

The Ritual of KaSa'o and the Expression of Hospitality at the Traditional Village of Tololela, Flores, Indonesia

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Abstract

The multitude of religions and cultures of communities with diverse geographical backgrounds had attracted a growing number of tourists to come to Indonesia. For that reason, community-based tourism has been considered as an alternative way to boost economic prosperity. On the island of Flores, the advancement of cultural tourism in the recent years has opened the opportunity to introduce the traditional village of Tololela as its new tourist attraction especially during the traditional ceremony such as KaSa'o. This article discusses KaSa'o or the ritual of the housewarming ceremony at Tololela village. We examined how the community conducted the ritual as part of the hospitality of Ngadha ethnic group and how the community created the temporary spatial arrangements at the village ground. To fully understand the meaning of KaSa'o, we conducted participant observations, interviews, and actively involved in the ceremonies of KaSa'o. We concluded that the rituals at Kasa'o involves a form of hospitality that plays a significant role to attract tourists to Tololela, which in turn drives the need for the erection of a village gate (Batanua). The gate acts as a formal attribute and marks the starting point for tourists who intend to see and learn about the traditional ethnic society in this village and also serve as a statement to the outsiders to respect the customs of the village.

Keywords: KaSa'o, hospitality, Tololela, *Batanua*, tourism, Indonesia, Traditions.

Introduction

The growth of the tourism industry has increased the rise of awareness of rural communities to conserve traditional settlements of Tololelain Ngadha Regency; a small village located in the island of Flores. With the increasing cultural tourism in Flores, the government of Ngadha Regency has a program to help to preserve traditional settlements of many village communities that are willing to welcome outsiders to visit their villages. Tourism provides incentives for village income, while at the same time strengthens the symbols and functions of cultural artifacts. Not only that, the government will provide other amenities such as parking areas, coffee shops, public toilets, information houses, and the village like the one they built for the village of Bena. One of the missing cultural artifacts in the traditional village of Tololela is *Batanua*, which is a gate or entrance to enter the traditional village formally.

Batanua is one of the structural parts of the traditional village that also serves as a symbol of identity. The village is considered incomplete without the gate. In the traditional village spatial system, *Batanua* is placed at the highest position in a village facing the mountain. The

composition of *Batanua* consists of vegetation and a stone formation made by piling up stones collected from the rivers. The layout of the vegetation and the formation of stones form a spatial layout that represents the entrance access, memories of the main characteristic of the village community, and symbols of the origin of the community.

Most tourists who visit Ngadha traditional communities intend to interact with the village atmosphere and seek a view of traditional ethnic society, particularly at the striking cultural manifestations: exotic houses, *ngadhu*, *bhaga*, and megaliths. The villagers welcome those who enter the village and show their hospitality because they regard them as guests. The villagers would be reluctant to show any semblance of hospitality to the tourists who just linger around the village to observe and take pictures because they regard them as strangers. For this reason, it is important to establish a boundary with the gate; either physically or symbolically to prevent any tourists from entering the village without any permission and welcome from the villagers.

Strating from 2017, DRPM (*Direktorat Riset dan Pengabdian Masyarakat*/Directorate of Research and Community Services) allocates grants for universities in Indonesia to apply research in communities, ranging from community technology to collaborative research with local government or the private sector (DRPM, 2016). Community engagements are considered as part of universities' social responsibility towards their stakeholders, particularly to the local societies. We engaged with the community of Tololela, as part of our responsibilities in developing the human capital and the socio-economy of the community. Our community service program was focusing on preserving their cultural aspect by providing the technical aid on science and technology. In 2019, sponsored by DRPM Universitas Indonesia under the program of Community Engagement, we planned to build a *Batanua* we had previously designed with the community of Tololelain in 2018. This program aims to assist the residents to build the gate, while at the same time open the initial cooperation between Universitas Indonesia and the traditional communities. In the long run, this collaboration will be further developed into other forms of assistance, as many traditional villages demand other forms of community services. We found that the community does not solely need aid in preserving their cultural aspects, but also the technical aid on science and technology.

Objectives of the study

This paper aims to understand the contextual issues or phenomenon of the community, as the foundational research for community engagement. Prior implementation of community practise, and understanding of the local knowledge creates technical solutions that are practical and effective (Bassler, 2008). This article discusses KaSa'o or the ritual of the house warming ceremony at the traditional village of Tololela and its correlation to the importance of the village gate (*Batanua*). The findings of this preliminary research will be useful for the guidances on how to organize and engage with the community and stakeholders; especially in the local decision-making process concerning the construction of the village gate. We also examined how the community conducted the ritual as part of Ngadha hospitality and how the community created the temporary spatial arrangements at the village ground. We considered that participation and observation on the ritual on-site need to be done before applying our plan to hold the construction of *Batanua* for anticipating the tendency of Tololela to become a new tourist destination.

Literature Review

Traditional architecture expresses a strong relationship between people, God, and the natural surroundings. Living space is manifested by cosmology, way of life, hierarchy, symbols, ornaments, and architectural forms. A house is not only just a place to live but also a place of origin, rituals, and also an inheritance. Considering the close relationship between a house and the ancestors, consequently, a house is considered to be sacred and robust that it is almost temple-like (Waterson, 1997).

In traditional societies, welcoming visitors into their community is important to build a good foundation for good relations and to maintain friendship. It can be expressed by sharing their food and drinks, or even by offering their houses to accommodate their guests. Mennel et al. (1992) quoting Van Gennep, states that food sharing is not only a form of togetherness and equality but also an effort to redefine and reaffirm social equality between groups. Lashley (2000) defines the sharing of food and drinks between host and guest in the private domain as a reciprocal obligation with the consideration that "one day, in turn, the guests will become the host." Selwyn (2000) states that offering the banquet is a way to change the relationship from not knowing each other to becoming friends.

Some traditional societies have their unique rituals or ceremonies to welcome visitors and also to connect the visitors to the presence of their ancestors since the presence of ancestors plays an important part in traditional societies. Animal sacrifice is involved in these rituals to commune with the invisible ancestral power through food sharing (Visser, 1991). The purpose of these rituals is to seek the ancestors' approval. For this reason, the name of the ancestor should be mentioned in every speech. Welcoming rituals also offer the opportunity to establish a host-guest dynamic that shows the host's authoritative power over their guests.

Since a ritual requires the involvement and support of the community, a successful ritual can also be an indicator to predict the strength of someone's attachment to the ritual place. In cultural events, the ritual place provides a medium for community values and beliefs. Greene (1996) stated that attachment to a certain place influences their sense of stewardship of a place. A ritual also encourages individuals to enjoy the interactions that could strengthen their emotional attachment to the built environment. In effect, a ritual can emphasize the value they recognize in the feeling of ownership and a sense of belonging for the participants.

The question is how this strong connection between a ritual and social and cultural context can persist when tourists enter a village? With the exposure gained from promotions in social media, there would be a surge of tourist visits to Tolelela in the near future. When promoting tourism, the government tends to focus on those which are immediate, accessible, colorful, and visible to the 'tourist gaze,' which can more easily shape and construct an image (Wood, 1997). Cultural tourism is not only about the traditional material and objects but also about the traditional way of life, which includes aesthetic and authentic cultural forms. The local government should not only focus on the need of the tourists but also of the communities.

Studies on tourism in traditional villages in Indonesia have mostly been stimulated and enriched by personal experiences that rely more on empirical works. What tourists think, how they feel and what influences their thoughts and feelings is especially fascinating to tourists themselves, to the people who manage their behaviour and to analysts studying contemporary life (Pearce, 2005). Studies on tourist behavior are emerging mostly on tourism studies, which draw on the disciplines of psychology, sociology and anthropology (Pearce, 2005). Schroter conducted a field work and examination of the annual ritual cycles among the Ngadha society (Schroter, 2000). However, she focused on how they confronted with the global impacts, how the meanings of rituals have changed and how tradition and modernity are balanced. For contribution to tourism development in Indonesia, this paper addressed the lack of research on the aspects of ritual, spatial arrangement, and hospitality. The main question is how the traditional community of Tololela created the temporary spatial arrangements expressing hospitality to foreigners through rituals.

Research Methodology

We engaged in participant observation in the rituals to explore and analyse the spatial patterns of event, attitudes of the participants, and the motivations of the rituals. Following Spradley (1980), we considered ourselves as participant observers rather than the ordinary participant, who need to focus on: a) "the dual purpose" or approached rituals with the two

purposes, firstly to interact within the ritual, and secondly to watch and record all rituals, in term of spatial settings, interactions and participants within the situation during rituals; b) “the wide angle lenses” or absorb as comprehensive as possible a range of information to reveal the course of the situation by looking at the sights, sounds, atmosphere, proxemics, people’s reactions and behavior; and c) “the record” or keeping detailed notes of observations on the ritual spaces, actions and interactions, conversations, and emotions encountered during the ritual.

Prior to engaging in the rituals, we visited some Ngadha traditional villages to observe and gather qualitative information. We conducted semi-structured interviews with the ritual host and important key persons as informants. In this case, to lead to significant insights of the informants, we took the control measures to reduce our reactivity and influence. The semi-structured approach admitted the informants to elaborate on areas significant to them, whilst allowing us to direct the topics of conversation around the key questions. Unstructured interviews with strangers attending the rituals were done to be more exploratory or simply chatting about the rituals with other ritual participants. In addition, we kept all the notes on the views and comments of participants as went through the rituals. Triangulation of the research finding was done through analyses of all qualitative information gathering methods relating back to the range of data generated during the participant observations and field notes.

The village of Tololela

Tololela is located between two flat lands in the hills below the foot of Mount Inerie. Tololela village is also located in a remote place that can only be reached by foot for one hour or by using a motor vehicle for 15 minutes which is then continued on foot. Administratively speaking, the traditional village of Tololela is located in the area of Manubhara village, Inerie District, Ngadha Regency, Flores. It is a part of the Jerebu'u area. Based on village monograph data (2019), Tololela is administratively considered a hamlet (*dusun*) with a total population of 96 people. All community members are from Ngadha ethnicity and dominated by descendants of the people from the Bena traditional village.



Fig. 1: Village location

Source: author

Tololela village consists of 31 traditional houses. The upper village is inhabited by four clans (*woe*) of Siga Dala, Siga Daku, Siga Lalu Bila, and Siga Padhu Raga while the lower village is inhabited by the clans Metu, Be' a, and Raba. The clans' presence in the village is seen from the seven pairs of *Ngadhu* and *Bhaga* in the village yard. The steeply topographical situation separates the village into two parts, namely the upper and lower parts. Although they seemed to be separated from each other, both parts still act as one community that do their activities together. Most of their communal activities took place at the *kisaloka* in the upper village. *Kisaloka* is a big *loka* (yards) situated on a higher ground than the traditional houses which surround it.

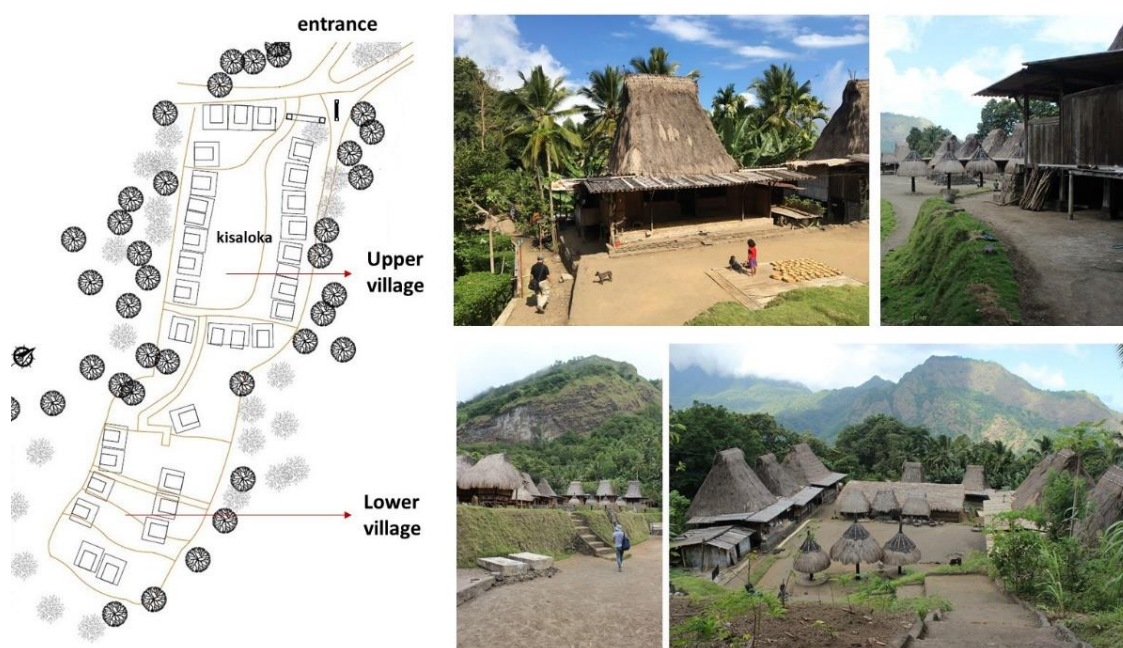


Fig. 2: Village of Tololela, Flores

Source: author

The Ritual of KaSa'o

KaSa'o is a ritual of house warming and one of the most important ceremonies as it is an effective way to acknowledge the status of Sa'o (house) and the clan who owns the Sa'o. A Sa'o will last as long as the clan exists to continue their legacy. A clan has a strong connection with their Sa'o because a Sa'o holds the property and the passing of the clan's name. Ngadha ethnic applies the matrilineal system and so a Sa'o is run by the female members of the clan who must be hospitable, a good cook, friendly, have good organizing skills, and other positive attitudes.

Sa'o is also a representation of the identity of family and clan members or *Woe*. Each Sa'o bears a name taken from their ancestors. Thus, the children and grandchildren would easily understand the history and the journeys of the clan origins through the name of Sa'o. In Tololela village, there are 7 (seven) *Woe* marked by the presence of seven pairs of *Ngadhu* and *Bagha* in the middle of the village ground.

We had the opportunity to attend the ritual of KaSa'o at Tololela in July 2019, hosted by the Rutinus family. It was a huge ceremony, involving not only residents of Kampung Tololela but also the government officials. The purpose of the KaSa'o of Rutinus family was to celebrate the completion of Sa'o renovation which has reached the plenary stage. It symbolically illustrated the success of Rutinus' extended family as well as the realization of unity and solidarity among clan members. They expressed their gratitude for the blessing of all family members, both success and prosperity. The last KaSa'o held by the Rutinus family was held 25 years ago.

The Chronological Ceremonies of KaSa'o

1) Preliminary visit and the ritual of hosting the visitors of Sa'o One

As the outsiders, we needed to gain the ancestors' approval before we could participate in KaSa'o. Two days before the ritual, we performed a traditional ceremony to enter the sacred inner-core of the traditional house of Sa'o One. We were introduced to the host's ancestors, through a ceremony called "*ti'ikaebunusi*", which translated as 'give food to the ancestors'. The ceremony was a pre-requisite to appeal to the evil spirits in the mountains not to cause any harm.

The ritual required us to bring a live chicken as an offering, rice, and *moke* (palm wine). A member of the clan poured the *moke* in a coconut shell before he started to pray in their traditional speech. Afterwards, he sacrificed a chicken. In this case, chicken acted as a medium for communication. The fresh blood of the chicken was collected and stamped in 7 (seven) parts of Sa'o One. To remove and clean the feathers, Martinus's son burned the chopped chicken over the hearth located at the corner of Sa'o One before handing again to his father. Martinus split the chicken to examine the position of the belly strap (*Ura Manu*). Eventually, Martinus confirmed that we were accepted by their ancestors, indicated by the straight position of belly strap. After that, Martinus cited prayers to the ancestral spirits. He was asking for approval from his ancestors to let us join the ritual. After he got the answer from his ancestors, he asked for their blessing and protection against evil spirits. His wife then cooked the chicken in the hearth so all participants could have a feast and sip *moke* together.



Fig. 3: Ritual of hosting the visitor at Sa'o One

Source: author

2) Preparation of KaSa'o

We returned to Tololela again before the main ritual began. Even though the ritual was due for the next day, there were already a lot of visitors. It caused some problems mainly relating to vehicles. Due to the lack of paved ground, it was simply very difficult to maneuver the vehicles since there was not enough room for motor vehicle parking. While people were trying to find the best solution for this, inside the village the ritual preparation proceeded without any problem.

The community cleaned the *kisaloka* so it would be ready for the ritual. Rutinus family was busy preparing the foods while the others were trying to commune with the ancestors to choose the ritual officer. The ritual was held at the main house (*Sao SakaPu'u*) of the family because the clan's sacred heirloom was kept there. The officer chosen by the community sat under the most sacred place called *Mataraga* while carrying *moke*, bamboo, and a piece of leaf. He used those objects to determine whether the ancestors gave their approval or not. He poured *moke* to the bamboo and let the leaf float in the *moke*. If the leaf rotated to the right, he was approved by the ancestors.

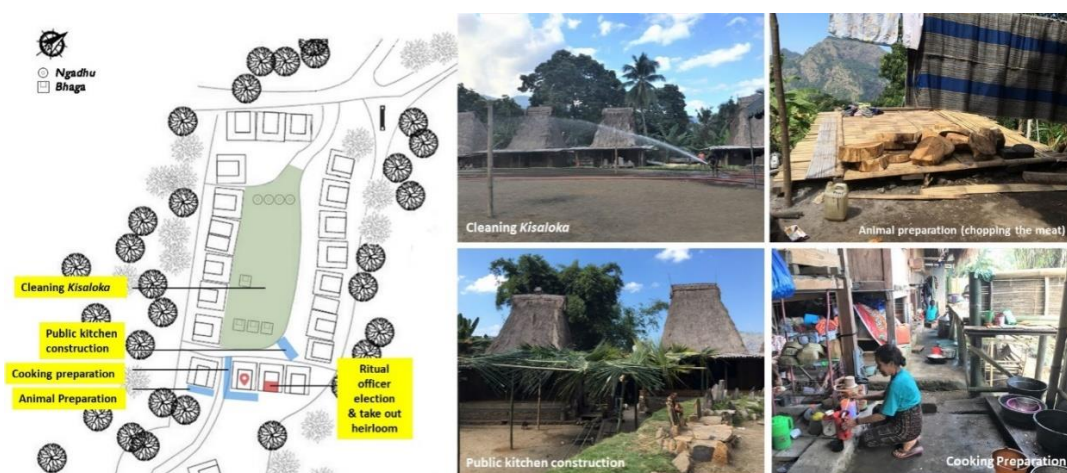


Fig. 4: KaSa'o Preparation

Source: author

3) The Ritual Day

The ritual of KaSa'o lasted for two days. The first day was the reception for the guests while the second day was the rituals for the animal sacrifice and the *Meghe* ritual. During the process, someone who had been purified must sit under the *Mataraga* in the inner Sao One to guard the *Mataraga* until the ritual was over.

The Ka Sao ceremony began in the morning on the first day with an animal sacrifice ritual to invite the ancestors to attend the ceremony. It was done right in front of the stairs of the house (*Watupaliwa'i*). As the owner of the house (*Mori Ngalu*), Rutinus recited a prayer while the animal for sacrifice (*welangana*) was slain. He prayed for the ancestors to bless the ceremony. After that the whole village had breakfast together with the feast prepared by the Rutinus family.

The guests arrived in groups, carrying baskets of rice, bamboo tubes filled with *moke*, and pigs. There were 30-50 people in every group. Since KaSa'o coincided with *Inerie* festival held by the *Indonesiana*, local and national government officials also visited the village. The reception of the guests began with *Sa Ngaza* (notification). A representative from the guest group initiated the entry to the village by shouting the traditional stanza and explained where their family came from, what their relationship with Rutinus was, and the aim of their visit.

After that, someone played the music (*Go Laba*) while the dancers from the host's side created a formation to greet the guests. This dance was called *Ja'i*, which formed a circuit encircling the village ground in a counter-clockwise manner. *Ja'i* dance was performed every time a group of guests came. The hosts danced with other families who have already attended. Next, the ritual proceeded to the feast. Food was distributed to hundreds of guests by hand and *bhakis*.

During the first day of KaSa'o, the village ambience turned into excitement. In the evening, around 20 people entered the inner Sao of Rutinus, closed the door and left a man to stay at the terrace. Those who remained inside the inner Sao sang poetries in the rhythm of foot beats. They were stomping their feet on the wooden floor, creating impressive sounds while also showing how strong the structure of Sao was. The man at the terrace acted as a representative for the outer world and thus he followed the singing and foot-stomping. According to the local inhabitants, the song contained both praise and respect for their ancestors.



Fig. 5: Ritual of KaSa'o (Day One)

Source: author

The second day comprised of a series of the main rituals marked by the slaughtering of four buffaloes and dozens of pigs. The number of pigs represented the number of relatives who visited on the first day of KaSa'o since they all brought pigs for the occasion. The ritual started with *Zia UraNgana* (greeting the ancestors) to tell the host community about the offerings. Afterwards, they sacrificed the buffalos in the middle of *kisaloka*. All men gathered to witness the slaughtering while the women watched from the verandas of their houses. They then smeared the blood from the buffalo and hanged the rib on the *ngadhu*. It was a symbolic ritual of feeding the ancestors to keep them alive.

After the buffalo, they turned to slew the pigs in the *loka* of Ratinus house and the neighboring *loka* adjacent to Rutinus house. The sacrificed pig was then burned to remove the hair and dirt, while some people prepared the arenas for the post-slaughter process by covering banana leaves as a base to separate the meat and broth. The process from slaughtering to cleaning was done very fast. The cleaned pigs were divided into halves, the head and tail parts. The head part was handed over to the donor, who would quickly cook at his/her house to be given back to the host for the following ritual called *Meghe*. The tail part was handed over to the cutting team, who immediately chopped up the meat into small-size before cooking in giant pans. In another part, the women endlessly cooked rice in large pots on top of open firewood that kept on burning during these three days. Everyone had to work fast because, in the afternoon, all offerings must be distributed to villagers during the next ritual of *Meghe*. At *kisaloka*, some men began to place bamboo planks to prepare the ritual.



Fig. 6: Ritual of *Meghe* (Day 2)

Source: author

The ritual of *Meghe* started by holding the *BheiBhodo* ceremony. First, some men took out hundred of kilograms main *Bodho* from Rutinus house and moved it to the food collection point. In the meantime, the donors carried a series of smaller *Bhodo* decorated with pig bones and delivered it to the host. When all *Bodho* had been gathered, a group of men raised the main *Bhodo* and paraded encircling the village ground in anti-clockwise movement. In the front, rows of men and women danced and sang to head the procession, followed by a man who shouldered the main *Bhodo* and moved it in accordance with the songs and dance. All residents and visitors happily greeted this exciting attraction with cheers and laughter.

After *BheiBhodo*, it was time to distribute half-cooked rice and half-cooked meat to the participants. The villagers and guests brought their bamboo containers called *baghis*. They all sat in a row along the bamboo bars, waited patiently for the distribution of rice and meat. When everything was ready, the master of ceremonies gave the signal to start *Meghe* or the ritual of food distribution.

Rutinus family fed hundreds of people on this occasion. Everybody was treated equally regardless of his/her status. While waiting for their turn to receive the rice and meat in a counter-clockwise direction, the participants had to sit cross-legged and hold *baghi* respectively to receive their portion. Those who donated pigs received a substantial portion more than the majority who used a standard *baghi*. After receiving their rations, the residents dispersed in a queue, starting from the front to the back rows. They brought half-cooked rice and meat and returned to their own houses for re-cooking. The *Meghe* ceremony marked the end of the second day of KaSa'o. To show gratitude, at the end of the *Meghe*, the Rutinus family members were shouting and giving away the rice to express their gratitude that all the food were already distributed.

The last ceremony was the *KelaNio*, which was carried out on the next day by the Rutinus family and the workers who built his Sa'o. Rutinus rotated a coconut before splitting it into two while chanting traditional rhymes. Everyone asked to see his/her reflection in the coconut water. If anybody could see the reflection of his/her face in coconut water, it is believed

that his/her soul was purified and cleaned. This ritual was also aimed to bring peace to the home, so that the inhabitants would always live in harmony and peacefully.

Discussion

- 1) The series of ceremonies that we had to carry out in Sa'o One upon entering the village convinced us that as outsiders we had to get permission not only from the residents but also from the ancestors. The community of Tololela embraces Catholicism, but worship to the ancestors remain very important. People have a strong belief that their lives are inseparable from their ancestors. The ancestors are protectors of the clan so that various rituals would not be conducted without the involvement of the ancestors. The ceremonies that we have to take part ensured that many aspects of life must be under the control of their ancestors. The ritual of asking permission of the ancestors reaffirms the villagers on our existence and signifies that we are not outsiders anymore.
- 2) The way the community treats the ancestors indicates the important links between the living and the supernatural forces. It showed how the community fed, recalled during the speech, and sought the ancestors' approval throughout the rituals. Realizing how important the ritual was, we showed concern about the ceremony as a pre-requisite ritual in advance for the construction of *Batanua*, as the permission of the ancestors remains very important.
- 3) Each member of the village community, from children to elders, women, and men, worked together in preparing the party held next day, based on the division of tasks that was mutually determined during the KaSa'o preparatory meeting. Cooperation and togetherness were the natural social capital owned by the residents of Kampung Tololela. This actual situation had awakened a bit of optimism for the next community engagement project of *Batanua*.
- 4) The donation of pigs was an important public demonstration to show the retaliation for donations that have been made by the host. Pig donation is a form of constant exchange to maintain family ties. During the rituals, pigs always become the center of attention. The bigger the pig, the more important is the relationship between the benefactor and the host. After the slaughter, it is essential to store and display the pig's jaw above the door of the house. The number and the size of the jaw indicates the number of relations between the host and relatives. In the culture of oral tradition, displaying the jaws is a form of documentation to retain the memory of the rituals that has been performed in the past.
- 5) Donating pigs and sharing activities indicated the good relationship between the host and the benefactors. Every visit is a social event that is enriched by eating together and drinking *moke*. The meat exchange continues to other families, who receive meat from the benefactor families. Those who do not donate pigs but contribute in other forms of donations such as labor or lending things such as pans, clothes, etc. are paid with meats. For generations, the pig exchange has been the form of hospitality between villagers. In the wake of cultural tourism, it raises a question: what kind of exchange should happen between the villagers and tourists? According to Meethan (1995) tourism is typified as the experience and consumption of place. Participating in a ritual offers the tourists a chance to indulge in it, but their appreciation and commitment would never be the same as the locals. The tourists may experience a sense of attachment during rituals but this is only temporary and the hospitality is not recompensed.
- 6) During the ritual, all participants (including our team members) were required to wear traditional clothes. For this reason, visitors were asked by the residents to rent the traditional *ikatsarung* for 50 thousand rupiahs. Visitors enjoyed the chance to experience wearing traditional clothes. This opens up the idea for the necessity of the visitors to wear *sarung* as the procedure to visit the village. This is a good opportunity to introduce the traditional handwoven fabric made in Tololela. This idea could be integrated with the construction of the gate. The community can use the collected rental fees as an additional income for the maintenance of village facilities. Unlike hospitality between the villagers, the tourists as the guests do not have any mutual obligations. Hospitality should transform into the new form that could accommodate the tourists as mere guests; in this case the requirement to wear traditional *ikat sarung*. The villagers get the rental fee and the tourist have an exotic and authentic experience.

- 7) The ritual of KaSa'o and other traditional ceremonies are very interesting attractions with great potential to attract foreign and domestic tourists. Socialization of rituals through social media has greatly boosted Tololela's reputation as a tourist destination more than the neighboring traditional villages of Bena and Gurusina. For that reason, the existence of the *Batanua* gate has become very important. However, it is necessary to anticipate the potential of negative impacts that would emerge with a large number of tourists. Compared to other villages, Tololela village still maintains its authenticity and doesn't have many tourist facilities. Maintaining village authenticity requires strategies and programs that need to be anticipated in line with the construction of the *Batanua* gate.
- 8) In our observations during visiting Tololela village, we saw that tourists did not only visited but also spent the night in the village. Every household gets the opportunity to take turns to provide their home as a place to stay for the tourists. The hospitality and readiness of the villagers in accepting outsiders show that Tololela villagers are people who are willing to open themselves to accept outsiders. Generally, the tourists who are interested in cultural tourism are those who intend to explore the lifestyle of the villagers as they are.

Concluding Remarks

The success or failure of a ritual in the community of Ngadha is primarily determined by the number of guests present and animals slaughtered. According to Daeng (1988), ancestors always favor the host who conducts a long ritual that is also attended by many people. The guests who were coming from far away places are also preferable. Thus the arrival of tourists during the ritual is considered to be a chance to please the ancestors.

The villagers often complain that without the presence of the gate, tourists tend to directly enter the village without understanding the rules or norms of the locals. Consequently, it has the potential to cause conflicts. The village gate of *Batanua* will effectively become the transitional element. It is a symbolic standpoint for the outsiders to understand the village customs. This initiation is crucial, as nobody wants the tourist to ruin the balance and harmony of the village.

Tololela is one of the traditional settlements that has been carefully preserved by its inhabitants. On the other, it has the potentiality to become the cultural and architectural tourist destinations and draw mass tourism. The gate would be the cultural filter that could protect the village from the undesirable impact from outside. The vicinity of the gate could also be transformed into a transitional space by adding a temporary shelter. Here, the visitors will obtain the pre-knowledge of the rules and customs of the village. In this case, the shelter could act as the place for waiting before they are 'permitted' to enter the village. Ideally, for typical villages like Tololela, there should be two entrances, both have cosmological meaning in the formation of a village. One is *Batanua* or entrance for the outsiders which is located on the highest surface of the land. Other is *zele nua*, as the entrance and exit of residents, located on the lowest land and in the direction to the river. However, we focused merely on *Batanua*.

Our team's involvement in the construction project of *Batanua* would be in the form of community engagement using the combination approach of top-down and bottom-up. This approach previously was done at the design phase. After designing *Batanua* based on the "academic" approach, we discussed it with the villagers and customary stakeholders for evaluation and acquired responses. In this case, we had to adjust the design based on the cosmological values, especially in relation to orientation and location. We also needed to consider to hold rituals before and after the construction.

The community engagement is a way to maintain the building tradition while at the same time, introduce the new tradition to record the construction process to the younger generation. The project allowed the transfer of knowledge not only among the old and the young generation of community members but also between academics (who had the technical knowledge) and the

community (who had the knowledge of cultural traditions). The role of the local government (represented by the Division of Tourism) is to support the collaboration activities by providing the accompanying staff. Furthermore, the construction of *Batanua* will also involve the whole community in the form of cooperation so that it will generate a sense of ownership and ensure the sustainability of the village traditions.

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