

The essential meaning of Maantat tradition in Ladang Panjang Village, Sarolangun Regency, Jambi, Indonesia

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Abstract

Maantat is one of the ancestral traditions of the Malay tribe, and it is still preserved in the Jambi region, Sumatra. The Malay people in Jambi practice this tradition on important days, such as Islamic religious holidays and weddings. This study aimed to determine the meaning or important values in implementing the Maantat tradition that makes this tradition sustainable until now. The method used is descriptive qualitative with an ethnographic approach. Data collection techniques use observation and interview techniques. The study was conducted in Ladang Panjang Village, Sarolangun, Jambi. This study found that Maantat is a tradition of delivering food in containers (rantang) to relatives during critical events. The essential values contained in it are fostering a sense of togetherness and solidarity, the manifestation of gratitude, and respect for elders and customs, all of which are manifestations of the noble values of Indonesian society that prioritize relationships between individuals, spirituality, and respect for tradition.

Abstrak

Kata Kunci:

budaya; nilai-nilai
esensial; suku
Melayu; tradisi
Maantat

Nilai esensial yang terkandung dalam Tradisi Maantat di Desa Ladang Panjang, Sarolangun, Jambi, Indonesia

Maantat adalah salah satu tradisi warisan leluhur suku Melayu yang sampai saat ini masih dilestarikan di wilayah Jambi, Sumatra. Tradisi ini dipraktikkan oleh masyarakat suku Melayu di Jambi pada hari-hari penting, seperti hari-hari besar keagamaan Islam dan acara perkawinan. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui makna atau nilai-nilai penting yang terdapat di dalam pelaksanaan tradisi Maantat yang membuat tradisi ini dapat lestari hingga saat ini. Metode yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan ancangan etnografi. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan teknik observasi dan wawancara. Lokasi penelitian dilakukan di Desa Ladang Panjang, Sarolangun, Jambi. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa Maantat merupakan tradisi mengantar makanan dalam wadah rantang yang diberikan kepada kerabat pada peristiwa-peristiwa penting. Nilai-nilai penting yang terkandung di dalamnya adalah memupuk rasa kebersamaan dan solidaritas, perwujudan rasa syukur, penghormatan yang lebih tua dan adat, yang kesemuanya merupakan perwujudan dari nilai-nilai luhur masyarakat Indonesia yang mengutamakan hubungan antarindividu, spiritualitas, dan penghormatan terhadap tradisi.

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1 Introduction

Tradition is a cultural heritage consisting of various customs, practices, beliefs, values, and customs passed down from one generation to the next in a community or society. It is rooted in the Latin verb "tradere," meaning to transmit or hand down (de Benoist, 1992). Tradition is a fundamental aspect of culture, serving as a means of transmitting social practices and knowledge across generations (McKean, 2003). According to Horner (in Graburn, 2000), tradition refers to the process of inheritance from one generation to another and also to something, a habit, or a thought process that is inherited from time to time. Tradition usually reflects the identity of a group of people and is often closely related to aspects of their lives, such as religion, art, language, or ways of social interaction. According to Adorno (1992), tradition is a multifaceted concept rooted in passing on knowledge and practices across generations. Tradition generally refers to cultural continuity, including artifacts, technology, customs, and language patterns, and tradition can also be applied more specifically to certain customs or practices. (Gailey, 1989). Traditions play vital social functions in society, including social integration, legitimation of social organizations, and socialization of individuals. (Asanov & Sharshenaliev, 2022). Traditions serve as mechanisms for cultural continuity, ensuring social stability and adaptation to new conditions. (Lavrinova et al., 2022). Traditions provide value-normative orientation and shape human spirituality. (Lavrinova et al., 2022) Traditions serve to maintain a society's cultural identity and help people understand their cultural roots. Amid globalization, preserving traditions is essential to maintaining the diversity of world cultures.

Tradition is part of culture. Culture and tradition are complex, interrelated concepts that significantly shape human societies and organizations. Culture encompasses a particular group's shared knowledge, beliefs, behaviours, and values (Smith et al., 2018), while traditions involve practices and customs passed down through generations (Rather & Rajeshwari, 2023). Understanding a particular society's traditions will also help us understand its culture.

Indonesia, as a country with extraordinary cultural diversity, has local traditions that reflect the wisdom and values of its people. One tradition that is rich in meaning and cultural values is Maantat in Jambi. Maantat is one of the ancestral traditions of the Malay tribe that is still preserved in the Jambi region, Sumatra. The Malay people in Jambi practise this tradition (and also in parts of Sumatra) on important days, such as Islamic religious holidays and wedding and circumcision ceremonies (Rahmi, 2024; Salam et al., 2022). Maantat, also called Maanta, comes from the word *maantaan*, which means to deliver (Irvandi, 2019).

Research on traditions in Indonesia has been widely conducted (Anggraeni & Supriadi, 2024; Anoe-grajekti et al., 2018; Bowen, 1986; Idrus et al., 2023; Iryana & Jamaluddin Z, 2023; Lestariningsih & Lestari, 2024; Mahira et al., 2023; Rafael & Benu, 2021; Rosidah et al., 2024; Watson & Kato, 1983), but not much specifically on the Maantat tradition. From a literature search using the Publish or Perish application, only three titles were found, namely "The Traditional Values of Maanta in Jambi Seberang Community" (Salam et al., 2022), "Pendapat masyarakat terhadap tradisi maanta asam pada kehamilan tujuh bulan di Jorong Lareh Nan Panjang Kanagarian Batu Payuang Kecamatan Lareh Sago Halaban ditinjau dari hukum Islam" (Irvandi, 2019), dan "Tradisi Maanta Nasi Panambai dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam: Studi Kasus di Padang Luar Nagari III Koto Kecamatan Rambatan Kabupaten Tanah Datar" (Maisa & Elimartati, 2021). The first study is similar to this study but was conducted in a different location, namely in Seberang Kota Jambi (Sekoja). This study was conducted in Ladang Panjang Village. Sekoja is an area on the outskirts of Jambi City whose people are relatively more advanced compared to the people of Ladang Panjang Village which is located in a remote village. This difference in location certainly has the potential for differences in the views of the community towards the Maantat tradition. Then in the research of Maisa and



Elimartati (2021), although discussing the Maantat tradition, the main focus is more on the application of Islamic law.

The novelty of this research is on the meaning and description of important values contained in the Maantat tradition based on the views of the Ladang Panjang Village community, Jambi, a village whose society is relatively homogeneous and comes from the Malay tribe. The purpose of this study is to describe the meaning and essential values contained in the Maantat tradition in the views of the Ladang Panjang Village community, Jambi.

2 Methods

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method. The object of research is the meaning and traditional values contained in the Maantat tradition, a Malay tribe tradition. Research data were obtained through field research using observation and interviews with informants of community leaders or elders at the research location, Ladang Panjang Village, Sarolangun, Jambi. Ethnography is used to analyze the data to obtain an accurate picture of what is happening in the Ladang Panjang Village community in viewing and carrying out the Maantat tradition.

3 Findings

3.1 The Meaning of Maantat Tradition

The observations and interviews found that the Maantat tradition is a tradition of delivering food using food containers to be given to relatives, especially older ones. This tradition is carried out on major Islamic holidays, such as at the end of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, the Prophet's Birthday, and essential events in life, such as circumcision and marriage. The activities carried out in the Maantat tradition are cooking together and sharing it by delivering the food to older relatives in food containers. Food delivery is usually done in the afternoon or evening before dinnertime. From the results of observations, it was also found that when the delivery person, for example, a newlywed couple, arrives at the house of the intended relatives, they will be greeted by the host and listen to advice from the host. Then, after finishing, the host will also give the couple food.

3.2 Essential Values Contained in the Maantat Tradition

The activities in the Maantat tradition and the interview results show that it is not just a tradition of delivering or distributing food. This tradition has essential values. The activities, goods, and food included in it symbolise the values or teachings of the tradition adopted by the people of Ladang Panjang Village.

Table 1 Essential Values in Maantat Tradition

No	Activities/Things	Meaning
1	Cooking the dishes	Symbol of togetherness and strong social ties
2	Rantang	Harmony
3	Rice, Gulai, Sambal, and Kote cake	Respect and well-being
4	Delivering food to older relatives	A form of gratitude, politeness, and moral education

4 Discussion

This study aims to determine the meaning and essential values contained in the Maantat tradition. The meaning and values can be known from how the people of Ladang Panjang Village carry out the tradition and how they perceive it.

4.1 Implementation of Maantat Tradition

As explained in the findings of this study, Maantat is a typical tradition of the Malay tribe that has been carried out from generation to generation by ancestors and still survives to this day, especially the Maantat tradition found in the location of this study, namely Ladang Panjang Village. Ladang Panjang Village is around 102.43 East Longitude to 2.14 South Latitude and is \pm 6 km from the capital of Sarolangun Regency (Surulangun). The total population of the village is 2,767 people, consisting of 1,710 men and 2,057 women. The town's entire population is Muslim, with their principal livelihood working on plantations and forests.

Figure 1 Location Map of Ladang Panjang Village



The Maantat tradition is the result of acculturation between Malay culture and Islam. Activities are carried out on significant Islamic days such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, the Commemoration of the Prophet Muhammad's Birthday, and Ramadan, as well as essential days in human life such as circumcision and marriage. At the same time, the attributes of goods and food in the Maantat tradition follow the traditions of the Malay tribe, such as the Rantang container and types of food, especially Kote cakes, which are always part of the Maantat tradition.

Explanations about the Maantat tradition were obtained from several interview results as follows.

(1) *“Maantat iko budaya yang masih ado hubungannyo dingan acaro-acaro agama islam, kami diaja budaya Maantat samo urang tuo dulu, dingan mencelik galo-galo proses budaya Maantat. Maantat ko budaya masyarakat suku Melayu yang bajalan sampai kini. Tampak cakmano masyarakat Suku Melayu masih makai budaya Maantat ko dalam semuo acara-acara yang ado di masyarakat. Berhubungan pengertian Maantat biso dimaknakan penghormatan sekaligus memberikan makanan yang dibuat masyarakat Suku Melayu. Tradisi Maantat iko bukan sekedar ngantat makanan tapi ngundo tingkat sebagai tempat makanantu” [Haji Latip (63 Tahun)]*

‘Maantat is a tradition still related to Islamic religious events; we are taught the Maantat tradition by following our ancestors and paying attention to all the Maantat tradition processes. Maantat is a culture of the Malay people that continues to this day. This is evident in how the Malay still carries out the Maantat tradition at every event in the community. The definition of maantat can be interpreted as respect and food given by the Malay people. This Maantat tradition is about delivering food and using food containers as a place or container for the food.’

(2) “Maantat iko nak, recap dilakukan untuk menyambut hari-hari besak agamo islam, acaro kawin dan lain-lain. Maantat iko jugo budaya turun menurun, dan jugo harus diajakan kepada anak-anak mudo tekait hal iko”. [Haji Amran (67 Tahun)]

‘This Maantat is often held to welcome the big days of Islam, weddings, and other events. It is also a tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation and is taught to young people regarding this matter.’

4.2 Cooking the Dishes

Cooking food to be shared is an integral part of the Maantat tradition. Cooking is carried out by cooperation (working together) of residents, both relatives and neighbours. This joint cooking event is usually led by a female figure who is an expert in cooking and traditional cooking spices. Although cooking is mainly handled by mothers or women, fathers or men are involved. The results of information like this were obtained from one of the informants, a cooking guide, namely Mrs Rosma Dewi (50 years old), who explained as follows.

(3) “Iyo Nak, waktu ado acara, disiko tukang masaknyo ibuk-ibuk yo ditulung dengan bapak-bapak. Besonyo dibukak oleh keluargo, tetangga, dan jugo masyarakat yang nak ikut nulung yang mengadokan acaro-acaro besak khususnya acaro nikah. Tapi yang jadi ketuo masaknyo bukan bapak-bapak, tapi rombongan ibuk-ibuk. Disiko lah jadi budayo, yang tukang tanggung jawab masak tu rombongan ibuk-ibuk.”

“It is right; when there is an event, the women cook with the help of men. Usually, it is started by family, neighbours, and the community who want to help organise significant events, especially weddings. However, the head of the cooking is not a man but a woman. It has become a culture; women are in charge of cooking.”

Figure 2 Cooking the Dishes



Cooking dishes together with community members symbolises togetherness and a strong sense of social solidarity among community members. This tradition strengthens social networks where individuals support each other, especially at important moments such as weddings, deaths, or big celebrations.

4.3 The Dishes

The dishes in the Maantat tradition usually consist of at least four types: rice, *Gulai* (buffalo or beef), *sambal goreng hati* or *sambal* pineapple, and *kue kote*. Each type occupies one container, so

there are four levels of containers overall. The bottom container is filled with rice; the container above it is curry (gulai), the *sambal* above it, and the top is the Kote cake.

Figure 3 Cooking Kote



This type of dish is intended to respect the traditions that prevail in Malay tribal society. Rice is the staple food of the Malay tribe, and *gulai* is a side dish usually accompanied by *sambal*. Meanwhile, Kote cake is a traditional Malay food as a snack.

(4) “*Masak jodah kote iko nak, masakan yang bearti untuk masyarakat disiko. Karno hampir semuo acaro kue kote sering ado sebagai bentuk suci, besar, dan kebersamoan kareno kue kote salah satu menu Maantat biso dimakan semuo orang*”.

‘This kote cake dish is meaningful for the people here because kote cake dishes are often provided as a form of purity, greatness, and togetherness at almost every event. Kote cake is one of the Maantat menus that all groups can enjoy.’

4.4 Rantang

Rantang is a set of stackable food containers, usually made of metal, that are used as containers for food supplies or for sending food. *Rantang* has been popular since the Dutch colonial era in Indonesia, although now it is starting to become rare because it has been replaced by containers made of plastic. The use of *rantang* containers is practical and clean because of their orderliness. Each container accommodates certain dishes and is arranged in an orderly manner based on the order of the container. This is a symbol of harmony and respect for tradition.

Figure 4 Rantang



4.5 Delivering food to older relatives

After the food is prepared in a container, the next activity is delivering it to older relatives or elders. The delivery person or a newlywed couple will deliver it to older relatives in this activity. After giving the food, the delivery person usually sits and listens to advice from the host. The essence of this activity is to visit older relatives and listen to their advice. It is carried out as a form of respect for the elderly and a form of gratitude for Allah SWT's blessings.

(5) *“Maantat ko ado saparangkat adab atau tata caru Maantat yang unik nak. Pertamo pado pernikahan sepasang penganten baru nganta makanan yang sudah disiap karumah urang yanglah dikatokan, sudah tu mendenga nasehat dari tuan rumah tu” [Edi (43 Tahun)]*

‘This Maantat has a unique set of Maantat manners and procedures, son. First, at a wedding, a newlywed couple delivers food that has been prepared to the homes of determined people, then visits the person's home and listens to advice from the host.’

(6) *“Pado acaro Maantat Nak, ado sarangkai adab yang parelu dikimak bukan basing-basing bae. Duduk lebih dulu denga nasehat orang tuo tu”. [Ibu Hajir (50 Tahun)]*

‘At the Maantat event, a series of ethics need to be considered, not just any old thing. Sit down first and listen to the advice of the parents’

Figure 5 Delivering food to older relatives



5 Conclusion

The Maantat tradition for the Malay tribe, especially for the people of Ladang Panjang Village, reflects the values of cooperation, respect for customs, religiosity, and harmonious social relations, not just a ritual of sharing food. This tradition not only maintains relationships between individuals but also strengthens the identity of the Malay culture as a society that upholds spiritual values, politeness, and solidarity. This tradition can be maintained until now because residents continue to carry it out with a sense of respect for the traditions of the Malay tribe, and it is carried out based on Islamic teachings. This tradition also involves the next generation because they are always involved in implementing the Maantat tradition. The implications of this study can be an example of the implementation of a tradition that can always be maintained through respect for ancestral traditions and the involvement of the next generation in its implementation. Recommendations for further research are that research can be conducted in other Malay areas with more heterogeneous populations, for example, in areas whose populations are not only Muslim or Malay.

Disclosure Statement

The author(s) claim there is no conflict of interest.

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