from hell. A *ḥadīth* narrated by Ibn Ishak says, "Ya Humaira (Aisyah, the Prophet's wife), what are you doing on this night? This night is the night in the middle of Sya'bān in which Allāh grants freedom from hell to everyone except for five types of persons; the person who does not stop drinking arrack, the person who scorns both his parents, the person who sets up places of prostitution, the person who raises prices and treats people badly (Indon *secara aniaya*), the custom officers who are not honest and the slanderers.

In addition, in the Acèhnese cosmology, it is believed that the fate of humanity will be determined through the divine appearance of a many-leafed tree in Heaven called Sidratul Muntaha which had been seen by the Prophet on the night of his journey to Heaven (Ach *malam mè'reuät*). On every leaf of this tree is written the names of all human beings on earth, how many years they will live, when and where they will die. Thus the leaves of the tree represent people on the earth and the tree itself is a symbol of human fate (see Ch.2). Every year in the middle night of Sya'bān, Allāh (some says angels) shakes the tree till some of the leaves which have been yellow fall down. The fallen leaves foretell that the person represented will die within that year. One informant says that when the fallen leaves fall due to being shaken by angels and then descend upon other leaves, the people represented on the earth will sense a strange sound in their ear (Ach *meu 'ie 'ie lam gulunyung*) and often those people dream of something bad, for instance, loosing a tooth (Ach *teuloh gigoe*) or a destroyed house (Ach *reuloh rumoh*). He says further that if one dreams that a right upper tooth is lost, it means that one of his brothers from his father's side will die. If one dreams that a left upper tooth is lost, it means that one of his brothers from his mother's side will die. If one dreams that a right lower tooth is lost, it means that one of his brothers from his grandfather's side will die, and if one dreams that a left lower tooth is lost, it means that one of his brothers from his grandmother's side will die. Meanwhile, if one dreams that the front of his house collapses, it means that one of the males in the family will die. If it falls apart at the back, it means that one of the females in the family will die. If the right side collapses, it means that one of the brothers from the father's side will die and if the left side falls apart, it means that one of the brothers from the mother's side will die.

Moreover, it is related that the night of Sya'ban has certain meanings in Islamic spirituality. Islamic followers recognize that this night is the night of changing *kiblat* (direction of prayer) from Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, Palestine to Mecca's mosque in Mecca, Arab. It is also said that the Prophet Ismā'īl (Ibrāhīm's son) was born near Ka'bah (the direction to which Muslims pray) on this night. The middle of Sya'bān is called the harvest time of forgiveness (Indon *malam panén pengampunan*) and thus the Aneuk Jamee and the Acèhnese celebrate it by carrying out the religious services 'prayer of glorification' (Ach *seumayang taseubèh*), 'wish prayer' (Ach *seumayang hajat*) with certain *do'a* and or *puasa Nisfu Sya'ban* "fasting of Nisfu Sya'ban".

## 1. Seumayang teuseubèh

*Seumayang teuseubèh* (Arb *shalat tasbīh*) or "prayer of glorification" resembles all other prayers but it is distinguished by the constant repetition of a certain *teuseubèh* (Arb *tasbīh*) formula in praise of Allāh. *Tasbīh* that are recited consisted of four sentences:

*Subḥanallāh*  
*Wal ḥamdulillāh*  
*Wālaillā haillallāh*  
*Allāhu Akbar*

Allāh is Holy  
 and all praise is due to Allāh  
 and there is no deity except Allāh  
 Allāh is the greatest

I did not see this prayer performed at the Blangporoh's mosque. In the past, however, this prayer was performed together in the village mosque in which one who is present is chosen to act as an *imām*. Currently, this prayer is performed individually both at home and at the mosque. Some say that 'prayer of glorification' is now performed individually by some villagers in preference as they can freely choose how many cycles of ritual prayer (Arb *raka'at*) they like. Teungku Jauhari said that he performs this prayer in the night of the middle of Sya'ban at his house with four cycles of ritual prayer and recites the *sūrah al-Fātiḥah* in each cycle of ritual prayer then continues with other short *sūrah*. As he finishes the Qur'anic recitation in the first cycle, he recites the *tasbīh* with four sentences more than fifteen times while he was standing. He then performs the act of bowing and recites it (the same *tasbīh*) ten times while he is in the posture of bowing. After that he raises his head from bowing, and says it ten times. Then he performs the act of prostration, and recites it ten times. He then raised his head from the posture of prostration (Indon *sujud*) and repeated it a further ten times. Then he performs the second act of prostration,

and recites it ten times. He then raised his head from the posture of prostration, and recited it again ten times. The total of *tasbīh* is seventy-five in each cycle. He repeats this in the remaining three cycles of the ritual prayer.

Other villagers also perform the same ritual as the Teungku Jauhari but some perform only two cycles of ritual prayer, while others perform more than two cycles of ritual prayer. It is said that for those who recite the *tasbīh* it is as if one plants a tree in heaven. The more one recites *tasbīh*, the more he or she plants trees in the heaven. Their fruit will be picked later on the Day of Judgment. In addition, it is said that if one performs ‘prayer of glorification’, one hundred cycles (Indon *raka’at*) in the middle night of Sya’ban and recites the *sūrah al-Fātiḥah* and the *sūrah al-Ikhlās* in every cycle, Allāh will send down five thousand angels from heaven to write down the religious merit. One would be in ‘flood of merit’ (Indon *banjir pahala*). Another *teungku* who also performs this prayer says that the middle night of Sya’bān is the night of freedom. The deceased will be released from their torments if their descendents pray for them. He adds a *ḥadīth* narrated by Ibn Majah “When the middle of Sya’bān arrives, please get up, make the night lively, observe the fast during the day time because in this night Allāh comes down to the worldly sky when the sun sets and says; If someone asks for forgiveness, I will forgive him or her, if some one asks for livelihood, I will grant it, if some one is stricken by disaster, I will release and save him or her, and who ever asks for pardon will be forgiven”. This call lasts till the dawn comes so that the *do’a* should be recited not only for oneself but also for the *ureueng chi’*. The middle of the night of Sya’ban is a good time to invoke *do’a*. The person who calls for prayer (Ach *bileu*) in Blangporoh carries out this prayer individually in the mosque. He says that by performing this person’s sins will be forgiven, the first sins and the last, the old and the new, the unintentional and the deliberate, the small and the great, the private and the public. It is also said that the aim of performing this prayer is not merely to gain religious merit from Allāh but also it is a good night sport.

## 2. Seumayang hajat

In Blangporoh there are several people who perform a special prayer called the ‘wish prayer’ (Ach *seumayang hajat*) after performing the prayer of glorification. In the past, this kind of prayer was celebrated by women with much greater zeal than by men. They sometimes performed it under a female

*imām* or by themselves in the *meunasah* or in the mosque (Snouck Hurgronje 1906:223). On the middle night of Sya'ban, I went to the person who calls for prayer in the village mosque. He performed two 'cycles' (Indon *raka'at*) of 'wish prayer'. He said that after performing the prayer, for the first 'cycle' of the ritual prayer he recites the *sūrah al-Kafirūn* (QS 109:1-6), and for the second 'cycle' of the ritual prayer; he recites the *sūrah al-Ikhlās* (QS 112:1-4). After praying he then seats himself on a praying mat facing toward Mecca (Indon *kiblat*). He then recites the *sūrah Yāsīn* (QS 36:1-83) three times, after which he performs the following *do'a*:

Asking Allāh to prolong his age (Ach *beupanyang umu*)

Asking Allāh to make his life easy (Ach *beumudah dalm hudép*)

Asking Allāh to save his faith (Ach *beuseulamat iman*)

He says that at 12 o'clock in the middle night of Sya'bān, Allāh orders His angels to exchange "the deed notebook" with the new one. He adds, "My old deed notebook will be closed and exchanged with the new one. I want the angels to write the last good deeds in my old deed notebook and I also want the angels to write the first good deeds in my new deed notebook before they are lifted up by the angels in the middle of this night". Another devout man, Teungku Juned, also performs a special prayer at his house on this night. He says that he performs two cycles of 'wish prayer'. The first cycle of the ritual prayer he recites is the *sūrah al-Ikhlās* (QS 112:1-4) and the second cycle of prayer is the *sūrah al-Kafirūn* (QS 109:1-6). After finishing praying, he recites the *sūrah Yāsīn* (QS 36:1-83) until three times after that he invokes *do'a* asking the following particular requests:

Asking Allāh to prolong his life

Asking Allāh to give him an easy life

Asking Allāh to safeguard his strong faith

Asking Allāh to give him the "blessing end"

Asking Allāh to save him in this world and on the Day of Judgment

He says that we do not know when we die so that we always have to prepare for death by performing religious obligations and other voluntary ones. Invoking *do'a* especially on the middle night of Sya'bān is very important. It is the 'core' of any religious service so that the Prophet performs a special prayer in this night, thus the prayer itself is the *do'a*, ensures on *teungku*. He adds that a person who does not want to invoke *do'a* and ask Allāh is identified as a

stingy person (Ach *ureueng kriet*). Another *teungku* also performs the religious service in the middle of Sya'ban which is more or less the same as what the others do but he invokes additional *do'a* for the safety of the deceased's 'soul' (*roh*) and asks Allāh to bestow His blessing on them. He said that just as on the night of *lailatul Qadar* "the night of power" in the last week of Ramadhan month, Allāh also gives permission to all the deceaseds' 'souls' to return to their houses to observe their family's behaviour. Even the 'souls' of people who are in violation of Allāh's law return to their houses but they cannot reach them. In contrast, the 'soul' of good people returns and can reach their houses and revisit the places they always frequented. The 'soul' will be very happy if the *do'a* is invoked for them. The deceased's 'soul' advises their grandsons and granddaughters to pray for them as well as to advise them to continue the good deeds and stop doing bad deeds. If they violate Allāh's law, the 'soul' asks them to return to the right path and observe good deeds. The living, however, cannot hear this advice of the deceased's 'soul's, says the *imām*. My informant also reports that many women in their own houses and students at village boarding schools also perform their special prayers and *do'a* to Allāh in the middle of Sya'bān.

## **Puasa nisfu Sya'bān**

The voluntary fasting on the day in the middle of Sya'ban is called *puasa nisfu Sya'ban* (Ach/Indon *puasa*: fasting; Arb *nisfu Sya'ban*: a half Sya'ban). The *imām* says that this fasting earns rewards and we should encourage each other to fast voluntarily. It is easy to find people who fast on this day but difficult to estimate how many people actually practice this voluntary fasting. I found a number of villagers engaged in this voluntary fasting on the day in the middle of Sya'ban. Some of them commented that the Prophet himself practiced this voluntary fasting. They like to follow his example. One said that he performs this voluntary fasting as a practice for fasting in the Ramadhān month as well as to reap the religious merit. Another says that performing voluntary fasting on this day is important because on that day Allāh decides who will live and who will die in the year to come. Like several other old men and women in the village, he also does fasts on the following days. It is also said that the predestined hour of death (Ach *ajai*) and age (Ach *umu*) is decided by Allāh in the middle of Sya'ban till the middle of the following Sya'ban. He suggests this voluntary fasting cleanses all bad characteristics from the heart; prejudice, re-

venge, and the like. But many people whom I interviewed on this day say that they perform this voluntary fasting because they want their “deed notebook” to be lifted up to sky when they are fasting.<sup>257</sup>

Some teenagers of the villagers and students of the boarding school in Blangporoh also observe this voluntary fasting. A male student at the boarding school and a young village girl say that they observe fasting on this day as a ‘mind exercise’ (Indon *latihan jiwa*) for themselves. The girl says that she observes fasting in order to make herself get used to doing good deeds; fasting is prestigious for her although many people who observe fasting on this day discuss the religious merit of it. She also adds “the good things we do is not only to please Allāh but also has a good moral and social effect on ourselves and is a good deed in itself”. I also found several married women who did not observe this voluntary fasting because they are in the ‘red date’ (menstruation) some others gave no reasons. Later on an informant told me that they do not fast because their husbands do not allow them to do so. In this case married women are at a disadvantage in comparison to men. A woman cannot decide independently whether she observes fasting or not because she must ask permission from her husband in advance.

Voluntary fasting of women against the will of their husbands is not valid. The *imām* states that even the wife’s obedience to her husband takes precedence over obedience to her parents. An *imām* mentions one *ḥadīth* stating “if a woman prays five times a day, observes fasting in the month of Ramadhan, guards her body and obeys her husband she can enter the Paradise from whichever doors she wishes on the Day of Judgment”. He further explains that a married woman must serve her husband according to her ability; the first of such obligations is to satisfy her husband. She must be able to sleep with him whenever he pleases to keep each other “chaste”. If she observes fasting, it could create a problem as she could not have an intercourse with her husband while fasting. Therefore, a woman always has to consult her husband about her plans to fast on days other than in the Ramadhan lunar month because it is generally the wish of the husband to have sexual intercourse. When I mention this to several village women, most of them just smiled and commented, “That is the

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257 This idea is based on a *ḥadīth* narrated by an-Nasai’: “The Sya’ban lunar month is the month that is usually forgotten by many people because it is between the month of Ra’jab and Ramadhan. It is the month in which Allāh lifts up the deeds of a person. I want my good deed to be lifted up when I am fasting”.

way this world is” (*Jam cit alah begitu nien dunia ko*) or “Allāh is merciful” (Indon *Allāh maha pemurah*). He will not hold it against us. Some stated that Allāh blames husbands who keep their wives from fasting.<sup>258</sup>

On this night, many villagers go to the mosque or ‘prayer house’ (Ach *meunasah*) to perform the ‘sunset prayer’ (Ach *seumayang megréb*) and continue with the ‘night prayer’ (Ach *seumayang isya*) and later on continue with the voluntary prayers for the middle of Sya’bān (Ach *seumayang sunat Nisfu Sya’ban*); the prayer of glorification (Ach *seumayang teuseubèh*), and prayer of wish (Ach *seumayang hajat*). During the day many devout people fast which has become part of village tradition. The situation is also the same in the capital city of Acèh, Banda Acèh, where many people; men and women go to the great mosque Masjid Raya Baiturrahman in the night in the middle of Sya’ban to observe various kinds religious services there to cleanse their ‘soul/mind’ before the coming Ramadhan month.<sup>259</sup>

The good believers always want to fill the new “deed notebook” with good deeds (Ach *amai salèh*) and from that night they start filling their “deed notebook” with ‘*ubudiyah* “making one close to Allāh” and vice versa, the godless people (Ach *ureueng pasèk*) and hypocritical ones (Ach *ureueng munapè*) do not bother with this historical night. They always continue doing immoral things (Ach *but maksit*), says the *imām*. In the boarding school in Blangporoh, the night in the middle of Sya’ban is very lively and much celebrated and during the day voluntary fasting is observed. This is a good tradition to maintain, adds the *imām*. The focus of the conversation that night is to remind all students not busy themselves with useless things and to be well prepared to welcome Ramadhan in a half-month time.

Muslims in many Islamic societies have attempted to elucidate the importance of pray in the middle of Sya’ban, to explain why the Prophet performed the special prayer. The Yoruba people of Nigeria, for instance, believe that in the middle of Sya’ban, Allāh will alter the human *qadr* (power or right) and provide a new program for humanity (Ryan 1978:276). Similarly the people in Blangporoh, Blangbaru, and Kutaiboh in West Labuhan Haji district believe that in the middle of Sya’ban Allāh will predetermine the fate of humanity for the year ahead. Therefore, a special ritual is performed to cleanse

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258 Here I find some similar ideas about the voluntary fasting in Morocco, see Buitelaar (1993:28-29).

259 See Waspada, August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

the “soul/mind” as part of the preparation for welcoming Ramadhan or to prepare the good deeds for happiness on the Day of Judgment. In addition, the *imām* says that through doing good deeds (Indon *amal baik*) one’s life will be prolonged by Allāh. He hears what we ask for therefore we have to recite some good *do’a* to Him in the middle of Sya’ban. “Perhaps some of the good *do’a* recited on this night will change our suffering and difficulties in our life”. He adds “Insya Allāh” or “if Allāh wills” admitting that Allāh has a power to determine all events.

## Peugléh meunasah

Another form of communal activity in the Sya’ban lunar month in Blangporoh village is *peugléh meunasah* (cleaning the prayer house) or mosque (Ach *meuseujid*). *Meunasah* plays a strategic role in the life of Acèhnese and has a very significant function, both religious and social (Snouck Hurgronje 1906; Alfian 1977; Nur 1996). The *meunasah* serves as a house for prayer, school, village guesthouse, meeting place or occasionally as a place to formalize important ceremonies such the signing of marriage contracts (Dall 1982:36). Here in Blangporoh, Blangbaru, Kutaiboh and other villages in Acèh, *meunasah* helps to build the character, behavior and lifestyle of the people of Acèh. It is not the same as *mushalla*, the mini mosque found in many villages in Java.<sup>260</sup> It is the center of all community activities: holding community meetings, performing religious feasts such as *khanduri bu*, *mo’lōt*, *apam*, *khanduri padé* etc and performing marriages for members of the community.<sup>261</sup> A decision made by the village head is not legal until it is endorsed in the *meunasah*. And it goes without saying that such decisions will be more quickly disseminated and supported. In addition, *meunasah* also functions as a centre of learning, both formal and informal. The name *meunasah* has its origin in the Arabic word *madrrasah*, meaning ‘religious Islamic school’. It is not only a place where people go to learn, but

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260 *Tengku Ibrahim Samahani*, an ‘*ulamā*’ from Samahani in Acèh Besar, says that foreign cultures include those brought by migrants from Java. “They build *mushalla* (mini-mosques) that are not the same as *meunasah*”, he says. What is in a name, some might ask. “For me, the name is important because it also motivates people to observe its true functions”. See the Jakarta Post, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

261 *Muhammad Insya* says, “There was a time when people got married in *meunasah*, he recalls, citing that his two children were probably among the last to do so”. There is a belief that if one does not get married in a *meunasah*, it could affect one’s life and marriage. One will not be so prosperous, and may not even conceive a child.

also a place where learned people impart their knowledge to their respective communities. Besides being a sleeping place for boys it is a place where men spend the rest of the day after doing daily activities. Here, young boys receive religious instruction and learn about morality, ethics and social relations.

Unlike *bersih désa* (cleansing the village) carried out within Javanese culture which cleans the village from any dangerous spirits by offering foods to the guardian spirit of the village at the spirits' place of burial (Geertz 1976:81-3; Nur 1996:35), the tradition of *peugléh meunasah* in Blanporoh village is solely intended to clean the *meunasah* from dust, wild grass in its yard including repainting and hanging a banner written with the word *marhaban ya Ramadhan* (welcome o Ramadhan) in front of it as parts of activities for welcoming Ramadhan. The *meunasah* is not only utilized by people (during Ramadhan) as a place to perform religious services (Arb 'ibādah), particularly daily prayers, but also as a place where mature teenagers can spend their time during the day and gather after sundown.

The tradition of *peugléh meunasah* in the village is performed on the last Friday of Sya'ban. On the last two Fridays of Sya'ban, the head of the village (Ach *keuchik*), Anasjuddin announces to Friday followers using a microphone and loudspeaker after praying by saying the "big guest" (Jam *tamu gadang*; Ach *jamee rayeuk*), that is Ramadhan month will come soon". On the last Friday morning of Sya'ban, *peugléh meunasah* is held until the Friday prayer. The village head asks for all villagers, especially men to come there. In addition, in his Friday sermon performed earlier, the preacher, Tgk Iswadi talks about the importance of purification and asks a question "how can we pray during Ramadhan if the *meunasah* is unclean?" In his sermon, he says that *peugléh meunasah* is a compulsory tradition which should be carried out to find the real meaning of Ramadhan, that is, the forgiveness of Allāh. Allāh will not grant forgiveness if "His house" is not cleaned. At the end of his sermon, he prays to Allāh in order that every Muslim is given the opportunity to "meet" in Ramadhan month which will come soon.

The tradition of *peugléh meunasah* involves social solidarity in the life of the community as well as uniting society to achieve a better solidarity, like in other *khanduri* that are performed. Teungku Usman, who lives next to the *meunasah* recounts that the tradition of *peugléh meunasah* is held annually. He says that Blangporoh village has appointed a *khadam* (cleaning service) for it. However, this tradition remains to be done on behalf of the village, as it is spe-

cial to welcome Ramadhan. Although there is no particular punishment given to those who do not participate, almost everybody is involved in this work. Some villagers say that they feel embarrassed if they do not participate in this tradition to welcome Ramadhan. As has been observed on that day some villagers offer cakes, some offer dry breads, some offer tea and some others working as civil servants are asked to offer a flask of coffee (*Ach saboh cirik kupi*) or money (*Jam kipieng; Ach pèng*) to buy cakes. This communal work is held on Friday. The money is a replacement for those who cannot participate.

Besides *peuglèh meunasah*, the focus on cleansing in Blangporoh also affects every household. This is the same with the Acèhnese society in Lamno district, West Acèh written by Nur (1996:37). There are two times that people have to renew or repair their houses, namely before Ramadhan, and when a father marries off his daughter (*ibid*). The marriage tradition of Aneuk Jamee in West Labuhan Haji district takes a matrilocal form in which the groom will live in the bride's house. As part of the preparation for the wedding reception, a family should clean and repair the house to honor the coming of the son-in-law. This is, on the one hand, a reflection of the respect of the bride's family toward the groom. On the other hand, this is also a reflection of the last responsibility of a father toward his daughter since after marriage a woman obtains legal possession of the house (*Ach rumoh*). Two household fathers say that they feel truly embarrassed if their houses are not cleaned and repaired as they marry off their daughters. Therefore, the resemblance between the coming of Ramadhan and the coming of the son-in-law are expressions of happiness and honor. The tradition of *peuglèh meunasah* shares that expression. Besides, most importantly, purification is an aspect of preparation to welcome the Ramadhan month since it is considered a holy month.

## Meugang

Two days preceding the coming of the Ramadhan lunar month are recognized by the Aneuk Jamèe as *hari meugang* (some say *hari mamagang* from *Ach uroe meugang* or *uroe makmeugang*) or “*meugang* day or *makmeugang* day”.<sup>262</sup> The *meugang* day is also called *hari mambantai* (*Ach uroe seumeusie*)

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262 In the capital city of Acèh, *meugang* is done three days preceding Ramadhan called *meugang kanto* or “office *meugang*”, meaning *meugang* is collectively done a day earlier for the government officers.

or “slaughtering day”. The *meugang* tradition which is practiced by the Aneuk Jamèe in Blangporoh, West Labuhan Haji district is unique.<sup>263</sup> Much preparation is performed on this special day and buying meat becomes a special tradition as many villagers admit that they are not used to eating meat. In addition, it is practically a cultural “obligation” on that day that all households should have meat to cook, particularly beef or buffalo. At this time, meat is more expensive than usual. Nevertheless, high prices are not obstacles. The tradition of slaughtering animals for the *meugang* day has existed for hundreds of years in Acèh, say some villagers. Others say that it began at the time of the Acèhnese Sultan. The number of slaughtered animals at this time is massive.<sup>264</sup> People will also journey home prior to the start of the fasting for the *meugang* celebration. It is around this time that all the family members return home (Indon *mudik*) to be together with their families.

The *meugang* tradition, which centres on the gathering of the extended family to eat and drink together, occurs three times a year in Acèh; two days preceding the coming of the fasting month called *meugang puasa*. This *meugang* indicates how deeply enjoyable it is to perform the religious service in Ramadhan month. A day before the celebration of Idul Fitri (Arb *ʿīd al-Fitr*) called *meugang uroe raya puasa* on the final day of Ramadhan when the family ends the Ramadhan month together. This *meugang* is performed with the assumption that people have already successfully cleansed their ‘soul’ (Jam *jiwo*) during Ramadhan month. A day before the celebration of Idul Adha (Arb *ʿīd al-Adhā*) called *meugang uroe raya haji*.

It is said that *meugang* done at the moment of *hari rayo* (Ach *uroe raya* from the Indon *hari lebaran*)<sup>265</sup> is a way of thanking Allāh for receiving victory

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263 The tradition of *meugang* day is also performed by all tribes in Acèh, especially in the southern and western coast of Acèh, such as in Southwest Acèh, South Acèh, West Acèh, Nagan Raya, and Acèh Singkil, marked with slaughtering cattle (Emtas 2008:78). The tradition of *meugang* day is very strong for the society in the southern and western coast of Acèh to welcome Ramadhan month. See Serambi Indonesia, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

264 There will be a lot of cattle in transit on the roads before the *meugang* day. Sellers from West to South sell them. Population and cattle movement cause traffic jams. Apparently the sellers are too “embarrassed” to sell them to their own neighbours at exorbitant ridiculous prices.

265 Both the day of Idul Fitri (Arb *ʿīd al-Fitr*) or “the celebration of making the end of fasting month, Ramadhan” and Idul Adha (Arb *ʿīd al-Adhā*) or “the major feast day held on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Zulhijjah” are called *hari lebaran* or “wide day” in Indonesia.

(Indon *kemenangan*) from Him. The latter *meugang* is not as important as the former two. The reason for this is those four days after *meugang uroe raya haji* people from wealthy backgrounds will slaughter animals for those less fortunate - an obligation referred to as *ibadah qurban*. *Meugang puasa* is the most sacred tradition discussed here, during which large quantities of meat are purchased by the Aneuk Jamèe and the Acèhnese. Half of the meat will be cooked and eaten while the other half will be used to make ‘boiled meat’ (Ach *sie ruboh*) or ‘dried meat with palm sugar and coriander’ (Ach/Indon *dèndèng*). These two types of meat dishes are eaten with rice and can last for several days.

From the middle of Sya’ban, *meugang puasa* day becomes a focus of people’s conversation whether in the ‘prayer house’ or in the coffee shop (Ach *keudè kupi*). Usually the conversation starts with types of meat and the prediction of the price of a kilogram of meat and later the conversation touches on many aspects of social life such as about the types of meat. There are three types of meat available in West Labuhan Haji district on *meugang* day: *sie meukilo*, *sie plah patèe*, and *sie tumpok*:

### **Sie meukilo**

*Sie meukilo* literally means the meat (Ach *sie*) sold by weight.<sup>266</sup> The slaughtering is done in the field near the market. The butchers only sell the pure meat and the buyers can freely choose which part of meat from the slaughtered buffalo or cows they want to buy. This kind of meat should be paid for in cash to sellers at the market stall. This practice is merely a commodity exchange. Commodities are exchanged strictly in relation to other commodities without any implied residual obligations or relationships between the people involved (Gregory 1982). The villagers as buyers do not make an appointment with the butchers as sellers in advance and they do not even know each other. The meat sellers alienate themselves from the selling of the meat.

### **Sie plah patèe**

*Sie plah patèe* literally means the meat which is divided up (Ach *plah*) then wrapped (Ach *patèe*). It is also called *sie meripèe* (meat of communal sharing), which is done by the village organizations, such as by “religious dis-

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266 *Sie meukilo* begin to be known in the period of New Order because before that the villagers did not recognize scales (Ach *céng*).

cussion groups” (Indon *kelompok-kelompok pengajian*) in the villages in West Labuhan Haji district. One of the members of an organization buys one or two buffalos. After slaughtering, all members of the organization work together to skin, to chop and to divide the meat, skin, liver, heart, intestines and other internal organs into equal amounts for each member. My respondent says that some of *sie plah patèe* is sometimes contributed to the poor and orphans on *meugang* day but it must be done with the agreement of all members of the organization.

## **Sie tumpok**

*Sie tumpok* literally means meat which is heaped (Ach *tumpok*) after being slaughtered. It is also called *sie adat* in which a person who has several buffalos or cows will invite villagers to buy meat from him on *meugang* day. The slaughtering is done in the village. The owner of the cattle does not benefit from this. Each family in the village is asked how much he intends to buy in order accurately know how much cattle must be slaughtered. He then writes down the names of those who buy meat from him. After slaughtering, he calls the buyers one by one to welcome them to take the meat that has been divided up. *Sie tumpok* are mixed among meat, skin, liver, heart, intestines and other internal organs which are turned into favourite dishes for the Aneuk Jamèe and for the Acèhnese.

The tradition of *sie tumpok* does not only benefit the owners of the cow or buffalo but also the villagers. The owners neither have to pay the market tax nor hire a market stall as slaughtering is done in the villages. On the other hand, this tradition enables the buyers to have meat on *meugang* day even though they do not have money on that day. *Sie tumpok* is a form of loaned meat which can be paid for at certain times during the next several months or after harvesting. Also, *sie tumpok* can be paid for not only with money, but also with rice in order that the villagers can have meat on that day. Comparing the price of *sie tumpok* with other kinds of *meugang* meat (Ach *sie meugang*), for instance; *sie meukilo* sold in the market and *sie plah patèe* sold in the village, *sie tumpok* is more expensive. But this is compensated for with social solidarity. Some of the *sie tumpok* is contributed to poor people, and orphans in the village who are unable to provide meat on *meugang* day. Here one can see that the social aspect is more important than making a profit (Ach *mita untong*).

The buffalos or cows are slaughtered by each village *teungku* for these three types of meat in West Labuhan Haji district because the *teungku* know well the *do'a* of slaughtering cattle. Ahmad in Kutaiboh says that because *teungku* is close to Allāh it is one of the ways to help him, as he does not receive any salary from the government. In the early morning of *meugang* day, the *teungku* together with the owners of cattle go to the places where the buffalos or cows are going to be slaughtered. After slaughtering, the *teungku* is given a three-finger length of the slaughtered buffalo's neck. The *teungku* then shares it with the village mosque staff: the village *khatib* (preacher), the village *bileu* (the one who call for prayer), and the village *khadam* (cleaning service). The more buffalos from their villages are slaughtered on *meugang* day, the more meat the *teungku* and the village mosque staff receive. My respondent says that sometimes even the village *teungku* who gets the meat from the slaughtering sells it to other people on the *meugang* day because many cattle from his village have been slaughtered by him.

The meat cost from Rp 100.000 to Rp 120.000 on *meugang* days in 2007 in West Labuhan Haji district. It is Rp 20.000 to Rp 40.000 more expensive than usual. This is because the request for meat on the *meugang* day is so high that the price increases. This has become a tradition in West Labuhan Haji. One butcher says that although the fulfilment of all meat required on this day is difficult the families must have it. The village people "attack" the butchers at the markets in Blangkejèrèn, the capital city of West Labuhan Haji in order to get meat on this day. Another butcher says that the meat on the day of *meugang* is more expensive but the price will go a little bit down in the afternoon. Like the people of coastal areas of West Acèh, Simeulue, Acèh Jaya, Nagan Raya, and Southwest Acèh, the people of West Labuhan Haji, and the people of South Acèh prefer buffalo meat. The beef is consumed less here. However, the people in the capital city, Banda Acèh, Acèh Besar, North Acèh and East Acèh prefer beef and consume less water buffalo meat. On this day, many visitors go to the meat market. But less people are interested in going to the fish market although the fish sellers have brought down the price. For example, a tuna fish (medium size), which is usually sold for Rp 35.000, becomes Rp 20.000 on that day. The same applies to the chicken sellers on this day. Usually they are visited by many buyers, yet on this day the chicken market is slack (Indon *lengang*) and the price remains the same as on days prior to *meugang* day.

It is the fact that every person especially the family head makes a big effort so that on *meugang* day they are able to buy meat. The poor people usually save money a month or two months prior to *meugang* day to buy one or two kilograms meat. In the village sometimes rich people buy a buffalo or cow whose meat is contributed to the poor and orphans after being slaughtered. One says that in the capital city of Acèh, Banda Acèh this practice is sometimes also done by the local officials on *meugang* day. The *meugang* tradition has become a part of the culture of the Aneuk Jamèe particularly and for the Acèhnese as a whole. It does not only influence the dynamics of the Aneuk Jamèe culture but also brings many consequences to the changing economy and social of the Aneuk Jamèe society. From the economic perspective, this tradition promotes local economic development with the development of animal husbandry besides this tradition also has the effect of strengthening the social links of the Aneuk Jamèe society in West Labuhan Haji district.

It is not considered very good to begin performing the religious service in the fasting month without meat at home. Therefore, every family head buys high quality meat at the market on *meugang* day and every housewife bakes *leumang* and makes other traditional Acèhnese cakes such as *keutupèk*, *leupèk*, *bada* and *tapèe*. These activities on *meugang* day remind people that “the guest of Allāh” (Ach *jamee Allāh*), the Ramadhan month will come soon. He adds that people who do not buy meat and do not make traditional cakes on *meugang* day are those who do not respect the “the guest of Allāh” which will come in two days time. *Meugang* is a happy occasion for a family to welcome Ramadhan month. Therefore, families should have at least one kilogram of meat during this time. Otherwise, the celebration of *meugang* to welcome Ramadhan will be virtually meaningless, says one of the family heads in Blangporoh. Like the Acèhnese in Lamno district, West Acèh (Nur 1996:42), the Aneuk Jamèe people in Blangporoh regard meat as a very special food, not only because of its benefit for human health, but also because meat is an expensive meal compared with other dishes. Hence, as a part of the happiness associated with the coming of Ramadhan, people celebrate by having meat. Therefore, from the Aneuk Jamèe and the Acehnese’s perspective as written by Nur, “a person cannot properly speak about Ramadhan month without following a *meugang* tradition which is considered as a phase between everyday life and a special time of Ramadhan”.

The existence of *meugang* to welcome Ramadhan gives poor people the opportunity to enjoy the delicious taste of meat at least once a year. Poor people usually eat meat only at a *khanduri* whether in *khanduri ureueng matèe* or at wedding receptions which are held by rich people. Some villagers say that they only experience ‘big meal’ (Ach *pajoh rayeuk*) when someone invites them to the *khanduri*. Therefore, Sya’ban is regarded as a happy month since this month is characterized as ‘the month of the rice feast’ (Ach *buleun khanduri bu*). Furthermore, since *meugang* is considered as a transition between everyday life and the liminal time of Ramadhan, everyone saves extra money to be spent on this tradition. One father of a household in Blangporoh says that he has been saving money for *meugang* day for two months. Even some fathers of households in Blangporoh and Kutaiboh village borrow money from their neighbors to buy meat on *meugang* day. Even though the price of meat on *meugang* day is more expensive than on ordinary days, it does not decrease the people’s demand for it.

*Meugang* day is also celebrated by people returning home. I often hear people sitting in the coffee shop (Ach *warōng kupi*) or in the prayer house (Ach *meunasah*) asking each other about their family in *rantau* (away from the home town) and whether they can come home or not on *meugang* day. A woman whose husband is in *rantau* will be very worried if on the days preceding *meugang* her husband has not returned home. She worries not only about how to buy *meugang* meat, but most significantly, because a family should be together on that day. The same is the case with families whose children are in *rantau*, parents in the village will also be very worried if their children do not return home on the days preceding *meugang*. I find that the Aneuk Jamèe in Blangporoh stress the importance of the *meugang* ritual to the family’s sense of togetherness. One father of a household says that togetherness is the happiness that is difficult to describe in words, it can only be felt. For him, happiness can only be found if all the family members including the return of deceased’s ‘soul’ (*roh*) can be together on *meugang* day. The high price of *meugang* meat and other foodstuffs on *meugang* day are not obstacles if compared to the immeasurable value found when families, either small or large, gather together on *meugang* day to start the fasting month. Therefore, the children in *rantau* should rightly return to their village to be together with their parents in order that all family members can taste all varieties of the cooked food prepared by their mother. This shows that *meugang* is a time of rebuilding a social community.

Many household wives shed tears as their beloved children are for some reason in *rantau*. They cannot come home to taste the food cooked by their beloved mother.<sup>267</sup> In addition, many parents are sad and even cry if their children are not together with them on that day. The wife of Hayyan, Sa'diyah in Blangporoh says that if her son does not come back from the city on *meugang* day she will invite her son's friends in the village instead of feeding her own son with the cooked *meugang* meat she prepares. By doing so, her deep longing (Ach *meuchén*) for her son to be together will disappear a little bit. In addition, my respondent says that there are parents in Blangporoh who go to the *imām* a month prior *meugang* day and asking him to recite *shamadiyah* in order that their children in *rantau* remember their parents and come back on the day of *meugang* because their parents want to eat a meal together with their children. If the *shamadiyah* is accepted by Allāh, the son's heart in *rantau* will be gentle (Ach *leumoh*) and he will remember his parents and come back to his house on *meugang* day. There is, however, a different case with Mawardi and his wife. When they know that their son cannot be together on *meugang* day, they go to their son's house in Banda Acèh prior to *meugang* day and celebrate the *meugang* day together there. When I asked why people should be together on *meugang* day, many people repeat the saying "That is a good day and a good month" (Ach *uroe get, buleun get*). My respondent, however, answers by saying "because *meugang* is about good meat and good traditional cakes, all these good things should be tasted together by all family members".

As a tradition that has been passed down from one generation to another, the *meugang* tradition for the Aneuk Jamèe does not merely mean buying and eating meat but also reflects the pride and esteem of the head of the family, especially a father at the head of his family. If the father cannot provide the family with meat which is relatively expensive, his esteem will fall dramatically as is admitted by M. Nazar in Blangporoh. In 2005 in Leunké - Banda Acèh, a pedicab driver cut off his penis in front of his wife because he could not bring meat to his family on *meugang* day (Nur 1996:44). From this shocking incident it can be understood that bringing the raw meat home is a sign of men's honor. The man who is not able to bring the raw meat home on *meugang* day implies that he is not able to hold his honour as husband towards his wife. Because the meat of *meugang* is a sign of men's honour, men will do the shopping on

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267 See Serambi Indonesia, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

*meugang* day, particularly to buy meat. Therefore on *meugang* day the general picture in West Labuhan Haji and in other parts of Acèh, whether in the market or in the villages, is of men carrying the *meugang* meat (Ach *sie meugang*).

For a man who is just getting married, *meugang* day can be a prestigious day and can also be an unhappy day since all expenses on *meugang* day fall to him. On that day, he should show his wife's family that he is able to provide *meugang* meat. Usually, if a family already has a son-in-law (Jam *minantu laki*; Ach *meulintè agam*), he is the person responsible for providing *meugang* meat. Based on the village tradition, the man who has just got married is obliged to bring home meat and complete cooking spices called *aweuh lengkap* ("complete coriander"). The *aweuh lengkap* consists of coconut (Ach *bòh u*), calamondin (Ach *bòh kuyun*), salt (Ach *sira*), chilli (Ach *campi*), onion (Ach *bawang merah*), garlic (Ach *bawang putéh*), ginger (Ach *bòh halia*), coriander (Ach *aweuh*), turmeric (Ach *kunyet*), pepper (Ach *lada*), galingale (Ach *langkuweuh*), fennel (Ach *jintan maneh*), stern-anis (Ach *lawang kléng*), fried grated coconut (Ach *u neuleu*), bay leaves (Ach *on salam*), cardamom (Ach *kapulaga*), coconut oil (Ach *minyuek u*), lemon grass (Ach *bak reu*), several lime leaves (Ach *on kruet*), cattapa (Ach *keutapang kléng*), candlenut (Ach *bòh kiro*), and dried carambolas (Ach *asam sunti*). After having been cooked by the wife with the help of her female family or her female neighbours, the cooked meat with rice and other side dishes are placed in *rantang* (set of stacked containers for transporting food) then it is given to the husband's mother (Jam *bisan padusi*) together with traditional wet cakes such as *leupèk*, *leumang*, *keutupèk*, *tapè*, *timphan* or *asoe kaya* and *bada*. All these are placed in an *ayan* (a tin can) and are wrapped with cloths. Sometimes some dried bread made with butter is also placed in the *ayan*. By giving these, she wants to express her loyalty in front of her husband's family and also to show that her husband is still responsible for his family as a symbol of care or family ties.

After receiving the *rantang* containing the cooked food and *ayan* containing wet cakes and dry bread from her daughter-in-law (Jam *minantu padusi*), the mother's husband (Ach *mak tuan agam*) estimates the price of the cooked food, traditional cakes and dried bread given by her daughter-in-law. In return, the husband's mother then places an amount of money in the *rantang* and *ayan* to be returned on that or the following day without her daughter-in-law noticing. Sometimes the returned *rantang* and *ayan* new clothes, sugar, and coffee are also added. The money given by the husband's mother belongs to the

daughter-in-law's mother; meanwhile some cooked meat, the baked traditional cakes and dried bread are brought by the daughter-in-law are shared with neighbours by her husband's mother on this day. This implies that *meugang* tradition is an opportunity to strengthen relationships not only between the son-in-law and wife's family by bringing raw meat home, but also between the daughter-in-law and the husband's families including neighbours through sharing some of the cooked meat together with cooked wet cakes and dry bread on *meugang* day. Here is a clearly gift exchange in which a link is developed through the given *rantang* and *ayan* in otherwise separate family groups. Hence, the gift from the daughter-in-law implies an intention to maintain a social relationship between the families. The classic example of a gift is a daughter given in marriage: One's daughter remains one's daughter, even as she becomes the wife of a man.

If the son-in-law does not follow the *adat* by bringing raw meat home to his wife's family on *meugang* day, his honour will be decreased in front of his wife's family. He is then identified as *bawok lari panggang* or "bringing grilled meat away" meaning the person who avoids his obligations and is afraid of suffering a financial loss.<sup>268</sup> In addition, bringing the cooked meat with various side dishes together with wet cakes and dry bread to the husband's families on the *meugang* day is to avoid scorn (Ach/Indon *èjèkan*) from the neighbours onto the newly married couple. The new couple will certainly be ashamed if this happens. He adds this tradition has become *adat* defining the newly married man on the one hand, and proving the ability of the man to provide the *meugang* meat to his wife's family in the other hand. Although a man still has an equal obligation to take care of his original family as well as his married family, since he stays in his wife's house, his obligations to his wife's family are greater. Therefore, the ability of a man to provide the *meugang* meat to his wife's family is not just to follow the *adat* rule but, at the same time, also to increase the man's honour in front of his wife's family. It is also a symbol of care (Indon *keperdulian*).

Like the Acèhnese women in Lamno district, West Acèh (Nur 1996:44), the honour of Aneuk Jamee women in the context of *meugang* is equally strong

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268 It is also the same case if one of his wife's parents has passed away; a son-in-law does not go back and only goes back after *khanduri* on the seventh day. He is also identified as *bawok lari panggang* or "bringing grilled meat away" means he is stingy and afraid of spending money on the *khanduri*.

as that of the men as there is certain happiness for the village women in Blangporoh in cooking meat in the kitchen on the *meugang* day. Ibu Fauziyah as a housewife in Blangporoh says she is very sad if her husband does not bring meat home on *meugang* day. If there is no pure meat, bony meat is also fine because children are waiting for it and they swarm over it if it is brought home. The children's expression makes her proud. She adds that even though she works all the time in the kitchen on *meugang* day, she will be happy as she can cook meat in the kitchen which can later on be served to her families and to her husband's families. Another housewife says that if there is no meat on *meugang* day she will feel awful because the aroma of the cooking meat comes from all the other neighbour's kitchens. She adds "When there is meat, I am busy cooking in the kitchen and at the same time I can forget my own problems for a moment and the important thing is I can serve the cooked meat to my husband's families to show them that I do not forget them on *meugang* day". Therefore, the *meugang* tradition, again like the Acèhnese in Lamno (Nur 1996:44), symbolizes the honour of both men and women in the family.

Moreover, besides improving relationships with the extended families, the existence of the *meugang* tradition is an opportunity to improve relationships with the deceased relatives. The living will not forget them and always wants to be close to them. In Blangporoh, Kutaiboh and Blangbaru village, a small *khanduri* for *aruwah* (deceased's soul) is performed at home. A *teungku* is invited. *Shamadiyah* is then recited after burning incense and the *shamadiyah* session is closed with *do'a* for 'soul' (*roh*) asking Allāh to 'widen their graves' (Ach *lakèe beuluwah kubu*) and to release them from torment (Ach/Indon *bebas dari siksaan*). In addition, the *teungku* asks Allāh to grant prosperity (Indon *kekamkuran*) and long life (Ach *panyang umu*) for the living before ending his *do'a*. The *teungku* is then served with the cooked *meugang* meat with various dishes and other wet *meugang* traditional cakes.

It is worth mentioning that the *meugang* tradition in the context of Ramadhan is the symbol of slaughtering a cow or buffalo. The slaughtering of a cow or buffalo is not only to have its meat, but also to express the killing of *hawa nafsu* or carnal desire (Nur 1996:46). In line with this, Siegel (1969:98-105) points out that a man's nature in the Acehnese' conception consists of *akal* or rationality and *hawa nafsu*. When man responds to *hawa nafsu*, he is led away from Allāh, and behaves like an animal. On the other hand, through the use of *akal*, man can know Allāh's command and control man's instinctive nature that

is *hawa nafsu*. However, between *hawa nafsu* and *akal* there is always a struggle. Therefore, man needs religion in order to guide his *akal*.

The resemblance between animal behavior and *hawa nafsu* can be best understood in the saying “like cow” (Ach *lagè leumoe*) or “like buffalo” (Ach *lagè keubeu*). These two words often appear in daily conversation when people want to talk about someone else with bad behaviour or someone who has done something wrong (Nur 1996:46). The reason for the comparison with a cow or buffalo is because those animals are only endowed with *hawa nafsu*. Furthermore, since people use both animals in ploughing rice fields, those two animals have become a symbol of stupidity (*ibid*). In relation to the *meugang* tradition it is not the endowment of *hawa mafsu* and the symbol of this animal as written by Nur, but, most importantly, bringing home its meat on *meugang* day is a valuable gift. It testifies the relationship of the household and the son-in-law to strengthen the affinal relation in which he brings home the raw meat and *aweuh lengkap* to his wife’s family and his wife’s family gives back the cooked meat with *aweuh lengkap*. The following figure 12 showing the affinal relation in the context of *meugang* tradition.

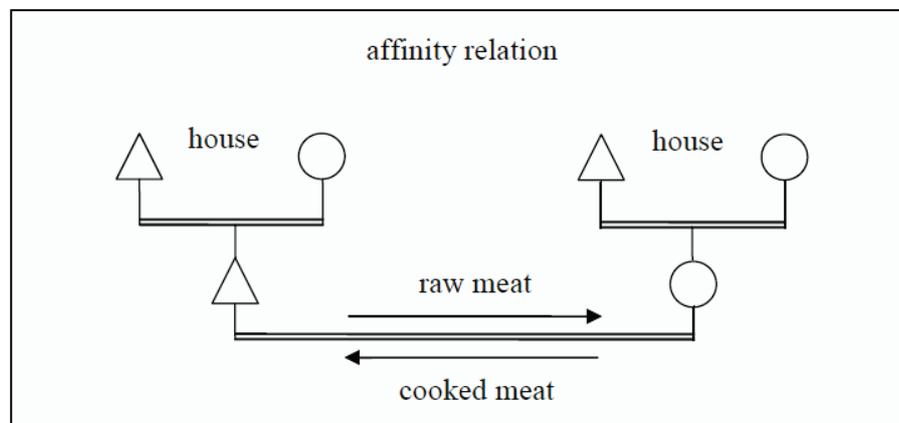


Figure 12. The affinal relation in the context of *meugang* tradition

## Pajoh-pajoh

A day preceding the coming of the Ramadhan lunar month is recognized as *uroe pajoh-pajoh* (*Jam hari makèn makèn*) or “the day for eating”. People in great numbers spend their day having *pajoh-pajoh* in open areas especially along river banks and seashores known as places of recreation. *Pajoh-pajoh*, sometimes known by the term *meurumok* or *meuramien*, is a happy excursion undertaken by two families together in a recreation area. As has been observed

on this day, Blangporoh village and other neighbouring villages are empty (Indon *sepi*) even the government offices in Blang Keujèrèn, the capital city of West Labuhan Haji are also empty as many officers are absent. In addition, businesses, kiosks, and other shops are closed as their owner picnic on the river banks or seashores. On this day, the picnic locations will become “seas of humans” (Indon *lautan manusia*) performing the *pajoh-pajoh* tradition. In south Acèh, the locations visited on the day of *pajoh-pajoh* are Krueng Baru, Air Dingin in Sawang, Kolam Aroya, Tingkat Tujuh and Lhok Rukam sea shore in Tapaktuan, Pasie Kuala Ba’u in Klut Utara and Lhokjamin in Bakongan.<sup>269</sup>

The villagers prefer to visit locations along the river bank of Krueng Baru on *pajoh-pajoh*. The existence of this river is interesting enough as it is a border between the region (Indon *kabupaten*) of South Acèh and Southwest Acèh. On the south is the district of West Labuhan Haji and on the west is the district of Lembah Sabil. If the weather is fine, visitors standing on this river bridge can clearly see the peak of Gunung Leuser National Park (Indon *Taman Nasional Gunung Leuser* (TNGL)).<sup>270</sup> In addition, Krueng Baru has clear (Indon *bening*) water so that it becomes an object of interest to the visitors. They can take long baths and enjoy its cold water flowing from the mountain of TNGL. Moreover, from the Krueng Baru bridge visitors can also see many other things, such as groups of household wives washing clothes on both of its banks, truck drivers take stones and sand for building projects and farmers go back and forth with their canoes to their gardens in the upper reaches of river. There are coffee shops and small kiosks selling various food, drink and fruit for the visitors on both sides of the river bank. There is also a mosque at the head of the bridge for prayers. In short, Krueng Baru offers many attractions so that thousand of visitors decide to go there, have a meal, bathe, dive etc on the day of *pajoh pajoh* to welcome Ramadhan.

Like the Acèhnese, the Aneuk Jamèe celebrates *pajoh-pajoh* twice in a year. Both are based on the lunar calendar. First, *pajoh-pajoh* is held on the final Wednesday of Safar lunar month called *uroe rabu habéh*. Safar lunar month in Acèh is considered an unlucky month (Ach *buleuen hana untong*)

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269 See Serambi Indonesia, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007. In the southwest region, places visited on the day of *pajoh-pajoh* are Ujung Serangga beach, Jilbab beach in Susoh, Bendungan Irigasi in Kuta Tinggi, Krueng Beukah in Blangpidie, Krueng Babahrot in Lama Inong, and Krueng Baru at the border between Southwest Acèh and South Acèh and Krueng Seumanyam at the border between Southwest Acèh and Nagan Raya.

270 See Serambi Indonesia, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

because historically in this month, the Prophet Muḥammad was very ill. Therefore, on *rabu habéh* day, in order to avoid any misfortune, people go to the river or sea to bathe and clean themselves. They sometimes come with pieces of paper with certain verses of the Qur’ān to be mixed with the water. *Pajoh-pajoh* on the day of *rabu abéh* is not solely an expression of happiness, but most importantly, it is a ritual which is intended to purify the body from any dangerous spirits. Second, *pajoh-pajoh* is held on the last day of Sya’ban or a day preceding Ramadhan. *Pajoh-pajoh* on this day is purely a joyful activity with the aim of “throwing off all carnal desires” (Ach *peuleh hawa nafsu*) to welcome Ramadhan because the following day the fasting month begins and all people have to fast. Arbi says that *pajoh-pajoh* is a day in which one satisfies him or herself with everything but stays within permissible limits and does not collide with the Islamic teaching as well as with the *adat* tradition.

*Pajoh-pajoh* is held communally. The villagers do *meuripèe*<sup>271</sup> (share money) to pay for all expenses, particularly for the public transportation costs. Nonetheless, people go to the river banks or seashores in their own vehicles on this day. M. Nazar says that the money for the day of *pajoh-pajoh* has been saved at the time he saves money for the *meugang* day. The aim of this tradition is to release *hawa nafsu* to welcome the Ramadhan month. Some old men whom I talk to, say that the expression of happiness on the day of *pajoh-pajoh* by feasting on the river banks or seashores is not only merely to welcome Ramadhan month but also because people have already “met” the ‘souls’ (*roh*) of their deceased families returning as the *teungku* burned incense and recited *do’a* at the *meugang* night, the night prior to the day of *pajoh-pajoh*.

*Pajoh-pajoh* in the context of Ramadhan both for the Aneuk Jamee and for the Acèhnese can be considered as a form of the their interpretation of one of the Prophet’s *hadīth* narrated by Aḥmad and Nasai, “if a person welcomes Ramadhan with a feeling of happiness; his or her body will be saved from the heat of hell on the Day of Judgment”. Since *pajoh-pajoh* is an expression of satisfaction, the people regard it as a good way to carry out the Prophet’s suggestion even though the Prophet celebrates in welcoming Ramadhan. I observe that soon after people arrive at the riverbank of Kruengbaru, mats are spread out and tents erected. They then have a meal enjoying a fresh feeling, the pre-

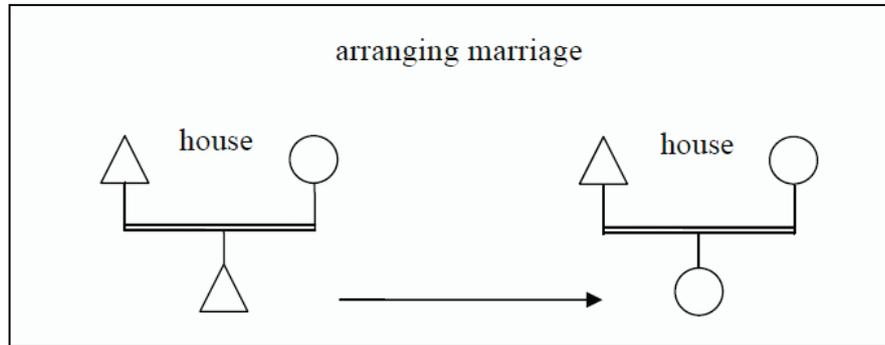
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271 In Aneuk Jamee and Acèhnese community, *meuripèe* (voluntary contribution) is always a solution in communal activities, both ritual and social, such as in religious *khanduri* and in building a prayer house (Ach *meunasah*) or mosque (Ach *meuseujid*).

pared delicacies and the natural beauty around them. Many talk to each other while eating and sometimes laugh while eating various delicious foods which are only consumed occasionally. Besides the cooked *meugang* meat, there is also food such as fruit salad (Ach *nica*h or *cinica*h; Indon *rujak*) with a pungent dressing; e. g, unripe mango with a tangy sauce or fruit salad with sweet sauce. After the meal, most of them take a bath, and dive in the Krueng Baru River. They enjoy the coldness of the river water and sometimes go onto the river bank and jump down into the water again. Here it is clear that the communal nature of *pajoh-pajoh* is expressed not just by the fact that so many people participate, but also by the nature of their participation. It can be seen in the happiness on their faces and in the tone of their voices.

One of the unfavourable aspects of the tradition, which is criticised by some people, is the way people carry out the *pajoh pajoh* tradition. Some old men in Blangporoh, Kutaiboh, and Blangbaru village whom I discuss with lamented that it is not appropriate to welcome Ramadhan in such a way. Instead, they suggest learning more about *ibadah Ramadhan* (the religious service of Ramadhan) and visiting and asking forgiveness from each other to “clean the soul/mind” (Ach *peugléh jiwa*) before beginning to fast in Ramadhan or looking to see how the students at the Islamic boarding school (Ach *aneuk dayah*) celebrate the days preceding Ramadhan. Furthermore, they say that what people do on the day of *pajoh pajoh* is not what the Prophet practiced when he was alive. Hence they categorize this practice as heresy (Arb *bid'ah*). They prohibit their children from taking part in this tradition and also believe that spending the day of *pajoh-pajoh* on the river banks or seashores as an expression of happiness is clearly sinful because men and women mix together, beginning in the truck and then bathing in the rivers. Such a tradition was not recognized at the time of the Prophet and his companions. This tradition belongs to non-Muslims, says Teungku Bustamam. He also says that nowadays, people tend to express happiness without considering that their actions go against Islamic teaching and the *adat* rules. However, apart from going against Islamic teaching, the day of *pajoh-pajoh* at the river banks or seashores provides an opportunity for marriageable young men and women to meet and to talk to each other and choose their prospective spouses. My informant says that it is common soon after the day of *pajoh-pajoh*; that the traditional matchmakers are busy in arranging marriage proposals with the parents of the interested parties in West Labuhan Haji district, South Acèh.

The following figure 13 shows that the practice of *pajoh-pajoh* is one of the opportunities to construct the next generation.



**Figure 13. The practice of *pajoh-pajoh* constructs the next generation**

Furthermore, the *pajoh-pajoh* also shares a major characteristic of *khanduri* this being that neighbours come together on the riverbanks or seashores and share their food. This is usually conducted communally among several neighbours who do *meuripèe* to pay for the cost of transportation. At the riverbank or seashores, there is not just recreation available, but the *pajoh-pajoh* itself can also be considered as an act of purification. This is because almost everyone, men or women, children or young people, bathe and clean their bodies in the river on the day of *pajoh-pajoh*.

My female respondent says that in the past on a day preceding Ramadhan, the Aneuk Jamee women especially performed *mandi balimau* (bathing with citrus fruit) to purify their bodies. This is done by mixing several kinds of fragrant flowers; *frangipani*, *jeumpa* flower, *seulanga* flower, fragrant lemongrass, nubbled lime, *kabèlue*, leaves of civet cat's *pandanus* (Ach on *seukè musang*) and other fragrant grasses. All these 'ingredients' are cut into small pieces and placed in a tin can (Jam *timbo*) that has been filled with water. Limes are cut into slices. They are then mixed in the water together with flowers in the tin can till the water is fragrant. This is done two nights preceding Ramadhan in order that all the fragrant smells are mixed with water to be used to bathe at their houses on the day preceding Ramadhan. This tradition is no longer often practiced. Instead, the village women use shampoo as they take a bath in the river of Krueng Baru on the day of *pajoh-pajoh*. Nonetheless, my male respondent says, however, that in Acèh Singkil, on the day preceding Ramadhan that women perform *mandi balimau* to purify their bodies. It is done by mixing several kinds of fragrant flowers including the leaves of civet cat's

*pandanus*. They are then pounded and filtered to get between one and two litres of water which is then used as shampoo. This water is used to rinse off (Indon *membilas*) after bathing with river water so that the fragrance from the rinsing water remains on their bodies. The Acèh Singkil women perform *mandi balimau* together by lining up at the riverbank of Elsoraya in Acèh Singkil. Cheering is appeared at the moment. They bathe laughing together. In addition, M. Yamin, a Minangkabau man who has just migrated from West Sumatra to Blangporoh village says that Minangkabau people of West Sumatra also recognize the tradition of *mandi balimau* to welcome Ramadhan. Several days before Ramadhan begins, many people bathe in a river or sea in order to purify their bodies. On this occasion, they clean their bodies with citrus fruit. Moreover, in Morocco, as another example, on the days preceding Ramadhan people visit the public baths and scrub themselves to purify their bodies for the coming of Ramadhan (Buitelaar 1993:38; Nur 1996:40).

*Pajoh-pajoh* tradition is not only a joyful activity to express gladness in the context of welcoming the ‘king of the month’ (Ach *panghulè buleun*), that is Ramadhan month but it is also an expression of gladness as people have “met” the *aruwah* of deceased families when they perform *khanduri* for them at the night of *meugang*. In addition, this tradition is an opportunity to improve their social relationships with the living by going to the river banks or sea-shores together. *Pajoh-pajoh* tradition is an opportunity to purify their bodies from external dirt (Ach *kotoran lahée*) through bathing together in a river or sea before they fully concentrate on fasting in Ramadhan.

## Conclusion

The series of rituals during Sya’ban lunar month is intended to welcome Ramadhan. Since Ramadhan is regarded as a holy month, purification becomes an important aspect especially in the Aneuk Jamee activities and in the Acèh-nese activities in general which involve a process of gift and commodity exchange. The ritual of *khanduri bu*, both at family and village level, *khanduri beureu’at* in the middle of Sya’ban, religious services such as ‘prayer of glorification’ (Ach *seumayang taseubèh*), ‘wish prayer’ (Ach *seumayang hajat*) with certain prayers (*do’a*) and ‘fasting of Nisfu Sya’ban’ (Ach *puasa Nisfu Sya’ban*) require purification as requisite for being valid. It is understandable that purification emerges as a part of the important preparations for Ramadhan since, during this month; Muslims have to perform many series of rituals. If the

performing of *khanduri bu*, *khanduri beureu'at*, religious services and slaughtering buffalos or cows on *meugang* day symbolize the process of purifying the 'soul/mind' (inner human self) as well as rebuilding the social communities and strengthening the social and affinal relationships (see figure 12), *peugléh meunasah* and *rumoh* (house) emphasizes the purification of material things (outside the self). Both imply the importance of purification in welcoming Ramadhan. Furthermore, Sya'ban can be regarded as a preliminary phase leading people away from their everyday life into the liminal time and space of Ramadhan. And the practice of *pajoh-pajoh*, on the one hand, is an expression of a border between secular and secret happiness, but on the other hand, the practice of *pajoh-pajoh* shows how relationships amongst the next generation are constructed (see figure 13) since the *pojoh-pajoh* tradition at the river banks or seashores provides an opportunity for the marriageable young men and women to meet and to talk each other and choose their future prospective spouse.

## CHAPTER 11

### The ritual of Ramadhan

Ramadhan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, which coincides with the month of September. The exact date of Ramadhan is variable, sometimes falling in the dry season, and sometimes in the wet or rainy season. The first day of Ramadhan is also variable since Sya'ban, the preceding lunar month sometimes has twenty-nine days, and sometimes thirty days. Therefore, in the last few days of Sya'ban, predicting the first day of Ramadhan becomes the main topic of conversation. The Aneuk Jamee wait until there is official information either from the government or from *teungku dayah* "Islamic scholars of the boarding school" for confirmation of the first day of Ramadhan, although it has already been indicated on the Gregorian calendar.<sup>272</sup> In 2007, when this research was conducted both the *teungku dayah* and the government agreed on the timing of the first day of fasting. Hence, everyone began fasting together. After 'sunset prayers' (Ach *seumayang meugr b*), some people turned on their televisions and evening radio to hear the government's determination of the new moon (Arb *r 'yah*)<sup>273</sup> by the National Team for Visual Observations of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, followed by a speech about the merits of fasting that urges everyone to do good deeds and avoid evil. This chapter describes the religious services and events taking place during Ramadhan month in the village and in the *dayah* "boarding school" complex. In the latter the *suluk*<sup>274</sup> ritual is practiced.

### Fasting

From the first evening the fasting month creates a distinction between everyday life, in which the villagers gather at the village mosque to perform vari-

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272 In the past, the government's decision on the first day of Ramadhan was sometimes contradicted by the decision made by several *teungku*. Therefore, people who have a strong commitment to the *dayah* - those who belong to PERTI (Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah) - will follow the *teungku*'s decision, whereas the majority of people will follow the government's decision (Nur 1996:48). The contradiction emerged because of different techniques used to observe the coming of the moon.

273 Sighting of the new moon to start or close the fasting month, as opposed to mathematically calculating the date.

274 The practical method to guide the seekers by tracing a way of thought feeling, and action, leading through a succession of 'stages' to experience the Divine Reality (Trimingham 1971:4).

ous religious services. Many villagers and more than one thousand people from various districts in Acèh come to the (boarding school) *dayah* of Sheikh Muda Waly to perform the *suluk* ritual and other religious services in the *dayah*'s mosque.<sup>275</sup> People stay awake until it is time to have an early morning meal (Jam *sahur*), just before day-break. After religious services, some people go to *warung* (small coffee shops or rice-eating stalls) but many others remain in the *dayah* mosque spending the time uttering 'religious chants' (*dzikir*), some others chat with each other. During this night people in the village and the *dayah*'s mosque perform additional prayers to Allāh. They believe that Ramadhan is an occasion to wipe out one's sins and enjoy Allāh's unlimited mercy.

Some men in the *warung*, generally, spend the night drinking coffee, tea and talking. Although they go to sleep later than usual, women (particularly housewives) must get up much earlier than usual on the first day of Ramadhan since they have to prepare an early morning meal for their families (Nur 1996:50). For men, the first night of Ramadhan marks the beginning of a time of relaxation as their usual activities during the month are reduced, whereas for women, the first night of Ramadhan signals the beginning of a busy time since Ramadhan activities require them to work harder than usual (*ibid*). Men in the village mosque, the coffee shop or 'rice stall' (Ach *warong bu*) will go back home after having an early morning meal. Once at home, a husband wakes up his wife and helps her cook. The *suluk* followers (called *sālék* "traveler") in the *dayah* complex also sleep very late, spending a long time at the mosque during

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275 Participating in the *suluk* "retirement from the world" involves practising the *dzikir* (religious chants) as well as performing other religious services under the guidance of the *dayah* leader. For this ritual, the *suluk* followers have to separate themselves temporarily from their wives and children with the aim of coming close to Allāh. During *suluk*, the followers chant the recital of the confession of faith (Ach *meratéb*) to invoke the Prophet Muḥammad, and recite the Qur'ān completely as well as praying together day and night. The goal of this strenuous meditation exercise is to lessen the indescribable distance between man and Allāh. "Members of a *suluk* have no other goal than to come closer to Allāh; only that, there is no other purpose". The practice of this *suluk* is based on the 'seclusion' (Indon *khalwat*) of the Prophet Muḥammad at the Hira' cave (Indon *gua Hira'*) and the Prophet Moses at Sinai hill (Indon *bukit Sinai*). Some people perform *suluk* for 40 days; some perform *suluk* for the whole Ramadhan month; some perform for twenty days and the majority perform it for the last ten days of Ramadhan. The majority performed *suluk* on the last ten days of Ramadhan because there was a particular moment called *lailatul qadar* "the Night of Decree". *Lailatul qadar* is better than a thousand months (QS 97:3). By performing *suluk* on the last ten days of Ramadhan, the *sālīk* believe that they will receive a greater religious merit, both the religious merit of performing *suluk* and that of *lailatul qadar* night.

the night. They do not cook themselves as the *suluk* committee prepares their meal.

Before dawn, a young man in the village mosque calls “wake up, wake up, *sahur, sahur*” (Ach *beudoh-beudoh, saho-saho*) over loud speakers. One is not allowed to eat or drink one hour after this call an hour before the moment one may not eat and drink (Indon *imsak*), all family members have woken up to have early morning meal. In Blangporoh, many families have their meal sitting on a plaited mat side by side, including their son-in-law who normally never eats with his parents-in-law. Before having their meal, a father usually reminds his children to say the “intention” (Indon *niat*) to fast in Arabic. This translates as “I intend to fast tomorrow, to fulfill my duty during the fasting month this year for Allāh's sake”. Uttering *niat* is very important for the validity of worship. Children who are unable to utter *niat* in Arabic may utter it in Jamee or Acèhnese. In the *dayah* complex, the *suluk* followers also have meals together, thus acting as if they were kin. They share cooked rice and vegetables, for they are not allowed to consume any food that has a ‘soul’ (*nyawa*) such as fish, shrimps and meat, “so that their own ‘soul’ (*jiwa*) is always focussed on Allāh”. Eating food that has a ‘soul’ (*nyawa*) during *suluk*'s performance is said “to close the door of the heart, make the body heavy, and strengthen the *hawa nafsu* or “carnal desire” (see below). When a human acknowledges his *hawa nafsu*, he or she is led away from Allāh.<sup>276</sup>

After the early morning meal, a father insists that all the children avoid sleeping prior to performing the ‘sunrise prayers’ (Ach *seumayang suboh*). Later, when the call is broadcasted over the radio followed by the voice of the drum (Indon *bedug*) from the *dayah* mosque, people stop eating, drinking, smoking and chewing betel vine. This is a sign that the fasting time has begun. After performing the ‘morning prayer’ in the village mosque, the village men return home and sleep, whereas several village women stay in the mosque reciting the Qur’ān. Some young men and women in village and many in the capital city of West Labuhan Haji, Blangkejèrèn, do not immediately go back home, but spend the morning walking around excitedly. This tradition is called ‘walk-

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276 Another reason why the *suluk* followers are not allowed to consume meat or something that has a ‘soul’ (*nyawa*) is that it is related to the validation of the *dzikir* (religious chants) chanted during the *suluk* performance. Some male *suluk* followers said that if they do so, it may provoke a dream of sexual intercourse and ejaculation. When that happens, their *dzikir* is no longer valid.

ing in the morning' (Jam *bajalèn subuah*) and takes place only during Ramadhan. It is only done by young people and sometimes referred to as 'love in the morning' (*asmara subuah*).<sup>277</sup> In the *dayah* mosque, however, the *suluk* followers practice the method of *suluk*, *dzikir* and perform additional recommended religious services under the direction of the *dayah* leader.

Unlike the scene in the *dayah* complex, which is full of people reciting prayers, the scene in Blangporoh village is very quiet, particularly during the first week of Ramadhan.<sup>278</sup> Schools are closed and the village market only starts around midday. Moreover, the working hours in the government offices are shortened so that civil servants can catch up on sleep.<sup>279</sup> Moreover, the coffee shops, canteens and rice-eating stalls are closed but in Tapaktuan, the capital city of South Acèh, some are secretly open to cater for those whose cannot fast for different reasons such as having to do hard physical work. However, they would never eat or drink in public as a sign of respect for people fasting.

The village men usually wake up from their morning sleep around 10 or 11 o'clock. After taking a bath, they leave the house and go to the village or district market in Blangkejèrèn or to the mosque. An hour before the 'midday prayer' (Ach *seumayang leuho*), many men gather in the mosque and converse while lying on the floor. Men's behavior during Ramadhan is characterized by *lalè puasa*, that is, the effort to distract the mind from food for instance by sleeping during the day. After performing the 'midday prayer', everyone lies down on the floor and sleeps. Usually they wake up before or during the time for 'afternoon prayer' (Ach *seumayang asa*). In the *dayah* mosque after per-

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277 Similarly, in Lamno district, West Acèh, after performing *subuh* prayer 'morning prayer', in Ramadhan, women and men walk around the village to get to know each other and this often results in them falling in love. In a society where women are forbidden to go outside alone, this tradition functions as an escape from a secluded life. Their excuse is that they must go to the mosque to perform the 'morning prayer'; no one can forbid this, not even their fathers (Nur 1996:52).

278 The *suluk* followers practice how the (Indon *tatacara pengamalan*) the *suluk* is implemented and end with *dzikir* and the *do'a* till 9 o'clock. Sometimes they are asked by the leader of *dayah* to collect stones on the sea coast of Blangporoh to be placed in the yard of the mosque complex. After that they may take a rest for 2 hours then again gather at the *dayah* mosque for the "midday prayer" (Indon *sembahyang zuhur*).

279 On regular days, office hours start at 8 am and end at 5 pm. However, during Ramadhan offices in the capital city of West Labuhan Haji, Blangkejèrèn begin activities at 9 am and stop at 3 pm.

forming the ‘midday prayer’, the *suluk* followers again put the *dzikir*<sup>280</sup> into practice and perform additional recommended religious services under the direction of the *dayah* leader. After this they may go back and sleep in their own “places”<sup>281</sup> before the ‘midday prayer’.

Before the ‘afternoon prayer’ (Ach *seumayang asar*), the village men wake up from their midday sleep and then go to the market to buy vegetables and side dishes or they return to their homes. Shopping activities during Ramadhan are generally carried out by men, instead of women. During Ramadhan, the village women spend their time inside the house; whereas village men remain outside the house. After performing the ‘afternoon prayer’, the market is crowded with people, most of whom are men. This special market only sells snacks for breaking the fast (Jam *buko puaso*), especially, traditional snacks such as *boh rom-rom*, *timphan*, *leumang* and *tapè* these are rarely sold at other times. Also in the *dayah* complex village sellers, most of them are women, sell fruit, snacks for breaking the fast, cooked vegetables for dinner and the daily needs of the *suluk* followers. This market is called ‘*suluk* market’ (Jam *pasar suluk*) and the cooked vegetables sold are called ‘*suluk* vegetables’ (Jam *sayur suluk*).

On the first day of Ramadhan, all members of a family break the fast in their house; no one does this in the mosque. As the days of Ramadhan continue, however, many men tend to choose the mosque as a place to break the fast since the mosque committee has made a schedule whereby three households give food to the village mosque every afternoon for those breaking their fast there. Serving food for those fasting are a good deed and it is said that the people doing so will receive the same religious merit as the fasting people themselves. The reason why they choose to break the fast in the mosque is to meet other people. But all agree that food served in the mosque is better than those served at home because everyone will serve other people with their best food.

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280 The word *dzikir* in the Qur’ān in has difference meanings. Apart from its general connotation of remembering Allāh at all times, as expressed in the words’ standing, sitting and reclining (QS 3:191), it also refers to a specific rite of the prayer (*salat*). Thus in the verse, “When the call to prayer on Friday hastens remembrance of Allāh (*dzikir*)” (QS 62:9), the words “*dzikir* Allāh” indicates the congregational Jum’at prayer. But the main purpose of all forms of *dzikir* is the same i.e. purification of the heart and spiritual development of man. In fact all the four rituals of prayer, fasting, alms giving and the pilgrimage aim at spiritual exaltation of Muslims.

281 All *suluk* followers make a place to sleep with mosquito nets (Jam *kelambu*) in the room of *dayah*.

Several minutes before breaking fast, all members of the family are at home and sit on the plaited mat; in front of them are various snacks. They wait for the sound of the alarm broadcasted over the radio and the sound of drums from *dayah* as a sign that the time for breaking the fast has come. After performing the ‘sunset prayer’ (Ach *seumayang magrèb*), the family members return to their plaited mat to have dinner. Some families, however, have dinner before performing the ‘sunset prayer’. In the *dayah* complex, the *suluk* followers break the fast, share and taste each others food together. After performing the ‘sunset prayer’, they have their dinner. Generally, people consume less than usual during Ramadhan. After performing *tarawèh* and *witir* prayer, they once again have a meal.

According to the villagers and *suluk* followers, fasting serves various purposes. It is a means of learning self-control not to be preoccupied with the satisfaction of bodily appetites during daylight hours. It is also a measure of the ascendancy of a spiritual nature; a means of coming closer to Allāh. Experiencing hunger develops compassion for the less fortunate, and teaches one to be thankful and appreciative of all Allāh’s bounties. It provides a break with rigid habits and is thus advantageous for the health. It guides and controls the part of a human’s nature that one shares with the animals called *hawa nafsu* or *nafsu*<sup>282</sup> so that human beings are led to do God-fearing (Arb *taqwa*) or positive things. This last aim of fasting is strongly emphasized. One *teungku* argued that *nafsu* may not be allowed to be a ‘king’ (Jam *rajo*) in one’s self. The *nafsu* must be subordinate to intelligence. A person who is not able to restrain his *nafsu* has thus taken his own *nafsu* for his God. One elderly *suluk* follower described the creation of *nafsu* as follows:

Allāh created *nafsu*, He then asked it; “Hi *nafsu*, who are you? (Arb *man anta?*) and who am I? (Arb *man ana?*)” *Nafsu* answered, “I am I” (Arb *ana, ana*) and you are you (Arabic *anta, anta*). This “uncultured answer” caused the *nafsu* to enter hell. After a long period, Allāh took the *nafsu* out of hell. Allāh asked it the same question. *Nafsu* also still answered “I am I” and “you are you”. Because of its behavior, Allāh then punished it [*nafsu*] by not giving it food and drink for a certain period of time. Allāh then asked the *nafsu* again; “who are you?”, and “who am I?” *Nafsu* answered

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282 In the Qur’ān, *nafsu* has two meanings. Sometimes *nafsu* means ‘self’ (Indon *diri*) and in certain cases it means ‘soul’ (Indon *jiwa*). *Nafsu* does not always have a negative meaning. It is both strength and “moving energy” in life so that *nafsu* does not need to be killed but must be guided and controlled so that human beings are led to do God-fearing (Arb *taqwa*) or positive things.

“I am a creature” (Arb *ana makhluk*) and “you are the Creator” (Arb *anta khaliq*).

This story demonstrates the nature of *nafsu*. It did not fear being thrown into hell’s fire but it was aware of not being given food and drink for a certain period. The village *teungku* classified *nafsu*, corresponding to three stages of a person’s development, from physical to moral and then to spiritual.

1. *Nafsu ammarah* is “the *nafsu* prone to evil and lust, inciting people to evil doings”. A person who has this *nafsu* releases himself from religious deeds and does not oppose evil. He surrenders to his lust (Indon *syahwat*) and the invitation of *syétan*. Such persons happily transgress Allāh’s orders and are greedy and boastful and have other “reprehensible” traits.
2. *Nafsu lawwamah* is “the self accusing soul”. A person who has this *nafsu* condemns and hates every form of evil but sometimes succumbs to it. He is then aware of this and asks forgiveness from Allāh. He knows his own mistakes but he regrets them. If he does wrong he wants to be pardoned, it is difficult for him to get rid of his jealousy and pride, and he is too happy when being praised. Such a person finds himself weak in controlling carnal desires. It resembles the physical weaknesses of a child who does not want to fall but whose weak legs are unable to support him. But through spiritual training, this *nafsu* can be purified and become capable of attaining the final stages of its development, called *nafsu mutmainnah*.
3. *Nafsu mutmainnah* is “the *nafsu* at rest”. It is at peace and protected from all forms of doubt caused by desires instigated by *nafsu*. In other words, at this stage a man becomes content. The *teungku* recited the Qur’ān to explain this state of *nafsu*, “[To the righteous it will be said],”O reassured soul, return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing [to Him] (QS 89:27-28). The character of a person who has this *nafsu* is generous and not stingy. He or she feels Allāh’s mercy on him or herself always worships Allāh asking His forgiveness for his/her sins. This person has patience when calamities befall him/her and other praiseworthy traits which are reflected in his/her speech and actions.

The people are strongly advised to not follow the *nafsu ammarah* and the *nafsu lawwamah*. The human’s *nafsu* should be in the state of *nafsu mutmainnah* so that they are able to protect themselves from hunger and illicit sexual yearning. The person who has this *nafsu* uses his/her intelligence (*akal*) guided by religion so that he or she can know Allāh’s commands. This *nafsu* is able to guide him/her to the right path by means of intelligence. It is said that the month of fasting is a way of guiding human beings to a good *nafsu* [*nafsu mutmainnah*]. The *imām* quoted a *hadīth* saying, “A matter that I am afraid of for you, is when *hawa nafsu* and day-dream take over. *Hawa nafsu* prevents one

from doing a good thing; meanwhile overactive day-dreaming causes one to forget the hereafter”.

## Tarawèh prayer

The interval between the ‘sunset prayer’ (Ach *magrèb*) and the ‘evening prayer’ (Ach *seumayang isya*) is approximately one and a half hours. During this time, men rest at home, while women are busy washing. Everyone in the house then gets ready to go to the mosque to perform the ‘evening prayer’ and the ‘special night prayer’ (Ach *tarawéh*). Women wear a white cloak covering their heads and body (Ach *teulekong*) when they leave the house. On the way to the mosque, a husband usually walks behind his family. Arriving at the mosque, some people who have taken ablutions enter the mosque directly, and the rest stay outside to finish their cigarettes. Children chase each other in the yard of the mosque. When the call to prayer (Indon *azan*) is intoned by the *bileu* (Arb *muazzin*), all these activities cease, and everyone enters the mosque and sits side by side in several rows (Indon *saf*). The place for men and women is separated by a white cloth called a *tabir* “curtain” which is suspended from one side to another so that the women cannot see the men. The *bileu* invokes well-being for the Prophet (Ach *seulawet*) while waiting for people who come late. One of the texts recited is, “O Umar, Usman, Ali and Abubakar are the companions of the Prophet. Tuan Fatimah is the daughter of the Prophet and the Messenger of Allāh is our adoration”.<sup>283</sup> Several minutes later, the *bileu* pronounces the call to begin the prayer (Indon *kamat*) and everyone stands up and straightens their rows. Boys stand in the last row behind the men and girls stand in the last row behind the women. They are reminded by the leader of prayer to be quiet and not to make any noise while people are praying.

The *tarawéh* prayer is performed around fifteen minutes after the “evening prayer”. There is no religious sermon (Indon *ceramah agama*) between the two except on the first night and several nights in the middle of Ramadhan.<sup>284</sup> The *tarawéh* prayer is performed in 20 *raka’at* (10x 2 *raka’at*)<sup>285</sup> followed by *witir*

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283 Indonesian, “*Ya Umar Usman Ali, Abubakar sahabat nabi, Tuan Fatimah binti Rasuli, yā Rasulullāh junjungan kami*”.

284 In other regency cities such as Tapaktuan and Blangpidie, this interval is filled by an Islamic sermon (Indon *ceramah agama*) which is carried out every night by different people on different topics.

285 See note 18 of Ch.5 and note 8 of Ch. 12 about the definition of *raka’at*.

performed in three *raka'at*. There are thus 23 *raka'at* altogether. Twenty-two *raka'at* is predominant in the village and in the *dayah* mosque as it represents the hallmark of proper practice among Perti or *dayah* people, whereas Muhammadiyah people perform 8 *raka'at* (4x 2 or 2x 4) followed by *witir* three *raka'at*.<sup>286</sup> In addition, beginning from the 16th day onward, the *qunut*, an innovation uttered at the “morning prayer” (Ach *seumayang suboh*), is uttered at the end of *raka'at* of *witir* prayer in the village and *dayah* mosque in Blangporoh.

Concerning the practice of the *tarawèh* prayer traditionalists and modernists exhibit their differences quite publicly, although now, unlike in the past (Baihaqi (1983:146), the difference between these two beliefs do not cause any conflict, but only occurs at the level of opposing argumentation. Both groups regard the special “night prayer” as recommended but not compulsory which may be observed in the recitation of 11 *raka'at* or 23 *raka'at*. One said “I believe 11 *raka'at* or 23 *raka'at* are legitimate (Indon *sah*), most importantly, there is no difference in the amount of religious merit”. One traditionalist in Blangporoh said “Not performing *tarawèh* at all is not a sin, but if someone would like to perform it, the more the better”. He added, “Performing 8 *raka'at* is essentially good and lawful but it is only a minimum and, therefore, implies laziness”. According to modernists, performing 20 *raka'at* of *tarawèh* prayer is heresy (*bid'ah*). The work is useless because unlike modernists practicing the *tarawèh* prayer which is performed slowly and well, the 20 *tarawèh* are usually performed badly and hurriedly.

Along with 20 *raka'at* of *tarawèh* prayer, the traditionalist follows more elaborate procedures. After each of their two units, the *bileu* utters the glorification of Allāh and praises the Prophet Muḥammad, to which the others respond in chorus. After completing the *tarawèh*, the *imām* leads his congregation to express the intention (Jam *niaek*; Indon *niat*) for tomorrow’s fasting (to prevent

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286 Similarly, in Java the traditionalists (represented Nahdlatu Ulama or NU) practice 23 *raka'at*, whereas the modernists (represented by Muhammadiyah and Masyumi) adhere to the practice of 11 *raka'at* (Geertz 1976:221). I did not find that people perform 8 *raka'at* of *tarawèh* prayer followed by 3 *raka'at* of *witir* prayer in Blangporoh but I found many people performing them in the Tutong and Panton Pawoh village, the neighboring village of Blangporoh. In addition, many people perform 8 *raka'at* of *tarawèh* prayer followed by 3 *raka'at* of *witir* prayer in Manggég district, the neighboring district of West Labuhan Haji. Manggég is one of the strongest bases of Muhammadiyah in South Acèh (Hasimi 2002:25).

the people in the congregation from missing their intention). After uttering the *niat* in chorus the *tarawèh* congregation is over. The elaborative *tarawèh* performed in the village mosque takes approximately one and a half hours (till 9.30). The *tarawèh* in the *dayah* mosque takes longer as some special long prayer poems are uttered at the end of *tarawèh* and *witir* prayer.

## Tadarus

The tradition of reciting the Qur'ān at night during Ramadhan is known by the term of *tadarus* (Ach *meudaroh*). This term derives from the Arabic *tadar-rasa*, which means “to study”. In Blangporoh, the term *tadarus* refers to the tradition of reciting the Qur'ān in the mosque or prayer house during Ramadhan only. During other months it is called *baco Qur'ān* (Ach *beuet Qur'ān*).

After performing *tarawèh* prayer, women return home whereas many men stay in the mosque, where they form several groups, each having a special topic of conversation. Several people serve coffee and snacks to men sitting around cross legged facing each other on plaited mats in the middle of the mosque. Each person has a small bench (Ach *reuhai*) in front of him on which the Qur'ān is placed. The *imām* then opens the *tadarus* by reciting the first *surah* of the Qur'ān (*surah al-Fātihah*). One of them continues reading the second *surah* while some others follow him by memory and correct any misread verses or wrong utterances. He who carefully listens to the Qur'anic verses being read receives the same religious merit as the person who reads them. Between the readings of the verses, the others yell *Allāh, Allāh* or *Allāh ya Rasulullāh*. In addition, the better the rhythm the reciter puts into his reading, the louder the others yell *Allāh, Allāh* or *ya Rasulullāh*. When the reader feels tired he stops and someone else in the group takes his turn; the former reader listens (Ach *simak*) and becomes the corrector. The *tadarus* reciters use a loudspeaker. As a result, the sound of *tadarus* can be heard throughout the villages. The sound of *tadarus* being broadcasted from every mosque brings the night to life so that no one including children is afraid to go out in the dark night.

In *tadarus* every one can take a place and leave the group whenever he wants. Also, any reciter can stop reciting when he feels tired. It is common for one person to stop for a moment to have a drink or smoke a cigarette, after which he will return to his place in the group again and continue to recite the Qur'ān. In the past, in every Ramadhan month there were three groups of *tadarus* in the village mosque. One was for old people, another one was for adults

and the other one was for the adolescents. Now they are mixed into one group so that those who know how to recite the Qur'ān well can guide other reciters who are “weak”. The *tadarus* may proceed until late in the evening or until early morning. This depends on the number of those attending. Many devout people, however, read the Qur'ān individually at home.

When the whole Qur'ān has been read, people in the village prepare a feast called *khanduri khatam Qur'ān* “*khanduri* for the completion of the Qur'ān”. This *khanduri* is not as elaborate as other *khanduri* (such as *khanduri bu* (Ch.10)/*khanduri mò'lōt* (Ch.7)) where a large meal is provided. Instead, men sit joyfully together in the mosque and eat snacks with coffee or tea. They eat the *khanduri* [food] served by the volunteering households. After eating, a special *do'a* is invoked by the *imām*. In many villages in West Labuhan Haji, the *khatam Qur'ān* “the completion of the Qur'ān” is held on the last ten days of Ramadhan especially on the uneven nights of the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th or 29th. When this research was conducted in 2007, the *khanduri khatam Qur'ān* in Blagporoh village was held on the 25th night of Ramadhan.

Unlike in the village mosque, there is no *tadarus* held after *tarawèh* prayer in the *dayah* mosque since the *suluk* followers recite more *dzikir*, *shamdiyah*, *tahlil*, and *do'a* (see Ch.9). They recite the Qur'ān individually during the day and sometimes in the early morning since reading the Qur'ān during Ramadhan is considered very meritorious. Especially in the last ten days of Ramadhan more *suluk* followers, remain in the mosque (Indon *iktikaf*) to receive merit and many others combine praying or reading the Qur'ān in order to receive even more merit.

## Nuzul Qur'ān

It was in the Ramadhan period that the Qur'ān was revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad. Thus the holiness of the Ramadhan period is said to stem from the fact that it hallmarked the day when the angel Gabriel began the transmission of Allāh's message to the Prophet Muḥammad. The exact date has never been identified, but is believed to be one of the last ten days of this month, which Muslims call *lailatul qadar* “the night of the power”. According to Qur'anic explanation, the night of *lailatul qadar* is better than a thousand months, in that each good deed performed on that night will receive the same rewards as those done over a period of a thousand months (QS 97:3). Although the Prophet Muḥammad explained that the night of *lailatul qadar* will occur during odd nights

in the last ten days of Ramadhan, many Muslims believe that *lailatul qadar* only comes on the night of the twenty-seventh of Ramadhan (Nur 1996:63).<sup>287</sup> In Blangporoh many *suluk* followers and villagers visit the Syeikh's tomb on this night to offer prayer to him and receiving 'blessing' from him in return.<sup>288</sup> They claim that the Syeikh has received numerous followers, intangible knowledge and power associated with Islamic mystical practice as gifts from Allāh. People thus pay homage to the Syeikh in part by means of gift-giving to the Syeikh. According to them, being blessed, in such a manner is close to Allāh in the hierarchy of authority. "What one finds then is not unlike the situation described by Ibn Khaldun (1967:304) in which persons with a reputation for piety are frequently the recipients of the gifts because "the great mass believes that when they give the Sheikh presents, they serve Allāh" (Soares 1996). "By giving gifts to others, people are generally seeking to assure their place in the next world, but they frequently wish to obtain merit and Allāh's blessings in the world where they are living as well" (*ibid*).

In the Acèhnese perception, at a particular moment of *lailatul qadar*, all trees will bow to the ground in the direction of Mecca (*kiblat*).<sup>289</sup> Since the *lailatul qadar* is "better than a thousand months" and the Qur'ān was presumably revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad on this night, Blangporoh villagers hold a small ritual meal (*khanduri*) and the *nuzul Qur'ān* celebration on this night in the hope that this will be on the "night of the power" which is believed to occur on the 27<sup>th</sup> night of Ramadhan. By doing so, they believe that they will receive greater religious merit, both the religious merit of *nuzul Qur'ān*'s commemoration and of *lailatul qadar*. The ritual marks the Qur'ān as the way

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287 In Saudi Arabia, many people believe that the *lailatul qadar* will occur on 27th of Ramadhan. During the night, around one million people come to the Great Mosque at Mecca and at Medina to observe the *tarawèh* prayer. Almost everyone spends the night by reciting *do'a* and *dzikir* (religious chant to remember Allāh) (Yamani 1937:85; Nur 1996:64).

288 Similarly, in Morocco, for example, many people pay a special visit to the shrine tomb during this night for gift-giving exchange. They believe that the spirits who have been locked up during Ramadan are released on the twenty-seventh and return to earth (Buitelaar 1993:68).

289 In the past, according to Snouck Hurgronje (1906:235), on the evening of the twenty-seventh of Ramadhan every household sets a special lamp and puts it in front of the door of a house. However, this tradition has not survived. Nur's informant said that Snouck Hurgronje was wrong, the lamp was not a part of *lailatul qadar*, but it was intended as an expression of happiness at the coming of the *uroe raya* "īd day". In the past, because there were no candles, children in Acèh played with lamps (Nur 1996:64).

of life for Muslims, regulating all their actions. Unlike other holy books, the content of the Qur'ān is still believed to be authentic from the day of its revelation by Allāh through the messenger of Gabriel to the Prophet Muḥammad. The *nuzul Qur'ān*'s celebration has always been a sacred tradition for the community. People believe that Allāh placed much religious value on the night of revelation. Therefore the night should be celebrated and older people advise the young not to forget to perform the ceremony annually. When the *imām* announces the date of celebration, the people in Blangporoh then tell each other about their plans to prepare certain cakes for the night of celebration, and to go to the market to buy their ingredients.<sup>290</sup>

On the night of *nuzul Qur'ān*, a well known preacher is officially invited via letter by the village *imām* to the mosque. Meanwhile the young males and females decorate the podium with colorful paper and traditional clothes. The *nuzul Qur'ān* is held in the village mosque after *tarawèh* prayer at about 21.30 pm. The hall of the mosque is divided into two parts, the front part for men and the back part for women. As when praying *tarawèh*, a curtain is suspended between the men and the women to avoid contact and communication that could lead to lack of attention to the *nuzul* speech. In the mosque's yard, some menstruating women, having come to listen to the speech, sit on plaited mats brought from their homes. They not allowed to enter the mosque.

Before the speaker delivers the speech, the *imām* warns all attendees to be silent and to pay attention to the speaker. Preceding the speech, a young man recites several Qur'anic verses in order to receive blessing from Allāh. The reciter is famous in the region for being able to read with a good rhythm. After several verses of the Qur'ān have been recited, the speaker comes to the podium to deliver his lecture on *nuzul Qur'ān*. In his speech, he mainly emphasizes the history of the revelation of the Qur'ān at the time of the Prophet. He mentions that the Qur'ān was revealed in two places; Mecca and Medina. The verses revealed in Mecca are called *Makīyah* and those in Medina *Madaniyah*. He tells how the Qur'ān was revealed gradually and consists of 114 chapters or *surah*. Each *surah* contains verses called *ayat*. The *surah* are not in the order in

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290 Besides bringing the food to the mosque on the night of celebration, some households invite public figures of the village to come to their houses to enjoy the meal. If the invited people do not attend due to certain reasons, instead, they invite students of the village boarding school to replace them. Before eating, the *imām* recites *do'a* to seek the "goodness" from Allāh. Reciting *do'a* on this night brings much strength and benefits due to the moment of *nuzulul Qurān*.

which the revelation was received. In general, the longer *surah* were revealed in Medina; the shorter in Mecca. It is Allāh's miracle and incapable of being imitated and sublime in its form and content. The total number of its verses is 6,666. The speech ends after two hours when the entire history of the Qur'ān has been told.

During the speech, the audience remains silent and listens carefully. The speech is taken as "knowledge" by the audience as the content is full of advice and religious values that are useful in Muslims' daily life. At the end of the speech, the speaker recites *do'a* asking for long life, strength of faith, and acceptance of all good deeds. The master of ceremony closes the program. On the way home, people talk to each other and discuss the speech that they have just heard.

Meanwhile at the *dayah*, the celebration of *nuzul Qur'ān* is celebrated by more than a thousand *suluk* followers because many of them enter the *suluk* ritual on the last ten days of Ramadhān. One day before the celebration, the *dayah* leader has informed the followers about *nuzul Qur'ān*. The people are asked to prepare cakes. At sunset on the night of *nuzul Qur'ān*, the *suluk* followers break the fast together. Several minutes before the fast is broken, many *suluk* followers are ready with their bowls into which cakes are piled. When the *bileu* calls, all the participants set about finishing their drink and cakes. After breaking the fast, all *suluk* followers return to their "own place" to have dinner. Afterwards everyone comes into the *dayah* again to perform religious services under the direction of the *dayah* leader.

*Nuzul Qur'ān* is celebrated after "evening prayer" and *tarawèh* prayer at about 10 o'clock at night. The celebration is begun by the speaker in Acèhnese, the language of most *suluk* followers. He is a religious leader who knows the Islamic law and understands the *suluk*'s performance well. Like the celebration in the village mosque, the celebration of *nuzul Qur'ān* at *dayah* mosque begins with reciting Qur'ānic verses by a person selected from among the followers. Therefore all attendees listen with interest due to its fluency and good rhythm. Next, the main speaker steps onto the podium and begins to describe the history of the Qur'ān revelation and how to practice its teaching in real life. The program is closed by reading *do'a* by an appointed person.

The attitude of the listeners in the village and *dayah* mosque varied. Some of them concentrated on the speaker, particularly people who sat near the podium. Some old men were sleepy and sometimes even fell asleep for a moment.

Some others, particularly young people sometimes whispered amongst themselves while the speaker was speaking. In general, the attitude of listeners at this celebration is similar to that of listeners at any other public sermon (Indon *ceramah*) in the district.

## **Zakat fitrah**

The *zakat fitrah* ritual (from Arb *zakat* “to purify” and *fitrah* “the purity”) completes the process of purification for fasting. It serves to atone for any involuntary negligence on the part of people fasting during Ramadhan and to provide food for the poor and the needy people on the day of *idul fitri*. The Blangporoh people consider it to be very important since it is not just a religious obligation but it is also considered to complete the fasting. One *teungku* said, “One’s fasting is not valid until after one has paid the *zakat fitrah*. The fasting rewards remain hanging between earth and paradise”. Therefore, every fasting person must pay it; otherwise the fast has no meaning for him/her and the deed of fasting (Ach/Indon *amalan puasa*) cannot reach Allāh.

The *zakat fitrah* is called “*zakat* of the soul” (Indon *zakat nafsi* or *jiwa*) because every ‘soul’ should pay for it, even a newly born baby. Besides obeying Allāh’s command, its function is said to purify those fasting from useless or ‘dirty words’ (*Jam kato kotor*) and to eliminate “the meanness in the human heart”. A *hadīth* says, “Those who give it before the ‘*īd*’ prayer, give the accepted *zakat fitrah*, meanwhile those who give it after performing the ‘*īd*’ prayer, give as normal charity and not as the *zakat fitrah*”. A *teungku* told this story “Usman bin Affan (the third caliph) once forgot to give it before performing the ‘*īd*’ prayer. He freed a slave. He then went to the Prophet and said, “O Prophet I forgot to pay the *zakat fitrah* before the ‘*īd*’ prayer. I then freed a slave”, the Prophet answered, “If you freed one hundred slaves, your action still did not reach the value of the *zakat fitrah* which is paid before performing the ‘*īd*’ prayer”. This story demonstrates that paying the *zakat fitrah* before the ‘*īd*’ prayer is very significant in order that “there are no impoverished inhabitants left without staple food on this joyful occasion [i.e ‘*īd*’ day]”.

The *zakat fitrah* also functions to cleanse the givers (*muzakki*). One *teungku* claimed that fasting brings the Muslim only to the door of paradise, and no one can enter paradise before giving the *zakat fitrah*. He said that by giving it, Muslims become cleansed, and therefore can enter into paradise. Perhaps, this idea has become the strong motivation for the Aneuk Jamee to

arrange a special stock of rice on the last few days of Ramadhan to give as their *zakat fitrah*.

Giving the *zakat fitrah* takes place in the village mosque after the performance of *tarawèh* prayer.<sup>291</sup> Several days before giving it, the committee announces the schedule to all *tarawèh* praying in the mosque. The *zakat fitrah* given consists of either rice or money. The gift in rice is 1, 5 bamboos per ‘soul’ (about 3, 5 liters) and the gift in money is about Rp 17, 500 per “soul” (*jiwa*). Most villagers pay it in rice since many *teungku* say that the true *zakat fitrah* consists of the main staple food of the people, since the Prophet Muḥammad paid it by using wheat as the staple food at that time.

The family head gives the *zakat fitrah* directly to the *teungku*, as one of the *zakat fitrah*’s collectors, in the mosque. Should he have no time; the *zakat fitrah* can be given by his son. In giving it one must declare to the *teungku* that the rice is the *zakat fitrah* from all members of his family. Teungku Usman who has five children for instance explained to the *teungku*, “This is our *zakat fitrah* that Allāh requires us to give. I give it to *teungku* on behalf of my family, which comprises of seven people (I, my wife, and my five children)”. After that, the *teungku* measures the rice by using a special tin to determine whether it is the correct amount. If that is correct, both the *teungku* and the giver of *zakat fitrah* shake hands. At this moment, the *teungku* says to the giver: “I receive your *zakat fitrah* (by mentioning the name of giver) and the *zakat fitrah* from your family. May Allāh bless you and your family”.

For the parents whose children learn the Qur’ān with certain *teungku* in the village or at *dayah*, their *zakat fitrah* will be given directly to that *teungku*. It is to receive the religious merit as well as to receive the ‘blessing’ (*beureukat*) from the *teungku* who are close to Allāh and even sometimes deemed as saints (Indon *aulia*). In addition, the housewives give their children’s *zakat fitrah* to the village midwife who has helped them in the process of delivery.

The *zakat fitrah* that has been collected is kept by the treasurer of the mosque for several days. The treasurer also prepares the requirements of the committee members such as plastic bags, gunnies, a tool for measuring rice

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291 The *zakat fitrah*’s committee does not collect the *zakat fitrah* from each of the givers’ house. They are passive and only sit and wait at the mosque. Whereas in a *hadīth* from Ibnu Abbas it is clearly stated, “*Zakat* is taken from the rich and given to the poor amongst them” In the Qur’ān (9:103) it says, “Take, [o Muḥammad], from their wealth charity (*zakat*) by which you purify them and bring them prosperity and invoke [Allāh’s blessing] upon them...”

(Ach *arèe*) etc. On the night when the *zakat fitrah* is distributed the treasurer prepares ‘light food’ (Indon *makan ringan*), such as porridge from green beans, cakes and drink. The last task of the *zakat fitrah* collector is to make a report to the society about the number of portions (Arb *snif*) in which it has been divided and distributed. According to the Qur’ān, the *zakat fitrah* must be given to eight categories of people (*snif*) Qur’ān (9: 60) says:

*Zakāt* donations are only for the poor and for the needy and for those employed to collect [*zakāt*] and to bring hearts together [for Islām] or to free captives [or slaves] and for those in debt and for the [stranded] traveler-an obligation [imposed] by Allāh. And Allāh is knowing and Wise”.

In Blangporoh, the *zakah fitrah* is divided into 4 categories of people; needy (Indon *fakir*)<sup>292</sup>, poor (Indon *miskin*),<sup>293</sup> *zakat* collectors (Indon ‘*amil zakat*)<sup>294</sup> and religious functionaries (*sabilillah*) because other categories such as freeing slaves are no longer required.

The portions for the needy and the poor are distributed on the night of *meugang*, a night preceding the night of *idul fitri* while other portions are distributed on the night of *idul fitri*. On the night of *meugang* the *zakat fitrah*’s gifts of rice and money are distributed to each receiver by using pedicabs. These portions are intentionally distributed on this night so that on the following day [the *meugang* day] the receivers can buy clothes for their children, and the needy families are able to attend to the mosque on the day of *idul fitri* happily.

In distributing the *zakat fitrah*, the committee is helped by the village people as this work is said to be a religious service to Allāh when the deeds of religious service are multiplied. The recipients of the *zakat fitrah* are women. Receiving the rice, the committee on behalf the *teungku* urges the woman and all her family members to increase their religious service and reminds all the recipients that every portion of *fitrah* rice contains Allāh's blessings. Hence, no portion of the *zakat fitrah* rice should be wasted.

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292 The term *fakir* here is a person who does not have wealth or has wealth but less than half of what they need to live on.

293 Meanwhile *miskin* the person who has half of what he needs but it is not enough.

294 *Amil* are the persons who get an official letter from the village head to collect and to distribute the *zakat fitrah*.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described how the people and the *suluk* followers in Blangporoh adjust their lives during the month of Ramadhan. From an anthropological perspective, Ramadhan can be regarded as a “liminal time” in the Islamic calendrical rituals. Liminality is a time and place of withdrawal from the social world to another world (van Gennep 1960) (or normal modes of social action) or as an interstructural situation (Turner 1979:234). The liminal period as defined by Turner is an ambiguous condition, dissolution of all categories and classifications, a suspension of normative obligations, and a period of seclusion (Morris 1993:253; Nur 1996:82). Therefore, during liminality, room is created for the members of a society to re-evaluate their basic assumptions into new meaningful wholes (Buitelaar 1993:129; Nur 1996: 82). Regarding Ramadhan ritual activities from the view point of the people and the *suluk* followers in Blangporoh village, there are three notions which lend meaning to the performance of Ramadhan rituals.

The first notion is Ramadhan as a month in which to purify the heart, the controller of the mind and source of all actions. During Ramadhan, the Aneuk Jamee’s perceptions about the importance of purity become apparent. This concern with the importance of purification emerges not just because all religious services would be invalid unless the conditions of purity were met, but also because the core of Ramadhan itself is a month of forgiveness. Fasting people fear that they will not attain the core of Ramadhan if they are impure. In this context, people refer to this purification in the Prophet’s word that “Indeed in the body there is a piece of flesh, when it is reformed (purified) the whole body becomes purified; if it remains corrupted the whole body becomes putrid; that (piece of flesh) is the heart (Arb *qalb*)”. The Qur’ān also exhorts the purification of the heart when it says: “Successful is the man who purifies himself (QS 87:14), and “Surely, the successful one is the one who purified his/her soul (QS 91:9), and Allāh loves those who keep themselves purified (QS 2:222).

The second notion is Ramadhan as a month of religious service in order to receive spiritual training. Abstaining from eating, drinking, and sex for a limited number of hours during the whole month of Ramadhan provides a practical training for their moral elevation. During this month, spiritual training becomes more intensive when observing the voluntary last ten days worship of *i’tikaf*. By temporarily severing family contacts and confining oneself within the

boundary of the mosque one comes closer to Allāh and feels the pleasure of inner worship. It is believed that each good deed performed during Ramadhan brings the performer one step closer to Paradise. Thus, during Ramadhan worship is intensified. Religious practice and moral values are strengthened.

The third notion is Ramadhan as a month of joy. This can be seen in the joy experienced by families reuniting and the joy associated with the many *khanduri* held during Ramadhan such as the *khanduri* of *khatam Qur'ān* and *nuzul Qur'ān*. Joy is experienced when people enjoy a common meal of rice and various special meats in a *khanduri* during Ramadhan. For men, the significant joy of Ramadhan is in withdrawing from the usual work necessary to earn a living. Instead, they gather day and night with friends in the mosque, and also spend time in the *warung* during the night. For a woman, the great joy of Ramadhan is above all in being able to serve the family an abundance of special food and to redecorate the house. The greatest happiness of Ramadhan is, of course, the celebration at the end of Ramadhan.

These three notions are interrelated and as a result, to some extent, it is difficult to make a distinction between them. I consider that the Blangporoh Muslim fast of Ramadhan in the light of Turner's theory in which Blangporoh society endeavors to achieve the harmony of *communitas*, a particular sense of being united. It is important to recognize that these notions on a practical level do not contradict the core of Ramadhan on a normative level. Indeed, these three notions can be deemed as an ideal path for the Aneuk Jamee and the *suluk* followers to achieve the core of Ramadhan as revealed in the Qur'ān and the *hadīth*. Ramadhan offers people the opportunity to renew and invigorate their moral as well as their physical lives. Ramadhan is a moment for the Aneuk Jamee and the *suluk* followers in Blangporoh to return to their basic identity as an Islamic and social community. Through (experiencing a special life during) Ramadhan, they endeavor to proclaim to themselves and to other people that their basic identity as Muslims and as the Aneuk Jamee have not changed.

## CHAPTER 12

### The ritual of uroe raya puasa

Syawwal is the tenth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, which coincided with the month of October in the Gregorian calendar. The celebration on the first day of this month marks the end of Ramadhan. In Islam the celebration of the end of Ramadhan is called *'īd al-Fitr* (Indonesianized Arabic *idul fitri*), when the fasting is “broken” with special prayer and festivities. *Fitr* is derived from the word *fatar* meaning breaking. Another connotation of *fitr* is derived from *fitrah* or “alms” meaning nature, purification. *'Īd al-Fitr* thus means “breaking the fast” and “returning to nature or purity” as if a baby had just been born. In the Acèhnese, *'īd al-Fitr* is called *uroe raya puasa*, “the great day after Ramadhan”. It is the celebration of Allāh’s magnanimity in providing nature and purity to human.

### The ritual of the uroe raya puasa

The ritual of the *uroe raya puasa* cannot be separated from the religious services performed by Muslims during Ramadhan lunar month. The relation between fasting (*Jam puaso*) and the *uroe raya puasa* can be understood as the relationship between “struggle” and “victory”. Fasting is primarily the act of willingly abstaining from basic human urges; eating, drinking, and having sexual intercourse and it is a spiritual journey to release the human body from satanic powers. Meanwhile *uroe raya puasa* is a “victory feast” a day in which those fasting are freed from satanic desire. They have successfully observed the fast and have passed all kinds of “tests” that could break their fast. In the Acèhnese culture, men are characterized as possessing both rationality (Indon *akal*) and passion or carnal desire (Indon *hawa nafsu*). *Uroe raya puasa* is a time when men feel renewed and in full possession of themselves (Siegel 1969:188). This happiness is clearly seen on their faces during the celebration.

Like the day of *uroe raya haji* (Arb *'īd al-Adhā* or “the festival of sacrifice”), the day of *uroe raya puasa* is a national holiday. In the context of Indonesian Muslim social life, it is regarded as an important moment to give and to receive forgiveness from others. During the days prior to the day of *uroe raya*, Indonesian Muslims are always eager to return to their hometowns (Indon

*mudik lebaran*)<sup>295</sup> to spend their holidays with their relatives and close friends during this special day to enjoy freedom from tight working schedules and normal activities. The return to their villages of origin as well as the wearing of new clothes is a sign of the significance of the *uroe raya* in the life of Indonesian Muslims. In addition, the Acèhnese in general, and the Aneuk Jamee in West Labuhan Haji district in particular, regard it as obligatory to acquire “everything new” (Indon *serba baru*) on the *uroe raya* day. Everything new from a car, a motorbike, bike, furniture, clothes, and newly-painted houses to a new haircut is acquired in order to celebrate the “victory day” after the fasting month.<sup>296</sup> Young and old men go to barbers. Some have their beards shaved, some only have their moustaches trimmed and many have their hair cut. As there are many people at the barber shop, they sometimes have to queue up on the days preceding *uroe raya* in Blangkejèrèn, the capital city of West Labuhan Haji district.

Some affluent families in Blangkejèrèn buy new things for the celebration of *uroe raya* such as furniture, praying mats as well as several new sets of clothing for the children and repaint the walls of the houses. Using new furniture at *uroe raya* has long been practiced. One housewife said “when my parents were still alive, we received several pieces of furniture to replace the old ones; the walls of the house had to be repainted in a different color, not to mention wearing new clothes at *uroe raya*”. In the past prior to the conflict between the Acèh liberation movement and the Indonesian government, many women would go to the hairdresser to have their hair cut and/or straightened and their face made up for the “festival day”. Nowadays they seldom go to the hairdresser’s as women are obliged to wear a head scarf (Indon *jilbab*). There is no need for them to have their hair or face done. A young man in Kutaiboh village told me that “I am happy as my parents have bought me a motor bike even though it is bought on credit. It is good so that I do not have to go on foot or go with other friends’ motor bikes to visit to my family’s house or my friend’s house”. There is a different feeling when things are bought for the *uroe raya* “festival

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295 *Mudik lebaran* refers to the tradition of those who live in urban areas returning to their home area during *‘īd al-fithri* as many villagers migrate to cities and live there for long or short periods. Once a year, these people return to their homeland, especially during *‘īd al-fithri*. Through *mudik lebaran*, the migrants maintain close ties with their home village, and bring their earnings to their families in the village (Blackwood 1993:10; Nur 1996:75).

296 See Waspada, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007.

day” and when they are not bought for the *uroe raya*. This feeling of a difference, according to an informant, is strongly felt by many people in the village, particularly poor people who are only able to change their old clothes for new ones on the *uroe raya* day.

The enthusiastic celebration of the *uroe raya* with “everything new” influences the economy through increased purchase of certain consumer products such as cars, motor bikes, bikes, furniture and clothes. Motorbikes and furniture are sold out prior to this occasion. Cloth sellers say that in the month of Ramadhan month, ten times more profit is made compared ordinary days since many people buy new clothes, praying mats, and rimless caps at the end of this month. “When people have money to spare they buy not only new clothes but also chairs and dining tables for receiving guests on the *uroe raya*. It is not surprising that several days preceding the *uroe raya*, street markets are filled with people. Here it is clear that the concern is the acquisition of new things. In contrast, the secretary of Islamic scholar (Arb ‘*ulamā*’) association in Acèh, Teungku Faisal Ali says that according to religious teaching there is no obligation to buy “everything new” to celebrate the “festival day” but more importantly *‘idul fitri* (from *īd al-Fitr*) means “a return to cleanliness”. This idea must be present when celebrating *‘idul fitri*.<sup>297</sup> The *imām* pointed out that celebrating the *uroe raya* with “everything new” is of religious concern as jealousy might arise when people show off their new things. He further added that the “festival of breaking the fast” is the happy day after a person has fasted for a month. The religious service of fasting along with other religious services is certainly a joy for people who perform it sincerely so that the *uroe raya* is an appropriate moment to ask for forgiveness from Allāh and at the same time to ask and to receive forgiveness from fellow Muslims, and that it is surely not the time to act grandly and to show off new possessions. Celebrating the *uroe raya* to *ulamā*’ is therefore an opportunity to cleanse and renew the moral state of being.

With regard to asking and receiving forgiveness, the previous *imām* of Blangporoh village contends that “it is better to forgive a person who comes and asks for forgiveness from you”. A person who wants to forgive others has a fabulous “soul/mind” (Indon *berjiwa hebat*). He is reminded of the Prophet’s *hadīth* narrated by Bukhari and Muslim saying, “Those who believe in the doomsday should “mend friendships”. Friendship can ease the earnings of a

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297 See Waspada, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009.

livelihood and allows one's service to be remembered by others. The victory from Allāh comes as long as human beings are united among themselves. In contrast, people who like breaking the bonds of friendship will be defeated by *syétan* (Satan). It is said that friendship is the "soul/mind" (Indon *jiwa*) of Islam. The *uroe raya* is a noble day as the day of "returning to cleanliness" for the people who have just finished observing a month of fasting. Those who exalt Allāh with special chanting will be the winners as well as clean, that is why the *uroe raya* should be "associated" with the recitation of the phrase of praise "Allāh is great" (Arb *takbir*), the devotional repetition of the utterance "Praise be to Allāh" (Arb *tahmid*), and sentences glorifying Allāh (Arb *tasbih*). This day is a spiritual day of joy because Allāh eliminates people's sins. Wearing new clothes, using new prayer mats, smelling of fresh perfume, sitting and eating on brand new furniture on *uroe raya* does not only make people happy; it also makes them feel clean expressing they are freed from sin.

### **The preparations for the "festival day"**

The preparations for celebrating the "festival day" are underway from the beginning of Ramadhan. As the day of the *uroe raya* approaches, it becomes a more frequent topic for conversation. Generally, women talk about *uroe raya* in relation to the preparation of traditional cakes which will be served to guests as well as using new furniture and decorating the rooms. Devout Muslims talk about *uroe raya* in terms of forgetting all past grievances. A household head talks about *uroe raya* in terms of how to obtain the money to buy meat, new sets of clothes, new furniture. Newly married couples talk about *uroe raya* in terms of paying a visit to both their families, the village elders, neighbors, close friends and how and when to go to their houses. Children excitedly anticipate wearing new clothes, shoes or sandals and visiting family members to receive money. Teenagers are allowed to smoke and go out with their friends. Whenever people sit and talk, such as in a coffee shop (Ach *warung kupa*), a prayer house (Ach *meunasah*), at markets, or at home, the *uroe raya* is discussed, either as a problem or as an anticipated holiday.<sup>298</sup>

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298 The preparations for celebrating the *uroe raya* in West Labuha Haji district, South Acèh are much similar to those for celebrating the *uroe raya* in Lamno district, West Acèh, see Nur (1996:76).

The most important activity in the celebration of the *uroe raya* in the village is the preparation of a variety of traditional cakes which has been planned by housewives since the middle of Ramadhan. Parents who have married off their daughter just before Ramadhan begin to prepare traditional cakes from the beginning of Ramadhan as they have to revisit the daughter's husband's parents' house and bring cakes to husband's parents on the *uroe raya*. Preparation of these cakes is not an easy task and people in Blangporoh solve this problem by "helping each other" (Indon *gotong royong*) by cooking together during the day to strengthen their social relationships. As a result, the nature of the preparation of the *uroe raya* traditional cakes is similar to that of other communal activities as practiced in ritual of *khanduri bu*, *apam*, *bungong kayèè*, *padé*, *mò'lōt*, etc. "Everything is performed as a community, and this leads to continuous, cooperative involvement in various aspects of social life" (Nur:76).

Walking around the villages in West Labuhan Haji district during the last week of Ramadhan, one can find many groups of women busy cooking traditional cakes individually at night and collectively during the day so that they are not able to perform *seumayang tarawèh*<sup>299</sup> in the mosque at night. Cooking traditional cakes for *uroe raya* is considered to be a necessity in the Aneuk Jamee society. If they do not do so, there is "no taste" (Indon *tidak ada rasa*) in the welcoming of *uroe raya* (Emtas 2008:83). One housewife argues that sincerely preparing cakes for the family and the guests on the *uroe raya* is a source of religious merit (Jam *pahalo*; Ach/Indon *pahala*) for the women as the men cannot make them. Nur's female informants say that women's religious merit is even greater than men's because women's activities during Ramadhan are greater than usual, whereas during Ramadhan men only *teunget* ("sleep") which she refers to not only as "sleep" but also connotes laziness (Ach *beu oe*) (Nur 1996:77). From the women's perspective, therefore, men are regarded as lazy during Ramadhan as all their activities are reduced. On the other hand, women have their own way of receiving more religious merit, that is, through increasing their activities during Ramadhan (*ibid*).

On the last two days preceding the *uroe raya* the markets in West Labuhan Haji district are full of people. Many of them also go the market in Manggèng and Blangpidie, the neighboring district's markets. They purchase new items

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299 A special prayer is performed in the evening of the Ramadhan month which is alternate Qur'anic recitations and private prayers.

necessary for the *uroe raya* such as clothes, prayer mats, rimless caps, shoes and sandals. Most parents accompany their children to buy the new clothes and other new items at the market but many husbands let their wives do their own shopping as their husbands do not know which clothes they prefer. All transactions are done in cash where commodity exchange takes place where there are no implied residual obligations or relationship between the buyers and the sellers. It is regarded as inauspicious however for men to buy their wives' clothes, therefore women have to buy the clothes themselves. As in Lamno district, West Aceh, although women are not generally permitted to go out during fasting, the approach of *uroe raya* requires them to depart from this practice (Nur 1996:78). Here a contradiction emerges between the joy of the festival day and religious values as women are allowed to go out shopping and mix with other men in the markets as part of their preparations for *uroe raya*. This leads to a loss of religious values and only the "joyous atmosphere" remains apparent (*ibid*).

The final day of Ramadhan is also recognized as *meugang* for the "festival of breaking fast" (Ach *meugang uroe raya puasa*). Less meat is prepared for this *meugang* than in the two days preceding the coming of Ramadhan month (Ach *meugang puasa*). The difference in the amount of the meat prepared is related to the purpose of serving meat at the *meugang*. Prior to the fasting month, *meugang* meat is intended as a specific side dish for the family throughout Ramadhan indicating how deeply enjoyable it is to perform religious service in Ramadhan month (see Ch.10), whereas the meat of *meugang* for the *uroe raya puasa* ("festival of breaking fast day") is intended to celebrate the joy of the *uroe raya* itself because it is assumed that people have already successfully cleansed their "soul/mind" (Jam *jiwo*) during the Ramadhan month. On the day for *meugang* of the *uroe raya puasa*, once again a newly married man must provide his wife's family with raw *meugang* meat as a symbol of care and the wife's family gives the cooked meat, sugar and cakes to her husband's family as a counter gift.

## **Reciting the takbir on the final day of Ramadhan**

After sunset on the last day of Ramadhan, the *imām* together with a group of people attend the Blangporoh mosque and recite special religious chants proclaiming Allāh's greatness called *takbir* (Ach *teukeubie*). Exalting Allāh in

Arabic follows the tradition in other parts of the Muslim world although the chanting melody must be local. The verses of *takbir* are translated as follows:

Allāh is the greatest (3x)  
There is no deity except Allāh  
Allāh is the greatest, Allāh is the greatest  
And praise be only to Him.

Surely Allāh is the greatest  
The abundant praise be only to Him  
Glory be to Him, day and night.  
There is no deity except Allāh, the One true God,  
He fulfilled His promise, He supported His servant,  
He granted his soldiers a manifest victory,  
And He inflicted decisive defeats on allied enemies.  
There is no deity except Allāh,  
And we worship none but Him, with sincere devotion,  
Even though the disbelievers may resent it.

The *takbir* is recited using a microphone and loudspeakers. The sound of men reciting resounds throughout the villages. The *takbir* is also performed in the boarding school's mosque and in neighboring villages' mosques. In the past, after the "noon prayer" (Ach *seumayang 'ashar*) on the last day of Ramadhan a large drum (Indon *bedug*) was suspended horizontally at the village mosque. It was used by a group of young men which created the expression "the drum is beaten as a sign that the "festival day" is coming" (Ach *gedam-gedum tambo di pèh, tanda jadèh uroe raya*).

On this night, two hours after the "night prayer" (Ach *seumayang isya*), groups of people from the capital city of West Labuhan Haji district, Blangkejèrèn recite *takbir* while driving round and round the villages on large and small trucks equipped with sound systems, led by a car with a loudspeaker. The *takbir* is called out over and over again. The sound of men reciting *takbir* can be heard everywhere in all villages till 11.00 pm so that this night is called *malam teukeubie* (the night recital of the prayer of praise "Allāh is great"). The sound of bamboo cannon (Ach *beudée trieng*) lit by the young men of the village enlivens this evening. Children light candles in the yards, young boys light sparklers on the village streets, while women remain in the houses preparing special food such as *lontong*, *tapèe*, *keutupek*, etc and iron dresses for the morning congregational service of worship at *uroe raya*. The ending of Ramadhan is

thus acoustically marked by the evening's amplified proclamations building up a sense of expectancy for the next morning's worship.

By about six o'clock on the following morning, that is the morning of the first day of *uroe raya* [the first day of Syawwal] several of the best Quranic reciters begin to chant the *takbir* over loudspeakers in the village mosque. Everyone takes a bath to clean the body after the completion of Ramadhan fasting. Men, women, and children are dressed in their finest: men in fine new clothes and *sarong*<sup>300</sup> with some wearing white garments that leave only their faces visible; women in brightly colored clothes, *sarong* blouses and wearing perfume. They have something to eat, preferably something sweet, before walking in new sandals to the village mosque for a special communal prayer called *seumayang uroe raya* "the congregation for *īd* prayer".

### **Seumayang uroe raya, "the congregation for *īd* prayer"**

This recommended communal prayer is performed by everyone as part of the acts necessary for the day of the *uroe raya*; men and women, adults and young children are present at the mosque with the men and boys filling the front spaces and the women and girls in the back.<sup>301</sup> Due to the presence of two mosques in Blangporoh village - one is in the boarding school complex, the other in the village center - some villagers perform this communal prayer in the boarding school's mosque but most go to the village's mosque to perform this congregational worship. The communal prayer is no different from ordinary prayer except that the beginning of the first and second *raka'at*,<sup>302</sup> *takbir* of "Allāh is greatest" (Arb *Allāhu akbar*)<sup>303</sup> is uttered twelve times respectively in an audible voice, instead of only once as is done during ordinary prayer. The *takbir* is uttered seven times during the first *raka'at* and five times during the second *raka'at*. After saying *takbir* at the beginning of the prayers (Arb *takbiratul ihram*) in the first *raka'at*, *takbir* is recited seven times, with hands lifted with each *takbir*. After the seven recitations of *takbir*, the prayers are

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300 Skirt made from a piece of fabric wrapped around the body and fastened at the waist (worn by men and women).

301 The *imām* says "even menstruating women are encouraged to the prayer's ground but they should keep away from the actual place of prayer".

302 The essential unit of the prayer ritual, consist of bows and prostration of bows and prostrations performed a prescribed number of times.

303 Recitation of laudation, "Allāh is great" (Arb *Allāhu akbar*) or the act of glorifying Allāh by declaring in an audible voice: "Allāh is great".

performed in the usual way (reciting the *sūrah al-Fātihah* (QS 1:1-7) and one *surah* from other elective *sūrah*. In the beginning of the second *raka'at*, five *takbir* are recited in the usual way. Between *takbir* the chanting as a part of the confession of faith (Indon *zikir*) is recited as follows:

<i>Subhanallāh</i>	Allāh is Holy
<i>Wal hamdulillāh</i>	And all praise is due to Allāh
<i>Wālaillā haillallāh</i>	And there is no deity except Allāh
<i>Allāhu akbar</i>	Allāh is the greatest

This special communal prayer is followed by a sermon which stresses those significant lessons that must be learned by performing good deeds during Ramadhan- Below is an extract of the sermon delivered by the *imām* in the village mosque:

There are five important lessons that must be defended in every day life by every individual in order to become a clean individual: Do not take and use unlawful wealth; During Ramadhan we have to keep away from unlawful goods. Thus there is no reason to take the unlawful one. The society that lives with unlawful goods is a fragile society. If Allāh shows that the unlawful wealth resembles dirt, intelligent human will never take it because that wealth is never the same as the lawful one. The unlawful wealth destroys the orderly life while the lawful one spreads the “goodness” (Indon *kebaikan*).

Restraining *hawa nafsu* (carnal desire): During Ramadhan we have successfully restrained ourselves from being immoral. This indicates that *hawa nafsu* is very weak. Human beings are not creatures that are restrained by *hawa nafsu*, but rather they who restrain their *hawa nafsu*. There is a difference from animals that have no mind (Indon *akal*). Human beings are creatures that regulate their *hawa nafsu*'s distortion.

Subduing *syètan* (Satan): We have proven that during Ramadhan *syètan* has no power. Look at mosques; they are full of people during the nights of Ramadhan. In houses, prayer houses, mosques and other places people are heard reciting the Qur'ān. This is evidence that *syètan* is in fact very weak so that it is not proper that the people who believe in Allāh and in doomsday still follow *syètan* and his activities. Trying seriously to follow Allāh; during Ramadhan we have successfully obeyed Him. When Allāh orders us to fast, we fast. Actually fasting is very hard because what hold up are the things which are actually lawful and may be done. This indicates that there is no reason not to follow Allāh after Ramadhan because He is the One who knows everything.

Leaving sin and immorality: Ramadhan is a hard month to be far from sin. We have successfully proven during Ramadhan that we can leave all forms

of sin and immorality and even can leave everything that does not contain religious merit. It is impossible that dirty individuals living in the sinful world can form a good society. One of the ways to develop a clean and civilized society as well as helping each other in “goodness” and Allāh-fearing (Arb *taqwā*) (together keeping away from badness and sin) is therefore to return to the inherent disposition towards virtue in humanity, to return to fully following Allāh and glorify Him, to return to making mosques prosper, to “make friends with the Qur’ān”, to restrain carnal desire from sin and *syètan*, to make nights alive with religious service. Ramadhan is a true example of life and show the real personality of a true Muslim. That is the secret why Allāh allows the good deeds of Ramadhan to be used as a ladder to become righteous because through Ramadhan one will have the maximum consciousness of a Muslim as the slave of Allāh, spreading affection to all human beings, saving them from brutal and ill-treatment, and asking them to return to Allāh.

The sermon is concluded with *do’a*. Everyone stands up to return home. While standing they shake hands with each other and, in this instance, the congregation turns into a mass of people shaking hands. They then return home to express the depth of their family ties.

## Requesting forgiveness

The members of the family ask forgiveness from each other. There is a particular pattern to this performance. In one household I observed a husband sitting on a chair in the living room. His wife kisses and buries her head in her husband’s hands asking forgiveness from him. The wife then sits on another chair near her husband. Children perform in the same manner asking forgiveness (Ach *lakè ampon*) and receiving blessings from their parents. The mother in particular is moved to tears and laments over the bowed heads of her last child because of his bad behavior telling him you must learn to behave better (see also Bowen, 1993). Other family members ask forgiveness from those senior to them in the same manner, sometimes briefly and other times for a long exchange of caresses and tears. At the boarding school, however, this is performed slightly differently with the *suluk* followers and the boarding school students queuing up in order to shake hands with the *teungku* sitting on a chair while bowing their bodies and asking for forgiveness and blessing from him.

The term for asking forgiveness is “*meuah lahé batén*” (forgive me for any external and internal sins), and the response is “*lahé batén*” (me too, from external and internal sins). Some boarding school’s students who do not return

to their villages on the *uroe raya* day greet their friends with common Arabic greetings such as “blessed *īd*” (Arb *īd mubarak*) and “May Allāh accept sincerity from us, and the one from you” (Arb *taqabballāllahu minna wa mingkum*) while they shake hands on the day of *uroe raya*. Before visiting their neighbors and receiving guests, many families perform the ritual of visiting the graves of their ancestor’s (Ach *ureueng chi*) and other deceased relatives where they recite *do’a* for the safety of their ‘souls’ (Ach *roh*) and for the mercy of Allāh. They sprinkle the graves with water perfumed with flowers. They place flowers between the grave stones in the same manner as during the ritual of *khanduri bu* in the Sya’ban lunar month (see Ch.10). This ritual is called *jak saweu ureueng chi* (go and see *ureueng chi*) to honor as well as not to forget them, says one of the visitors to the ancestors’ grave at the *uroe raya* in Blangporoh. Another visitor says that it is not necessary that other people are visited on the *uroe raya* but that it is important to visit the *ureueng chi*’s graves. “We have to prioritize visiting the families who have already passed away and recite *do’a* for them”. The other visitor says, “Visiting graves is not only to remember the *ureueng chi*’ but also to honor them as we did when they were still alive and when they passed away”.<sup>304</sup>

After returning from visiting the ancestors’ graves, men visit the *imām* of the village, village leaders, village elders and close neighbours. They then go around with their family members visiting their elders and relatives on the husband and the wife’s side, especially those in the same village, while the elders and relatives in other villages are visited at a later date. For those who have many relatives, visiting them may take a few days. Omitting to visit some particular relatives or elders on the *uroe raya* day or the subsequent days without reason is considered contemptuous and something that everyone should avoid. Sending the *uroe raya* cards by mail is not enough and this is common only between friends and relatives living at different localities (see also Muhaimin, 2004). It is even considered an insult to send the *uroe raya* cards to a father-in-law (Ach *yah tuan*) or a mother-in-law (Ach *mak tuan*). An ordinary handwritten letter, not a card, however, is acceptable for those who do not live in Acèh or in Acèh but when difficulties make a visit impossible.

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304 Many people also visit *kuburan masal* “massive graves” in Banda Acèh and Acèh Besar on the festival of breaking fast (Arb *īd al-Fitr*) and during the “festival of sacrifice” (Arb *īd al-Adha*). See Serambi Indonesia, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

Close friends are then visited. They use the visits to feel nostalgia and to reunite as they have not seen each other for a year or more. They are served with food and drink while talking, chanting, joking, teasing, sharing happiness and cheering each other up. One says that this joyous moment cannot be had if close friends are not visited. In addition, children who learn how to read the Qur'ān and other Islamic knowledge at the prayer house (*Ach meunasah*) visit their teacher. At first, they gather at the prayer house and then go together in groups to their teacher's house to shake hands and to ask for forgiveness. This tradition in Blangporoh is called *manjalang*. It is believed that the teacher, from whom they learn to recite Qur'ān and at the same time acquire Islamic knowledge, is a person who guides them to paradise. Visiting him on the "festival day" is said to be a symbol of honor from the students.<sup>305</sup>

## The ritual sending of SMS

Families with phones make calls to distant relatives to send well-wishes for *uroe raya* should there be no time to visit families or close friends on the third or the fourth day of the *uroe raya*. As making phone calls is expensive, short message services (SMS) are sent instead of visiting. This is done by many village people. Sending an SMS is an alternative to a physical visit. It is sometimes sent with a *lebaran* card (Indon *kartu lebaran*) in the form of traditional poetry, advice etc. The following are several examples of SMS in which such poetic and romantic verses are sent to close friends on this occasion:

*Leumang boh labu pasoi lam buloh*

*Leumang* made of pumpkin is impaled in bamboo

*Saleum ulon boh made in Cina*

Greetings I make in China

*Lon kirém saleum takôt hana troh*

I send a greeting fearing it does not reach

*Lon kirém bungkoh takôt meu tuka*

I send a handkerchief fearing it gets accidentally exchanged

*Lon kirém lagu kasèt ka putoh*

I send a song fearing the cassette is broken

*Saleum lon peutroh lewat Nokia*

Greeting are sent through Nokia

*Lon mumat jaro posisi jioh*

I shake hands from a distant place

*Me'ah rakan boh ubé na dosa*

Please forgive all sins

*Pulo Sumatra gunong meurentang*

Sumatra Island has mountains in a row

*Bukét Barisan geu rasi nama*

Bukit Barisan is a good name

*Nyou karab abéh bulan Ramadhan*

Now the Ramadhan month nearly ends

*Talakè bak Tuhan beu ampon désya*

Asking Allāh to forgive sin

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305 See also Emtas (2008:82), about *manjalang* tradition in the Aneuk Jamee both in the festival of breaking fast (Arb *īd al-Fitr*) and in "festival of sacrifice" (Arb *īd al-Adha*).

*Sepuluh jari tersusun rapi  
Bersihkan diri setulus hati  
Tak terasa idul fitri  
SMS dikirim pengganti silaturrahmi*

Ten fingers are arranged in orderly fashion  
Purifying the self sincerely  
Suddenly *idul fitri* arrives  
SMS are sent instead of visiting

*Berharap padi bertemu lesung  
Bertanak beras menjadi nasi  
Hasrat hati bertemu langsung  
Tetapi tiada daya di dalam diri*

Hoping rice meets a mortar  
Cooking unhusked rice to be cooked  
Wishing to meet directly  
But there is no power in me

*Umpama dosa bagaikan daun kayu  
Sebelum layu yang lain sudah tumbuh muda  
Umpama dosa bagaikan gelombang di laut  
Sebelum surut yang lain sudah tiba  
selamat idul fitri dan permohonan maaf*

Sin is like the three leaves  
Before they are faded others have grown  
Sin is like the sea waves  
Before subsiding others have arrived  
Congratulations on *idul fitri* and requesting forgiveness

*Seiring terbenam mentari di akhir Ramadhan  
tibalah kini bulan Syawwal  
adat jauh berkirim kata  
adat dekat puji memuji  
andai ada tersilap kata  
maaf dipinta sepuluh jari*

Along with the sun setting at the end of Ramadhan  
Now the Syawwal lunar month arrives  
The *adat* of far is sending words  
The *adat* of proximity is praising each other  
If there is a wrong word  
Forgiveness is asked with ten fingers

*Yang jauh itu waktu, yang dekat itu mati  
yang besar itu nafsu, yang berat itu amanah  
yang mudah itu berbuat dosa  
yang panjang itu amal shalih  
dan yang indah itu saling memaafkan*

What is far is time, what is close is dead  
What is big is passion, what is heavy is trusteeship  
What is easy is sinning  
What is long is good deeds  
And what is beautiful is to forgive each other

*Orang yang mulia di antara kamu sekalian  
adalah orang yang selalu memaafkan  
dan tidaklah ada rasa dendam  
Walau kita tak saling jumpa  
dan tangan pun tak saling berjabat  
Kami memohon maaf lahir batin*

The noble persons among you  
are those who always forgive  
and there is no revengeful feelings  
Although we do not meet  
and do not shake hands each other  
We ask for complete forgiveness<sup>306</sup>

The SMS receivers send a reply, which is similar to that of the senders even though the sentences are simpler with standard phrases containing the words of sincere forgiveness for all the sins they have ever done. In the context of one's relationship to Allāh (Arb *ḥablumminallāh*), one should always ask for forgiveness from Him through recited *do'a*. In the context of one's relationship

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306 See also Serambi Indonesia, the "sociology of forgiving each other" (Indon *maaf memaafkan*), September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

to human beings (Arb *ḥablumminannās*), the forgiveness only can be received by asking forgiveness from the people whom we have wronged. If the forgiveness is not received from him or her, one is sinful till the end of his or her life. In this case Allāh cannot forgive that particular person. Thus a person asks for forgiveness from others, especially on the day of the *uroe raya*. When the forgiveness is obtained from human beings, pardon from Allāh is automatically also obtained so that a person is said to have achieved “victory” and is purified. After receiving forgiveness, life will run well, peacefully and pleurably. Otherwise, boastful attitudes, envy, spite, slander, anger and the like become a “prison ” for him or her not allowing them be accepted by others. In addition, for the newly married man as well as providing his wife’s family with *meugang* meat as an expression of the harmonization of the relationship between the husband’s and the wife’s family, he together with his wife has to visit their family, neighbors, and close friends on the *uroe raya*. Their hosts, in turn, perform a *tamuntuak* (Ach *teumuntutuk*) for them.

## The *teumuntuak* ritual

*Teumuntuak* is the introduction performed by the bride (Jam *binie*; Ach *binio*) and the groom (Jam *laki*; Ach *lako*) to their respective parents, village elders, neighbors, and close friends by shaking hands. Each person shaking hands with the newlywed couple will give them money (Jam *agih kipieng*; Ach *jok pèng*) by inserting it either in the wife’s hand or the husband’s.<sup>307</sup> Prior to performing *teumuntutuk*, the husband’s side informs their family, neighbor, and close friends that the newly married couple will perform the *teumuntuak* tradi-

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307 *Teumuntuak* tradition performed at the time of the *uroe raya puasa* “festival of the breaking fast” is the continuation from the first *teumuntuak* tradition performed at the time of the marriage ritual when the groom with village elders arrives at the bride’s house to fetch the bride. Before the bride goes together with her group to the groom’s house, *teumuntuak* is held for the groom by the bride’s side consisting of her relatives, neighbors, the wife of *imām* and the village leader. When the bride wants to return to the groom’s house, she is first introduced to the family of the bride, wears the *adat* dress, performs obeisance and introduced to the family and close friends of the bride side that have waited the coming of the groom at the back verandah of the house. Each person from the bride’s side holds money to give to the groom by way of shaking hands (Alamsyah 1991:54). The amount of money given to the bride is not set but the groom’s side has to give more money to the bride at the time of *teumuntuak* at the bride’s house. This is done under the guidance of an old woman called *penganjo* who asks one by one the bride’s side to say the congratulatory word to the couple. It is then followed by giving utensils to the bride at least one set by an old woman.

tion. About two weeks preceding the “festival day”, the husband’s side sends “ingredients” for making traditional cakes such as glutinous flour (Jam *tapuang sipuik*; Ach *teupong leukat*), sugar (Jam *gulo*; Ach *saka*), egg (Jam *talue*; Ach *bòh manok*), coconut oil (Jam *minyak karambi*; Ach *minyek u*), coconut (Jam *karambi*; Ach *bòh u*) and so on. Meanwhile the wife’s side prepares banknotes for *tamuntuak* for the husband, as well as preparing many kinds of traditional cakes such as *juadah*, *wajéb*, *keukarah*, *dodoi*, *meuseukat*, *leumang* and so on.

On the *uroe raya puasa* “festival day of breaking fast”, these traditional cakes are placed in a special tin can called *jambalomang* (a pack containing traditional cakes). They are then brought to the husband’s parents’ house by one of women from the wife’s side. Such tradition on the *uroe raya* is called “repeating the trace” (Jam *meulang jajak*), that is to revisit her parents-in-law accompanied by other women from her family, neighbors and circle of close friends. When the group from the wife’s side arrives at the husband’s house, they are served with the cooked food and the ritual of returning *jambalomang* is performed by an old woman on behalf of the wife’s side by the husband’s side. The husband’s side then takes all contents of *jambalomang* and places money and clothes in it as a return gift. The wife performs obeisance (Indon *sembah*) by shaking hands with the husband’s parents followed by her group one by one while asking permission to leave the house afterwards. After shaking hands, her group leaves the husband’s house by taking back the *jambalomang* that has been filled with counter gifts from the husband side. This tradition has been passed down from one generation to another. After returning from her husband’s house, the wife and the husband then visit the neighbors, *adat* elders, and close friends accompanied by small children. For this visit, they also bring traditional cakes wrapped in a container. When arriving, the wife gives the wrapped container containing the traditional cakes to the visited house after shaking hands. When they leave the visited house, the hosts shake hands with the newlywed couple by inserting banknotes into the wife’s and the husband’s hands. As they go back, the container of the given traditional cakes is filled with clothes as a counter gift for the houses that are visited. The closer the newlywed couples are to the people whom they visit, the more valuable gifts [traditional cakes] are brought and the more valuable gifts they receive in return. According to several old people in West Labuhan Haji district, in the past, the new couple would be given a chicken or a duck when they visited their families on the “festival day”. This gift was a reflection of the closeness of their family

relationship. Similarly, when children visit family members, they are given some money. For children, receiving money from their relatives during the *uroe raya* is a certain kind of joy.

The *teumuntuak* ritual is an *adat* that has a deep influence on the society. If the newly marriage couple do not perform this ritual, they feel that their marriage ritual has not been completely performed. They are also afraid that their families or neighbors or close friends will say “why do you not visit and introduce your wife to my house” (Ach *ék hana ijak dan peuturi inong jih u rumoh lon*). If this ritual is not performed, society will say that the newly married couple is “uncultured”. It is considered shameful and results in bad gossip about the newly married couple in the society as they have not performed the ritual in accordance with a tradition that has been passed down from one generation to another.

## The aims of the teumuntuak ritual

The villagers interpret the aims of the *teumuntuak* ritual in term of Islamic values:

1. Introducing (Ach *jak meuturi*) the wife to the husband's side and introducing the husband to the wife's side in order to get to know each other so that a brotherhood relation is well preserved. Knowing each other is the basic relation among humans. In line with this the Qur’ān (49:13) says “O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allāh is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allāh is Knowing.
2. Developing the bonds of friendship (Arb *silaturrahmi*) as well as applying Allāh great mercy towards humans as a model for relationships among humans (Arb *silaturrahīm*).  
Strengthening the brotherhood relationship (Arb *ukhuwah Islāmiyyah*) and preventing dissolution. The Qur’ān (49:10) says, “Believers are brothers, so make a settlement between your brothers. And fear Allāh that you may receive mercy.”
3. Preserving culture that has been developed for years so that this tradition is continuously maintained and becomes characteristic of the Aneuk Jamee culture.

The *teumuntuak*'s performance on the *uroe raya* provides the family with something strengthen their relationships. Such visiting develops relationships among villagers. It also has a good influence, especially for developing a sense of togetherness within a family. In addition, it can also create brotherhood relationships in society life which cannot be separated from certain habits that have become a tradition in the village. This can be seen in the performance of the

*teumuntuak* tradition which involves gift-giving as a manifestation of the social interaction in strengthening the kinship relations and brotherhood among them. An individual has to adapt him or herself to their environment with the rules that have been given in society life. Such rules are often known as a social norm. One of the important social norms is ethic and behaviour as the manifestation of the activities which are reflected in *teumuntuak* tradition. In addition, the performance of *teumuntuak* tradition can “plant” a sense of high solidarity in religion and for society in society life and can lead to a sense of brotherhood. This has a good influence on society and leads to happiness for both sides. Visiting both family sides and reciprocating the traditional cakes can create a strongbrotherhood relationship, create unity, create a sense of love, and preserve reconciliation among families besides increasing the sense of solidarity among villagers.

## Conclusion

The celebration on the first day of Syawwal, the tenth month of the Islamic lunar month, marks the end of Ramadhan. The celebration of the end Ramadhan is called *uroe raya puasa* or *ʿīd al-Fitr* (Indonesianized Arabic *idul fitri*) “the festival of breaking fast” which is one of several Islamic calendar ritual part of the purification process of Ramadhan.

The ritual of the *uroe raya puasa* cannot be separated from the religious services performed by Muslims during the month of Ramadhan. The relation between fasting (Ach/Indon *puasa*) and the *uroe raya puasa* can be understood as the relationship between “struggle” and “victory”. *Puasa* is a spiritual journey to release the human body from satanic powers. This journey is represented by restraining basic human urges: one must stop eating, drinking, and having sexual intercourse. On the other hand, *uroe raya puasa* is a “feast of victory” where fasting people are freed from satanic desire.

The series of activities performed at the *uroe raya puasa* “the festival of breaking fast” marks the end of the liminal time of Ramadhan lunar month and the beginning of normal time. The core of Ramadhan is the opportunity for Muslims to eliminate their past sins. It is therefore during Ramadhan that people conduct their business with more religious services to receive forgiveness from Allāh. Even though forgiveness is the right of Allāh, which means that only Allāh can eliminate human sin, asking for pardon is a reflection of the human awareness of its weaknesses. Having fasted people feel as if they have

been reborn into this world because all their sins have been eliminated. Hence the *uroe raya puasa* is a “feast of victory” and a new opportunity for all Muslims to enter into a new life. In addition, wearing new clothes, wearing perfume, buying new furniture, vehicles to visit each other, reciprocating gifts, sharing and eating traditional cakes are regarded as imparting a physical joy of the *uroe raya puasa*. The elimination of sins by Allāh on that day is deemed as the spiritual joy of the *idul fitri*. The chanting of *takbir* (Allāh is the greatest) and *tahlīl* (there is no god but Allāh), which is followed by the performance of a special prayer on the morning of *uroe raya puasa*, is an expressions of the purity of a Muslims’ faith from any kind of false worship. If wearing new clothes and perfume are symbols of physical purity at the end of Ramadhan, the chanting of *takbir*, the special prayer of *uroe raya puasa* and asking pardon from other people, are the symbols of spiritual purity (Nur 1996:90). Moreover, bathing on the morning of *uroe raya puasa*, for instance, can be deemed as a climax of the purification process of Ramadhan. To express this condition of purity, people wear new clothes on the day of *uroe raya puasa*.

The people relate the *uroe raya puasa* to the tradition of visiting others in order to ask for pardon. Asking for pardon reflects the awareness that everyone has faults and weaknesses. In order to be in harmony with others, one has to acknowledge his or her faults, weaknesses and wrong deeds toward others by asking for forgiveness preferably on *uroe raya puasa*. Newlyweds visit their parents, neighbors, close friends, shake hands and give money. The *uroe raya puasa* is a good opportunity to introduce the bride and the groom to both sides of the family as they return to their homeland to celebrate *uroe raya puasa*.

It is viewed positively if people ask for forgiveness and forgive each other either directly or through various media communication. In this sense, the *uroe raya puasa* is valued as a moment to develop communication, both with Allāh and among human beings. Communicating with Allāh is attained through continuously maintaining (*taqwā*) “Allāh-fearing” during the fasting month. Communicating with human beings is gained through the bonds of friendship, gift-giving relationships and forgiveness. The acts of purification during *uroe raya puasa* can be seen as a point of transition from the liminal time of the sacred month back into everyday life as people feel that they have be reborn and are without sin.

## CHAPTER 13

### The ritual of *uroe raya haji*

Dzulhijjah is the twelfth month of the Islamic lunar month, which coincides with the month of December in the Gregorian calendar. This month in the Acèhnese and in the Islamic calendar begins with the completion of the pilgrimage to Mecca. The celebration on the tenth day of this lunar month is called *ʿīd al-adhā*, “the feast of sacrifice”, one of the two major yearly holidays in Islam. The Aneuk Jamee refer to it as *hari rayo qurban* or in Indonesianized Arabic *idul adha* (Arb *ʿīd al-adhā*), commemorating the willingness of the Prophet Ibrāhīm to sacrifice his son, Ismaʿīl for the sake of Allāh. The villagers often talk simultaneously about the sacrifice the pilgrims undergo in the city of Mina and their own sacrifice. In this context the Aneuk Jamee also refer to this local event as the “pilgrimage holiday” (Jam *hari rayo haji*; Ach *uroe raya haji*). Like *uroe raya puasa*, “festival of breaking the fast”, *uroe raya haji* is recognized as a national holiday. School holidays begin a few days earlier and last a few days after the festival. This chapter describes the celebration of *uroe raya haji*.

### The celebration of *uroe raya haji* and the performance of animal sacrifice

The Aneuk Jamee celebrates *uroe raya haji* for four days. The day preceding the actual four days or the 9<sup>th</sup> of Dzulhijjah is called *hari Arafah* (Ach *uroe Arafah*). On this day all pilgrims gather together to perform the ceremony by gathering in the field of Arafah in Saudi Arabia, during the *hajj* (Indon *wukuf*) and wearing the same clothes, that is a consecration cloth (Indon *pakaian ihram*). The *imām* whom I discuss this with says that *hari Arafah* is the best day in the year to fast. All Muslims are recommended to fast on this day to cleanse themselves from their sins. Minimal, “small sins” (Indon *dosa kecil*) are eliminated which occurring during last year and which will occur in the year ahead.

In contrast to the *uroe raya puasa* which is marked by “staple food” (Indon *zakat fitrah*). The *uroe raya haji* is marked by sacrificing cattle; rams, sheep, buffalos and oxen. Slaughtering these animals is the “emphasized recommendation” (Arb *sunnah muakkadah*). However, there it is not a sin if you do not slaughter an animal. It should be done by Muslims who have feel

obliged to observe the precepts of religion (Arb *mukallaf*) and have enough money. If affluent people do not perform the sacrifice, they have passed an opportunity to gain much religious merit (Jam *pahalo*). A *hadīth* transmitted by Abu Hurairah states, “Those who are affluent and do not perform sacrifice, do not approach Our mosque”. In addition, the sacrifice becomes obligatory if parents request their children to perform a sacrifice for them when they are still alive. In this case, their children must fulfil their parents’ request using their parent's money.

Moreover, it is not an obligation to perform the sacrifice for those who are already dead. If the sacrifice is performed, it is then considered to be a gift for the dead. The sacrifice is obligatory if one has uttered a sacrificial vow/promise (Indon *qurban nadzar*). A *hadīth* narrated by Bukhari and Muslim states, “The one who has uttered a vow to adhere to Allāh, they must do so” and the Qur’ān (22:29) states “fulfil your vows”. If the person who has uttered the vow passes away before performing his/her sacrificial vow, his/her heir (Indon *ahli waris*) must perform it for him/her. As this sacrifice is performed, his/her heir must say that the sacrifice is for that person.

The sacrifice is performed following in the footsteps of the Prophet Ibrāhīm. It is performed on the day of *uroe raya haji* after the congregation performs “*īd* prayer” (Ach *seumayang uroe raya*). It can also be continued on three consecutive days; day 11, 12 and 13 of Dzulhijjah, these days are known as *tasyrék* days. On these days, the sacrifice can be performed in the morning, at midday or at night. It is important to note that if the sacrifice is performed prior to performing the *īd* prayer it is not considered to be a sacrifice. The aim of the sacrifice is to “come close” (Arb *qaraba*) to Allāh. The sacrifice is said to give an abundance of love directly to Allāh so that there are no boundaries between a person and Allāh such as wealth, a wife or a degree. But if it is performed after the *tasyrék* days it is considered as charity (Ach *seudeukah*).

Unlike the aim of the *akikah* sacrifice which is the redemption of a child, the aim of sacrifice on *uroe raya haji* is the redemption of oneself. Therefore, sacrifice and *akikah* cannot be united. The entire sacrificial ritual celebrates the sacrifice made by the Prophet Ibrāhīm, who is believed to have dreamed that Allāh asked him to sacrifice his son, Isma’īl. The Qur’ān says Ibrāhīm said to his son “O my son, indeed I have seen in my dream that I [must] sacrifice you, so see what you think.” He said, “O my father, do as you are commended. You

will find me, if Allāh wills, steadfast.” (QS 37:102).<sup>308</sup> As Ibrāhīm really was about to kill Isma’īl, the angel replaced him with an animal. So an animal was slaughtered by Ibrāhīm instead of Isma’īl. The sacrificed animals are usually male, they must be healthy and in perfect condition with a reasonable weight. They can be obtained quite easily everywhere because many people sell them for this. On this occasion the price of cattle increases by 30 percent,<sup>309</sup> because the people search for the perfect sacrificial buffalo, cow, sheep or ram. Many customers also buy buffalo or oxen for slaughtering on *meugang* day (a day preceding *uroe raya haji*) so that there is not enough livestock for these occasions. A lot of good cattle are slaughtered on *meugang* day (9 Dzulhijjah) which is concurrent with the sacrificial day; 10-13 Dzulhijjah, a day or two days preceding the *uroe raya haji*. This influences the number of good cattle available to be sacrificed on the day of sacrifice.

## Meugang versus uroe raya haji

There are two rituals performed by the Aneuk Jamee in relation to the *uroe raya haji*. These are *meugang* (eating meat before *uroe raya haji*) and *qurban* (slaughtering sacrificial animals). Although they are performed nearly at the same time, those two activities have two different meanings. *Meugang* derives from an *adat* tradition, while the sacrifice is prescribed by the *syari’ah*. In the context of the *uroe raya haji*, the *meugang* ritual is marked by the family’s obligation to consume meat together (see Ch.10). After *uroe raya haji*, the celebration of eating meat is continued with the sacrificial meat (Indon *daging qurban*). Hence a double portion of meat is consumed.

*Meugang* before the *uroe raya* day is seen as an expression of happiness to welcome the coming of the *uroe raya haji*, here the family eat together. In *syari’ah* law, however, the day preceding the *uroe raya haji* (on 9 Dzulhijjah) is the day of Arafah. All Muslims are recommended to fast on this day to rid

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308 The order of the sacrifice is based on the Qur’ān in the *sūrah al-Kawthar* (QS 108: 2) “So pray to your Lord and sacrifice [to Him alone]”, also in the *sūrah al-Hajj* (QS 22:36) “And the camels and cattle we have appointed for you as among the symbols [i.e., rites,] of Allāh; for you therein is good. So mention the name of Allāh upon them when lined up [for sacrifice]; and when they are [lifeless] on their sides, then take from them and feed the needy and the beggars. Thus have we subjected them to you that you may be grateful”.

309 A buffalo or cow costs Rp 6 to 15 million. Ram or sheep costs Rp 1.2 to 2.5 million (Serambi Indonesia, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009).

them of their sins. Here there is a contrasting pattern in welcoming the day of *uroe raya haji* between *adat* and *syari'ah*. At the beginning the *meugang* ritual is held in order to prepare food for 'breaking fast' (*Jam buko puaso*) for people who observe fasting on the day of Arafah but this is less prominent because the *meugang* meat usually has been already cooked at midday and immediately consumed by the family. According to *syari'ah* law, the "culture of eating" (Indon *budaya makan*) is recommended for up to 3 days after performing the *īd* prayer. Fasting on these days is thus not allowed, for the Prophet said "These days are the days for eating and drinking".

In addition, *meugang's* meat is prepared for one's family whereas the sacrificial meat is also shared by others, especially with the poor and orphans. *Meugang* is performed to strengthen family relationships through sharing *meugang's* meat and its focus is on one's own family rather than on society at large. The sacrifice, however, is performed to strengthen the bonds of friendship and social solidarity.

Sacrifice is best performed on the *uroe raya haji* day as the sacrificer's sins are eliminated when the sacrificial blood flows. Meanwhile *meugang* is a special *adat* in the society performed three times a year (before Ramadhan, before the *uroe raya puasa*, and before the *uroe raya haji*), it has no relation to religious service (see Ch.10). *Meugang* is a burden on people as the meat is costly on the *meugang* day so that the needy queue up for hours in front of the governor's office in order to get a piece of *meugang* meat.<sup>310</sup> Sacrifice, on the other hand, is performed by people who can afford to do so. The meat is then shared free of charge to the needy so that people can enjoy the *uroe raya haji* day without being burdened economically. Although the "essence" (Indon *essensi*) of *meugang* is different from that of sacrifice, this differentiation indicates the cultural uniqueness of the Aneuk Jamee society.

## **īd prayer and strengthening bonds of friendship**

Like the celebration of *uroe raya puasa*, the celebration of *uroe raya haji* is a joyful occasion. It marks the state of enhanced piety. It is also a day of forgiveness, moral victory and peace, of congregation, fellowship, brotherhood and unity. One should forget old grudges and ill-feelings towards one's fellow men. People wear their finest white clothes symbolizing purity and austerity

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310 Serambi Indonesia, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009.

and attend the *īd* prayer in the mosque in the morning, reciting *takbīr*.<sup>311</sup> It is then followed by a sermon called *khutbah uroe raya haji*. In his sermon, the *imām* implores people to remember the trials and triumphs of the Prophet Ibrāhīm when facing Allāh's command to kill his son Isma'īl and to reflect on the lesson behind this command as willingness to make a sacrifice in all areas of life in order to stay on the straight path of faith. The sermon then focuses on the meaning of sacrifice. This meaning is not only based on textual exegesis but also on all deeds performed which bring one closer to Allāh. The *imām* stresses the value of 'sincere devotion' (Arb *ikhhlās*) in any sacrifice performed, linking this to the obedience displayed by the Prophet Ibrāhīm. In addition, he encourages people at *īd* to end any past animosities they may have, to forgive others and to release any feelings of enmity or ill-feeling towards others. At the end of his speech, the *imām* recited a *hadīth* in Shahih al-Bukhari no 1623, 1626 and 6361<sup>312</sup> about the last sermon of the Prophet in front of a large gathering of people during *haji*. Here is a translation:

O people, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you: Remember that you will indeed meet your Lord, and that He will indeed reckon your deeds. Allāh has forbidden you to take usury/interest; therefore, all obligations shall henceforth be waived. Your capital, however, is yours to keep. You will neither inflict nor suffer any inequity. Allāh has judged that there shall be no interest and that all interest due to Abbas Ibn Abd al Muttalib (the Prophet's uncle) shall henceforth be waived.

Beware of Satan for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.

O people, it is true that you have certain rights in regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives, only under Allah's trust and with His permission. If they abide by your rights then they have the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them, for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right to see that they do not make friends with anyone of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste.

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311 I no longer here describe how the *īd* prayer is performed and the *takbīr* is recited as they are similar to *uroe raya puasa* (see Ch.12).

312 See *shahīh imām* Muslim referring to this sermon in *hadīth* number 98.

O people, worship Allāh, perform five prayers a day (*salat*), fast during the month of Ramadhan, give your wealth in *zakat*.  
Perform *hajj* if you can afford to.

All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black, nor a black has any superiority over a white - except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim, which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not therefore, do injustice to yourselves.

Remember one day you will appear before Allāh and answer for your deeds, so beware, do not stray from the faith of righteousness after I am gone. People, no prophet or apostle will come after me and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore, o people, and understand words which I convey to you. I leave two things behind, the Qur’ān and the Sunnah (*hadīth*), if you follow these you will never go astray. All these who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listened to me directly. Be my witness, o Allāh, that I have conveyed your messages to your people.

The *īd* sermon is concluded with *do’a*, after which everyone stands up to shake hands with each other. Some hug each other and wish a happy *īd*. They then return home to concentrate on family ties. The members of the family ask pardon from each other. Then, people visit each other’s homes, asking forgiveness and partaking in the festive meals with special dishes, beverages, and desserts. Children receive gifts and sweets on this occasion. It is common to greet people with “Selamat Hari Raya”. Many people also greet one another with *mohon maaf lahir dan batin* “please forgive my external and internal [being]”. This is the time to cleanse themselves from sin and strengthen their bonds of friendship (Arb *silaturrahmi*) with relatives and friends. Another phrase of greeting is *minal aizin wal faidzin* “May you be part of the people who return to purity and part of the people who are granted glory”. The latter Arabic phrase is usually used in conjunction with the former; thus, “*Minal aizin wal faidzin, mohon maaf lahir dan batin*”.<sup>313</sup> Like pilgrims at Mecca’s performing a sacrifice, the Aneuk Jamee who can afford to do so offer domestic animals such as ram, sheep, and buffalo as a symbol of Ibrāhīm’s sacrifice.

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313 Other greetings *aturoe raya*, see Ch.12.

## The ritual of animal sacrifice

One thing that distinguishes the *uroe raya haji* from the *uroe raya puasa* celebration is the sacrificial ritual performed during this month only. The sacrifice of an animal commemorating the ram sacrificed by Ibrāhīm in place of his son is the most important feature of this celebration. It is based on the Qur’anic idea that Allāh asked Ibrāhīm to sacrifice his own son, Isma’īl.<sup>314</sup> All Muslims in the world join in celebrating “the feast of sacrifice”. The sacrifice is not compulsory. It is, however, considered an obligation for those who can afford it and they understand their act as a part of Islamic history; “indeed the rich imagery of eschatology assures many people of the ritual’s ultimate efficacy” (Bowen 1992:276).

On December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007, at about 2 o’clock, a sacrificial ram was slaughtered for M. Arsyad who passed away two years earlier in Blangporoh village. Before being sacrificed, the sacrificial ram was bathed, dried, combed then had its body sprayed with perfume and its face powdered. The sacrificial ram was then fed with steamed glutinous rice and traditional cakes. A ritual identity between Isma’īl and the sacrificial ram is established for it is said that these acts are performed to repeat the actions of Isma’īl’s mother, Hagar (Hajar) before Isma’īl was taken to be sacrificed. The deceased’s wife, Nurlaili then brought a tray called *talam* containing tools for “cooling” (Ach *peusijuek*) close to the sacrificial ram. On the tray, there were several articles:

1. Rice (*breuh*) and unhusked rice (*padé*) and so-called *breueh padé* in a glass. These *breueh padé* are scattered on the ram as the cooling ritual is performed.
2. There are three kinds of grass leaves:
  1. Several leaves of coarse grass (Ach *naleueng sambō*) with its roots
  2. Several leaves of *cocor bèbèk* (Ach *on sisijuek*)
  3. Several leaves of *manèk manòe*.

All these leaves are tied in a bunch placed in one bowl (Ach *cawan*) with ordinary rice flour (Ach *teupōng taweue*). The function of these three kinds of leaves is to

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314 Ibrāhīm did not ever once think “why” or that he might say “no”- if that was Allāh wanted, he trusted Him no matter what! His faith was rewarded when his son’s life was spared by Allāh at the very last minute. Just as the knife was coming down, there was a lamb in the place of Isma’īl and that was what Ibrāhīm actually sacrificed, explained one *teungku*. He added, “The ram sacrificed by Ibrāhīm was taken from Paradise by Gabriel. The sacrificial ram belonged to Habil (Abel), the son of Adam that was accepted by Allāh because of his sincere sacrifice to Him”.

sprinkle the liquid rice flour on the sacrificial ram as it is “cooled” during the ritual of “cooling” (Ach *peusijuk*).

3. Glutinous rice (Ach *bu leukat*) with coconut, stir-fried with palm sugar (Ach *u mirah*). The glutinous rice is coloured with pounded turmeric to make it yellow (Ach *pulôt kuneng* or *bu leukat kuneng*) as an offering for the sacrificial ram. Glutinous rice (Jam *nasi kunyik* or *pulot kunieng*) is placed behind both ears of the sacrificial ram as a symbol of *peusunténg* (it is ritually purified with such a flour mixture).
4. *Teupōng taweue*, fresh water which has been mixed with the ordinary rice flour, is placed in bowl together with three kinds of the above leaves. *Teupōng taweue* is sprayed on the sacrificial ram which is “cooled” with a bunch of the above three leaves that represent unity and a cool condition.
5. It is said that the ritual “cooling” of the sacrificial ram is recommended by the ‘*ulamā*’.

The ram is then “cooled” by the *imām*, the deceased’s wife and the deceased’s first son. The ram is brought by the deceased’s second son from his house to a hole dug in the house’s front yard. Another tray containing articles wrapped in a white cloth called *ayapan* is brought near to the hole by the deceased’s wife. *Ayapan* contains a comb, soap, a tooth brush, a mirror, a knife, face powder, a bottle of shampoo, a tube of toothpaste, a bottle of perfume, an umbrella, hair cream, scissors, a blanket, a slipper, and a shirt. These articles are destined for the beneficiary on Judgement Day. All these articles are wrapped in a white cloth as a symbol of holiness and sincerity from his wife and children for the deceased. A Rp 10,000 note is placed at every end of the white cloth as if it were for sewing the deceased’s clothes on the Judgement Day. In addition, one says “This money is for shopping on the Judgement Day”. It is also said that this money should cover all costs for the sacrificial ram if anything is lacking (Ach *meunyo na kureueng*). In other words, placing money at every end of the white cloth is to complete what is incomplete since the sacrifice must be perfect. Besides these articles, the tray also contains various traditional cakes. The ram is again fed by the *imām* with several of these cakes.<sup>315</sup> This action refers to Isma’īl who was told to eat fully before he was brought by Ibrāhīm to be sacrificed.

Soon after the ram is brought to the hole, the deceased’s second son gives a sharp knife to the *imām* without allowing the ram to see it so that the sacrifi-

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315 One says that the beneficiary’s name is sometimes placed in the cake which is then fed to the ram before it is sacrificed.

cial ram is not aware of its imminent death. With his right hand, he hands over the sacrificial ram together with its rope to the *imām*. While his left hand he grasps the rope circling the ram's neck and utters "This is the sacrificial ram for my father, M. Arsyad bin Muḥammad Daud" (*Jam iko kambing qurban untuk ayah ambo, M. Arsyad bin Muḥammad Daud*). The *imām* answers, *qabiltu* "I have accepted it". The deceased's first son strongly grasps the ram's feet placing it in the direction of Mecca emulating the Prophet who placed his sacrifice in this direction as he performed the ritual of sacrifice. The *imām* as the knife wielder then solemnly utters *takbir* as follows:

*Allāhu akbar* (3x)  
*Lā ilāha illallāh*  
*Wallāhu akbar*  
*Allāhu akbar*  
*Wa lillāhi al-ḥamd*

Allāh is the greatest (3 x)  
 There is no deity except Allāh  
 Allāh is the greatest  
 Allāh is the greatest  
 and praise only be to Allāh.<sup>316</sup>

This *takbir* is repeated three times respectively by the deceased's family while holding onto the white cloth over the ram and other participants standing around. The *imām* dedicates the sacrificial ram as follows: "This is the ram for the deceased M. Arsyad bin Muḥammad Daud" (*Jam iko kambing akikah untuk almarhum M. Arsyad bin Muḥammad Daud*). At the moment when the knife is brought to the sacrificial ram's throat, the *bismillāhirrahmānirrahīm* (in the name of Allāh, the merciful, the compassionate) and *shalawat* "praying for the Prophet's well-being" are uttered in a murmur by the *imām* just before cutting its throat. At the completion of the dedication, he slits the sacrificial ram's throat with a horizontal movement so that the knife remains unseen. After slaughtering, the *imām* recites a *do'a*, "O Allāh, this is from You and returns to You, so please accept the sacrificial ram for M. Arsyad bin Muḥammad Daud", (*Arb Allāhumma minka wa ilaika fataqabbal min M. Arsyad bin Muḥammad Daud*). The attendants then utter *āmīn* "please approve o Allāh" in chorus.

According to the *imām*, the fact that the sacrificial ram is handed over with a rope tied around it indicates "that the animal belongs to that person's family who provided it". The rope is "a connector between the animal and its

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316 The *imām* explained that *Allāhu akbar* "Allāh is the greatest" 3x was uttered by Ibrāhīm then continued with *Lā ilāha illallāh wallāhu akbar* "There is no deity except Allāh and Allāh is the greatest" by his son, Isma'īl and then continued with *Allāhu akbar wa lillāhi al-ḥamd* "Allāh is the greatest and praise only be to Allāh" by Gabriel when Isma'īl wanted to be sacrificed by his father, Ibrāhīm. This is deemed as the origin of *takbir* which is now uttered by Muslims.

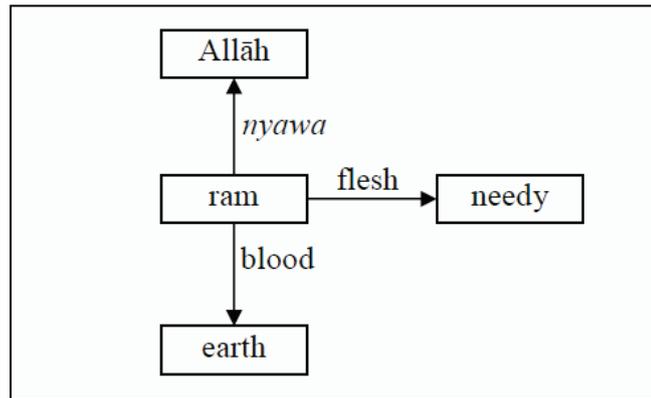
owner” so that the family who are the beneficiaries of the sacrificial animal hold on to their rope before it is sacrificed as a symbol of the connection with the afterlife. The idea here is that people want to be together not only when they are on earth but also in the afterlife.

The ram sacrificed in Blangporoh village did not utter a sound when it was slaughtered. From its conduct, the sacrifice was believed to reach its spiritual destination as the people found it ready and willing for the knife. Just before death, the ram suddenly became tame (Indon *jinak*) and the people could “see in its eyes” that it was willing to be sacrificed. Many villagers said “This is a good sacrifice”. The sacrificial ram is said to “see how the beneficiary is”. If it utters a sound, it means the “soul” (Indon *roh*) of the sacrificial ram does not want to be a vehicle for the beneficiary on the Judgement Day; this is because the beneficiary is still sinful and Allāh will certainly not accept it.<sup>317</sup> The name of the sacrificer the person in whose name the sacrifice is performed)<sup>318</sup> is often written on a piece of paper that is dropped in the hole with the blood of the sacrificial ram which is witnessed by the sacrificer’s family. Throwing the name of the sacrificer in the blood is said to be like “sending the sacrificer’s name” to Allāh. Some claim that the blood of the sacrificed ram will reach Allāh to later become a horse, but others say that the sacrificers’ fear of God (Indon *ketaqwaan*) and his sincere intention will reach Him. This last idea can be found in the Qur’ān “it is neither their meat nor their blood that reaches Allāh; it is your piety (Indon *kealiman*) that reaches Him” (QS 22:37). In several villages *teungku* argue that the blood is destined for the earth, the flesh is for the poor and the “soul” (*nyawa*) is for Allāh. The God-fearing, the sincere intention of sacrifice will be a vehicle for the beneficiary on Judgment Day (see figure 14).

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317 On one sacrificial ram at the mosque of Meunasah Baru, the neighbor village’s mosque says that the sacrificial ram uttered a sound when it was sacrificed. The villagers whom I interview with say that it is because the sacrificer did not pray properly five times daily (Ach *semayang limong watèe*) when the sacrificer was still alive.

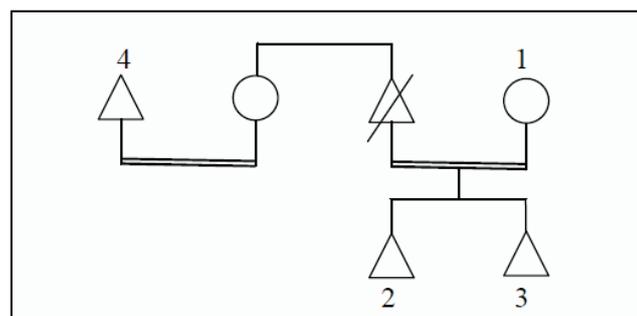
318 See Hubert and Mauss (1964:9-28); the person in whose name the sacrifice is performed (“the sacrificer”) and the knife wielder (“sacrificer”).



**Figure 14. The destination of the parts of the sacrificial ram**

As the *akikah* ram is being slaughtered, a white cloth is held over the sacrificial animal. The white cloth is a symbol of the sincerity of the family performing the sacrifice for the deceased’s benefit as well as to honour the sacrificial ram. It also symbolizes *Arash*, “a place where Allāh sits”. It is said that the religious merit of the sacrifice penetrates the *Arash* from the place where the ram is sacrificed. Like the blood of the sacrificial ram that flows down onto earth, the white cloth held over the sacrificial ram is also believed to ask for forgiveness on behalf of the beneficiary. The white cloth acts as an umbrella to protect the beneficiary from the sunshine which is extremely hot on Judgement Day. Some villagers, however, say that holding the white cloth over the ram is to honour the ram’s “soul” (Indon *nyawa*) that leaves the body of the ram and goes to Allāh besides it also resembles a cloud because when Isma’īl was sacrificed by Ibrāhīm, the cloud resembling an umbrella protected him.

The white cloth is held over the sacrificial ram by the following four people; the front right of the cloth is held by the deceased’s wife; the front left is held by the deceased’s first son; the back right of the cloth is held by the deceased’s second’s son. The back left is held by the husband of the deceased’s sister (diagram 14).



**Diagram 14. Kinship relations of those holding the white cloth over the sacrificial ram**

After slaughtering the sacrificial ram, the white cloth is rolled and placed back on the tray. The white cloth with the *ayapan* articles are given to the *imām* by the deceased's wife as a gift with the following words: "This *ayapan* is for you" (Jam *ayapan ko pulang ka tuangku imam*) and he answers "I receive this *ayapan*" (Jam *alah ambo tarimo ayapan ko*). The contents of *ayapan* are later divided between the *imām*, the preacher, the person who calls for prayer (*bilāl*) and the mosque's care taker (*khadam*).

On the same day in the afternoon, the sacrifice ritual is also performed in Kutaiboh village. Two sheep are slaughtered. A white cloth and a white umbrella are held over the sacrificial sheep. The umbrella is said to be a symbol of sky protecting the beneficiary from the sun's heat which is spanned over their heads on Judgment Day.

The next day, on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007, in the village of Ladang Tuha II in Manggeng district, the neighbour district of West Labuhan Haji a buffalo was sacrificed for seven consanguinal relatives. Five beneficiaries had already passed away, while two are still alive. For several days before slaughtering, the buffalo is well treated, fed, and bathed. On the day of slaughter, it is also treated in the same way as the sacrificial ram mentioned above. It is slaughtered in the middle of the main residential area near the prayer house (Ach *meunasah*), with the active participation of many individuals. Several men tie the buffalo's legs together with rope and then topple it on its side. One of the living beneficiaries then spiritually cleanses the buffalo by sprinkling it with healing leaves and water and powdering its face. These acts prepare the buffalo to "meet" Allāh. The buffalo is then slaughtered by the *imām* after completing the dedication to the beneficiaries, uttering *bismillāh* (in the name of Allāh) and praying for the Prophet's well-being (Ach *seulawet*). Like the sacrificial ram in Blangporoh, a white cloth is also prepared in Ladang Tuha II village but it is not held over the sacrificial buffalo due to strong protest by one of the attendants who insist that "This is not recommended by the Prophet". Later on the white cloth with some money at each corner is given to the *imām* who slaughters it.

In Meunasahbaro, another neighboring village, the sacrificer himself acts as the knife wielder. He slaughters a sacrificial buffalo for his family. The sacrifice is held without the ritual of "cooling" and the white cloth and umbrella as the sacrificer is a modernist. Although his wife wanted to have the *imām* perform a "cooling" ritual, her husband - a modernist Muslim - refused to do so. Many villagers, however, do not agree and condemn the sacrificer by saying

“The sacrificer does not respect the “soul” (*nyawa*) of the sacrificial animal that goes to Allāh. The sacrificial buffalo is not spiritually cleansed by sprinkling it with healing leaves and water. Its face is not powdered neither is a white cloth held over it before it is sacrificed”. Additionally, “since the sacrificial animals will meet their sacrificers in the condition they were sacrificed on Judgment Day, these acts must be well performed before they “meet” Allāh”.

The buffalo is killed in the yard of the village’s mosque where a festive mood prevails with many men helping tie the animal down. Before slaughtering, *takbir* is then recited by the sacrificer followed by his family and all the attendants. Just prior to cutting the buffalo’s throat, the sacrificer dedicates the sacrificial buffalo for the benefit of his own name then those names of his wife and children. He then pronounces *bismillāh* and the confession of faith (“I attest that there is no deity but Allāh and that Muḥammad is His messenger”). At the completion of the dedication he slits the buffalo’s throat as quickly as possible with a horizontal movement so that the sacrificial knife is hidden from the animal’s view.<sup>319</sup> The sacrifice is performed in such manner so as to acknowledge the fact that only Allāh has the right to take a life, and that animal may only be killed by humble human members of Allāh’s creation. This indicates that the condition of the sacrificial animals needs to be perfect in both the physical and the spiritual sense of the word (al-Sekhaneh 2006:141). In addition, Allāh has given human beings power over the animals and allows them to eat their meat, but only if His name is pronounced at the solemn act of taking life. Muslims slaughter animals in the same way throughout the year, so that by saying the name of Allāh at the time of the slaughtering, people are always reminded that life is sacred.

Meanwhile, the living beneficiaries stand aside together with other participants while continuing to recite *takbir*, witnessing the sacrifice being slaughtered. It is believed that the blood, the grass, and the ground at the slaughtering place ask for forgiveness from the beneficiaries. A drop of blood from the sacrificed ram that falls on earth is said to have the same religious merit as that from a dead martyr. In addition, witnessing the sacrifice by its beneficiary is recommended by the *hadīth*. The *imām* recalls one *hadīth* narrated by al-Hakim, “Hai Fatimah [the Prophet’s daughter], get up and witness the slaughter

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319 Among the Bedouin of Jordan, the camel is killed by a vertical upward stab in the throat so that the sacrificial knife remains unseen (al-Sekhaneh 2005:141).

of your sacrificed animal! From the first blood drops, Allāh has forgiven the sins you have made. Please say; “my prayer, religious service [sacrificed], life and death are only for Allāh, Lord of the world. I am the first person from the people who surrenders to Him”. Soon after slaughtering, a set of prayer is recited by the *imām*:

I turn my face to the Creator of the heavens and earth. And I am not of the polytheists. Surely, my prayer, my devotion, my life and my death, belong (solely) to Allāh, master of the whole universe. None is comparable to Him, and for that I am ordered, and I (certainly) belong to the Muslims.

All attendants raised their hands as high as their breast and intoned *āmīn* (please approve o Allāh) at the end of each recited *do'a*. The ritual of sacrifice is then over. At night, a *khanduri* is held at the sacrificer's house, at which spiritual and future benefit is produced by reciting *shamadiyah*, *tahlīl* and *do'a* for the sacrificer.

## **Families and judgement day**

Like the *akikah* sacrifice, the sacrificial ram, sheep, cow or buffalo is believed to provide a future vehicle. On Judgment Day (Jam *kiamet*), the sacrificial animals will meet their masters next to their cemeteries in the condition in which they have been sacrificed. Many *teungku* said that on Judgment Day the persons named as sacrificial beneficiaries will be able to ride on the animal to the place of judgment, Padang Masya (Arb *al-mahsyar*), and visit the Prophet Muḥammad to ask for *syafa'ah* (“help”) from him and then travel on to “meet” Allāh. This exegesis is more or less the same as that which I received from the village *imām*. He says that the Prophet Daud begged Allāh, “Oh my God what is the reward given to the Muḥammad's followers for their sacrifice? Allāh replied, for each of the animal's fur one receives ten rewards; and it erases ten sins. Each fur is replaced by a building in Paradise, one fairy (Indon *bidadari*), and one mount with wings so that the riders can fly it everywhere they want.” Only one person can ride a goat, sheep, ram to the Mahsyar field, but seven can ride on a buffalo, cow, or camel. “The sacrifice of an animal thus provides the opportunity to bring together parents, children, and grand children on the back of the afterlife's mount” (Bowen 1992). Besides, riding on the sacrificial animal is said to prevent danger on Judgment Day when they pass over the bridge (Indon *sirat*) into the Hereafter.

Like people in Gayo, Central Acèh, the Aneuk Jamee couples also shape their sacrificial performances with a sociability in the afterlife in mind, trying to provide a mount for themselves, their children, and if possible, for their parents and grandparents. "Parents feel a particularly strong obligation to provide a mount for a child who dies young, as do children for those parents and grandparents who have no resources to make a sacrifice in their own names" (Bowen 1993). The midwife in Blangporoh says that "without a sacrifice there is no tie between parents and children". On Judgment Day, the children bring the certificate containing their parents' name and look for their parents. For example, if their parents are in hell then the child comes to pick them up and brings them to paradise. Without a sacrifice there is no tie between parents and children.

The prospect of future abandonment by one's children horrifies most people and provides further encouragement to perform the sacrifice. It also leads people to include in their dedications even those parents or children who already have a vehicle provided for them, in order to ensure that family ties will be preserved during the harsh time of Judgment. In the past, just before a sheep was sacrificed all the close relatives of the beneficiary would grasp its tether rope, thereby strengthening their tie in the after life (Bowen: 1992).

Like the people in Gayo in Central Acèh, the Aneuk Jamee also project the imagery from the ritual event onto the family's fate in the afterlife.

## **The requirements of the sacrificial animals**

There are strict rules determining the nature and the condition of sacrificial animals. It should be of a particular age: at least six months for a lamb, one year for a goat or a sheep, two years for a cow, buffalo and five years for a camel. Male animals are preferable. A Muslim can offer either a goat or sheep, or one seventh of a cow, buffalo or camel as the sacrifice, seven people agree to offer a cow, buffalo or camel at the same time and it must be sacrificed where the sacrificer lives. These animals must be in perfect condition. Impaired animals such as animals that are blind, crippled, sick, and thin cannot be slaughtered for sacrifice. This accords to what the Prophet said, "There are four kinds of animals that cannot be sacrificed: a one-eyed animal whose defect is obvious, a sick animal whose sickness is obvious, a lame animal whose limp is obvious, and an emaciated animal that has no marrow in its bones".

The *hadīth* prescribes the following; it is “reprehensible” (Arb *makruh*), to sacrifice defective animals, missing for example, a horn or an ear. As Allāh is perfect, He is entitled to a perfect sacrifice only. The sacrificial animals may not be exchanged or sold. Such rules are followed in different Islamic societies. For example, Sekhaneh (2005) found among the Bebouin of Jordan that they follow such rules. The people of the Aneuk Jamee in west Labuhan Haji-South Acèh also follow such rules. As with the Bedouin, the perfection of the sacrificial animal must be matched by the proper moral condition of the sacrificer and the mental condition of the animal to be sacrificed. The act must be performed with piety (Indon *kealiman*) in the heart and in such a way that the animal is not unduly frightened but killed in quick manner. Most significant is the rule that “once the animal has been selected for sacrifice; it may no longer be sold or otherwise alienated, except in order to exchange it for a more adequate specimen” (al-Sakhaneh 2005:141). “If an animal purchased for sacrifice has been lost, stolen, or has died then another animal must be purchased instead. If that animal has been sacrificed and the first subsequently recovered, it should be sacrificed as well. Thus once an animal has been dedicated to Allāh it may not be the object of any other exchange transaction” (*ibid*). If the sacrificer does not know how to slaughter an animal, he may hand over the task to another person who is devout and knows about sacrifice. When giving the mandate, the sacrificer says, “This is my sacrifice that I give to you to be sacrificed and then distribute its meat to those who have the right to accept it”. It is considered favourable (Arb *mustahab*), however, for sacrificer to be present during the sacrifice.

After the sacrifice has been made, it is better for the sacrificer to distribute the sacrificial meat (Indon *daging qurban*) if he can but he may ask for help from those who understand how to divide and distribute it as regulated by Islamic law.

## **The distribution of the sacrifice**

The distribution and consumption of the sacrifice form an important part of the total ritual. If a sheep, ram, cow or buffalo is killed, the animal’s meat must be divided and shared in a fixed fashion for the sacrifice to be complete. The sacrificer with the help of the committee members skin the animal and distribute the sacrificial meat for the consumption on the *uroe raya haji* day. It is mostly given to others and it is even far better if the sacrificer gives everything to the needy as charity. The meat is cut up arbitrarily and mixed in such a man-

ner that no special part of the animal will be allocated to any particular recipient. It means that the receivers receive similar mixed contents of the animal. What is important here is that there is no social distinction. Everybody gets the same share. Social distinctions between persons are neutralized and all receivers are equal in relation to Allāh. “Thereupon the meat is carefully divided into three parts of equal weight; one part is distributed among the sacrificer’s own household, one part among non-co resident relatives, and one part among non-related neighboring households” (al-Sakhaneh 2005:141). “Allāh as the giver of the meat thus negates the distinction between these categories, giving each person - irrespective of his creed or kinship - the gift of meat” (*ibid*). The act symbolizes the willingness to give up things that are of benefit to the people in order to follow Allāh’s command. It also symbolizes our willingness to give up some of the sacrificer’s bounties in order to strengthen ties of friendship and help those who are in need. One sacrificer says “I recognize that all blessing comes from Allāh, and I should open my heart to sacrifice the animals and share with others”.

The existence of the committee members for slaughtering animals is needed so that the sacrificial ritual can be performed smoothly. However, they are not allowed to take skin or other parts of the sacrificial meat except if they are poor or have received meat from the sacrificers as a gift (*Arb hadiya*). It is said that when the sacrificer delivers the meat to the poor, he or she will get the same reward that he or she would get from releasing a slave from his/her master. As has been observed, the sacrificial meat in the cluster (*Ind dusun*) of Darussalam of Blangporoh villiage is divided into 25 heaps suitable for the poor families in that cluster. Meanwhile, the sacrificial buffalo’s meat Ladang Tuha II is divided into 150 heaps and in Meunasah Baro it is divided into 170 heaps suitable for the poor families including the orphanages in these villages. The sacrificer does not divide the sacrificial meat into three equal portions as described above because there are more poor people in the village. Most importantly, this charitable practice is demonstrated by the concerted effort to see that no impoverished inhabitants are left without sacrificed food during this joyful occasion.

It is also permissible to give the sacrificial meat to non-Muslims as charity since they do not fight against Muslims. The Qur’ān says” Allāh does not forbid you from having contact with those who do not fight you because of religion and from those who do not expel you from your homes; you should be righteous toward them and act justly towards them. Indeed, Allāh loves those

who act justly (QS 60:8). In contrast, it is forbidden to give the sacrificial meat to non-Muslims who fight against Muslims. The Qur'ān says, "Allāh only forbids you from having contact with those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion. He forbids you to make them your allies and whoever makes allies of them are then the wrongdoers (QS 60:9). The sacrificer is allowed to receive and consume a part of the meat of the animal in order to receive 'blessing' from Allāh. The animal is a sacrificial gift to Allāh and it is in His name that the meat is distributed among other people. It is significant that "in principle the social vicinity of the sacrificer entitles people indiscriminately to an equal part of the meat, be they Muslims or Christians, or whatever their social standing" (al-Sakhaneh 2005:141). On this occasion many households perform sacrifices. It is clear that it leads to an intensive process of gift-giving among the entire inhabitants in the name of Allāh. Hence it is forbidden (Arb *haram*) to alienate any part of the sacrificial meat by selling it or giving any part of it as payment for services. This is based on a *hadīth* from Ali, "The Prophet has ordered me to handle the sacrificed camel and I divide its skin and meat and I do not give the butcher any part of it. He said "we give from our own belongings". Thus the butcher, skinner, or cleaner should not be given any part of the animal in reward for his services but should be paid separately.

## Conclusion

The *uroe raya haji* is one of the two major yearly holidays in Islam. It falls on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the Islamic lunar month of Zulhijjah and it is the "feast of sacrifice" which symbolically marks the willingness of the Prophet Ibrāhīm to sacrifice his son, Isma'īl in obedience to Allāh. This twelfth month in the Acèhnese calendars or in the Islamic calendars follows on from the completion of the pilgrimage to Mecca. The Aneuk Jamee refer to it as *hari rayo haji* or in Indonesianized Arabic, *idul adha* (from Arabic *īd al-adhā*). They talk about the sacrifice which the pilgrims perform in the city of Mina in Mecca simultaneously with their own sacrifices. In this context the Aneuk Jamee also refer to this local event as the "pilgrimage holiday" (Ach *oroë raya haji*).

There are two rituals performed by the Aneuk Jamee related to the *uroe raya haji*. They are *meugang* (eating meat before *idul adha*) and slaughtering sacrificial animals. Although they are performed nearly at the same time, these two activities have two different dimensions. *Meugang* is from an *adat* tradi-

tion, while sacrifice (Arb *qurbān*) is from *syari'ah*. In the context of *uroe raya haji*, the *meugang* ritual is marked by eating meat together in the family. After *uroe raya haji*, the celebration is continued by sacrificing the meat. The Aneuk Jamee's custom of performing *meugang* before the *uroe raya haji* day is to welcome the coming of *uroe raya haji*. Welcoming it is done through eating together with their families. However, in *syari'ah* law, a day preceding the *uroe raya haji* (on 9 Dzulhijjah) is the day of Arafah. On this day all Muslims are recommended to fast to eliminate their sins. In the *syari'ah* law the “culture of eating” is recommended after the *idul adha* prayer for 3 days respectively, (11-13 Dzulhijjah) called *tasyréd* days. Thus fasting on the *tasyréd* days is not allowed, as the Prophet said “these days are the days for eating and drinking”. Here there is a different pattern in welcoming the day of *uroe raya haji* between *adat* and *syari'ah*. The *meugang*'s meat (Ach *sie meugang*) is prepared for one's family whereas sacrificial meat (Ach *sie kureubeun*) is shared amongst others, especially the needy. *Meungang* is performed to strengthen family relationships, whereas, the sacrifice is performed to strengthen the bonds of friendship, its focus is also on social attention to the needy.

Like the Gayo people in Central Acèh, the Aneuk Jamee couples also “shape their sacrificial performances with the afterlife in mind, trying to provide a mount “vehicle” to heaven on Judgment Day for themselves, their children, and, if possible, their parents and grandparents. Parents feel a strong obligation to provide a mount for a child who dies young, as do children whose parents and grandparents have no resources to make sacrifices in their own names” (Bowen, 1992). Like the *akikah* (Arb *'aqīqa*) sacrifice, the sacrificial ram, sheep or buffalo provides a future gift. On Judgment Day, the sacrificial animals will meet their sacrificers next to their cemeteries in the condition in which they have been sacrificed. Only one person can ride a goat or a sheep to the place of Judgment, but seven can ride on a buffalo or a cow. A buffalo sacrifice or a cow thus provides the opportunity to bring together parents, children, and grandchildren on the back of the sacrificial mount. In addition, like the Gayo people in Central Acèh, the Aneuk Jamee also “projects the imagery from the ritual event onto the family's fate in the afterlife” (Bowen, 1992). This specific image is proof that the ritual of sacrifice performed on *uroe raya haji* in Aneuk Jamee society involves not just the offering but much more than that, it includes the moral bonds uniting them as they come together to sacrifice livestock such as a ram, sheep or buffalo to Allāh.

In this single sacrificial ritual, there are two different dimensions, the Aneuk Jamee's *adat* dimension and the Islamic dimension. In the Aneuk Jamee's *adat* dimension there is a discourse on the "cooling" ritual and in the Islamic dimension the "cooling" ritual is not relevant. In the Islamic dimension the ritual of sacrifice is based up the first animal sacrifice made, that is the sacrificed ram instead of Isma'īl this we may call the Ibrāhīm tradition. Here both these ritual discourses are united in the same sacrificial ritual but modernists want to purify Islam from *adat* and therefore insist that the "cooling" ritual should be removed.

## CHAPTER 14

### Concluding remarks

The society of the Aneuk Jamee is composed of people who mostly originate from Minangkabau, West Sumatra. During their settlement in the southern and western coast of Acèh over the last hundred years, some of them have mingled with other migrants who, for the most part, were descendants of inhabitants from the region of Acèh. During this long period of separation from their native Minangkabau area and due to geographic circumscription, they found that certain dimensions of their inherited culture were changing. In addition, the joining of two different traditions in that area – the Acèhnese *adat* and the Minangkabau *adat* – has resulted in a mutual giving and receiving of aspects of each respective *adat*. Aspects of the Acèhnese's *adat* were incorporated into that of the Aneuk Jamee since the southern and western coast of Acèh has always been a part of Acèh's sphere of influence. These factors cannot be ignored in understanding the changes taking place within the Aneuk Jamee society. As a result the *adat* of the Aneuk Jamee is difficult to classify either as the Minangkabau *adat* or the Acèhnese *adat*. Elements from both have been integrated into a distinct, coherent and particular system of *adat* that can be identified as specific for the Aneuk Jamee. Such is reflected in the ritual calendar that is the object of this study.

The specificity of the Aneuk Jamee *adat* is correspondingly reflected in the structure and process in the Aneuk Jamee's ritual calendar. Throughout this thesis, I have presented a wide-ranging discussion of the Aneuk Jamee's ritual calendar constituting in its totality the annual ritual cycle that forms the foundation of the socio-religious order of the society of South Acèh. This discussion includes what the local people believe as well as what they do. Exceptions do occur, but by and large, what people believe, do, and enact are complementary. What they believe motivates what they do and how they act, while what they do and how they act reflects in verbal as well as in non-verbal expressions what they believe.

Careful examination of these rituals shows that the Aneuk Jamee society in South Acèh reflects different perspectives: the traditional *adat* perspective, the historical Islamic perspective, and the modernist Islamic perspective. This suggests that the Aneuk Jamee society is comparable to other societies in Indonesia in that they have a culture and identity that makes them different from

others while at the same time sharing characteristics that makes them comparable.

Whereas the facts covered in this study are connected with traditional customary practices (Indon *adat istiadat*), the thesis endeavours to demonstrate that many, if not most, acts or expressions have scriptural roots or find their justification in the basic sources of Islamic doctrine: the Qur'ān and the *hadīth* and the works of the 'ulamā' in which operational meanings of the Qur'ān and the *hadīth* are elaborated. Whether or not this basis and justification are considered applicable and acceptable to other Muslims is a matter of theological debate within the Muslim community rather than a subject for judgment by observers. The relation between *adat* and Islam in Acèh has been influenced by the following guidance: "*Adat bak Poe Teumeureuhom* [Sultan Iskandar Muda], *Hukom bak Syiah Kuala. Hukom ngon adat lagèe zat ngon sipheut*" (*Adat* is with Poe Teumeureuhom, Law is with Syiah Kuala. Law and *adat* are like substance and its character). This expression means that questions concerning social and political order are decided by the wisdom of the Sultan and his advisors, in this case symbolized by Sultan Iskandar Muda. Islamic law is in the hands of religious leaders, symbolized by the great and well-known, Teungku Syiah Kuala (Syeikh 'Abd Al-Ra'ūf Al-Singkīlī). "*Zat ngon sipheut*" means that laws and traditional customary practices are tied up firmly like substance and character. *Adat* and Islamic law are thus inseparable. Some Aneuk Jamee and Acèhnese are sometimes confused what belongs to *adat* and what to Islam, saying that customary law (*adat*) in Acèh is derived from Islam.

The order of *adat* varies in different areas in Acèh. For instance, *adat* in Central Acèh may vary from the ones in coastal areas such as the *adat* of the Aneuk Jamee in West Labuhan Haji district, South Acèh. Yet this does not create a conflict because one subscribes to the principle that *adat* is where you are; wherever you walk on this earth it is under this sky that you live [and it is rules that you obey] (*adat itu adalah domisili, dimana bumi dipijak, disitu langit dijunjung*). *Adat* is the customary means to create an ordered life within society and all that surrounds it. According to the Jamee elders in West Labuhan Haji district, *adat* aims to uphold the teachings of Islam. They insist that, "the law of religion without *adat* is tasteless; *adat* without religion is canceled" (*hukom/agama hana adat tabeu, adat hana agama bateu*). *Adat* is understood as a flavor of religion. If it is violated, it brings sanctions. It has the highest status in a community and is sacred.

*Adat* in Blangporoh society forms, and is expressed in all forms of, social interaction, ranging from concrete settlement patterns to vernacular language, kinship terms and marriage systems, rituals and games, arts and weapons etc. This thesis has focused, however, on the *adat* of the annual ritual calendar. A brief review of what the analysis has highlighted is useful to explore to what extent the society's core ideas and values reveal pre-Islamic elements as well as those central to historic Islam.

In chapter 2, the Aneuk Jamee cosmology revealed that there are categories of cosmological beings interacting with the living. The Aneuk Jamee believes that the universe consists of two interconnected parts: the visible and the invisible. Human beings live on the visible level, while God and spiritual beings, such as *malaikat* (angels), *iblis* (devils), *syètan* (Satan) and *jinn* (genies), exist on the invisible level. Both levels are interrelated and they interact through the belief and rules given by God. The Aneuk Jamee idea of God derives entirely from Islam. The essence of the Aneuk Jamee's theology is its monotheism - the belief in Allāh as the creator of all things. Nothing has happened or shall happen without His knowledge or His will. He is the only everlasting and unique reality, the eternal and absolute, to whom alone all worship is due. Central to the Aneuk Jamee ideas is the belief in the unity of God and His attributes which explains Himself and His existence. Striking is the total absence of Hindu deities.

However, *malaikat* are believed to act as intermediaries between the divine world and the human world working at the command of Allāh. Belief in *malaikat* is closely connected to the belief in other spiritual beings such as *iblis*, *jinn*, *syètan* and *makhluk halus*. The two realms are opposed but complementary so that each makes the other understandable and acceptable. *Malaikat*, *iblis*, *jinn*, *syètan* have their roots in the Qur'ān but *makhluk halus* do not. Although the Aneuk Jamee believe and maintain that *makhluk halus* are part of the spirits that have their original roots in the Qur'ān, it may be argued that these beliefs are maintained and derived from a pre-Islamic Aneuk Jamee socio-cosmological view of the universe that has been integrated into the local Muslim belief system. As detailed information about these spiritual beings is incomplete and speculative, their nature, essence and actions are described differently by different people.

Chapter 3 demonstrated that the Aneuk Jamee system of kinship is expressed and enacted during life-cycle rituals such as weddings, circumcisions,

and funerals. In addition, *hari rayo idul fitri*, the celebration at the end of the fasting month of Ramadhan and *hari rayo haji*, the celebration of the “feast of sacrifice” are the media through which kinship connections are acknowledged. The recognition of consanguineal kinship is limited to three descending and three ascending generations. Beyond these boundaries, kin are not terminologically acknowledged. In addition, the recognition of kinship is “horizontal” rather than “vertical”, in that an apical ancestor is not the point of orientation rather it is siblingship. Relatives are commonly distinguished as close or distant, but seldom with precision. The descendants of a single grandparent usually regard one another as close, but the descendants of siblings of grandparents are distant and can be forgotten. In explaining a distant link, an individual traces the connection until a sibling relationship at the third ascending generation and stops there. The farthest back the kinship reckoning goes is to say that “our ancestors (*muyang/moyang*) are siblings”, rather than identifying the relationship between persons as descendants of a linking ancestor. In other words, the Aneuk Jamee tends to say that, “We descend from siblings”.

The order of birth is an important principle for the relationships between siblings and the orientation in time is a main principle for ordering the relations among siblings. The children’s absolute order of birth is not subordinated to the order of birth of their respective parents. Therefore, this principle cannot be spoken of as an “inherited” one. The children do not take on their respective parents’ birth order and are not subordinated under their parents’ age but depend on the order of their own respective moment of birth. Absolute age, therefore, can be identified as a main structuring principle for the relationships among parents’ siblings’ children. The children designate their parents’ siblings according to their relative age and respect the order of birth of their parents’ generation. Hence the orientation in time is a main characteristic of their relationship. Not only is the relative age important to this relationship, but also a gender specific distinction is made clear.

The ritual of marriage described in chapter 4 demonstrates that the authority in conducting a marriage relationship does not derive from the patrilineal relatives (*wali hukum*) but from the matrilineal ones (*niniak mamak*). Patrilineal relatives do not seem to play a significant role in the establishment of affinity. Most parts of the ritual are performed by *niniak mamak* of both the bride and groom. Never are a bride and groom represented by *wali hukum*. *Niniak mamak* are responsible for the marriage; most ritual transactions are

performed by them. The siblings of the bride and groom are not given any formal roles in the wedding ceremony.

The Aneuk Jamee wedding is accompanied by an elaborate series of gift exchanges between the groom's parents and the bride's. Apart from the transfer of money and jewelry, the gifts given from the groom's side to the bride's called *hantaran* are goods such as cloth, cosmetic products, fruit, toilet articles, trinkets, etc. These gifts are reciprocated by the bride's side to the groom's. These are not distinguished by special terms but consist of cooked food which is prepared by women in the kitchen. The notion of marriage for the Aneuk Jamee is, therefore, significant in understanding the domestic life of the Aneuk Jamee society. The wife provides the home as well the cooked food for the husband. This exchange is conceptualized as a relation between the host (wife) and the guest (husband).

Chapter 5 discusses the ritual of *khanduri 'asyūrā* performed on the tenth day of the first lunar month, Muḥarram (i.e. January). The people associate the events of Muḥarram and *'āsyūrā* with different mythical contexts. Some stress the myth of Husén, others stress the myth of Moses and Pharaoh and some others stress the myth of Noah's ark. The myth of Noah, in particular, is important because it was deemed to be the occasion when the first porridge was cooked. The Blangporoh villagers cook the porridge and celebrate having been saved from the deluge by Allāh. This ritual consists of four activities: 1) Preparing the *'āsyūrā* porridge commemorating the first meal consumed after the ark ran aground; 2) Observing the *tasu'a* (fasting on the ninth day) and the *'āsyūrā* (fasting on the tenth day) of the Muḥarram month; 3) Caressing the orphans' head and; 4) Performing the *'āsyūrā* prayer. The interpretations of the meaning and the value of distributing *'āsyūrā* porridge in the ritual of *'āsyūrā* are twofold. Firstly, the ritual has a social meaning and value, in that it strengthens the community ties by cooking the *'āsyūrā* porridge and by sharing it. The villagers offer the *'āsyūrā* porridge to be distributed to neighbors, next-of-kin and people who pass through the community on that day. Secondly there is the religious meaning and value, that is the merit that one receives from Allāh when one performs the ritual of *'āsyūrā*. One does it for one's fellow people, for one's community and because Allāh saved Noah and his followers and Moses and his followers. The religious merit received from performing this ritual is meant to be transferred to Hasan and Husén, the martyred grandchil-

dren of the Prophet Muḥammad, while begging Allāh to forgive their sins and allow them a “wide grave”, that is, to release them from torment.

Chapter 6 shows how the ritual of *tulak bala* (“warding off calamity”) is celebrated annually on the last Wednesday of the second lunar month of Safar (February). During this period there is an interdiction on house building, on performing marriage rituals etc. Accidents, epidemics and disasters are believed to occur during this month and particularly on the last Wednesday which is considered inauspicious. Such catastrophic events are attributed to Satan and other evil supernatural beings attacking human beings and cattle. The ritual of *tulak bala* performed during this Safar month is therefore considered crucially important to ward off all kinds of evil and misfortune by strengthening the social relations among the people. On this day young men and women as well as the elderly hold a social gathering at the seashore or at a river bank. They bring various kinds of food with them and entertain themselves by singing to the accompaniment of guitar music. On the actual day of the ritual, some young men play football, and then take a bath in the river or in the sea called *manoe sapha*. This ritual bath may have been originally a secular bathing festivity providing an opportunity for the nubile young men and women to see and to get to know each other. It would also seem possible that such a festivity might well have been part of Jamee traditions before it was endowed with an Islamic significance. It is, however, worth mentioning that most performances of the *tulak bala* ritual in Blangporoh have changed as culture in the coastal area is more open to foreign influences. This change is also caused by the rigorous criticism from the local modernists and ‘*ulamā*’, claiming that constructing a banana raft with offerings placed on it and then releasing it to the sea or river on the day of *tulak bala* is a pre-Islamic act. Therefore, at present, the recreational aspect is stressed more than the ritual aspect.

The ritual of *khanduri mo’lōt* “the ritual celebrating the Prophet’s Muḥammad birthday” described in chapter 7 held either in the *mò’lōt* month (on or after the 12th day of Rabī’ al-Awwal - the third month of the year (March) or in one of the two following months (April and May). It is performed in light of generating happiness manifested in the society as a whole that participate in all aspects of the *khanduri* so that the more abundant the *khanduri* [food] is, the more happiness that is felt and displayed. The recitation of the *diké mò’lōt* consists of appeals to Allāh to give the highest dignity to the Prophet, his ancestors and descendants and to give merit to his companions, his followers, participants

and to all Muslims. The *diké mò'lōt* is recited because people believe that the 'spirit' (Indon *roh*) of the Prophet and his companions are present with them. Reciting the *diké mò'lōt* is considered the same as praying for the Prophet's well-being in order to get 'help' (*syafā'ah*) from him in the hereafter in return. For these reasons, many villagers are willing to go into serious debt in order to be able to join in the communal meal and at the same time to celebrate the Prophet's birth, for the social commensality is always embedded in the wider cosmological frame. Nonetheless, the orthodox '*ulamā*' find the inclusion of any food on this occasion to be dangerous, misleading people into seeing religious events as self-interested spiritual transactions, when in fact they should be primarily an act of obedience to Allāh.

In performing this ritual, the performers various intentions may have different valorizations. The *khanduri mò'lōt* at the family and village level are not just perceived as a commemorative celebration but also as a part of several exchange relationships and the villagers have different interpretations of the various parts of the ritual. These interpretations range from understanding their actions as prayers to Allāh, to generating merit for the 'soul' (*roh*) of deceased family members by bringing offerings to the mosque, to allowing angels to enjoy a meal offered on this occasion. The '*ulamā*', however, object to these interpretations as they also object to the interpretation of *mò'lōt* as a *khanduri*, and during didactic lectures they may express a disdain for including the distribution and the consumption of food in the ritual. In their view, Muslim holidays are primarily about remembering and celebrating events in Islamic history, conforming to the historical example set by the Prophet and demonstrating obedience to Allāh through worship, fast, and sacrifice.

Chapter 8 is devoted to the ritual of *khanduri bungong kayèè* "the ritual for flowering trees". It is performed especially for fruit bearing trees such as *nephelium*, *lansium*, mango, and so forth in Jumadil Akhir (June) to protect the fruition of the trees from the southern wind and from flashes of lightning. It aims at ensuring that Allāh will take care that the trees will bear fruit, the blossoms will not fade and fall onto the ground prematurely and that the trees will not be attacked by diseases but will benefit human beings. The ritual is closely connected with the idea that the winds cause the trees to blossom. Such winds are classified into four kinds: the northern wind, regarded as "cold", the southern wind regarded as "hot"; the eastern wind regarded as "patient"; and the western wind as "strong". Each wind has its own function for the trees. The

eastern wind functions as fertilizer for the tree; the northern wind strengthens the tree roots; the western wind will make the tree bear blossoms; while the southern wind can make the tree blossoms fade and fall to the ground. If the wind does not shake the trees, the trees will not bear blossom. When the western wind blows, the tree trunks shake and their branches rub each other. As a result the hollow spaces in the tree trunks are opened and the wind penetrates the tree trunks causing the trees to bloom. Therefore, the villagers say that the western wind is the “husband of the tree”, just like the “husband of the turtle is the southern wind” because “if the southern wind blows the female turtles lay eggs”.

Even when performing the ritual of *khanduri bungong kayèe*, it may still happen that the trees do not blossom, that is, that the fertility of the fruit-bearing trees has not been safeguarded. For there are several further requirements for the fertility of the fruit bearing trees: it is dependent upon collective ritual action, the “mercy” of Allāh, the actions of jinn, fair political leadership, and respecting the *adat* rules particularly concerning exogamy and incest which is the most serious crime in *adat* law.

Chapter 9 describes the ritual of *khanduri apam* performed in the seventh lunar month, Ra’jab (July). It is commemorated by baking *apam* cakes in every house and distributing them at the mosques or prayer houses as special food in the interest of ancestors and recently deceased relatives. The ritual is celebrated on two different occasions: for the deceased of a house and collectively, for all deceased that have become ancestors. The collective *khanduri apam* can only be celebrated after the individual *khanduri apam* has been performed for each deceased person. Thus, first the relation between the living and ancestors of a particular house is established, and only then the relation between the living as a whole and the ancestors of the society as a whole are expressed. This is indeed the way of mediation between the living and ancestors. The ritual has various dimensions. The first dimension is that it takes care of the dead, on both occasions they are nourished with the spiritual essence of the rice. To that end, rice cakes are cooked, the smell of which attracts the deceased and whose fragrance is intended as nourishment for the deceased. The second dimension is that performing the *khanduri apam* generates merit that is transferred to the deceased in order to protect his or her in the grave from the interrogating angels. It is redeemed by linking the offering of the rice cakes with the recitation of the *shamadiyah*. They generate the gift from Allāh to those performers. This

third dimension is denied by modernists who reject the possibility of the living aiding the dead through the *shamadiyah* recitation. They argue that “the person can only help him or herself directly in relation to Allāh”. The modernists also deny that one can send food to the souls but they do value the food’s natural qualities.

Chapter 10 is devoted to the ritual of *khanduri bu*, performed in the eighth lunar month, Sya’ban (August). This is aimed at thanking the ancestors (*ureueng chi’*) who have already transferred well-being to the living. This is regarded as an important obligation to the ancestors. The ritual entails visits to the ancestral tombs and feeding the ‘souls’ (*roh*) of the ancestors by distributing rice and other food dishes to the poor and orphans to commemorate the services of the ancestors who have accumulated and generated wealth in the past. The Aneuk Jamee state that there are villagers who used to be rich but who gradually lost their wealth as their ancestors condemned them for not commemorating them. In such a case one’s wealth would no longer be ‘blessed’ (*beureukat*) as their descendants no longer expressed their gratitude to their ancestors but neglected them instead. Thus, the food given to the poor and orphans is regarded to be a social demonstration of the sincere devotion to Allāh in order to “prevent calamities”. It testifies to the fact that the givers’ “heart is not hardened” and that he has not forgotten the ancestral origin of his well-being. His gifts, given in acknowledgement of these debts, are a means of “cleansing his soul/mind”. Many villagers are now rich because they have received the benefits and the prosperity as ancestral gifts called “the deceased’s property. Such ancestral gifts of prosperity to the living remain “the deceased’s property”. This prosperity would diminish and eventually be lost altogether if the living did not perform the *khanduri bu* ritual in acknowledgement of these ancestral gifts.

The ritual of Ramadhan analysed chapter 11 is performed in the ninth lunar month (September), consisting of *fasting*, *tarawèh prayer*, *tadarus*, *nuzul Qur’an* and *zakat fitrah*. It is regarded as a “liminal time” in the Islamic calendrical rituals. The Aneuk Jamee do not only understand Ramadhan on the normative level but have specific interpretations on the practical level. There are three notions which give meaning to the performance of Ramadhan rituals. The first notion is Ramadhan as a month of purification in which to purify the heart, the “controller of the mind” and source of all actions. The second notion is Ramadhan as a month of religious worship to get the best spiritual training.

During Ramadhan, people become more aware of performing religious worship. The belief is that each good deed performed during Ramadhan brings the performer one step closer to Paradise. Thus, during Ramadhan worship is intensified and religious practice and moral values are strengthened. The third notion is Ramadhan as a month of joy. This can be seen in the joy experienced by families reuniting and associated with the many *khanduri* held during Ramadhan. The greatest happiness of Ramadhan is, of course, the celebration at the end of Ramadhan. It is interesting that all these joyous activities do not contradict Islamic teaching but rather are acknowledged as part of religious service. These three notions are interrelated and as a result, to some extent, it is difficult to make a distinction between them. Ramadhan is, thus, a moment for the Aneuk Jamee and the *suluk* followers in Blangporoh to return to their basic identity as an Islamic and social community. Through experiencing a special life during Ramadhan, they endeavor to proclaim to themselves and to other people that their basic identity as Muslims and as the Aneuk Jamee has not changed.

The ritual of *uroe raya puasa* “the festival of breaking fast” examined in chapter 12 is the major annual holiday of Islam and is performed on the first day of the tenth lunar month, Syawwal (October). The celebration called *uroe raya puasa* marks the end of Ramadhan. The ritual of *uroe raya puasa* cannot be separated from the religious services performed by Muslims during the Ramadhan lunar month. The relation between fasting and *uroe raya puasa* is perceived as a relation between “struggle” and “victory”. Fasting is a spiritual journey to release the human body from satanic powers. This journey involves restraining basic human urges: one must stop eating, drinking, and having sexual intercourse. *Uroe raya puasa*, then is a “feast of victory” celebrating that people have been freed from satanic desire.

It is worth mentioning that *uroe raya puasa* is valued as a moment to develop communication, both with Allāh and among human beings. Communication with Allāh is attained by continuously carrying out ‘Allāh-fearing’ prayers (*taqwā*) during the month of fasting. Communication with human beings is achieved through the bonds of friendship, gift-giving and forgiving each other. In addition, the purification performed during *uroe raya puasa* can be seen as a point of transition from the ‘liminal time’ of the sacred month back into everyday life. As people feel that they are reborn and without sin, *uroe raya puasa* is for the Aneuk Jamee not only the climax of the purification process but also the starting point for the return to everyday life.

Chapter 13 is devoted to the ritual of *uroe raya haji* (“pilgrimage holiday”), another major yearly holiday in Islam, performed on the 10th day of the twelfth lunar month, Zulhijjah (December). It is the “feast of sacrifice” which commemorates and represents the willingness of the Prophet Ibrāhīm to sacrifice his son, Isma’īl in obedience to Allāh. The Aneuk Jamee couples conduct their sacrificial performances with their after life in mind. They aim to provide a “vehicle” to Heaven on Judgment Day for themselves, their children, and, if possible, their parents and grandparents. Parents feel a strong obligation to perform the sacrifice for a child who dies young, as do children whose parents and grandparents have no resources to make sacrifices in their own names. Like the *akikah* sacrifice, the sacrificial ram, sheep or buffalo represent a gift. On Judgment Day, the sacrificial animals will meet their sacrificers next to their cemeteries in the condition in which they have been sacrificed. Only one person can ride a goat or a sheep to the place of Judgment, but seven can ride a buffalo or a cow. The sacrifice of a buffalo or a cow thus provides the opportunity to bring together parents, children, and grandchildren on the back of the sacrificial mount. This specific image bears witness to the idea that the ritual sacrifice performed on *uroe raya haji* in the Aneuk Jamee society involves not just the sacrificial slaughter but above all it strengthens the moral bonds between those who come together to sacrifice livestock to Allāh.

It seems clear at this stage that the Aneuk Jamee cannot be separated from the ritual performance of these manifold *khanduri* rituals. They consider the performance of calendrical *khanduri* as the most important parts of social action. It is of vital importance for the continuity and reproduction of all social life. The Aneuk Jamee deem the ritual calendar of fundamental importance for their very existence as a society. As local *adat* elders say, “if the ritual calendar were not be performed, it would be as if there was something wrong with the village people; they would feel uneasy that there is something incomplete in their lives, for the rituals have become part of *adat* in the society”.

Islam has entered the *adat* of the society, influencing this annual ritual calendar. As a result, the concept of *agama* “religion” and that of *adat* “customary order” cannot be separated. They have become united as two sides of the same coin. Pre-Islamic representations, however, still have a strong root in the praxis of *adat*, such as when performing rituals of *tulak bala* (“warding off calamities”) and in the belief in the different categories of cosmological beings even though the Aneuk Jamee have strong faith in Islam as a religion. The

*adat* of the ritual calendar has a foundation in the ideas and values of the Aneuk Jamee. The Aneuk Jamee *adat* acts as a framework of guidance and reference in life. The ideas and values are expressed in and through all acts aimed at earning a livelihood and in the enactment of all rituals accompanying their lives.

Apart from the proposal by some groups of people, that the *adat* of the ritual calendar should be abandoned since it is old-fashioned or even hampers development, the reality is that the *adat* remains an essential part of and a guide for every step in the life of community members. Acèh is well known as a special area with regard to education and *adat*. The autonomy of the Acèhnese *adat* in the past and in the present is evident from the fact that nearly all their life activities are carefully arranged by *adat*, starting from life in the household and exploiting the means of livelihood, to community life and religion practice. For them, the *adat* is a guide as well as a frame used as a flavour to give a good taste to life.

The guidance and grandeur of *adat* contributes to a sense of self-esteem and self-confidence. As Guru Budiman, the head of Acèh *adat* council in West Labuhan Haji district has put it; “We are great nation, foreigners will be amazed and respect us if we are able to maintain life in the environment of law and *adat*” and a local proverb says, “the people who have no *adat* resemble a ship that has no a captain” (*ureueng tan adat lagè kapai tan nahkoda*). Life which is not protected by *adat* is barren, a life without passion. Especially for the village farmers and fishermen, the *adat* of their ritual calendar is of crucial importance both for “digging for knowledge” and for societal relations. Through “digging for knowledge” one can acquire ritual knowledge if one has learnt the theory of the ritual either in formal or in non-formal teaching, and it will be quickly mastered if the opportunity is given to practice the ritual in social life. This opportunity is provided if one is involved directly in *adat* activities.

The Aneuk Jamee *adat* acts as a glue, uniting people's lives together. *Adat* has “planted” the attitude of mutual assistance to solve the many problems facing the society. People know that the main economic activities of farming and fishing not only bring many risks but may also easily lead to various conflicts among each other. For farmers these risks include the problem of channelling and dividing water and maintaining the dikes between rice fields. For fishermen, these are the problems of catching fish and other marine species and the problem of exploiting the coral reefs and other sea resources. *Adat* enables

them to solve these conflicts and provides the opportunity to enjoy holidays and the company of others even if there is not enough money to support themselves. Therefore, *adat* is one of the coordinating institutions requiring a person to be mutually responsible and to overcome problems and disputes in the society. The *adat* of the ritual calendar enables conflicts to be solved, people to gather together, tension to be released and soothes exhausted souls enslaved by everyday responsibilities toward one's family. Eating together during the rituals binds social relations closer and enhances a sense of understanding towards one another. It is, therefore, not an exaggeration to insist that this *adat* of the ritual calendar should be maintained, as it contributes to the sense of sociability, and to the identity of the Aneuk Jamee. It enables the society to unite in facing problems and catastrophes that might appear in the future. Society should respect the *adat* as long as it does not collide with religious teaching, the nation's laws and development. As the Aneuk Jamee themselves insist, living without *adat* is like eating curry without salt, living a life without flavour, without pleasure, and without passion.



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KITLV	= Koninklijk Instituut voor Tall-Land-en Volkenkunde
LAKA	= Lembaga Adat Kebudayaan Aceh
LP3ES	= Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial
CNWS	= Concord Naval Weapons Station

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## APPENDIX 1

The poem at *menendai* ceremony by the groom's side

*Biduak dikayuh kamuaro  
manyawuak ayie mamakai timbo  
alah putieh uban dikapalo  
bungo yang kambong balun basuwo*

*Bakato kato dalam hati  
terbayang-bayang dikalopak mato  
tabayang didalom mimpi  
dapek barito sakatiko  
barito dibawok unggéh tabang  
ada kambang sakumtum bungo  
yang sedang kambang ditangkainyo  
ditanamdirumah iko  
bungo yang dijaga niniak mamak  
ayah jok bundo*

*Anak padusi ibarat kato urang  
sarupo buah durian  
kamano disimpan babaun juo*

*Bak pihak hati yakin ka bungo  
walau dilintang tujuh lurah dan bukik  
namun bungo tatok kami turuit juo  
indak kami tahu jok litak badan  
banyak kampung kami lalui  
puluhan koto yang kami singgahi  
banyak sungai kami seberangi  
baliku jalan yang kami tampuah  
kini kami tibo dikampungko  
kami tahimbau tibo dirumahko  
lantran cahayo bungo kambang  
dirumahko*

*Dari jauh kami datang manjalang  
mambawok sarato saikue kumbang  
kumbang pandan banamo sikumbang jadi  
sayoknyo hijau kamerahan  
tabangnyo tinggi manambuih awan  
tigo kali dalam sahari  
tabang ka Aceh babalik hari  
tabang ka Arab mencari makan  
tingganyo jauh dari yang ramai  
indak sabarapo diom di nagari  
banyak badiom dikampung urang  
hitom balakangnya banyak bajalan  
sirah muko banyak bapaneh*

The Canoe is rowed into the estuary  
drawing water with a bucket  
a pat on the head that is gray-white  
the blossoming flower has not been met

Saying in the heart  
imagine in the eye's eyelid  
imagine in the dream  
getting news instantly  
news carried by flying birds  
there is a flower  
which is blossoming on its stalk  
it is planted in this house  
a flower guarded by *niniak mamak*  
father and mother.

People say a girl  
resembles the *durian* fruit  
stored away but whose scent is in the air

Because the heart is sure about the flower  
although it is blocked by 7 villages and hills  
however the flower should be followed  
we do not know that our body is tired  
many villages we pass  
dozens of cities we stop at  
many rivers we cross  
winding roads we travel  
now we arrive in this village  
we are called to arrive at this house  
due to the light of flower in bloom  
in this house

From far we come  
we bring along a beetle  
the *pandan* beetle named *sikumbang jadi*  
its wing is reddish green  
it flies high in the clouds  
three times a day  
flying to Aceh returning on the same day  
flying to Arabia searching for food  
it lives far from the crowd  
it does not stay much in the realm  
it stays more in other people's villages  
black on its back because it walks more  
its face is red because it stays in the heat more

*bajalan kumbang kian kamari  
bak pihak paruik indak baisi  
ibarat ayam maken mangakeh-ngakeh  
indak mangakeh indak ado maken*

the beetle walks here and there  
because its stomach is empty  
it is like a chicken, scratching  
no scratching no food

*Kami ingin mampasunting bungo kambang  
semerbak bawangi didalam taman  
harumnyo sampai katapian mandi  
bila bungo indak dapek kami pasunting  
untuk selamo-lamonyo*

we want to engage the blossoming flower  
the fragrant scent in the garden  
its scent reaches the edge of a bathing place  
if we cannot pick  
the flower forever

*Kami malu pulang ka kampung  
dari pado hiduik maracun hati  
biarlah mati baputuh tulang  
izinkanlah kami kini batanyo  
apakah bungo balun bapunyo?  
jiko ado kumbang manjago  
izinkan kami bagantuang dirantiangnyo  
bapacik kami didaunnyo  
itulah mohon jok pintak kami  
kironyo keuchik jok niniak mamak  
bak rela jok ikhlas mengabulkannyo*

We will be ashamed to go back to the village  
better that it poisons the liver  
better to die by having one's bones dissembled  
please allow us now to ask the question  
does the flower have an owner  
if there is a beetle that protects  
please allow us to hang on to its twig  
we grasp its leaf  
this is our hope and request  
hopefully *keuchik* and *niniak mamak*  
are willing and sincerely agree

*Buruang tampuo duo sajoli  
tabang mancari tampek basarang  
berilah kami kato yang pasti  
untuk pesambahan kami bawok pulang*

*Tampuo* birds fly side by side  
flying to look for a nest  
please give us certain words  
as a gift to bring home

### The response to the poem by the bride's side

*Iyo bana sabagai kato yang disampaikan tadi  
kumbang tabang diateh kampung kami  
bamacom corak warna bulunyo*

This is right what has just been said  
there are beetles flying over our village  
they have many colors on their wings

*Ramo-ramo duo sakawan  
hingkok dibatang kayu mati  
bungo lah lamo kambang ditaman*

The butterflies are flying in pairs  
perching on the dead wood  
the flower has long been in blossom in the  
garden  
waiting for an ideal beetle

*menanti kumbang idaman hati*

*Mandanga kato niniak mamak cako  
hati kami harok-harok cameh  
sabob kumbang masiah tabang tinggi*

Hearing the words of *niniak mamak*  
our heart is happy and anxious  
because the beetle is still flying high

*Menuruik barito yang kami danga  
bukan kumbang sambarang kumbang  
kumbang batuah sarato sakti  
disagan kawan maupun lawan  
kumbang kasayangan ayah jok umak  
pagi dimandikan jok aie ambun*

According to the news we heard  
it is not a normal beetle  
it is blessed and magic  
it is respected by opponents and friends  
the beloved beetle to its mother and father  
in the morning it is bathed with dew

*patang dimandikan jok aie bungo  
malom basalimuik jok kain bugih  
pagi dibaduang jok sutro haluih  
makan dibari ditapak tangan  
minum manyusu dibungo kuku*

*Pikie kan bana kek niniak mamak  
jangan manyasa dikemudian hari  
tiliak anak, caliak calon minantu  
elok-elok pak keuchik mamanjek  
jangan tapajek rumpun buluah baduri  
badan luko baju cabiak  
lapah naiak indak lapah turun  
nandak malompek takuik patah  
alamat sangsaro badan salamonyo*

*Kami paingek sakali lai  
jangan tinggal carat badusanak  
sabalun kaki dilangkahkan  
sabalun lengan diayunkan  
kato sapatah dipikiekan  
sasa dahulu ado manfaatnyo  
sasa kamudian indak ado gunonyo*

at noon it is bathed with flowery water  
at night it is covered with *bugis* cloth  
in the morning it is wrapped with fine silk  
eating from the palm of a hand  
drinking, sucking on the *kuku* flower

Please do think *niniak mamak*  
do not regret it later  
look at the son, look at the daughter-in-law  
*pak keuchik* please be careful when climbing  
do not climb the thorny bamboo  
the body is injured and the clothing is torn  
can go up but cannot getdown  
want to jump but afraid of getting hurt  
the body will be miserable forever

We remind you once more  
do not forsake the brotherhood  
before the foot steps  
before the arm swings  
a single word must be thought  
regret in advance has an advantage  
regret later is of no use

## APPENDIX 2

### The poem of greeting the groom (Jam *marapulai*)

*Assalamu 'alaikum kami ucapkan  
kapado linto sarato rombongan  
jok bahaso jamu kato diucapkan  
dimano yang salah tolong maafkan*

Peace be upon you we utter  
to the groom and his companions  
in Jamee we announce  
where there are mistakes, please forgive

*Assalamualaikum hai marapulai  
baru sampai pado malomko  
anak daro alah duduk diateh kursi  
linto dinanti dari sanjo cako*

Peace be upon you 'hai' the groom  
just arrived on this night  
the bride has already sat on a chair  
the groom is awaited from sunset

*Anak daro kini alah rancak  
alah bacalak dibulu mato  
calak dimuko gincu dibiebie  
tangan jok kaki bainai pulo*

The bride is now adorned  
has mascara on her eyelids  
makeup on her face and lipstick on her lips  
henna on her hands and feet

*Bak pihak sayang inyo ka abang  
siang jok malam mangkhayal sajo  
cako batanyo ka mak pangapik  
kabilo sampai linto kasiko*

Because the bride loves her brother [the groom]  
day and night she fantasizes  
just now she asks her best companion  
when does the groom arrive

*Waktu didanga linto alah datang  
hatinyo sanang gamuruah dado  
anak daro kini basamo pangapik  
tangan bapacik jalen basamo*

When the bride hears the groom arrive  
her heart is happy  
the bride is now with her best companion  
her hand is held and they walk together

*Assalamualaikum hai mak pangapik  
payuang dipacik takambang pulo  
nandak manabu sibareh kunyik  
jangan tapaciak kabaju linto*

Peace be upon you 'hai' best companion  
the umbrella is held and opened up  
want to scatter the yellow rice  
do not litter the groom's cloth

*Assalamualakum hai anak daro  
pado malomko lah sanang hati  
abang tabayang siang jok malom.  
didalam tidue manjadi mimpi  
mimpi baranang di aie banjie  
badan tasenak hari lah pagi*

Peace be upon you 'hai' the bride  
on this night, your heart is happy  
the brother [groom] is imagined day and night  
in sleep he becomes a dream  
dreaming about swimming in a flood  
the body jerks, the day has already dawned

## APPENDIX 3

### The poem of handing over the groom by the groom's side

*Kami serahkan bulek sarupo bola  
dapek bagolek kamana sajo  
kok batangkai dapek dijinjing  
kok batali dapek di helo  
kok bakarajo buliah disuruah-suruah  
mambantu karajo apa sajo  
disuruah mahalau ayom  
katiko manjamue padi  
disuruah manumbuak padi  
disuaruah kapakan untuak mabali  
bilo ado silop jok salah mohon diajari  
ditegur dibari patunjuak dinasehati*

We hand over [the groom] round like a ball  
which can be rolled everywhere  
if there is a handle he can be carried  
if there is a rope he can be pulled  
if there are activities, the groom can be invited  
to help with whatever work  
asked to shoo away chickens  
when drying unhusked rice  
asked to pound unhusked rice  
asked to go shopping  
if he makes a mistake, please teach him,  
reprove him, give guidance and advice

*Paie kaladang mamatiak patai  
ambiak amping katampek palo  
janji kini lah sampai  
alah basatu kumbong jok bungo  
isi bingkisan mintak diparekso*

Going to the field to pick up Petai  
takes a *pandan* sack to collect nutmegs  
the promise is now due  
the beetle and flower have been united  
the containers of gifts should be checked

### The response to the poem by the bride's side

*Mandanga kato bapak cako  
sarupo aie alah dijaniahkan  
kok batali alah buliah kami helo  
kok batangkai alah buliah kami jinjiang  
kok talatak cit alah ditampeknyo  
kami alah pacayo kasadonya  
indak ado laie yang kami ragukan  
alah panuah jok sampurno*

Hearing the words the man just said  
it is like water that has been clarified  
if there is a rope, we may pull it  
if there is a stalk, we may wield it  
if it is placed, it has been put in its place  
we believe everything  
there is nothing that we worry about  
it has been full and perfect

*Bukan kami batanom naneh  
kami batanom si anak palo  
kami indak mamandang harato jok ameh  
yang kami pandang sanak saudaro*

We do not plant pineapple  
we plant nutmeg  
we do not see wealth and gold  
we see the brotherhood

## GLOSSARY OF ANEUK JAMEE TERMS

The glossary includes the terms in Jamee, Acèhnese, Indonesian, and Arabic that are frequently used in this dissertation. When it is considered to be an Acèhnese term or name it is marked as (Ach), an Indonesian as (Indon), an Arabic as (Arb) but when it is Jamee is unmarked.

### A

<i>Adat</i> (Arb from <i>'adah</i> )	customary order
<i>Al-Fātiḥah</i> (Arb)	the opening chapter of the Qur'ān
<i>Akikah</i> (Arb from <i>aqiqah</i> )	the seven-day naming ritual
<i>Alim</i>	a person with some learning of Islam but not as learned as <i>'ulamā'</i>
<i>Al-ikhās</i> (Arb)	chapter 112 of the Qur'ān
<i>Akal</i> (Arb from <i>aqal</i> )	reason, rationality
<i>Amil zakat</i> (Indon)	the collector of alms
<i>Aneuk Jamee</i>	the “children of the guest”
<i>Ashar</i>	afternoon, afternoon prayer
<i>Asyura</i>	the 10th day of the first Islamic lunar month, Muḥarram
<i>Aulia</i> (Arb pl. <i>walī</i> )	saints
<i>Aurat</i>	parts of human body that have to be covered when a person is outside the confines of the family.
<i>Aruwah</i> (Arb <i>arwāḥ</i> , pl. of <i>ruh</i> )	the spirits of the deceased
<i>Azan</i> (Arb <i>adhān</i> )	call to prayer

### B

<i>Batin</i> (Arb <i>bātin</i> )	inner, spiritual, esoteric
<i>Barakaèk</i> (Arb from <i>baraka</i> )	spiritual blessing
<i>Bid'ah hasanah</i> (Arb)	an innovation regarded as beneficial
<i>Bid'ah madzmumah</i> (Arb)	an innovation regarded as blameworthy.
<i>Bileu</i> (Ach)	the person who says the <i>azan</i>
<i>Bismillāh</i> (Arb <i>basmala</i> )	the invocation of <i>bismillāhirrahmanirrahīm</i> : “In the name of Allāh, the Merciful, the Compassionate”.
<i>Buko puaso</i>	the time for breaking the feast; cakes for the time of breaking the fast
<i>Bulèn</i>	month, moon
<i>Bupati</i> (Indon)	the regency (Indon <i>kabupaten</i> ) head

### C

<i>Camat</i> (Indon)	the district (Indon <i>kecamatan</i> ) head
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### D

<i>Dayah</i>	the common term for the Islamic religious boarding school in Acèh, similar to the <i>pesantren</i> in Java
<i>Do'a</i> (Arb from <i>du'ā</i> )	prayer usually in the sense of supplication to Allāh, as opposed to liturgical prayer, spell, recitation
<i>Doso</i>	sin, sinful
<i>Dusun</i> (Indon)	“cluster”
<i>Dunio</i>	the world; this world, as opposed to the hereafter

<i>Dukun</i> (Indon)	a practitioner of a magic who claims to possess secret powers which he or she employs in a variety of functions
<b>F</b>	
<i>Fikh</i>	the science of Islamic jurisprudence
<b>H</b>	
<i>Hadis</i> (Arb from <i>ḥadīth</i> )	traditions of the Prophet, those reports from the first generations of Muslims regarding the words and actions of the Prophet Muḥammad, judged as genuine, constitutes a second scripture in Islam.
<i>Hari rayo haji</i>	the feast of sacrifice
<i>Hari rayo puaso</i>	the feast of breaking the Ramadhan fast
<i>Hawa nafsu</i>	carnal desire, passion
<i>Hawa nafsu</i>	the part of man's nature that he shares with animals; everything within man that arises spontaneously
<b>I</b>	
<i>Ibadah</i> (Arb from <i>'ibādāt</i> )	religious services that referring to the "five pillars of Islam"
<i>Idah</i> (Arb <i>iddah</i> )	the waiting period after a woman is divorced during which she must wait before being eligible for remarriage.
<i>Ikhlās</i> (Arb)	sincere devotion
<i>Imam</i> (Arb <i>imām</i> )	leader in performing prayer; and everything which is related to religious duties.
<i>Imuem mukim</i> (Ath)	see <i>mukim</i>
<i>Ibadat</i> (Arb <i>ibadah</i> )	religious service)
<i>Idang</i>	a packet of food that includes rice and a variety of side dishes which is served at a communal feast
<i>Ikhlās</i> (Arb <i>ikhlās</i> )	absolute devotion to Allāh in religious faith, practice and action
<i>Imam</i> (Arb <i>imām</i> )	religious official in villages, prayer leader
<i>Israk mikrāj</i>	the celebration of the Prophet's ascension to heaven
<b>J</b>	
<i>Jin</i> (Arb <i>jinn</i> )	spirit
<i>Jalèn subuah</i>	the tradition of walking in the morning during the month of Ramadhan
<i>Jubah</i> (Arb <i>jubbah</i> )	a frock often worn by saintly individuals among Muslims
<b>K</b>	
<i>Kabupaten</i>	an administrative unit, a regency headed by a <i> bupati</i>
<i>Kecamatan</i>	a subdivision of a regency or district headed by a <i> camat</i>
<i>Keucik</i>	village head
<i>Kadha</i>	the power of Allāh to determine all events
<i>Kadhi</i> (Arb <i>qādī</i> )	a judge in Islamic law, a religious official

<i>Kampung</i>	urban compound
<i>Kapalo kampung</i>	the head of the village
<i>Kemukiman</i>	a collection of several villages, headed by <i>imuem mukim</i>
<i>Khatīb (Arb)</i>	a preacher
<i>Khanduri</i>	a ritual meal, a comunal feast
<i>Kitab (Arb kitāb)</i>	writing; scripture, a book
<i>Kujruenblang</i>	rice ritual specialist
<i>Kurafat (Arb khurāfā)</i>	applied by purist Muslims to many aspects of historic Islam
<b>L</b>	
<i>Lahi</i>	outer self, born
<i>Lailatul qadar</i>	“the Night of Decree”
<i>Laukh makhfudz</i>	the tablet where the record of the decisions of the divine are preserved
<i>Luhu</i>	noon the prayer observed at noon
<i>Latihan kejiwaan (Indon)</i>	training ‘soul’
<b>M</b>	
<i>Marantau</i>	staying outside one’s home area
<i>Makèn-makèn</i>	an excursion to the beach or river; a social gathering with food during an excursion
<i>Makrifat (Arb ma’rifah)</i>	intuitive knowledge concerning the relationship of worshippers to Allāh
<i>Magrib</i>	sunset, prayer observed at sunset
<i>Meugang</i>	the tradition of slaughtering cow or buffalo two days preceding Ramadhan, <i>idul adha</i> and <i>idul fitri</i> celebration
<i>Meunasah (Ach)</i>	prayer house
<i>Meuratéb (Ach)</i>	religious chants
<i>Mo’lot (Ach)</i>	the Prophet’s birthday and its celebration
<i>Muazin (Arb muazzin)</i>	the person who calls to prayers
<i>Muhammadiyah (Indon)</i>	modernist Islamic organization
<i>Mukim</i>	see kemukiman
<b>N</b>	
<i>Nadzar (Arb nadhr)</i>	a vow to undertake a religious action
<i>Nièt</i>	a short declaration of the intention pronounced audibly or mentally
<b>P</b>	
<i>Pengajian</i>	religious discussion
<i>Pahalo</i>	religious merit
<i>Pakan</i>	market
<i>Puaso</i>	fasting
<b>Q</b>	
<i>Qurban (Arb Qurbān)</i>	the ritual offering of livestock to commemorate Ibrahim’s willingness to sacrifice his son Ismail to Allāh

## R

*Raka'a* (Arb)

the prescribed unit of prayers and accompanying bows and prostrations of the prayer ritual, how a villager behaves during the village activities  
voluntary contribution for a communal feast

*Reusam*

*Ripèe*

## S

*Salék*

the *suluk* followers

*Sahur*

the meal taken just before day break

*Sarung*

a wrap-around lower garment

*Sawah*

wet rice field

*Sadakah* (Arb *sadaqah*)

giving charity, alms to the less fortunate

*Salawat* (Arb *salawāt*)

Allāh wishes or salutations: The Arabic expression (Arabic *Allāhumma salli 'alā Muḥammad wa 'alā āli Muḥammad*) "Blessing on Muḥammad and his family".

*Saidina* (Arb *sayyidīnah*)

the title 'our leader' designating important person-ages in Muslim history, such as the Prophet and the righteous caliphs

*Seumayang*

(Indon *sembahyang*; Arb *salāt*)

Islamic prescribed prayer

*Sharī'a* (Arb)

Islamic law; lit., "path"

*Shirk* (Arb)

idolatry, polytheism

*Sunnah* (Arb)

the way of Prophet

*Shamadiyah* (Arb *shamad*)

eternal

*Subuah*

daybreak, prayer observed at daybreak

*Suluk*

the practical method to guide seekers by tracing a way of thought, feeling, and action, leading through a succession of 'stages' to experience the Divine Reality (Trimingham; 1971:3-4).

*Sunat* (Indon),

Islamic services which are recommended but not obligatory

*Syahadat* (Arb)

Islamic confession of faith ("There is no god but Allāh, and Muḥammad is his Messenger")

*Syari'ah* (Arb *sharī'a*)

the Islamic law code

*Syafa'at* (Arb *syafā'ah*)

the intercession of the Prophet on behalf of Muslims on Judgement day

*Syahbanda*, the harbor master

*Serambi Mekkah*

"the verandah of Mecca", a nickname applied to Acèh because of its historical ties with the Islamic holy land, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when pilgrims from Southeast Asia passes through Aceh

*Syeikh* (Arb)

an exemplary religious figure

## T

*Tadarus*

the tradition of reciting the Qur'an during the night of the Ramdahan month

*Tauḥīd* (Arb)

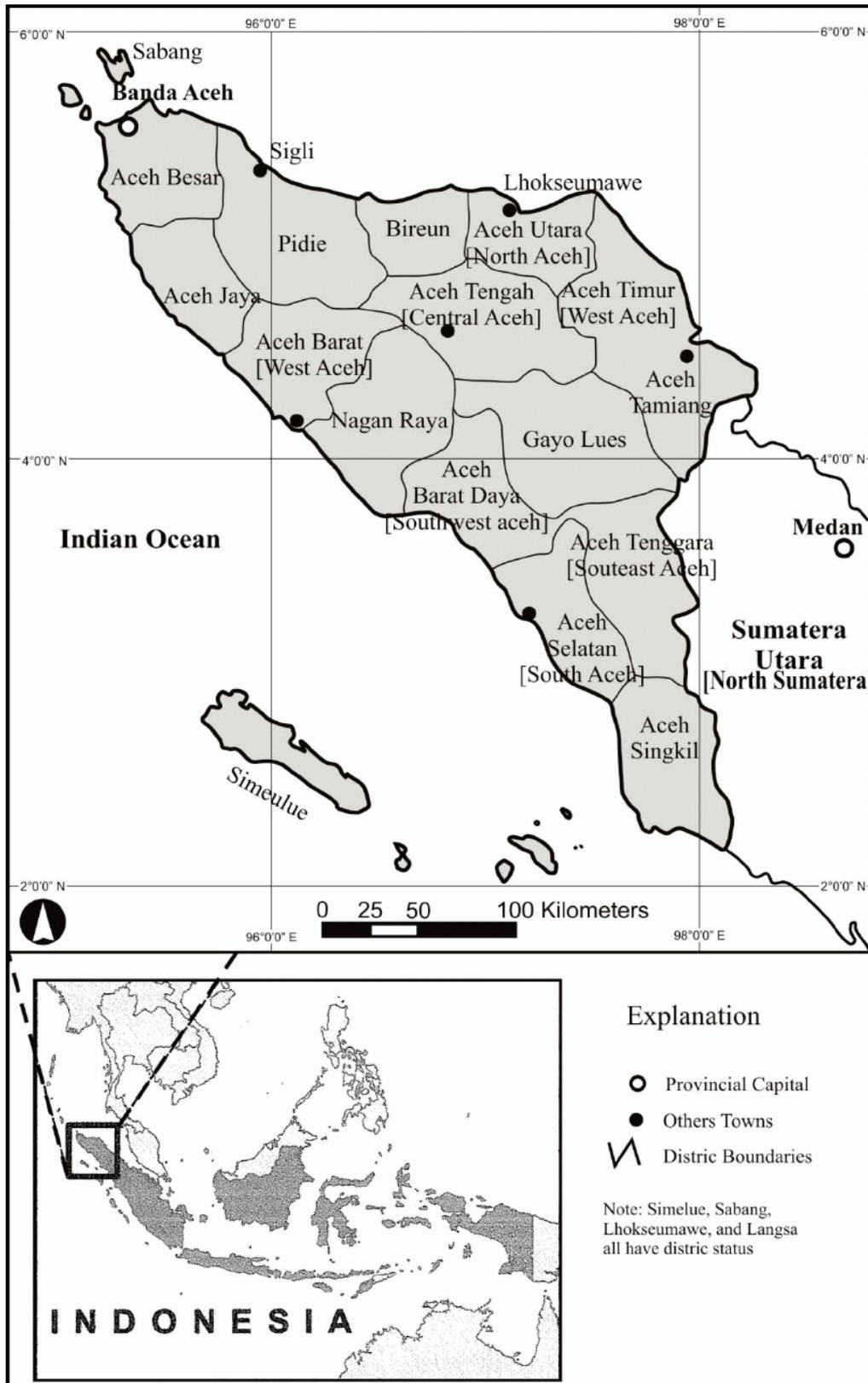
the oneness of Allāh

*Tahlīl* (Arb)

reciting *la ilaha illa Allāh*, "there is no deity but God"

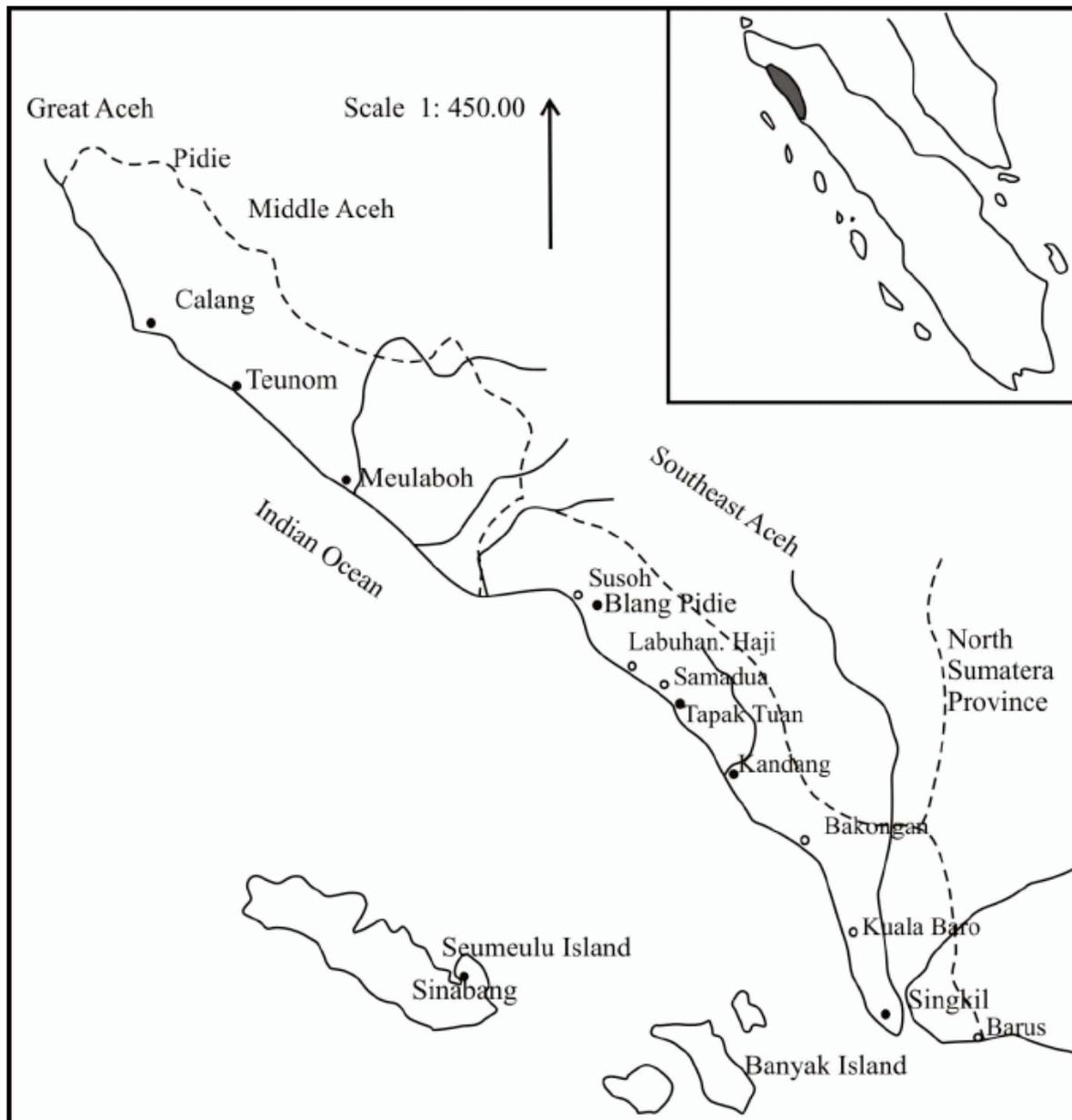
<i>Takbīr</i> (Arb)	proclaiming <i>Allāhu akbar</i> , “God is great”
<i>Tasbīh</i> (Arb)	repeating <i>subhanallāh</i>
<i>Tarawèh</i>	special night prayer during the month of Ramadhan
<i>Takdir</i>	the recognition that all matters of creation are determined by Allāh
<i>Tahlil</i> (Arb <i>tahlīl</i> )	recitation of the phrase “ <i>la ilāha illallāh</i> ” (there is no god but Allāh). <i>Tahayyul</i> (Arb <i>takhayyul</i> ), a concept applied by purist Indonesian Muslim to many folk practices in Indonesian life
<i>Tuangku imam</i>	a leader in Islamic prayer
<i>Tulak bala</i>	“pushing back danger”, “warding off calamities”
<b>U</b>	
<i>Ulama</i> (Arb ‘ <i>ulamā</i> ’)	scholars of religious sciences in Islam and generally acknowledged leaders of the community in matters of religion
<i>Uraung karamek</i>	a person who has supernatuaral qualaities
<b>W</b>	
<i>Wājib</i> (Arb)	required
<b>Y</b>	
<i>Yāsīn</i> (Arb)	a specific chapter of the Qur’an
<b>Z</b>	
<i>Zakāt</i> (Arb)	religious tithe
<i>Zikir</i> (Indon <i>dzikir</i> ; Arb <i>dhikr</i> )	the repetition of the names of Allāh and certain religious formulae as a means of demonstrating piety or, as in the case of mystics, to induce a mystical trance

# MAPS



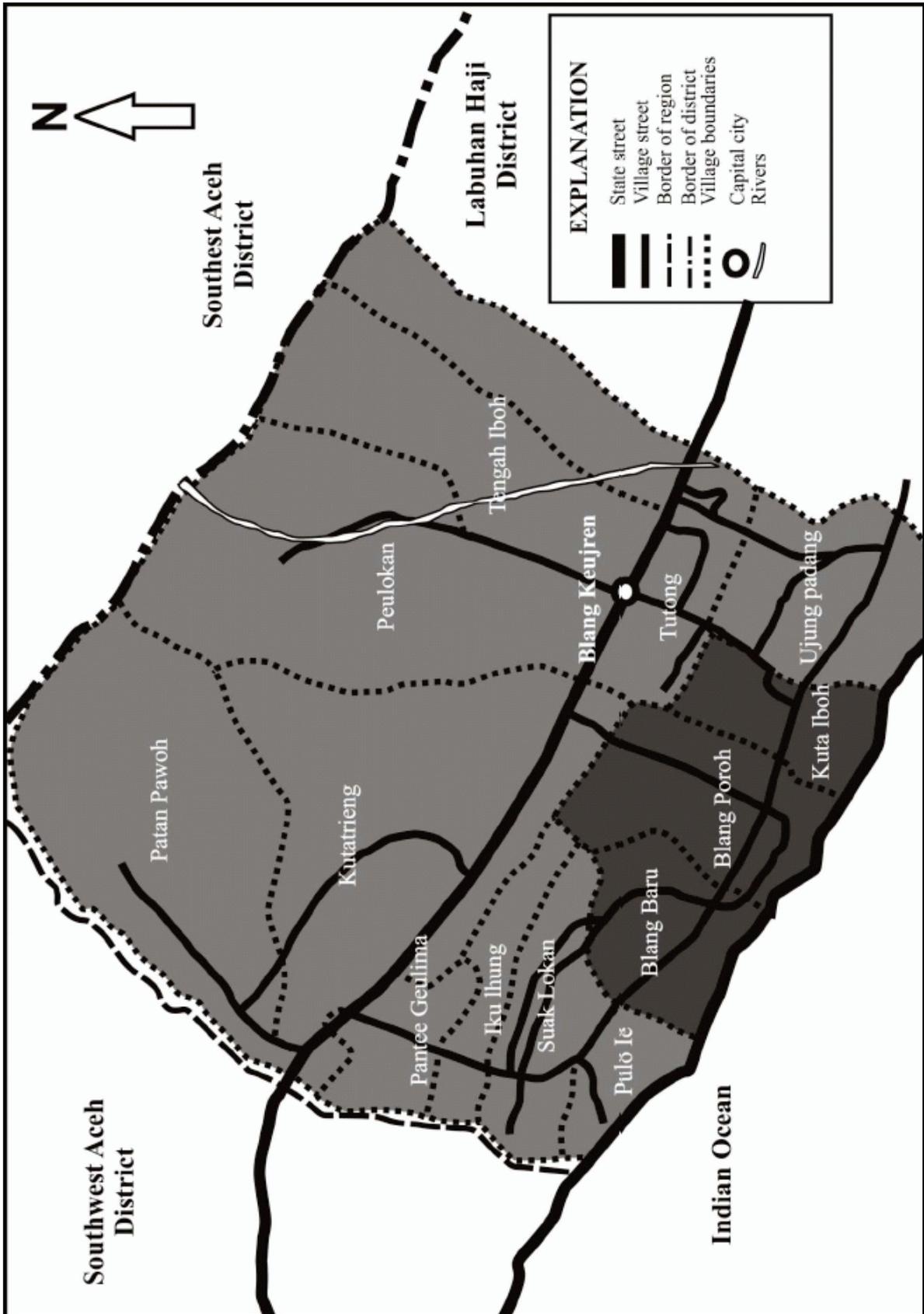
**Map 1. Aceh-Indonesia**

Source: [www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/aceh/map.pph](http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/aceh/map.pph)



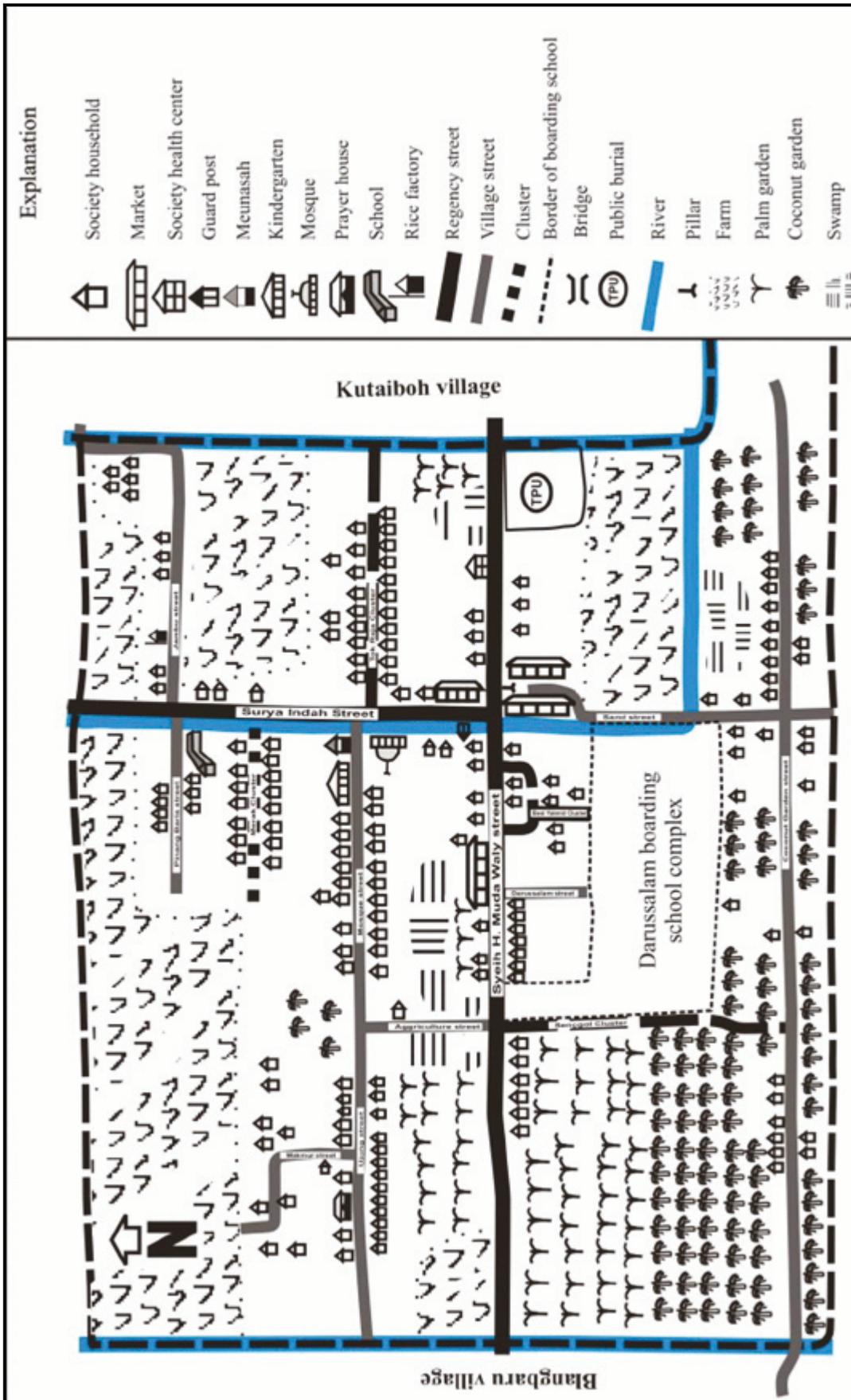
**Map 2. The distribution of Aneuk Jamee population in the southern and western coast of Aceh.**

Source : Sulaiman (1978:51)

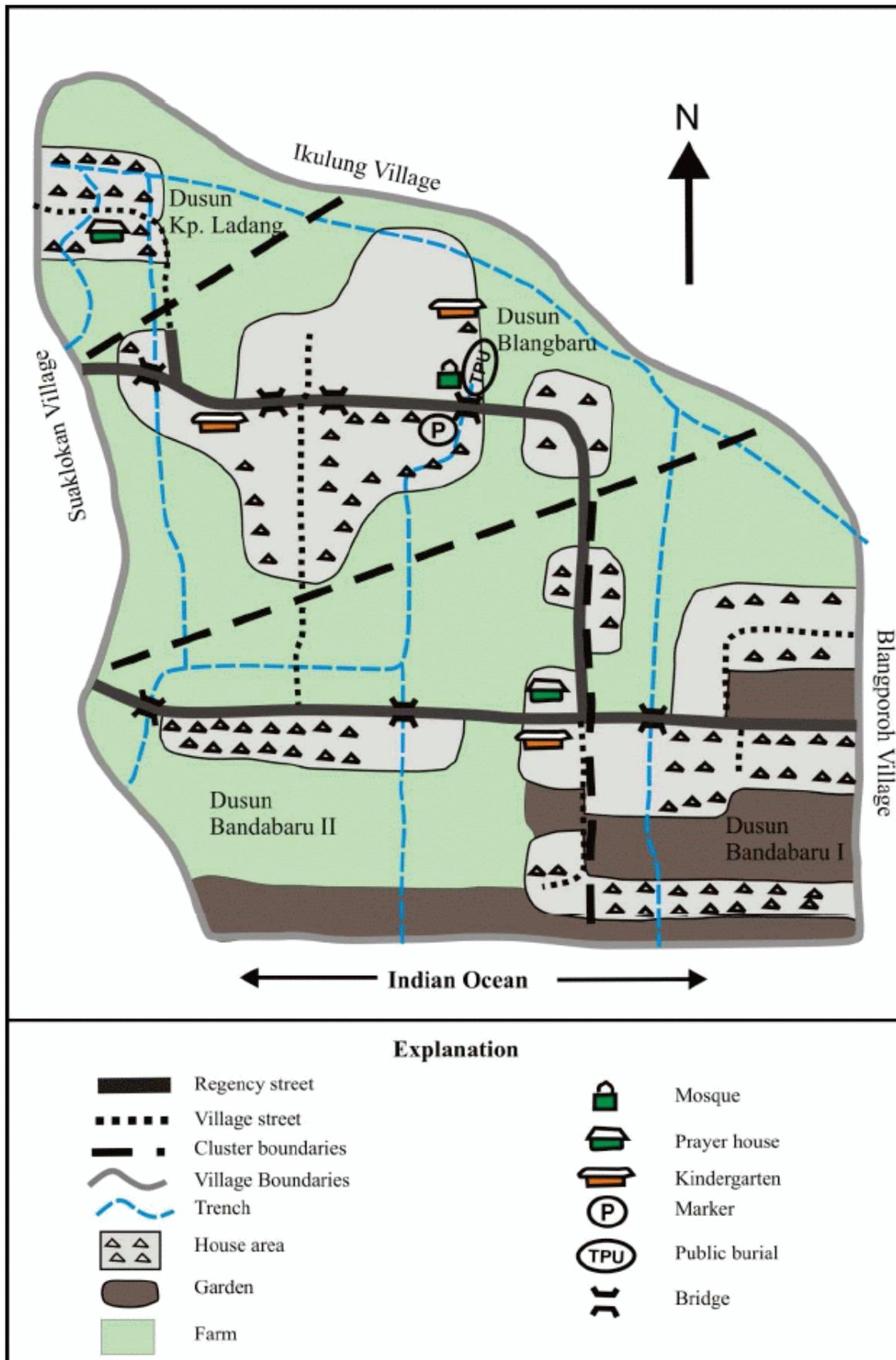


**Map 3. West Labuhan Haji district**

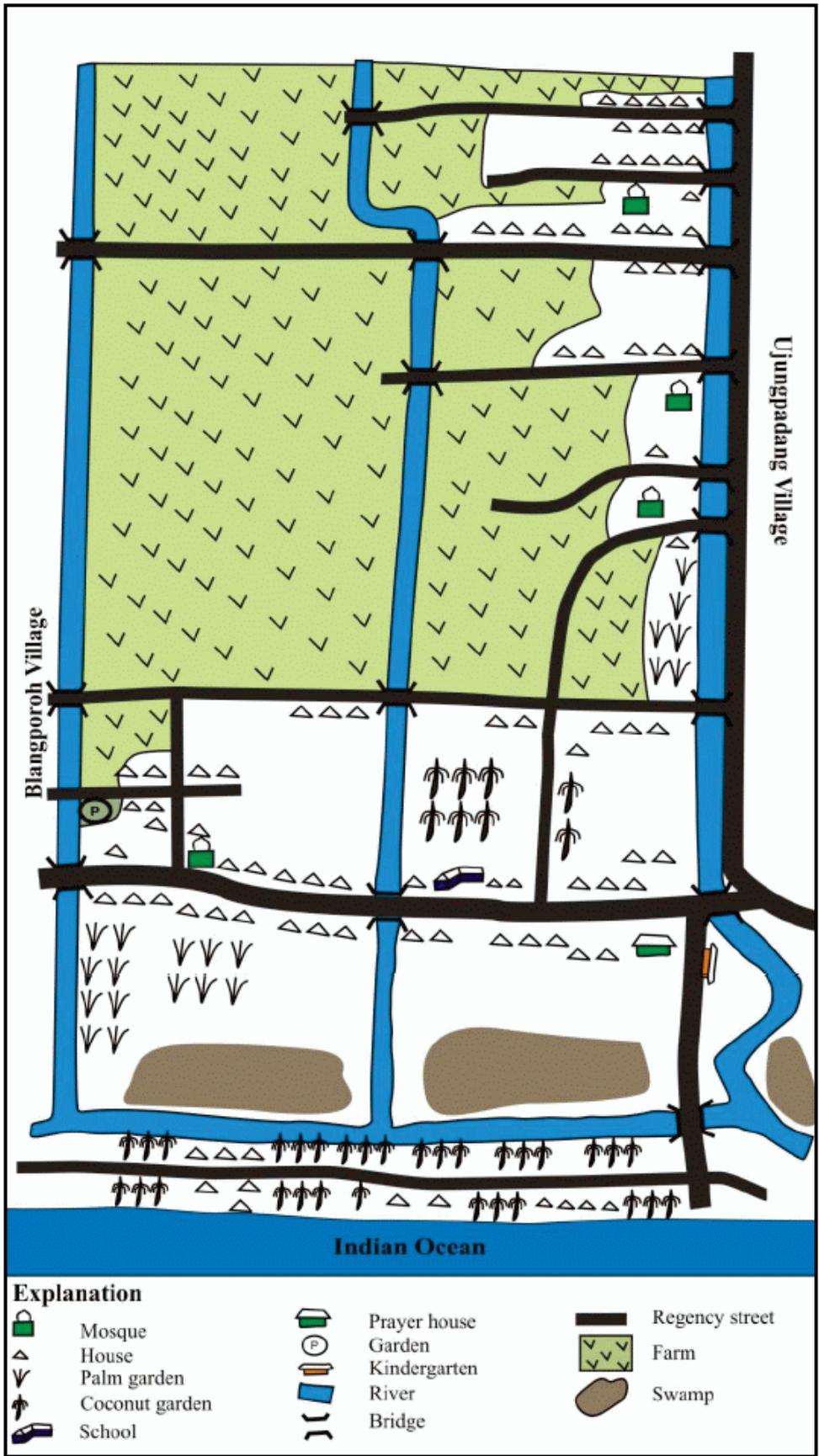
Source: the Camat office of West Labuhan Haji district



Map 4. Blangporoh village



Map 5. Blangbaru village



Map 6. Kutaiboh village

## PHOTOGRAPHS



1. The groom about to depart to the bride's house.



2. Groom's relatives bearing gifts to the bride's house.



3. Bride and groom seated on the dais.



4. The ritual bathing during *tulak bala* day.



5. Women preparing *khanduri 'āsyūrā*.



6. Women cooking the *'āsyūrā* porridge.



7. *Idang gadang* offerings on the verandah of the mosque for the *mo'lot* celebration.



8. *Sanggèn* offerings on the verandah of the mosque.



9. *Idang nasi kunyik* offerings in a house near the mosque.



10. Spectators of *dikémo'lot* (the Prophet's birthday celebration).



11. Awaiting the signal to eat the *daluang*.



12. Commensal eating of the *daluang* and *sanggen* offerings.



13. Preparing the *khanduri bugong kayè* offerings.



14. Pouring the *kanji* on the base of the mango tree.



15. *Kanji* distributed to children.



16. Women pounding rice for the *apam* cakes.



17. *Apam* cakes.



18. Commensal eating of *apam* cakes in the mosque.



19. Reciting *shamadiyah* with white stones.



20. Placing the *shamadiyah* chanted stones on graves.



21. Preparing rice for *khanduri bu*.



22. Orphans eating *khanduri bu*.



23. Men eating *khanduri bu* in the mosque.



24. Performing 'idul fitri prayers at the village mosque.



26. Buffalo sacrifice on the first day of 'īd ul adha.



25. Mirror placed in front of the ram's gaze.



27. The sacrificer handing over the knife



28. Dayah students praying at the Sheikh's grave.



29. A woman placing water on the Sheikh's grave to receive *baraka* ('blessings').



30. Researcher with one of his informants.



31. Researcher collecting data from men.



32. Researcher collecting data from women.

## Curriculum Vitae



**Dr. Phil. Abdul Manan, M.Sc., MA** was born in Alurambut, Manggeng district (now Lembah Sabil district), South West Aceh (Sumatra-Indonesia) on Juni 21<sup>st</sup>, 1972. His ethnicity is Acèhnese. He finished his Islamic Elementary School (MIN) Suakberumbang-South West Aceh in 1985, State Junior High School (Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri) Manggeng-South West Aceh in 1988, Teacher Training School (Sekolah Pendidikan Guru) Tapaktuan-South Aceh in 1991, Under Graduate Program of English Language Education at the State Institute for Islamic Studies Ar-Raniry (S. Ag) (now State Islamic University (UIN) Ar-Raniry) Banda Aceh in 1997, Master in Educational and Training System Design (M.Sc-Scholarship from Student Netherland (StuNED)) at the Faculty of Educational Science and Technology of the University of Twente, Enschede, Holland in 2001, Master in Islamic Studies (MA-Scholarship from Indonesian Cooperation in Islamic Studies (INIS) at the Faculty of Letters and Theology of the University of Leiden, Leiden, Holland (2003) and Dr. Phil - Scholarship from *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* (DAAD Bonn) in Ethnology at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, Germany in 2010. In 2015 again he got scholarship for alumni from DAAD Bonn called *Wiedereinladung* Scholarship for two months (June-July) to design his post-doctoral program proposal at the Institute for Ethnolgy at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, Germany. From 1995-1999 he worked as teaching staff of Langange Development Center of UIN Ar-Raniry. From 2004-2011 he worked as a methodology of Islamic Studies lecturer at Syaria Faculty of UIN Ar-Raniry and from 2012 till now he works as a cultural anthropology lecturer at Adab and Humanities Fakulty of UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. Among of his selected scientific publications are:

### Books

*Ritual Kalender Aneuk Jamee di Aceh Selatan* (Vol I) ISBN Ar-Raniry Press, First Edition October 2012. *Rabbani Wahid: Bentuk Seni Islam di Aceh* ISBN Balai Pelestarian Nilai Budaya Aceh-Sumut, First Edition March 2012. *Ritual Kalender Aneuk Jamee di Aceh Selatan* (Vol II) ISBN Ar-Raniry Press, First Edition December 2013. *Syari'at Islam di Aceh (Realitas dan Respon Masyarakat)* ISBN Ar-Raniry Press, First Edition October 2014.

### Journals

“Syura Menurut Perspektif Al-Qur’an” (Interpretasi Q. S. Al-Syura: 38) in *Al-Mu’asyirah* Vol. 2 No, 2 June 2005, Ushuluddin Faculty of UIN Ar-Raniry. “Eksistensi Dar Al-Hikmah dan Pengembangan dalam Konteks Kekinian” in *ADABIYA* Vol. 7 No. 13 August 2005 Adab and Humanities Faculty of UIN Ar-Raniry. “At-Tahniah Bi’idil Krismasi” (A Study on the Fatwa of Sheikh Muhammad bin Shalil al-Utha imin) in *Sosio-Religia*, Vol. 6. No. 4 August 2007 LinkSAS, Yogyakarta. “The Mortuary Ritual in West Labuhan Haji-South Aceh” in *Islamic Studies* Vol. 2 No.1 June-December 2012. Senat Pasca Sarjana of UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. “Keuneunong (The Acehnese Seasonal Calendar) ” in *ADABIYA* Vol. 7 No. 13 August 2013 Adab and Humanities Faculty of UIN Ar-Raniry. “Larangan Ngangkang Naik Motor bagi Wanita (Persepsi dan Respon Mansyarkat tentang Efektifitas Implementasi PERDA Kota Lhoukseumawe)” in *Islamic Studies* Vol.2, No. I January 2014. Senat Pasca Sarjana of UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh and “Ritual dan Institusi dalam Islam” in *ADABIYA* Vol. 16 No. 28 February 2015 Adab and Humanities Faculty of UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.

# The Ritual Calendar of South Acèh, Indonesia

Abdul Manan

This publication addresses the manner in which Islam manifests itself in the culturally specific representations and actions of the society of *Aneuk Jamee* of South Acèh, Indonesia. Based on long-term social-anthropological field research it explores the relations between the so-called normative Islam - as that has been laid down in the canonical texts of the Qur'ān and *hadīth*- and the ways in which these normative ideas, locally understood and valued, are expressed in the rituals conducted. The research has revealed how in local perception these ritual actions generate a reproduction of the social relationships and the moral foundation that make up this society. The meticulous examination of the village ritual calendar shows that three different perspectives on this social and moral order prevail: a traditional *adat* perspective, the historical Islamic perspective, and the modernist Islamic perspective. This attributes to *Aneuk Jamee* a complex dynamic socio-religious identity within the field of Indonesian cultures.

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