

The Existence of *Pawang Glee* and *Peutuwa Seuneubok* of
Mukim Pintoe Batee's Indigenous Community,
Peudada in Bireuen Regency-Aceh*

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Abstract

The existence of *Pawang Glee* and *Peutuwa Seuneubok* has become part of local tradition and knowledge of the indigenous community in Mukim Pintoe Batee. This knowledge of *seuneubok* and *glee* has been around since the time of Sultan Iskandar Muda. They are selected through consultation that involve the community's leaders in the region of mukim. Mukim is composed of some *gampongs* (villages), that headed by *Imeum Mukim*. They become a part of customary institutions. *Pawang Glee* is a person who is believed to have a thorough knowledge of the ins and outs of the hills or mountains. Meanwhile, *Peutuwa Seuneubok* is a person who is responsible for the management of indigenous lands and resolve disputes that occur in the *Seuneubok*. It is because *Seuneubok's* areas are lands that should not be sold but only used for cultivation. When the armed conflict in Aceh (martial law), this tradition still existed but did not function properly because people were afraid to farm or forest. While in the aftermath of the Helsinki MoU (Peace in Aceh), the customary rules have been used again in the form of Qanun (regional regulation). This research is conducted in Mukim Pintoe Batee, Peudada Subdistrict, Bireuen Regency in Aceh. It uses ethnographic method, through interviews and participant observation. In addition, it also uses a literature review. The purpose is to know the local knowledge of Mukim Pintoe Batee's indigenous community in managing the forests and customary land; to know the norms and customs when entering or managing forest lands; and to know how local knowledge can be preserved to the present. This research will be the first study on *Pawang Glee* and *Peutuwa Seuneubok* of the indigenous community in Mukim Pintoe Batee.

Key words: *Pawang Glee*, *Peutuwa Seuneubok*, Mukim Pintoe Batee, Peudada, Local Knowledge, Indigenous Community

* This Paper is presented on the 4th International Graduate Students Conference on Indonesia, The Graduate School of Gadjah Mada University, October 30-31, 2012.

Preliminary

During the armed conflict in Aceh, between the GAM and the TNI, the existence of *Pawang Glee (Pawang Hutan)* and *Peutuwa Seuneubok* did not function anymore. This is caused that people did not dare to go into farming or forest. Security conditions led to a vacuum in the running of local traditions of indigeneous community¹.

Pawang Glee or people are also often to call as *Pawang Utueng* (the meaning same, *Pawang Hutan*) and *Peutuwa Seuneubok* have become part of Acehnese indigeneous community². This existence, trusted by customary leaders has existed since the time of the Sultanate of Iskandar Muda (1607-1636).

Pawang Glee is a person who is believed to have a thorough knowledge of the ins and outs of the hills or mountains. While *Peutuwa Seuneubok* is a person who is responsible for the management of indigenous lands and resolve disputes that occur in the *Seuneubok*. Because, *Seuneubok's* areas are lands that should not be sold but only used for cultivation³.

Pawang Glee and *Peutuwa Seuneubok* are selected through consultation that involve the community's leaders in the region of mukim. Mukim is composed of some *gampongs* (villages), that headed by *Imeum Mukim*. They become a part of customary

¹ See, "Pedoman Peradilan Adat di Aceh, Untuk Peradilan Adat yang Adil dan Akuntabel", hal. 2, 2008. At the time happened the indigenous leadership vacuum caused by the armed conflict and the tsunami. Including at the time, there was not the qanun yet.

² In some places, the mention of *Pawang Glee* and *Pawang Utuen* is different. *Pawang Glee* dealing with altitude up to 1000 meters, including areas of production's forest, while *Pawang Uteun* keeps the area more than 1000 meters, entering areas of protected forest.

³ "Or another name is a person who leads and arrange customs relating to the management and conservation of forest".

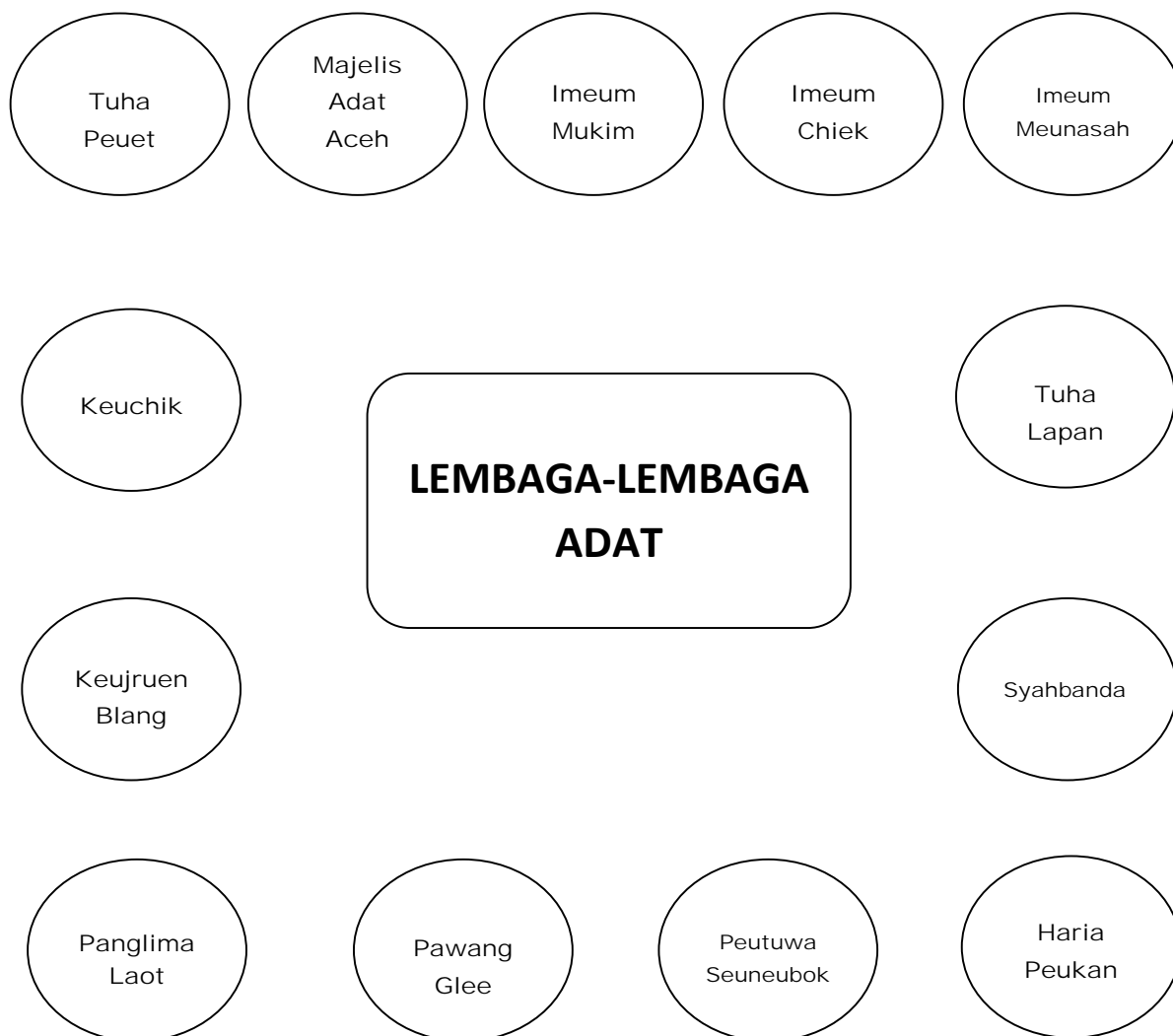
(*Qanun Aceh No. 10 Tahun 2008 tentang Lembaga Adat, Bab I Ketentuan Umum, Pasal 1 angka 27*).

"Or another name is a person who leads and set about clearing customs provisions and use of land for cultivation / plantation).

(*Qanun Aceh No. 10 Tahun 2008 tentang Lembaga Adat, Bab I Ketentuan Umum, Pasal 1 angka 24*).

Sumber: Pusat Informasi Bencana Aceh, "Istilah Adat", <http://piba.tdmrc.org/content/istilah-adat>.

institutions, where In general there are several customary institutions of the traditional leadership structures, namely⁴:



Cited: Book of "PEDOMAN PERADILAN ADAT DI ACEH, Untuk Peradilan Adat yang Adil dan Akuntabel", p. 7

⁴ *Op.Cit.*, p. 7.

Before in 2007, in general the indigenous knowledge and wisdom relating to Acehese customary law was developed through oral tradition. Written proof more on what that is written by individuals, and had not been compiled in a file or book on customary law in Aceh. Then, since in the post-tsunami, 2007 a large project begun, "Aceh Justice Project (*Proyek Keadilan Aceh*)", a research collaboration, between *Majelis Adat Aceh (MAA)* and the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), in an effort to collect as much as possible and explore the principles of customary law. They also conducted in-depth interviews to the experts and the indigeneous leaders. The result of this cooperation is the publication of a book entitled "*PEDOMAN PERADILAN ADAT DI ACEH, Untuk Peradilan Adat yang Adil dan Akuntabel*"⁵.

Peudada Subdistrict

Peudada is a subdistrict located in the Regent of Bireuen. Bireuen Regency which has its capital in Bireuen, a new district in 2000, which experienced the authonomy of North Aceh. Currently, it has 17 subdistricts.

In Peudada Subdistrict has six regions of *mukim*. Only four *mukims*, like Mukim Pintoe Batee, Mukim Blang Mirah, Mukim Krueng, and Mukim Bate Kureng which have the indigenous knowledge of *seuneubok* and *glee*, while the other two mukims, like Mukim Aloh Reng and Mukim Teungku di Payah have the indigenous knowledge of sea (*laot*), because both are located close to the sea.

Peutuwa Seuneubok and Pawang Glee of the Pintoe Batee

The *keuchik* of Teungku di Batoen⁶ and Imeum Mukim of Pintoe Batee said that the knowledge of *seuneubok* and *glee* of Mukim Pintoe Batee has been around since the time of Sultan Iskandar Muda. At that time, the rules of planting had existed.

The area of indigeneous land in the mukim reaches thousands of hectares, including 500 hectares that used for transmigration (before the armed conflict). Now, there is no transmigration. From that area, only one hectare is planted the banana.

⁵ A part of Project of Bappenas - UNDP which funded by European Union.

⁶ A gampong (village) of Mukim Pintoe Batee.

Currently, there are about 5000 hectares that worked by the community. Many who plant *tanaman muda*, such as the nuts which planted in the third month (March), the seventh (July), and the eleventh (November). Because the months of those are in the rainy season, but harvested in the dry season. There was also *tanaman keras*, like the trees of sengon, seumantok, and merante.

The rules of *seuneubok* of Mukim Pintoe Batee gives two hectares of the land for each person who wants to work at the land. *Peutuwa Seuneubok* who will give the permit of cultivation customarily. There is a letter to be signed by him. That land can only be worked and may not be sold. It is the rules that has been set for a long time, although not in written form. If there is a conflict, will be solved with the custom.

Likewise, indigenous forests, its area is also in the thousands of hectares. Indigenous forest which is protected forest, of great importance to preserve and ecological balance. In this forest is a place to live much wildlife including elephants. They often wander on the roads to the mountain top.

The Indigenous community should not be indiscriminate felling the trees. Although, in reality there are individuals who cut trees for the purpose of their lives, like cutting small trees for their homes. This condition can be understand, because they just cut the trees for their needs, and not intended for sale.

The concept of *Pawang Glee* of Pintoe Batee is different with the concept of "*juru kunci*" in Java. As the existence of *juru kunci* of Mount merapi in Yogyakarta, the person who has the supernatural powers to keep the mountain⁷. While here, not familiar with the term "*juru kunci*". The person who keeps forests is he who has a thorough knowledge of the forest. He must have patience, does not use his authority

⁷ A memory of the past. In the 1980's, at home we often had guests from Lhokruet (my village), a subdistrict in Aceh Jaya Regency. Among them, there were *Pawang Utuen (Pawang Hutan)*, *Pawang Rimueng (Pawang Harimau)*, and *Pawang Laot (Pawang Laut)*. They are the people who are believed to have '*ilmu*'.

I remember in the early 1980's, a visit to Lhokruet, when I was playing on the beach, accompanied by a *Pawang Laot* and when was playing near the forest, I accompanied by a *Pawang Utuen*. In the evening, they often told me about forest and sea. "The tiger try to avoid the human. When he ate human then he'll regret ". "When you're adult, I would give the prayers so that when you go to the forest, the tiger would avoid to see you". "Fishermen should not go to sea on Friday".

to economic interests, and is a respected person in the community. *Pawang Glee* of this mukim is a former GAM (Freedom Aceh Movement) commander who ever lived and fought in the forest. He was a man who does not talk much, quiet, and highly respected in the community.

The community has rules about the forest. The peoples should not cut a large tree. If wishing to cut a large tree, then they must obtain an approval from the Mukim. The cutting should be done with the ceremony of *peusijuek*⁸. In addition, they may not go into the forest on Friday. They also may not work in the forest, in the *glee*, or in the farm on the last Wednesday of each month. If they violate these restrictions, then there will be an accident.

The *Pawang Glee* and *Peutuwa Seuneubok* of Pintoe Batee is one example of the indigenous communities which exists in Aceh. This becomes an interesting question, how this tradition can continue to be maintained until the present? Because *the Peutuwa Seuneubok* ever said that currently only he who has knowledge of *seuneubok*. The knowledge of *seuneubok* here is not specifically noted, and is derived from a long experience. The young generation are now less to wish to know or to learn about *seuneubok*. If he's dead, he does not know who the person that will continue to be *Peutuwa Seuneubok* and have in-depth knowledge of *seuneubok*. He gave an example, for a meeting in the village, the people are the hard to come in a meeting if there is no money or food. Changes in attitudes and perspectives of the community happen in the post-tsunami. At that time was so much money in Aceh and all the works was often rewarded with money. For just *gotong royong*, cleaned the village itself, they were paid. That situation that causes that the people see something more on its economic benefits. It affected to the mental attitude until now. With an interpretive assumption, where the informant is a person who has knowledge and understanding of the situation and the conditions encountered and capable of giving meaning (Ahimsa-Putra, 2009).

⁸ Teuku Cut Mahmud Aziz, "*Peusijuek Pade Bijeh (Aceh)*", <http://melayuonline.com/ind/culture/dig/1971/peusijuek-pade-bijeh>. In Malay tradition the *Peusijuek* means *tepung tawar*. It is a traditional ceremony that has existed in Aceh for a long time.

It is interesting to understand the thinking of cognitive anthropology of James Spradley (1997), that a traditional knowledge that possessed by an indigenous community, is common knowledge that they receive as a truth. They understand and do in their tradition. This knowledge will not be lost basically because it is stored in the collective memory of the community. Cognitive approach can be used as method to bring again something that may have been considered lost.

Conclusion

The existence of *Pawang Glee* and *Peutuwa Seuneubok* of Mukim Pintoe Batee become a sign that the local wisdom and customary law in Aceh are still maintained. The existence of those are not just about rules of using the land or solve the conflicts or illegal logging, but should also be a customary governance in community economic rise.

Transforming traditional knowledge in the indigenous community needs to be done and it should be a commitment from many people, including the government. Because of the knowledge and these traditions should be maintained by the younger generation.

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