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### **The Cawir Metua Tradition: The Death Ceremony Karo Ethnic on Nort Sumatera, Indonesia**

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**ABSTRACT** -Indigenous communities in Indonesia are unique in every cultural process implementation, birth and death are two very culturally sacred events. Death for example in Karo ethnic tradition in North Sumatera has its own meaning. The birth of the concept of Cawir Metua shows the meaning that death in old age and has successfully married off his children is a social achievement that has a high social status in the Karo community. With a qualitative - descriptive study approach, this study explains how the concept understood by the Karo community towards the death process. As a result, ethnic Karo in giving awards to people who died in the category of Cawir Metua will do a unique cultural process, through various long processions. It is as a form of gratitude for the long life that has been enjoyed.

**Keyword:** Cawir Metua, Ethnic Karo, Longevity, Death

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#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The life of the community is inseparable from the culture, because the culture is due to the existence of its supporting community, one of the forms of culture is custom, while the ceremony is a concrete manifestation of the activities of customs related to all aspects of human life both social, cultural, economic, and etc.<sup>1</sup>

The plurality of ethnic groups in Indonesia, an impact on the birth of the diversity of culture and social customs, such as funerals (Kerja Kalak Mate) for the Karo people, organized with the great traditional party and festive. At the ceremony there should be dancing with the music as a retinue (traditional music), they danced together while lamenting the deceased, it is meant as an expression of condolences and expressed respect deeply the latter, as well as in the dance also presented a variety of advice ( Paedah-paedah) to the resident family.

This death ceremony takes a long time, also cost not less because this ceremony depends on how long the corpse is buried in the funeral home, among the Karo people the corpse is sometimes buried 2 to 3 days or more to wait out al-marham Present, or have not been able to see the deceased person. In the Karo tradition, the dead will undergo special treatment, summarized in a customary ceremony of death. The customary ceremonies of death are classified by age and status of the dead.

Besides the cost or the funds also the time in the implementation will be very influential with the families present, as long as the corpses have not been buried for mourners who come from far away places inevitably have to remain present in that place, and for affected families must also provide food and drink As well as other costs incurred due to the ceremony, although in the implementation of the ceremony is very costly, a long time and very complicated. But the people of Karo still hold a ceremony of death and even they want to borrow/borrow only for the ceremony.

Those who work as well as those who live as entrepreneurs, farmers will leave their jobs for the sake of his good name. Such a thing also affects families who come to honour the corpse still lying in the midst of the family, and still waiting until the end of the ceremony and when the funeral will be implemented.

In Karo society death (metua) in very old age is the most desirable death, especially when the dead have married off all their children and have grandchildren of their children. In the cultural traditions of the Karo people such deaths referred to as "Mate Cawir Matua" and regarded as the ideal concept of death (death by not having another child dependents). Ceremony Cawir metua is one example of a complex culture form as in the form of social activity.

Meanwhile, according to Islamic view, if a person who died must be held faridhu kifayah, not allowed to hold him too long at home, let alone to carry out a large party and dance accompanied by music. But such a fact is still happening and done among the Karo people.

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*by* Indra Indra

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Those who work as well as those who live as entrepreneurs, farmers will leave their jobs for the sake of his good name. Such a thing also affects families who come to honour the corpse still lying in the midst of the family, and still waiting until the end of the ceremony and when the funeral will be implemented.

In Karo society, death (mate) in very old age is the most desirable death, especially when the dead have married off all their children and have grandchildren of their children. In the cultural traditions of the Karo people such deaths referred to as "Mate Cawir Matua" and regarded as the ideal concept of death (death by not having another child dependents). <sup>4</sup> ceremony Cawir metua is one example of a complex culture form as in the form of social activity ..

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## II. THE CONCEPT OF CAWIR METUA IN KARO ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

A ceremony is a set of actions performed according to custom or religion which marks the sanctity or reverence of an event. Adat is a guideline in a society that contains values about good and bad, the values that live in a society grow and develop to adjust to the mood and the needs of society.

W. Robertson Smith.<sup>5</sup> suggests religion three ideas about the ceremony, the *first* social that besides Convictions, ceremonial system is also an embodiment in terms of religion or religions which require study and analysis of the particular, the *second* that the ceremonial religion or religion in question together with social functions to intensify solidarity society, and they assume that the ceremony is a social obligation, and the *third* describes the ceremony bersaji a joyful ceremony but also sacred.

It is also present in the Karo tribe community and its gotong royong in performing a happy and festive death ceremony, in which the people come to celebrate together. In the dictionary the term anthropology is described that: "Ceremony is an activity system or set of actions that is governed by custom or law that prevails in society associated with various kinds of permanent events that usually occur in the community concerned".<sup>6</sup>

But the entire face of the earth created by God must experience death, Van Gennep stated that the growth stages or "environment" [*life cycle*] individual, that is born, then childhood, through the process of becoming an adult and married, and became the Old, until the moment of death, it can be concluded that death can not be separated from human life.<sup>7</sup>

This death shows a shift in social standing that is very much different from the living person, where the dead can no longer relate directly to living people, according to the Hert concept which says:

1. The presumption that the transition from one social position to another is a time of crisis, a time of supernatural harm, not only to the individual concerned but also to the whole society.
2. The assumption that the body and all those who are close to the dead are considered sacred.
3. The supposition of transition from social to other positions can not take place simultaneously, but level by level, through a series of periods between the old.
4. The presumption that the initiation ceremony must have three stages: the stage that releases the object, from its relationship to the old society, the level that prepares it for its new position, and the level that elevates it into its new position.<sup>8</sup>
5. The presumption that in the preparatory stage of the initiation period is a weak creature that must be strengthened by various occult ceremonies.

For the people of Karo when someone dies then performed various custom ceremonies whose purpose is to respect and commemorate the services of the corpse in his life time, in this death ceremony karo people implement it in accordance with the circumstances of the deceased family, if the deceased person is rich , Community leaders then held the ceremony of death by using drums.

Karo people know some of the classifications of death among others: *mate Ibas Bertin* (ie fetus untimely birth), *mate tubuh* (the fetus is old, but when born lifeless), *mate maupus* (fetus was born in good health, but her mother died when childbirth), *mate lenga ripen* (infant had died before teething), *mate singuda-nguda / anak Perana* (adolescent male or female dies), *mate lenga dung dahin* (one died, but not old enough, for example, about 50 years), *mate dasawari* (someone dies suddenly), and *mate cawir metua* (diusis old died and his son had married arbitrarily either male or female). In the execution of this death ceremony is not all the same thing is seen from the age of the deceased, for the children who died then the ceremony is only held sekedarnya course, meaning that the child does not wear drums and do not carry out a massive ceremony although he is rich and Respected. The classification of deaths above is a classification of deaths held by the Karo community where in each ceremony is different according to the age level of the deceased.<sup>9</sup>

In general, the death of a massive implemented if the deceased had lived more or karonya term "*Cawir metua*" namely a death after the age of 70 years or more, then the means of implementation is done with *drum Sintua* term. and for the people who died karo "*Cawir metua*" or die of old age then held various festive ceremony in this ceremony entire immediate family members should wear traditional clothes and accompanied by traditional music Karo.

Type of death Cawir Metua is a type of death that has a high level, because not everyone can reach the age of Cawir Metua and have a lot of money for the party. Basically Cawir metua ceremony is not a thing to be forced to hold a big party, but to the Karo status, honour (*Hasangapon*), wealth (*Hamoraon*), and have offspring (*Hagabeon*) is preferred.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the Karo people attempt to flood the road, however, according to Ralph Linton says that status is a person's position or status in society, as the factors are the status of education, religion, age, income, wealth and others. So people who have a wealth of status will be higher, as well as other factors.

Karo people still believe and believe that the deceased parents have (*sahala*) that can affect the lives of people or families and their descendants. According to R. Otto all the religious systems, beliefs and religions of

the world centred on a concept of the supernatural being deemed Supreme, All-Good, All-wise, invisible, unchangeable, infinite and so forth.

Cawir Metua death ceremony is done is an expression of gratitude to God for the blessing of long life, until the time of death to pick him up, still had time to see all his children have spawn (even have grandchildren). Those who died cawir *metua* is a "pride" in the achievement of the last wishes of living humans as individuals and as a social creature.<sup>11</sup>

In the Karo community, there are several types of death ceremonies:

1. *Mate Ibas Bertin* is the fetus untimely born, for example, aged 6-7 months had a human form, but the birth (miscarriage) died.
2. *Mate tubuh*, the fetus is old, but when born lifeless.
3. *Mate maupus*, the fetus was born in good health, but her mother died in childbirth.
4. *Mate Lenga ripen*, the baby had died before teething.
5. *Mate singuda-nguda / anak perana*, adolescent male or female dies.
6. *Mate Lenga dung dahin*, one died, but not old enough, for example, about 50 years.
7. *Mate sadawari*, someone dies suddenly, such as suicide, fight, was struck by lightning and so on.
8. *Mate cawir metua*, someone dies due to ageing over 70 years. And is one type of death that has a high degree among other types of death. It is said to have a high degree because not everyone can reach the Cawir Metua and can hold this Cawir Metua party.<sup>12</sup>

### III. THE KARO SOCIETY (ISLAMIC AND CHRISTIAN) VIEW OF THE DEATH CEREMONY

In many customs carried out by a society, of course, many are less relevant to the teachings of Islam because the teachings of Islam is a teaching brought by the Prophet Muhammad SAW and not based on the results of human creation, but based on the revelation coming from Allah SWT. Islam is a way of life (*way of life*), which is an actual path of human life, clearly, applies to the elements and a system of life that contains the trust that interprets the nature of the universe and determines the position of man in it.<sup>13</sup>

In the customary funeral rites (*pesta si mate*), especially funerals at the Karo people, of course, a lot of which is contrary to the teachings of Islam because in a custom implementation funerals was not in accordance with the teachings of Islam, in the Karo traditional if there is a person who died then the *anak Beru*, *senina*, and *kalimbubu* held a consultation to determine when the body buried.

If viewed from the teachings of Islam is clearly contradictory since customary meeting and perform traditional ceremonies will certainly slow the course of obligations that must be held against the dead because this is, of course, all the family awaited his arrival so it takes a long time in organizing fardu kifayah.

The view of one of Karo's religious leaders about the implementation of the death ceremony has an effect on the implementation of fardu kifayah, for more details can be put forward several things, among others:

1. Time is too long, because of the many traditional events that must be implemented, it can not be left alone, so the funerary burial event often delayed to the corpse until several days buried in the funeral home.
2. Jama'ah can be reduced because some people have other work to be fulfilled so that people who implement karday kifayah stay only a few people.
3. Trouble for families to implement fardu kifayah this is because sometimes dead corpses have long died to cause so that people who carry out the occasion sometimes reluctant to execute it.

The view of Karo people who are Muslims in general the implementation of the ceremony of death can be said to negatively affect the economy, it can be known from the following things:

1. A waste of time. As explained earlier that the Cawir Metua ceremony is not enough just a day at home, but many days of its time. In every day there is an event in which event halted from *runggu* (consultation), *turun mangolu*, *pelaksanaan Landek* (dancing), *pedalan morah-morah / maneh-maneh*, and the burial of the bodies so that takes quite a long time due to the custom implementation.
2. Waste of matter. *Cawir Metua* ceremony is an event the death of parents who are married to all of his children both women and men. In this ceremony takes a long time that is four days or seven days. With so much time that it takes out a lot of material because every day a person is fed, the cost of a musician, the cost of buying the prescribed *boan*, as for what is *dipasud* with *boan* is the sacrificial animal that must be cut in the ceremonial feast, then to be divided To the public or invited guests.

However, the Karo people who are Muslims still have the ceremonies of death but after the corpse is buried called the dead people, in the form of a party after gathering to hold the rail/negotiation after a new mupakat word held party accompanied by dance (dance Sad) as well as religious leaders give advise words to the grieving patience in receiving the trial, and the event just one day wrote.

According to the informant one of which is a religious figure Karo people, Mr SP Build<sup>14</sup> say that the ceremony of death does not violate the teachings of religion, because religious teachings and customs should be

equally executed for each action or activity that a person or group of people is driven by nature Curiosity and customary speech. Customary guidance is a thing that should not be violated, for every individual of Karo society if not able to give tribute to his parents either during his life or after death is considered to have a customary debt that must pay even though the period of unspecified pay because the customary debt of children paid parents And the indigenous debt of parents is paid by the child so that the deceased parent is respected, that is why the Karo people always carry out the death ceremony in order to sing the unfulfilled customary debt during his lifetime.

The views Karo Christian community towards implementing metua Cawir funeral ceremony or a big party Karo people of calcification death can affect people's lives, according to informants funerals tend to be influential in the social field, while the influences are:<sup>15</sup>

1. Kegotong- Royongan

In the life of Karo Batak people known unity over the area / one village or descent (genealogies) and marriage (marriage) in every ceremony big or small ceremony such as ceremony death metua metua regional unity and nimarga presence very proven the existence of power donated or that is kegotong- They will bring a tumpak of rice and money in order to alleviate some losses. Gotong-royong is a spontaneous form of cooperation and contains reciprocal elements that are voluntary among peoples, the *anak beru* help in the kitchen cooking (marhobas), the taboo party / family to participate in order to organize the implementation of the ceremony.

2. Unity

What is meant by unity is (union, collection) some parts that have been united, among the Karo people often formed pesim nimarga and set up a monument each of each clan, as well as in every congregation / party, if the party / big ceremony such as cawir metua Is a Tarigan clan, the marga will also grieve and will see their participation as a clan, in which they also seek solutions how to make the party run well and will further strengthen the relationship between them.

Although in the implementation of custom Cawir Metua requires a very large cost but the Batak Karo people always try to fulfil it, because the Karo people do not like to say people who are not cohesive and they are stronger to culture than religion. That is why in Karo society, the Cawir Metua ceremony of his deceased parents as a tribute to parents and ancestors is a customary guidance that has been settled, and in reaching the life principle of the Karo Batak called the philosophy of life that is, hamoraon, hagabeon, and Hasangapon will be in line with the implementation of the ceremony. Since the hamoraon (wealth) of the ceremony can be accomplished as well as the hagabeon without any offspring as the mover of the ceremony will not be accomplished because that is the descendant of Karo Batak desperately needed in the execution of the ceremony, and later on the offspring will look respectful and the parents who died Ahead of the crowds. This is in Karo Batak beliefs, with the implementation of this ceremony they will get the blessing and cultural value system that is regarded as a noble value, these values have been embedded from the ancestors to the generation successor until now.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The process of performing the death ceremony of Cawir Metua before there is an arrangement for the party than the first step once they / the family of the deceased will notify the brothers, just held the rail/talk about the ceremony process from the beginning until the ceremony penguburuan finished. As the philosophical value of Cawir Metua ceremony is that one of Karo's cultural values is many breeds and longevity. After having many children, the length of the person's age, so if he died because of old age (cawir metua) to be a pride of its own. If this happens, then "complete" one's life.

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- [11] *Ibid*, p 334
- [12] Tridah Bangun, *Op. Cit*, p 54
- [13] Sayyib Qutub, *Islam dan Masa Depan* , (Jakarta: Terjemahan Media Dakwah, 1988), p 138
- [14] Interview, extensive interviewing and sabagai aims to facilitate discussion of the concept indentiknya tool custom implementation of death in the Karo people and the respondent was a part of the community leaders who know and understand the implementation of the death ceremony
- [15] Interview with Mr. SP Bangun Sebangi Religious Figures Lau Pakam In the village of Karo District of Mardinding Date 7 April 2017

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