

Social Phenomenology of Kensiu Indigenous People

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Abstract

Received: 8 November 2022

Revised: 15 November 2022

Accepted: 18 November 2022

This research aims to find out how the religious system and beliefs of the Kensiu Indigenous People relate to the art system in the Kensiu Indigenous People. This research uses a type of qualitative research using a phenomenological approach, an in-depth research approach to reveal problems based on phenomena and events. Results The religious system or belief and art are closely interrelated; in every community ritual, there is also an art that complements it. In the religious system of the Kensiu indigenous people's beliefs, in terms of the beliefs of the Indigenous People in general, they still practice the faith of animism, in which they believe that all things and creatures have a spirit. The belief system of the Indigenous People, in general, is seen to be disappearing and being eroded due to the current modernization and globalization that is happening today. This small number of Kensiu speakers can also wipe out the culture passed down from generation to generation.

Keywords: Belief, Culture, Modernization, Phenomenological approach, Religious system

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How to Cite: Adam, N. F. M., Saper, M. N., Handrianto, C., & Khatami, M. (2022). Social Phenomenology of Kensiu Indigenous People. *International Journal of Education, Information Technology, and Others*, 5(5), 104-114. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7430609>

INTRODUCTION

Herakleitos, a philosopher from Greece, said that there is a space and time frame in which the whole reality of our lives is faced. We cannot understand real things without placing them in a space-time frame (Cassirer & Lofts, 2020). Our environment is limited, and that space is full of abstract and concrete things humans find and experience. In addition, some elements and entities are inherited and learned from ancestors. Civilization is always dynamic and easily reacts to the activities in the environment at a certain time. Human groups or communities and private individuals interpret an event differently from groups or individuals with other backgrounds or mindsets (Walid et al., 2015). We live in an environment that shapes individual attitudes, community culture, and the natural environment. People can choose from thousands of different life paths when they are born into the world. Nevertheless, in the end, he could only choose one way of life. Human life experience is the main source of two human philosophies.

According to Comte, the modern philosopher, "Social conditions appear to modify the operation of physiological laws, so social physics must conduct its observations" (Cassirer & Lofts, 2020). In Malaysia, there are more than three hundred ethnic groups whose lifestyles significantly differ from those of other

groups. In addition to that, they have different identities and use more than 200 special languages. However, according to linguist Robert Blust, most Malaysian languages belong to the Polynesian Malay group. About two hundred and ten million Malaysians are spread over more than fourteen thousand islands, and about 1.5 percent of the total population lives traditionally. Activities to meet the needs of life or entertainment are far different from those of other human groups (Law et al., 2018).

According to Hakim (2017), a historian, those who live on the Peninsula are known as Negritos and have existed since 8000 BC, before still living in caves and hunting animals during the Middle Stone Age. It was inhabited by Austronesians, who became the ancestors of the Negritos, Sakai, and others, and was located in Kedah during the Paleolithic and Mesolithic eras in 5000 BC. These Negrito people are difficult to determine in terms of their physical characteristics because, among them, there are four sub-groups of Kensiu, which they know as Mos, Nakil (or Dalem), Hetot, and Tanjen. On average, they have fine curly hair, a dark body, a short height of 5 feet or less, a wide nose, and round eyes like East Africans, and most of them are like New Guinea's indigenous people, namely Papuans (Choy et al., 2014).

Early Western researchers introduced the term "little negro" based on the physical characteristics and character of the community (Young, 1970). They have dark skin, curly hair that grows close to the scalp, round eyes, wide noses, full lips, prominent cheekbones, and an average height of 1.47 meters for men, while women are shorter. Semang people refer to themselves as "minik," which means "people." In addition, self-identification also depends on the tribe, or "tribe."

The identity of the Negritos is distinctive and can be seen through their culture, material culture, and way of life (Salvador-Amores, 2016). They show little or no signs of agriculture. This is because they are an indigenous group that is completely nomadic. Their material culture forms include needles in nose piercing and the construction of temporary dwellings to shelter from wind and weather. The Negritos travel from place to place to hunt and gather food and forest products. They will move to another site if it is found that the current one is no longer productive. They do not practice agriculture. Until 2000, the total population of Kensiu who adhered to the Islamic religion was 118, and the rest still maintained the belief in animism.

The Negrito tribe is the smallest indigenous community compared to the Senoi and Proto tribes (Masron et al., 2013). The Negrito tribe is also known as the Semang tribe. Malays use the term "Semang" to refer to the Negrito tribe that lives in Peninsular Malaysia, hunting and gathering forest products. The Semang people are the oldest in Peninsular Malaysia and Southeast Asia.

There are many Negrito tribes in the northern part of Peninsular Malaysia and southern Thailand (Bellwood, 1993). The Negrito (Semang) community is also found in the Philippines, the Andaman Islands, the Bay of Bengal, southern Myanmar, the interior of Sumatra, and Sulawesi. In southern Thailand, Semang people are also known as "Tonggo" or "Mos." While in Kelantan, this community is known as "Pangan." However, these two terms have been discarded and replaced by "Negrito" (Abd-Ghani & Lah, 2015).

The Semang people, or Negritos, are one of the Peninsula's most famous indigenous peoples as an "egalitarian" society. This community consists of six tribes, namely Bateq (or Batik, Ngok, or Herb), Jahai (or Jahay), Kensiu (or Kenseu, Kensieu), Mendriq (or Menrik, Menreq, or Menrab), Kintaq, and Lanoh. All of these tribal names combine the meaning of "people" with "forest," "land," or "land" (Mohamed-Sultan et al., 2016).

In this paper, the writer mainly focuses on the Kensiu Indigenous People, who are one of the tribes that inhabit Lot No. 3623. The phenomenology that wants to be discussed is the social phenomenology of religion or belief and art. Kensiu Indigenous People, like other ethnic groups, have their own culture or customs that are not the same as those of different ethnic groups in Malaysia (Allia et al., 2016). The customs that live in the society of the Kensiu Indigenous people are the most important element and the root of their identity. Culture can be defined as the entire system of ideas, actions, and outcomes of human works in the context of community life that are made human property through learning (Garna, 1996). The belief system and art of the Kensiu Indigenous People are seen in the various traditional ceremonies carried out based on the cycle of life, namely birth, marriage, and death. Also seen in the various traditional ceremonies related to the plantation cycle.

Nowadays, along with the development and changes of the times, the culture of the Kensiu Indigenous People also experiences shifts and changes. This means that the culture of the Kensiu Indigenous People is not static but always dynamic; despite this, until now, there are still some that persist and are not shaken by the change of generations, even more showing their identity as an ancestral heritage. In this paper, the author wants to describe the social phenomenology of the Kensiu Indigenous People, especially their religious system or beliefs and art.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a type of qualitative research using a phenomenological approach, an in-depth research approach to reveal problems based on phenomena and events. According to Moleong (2013), qualitative research is a research method that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people or observed behavior. Qualitative research produces analytical procedures that do not use statistical analysis procedures or other quantification methods.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Beliefs of the Kensiu Indigenous People

Every race or nation in this world has its own beliefs and customs. Belief is something they believe in and adhere to, including in the field of religion (Christopher & Dzakiria, 2014). "Custom" is an activity or practice that has become the custom of a race. Kensiu Indigenous People have their own beliefs and customs (Adam, 2021; Ramadhani et al., 2021).

Beliefs from the religious aspects of the Kensiu Indigenous people

Regarding the beliefs of the Indigenous people, they generally still practice the faith of animism, where they believe that everything or every creature

has a spirit. However, there are also differences in understanding and belief between the three tribes.

Negrito tribes believe this world is inhabited by various gods and "supernatural" beings. These creatures are known as "living people." They are called that because living people will not die, which is different from ordinary people. Among these "living people," the most powerful is "Tok Pedin." According to their belief, Tok Pedin created all of nature, including humans, animals, mountains, and all plants. In carrying out his duties, Tok Pedin has an assistant named Karei. Karei is sometimes considered more important because she is always in contact with ordinary people.

Apart from these two characters, other deities are responsible for storms and typhoons, forests, plants, large rocks, etc (Ramli & Dawood, 2021; Nengsih et al., 2022). However, Kareila is actually "important" and has a high influence. He is the one who ensures that the customs and taboos of the community are fully obeyed. For example, if a mistake has been made, Karei will bring down rain and storms or bring tigers or other wild animals.

Their belief system can be considered a tool of social control and social sanction. Each group uses a shaman, charmer, or halaq to ensure that its members do not deviate from the wishes of their group as a whole. In short, the belief system certainly has a rather important function in a society that moves without a formal control system (Parsons, 1964). Many indigenous people still believe in animism, but some also believe in other religions such as Islam, Christianity, Bahai, and others.

Belief From Medical Aspects

The Kensiu community believes that shamans can help with more than just disease cures. His extraordinary advantages and knowledge caused him to be respected by his people. Shamans are usually older people. One of the advantages of a shaman is that he can help find lost people in the forest.

Puan Syarifah binti Kunyit is the mother of Razali bin Kulim, who lives in Kampung Lubuk Legong. He used to keep his grandfather's dagger, which was believed to have power over its owner. It is an heirloom from his late mother. However, this dagger can only be owned by men and has been given to his younger brother. Women cannot touch and wear it. This keris is considered safe and protects its owner from disasters and calamities.

Before modern medical services were introduced, shamans played an important role in traditional medicine by using the leaves and roots of trees. The shaman will cast spells on the patient and set some taboos so that the disease will recover quickly. Spells are verses that are read for a purpose. This spell is often used for various types of diseases or other purposes (Clare, 2016; Herlina et al., 2021). Kensiu's indigenous people believe that each disease has a guardian and a ghost. It can be banished with a curse spell. The spell service is subject to a hardening determined by the shaman based on the agreed-upon ability. Money and daily necessities such as food are among the hardeners imposed.

Sewang Belief

Sewang is a medical ceremony performed in the Kensiu community in Kampung Lubuk Legong. According to Encik Kulim, a shaman in Kampung Lubuk Legong, there are three types of rent in the Kensiu community: medical rent, annual rent, and guest celebration rent. They used medicine to treat sick people using spells and certain readings in the past. According to Encik Kulim, a shaman in Kampung Lubuk Legong, there are three types of rent in the Kensiu community: medical rent, annual rent, and guest celebration rent. They used medicine to treat sick people using spells and certain readings in the past. At the same time, Sewan tahunan is done for certain seasons, such as fruit season, spring, and others. Sewang to celebrate guests is held during weddings and certain events and ceremonies. Rental activities are only done at night.

Sewang Tahunan

Sewang aims to summon spirits for certain seasons. For example, spring is fruit season. This sewang involves a worship ceremony. They will worship the season by singing related songs, such as Sai Surai Bungak (the flower buds fall). They will also worship the spirits of mountains, rivers, trees, and others. As long as the worship is performed, they are in a state of unconsciousness. For this worship, only parents are involved. Children and pregnant women are not allowed to be in the worship ceremony. A bomoh leads this ceremony, and several participants dance and stomp long reeds. The annual rent is only paid one night a year, between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m. They burn incense and build a fire in the center and around it.

Sewang Perubatan

This sewang aims to treat common ailments such as fever, body aches, manufactured illnesses, etc. A bomoh leads this ceremony, and several followers dance and stomp the reeds while surrounding the patient sitting close to the firewood. As an annual ceremony, incense is also used. In this ceremony, only one song is sung: Yak Lengging Kong Padau (mother of evil things). This song is sung to summon all evil beings to the ceremony and then drive out all the evil spirits in the patient's body. Bomoh will exorcise the evil spirits by striking the patient with a bonglai leaf.

Sewang Sambut Tetamu

Sewang is often done in wedding ceremonies and at certain events. Sewang aims to celebrate guests who come. For kenduri kahwin, the Sewang ceremony is held for three days and two nights. The head of the sewang and his followers will dance together while playing long reeds as music. Among the songs sung in this ceremony are Doh Putau (welcoming guests), Genalel Tom Cibe (summoning the sun), and Beh Balan Jamu Tak Sewo (a place where people used to live). This ceremony is also performed at night.

According to Encik Kulim, the lyrics of this Sewang song only use the Kensiu language. Currently, the sewang ceremony of medicine is rarely performed because the Kensiu Indigenous People use modern services in hospitals and clinics. The residents of Kampung Ulu Legong have also embraced Islam, and the sewang ceremony is contrary to the Islamic teachings they have learned. According to Batin

Razali bin Kulim bomoh of Lubuk Legong Village, only his father and his brother's father remained.

Bomoh Kulim is a resident who knows the Kensiu Indigenous People in Lubuk Legong Village. He became a reference for the people of Kampung Lubuk Legong, especially in terms of the traditional customs and culture of the Kensiu Indigenous People (Roddin et al., 2019). His knowledge and wisdom are very important to the younger generation, so they remember the identity and traditions of the Kensiu Indigenous People. Bomoh Kulim Bin Keramat has five children and three grandchildren. Apart from being a bomoh, he works alone like the other villagers. Some Malay Indigenous People follow him into the forest to learn to find root wood and hunt.

Belief in the Shape of Prohibition

There are also beliefs in the form of prohibitions. If the prohibition is not obeyed, it will bring badness. In the family relationships of the Kensiu Indigenous People, some taboos are still practiced today, where daughters-in-law are not allowed to meet face-to-face and talk to their father-in-law and other next-door brothers, such as brothers-in-law and fathers. They also may not share dishes. The Kensiu Indigenous People believe disaster will occur if they violate this taboo. This belief has existed since ancient times when a son-in-law and his father-in-law had a fever and died.

Abstinence During Pregnancy wife

Wives are prohibited from lifting heavy objects and may not stand or sit on dead tree stumps. If this case is valid, it is believed that the wife will experience difficulties giving birth to children (Shahidi et al., 2018; Herwanis et al., 2021; Sicam et al., 2021). In Lubuk Legong Village, two midwives have traditional expertise in welcoming newborns. Nonetheless, the village midwife's service has now been replaced by a health nurse assigned to Lubuk Legong village.

Husband

While the wife is pregnant, the husband is prohibited from doing things like this: The husband needs to be careful when cutting reeds. Make sure the reed wrists are cut so that water does not accumulate. This is believed to leave an impression on the wife and baby (Tacey, 2013; Banseng et al., 2021; Pernantah et al., 2022). If hunting, the animal's blood may not flow into the river. If not, something bad will happen, like lightning or thunder, and the only way to avoid it is to pay with blood. Among the animals that may not be hunted while the wife is pregnant are monitor lizards, pangolins, hill turtles, sageng birds, pumpang birds, and lemurs. Husbands are also not allowed to fish because they are worried about giving the wife a bad impression and are not allowed to say things that are not beautiful, such as swearing.

Abstinence After Maternity

Among the taboos before giving birth is wearing a bloody cloth that comes out of the mother's womb and cannot be washed or thrown into the river.

The Kensiu Indigenous People believe that if this matter is carried out by lightning, storms, floods, hail, and thunder will occur in the village concerned. To prevent this from happening repeatedly, he needs to be paid in blood by the person washing the cloth in question. After taking blood, Bomoh will go to the river and release the blood. So, this taboo is now avoided because it happened once upon a time.

Mothers who have just given birth are prohibited from eating cold foods such as cucumber salad, umbut bayah, etc. The mother needs to sleep next to the campfire, so the fetus is healthy and heals again. The mother also needs to put some leaves in the stomach for healing. This practice has been carried out since the time of their ancestors. When the breeding system has healed, the mother may eat all the food under the spell of the Bomoh.

Marriage Customs and Family Relationships

The concept of life that prioritizes equity and equivalence is reflected in all aspects of the community's life. Most of the Kensiu Indigenous People in this village have a close relationship with each other. Only two people are married: one to a Malay woman from Kampung Baru and one to a Malaysian citizen. The Kensiu Indigenous People, who are Muslim, marry according to Islamic and family law.

A religious official from the Kedah State Islamic Religious Office performed their marriage. Meanwhile, marriage is to follow the beliefs of those who follow animism. No ceremony was held in their marriage. When the time comes for young people to marry, they only need the consent of the girl they intend to marry rather than the consent of the girl's parents. If the girl agrees to marry, the man will deliver goods in cloth, tobacco, and knives to the girl's father as a sign that the marriage between them will take effect. After that, they lived together as a sign that they were married. In the kinship system of the Kensiu people, kinship relations are bilateral, based on the descent of both parents from the male generation.

In the family relationships of the Kensiu community, there is a taboo that is still practiced today where daughters-in-law are not allowed to meet face-to-face and vice versa. The son-in-law is also not allowed to interact with the mother-in-law or meet face-to-face. Meanwhile, brothers and sisters who have yet to be married are not allowed to interact or meet face-to-face with their brothers or sisters-in-law. Not only are they not allowed to interact, but they are also not even allowed to mention names (Dallos, 2022; Nengsih et al., 2022). They use a third person to represent themselves if they want to interact with their father-in-law and in-laws. One concept of traditional life that is still perpetuated in the practice of avoiding solidarity is through avoidance relationships. In this regard, a group member tries to avoid face-to-face meetings in-laws, in-laws, or sons-in-law, especially of different genders.

Social organization

In the traditional life of the Kensiu community, a combination of five or six basic families forms a group. In most cases, all family members in a placement or camp share close kinship or clan ties. Each group is chaired by the oldest member but has no special title. A group leader is chosen based on age, experience, and knowledge of theology and mysticism. The chairman can decide

where to camp and when to move, but he is still subject to the opinions and advice of the group members he leads (Ting et al., 2018; Matt et al., 2022).

Generally, elders are not that important to this community at the group level. On the contrary, they prioritize egalitarian and solidarity concepts. The nuclear family is an important element in the social organization; it consists of a husband, wife, and children. For the Negrito people who practice low-shifting activities, their placement is better known as a "collection of windscreens," namely, people who live under roofs as temporary shelters. This group also took their children wherever they changed ranks. They would help this little kid in shifts. Each group has a husband, wife, and children, but only the little ones live with them. Another shady place will be built not far from their families for children over seven, while girls will also live with their parents and be separated by a bonfire in the middle of their bed. All matters of leadership lie in the hands of their father, who acts to make decisions in the family member's life (Handrianto, 2019).

Referring to the Kensiu in Baling, this social organization has greatly changed. They have lived in the Lubuk Lenggong for a long time, and moving slowly needs to be practiced more. This is because JHEOA has established permanent placements and is monitored by all agencies that deal directly or indirectly with them. Moreover, the organization has changed and been replaced by settlements as placement units under the leadership of a chairman, the headman. Penghulu still has the same role as the head of their tradition.

The belief system of the Kensiu Indigenous People is like that of other Negrito people, most of whom believe in traditional Kensiu beliefs. This belief advocates symbols such as Tok Batin, Karei, and Menoi as beings of high power. This eternal symbol of power is also referred to as the embodiment of extraordinary power or the spirit of the spirit, called "living people," or humans who live forever. The symbol of power and lack of power is mediated between humans and living people called Cenoi. Cenoi Tapn is often referred to by this community and equated with God or the Sultan among these symbols of power. Cenoi Tapn is similar to a contemplative (tawo). The upper part of the body is young, while the lower part is old. Cenoi Tapn is said to guard the lives of the Kensiu Indigenous People and manifest his anger through thunder and lightning (Kaei). This system is maintained and guarded by an authority called Halak, who acts as an intermediary for the Kensiu Indigenous People with symbols of superior power in their beliefs.

CONCLUSION

Kensiu Indigenous People live in Baling, Kedah, Malaysia. They believe every disease has a guardian and a ghost that can be banished with a curse spell. In this ceremony, only one song is sung: Yak Lenggong Kong Padau (mother of evil things). This song is sung to summon all evil beings to the ceremony and then drive out all the evil spirits in the patient's body. Among the taboos before giving birth is wearing a bloody cloth that comes out of the mother's womb and cannot be washed or thrown into the river. Mothers who have just given birth are prohibited from eating cold foods such as cucumber salad, umbut bayah, etc. Marriage is to follow the beliefs of those who practice animism. Negrito tribes believe this world is inhabited by various gods and "supernatural" beings. Kensiu Indigenous People have their own beliefs and customs. The Kensiu community

believes that shamans can help with more than just disease cures. In a ceremony, only one song is sung, Yak Lengging Kong Padau (mother of evil things). This song is sung to summon all evil beings to come to the ceremony and then drive out all the evil spirits. This sewang aims to treat common ailments such as fever, body aches, manufactured illnesses, etc. In the Kensiu community, a taboo is still practiced today where daughters-in-law are not allowed to meet face-to-face. Marriage is to follow the beliefs of those who practice animism. JHEOA has established permanent placements and is monitored by all agencies that deal directly or indirectly with them.

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