

# Birth ritual in banjarmasin



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A tradition is belief or behavior within a group or society which has been exist for generations with certain procedures. Every region in this world has their own traditions. Moreover in Indonesia, which already known as a country with a millions cultures. Indonesia has so much traditions from Sabang to Merauke, among others : Funeral ceremony in Toraja, Debus<sup>1</sup> in Banten, Karapan sapi<sup>2</sup> in Madura, Pukul Sapu<sup>3</sup> in Mamala, and others. But, have you ever heard about “ birth ritual” in Banjarmasin? Birth ritual considered as something sacred by the people of Banjarmasin.

They believe that life is always accompanied by hard times which filled with threats and dangers. And, In order to be able to through it all safely, the family will hold a ritual which known as birth ritual. This ritual divided into four sessions they are pre natal, parturition, post natal and a week after natal. This ritual started with the first session, pre natal. It is being held when the pregnancy reaches 9 months. The family should prepare some tools and equipments that will be needed at parturition later.

There are : upiah pinang<sup>4</sup>, kapit<sup>5</sup>, knife, sarong, batik cloth, tasteless-flour, honey, dates, salt, a liter of rice, grain of brown sugar, a coconut, and spices. Upiah pinang used to wrap the placenta. Kapit is used as a place to store the placenta. Knife used to cut the placenta. Meanwhile, a sarong or batik cloth used to clean the baby's body when the placenta has been cut. Tasteless-flour is used to sprinkle baby's body to be free from the interference of evil spirits. Honey, dates or salt used for greasing the baby's lips.

And, a liter of rice, grain of brown sugar, grain coconuts, spices for cooking fish given to whelped-shaman as an expression of gratitude. In addition, the family has to hold thanksgiving by making kukulih<sup>6</sup>. The porridge was given

a prayer, then spinned on the head of a pregnant mother. After that the porridge can be eaten by the whole family. It is intended to the birth process can run smoothly. The second session is parturition. The process will be assisted by whelped-shaman<sup>7</sup>. After the baby born, she will cut the placenta with a knife (the very sharp bamboo slats).

The placenta placed (inserted) into Kapit with a little salt. Then, she cover it with banana leaves that have been smoked (softened) before. Furthermore, it will be tied with bamban<sup>8</sup>, then planted under large trees or beneath the flowers or washed away in the rushing river water. It has to do with people of Banjar's belief who think that if the placenta was planted under a large tree, the baby in the future (expected) will be a " great man". Then, if planted under the flowers later the name will be fragrant. And, if washed away into the river, the baby will be a sailor.

Besides, it is also tied to a large tree in order to the baby in the future (as an adult) will not migrate (out hometown). So, planting the placenta depends on what the parents want or expect for the baby in the future. Additional information, not all the placentas treated like that but it is also well kept to be brought together with the placenta of other siblings. So, the siblings in the future do not fight each other. In other words, as siblings they have to live in harmony and peace. It is clearly reflects the value of harmony.

After cutting the umbilical cord, the shaman will clean off the baby with several layers of batik cloth or sarong. Then the baby placed on a tray which already based on a sarong or batik cloth also. Furthermore, the baby will be prayed in his/her ear (with adzan and iqamah) by his father. It means that, the first sound that the baby heard is the word of Allah. Thus, one day the

baby will be religiously devout children and always stay away from God ban. It is reflects the value of devotion. After that, the baby's lips smeared with sugar or dates and salt.

In order to, in the future the baby can sweet-talk and speak sweet words (all the words noted and followed people). It is reflects a propriety and dignity. The Third session is post natal. In this session, the family will hold a ceremony called *bapalas-bidan*<sup>9</sup>. As the name implies, the only one who plays an important role and at the same time led the ceremony is the shaman. In this part, the shaman will pronounce various prayers while powdery-offer baby's body with the tasteless-wealth. It means that the baby will always accompanied by his brother and avoided by bad spirits.

In addition also for the mother to survive and prosper, the ceremony ended with eat together. The last session called *tasmiah* which usually done together with naming. It is a ceremony which being held right after the baby is one week old or a little bit more. The family will invite some relatives and imam 10 to join the ceremony. The order of *tasmiah* is : reading the Holy Quran (Surah Al Imran)<sup>11</sup> and the Barzanji<sup>12</sup>. When read the Barzanji and find the word ' *asyrakal*', all the audiences must stand up and walk around the baby.

After that, naming by imam or the parents. With the end of *tasmiah* and naming, it ended a series of birth ritual of Banjar society. As previously noted, the birth ritual is sacred ritual in Banjarmasin. Because it has relation with the journey of life. The ritual divided into four sessions, which each of those has the excellent purposes. If many families hold a ritual like this,

perhaps in the future the young generations can appreciate their own life and able to get through the hard times as well.