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Lo Tiwa: Ritual of Human and Non-Human Relationship in Lembata Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia

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A B S T R A C T

This research focuses on the perspective of indigenous ecologies to see how the Lembata people maintain and care for their relationship with nature. The research located in the Lebatukan District highlands area of Lembata Regency in East Nusa Tenggara Province of Indonesia. The Lo Tiwa ritual is carried out by the Lembata people when pests attack their crops. When snails were attacking rice plants, people realized that they could eradicate the slugs through modern ways. However, they also realized that with the pesticide technology, the life of snails was threatened with extinction, which is considered unwise in preserving the local environment. Instead, they raised this issue on the altar of the Lo Tiwa ritual. In this way, preserving the relationship between humans and nature has happened, which is an integral part of environmental studies. Snails as pests are not killed, and rice plants are free from pests. In the Indonesian context, this research finds its context in efforts to promote a culture where the government wants to place culture, including rituals, as one of the essential forces in development. Apart from rituals, other cultural promotion objects include; oral traditions, manuscripts, customs, folk games, traditional sports, traditional knowledge, arts, and languages.

A. INTRODUCTION

Research on the 'Lo Tiwa' ritual took place within the Nubabuto community, Lebatukan District, Lembata Regency. This ritual specifically addresses the relationship between humans and nature. 'Lo Tiwa' ritual, in particular, explores the traditional community's perspective on dealing with crop-damaging pests. This is interesting to study in order to understand the reasons and wise considerations of the traditional community amidst the backdrop of highly advanced pesticide technology. Indeed, alongside these traditional efforts, there are also ecologically based technological efforts aimed at preserving nature, including crop pests (Wainhouse, 2004; Dyck, 2005; Rathore et al., 2021).

The practice of tradition and rituals in traditional societies persists for several reasons. Firstly, traditions and rituals serve as an appreciation of the achievements of ancient human civilizations. Rose (1950) argued that myths and rituals are two cultural practices that are inseparable and integral parts of highly advanced civilizations of that time. The enduring nature of myths and rituals today affirms the heights and grandeur of those civilizations. Myths and rituals are crucial as alternative ways for humans to comprehend the complex realities of life that are difficult to grasp through reason. Kewuel (2004) emphasized that at the same time, this reality is a postmodern phenomenon that highly appreciates various phenomena that are difficult to understand rationally. Secondly, traditions and rituals serve as a means of teaching humans to preserve the noble

values passed down by their ancestors. Xygalatas (2022) asserts that rituals may appear irrational, yet they make human life worth living and experiencing. Thirdly, traditions and rituals are part of the efforts to preserve how humans seek answers to the challenges of their time, whether in their relationship with God, with fellow humans, or with the universe. According to Goldstein (1981), these three reasons behind the persistence of cultural practices can be viewed as elements of resilience inherent in the process of social change.

In summary, these rituals continue to be performed because humans wish to maintain their relationships with God, with fellow humans, and with the universe. It is the belief of traditional communities that by maintaining the balance of these relationships, their lives will be secure and safeguarded. Consequently, they will work and seek their livelihoods in peace (Kewuel, 2022). There are rituals conducted to nurture these relationships collectively, but there are also rituals specifically related to each of these connections (Aileen, 2023).

Research on rituals has been conducted in Paubokol Village, Nubatukan District, Lembata Regency, specifically concerning death rituals (Kewuel, 2020). The series of death rituals begins when someone falls ill (the 'tulu nua' ritual). In the 'tulu nua' ritual, the sick person's relationships with God, fellow humans, and nature are reconciled in the hope of their recovery. The Lembata community believes that when someone falls ill, there must be a cause, and it is related to issues of these three elements in their daily life: God, fellow humans, and nature.

When death arrives (the 'owan' ritual), everyone who comes to mourn, especially close relatives, brings clothing as a gift that will accompany the deceased into their new life. While presenting these clothes on the body, mourners express farewell words and memories of their shared experiences during the person's lifetime. In the first three days after death (the 'tagam wuok' ritual), the 'tagam wuok' ritual is conducted in the morning, on the third day after burial. At that time, all family members and relatives gather at the mourning house. A messenger will go to the grave to observe any signs displayed there. These signs will be discussed in meaning by family members and relatives to understand the cause of the person's death. Based on the findings of the cause of death, the family will follow up with reconciliation rituals.

Bell (1997) explains that many human activities and behaviors in rituals, such as handshaking, singing, praying, or others, involve both social interactions and religious practices. However, not many people can identify and explain all of these as part of the ritual to others or outsiders. Therefore, a wide range of human activities qualifies as ritual activities. This often results in communities not fully sensing the sacredness of rituals,

and sometimes they seem to encounter contradictory practices.

Turner et al. (1969) further elucidates that rituals in traditional societies can sometimes be understood but are more often challenging to comprehend. Turner even employs distinctive language, stating that rituals present structured elements that can be understood, but also elements beyond human reasoning. This indicates that in ritual practices, humans find themselves in a situation that is, on one hand, rational, but on the other hand, beyond the capacity of human reason to fully understand.

Roose-Evans (1995) emphasizes that the performance of these rituals is vibrant and meaningful because they are deeply intertwined with their everyday lives. Rituals during illness serve as a reminder of their relationships with all parties: God, fellow humans, and nature. This is why these rituals are undertaken with great wisdom and devotion. Through these rituals, they relive their lived experiences. The rituals surrounding the death of a person essentially provide a moment for them to reminisce about their togetherness with the deceased. These rituals also serve as a time to help the family adapt to a new situation, the loss of a recently deceased relative. Tavor (2020) adds that death rituals can be viewed as a form of therapy for family members to quickly adapt to this new situation.

Research on "Lo Tiwa" is essential to answer several fundamental questions. What are the characteristics of the community that practices this ritual? How is this ritual performed? Why are pests not exterminated even though they clearly damage their crops; why are they sent back to their rightful place? What is the significance of each material used in the 'Lo Tiwa' ritual? Why is a boat used as a medium to send the pests back to their rightful place? According to the local community, where is the actual habitat of these pest animals?

These questions have been answered through our field research conducted over a period of six months from October 2021 to March 2022. During that time, we conducted this research in collaboration with the Lembata Regency government to explore the cultural richness of the community, specifically the cultural wealth used to address the ongoing conflicts in the area.

This research was conducted to understand how the people of Lembata Regency could live harmoniously with their fellow humans, with God and their ancestors, and with the universe and all its elements. Therefore, our research pertains to various rituals related to these three relationships. This paper specifically presents the findings related to the "Lo Tiwa" ritual by addressing the fundamental questions mentioned above. In the final section of this paper, we also provide an explanation regarding the Indonesian Government's policy, which

places significant emphasis on cultural preservation efforts through Law No. 5 of 2017 on the Advancement of Culture. In this regulation, rituals are one of the cultural advancement objects that receive considerable attention.

B. METHOD

Data collection in this research was employed by conducting in-depth interviews, observations, and literature study. Through in-depth interviews, researchers were able to collect data from the key informants and also the other informants found in the field. Through observations, researchers were able to process the evaluation of collected data and gain new data that were not collected during in-depth interviews. Through literature study, researchers were able to do verification to achieve data clarification. After all data were collected, researchers analyzed all of them before finally writing the research report.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The People of Nubabuto-Lembata, Their Origin and Character

The community in the Nubabuto region is comprised of eight villages. However, they all share a common ancestry. Their ancestors were refugees from a place called Lepambata Rua Roma, which was then struck by a tsunami disaster. Lepambata Rua Roma is believed to be the origin of the Lembata community in general. Due to the escape, their ancestors formed a group and settled in this area. Initially, they occupied coastal areas, but over time, they spread to the mountainous regions. In the course of their development, the inhabitants of this region established eight villages, which eventually became the name of the area. Nubabuto, in the Lamaholot language, means eight villages. Now, these eight villages, although administratively separate, still consider themselves as one in terms of origin and culture. This is why they unite in the celebration of the 'Lo Tiwa' ritual.

The eight villages in the Nubabuto region are Lodotodokowa, Balurebong, Dikesare, Lamatuka, Tapobaran, Lamahela, Lerahinga, and Lamadale. From an administrative perspective, these villages are part of the Lebatukan District, Lembata Regency, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). The Lebatukan District consists of 15 villages. In addition to the eight villages mentioned above, the other seven villages are Baopamak, Hadakewa, Lewoeleng, Merdeka, Seranggorang, Tapolangu, and Waienga.

The categorization of villages within the districts in Lembata Regency does not take cultural factors into account. Thus, in our research experience, we encountered the issue that government development programs do not automatically include cultural development. We once held

discussions with the then-regent of Lembata, Thomas Ola Langodai, to provide input for aligning the administrative division of villages with cultural community groups. We believed that through such an approach, the implementation of government work programs could simultaneously contribute to civil development and address their cultural development needs.

"I once had a similar idea, but it seems that the idea came a bit late, and it's challenging to implement because the villages have already been grouped not based on culture but rather on geographical size, population numbers, and various other considerations. I also find it difficult to approach community development. Sometimes, I find that villages sharing the same culture are administratively separated. In my view, this does need to be considered in governance. Culture is indeed essential in development approaches. So, if it's all fragmented, the government will face technical difficulties in implementing its programs." (Interview with the Regent of Lembata, Thomas Ola Langoday on February 24, 2022).

In terms of ethnic groups, the people in the Nubabuto Village area belong to the Lamaholot ethnic group. They also speak the Lamaholot language. Generally, in Lembata Regency, there are two major ethnic groups: the Lamaholot and the Kedang. There are also two major languages: Lamaholot and Kedang. The majority of the population in Lembata belongs to the Lamaholot ethnic group and speaks the Lamaholot language. Among the nine districts in Lembata Regency, seven belong to the Lamaholot ethnic group and use the Lamaholot language. These districts include Atadei, Wulandoni, Ileape, Ileape Timur, Lebatukan, Nubatukan, and Nagawutung. There are only two districts that belong to the Kedang ethnic group and use the Kedang language, namely Omesuri and Buyasuri.

2. The 'Lo Tiwa' Ritual and Its Meaning

The Lo Tiwa ritual is a living tradition within the community of Nubabuto village. This ritual has been passed down by their ancestors to deal with crop pests. The term "Lo Tiwa" is derived from two words: "Lo," which means to release, and "Tiwa," which means to discard. Therefore, the Lo Tiwa ritual carries the meaning of a ritual to discard or release something that disrupts the community's livelihood. The act of discarding or releasing implies an action to distance something away and not to annihilate or end its existence.

The choice of words they use to confront crop pests or anything that disrupts their lives are interesting. Starting from the name Lo Tiwa ritual, they have been guided by the wisdom of their ancestors not to use language or words to destroy or annihilate anything that disrupts their lives. This is fascinating because generally,

when faced with something disruptive like crop pests or the like, most people immediately think about how to eradicate them. The development of pesticide technology is one example of how technology is now readily available to help humans quickly and accurately eliminate crop pests. Boyle (2022) describes that rituals like these are related to the forgiving behavior that should be practiced by humans when dealing with anyone or anything, anywhere, and in any situation. This is the essence of humans as morally upright beings, whose function is to preserve the universe and all its elements.

This ritual is performed for the benefit of the eight villages as a unified entity. They believe that the people in these eight villages share a common origin and ancestry, and therefore, culturally, they should act as one. The suffering experienced by one village is the suffering of all of them, and the joy experienced by one village is the joy of all. This principle holds true even when several villages in this region (Balerobong, Lodotodokowa, Lamahela, Lerahinga) faced a crop pest infestation in 2022. They conducted this ritual, taking place in Lodotodokowa village.

"We perform this ritual together for the benefit of all eight villages. Even if some villages haven't been affected by the crop pests, we still involve them in this ritual. We feel like one community and share the same fate. An attack by pests or anything that happens in one village affects us all. That's why, in the ritual site in each village, there are always eight altars as a symbol that we all have a place there. We believe that any negligence by one village in this ritual would anger the spirits of our ancestors, and the ritual wouldn't be complete. So, we always stand together. This time, we decided to focus the Lo Tiwa ritual in Lodotodokowa Village." (Interview with Mikhael Boli on February 25, 2022)

One of the traditional leaders, Mr. Paulus Kotan, stated that when faced with crop pests, they could indeed take a practical step by using pesticide products available in stores to quickly eliminate the pests. However, in his view, cultural considerations and rituals carry more weight, urging them not to choose such methods. He mentioned that using those modern methods is a good and effective approach, easy and fast, and a part of technological advancements and human civilization. But it results in the death of the crop pests. It is at that point where the people in the Nubabuto Village area choose to control crop pests with the Lo Tiwa tradition rather than using pesticide technology.

"We know that we have a wise way of dealing with crop pests. Long before there was pesticide technology, our ancestors possessed this wisdom to let those creatures live without causing harm. The way they did it, our ancestors passed down to us a ritual to guide these creatures back to their rightful place. The presence of these creatures in our area does not

actually disrupt us. They just need to eat. Through this ritual, we are communicating to them that these are our crops, and that is why we guide them to where they belong. Where to? We believe they have a suitable environment as their rightful habitat." (Interview with Mr. Paulus Molik on February 25, 2022)

The 'Lo Tiwa' ritual begins with coordination among cultural leaders from different villages to discuss the measures for dealing with crop pests. This coordination stems from the fact that their crops are attacked by pests. The concern over crop pests becomes a shared concern, so when they are invited to a discussion, they all respond promptly and are ready to attend the gathering.

"Seeing the reality of the situation, we gather for a discussion. Usually, it is the village government officials who initiate the meeting as part of their duty to serve and protect the community. The invited members of the discussion, or rembuk, include the traditional leaders and other community members. The rembuk agenda typically focuses directly on preparations for the Lo Tiwa ritual. After the meeting, it is usually followed by on-site preparations that involve the community. We no longer discuss to weigh the choice between pesticides or the Lo Tiwa ritual. We immediately opt for driving away crop pests through the Lo Tiwa ritual. This means that the community prefers the wise heritage of our ancestors over the lethal pesticide technology." (Interview with Mr. Anton Nuba on February 25, 2022)

As such, the rembuk immediately decides on the preparation steps and sets the timing for the Lo Tiwa ritual. Subsequent preparation meetings are more focused on technical matters concerning the setup of the location, ritual materials, the person in charge of nuba, mobilizing the community as ritual participants, and other logistics. By preparing the location, it means that the village chosen as the host for the ritual needs to ensure that the ritual site, along with its nuba structures, is ready in every aspect.

Regarding the preparation of materials for the Lo Tiwa ritual, each village is responsible for gathering these materials. Some materials can be prepared collectively, but others are the responsibility of each individual village. Materials prepared collectively include a young chicken, a chicken egg, a cluster of wild banana (millet banana), ketupat (rice cake wrapped in palm leaves), and a snail, which is the crop pest currently affecting their crops. Materials prepared by each village include a male chicken as an offering to be placed on their respective nuba. The nuba serves as a ritual altar, representing the seat of traditional authority for each village. In the center of each village's nuba, there is a main altar as the focal point of the ritual. It is there that the main performer (shaman) of the Lo Tiwa ritual conducts the ceremony.

The term person in charge of nuba refers to the fact that each nuba, the structures surrounding the ritual altar, must be occupied by representatives of the

traditional elders. There must not be any nuba without its respective shaman's representative. That is why the Lo Tiwa ritual only commences once it is ensured that each nuba has its guardian or caretaker from the respective village. With the mobilization of the community as participants in the Lo Tiwa ritual, it means that this ritual is a communal event that should be known and attended by everyone. Therefore, each village must have its representatives.

The Lo Tiwa ritual begins with a procession from the open field to the ritual site or nuba, led by a shaman or tribal leader. All representatives from the villages participate in this procession, which is accompanied by regional songs and dances. Upon arriving at the ritual site (nuba), the tribal leaders and representatives from each village take their places at their respective nuba. Once everything is declared ready, the designated ritual leader initiates the Lo Tiwa ritual.

The Lo Tiwa ritual starts with an introduction by the ritual leader explaining the purpose and objectives of the ritual. This is followed by a mantra signifying the beginning of communication with the ancestral spirits. The mantra serves two purposes: to seek the blessings of the ancestors to ensure the smooth progress of the ritual without any disturbances and to request that the ritual brings benefits in terms of eliminating crop pests from their villages.

Following the mantra, the assistant shaman brings forward the offering materials, including a chicken, rice, palm wine, cotton, betel leaves, wild bananas, a small container (otha), a large container (liwang), as well as a miniature boat (jukung), rice cakes (ketupat), and snails as the crop pests to be sent away. Once everything is prepared, the molan (shaman) proceeds to slaughter the chicken, and its blood is sprinkled onto the ritual altar, the miniature boat, and onto all the nubas. This act signifies that all members of the villages have actively participated in the ritual.

Next, the assistant shaman promptly burns the chicken and selects the essential parts of the chicken as ritual offerings. These crucial chicken parts include the liver, heart, tip of the tongue, tail, and kidneys, which are presented as offerings to the ancestors. At this point, wild bananas are also burnt to be carried as provisions during the sea offering. The chicken is then burned, and its various parts are arranged within the miniature boat (jukung) alongside other ritual materials. In the center of the boat, the snails, representing the pests to be sent away, are placed. Following this, the remaining chicken parts are shared and consumed by the tribal leaders and other participants of the ritual around the ritual altar.

Once the ritual is completed at the nuba, the shaman and several representatives escort the pests to the sea for the offering. While releasing the miniature boat (jukung) with all its contents into the sea, the shaman utters another mantra, bidding farewell to the pests. After

the jukung has been set adrift at sea, all participants are instructed to turn away from the sea while the shaman recites the mantra. On their way home, none of the participants are allowed to look back towards the sea.

Here, the meaning of the material symbols used in the Lo Tiwa ritual will be explained. According to Mr. Yakobus Beda, the shaman who leads this ritual, every material used in this ritual holds a significance.

"The chicken symbolizes the sacrificial animal commonly used in the rituals of the Lembata community. The sprinkling of chicken blood on all the ritual materials, including the nuba, symbolizes the unity between the spirits of the ancestors and the living humans."

"Rice, ketupat, and tuak symbolize food and drinks. Ketupat and tuak represent the food consumed and beverages consumed in the present or in the near future. Rice symbolizes food that can be stored for preparation at a later time."

"White cotton symbolizes that within it are wrapped all the things that have brought bad luck to the community and are meant to be discarded along with the pests to a distant place."

"Betel leaves and areca nuts symbolize friendship and kinship. For the people of Lembata, offering betel leaves and areca nuts during a gathering is a symbol of brotherhood to ensure that there is no conflict between the two parties meeting, especially in the context of tradition and rituals. It signifies that their relationship is in good standing."

"The millet banana (wild banana with seeds) symbolizes refreshment because of the natural, fresh water contained in its stem."

"The small container (otha) and the large container (liwang) symbolize the containers in which food is placed. They symbolize the need for proper etiquette, where food should be placed in suitable containers."

"The snail represents the plant pest that is to be returned to its rightful place."

"Those are the symbols and their meanings in the Lo Tiwa ritual. The plant pests that we return to their place carry the message that, for our community, all creations have been created with their own designated places and habitats. We may not know where the snails belong, but we believe that they have a suitable place for them. So, we send the plant pests with that belief. As humans with ethics, our ancestors taught us that if there are people or creatures embarking on a long journey, including these snails, they should be provided for during the journey. We treat them well, and in return, we hope that these plant pests will no longer bother us. The reality is, after performing this ritual, the snail pests disappeared from our villages. Whether one believes it or not, that's the reality we've experienced as a result of the Lo Tiwa ritual that we

conduct whenever we face plant pest attacks,"
(Interview with Mr. Yakobus Beda on February 25, 2022)

At the end of the Lo Tiwa ritual, all participants come together to perform a dance called Beku as a form of celebration for the departure of the plant pests. The Beku dance is an ancestral heritage used to celebrate victory in a battle they once experienced. Today, the Beku dance has a broader meaning, signifying gratitude for both success and failure in battles against various challenges, including plant pests. It serves as a communal celebration of the outcomes in life's events. The song lyrics used in the Beku dance are filled with reflections on life.

3. Indonesian Government Concepts and Supporting for Cultural Development

The 1945 Constitution (UUD 1945) explains that Indonesian culture encompasses the entirety of local cultures from various ethnic groups in Indonesia. National Indonesian culture is defined as the result of the efforts of the Indonesian people, which includes both the old and original cultures from different regions as well as the cultures that are built upon new creations. Article 32, paragraph 1 of the 1945 Constitution mandates that the state is responsible for advancing the national culture of Indonesia amidst the global civilization while ensuring the freedom of the people to preserve and develop their respective cultural values. Article 32, paragraph 2 asserts that the state respects and preserves regional languages as part of the national culture of Indonesia. However, this law remains quite general and needs to be operationalized.

Law No. 5 of 2017 on the Advancement of Culture elaborates the operational steps taken by the government regarding culture. This law marks the beginning of considering culture as one of the forces for national development. Culture is also seen as an asset for the development of the nation's character. In short, this law addresses important aspects such as the protection, development, utilization, and cultivation of culture. These activities are related to ten objects of cultural promotion, which are oral traditions, manuscripts, customs and traditions, rituals, traditional knowledge, traditional technology, arts, languages, folk games, and traditional sports.

Efforts related to protection involve various activities, including inventory, safeguarding, preservation, rescue, and publication of Objects for the Promotion of Culture. The Inventory of these cultural objects comprises activities such as recording and documentation, designation, and data updating carried out through the Integrated Cultural Data System. This task is executed by the Central Government and/or Local Governments in collaboration and coordination with the community, whether on an individual or group basis or within cultural communities. The responsibility of the Central

Government and/or Local Governments is to facilitate every person (individual/group) involved in the recording and documentation of these Objects for the Promotion of Culture.

The Minister, through the verification and validation stages, determines the results of recording and documentation of Objects for the Promotion of Culture. During the verification and validation process, the Minister coordinates with relevant ministries/agencies and involves experts in the related fields. The updating of data for Objects for the Promotion of Culture is carried out periodically and continuously.

The Central Government and/or Local Governments are obligated to safeguard Objects for the Promotion of Culture. Any individual can actively participate in safeguarding these cultural objects. The protection of Objects for the Promotion of Culture aims to prevent foreign entities from making claims on the intellectual property of these cultural objects. Safeguarding Objects for the Promotion of Culture is achieved through continuous data updating in the Integrated Cultural Data System, passing down these objects to future generations, and advocating for Objects for the Promotion of Culture as a world cultural heritage.

The Central Government and/or Local Governments must work with the community to protect cultural objects. This is done to prevent damage or loss of these objects and to preserve their cultural value and diversity. It involves integrating these objects into daily life, maintaining the cultural ecosystem, and passing them down to future generations. The Central Government and/or Local Governments are obliged to collaborate with individuals and cultural communities to preserve the Objects for the Promotion of Culture. This is achieved through methods such as revitalization, repatriation, and restoration.

The Central Government and/or Local Governments are required to publish information related to the inventory, security, maintenance, and preservation of Objects for the Promotion of Culture. Everyone can actively contribute to publishing information regarding the inventory, security, maintenance, and preservation of Objects for the Promotion of Culture. This publication serves to disseminate information to the public, both domestically and internationally, using various media forms.

Development efforts are associated with activities such as dissemination, research, and enrichment of cultural diversity. Utilization efforts are related to activities like building national character, enhancing cultural resilience, and increasing Indonesia's influence in international relations. Lastly, fostering efforts involve activities aimed at improving the quantity and quality of

Cultural Human Resources, Cultural Institutions, and Cultural Norms.

The Central Government and/or Local Governments must engage in the Development of Objects for the Promotion of Culture in collaboration with both individuals and cultural community groups. This development involves activities such as dissemination, research, and enrichment of cultural diversity.

The Utilization of Objects for the Promotion of Culture serves several purposes, including building national character, enhancing cultural resilience, improving community welfare, and increasing Indonesia's international influence. To achieve these goals, it involves internalizing cultural values, fostering innovation and adaptability, promoting cross-cultural communication, and encouraging collaboration among different cultures. Additionally, it includes processing cultural objects into products while preserving their cultural significance and engaging in cultural diplomacy and international cooperation. Adherence to relevant laws and regulations is essential in this process.

To support the Utilization of Objects for the Promotion of Culture, the Central Government actively manages the products resulting from the processing of these objects. Large industries and/or foreign entities intending to utilize Objects for the Promotion of Culture for commercial purposes must obtain permission from the Minister. This permission should meet specific criteria, including obtaining initial information, sharing benefits, and specifying the origin of the cultural objects. The Central Government is responsible for using the benefits derived from this sharing to sustain and preserve the ecosystem related to Objects for the Promotion of Culture.

Both the Central Government and Regional Governments are obligated to foster the Advancement of Culture. This entails enhancing the quantity and quality of Cultural Human Resources, Cultural Institutions, and Cultural Systems. Improvement of those aspects can be achieved through various means, including increased education and training in the field of culture, standardization and certification of Cultural Human Resources in accordance with needs and requirements, and enhancing the capacity of cultural institution governance and cultural systems.

After six years of the implementation of the Cultural Advancement Law, the Indonesian government continues its efforts towards realization. For cultural objects that are well-established, the government is actively engaged in their development, utilization, and nurturing. For cultural objects that are not yet well-established or even non-existent, the government is vigorously working on protection measures. To support all of these endeavors, the Indonesian Cultural Directorate provides support to the community for the processes of

inventorying, safeguarding, preserving, rescuing, and publicizing the ten objects for the promotion of culture. This support is provided through the Indonesian Fund or Cultural Endowment Fund provided by the government. Additionally, the Indonesian Fund is also used to support the development and achievements of cultural figures in expressing their creativity. In recent years, the Indonesian Fund has greatly benefited cultural figures.

As a concrete program to implement the Cultural Advancement Law, since 2018, all Provincial, City, and District Governments throughout Indonesia have been required to undertake the inventorying steps for the ten objects for the promotion of culture. The funding for this inventorying process is the responsibility of each respective regional government. Consequently, the progress of this process varies from one region to another, depending on the financial capacity of each region.

Exploration of the Lo Tiwa Ritual is conducted as part of the cultural exploration activities in Lembata carried out by the local government to address issues related to human conflicts, human interactions with the divine and ancestors, and human interactions with nature. It is highly likely that exploration of the Lo Tiwa ritual in the future can be carried out in the context of cultural promotion. In the year 2023, the Lembata District government is currently making efforts to inventory the ten objects for the promotion of culture.

D. CONCLUSIONS

This research reveals the Lo Tiwa ritual, which teaches us the wisdom of our ancestors in dealing with opponents. The Lo Tiwa ritual imparts lessons on how to wisely confront plant pests. These pests do not need to be exterminated but rather sent back to their rightful place, wherever that may be. According to the testimonies of the community, these efforts have successfully helped protect their crops from pest attacks.

This experience teaches us a few important things. First, it tells us that we should respect and not destroy plant enemies. Second, being kind to these plant pests helps our crops grow well and supports our community. Lastly, it shows that the wisdom of traditional communities is just as important as modern methods for solving problems in life. In fact, traditional wisdom often has more morals and ethics in it. Modern technologies, like pesticides, may be powerful, but they often ignore moral and ethical concerns.

That is why keeping cultural traditions like the Lo Tiwa ritual in Lembata alive shows that moral and ethical values are more important than just practical thinking we often see today. So, it is right for the government to support and protect these traditions with strong rules. It is also important to respect the wisdom of

traditional communities, just like modern technology. This gives us more ways to solve different problems in life. The Lo Tiwa ritual is one example, but there are many other rituals in Lembata that help with various challenges in life.

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