

## SYMBOLIC FUNCTION AND MEANING OF ONTALAN TRADITION IN MADURANESE WEDDING

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### **Abstract**

*Ontalan is a Maduranese tradition at weddings. The term of ontalan (oncal: Javanese) means throwing, which is throwing money at the bride and groom when they are sitting side by side. As a tradition, ontalan is something that has been done and has become part of the life and local wisdom of the Pamekasan community which is still being implemented. The social function of ontalan is to strengthen social relations between families, a symbol of family cohesiveness, and also as a symbol of agreement on the marriage of the bride and groom. While the economic function of ontalan is in order to help families who have an intention and as a provision of life for a new couple. Some people continue to try preserving these traditions through inheritance to the next generation, construction and modification so that the tradition is in accordance with the times.*

*Ontalan adalah tradisi orang Madura di pesta pernikahan. Istilah ontalan (oncal: Jawa) berarti melempar, yaitu melempar uang ke pengantin saat mereka duduk berdampingan. Sebagai sebuah tradisi, ontalan adalah sesuatu yang telah dilakukan dan telah menjadi bagian dari kehidupan dan kearifan lokal masyarakat Pamekasan yang masih dilaksanakan. Fungsi sosial ontalan adalah untuk memperkuat hubungan sosial antar keluarga, simbol kekompakan keluarga, dan juga sebagai simbol kesepakatan tentang pernikahan mempelai pria dan wanita. Sedangkan fungsi ekonomi ontalan adalah untuk membantu keluarga yang memiliki niat dan sebagai bekal hidup bagi pasangan baru. Beberapa orang terus mencoba melestarikan tradisi ini melalui warisan kepada*

*generasi berikutnya, konstruksi dan modifikasi sehingga tradisi tersebut sesuai dengan zaman.*

**Keywords:** *ontalan; symbolic meaning; tradition; wedding*

## Introduction

The Maduranese -including the Pamekasan community as the locus of this research- is a society that classified as having and also maintaining a strong religious value (Islam) (Susanto, 2007: 97-98). Maduranese also has a variety of traditions which are the wealth of their people (Mu'in & Hefni, 2016: 109-112). Bouvier's ethnographic research found a great variety of cultures in Maduranese (Bouvier, 2002). Although Bouvier's research focused more on physical arts, he did not mention -either implicitly or even more explicitly- about the traditions carried out at the time of marriage in Madura, especially about *ontalan* tradition in weddings that are actually rich in uniqueness, symbolic meaning and benefits.

To a certain extent, these traditions become a reference -not to mention the rules that must be complained- because in reality many local traditions are unable to be continued, even eroded by the age or even for certain reasons the traditions are abandoned by their successors. However, it is still found a group of rural communities in some parts of Pamekasan more specifically communities in the District of Tlanakan who are still loyal to the custom of *kona* (ancient tradition). Efforts to preserve these traditions by some Maduranese continue to run from time to time, from generation to generation, both through inheritance and through construction by modifying these traditions in accordance with the times.

One of the traditions survived until now, even though only done at a small part of the Pamekasan community is *ontalan* at a wedding. *Ontalan* is a unique tradition that until now continues to be carried out by some Madurane -and also people outside Maduranese, such as Lumajang (Karyantoni, 2018) especially rural communities. This tradition is carried out at the time of sending the bride, from the bride female's house to the bride male's house (*ngunduh mantu*). This tradition is not only unique but also has symbolic meaning and benefits. They did it just to carry out the ancient tradition, *lalampun bhângaseppo* (traditions of the ancestors) without pervading its meaning.

One of the functions the tradition of *ontalan* is to strengthen and to make strong social solidarity of community members, or in order to strengthen the

kinship (*silat al rahīm*) through the fabric of *ukhuwah Islāmiyah*. The tradition of *ontalan* in its implementation involves most of the families of intention (*hajat*) owners (the bride male's family) and their relatives (*bheleh*), even *kanca* (friends) of bride male. Because of concept of *bheleh* in the Maduranese is not only limited to close relatives (*bheleh tarétan*), but it is also for close friends (*bheleh kanca*) (Wiyata, 2006: 63-64).

The tradition of *ontalan* has symbolic meaning as a sign of cohesiveness and agreement from the family of the groom to the fabric of love through the marriage of the bride and groom. Thus the expectations of both parties (the family of the groom and bride) as the hopes of the Maduranese ancestors "Rampa' Naong Bringin Korong" (Sadik, 2013: 30a) is marriage that gives comfoit, shade to all family members becomes a reality.

Currently, the tradition of unique and has a symbolic meaning as well as a good benefit socially and religious of *ontalan* has began ignored by the owner. Some Madurese - even the majority - are now ignorant and do not pay attention to *pandhuman kona* (the guidelines of ancient society) including when it comes to marrying off their sons and daughters. Maduranese *kona* (ancient Maduranese) was so *jijip* (careful) in marrying her sons and daughters.

This condition is different from the loyalty of Javanese people who are still loyal to the traditions of their ancestors, especially in the tradition of marriage (Roibin, 2013). For example, Surabaya people who are well known to advanced society (metropolis) are still loyal to the ancestral tradition in the implementation of the marriage ceremony of their sons and daughters, in terms of the wedding reception, they are still carrying out the procession of marriage preparations, including *peningsetan*, *siraman*, *midodareni*, *ngerik* ceremonies, *panggih manten*, *balangan suruh*, *tukar kembar mayang*, *wijik*, *kacar kacur* and so on (Solikhin, 2010). While in Madura society - especially Pamekasan - the unique and meaningful *tradisi kona* (ancient tradition) is rarely found anymore. Therefore, a study of the uniqueness and richness of meaning contained in the *ontalan* tradition needs to be explored in depth, especially since the tradition has begun to be unknown to the next generation.

This research focuses on three things, namely: (1) the perception of the Pamekasan community on the *ontalan* tradition, (2) the function and symbolic meaning of the *ontalan* tradition for the community both socially, religiously, and economically, and (3) the efforts made by the community in the continuity of the tradition.

## Method

This research approach is qualitative with the type of phenomenological research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982: 2). It can portray and explore values in human experience and life, especially related to *ontalan* tradition as the focus of this study. The status of researchers in this research is both as research instrument as well as data collector, full observer and participant observer. This was done in order to understand and know the reality of the *ontalan* tradition which up to now has been firmly held and implemented by the community, especially the rural communities in Tlanakan District area. Communities in this region -based on preliminary information from several informants- still uphold this *ontalan* tradition, even though there is a new format in the process, but substantively remains oriented to the functions and benefits of *ontalan* both socially and religiously.

The data sources of this research are community leaders, the community and other parties who are assumed to understand about *ontalan* traditions such as the local government, documentation, i.e. photos of *ontalan* activities, relevant writings and other norms related to this tradition. This research instrument uses participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies (artifacts) (Bungin, 2015: 118-119).

The data analysis of this research uses the form of interactive analysis, which is carried out during the collection and at the same time after the data collection. The three paths to be traversed in the data analysis process are data reduction, data presentation, and data verification or drawing conclusions.

The validity check of the findings of this study was carried out by: (1) adding and extending the intensity of attendance, (2) in-depth observations, and (3) triangulation by utilizing various data sources and methods, in the context of this study, the data sources especially interviews were not just one person, but rather a number of people taken purposively (purposive sampling). Therefore the data obtained is truly a reality, not something that happens by chance (Moleong, 2009: 324-327).

## Marriage Traditions in Pamekasan

Marriage is an important rite in human life. It is a process of combining two big families in a family bond into a larger unit. Because marriage is a process of unification of two big families before the marriage takes place, there are steps to do an assessment and measurement of seriousness, not only

in harmony between the couple but also in harmony and equality (*sekufu*) of both parties.

The Maduranese marriage process -specifically in the Pamekasan people- began with a number of activities including selection of candidates, engagement (*abhākalan*) and the implementation of a marriage contract (*akad nikah*). Candidate selection (*bhākal*) is not an easy initial process, because according to Maduranese women are both priceless assets and honours. Maduranese used to feel insulted (*malo*) when their daughters did not get married quickly, even though the girl was not old enough, not yet mature. However, this thinking along with the level of public awareness and regulations from the government has changed and abandoned. Not a few found some people who still violate applicable marriage laws, namely the minimum age allowed to marry for women 16 years and for boys 20 years.

On the other hand, for Maduranese to marry off a daughter is something that gives prestige. The sooner his daughter marries, the sooner the prestige is obtained. So it is not surprising that many Maduranese daughters have been married young. However, Maduranese is very *jijip* (careful) in choosing a partner for their children, including in determining their wedding day.

Determination of a mate is the initial process of marriage. In certain areas of Madura, it is based on several things. *First*, the agreement between parents when they are pregnant, either because of blood-related elements such as marriage between cousins and so on or because of friends, closest neighbours, *tunggal guru* (in the same teacher) or *kiai* or professional friend. *Second*, to engage the bride since childhood, based on the wishes of parents, whether they are happy with their children or not. It often forces children to accept it. The children do not dare to refuse what has become the decision of their parents, because if the rejection occurs, they will get sanctions from the family. Sanctions in the form of for example *ta 'ésapa* (ignored) and their parents will not interfere in the determination of a mate even in their marriage, and will no exception be referred to as a child who is not obedient to parents (*durhaka*). *Third*, determining the mate based on the children's own choices, especially this happens to those who are already educated. However, the determination of a mate like this does not mean leaving parents at all, especially mothers who are closer to them than their fathers. In the research location, the determination of the mate making model like the first (matched the child since in the womb) based on several informants was not found, except the second and third mate making models that often occur.

The consideration in determining wife for Maduranese is inseparable from the guidance of Islam as a religion they believe in. The consideration of wife in Islamic teachings as taught by the Prophet is based on four criteria, namely: because of wealth, descendants, beauty, and because of religion. If the four are not found, then the religion will be the main consideration (al-Asqallany, 201).

In Madura, there is a tradition which until now has been strictly enforced on the choice of a mate before entering the marriage process of their sons and daughters -including at the research location-, except for certain reasons or forced. For example, due to the oath of their parents, “*Sapétong toron ta’ ngala’a manto*” (up to seven offspring will not take a son-in-law). Usually, this oath is a result of communication or relations between the two families that are not good or can be called *moso*, or it could be that one of the families is not good offspring, based on terms of heredity or behaviour.

Even though girls can raise the prestige of the family or parents do not feel ashamed because they have been able to marry their daughter, so that her daughter does not become an old maid who does not get husband (*paju lakéa*). But family honour becomes socially worthless (*tadhâ ‘ajhina*) if one gets an incompetent son-in-law. Therefore, their parents choose a mate since he was a child even from the womb, so they can maintain good offspring or *nasab*.

This Madura song-poem illustrates how careful (*jijib*) of parents are in determining mate for their daughters -and this is the connection with the *Ontalan* tradition- for their sons and daughters (son-in-law):

*Pingpilo ta’ endhâ’ nyimpang loronga*

*Pingpilo loronga étombuwi nangger*

*Pingpilo ta’endhâ’ ngala’ torona*

*Pingpilo torona oréng ta’ bhender*

*Pingpilo ta’ endhe’ nyimpang loronga*

*Pingpilo Loronga étombuwi kolat*

*Pingpilo ta’ endhe’oréng ta’ pélak*

Meaning:

Pingpilo did not want to pass the road

Pingpilo the way is overgrown with nangger trees

Pingpilo did not want to take the daughter-in-law of his offspring

Pingpilo is the offspring of not righteous people

Pingpilo did not want to pass the road

Pingpilo the way is overgrown with nangger trees

Pingpilo did not want to take the daughter-in-law of his offspring  
Pingpilo is the offspring of incompetent people, do not know manners.

*Second*, there is the term “*robbhu bhata*” which means two brothers who want to marry two sisters too. Usually, marriages like this are avoided unless forced. According to Maduranese belief, this kind of marriage will bring *bhâlei* (disaster, the lives of the bride and groom are imperfect and unhappy).

*Third*, *Salêp tarjhâ* which means two brothers and sisters who will marry men who are also brothers and sisters who want to get married. Like the *robbhu bhâta* marriage, the *salêp tarjhâ* marriage in the view of the Madurese is an imperfect marriage.

For those who disgust or be careful of that belief, they must carry out the marriage of their sons and daughters by performing a ritual as an antidote to the *bhâlei* that will emerge. The ritual is that the two men (son and son-in-law) who have been married are walking together, then the son-in-law overtakes (precedes) the boy while *narjhâ* (lunging).

*Fourth*, the avoided marriages are marriages between two children from two siblings, or children from two biological women (*sapopo*, parallel cousin). Marriage between them is called *arellak belli* or *tempor belli*. Among ordinary people, such marriages become taboo. According to people’s beliefs if this marriage is done there will be consequences that will occur to the bride, for example, their child will be *ta’dhissa* (imperfect/physically or mentally disabled), the lives of the bride and groom are also imperfect and so on. This is different from the clerics who do not pay attention to customs like this.

The explanation above shows the observance of Maduranese in upholding their *bengatoa* tradition. Obedience is based on the establishment of a belief in the hearts of the people, that if they violate the tradition, then they will be subject to social sanctions and be subject to public ridicule. In addition, they are psychologically uneasy, feeling guilty and haunted by bad things that will befall him due to the violation, until they carry out *rokatan* ritual as a form of rejection *bhâlâi* (reject bad luck).

The next stage is engagement (*abhâkalan*) before entering the wedding. This activity is a continuation of the selection of candidates or *bhâkal*, starting from the exploratory activities or seeking information from male families about the whereabouts of the girl to be proposed. This term in Madura society is known as *nyalabhâr* activity, it is an activity to disseminate or *ngêngangêngnaghi* (preaching to the public) that their daughters or virgins have grown up and are ready for *noro’patona orêng* (ready to be married) by the family (their parents).



News about the girl who is ready *noro 'patona oréng* (willing to apply) will quickly spread to the public. Actively the man will *narabâs jhâlân* (break through the road) by sending an intermediary (usually a distant relative). If there is a signal to get a satisfying answer, it will be continued with *nagghuk* (patting) to convey the interest in applying for the girl by giving a souvenir, as a sign of *pangésto* (compassion).

The next step is *nyaba' oca'* (wooing), it is marked with *matoju 'tandh'* (seated the sign) symbolized by the submission of *topa' toju'* (*ketupat* which can be seated on the underside). After conducting the *matoju 'tandha'* process, the two candidates usually have considered the bride and groom officially, so that the restrictions on women's families to accept other candidates. Because accepting other candidates is against the law, both *sharia* law and social law. If the law is broken, then the family of the daughter will get social sanctions *tadhâ 'ajhina* (loss of strength and self-esteem).

The next step is the visit of the male family group as an official sign of the engagement by holding a *nalé'é paghâr* ceremony (Sadik, 2013: 65b) (binding the fence) to the women's family. This *nalé'é paghâr* event was marked by handing out snacks or market cakes including *leppet* banana, *sérépénang* (betel leaf, betel nut) and others. For the ancient Maduranese, all of the snacks or offerings contained meaning. The rope on the *leppet* means the pair of candidates. In urban communities, this *panyéngset* rope usually uses a gold ring as a binder. The type of banana that is brought will cause a situation for the bridegroom. If the candidate of groom brings milk bananas (*kasusu*), then this means as soon as possible or *bhiru* bananas means *kabhuru* (in a hurry), then this means the engagement period will not be long, or in the near future a wedding will take place. If the candidate of groom bring a young *séréé pénang*, then it simbolizes the engagement will be lengthy. But on the contrary, if the candidate of the groom brings the old betel nut, then the sign of the engagement will be brief and continued with the wedding. The gift brought by the man is automatically understood by the woman's family.

This condition is different from the modern Maduranese who chose to simplify the engagement ceremony by combining all activities in the ceremony of *nyabâ' oca'*, *matoju' tandhâ* and *nalé'é paghâr* into a ring exchange ceremony, accompanied by a set of clothes from the groom. For modern Maduranese, the practical and pragmatic considerations, *abhâkalan* process by using the ancient Maduranese tradition is seen as complicated, time-consuming, costly and labour-intensive. So the *Abhâkalan* process is not effective.



The woman's family does a counter-visit to the men's family home a week later. This visit was marked by the delivery of cakes in accordance with their abilities. This counter-visit activity is known as *tonggebbhân* (installation of a lid), in some areas also known as *nopoé lolos* (closing the former).

Certain villages in this research location, ancient customs are still applied in the application program, although there are modifications that are adapted to the times, for example, cakes brought as gifts are combined between traditional cakes with modern pastries, such as bread, *jhajhan parabân* (application or engagement gift cakes), and other modern cakes, depending on who wants to donate. Because of the villagers habits, if there is a family who wants to apply, other family members or relatives and even other friends, donate cakes and they usually participate in the application program, or for certain reasons such as at the request of prospective in-laws not to bring too many members of the group, they just donate the cake.

After the inauguration of the engagement ties, the two families are equally protecting of this engagement relationship by means of the *masekken betton* (confirming the edge boundary of the halls). One of way the *masekken* is by means of *ter-ater* (inter-delivery of food), for example on holidays, days of *beccé* or at any time especially when one of the two families have an event (*hajatan*). One holding *hajatan* as a ritual ceremony, theologically means people require the response of God from a number of hidden needs in their hearts (Roibin, 2013). Because *abhâkalan* which is not protected properly will result in the failure of the engagement, *épbabung* (severed) by reason of *tadhé 'pasté* (not a *takdir*) (Rifa'i, 2007: 90). *Abhâkalan* in the perspective of Maduranese can be birds or *dhéddhi* (the engagement can fail can continue).

The next stage is the implementation of the *akad nikah* (marriage). A few days before the marriage is held, the male family visits the female family to discuss determining the wedding day, usually accompanied by giving money, *obâng panyeddhék*, as a sign that the two engaged soon to determine the wedding day (Rifa'i, 2007).

Before the marriage ceremony was conducted, there were several traditions carried out by the Pamekasan *kona* people in the form of preparations in the form of the *ngangghi 'dhâlîka* ceremony (binding of bed halls made of bamboo). The bride and groom must make *léncak* (*ambin*, bed halls) other than as a part of the *bâ-ghibâ* to the prospective bride, as well as a bed for the newlyweds.

In addition to *léncak*, other items as *bâ-ghibâ* are money *bâ-tambâ kabellina bujâ* (additional money to buy salt) as a cost contribution to the

in-law, a set of clothes and decoration for the bride to wear on the wedding day, household goods and cupboards. as a place for this luggage. The luggage or *bâ-ghibâ* is usually delivered at *midodaran* evening events, or more familiar to the people at the current research location, *kombhuwan* night or *bhubuwan* night. If the distance between the bride and groom's house is far, then the items are delivered together with the bride's delivery event.

The custom of local community at the research location is the groom after marriage usually staying at the bride's house, both forever and temporarily. In certain villages, those who have implemented a marriage stay at the bride's house for a while, after that they usually return to the groom's house. Their terms are *mon ké 'laké' nyambi* (men bring wives). However, the bride's parents still prepare a home for newlyweds. All home furnishings, ranging from *léncak*, pillows, mattresses, and kitchen utensils are usually carried by the groom. All luggage is the property of the groom, while the bride only has usage rights. If there is somethings undesirable (divorced), the luggage will be taken home by the groom, because it does not include goods of *gono-gini*.

The next event is a wedding reception. There is one custom that is strongly held by the Pamekasan community before the bride and groom join in the wedding, namely a ceremony in the form of dialogue or questions and answer in the form of rhymes or song between *pangadhâ'* (spokespersons) of each bridal group, this event is witnessed by members of the bridesmaid group and surrounding people. This ceremony is known as *mokhâ blâbâr* which is a procession in a traditional Maduranese marriage which is carried out by the groom to open the veil that the bride wears (Researcher Team, 2010: 216).

The contest of rhymes, question and answer, puzzle and singing between the two spokespersons (*pangadhâ'*) sometimes takes a long time until both parties feel satisfied. One side of the rhyme program is a sacred event because in it tucked the hope of both parties, through each spokesperson with *okara matoro'a dhâging sakerra'* (entrust a piece of meat) from the groom's family to the bride's family, and vice versa. The other side of the pantun contest becomes an entertainment venue for the surrounding community who watch the bride, occasionally they applaud their support for the spokesperson (Ridawi, interview August 15, 2014).

After completing the process of rhyming or singing and *silat* (martial art although not all events use the tradition of *silat*), then a ceremony is held for the *mapegghâ' bhâlâbhâr* (breaking barriers) in the form of cutting the seven different coloured threads stretched at the door that the groom has to

go through the aisle. The cutting of the seven different coloured threads is a symbol of removing all kinds of obstacles that hinder the smooth path of the couples life. The hope is that the bride and groom become *jhudu bhâris dhunnya akhirah* (eternal mate in the world and afterlife) and be able to build the *sakinah mawadah wa rahmah* family.

The cutting of the seven strands of various coloured threads was carried out as a symbol of the disposal of things that would be an obstacle to the happiness of a newlywed's life, for example lust, the fury of anger, envy, greed, arrogance and lack of sincerity. The seven bad qualities must be fought. Fighting these bad qualities by the Pamekasan people is symbolized by cutting the strands of seven different colored threads, with symbols: black (impulse), red (fury of anger), white (strings attached), grey (greedy), green (spiteful), yellow (jealous), and pink (haughty) (Rifa'i, 2007: 92-93).

As a completion of the ceremony to cut the strands of this seven threads form, it is usually followed by *mowang sangkal* (throwing misfortune) activities, which are symbolized by removing the outermost fruit from a three-sided shaped banana. Bananas with the shape of three sides are considered to have no mate as other bananas in the same unit. Then this activity is continued with the sowing of *kembang campor bhâbur* (pieces of various types of flowers mixed with fragrant pandan leaves).

*Megghe' bhâlâbhâr* in Madura terms does not contain a single meaning, sometimes it also means the perfection of the first time a newlywed couple sexual intercourse. Maduranese were told that the bride's parents would look for *aré beccé* (good day) before allowing the groom to sexual intercourse with their children like a married couple. Usually, the husband and wife do the sexual intercourse for the newlyweds is held on the third night after the wedding.

The custom of determining *beccé'* day was very possible for Maduranese people in the past, because they did not know each other and were still covered in shame, they met each other only during the greet day (tellasan agung or Eid al-Fitr and *Rérajhâ* or Eid al-Adha), or even during their *abhâkalan* never met. However, that custom is no longer valid and ignored by Maduranese people who during times of *abhâkalan* have often met and walked together. According to some informants, many young people now do not understand their own custom. Custom which is used to be a supporting root for the upholding of Maduranese honour is now being ignored.

### Implementation of *Ontalan*

*Ontalan* is a Madurese tradition in bridal events. The term *ontalan* (*oncal*: Javanese) means throwing, which is throwing money at the bride and groom while they are on display. This implementation of *ontalan* between regions in Pamekasan is different. Some areas in Madura, carried out *ontalan* when the bride and groom were in the aisle (*kuwadé*: Madura).

As a tradition, *ontalan* is something that has been done and is a part of the life and wealth of the Pamekasan community, which is still being carried out by its owner. Even though in some places this tradition has begun to be ignored. For the people of Pamekasan *Kona* (ancient Pamekasan people) does not carry out the *ontalan* tradition when the wedding event means incomplete or inadequate and lack of joy of the wedding atmosphere. Therefore, this tradition should be maintained. Because the most fundamental thing of a tradition is the existence of information delivered on from generation to generation both written, oral and its implementation, without this inheritance a tradition will become extinct.

### Perception and Motivation of Carrying Out *Ontalan*

Not all people who carry out the *ontalan* tradition understand what the meaning and function of this *ontalan* is. They carry out the *ontalan* tradition just to implement the tradition and as a complement to the perfection and joy of the bride and groom.

In the ancient time, it was almost certain that all people who entered into a marriage contract carried out *ontalan*, they considered it imperfect if they did not carry out *ontalan*. Even though they do not know the exact history and meaning, people still carry on this tradition from generations to generation. According to them, the *ontalan* tradition was very good and did not conflict with religious teachings. The implementation starts from a simple method to a rather luxurious way, it depends on the host.

*Ontalan* carried out since ancient times is a form of concern for newlyweds. *Ontalan* is as a gift of blessing and provision for the bride and groom on their honeymoon. *Ontalan* is usually carried out in the groom's house, because the groom does not live with his parents anymore, but rather lives or returns to his wife's house and lives there forever.

Before the *ontalan* event began, the bride and groom were brought into the yard, sitting cross-legged with someone who would tidy up the money from the *ontalan* and in front of him, a tray would be provided. In several places

in this research location, the *ontalan* carried out in the position of the bride and groom that remained at the aisle, then the family gave money.

*Ontalan* activities are guided by someone, usually a *pangadh'* (spokesman) who is like a merchant offering his wares and selling them to male family members and their relatives and friends. The sentences spoken by *pangadh'*: “*kaule samangkén ajuwâle kembhâng konanga ngode sareng kembhâng malaté tumpang, pola bedhâ sé kasokan ngéréng éatoré. kéngéng mellé tapé ta' kéngéng abhâkta*” (Now, I want to sell young *kenanga* flowers, [groom's symbol] and *tumpang* jasmine flowers, [bride's symbol], maybe someone will by please, may buy but may not bring).

Usually after the *pangadhâ'* officially opens the *ontalan* event and starts from the *pangadhâ'* throwing *ontal*, then it will be followed by close relatives, namely the father and mother of bride and groom. However, it often happens, the father and mother of the bride and groom do not go outside to throw an *ontal*, so that such a situation requires *pangadhâ'* to call them one by one.

### **Ontalan Function**

*Ontalan* is a unique tradition in the Pamekasan community, *ontalan* also has a very deep symbolic meaning and function, both in terms of social-religious and economic aspects.

First, based on socio-religious, *ontalan* has the meaning of cohesiveness between families who have the event. They *saroju'* (agreed or rightly compact) provide *ontalan* for the bride and groom. It also means as their blessing on the marriage of the bride and groom as a provision for the bride and groom during their honeymoon period. So that the bride and groom's family, in particular, no need to hesitate and worry anymore about the sincerity of the groom's family to accept it as a family.

*Ontalan* means compact and closely related family ties, family ties (*ukhuwah*), both close and far-reaching families, both their homes in close and far distances. In the implementation, the *ontalan* event involved the whole of bridegroom's family and friends.

*Bhâle* in the broader terminology of Maduranese includes *bhâleh tarâtan* and *bhâle kanca* (not including *tarétan*). *Bhâle* in Maduranese life is not only limited to *bhâle semma'*, *tarétan semma'* (close relatives or close kin), but also includes *bhâle jheu* (distant relatives or peripheral kin).

People categorized as *kanca* are people who are bound by social and emotional relations. The quality of social relations determines the position

of their closeness so that Maduranese get to know the *kanca biyasa* and *kanca rapet* (close friends). *Kanca rapet* is often considered a relative, a family member, his position is like *tarétan semma'*/biological siblings and *misanan* (cousin). If for one thing that causes a break in social relations, one also often have the position as other people (not a family) and even called a *moso* (enemy), and *kanca* is because you are so well positioned as a *tarétan* (Wiyata, 2006: 63-64).

The informants agreed that one of the functions of the wedding ceremony was *pol makompol bhâlâ* (gathering family, *silat al-rahîm*) both close and distant relatives. As long as they hear the information that their relatives have events, it is almost certain that they will come, both invited and uninvited because that means family ties to the villagers first. This is certainly different from the current conditions, if not officially invited or not visited their respective homes, siblings sometimes do not want to come.

Social phenomena that occur in almost all villages, especially in the research location- *bhâlê* especially distant relatives will not come to the celebration if there are no invitations, or *peccotân* (invitations delivered along with items such as cigarettes, soap or others). They also came to the extent of the implementation of the marriage ceremony or *bhubhuwana* night (donating to the owner of the event). The reasons for their absence at the event (wedding) held by the owner of the event, ranging from busywork that can not be left to the *todus* reason (shame) for those who are not invited either intentionally or unintentionally. This reasoning often occurs especially for those whose economic status is not the same, especially for their lower (poor) economic status.

Second, economically, the function of ontalan is in order to help relatives who have an event, especially the groom. The custom of Pamekasan people after carrying out a marriage contract, the groom usually lives at the in-law's house (wife), although for some time. In certain villages the groom returns to his home, of course, after counselling with the bride. One informant stated that *mon ké'laké nyambi* (if a man carries his wife to his house). The groom who must go home for some reasons, for example as *ghâghântén* (a substitute for male parents) because it may be an only child, while his parents are elderly. Usually they are only allowed to return to the house of a male family after having children, unless there are urgent reasons, whenever they can, depending on the agreement of the two families, the important thing is that the new family couple is happy, harmonious (*sakinah, wawaddah wa rahmah*).

Pamekasan community custom in ancient times, after carrying out the *mantan anyar* (newlyweds) marriage contract should not work for at least seven

days, usually, the groom's family sends food every day to the bride's house which is devoted to the two newlyweds. During these seven days, his life needs are usually met from the results of *ontalan* money. Therefore, one *ontalan* function is as provision or *sango* for the bride and groom. Nevertheless, there are some brides who use the results of *ontalan* to buy goods for family needs, such as jewelery, household equipment, and so on.

As described above, *ontalan* gives goods (money) to the bride and groom. The items given in the *ontalan* event are pure as assistance from relatives, family and friends of the groom because the amount of the item is not recorded as a debt to be paid. *Ontalan* is different from *bhubuwân* which is recorded as a debt that must be paid when the person giving the donation (*abhubu*) to the people who has the event of marrying his sons or daughters or other events such as *nyonat* (circumcising) his son, *to' oto'* (an event intentionally held by Pamekasan people to return debts, or invite others to donate).

Money in its position as an exchange will increase high integrity in the whole system. Because exchange -by borrowing the term of Levi-Strauss- is an individual's moral commitment to the group, both direct exchange (restricted exchange), and indirect exchange (generalized exchange). All members of the community will be bound by moral ties, so they have a willingness to fulfil their obligations regardless of their personal interests. Therefore, items donated as gifts in the *ontalan* are recorded or unrecorded, in time they will return because they both have the belief that others will also comply with these moral requirements (Johnson, 1986: 58).

In the theory of social exchange, it is stated that initially for various reasons that persuade, people are attracted to each other to build social groups. Then when the bond is formed, the gifts they give each other will help maintain and increase the bond. A reverse situation is also possible, group ties will weaken or even break down if there are not enough gifts. And gifts that are exchanged can be something that is intrinsic, such as love, affection and respect, or something of extrinsic value such as money and physical exertion (Ritzer & Goodman, 2006: 369).

The essence of *ontalan* implies social exchange whether recorded or not, the person who receives *ontal* will someday exchange the results of the *ontalan* and give it to those who provide *ontal*, even though the amount is not necessarily the same. Between the two (who received *ontal* and who gave *ontal*), it is like an automatic transaction or rather a moral bond had taken place. In other words, for those who give *ontal* motivated to provide *ontalan* because



he/she (for those who already have an event) has never given *ontal*. While for those who do not have an event (not married off their sons and daughters) they give *ontal* -even without being asked- one day will reap the fruits of what they do that will get *ontalan* from those who have received *ontal*.

### Efforts to Preserve *Ontalan* Traditions

The role of parents in communicating the tradition of *bengatoa/bengaseppo* to the younger generation is very significant. Especially in the modern era with a global culture that comes in repeatedly through various media. People who are helpless will certainly not be able to engage in dialogue and not be able to filter the flow of foreign culture (global).

The loss of local Maduranese traditions, one of which is caused by the uneasy communication of the family in conveying the traditions referred to the next generation. The role of parents is very significant in order to preserve local traditions including *ontalan* traditions. Efforts to preserve this *ontalan* tradition, ranging from communicating by telling about the existence of these traditions to their children, to carrying out this tradition, both in a simple and luxurious manner. It is also done by modifying the implementation of the *ontalan* in accordance with the current situation and condition is by responding (*nangghâ'*) entertainment such as *orkes*, *rebana/tambourines (terbhang)*, *gambus*, *gamelan (tabbhuwân)* and others, as happened to the Terrak community.

The cultural modification was carried out as an effort to preserve, preserving *kona* (ancient) cultures, so that they would not disappear. Traditions are not only inherited but also constructed or invited. In invited tradition, it is not enough that tradition is only inherited without being constructed with a series of actions aimed to instill values and norms through repetition that automatically refers to continuity with the past. Inheritance shows the process of spreading tradition from time to time, while construction shows the process of forming or instilling tradition in others.

As a result of the absence of efforts to understand the meaning and preservation of traditions (*ontalan*), finally the next generation does not understand what is implied. They only carry out the traditional rituals only, not in substance or what the actual meanings and functions, or even they are not familiar with the tradition. Such is the case with generations in the village of Panglegur. They have heard of the *ontalan* tradition but for now, they have never seen it. There are even some of them who have not even heard about *ontalan* (Fitriya, Dayat, and Didik. Interview September 24, 2014).

## Conclusion

Based on the data in the previous section, it can be concluded that *first*, the *ontalan* tradition is an ancient tradition, existed since the time of *bengatoa/bengaseppo*, (ancestors) which has a unique, symbolic meaning and benefits for the community, both in terms of social, religious, and economically. It is said to be unique because this *ontalan* tradition in its implementation only involves *bhâle* and friends of the groom. Therefore the implementation of *ontalan* carried out at the groom's house.

The motivation of the people carried out the *ontalan* tradition is following the habit of their ancestors, as well as their response to the families who had given gifts in the *ontalan*, for those who already had an event, married their sons. While for those who have not married their sons, they hope that they will receive *ontalan* or they will be given an *ontalan* by their families when they carry out their son's marriage, of course, if an *ontalan* event is held. They have a strong belief that even though the *ontalan* is not recorded no matter how much they give, -because it is a gift for the bride and groom- they will be reciprocate because between them have intertwined a bond of unwritten obligation that must both try to keep that promise. For them, it is an act that will have social sanctions if it is not fulfilled.

*Secondly*, some communities in the location of this study believe that *ontalan* contains many benefits, both in terms of social, religious, and economic. Therefore, those who are still loyal to the *kona* (ancient) tradition always try to preserve *ontalan*. *Ontalan* has a symbolic meaning as well as a function that is the symbol of the consent of the whole groom's family to the marriage carried out by the bridegroom. Thus *ontalan* has the meaning of blessing from the groom's family and as a symbol of family cohesiveness expressed in the *okara rampa* 'naong bringin korong. While the benefits of the *ontalan*, socially can strengthen the social fabric, strengthen the kinship (*ukhuwah*) and economically is to help families who have the event to ease the burden of material needed at the wedding of his son. While for the bride and groom, the *ontalan* can be a provision of life during their honeymoon or can be used to fulfil their family's tools or needs.

*Third*, the efforts made by the community to preserve the *ontalan* tradition are: first, communicating (telling) to the next generation about the *ontalan* tradition, because they are aware that without good communication with the next generation, any tradition will become extinct. Second, giving examples through real activities, namely carrying out *ontalan* when they have

the event of marrying his son. In this way, the young generation will see the process of *ontalan* implementation as well as the meaning and benefits the *ontalan* contain. Third, modifying the implementation of *ontalan* by adjusting to the conditions of the times, for example, coupled with music events, *gamelan*, and others on *ontalan* events, according to their conditions, inclinations, and pleasures, especially the younger generation, so they do not feel outdated.

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