



2nd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON EDUCATION ISLAMIC STUDIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH

ICEISA

2017

18 MAC - 20 MAC 2017
UNIVERSITAS SANGGA BUANA YPKP,
BANDUNG, INDONESIA

PROCEEDINGS

Organizer:

ASSOCIATION OF MALAYSIAN RESEARCHERS AND SOCIAL SERVICES

In collaboration with:

UNIVERSITAS SANGGA BUANA YPKP, BANDUNG, INDONESIA.

**Proceedings
for the International Conference
on Education, Islamic Studies and
Social Sciences Research 2017**

**18-20 March 2017 Universitas
Sanggabuana YPKP Bandung,
Indonesia**

**Organised by:
Association of Malaysian Researchers and Social Services
In Collaboration with:
Universitas Sanggabuana YPKP Bandung, Indonesia**

THE RITUAL OF HUNTING DEER WITHIN PEOPLE OF KLUET IN SOUTH ACEH, INDONESIA (An Ethnographic Study in the Sub district of Kluet Tengah)

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Hunting deer as a ritual referred to the activity of hunting by people with the help of dogs and it was leaded by a *Pawang* (leader of hunting group possessing magical skills). The objectives of this research were to describe and to analyse this ritual within the people of Kluet Tengah in South Aceh. The study was conveyed by using qualitative approach, which meant that the researcher held the field study for the sake of data. The instruments used were observation and deep interview to the participants, who were *Pawang*, the elders, experienced people, and people involving in the rituals. Qualitative analysis included eliminating the irrelevant data, data display, and data verification. The result indicated that the ritual was still frequently held by the people, mainly for celebrating Islamic holidays. There were prohibitions during the rituals that must be avoided to prevent bad luck and to prevent bad effect from the magical spells used within the ritual. People said that deer had keepers by means of supernatural creatures that possessed ability to making harm for the people disturbing the deer. Thus, the ritual of hunting deer must be held by considering proper timing along with certain rituals as a way to ask permission of the keeper. The rituals of asking permission were including burning *keumenyan* (incense), casting specific spells, and tracing the deer's trail. The meat of captivated animals then was distributed for people evenly, without considering the participation on the rituals.

Keywords: rituals, deer, Kluet Tengah.

Background of study

The nature was a place where human life, grow, and breed; the effect of nature could not be avoided by human. On the other hand, human also had affected for human's life.⁶² Should the habitat was hard, human would adapt himself to it.

The environment surrounding the province of Aceh was considered hard, since it consisted of mountains and sea. There were eight ethnics as native inhabitants of Aceh, namely Aceh, Alas, Aneuk Jamee, Gayo, Kluet, Simeulu, Singkil, and Tamiang. Each of them had distinctive history, origin, and culture, which enriched the culture of Aceh.⁶³ Those diversities made Aceh rich of culture and rituals. All of those culture and rituals was still well preserve and held consistently by the people. One of the cultural rituals was the ritual of hunting deer held by the people of Kluet. Kluet referred to a sub ethnic existing in south Aceh. This minority ethnic spread within four *kemukiman* (an area consisting of few villages), namely Mukim Menggamat, Mukim Sejahtera, Mukim Makmur, and Mukim Perdamaian.⁶⁴ The people of Kluet settled in the remote area, approximately 20 Km from the main road, 50 Km from the city of Tapaktuan, and 500 Km from the capital city of Aceh, Banda Aceh.⁶⁵ The settlement of Kluet people located on fertile hills, on which wild animal lived and bred; those animals became one of favorite prey on hunting rituals. People of Kluet frequently held the hunting

⁶² Firkawin Zuska, dkk., *Kearifan Lokal Masyarakat Simalungun*, (Banda Aceh: Balai Pelestarian Nilai Budaya Banda Aceh, 2012), p.2

⁶³ Badruzzaman Ismail, *Sistem Budaya Adat Aceh Dalam Membangun Kesejahteraan*, (Banda Aceh: Majelis Adat Aceh, 2008), p.1

⁶⁴ Bukhari RA dkk., *Kluet Dalam Bayang- Bayang Sejarah*, (Banda Aceh, Team Ikatan Kekeluargaan Masyarakat Kluet, 2008), p.206

⁶⁵ L. K. Ara, Medri, *Ensiklopedi Aceh*, (Banda Aceh: Badan Arsip dan Kepustakaan NAD, 2008), p.208

deer as one of the cultural rituals.

The hunting ritual had strong root within Kluet people; they even held it before the modern age.⁶⁶ The people preserved this ritual along with rules and prohibition upon it. It was said that if the hunting deer conveyed without the guidance from a *pawang*, a series of bad luck and even a fatal accident, such as failure to get prey and accidentally hurt the other member of hunting group. According to the people, once even the supernatural creature made a member of hunting group resembled the prey; it made him killed since the other members hunted him as a deer. A *pawang* said that the ritual of hunting should be started by asking permission from the spirits or supernatural being; the Kluet people called them *penguasa belang*, who kept and watch the deer.⁶⁷ The people of Kluet believe the existence of spiritual being watching the wild animal; they referred is as *hantu buru*. Those supernatural creatures might be controlled by a *pawang* through spells. One worst occasion happening in a hunting ritual was the prey came alive again after the hunter killed it. Another strange occasion was the fur of animal could be as hard as wire, even though after separated by its flesh, should the prohibition was broken.⁶⁸

The ritual of hunting deer was often held as a part of celebration called *khanduri* (ritual for celebrating religious or cultural occasion by holding party and pray). Under the guidance of a *pawang*, the people went to the jungle to find a deer, then cooked together as a dish in *khanduri*. Usually the prey was including deer and small antelope. However, they often hunted the boar that became pest to them, since boar spoiled people's rice field and plants. The people of Kluet had so many rituals and cultures, which were needed to be studied as a way to preserve it. This study was conveyed as way to investigate and to pass the tapestry of culture of Kluet people for the next generation. Therefore, it was eligible to convey a study entitled "The Ritual of Hunting deer within People of Kluet in South Aceh (an Ethnographic Study in The sub district of Kluet Tengah)".

Methodology

This study was conveyed by using qualitative approach. This approach employed participat observation as an instrument for collecting data⁶⁹. The researcher by himself observed the ritual of hunting deer within the people of Kluet Tengah in South Aceh. The object of research thus included every activity relating the ritual of hunting deer performed by *pawang*⁷⁰ and the member of hunting group before, while, and after the hunting ritual, along with comments of competent cultural leaders as the primary data source. The library study was also conveyed upon relating document to complement the data. The observation was held to gain accurate date, along with interviews to the main informant⁷¹. The interviewed was initiated by structuralized question, and then the result will be guidance for further deep interview.⁷² The interviewed was performed as planned and unplanned to suit the activity of people. The data from interview was used to support data from main source. The data processing was initiated by verification stages. It purposed to check the completeness of data; it consisted of checking concordance between question and answer and data uniformity.⁷³ The following stage was coding, referred as classifying process of answers in accordance to types and data requirement. The qualitative analysis upon the data included eliminating irrelevant data, displaying, verifying, and interpreting data.

People's Perspective upon the Ritual of Hunting deer

Knowledge of supernatural and mysticism existed and adhered within the people of South Aceh, especially the people of Kluet Tengah. It was originated from prehistoric time and lasted until

⁶⁶ See http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2012/02/06/10545040/Dari_Salmon_Asap_hingga.

⁶⁷ C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Gayo Masyarakat dan Kebudayaannya Awal Abad Ke 20*, terj. Hatta Hasan Aman Ansyah, (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1996), p.258-275

⁶⁸ Muhammad Umar, *Perdaban Aceh (Tamaddun) I*, (Banda Aceh: Yayasan BUSAFAT, 2006), p. 138.

⁶⁹ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan Research & Development*, (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2006), p. 8.

⁷⁰ *Pawang* was a people experiencing in hunting animals. Besides, he also possessed knowledge on mysticism and had ability to cure trance, possession and any other mystical illness such as *meurampot*, *trubuk*, and *basung*.

⁷¹ Lexy J. Moleong, *Metodelogi Penelitian Kualitatif*, (Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya, 2007), p. 186.

⁷² Suharsimi Arikunto, *Prosedur Penelitian: Suatu Pendekatan Praktek, Edisi Revisi V*, (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2002), p. 201.

⁷³ Bogok Suyanto, *Metode Penelitian Sosial* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2008), p. 56.

the present day, even though the practice had being shoved aside of the modernization. Most of modern people thought that the practice of such mysticism was illogical. Yet, several people still believed that it had benefit on present days, and it was illegible to be preserved since the previous people reached glory through this knowledge⁷⁴. Based on the historical record, several Acehese hero, such as Raja Angkasah, Rajo Lelo, and Teuku Cut Ali defended their homeland before the occupation of the invader. Those figures were originated from South Aceh and possessed the mystical knowledge.⁷⁵

During the era of conflict between Acehese Liberation Front, known as *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM)*, most of separatist member possessed mystical matter such as amulet, bullet-proof spells, and various spells they got from *kak entuo* (sorcerers).⁷⁶ Through such mystical matter, they expected bravery and strength to fight the enemy equipped with sophisticated armour and weapon.

Similar mysticism was also found within the ritual of hunting deer. According to Suharnita, *bekih* (deer) was a pet of certain supernatural entity, which could not be captured except by the people possessing such mysticism.⁷⁷ Thus, the ritual of hunting deer should be led by a *pawang* or a people possessing knowledge on mysticism. *Pawang* also acted as a sorcerer, who might heal people of their illness, such as fever headache, toothache, and mystical illness as *santet* (black magic), possessed, *meurampot* (disturbed by supernatural creatures) and so on.⁷⁸

The primary prey on hunting ritual was deer. It was a mammal found on North and South America, Europe, Asia, and it was also introduced to Africa, and Australia. The body was slim and it had long leg.⁷⁹ There were 4 species of deer in Indonesia namely *rusa timor (Cervus Timorensis)*, *rusa sambar (Cervus Unicolor)*, *rusa bawean (axix kuhlii)*, and *kijang (Muntiacus Muntjak)*.⁸⁰ All of those species were found within province of Aceh, however, the dominant species were *rusa sambar* and *kijang*. According to Martunis, the deer was protected under government law and certain penalties were given for those breaking this law. However, the hunting deer ritual performed by Kluet people for celebrating holydays was done secretly, then made government could not give any penalty.

However, those performing hunting for personal benefit would be sanctioned by strict penalty.⁸¹

According to the opinion of people living in South Aceh, deer was categorized as endangered animals. However, according the people of Kluet Tengah, a people living near jungle, deer was protected by *pawang tuo* (supernatural beings). Thus, whoever wanted to catch the deer had to ask permission from the keepers by casting certain spells and performing some rites.⁸²

Sukardi Is stated "The deer could not be found in the entire area of a jungle, except the deer that was separated from its group. The deer rested in a place called *senong*, a clay mud-bath containing certain acidity". While gathering around *senong*, the deer became so lively and like to lick the grass and soil around it. *Pawang* Bintang told a tale of the origin of deer, as in the following.

Once upon a time, in the deep of a jungle lived the orphan sibling, Amad and his little sister, Podamina. There were so poor that Amad had to work hard and left his sister every day. Podamina looked sad, and Amad made a doll in the shape of a deer to entertain her. The body was made of *ijuk* (the fiber of palm sugar tree), the tail was made of wheat, the head was made of *tabungalo* fruit, and the leg was made of *pege talun*. Podamina was very happy while receiving the doll. A miracle happened that the deer turned to be a cute little fawn, then Amad made a stable for it. It grew to a tame deer, which often went in a jungle craving for food. One day, the deer did not come back to the house. Amad looked for it in a jungle for days. Finally, Amad

⁷⁴ Interview with Zulfidri, *Tuhapeut* of JamburPapan village in South Aceh, December 25, 2016.

⁷⁵ Interview with Zulfidri, *Tuhapeut* of JamburPapan village in South Aceh, December 25, 2016.

⁷⁶ Interview with Abdullah, an elder of JamburPapan village in South Aceh, December 17, 2016.

⁷⁷ Interview with Suharnita, an elder of Simpang Tiga village in South Aceh, December 13, 2016.

⁷⁸ Interview with Syar'ie, *Tuhapeut* of JamburPapan village in South Aceh, November 21, 2016.

⁷⁹ Damaring Tyas Wulandari, et.al., *Encyclopedia Fauna*, (Jakarta: Erlangga, 2008), p. 298.

⁸⁰ See www.papuaweb.org/unipa/dlib-s123/chahya-dwi/s1.pdf

⁸¹ Interview with Martunis, the head of sib district Kluet Tengah in South Aceh, December 24, 2016.

⁸² Some people said that asking permission while hunting deer could be done through mystical knowledge of a *pawang*

arrived at a cucumber field, which had been spoiled by unknown creature. Amad recognized that the cause was his deer. He asked the owner of field making a *tinjak* (certain trap) in the afternoon. The deer was captured, and the people slaughtered it. Amad got the liver. Podamina was very sad knowing her deer had been killed. She asked for the liver, sliced it, and spread it around the house and in the jungle. By the will of the almighty, slices of liver turned to deer, which grew and lived across the jungle. ⁸³

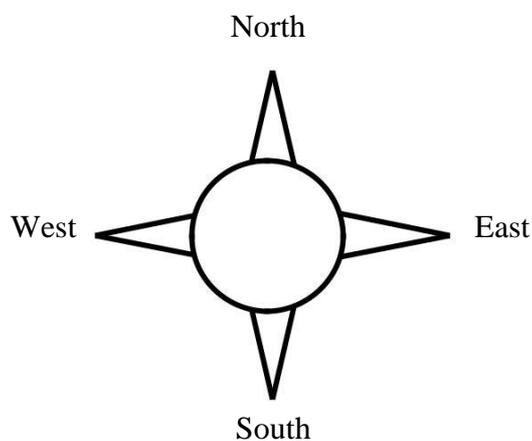
Before performing the ritual of hunting, a *pawang* looked for an appropriate time. It aimed to make the process of locating deer easier, protecting the member of hunting group, and preventing unintended accident. The ways on determining appropriate time for hunting were explained in the following.

1. Looking for good day and time

It was done by all *pawang*, including *Pawang Ali Husin*, while initiating the hunting ritual. There were several appropriate time for hunting. The first was on Friday at 11.00 AM. *Pawang Ali* said that while they hunted on Friday, despite the activity had been started since the morning; the deer would always be located around 11.00 AM. He added that it was matched to the Prophet Muhammad's pace on fighting the unbelievers. Then, the good time was 09.00 AM on Wednesday. On this day, deer was usually easy to be found. According to *Pawang Ali*, if hunting was started at 08.00 AM, the deer would be found within two hours. This day was related to the path of Prophet Ibrahim. *Begu* (a supernatural creature) usually helped the hunters while hunting on Wednesday; it would catch the deer, then *pawang* asked the prey from it. The last appropriate day was Saturday at 01.00 AM. This day was related to the path of Prophet Daud. On this day, even though the hunting had been started since the morning, the prey would be found after midday.

2. Determining path

According to *Pawang Aji Hamid*, after finding good time, the next step was determining path. It was done by considering cardinal directions of compass, namely east, west, north and south, as in the picture below.



If the hunting area was on the east, people should initiate it on Monday or Saturday and vice versa. Should the hunting was started on Monday and Saturday, the lucky area was located on the east, thus the people had to head toward east even though the destination was on east, southeast and so on. Then, if hunting area located on the west, the hunting should be started on Friday or Monday, and vice versa. On Monday and Friday, lucky area was on the west, and then the people had to go toward west even though the destination was on north or south. If the hunting was initiated on Thursday, the people had to go to the south and vice versa, even though the destination located on south, west, or any other directions. The hunters had to go toward north if the hunting was initiated on Tuesday and Wednesday, since the lucky area was located on the north. This rule was implemented while went out of house; the hunters had to head toward lucky directions first, as in aforementioned, the it might be changed in accordance to the actual destinations.

The activity of hunting was also closely related to season and weather. It was often performed during winter, since the footprint of deer could be easily observed on muddy soil. The body odor of deer was also might be traced easily bi the dogs. During the winter, there would be mud -bath and wallows, where the deer rested and drank. Usually, the deer was easily caught after they drank on wallows, since it made them hard to move of stuffed by water

There were taboos and prohibitions during hunting. A *pawang* always warned the member of a hunting group for not breaking these taboos before departure. Should a taboo was broken, they believed that bad luck would come upon them, such as getting lost, the dog would be killed by *begu*, and failing on the hunting. Among those taboos were

1. Do not be arrogant
2. Do not slaughtered the deer on the head
3. Do not mention the word *rusa* (deer) while finding it, despite, the word *yuu* pronounced in long note was used as a signal for other member.
4. Do not climb the tree while dogs were chasing the deer; hunters had to hide behind the tree.
5. Do not grill the liver, or giving it for dogs.⁸⁴

The impact of magic for hunting deer

Every action led to certain consideration, such as while the woods were cut, disaster as flood and landslide would come soon or later. The magic used while hunting deer was alo had certain impact for those possessing it. *Pawang* Bintang said that as a hunter practiced the magic more often, the deer would be easier to be caught and in a great number. It was caused by the reason that the guardian of deer (supernatural creatures named Martupang, Angkada, and Kandar Ali) had been a close friend of the hunter. Those guardian was also kept the hunter should another hunter abused him. As the impact, the family and relatives of another hunter might be frightened by the fact that those supernatural creatures might attack them, not only the hunter who abused the friend of Martupang, Angkada, and Kandar Ali.

Another impact was the death of cattle, such as buffalo, cow or goat owned by a hunter that had become a friend of genies guarding the deer. *Pawang* Bintang said that it was caused by the great mystical energy surrounded a hunter. Then, he also added that those genies might intrude the cattle. Hafni, an assistance of a *pawang*, said that hunting deer could be dangerous for a hunter and his relatives and families. The other *pawang* might challenge him by using magical force. Then, families and relatives of the hunter could be victim of this magical fight.

The danger also came from the supernatural creatures guarding the deer in the jungle. It occurred while a hunter forgot to ask permission or broke the taboos and prohibition during hunting. This action caused angry of those supernatural creatures, and they would attack the hunter. Should a hunter could not be attacked because of his magic, those guardians would attack his relatives and families. Thus, a hunter had to prepare such a guard using magic to keep himself and his family.

Hunting Rivalry

Everything done by humans sometimes triggers a rivalry. It has various forms, either in the form of material or in the form of morale. There is always competition in any field, including hunting. In the area of Kluet Tengah, 13 villages have five hunting groups. Each group has a *pawang* who they trust to give orders or to take policy. However, currently there are several rivalries among the groups of hunting. Recruitment of group cadres becomes the first rivalry. Criteria to become main members are for those who have strong physical and able to conquer the harsh terrain while hunting. However, if there is someone who has super strength (having the ability in the field of mystic), he will become the target of hunting group to be asked as a member. It is regarded as a regeneration of hunting deer group. When someone having the mystical talents has joined a hunting group, then he will be guided to be a good *pawang* . The guidance can be in the form of ordinances and the hunting process, including how to take out a policy to bring positive results to the rest of members. The purpose of the guidance is to prepare him as a replacement when the main *pawang* is died, so that the group can continue its existence in exploring the jungle without worrying the absence of the former one.

The cadre recruitment process is based on the observation of the local society. The community of Kluet Tengah is able to monitor the ability of its members who have the physical and mystical abilities. The members of the hunting group indeed do not set up a specific person in seeking the favourable figure within the society. However, if there is an individual who has strong physical and mystical ability, he will be immediately known by the community. That is, no wonder if the

⁸⁴There was no reason found for these taboos and prohibitions. It was said that arrogant was the most harmful taboo among others.

information of the mentioned figure will be up to the hunting deer groups.

The targeted figure is not always approve the call asked by the hunting deer groups. Sometimes, some people do not join any groups and refuse the request politely. In addition, the targeted individual has the right to choose his favourable group. Therefore, in this case, the prestige of the *pawang* is very important. The *pawang* who has the popular reputation would be chosen by the new members. The members of the hunting put a great hope to their *pawang*, so they get satisfactory results for each hunting. Hence, the cadre recruitment becomes a rivalry among the hunting groups. The stronger the hunting group then the greater their chances of getting the game in great numbers. However, the fellow members in a group will not experience any challenges since they mutually support each other.

The second rivalry is occurred over the figure of the *pawang* himself. The presence of *pawang* in the community makes him as a respected figure or person who is taken into account, particularly in the area of Kluet Tengah. *Pawang* is an individual who has two functions, namely as the leader of a deer hunting group and as a shaman. His mystical ability can be applied in daily life, both for the benefits of positive or negative. If the *pawang* can bring positive results, for instance, obtain the result of hunting in great number, his popularity will be increase in his community. If he was able to get the result of hunting in great number for every hunting, the whole community will praise him. The praise from the community should be taken into account by the *pawang*. There is a possibility that the praise will be the source of trouble for him or his family. Sometimes, the other *pawang* are not happy with popularity of the new *pawang*, which is being praised by the community. There is a possibility that they will send their black magic or curse the famous *pawang*. However, it is likely that the black magic or curse will not be successful since the popular *pawang* sometimes has the mystical ability of protecting himself. It is known as *pagar tubuh* (the fence of the body). Sometimes, the target is the members of *pawang*'s family. This case often overrides the *pawang*'s family because the other *pawang* are jealous upon the appreciation given by the society to the popular *pawang*. The black magic sender assumes that he also could be better than the famed *pawang*. If the black magic works, it proves that the targeted *pawang* is not a strong person since he could not protect the safety of his family. This finding is commonplace in the lives of the *pawang* and the community Kluet Tengah as well as other regions of South Aceh.

The Ritual of Hunting

A ceremony is a sign of greatness, a series of actions related to specific rules according to the custom and religion. The action and the ceremony are associated with an important event.⁸⁵ It has become a hereditary habit for the community of Kluet to conduct the ceremonies and rituals aiming to ensure the sustainability of an event. If those events were not implemented, the community would face misfortune and disaster. The rites and rituals conducted by them are meant to get a blessing over every intention they expect. One of the rituals often made is the ceremony of rice field *keunduri*. The ritual is done in the hope that yields will increase and their plants are spared from various pests.⁸⁶ The implementation of the hunting deer is also inseparable from the tradition of ceremony and ritual. This is done because when the hunters enter the woods, the obstructions and obstacles will be often faced by them, from either steep natural state, hard corals, or interference from the authorities and guards of the wilderness who are unseen. Therefore, the *pawang* should perform a ritual or ceremony to maintain the safety of hunting deer members. They do diverse ceremonies before, during, and after the hunting.

1. The ritual before hunting

Before the hunting is begun, the *pawang* firstly gathers all members of hunting group to determine an exact day for the hunting. It is not the easy things to do that can be done by anyone in anytime, so the *pawang* needs to do several rituals before its implementation. Next, he sets up the fireplace to burn *keumenyan* (frankincense) as a way of asking permission to the guard and the owner of the deer. It is also done as a form of requests delivered to the deer owner so "the protector" awards the deer to the hunting members. The deer sought by the group is maintained and preserved by supernatural beings or genie called as *Pawang Tuho* (Kandar Ali, si Amat, Martupang, Angkada).⁸⁷

⁸⁵ IAIN Ar-Raniry dan Biro Keistimewaan Aceh Propinsi NAD, *Kelembagaan Adat Propinsi Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam*, (Banda Aceh: Ar-Raniry Press, 2006), p. 57.

⁸⁶ Interview with Juriah, an elders of Jambur Papan village in South Aceh, 25 December 2016.

⁸⁷ See also *The Ritual of Khanduri Laot in Lowland Aceh* (Manan, 2016). The Acehnese people, who occupied coastal area, presume that the sea and its parts are "protected and belonged" to the spiritual beings/genie.

If it is allowed by the owner, the hunting will be carried out soon on the next day. Commonly, the deer can be found within a short time effortlessly.⁸⁸

When the *pawang* burns *keumeunyan*, he also articulates the following spells:

“Assalamu’Alaikum Hai Jibrail
‘Alaikum Salam Yaa Insan
Muhammad, Hai Keumeunyan
Aku Tau Asal Mulamu
Asal Mula Engkau, Ruhaybah
Nama dirimu Siti Aulia Allah
Nama Nyawamu
Ashaduallailahailallah
Tatkala Engkau Berasal Dari
Titik Sidratul Muntaha
Sampaikanlah Hajadku,
Jibril Menyampaikan”⁸⁹

“Peace be Upon You, O Gabriel
Peace be Upon You Too, O Insan
Muhammad, O Incense
I Know Your Origin
Your Very Origin, Ruhaybah
The Name of Yours is Siti Aulia Allah
The Name of Your Soul
Ashaduallailahailallah
At the Time You are Derived from
The Point of Sidratul Muntaha
Convey My Intention,
Gabriel Conveys”

After uttering the spells, the *keumeunyan* is burned until smokes come up. *Dupa* (incense) is also sometimes used instead of *keumeunyan*. As soon as this is done, “the supernatural deer owner” named “*Pawang Tuho* or *Kandar Ali*” shows himself in the front of the *pawang* to ask his intention. Then, the *pawang* expresses the following spells:

ey Kandar Ali,
rtupang, Angkada

Beriko Kudo Kudi Baku Sebuah”

i Kandar Ali,
rtupang, Angkada (the name of the spiritual
beings)
ase Offer One of Your Horses to Me”

When the spells are finished read by the *pawang*, the *Pawang Tuho* will instantly understand what he means. Then, the supernatural being disappears after grating the request of the *pawang*. The request is to ask one of his deer in tomorrow hunting or in the other days hunting. Furthermore, the hunting activity can be done the next day led by the *pawang*.⁹⁰

However, there are also different sequences of the rituals performed by some *pawang* in the area of Kluet. One of them, Pawang Tam, mentioned that the activities conducted before the hunting deer are setting up equipment, preparing dogs, and visiting the hunting members to discuss when it will be implemented without doing combustion of *keumeunyan*. Nevertheless, it is still done when they are already up on the hunting location.

2. The ritual during hunting

If the time for hunting has been settled, the *pawang* and his members soon prepare the equipment and perform the ritual of *keumeunyan* in order to ask the permission to the deer “keeper or owner”. Then, the hunting members go straight to the location of the deer. The earlier thing done by the *pawang* and his members when they arrive in the hunting area is doing *napak perjak* (searching the deer traces). This tracing sometimes takes a long time to be done, particularly in the dry season. It is understandable since the traces are not seen on the harsh land. Contrarily, if the hunting is carried out in the rainy season, the deer trails are easily found. When the traces have been found, the *pawang* hold *napak perjak* and cast the following spells:

at Kato Bumi
gguh Mati Kato Allah
ab Dari Pado Aku,
l Dari Pado Allah
llu Nafsin Zaikatul Maut
alillahi Wainnailahiraji’un”

at, the World Said
u Will be Dead, Allah Said
cause of Me,
e Death is from Allah
ery Soul Will Face the Death
Belong to Allah, and We Will Come Back to
Him”

⁸⁸ Interview with Ali Husin, a *pawang* of Malaka village in South Aceh, 28 December 2016.

⁸⁹ Other spells read by the *pawang* while the *keumeunyan* is burned, see Abdul Manan (2005:158).

⁹⁰ Interview with Aji Amid, a *pawang* of Simpang Tiga village in South Aceh, 26 December 2016.

After the spells are recited the deer footprints, the *pawang* ascribes the deer will not go away. It just waits for its death through the *pawang* and his members. By the command of the *pawang*, the hunting group are starting to search the deer by using dogs. The members spread to all parts of the jungle to look for the deer. When the deer trails are found again, the *pawang* casts the following spells:

ay Poda Minah, Hay Poda Minu
h Surot, Ke Merusa
k Kah Dong Bak Taligo
k Oen Kayee Ijo, Doeng Digata
uhan Kah Pateh Amanat Uloennyoe
gi Dudoe Gata Meurka
ahumma Shalli'ala
yidina Muhammad" (3x)

ey Poda Minah, Hey Poda Minu
u Back Off, I Want to Catch the Deer
not You Stand on the Trail
the Woody Green Leaf Where You Stand
You Do not Believe Me
morrow You Will be Fury
ahummashalliala
yidina Muhammad" (3x)

After the spells finished read by the *pawang*, the targeted deer usually will be found soon by the hunting members. They will chant "yuu" with long tones for three times. They also release the dogs to chase the prey.⁹¹ Additionally, there are different rituals done among the *pawang*. Unlike Pawang Ali Husin, Pawang Aji will pick up the soil stood up by the deer immediately when he found the deer traces in the hunting location. Then, he will wad it into rounded form by praying as follows.

, *Blib, Bag, Bismi*
ahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar"

, *Blib, Bag, Bismi (whatchamacallit)*
ahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar"

After the spell has been read, the soil is holding and placing on the navel of the *pawang*. It is represented as the letter of *nun* having a shape of fence. It means that it will beleaguer the deer so it could no longer go away from pursuit of hunting members. While the members are looking the deer, the *pawang* also casts another spell as follows.

"*Setitik Ransang-Ransang*
Alohong Simupron,
Benah ko"

Drop of Rangsang-Rangsang
hong Simupron (the Real Name of the Deer)
me Over Here"

The deer can no longer run so fast since the *pawang* has been recited the spells. Hence, the dogs can easily chase and get it. When the deer has been found, the members stab it until the deer is not able to walk. Then, the deer is slaughtered by the *pawang*. The first one who stabbed the deer will obtain one of special parts of the *bekih* (deer), namely *kitung* (meat and bone of a deer hip). However, there are no specific rules for those ones who want to stab the deer firstly. Anyone is allowed, including new members, even the local community who is passing by is allowed to stab the deer. Nonetheless, stabbing for the deer head is not allowed. This term is agreed as abstinence for every hunting member.

3. The ritual after hunting

After the deer is found and stabbed until it is unable to move, the *bekih* is slain by the *pawang*. The venison is distributed in accordance with a mutual agreement among the *pawang*, the hunting members, and the people who present in the hunting activity. The agreement has been implemented hereditarily for years. Its content is about the distribution of venison. The *pawang* will get the head and side parts of the deer. Another side will be given to *semelang* (people who present and participate in the hunting as well as the passers-by during the oprocess of venison distribution). The *pawang* and the hunting members also get a piece of meat for *semelang*.⁹²

When the deer is already killed, things outside the rationale boundaries are frequently occurred. For example, the slaughtered deer is still able to stand, it can escape rapidly, its entire fur stand like a needle, and it pulls out strange noises. According to Pawang Ali, those things are happened because the deer owner does not allow his pet taken by the hunting members. This occurrence is probably ensued because one of hunting members sometimes violates the restrictions described by the *pawang*. The owner is angry and wants to bring the deer back into the forest. To prevent such occurrence, the *pawang* takes his cloth or leafy twig and casts the following spells:

⁹¹Interview with Ali Husin, a *pawang* of Malaka village in South Aceh, 28 December 2016.

⁹²Interview with Bintara Takkub, an elder of Malaka village in South Aceh, 9 September 2016.

ey Kandar Ali, Martupang, Angkada
Ulang Ko Jadih

Atok Em Nguh Ku Beri Baku
Ino Nguh Aku Yang Puso
Laus Ko Bedih, Bo Bekas Em”

i Kandar Ali, Martupang, Angkada (“the Deer
Keeper”)
not You Stand Over There
u Have Given Your Deer to Me
Nguh I Take This Deer
s Deer is Mine, Go Back to Your Origin”

After the spell has been casted, the clothes worn by the *pawang* is wiped to the deer overrun by its owner. The deer lies down soullessly in a short time. Furthermore, it is allowed to be skinned. Then, the venison is distributed to all who attend even though they do not participate in the hunting.

Conclusion

The hunting deer has long been a ritual performed by the people of Kluet Tengah, South Aceh. The ritual remains existed until now, particularly in commemorating the major holidays of Islam. Practically, there are various rules or abstinences to prevent bad luck in hunting deer. The people of Kluet Tengah regard a deer as a mystic animal. It is considered to have its origin and “belongs to someone” as well as jade stones located in the forest of Singgahmata, Nagan Raya (see Manan, 2015, 2016). Therefore, prior to the hunting activity, the *pawang* should consider and determine the best time that is good for hunting. He also should employ several processes of ritual stages. The stages consist of asking permission to “the deer owner” without any disturbances and asking him to “give his animal freely”. The ritual is performed in the form of burning the *keumeunyan* while casting the spells before, during, and after the hunting activity. Once the deer is obtained, the venison is distributed to all people who attend the process of slaughter even though they do not participate in the hunting activity.

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