



## Analysis of Symbols in Kaili Customary Sanctions

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### Abstract

This study aims to determine the form of symbols in kaili customary sanctions and describe the meaning in the form of symbols in kaili customary sanctions. Kaili customary sanctions do not only function as punishments but as a holistic process that aims to restore balance and harmony in the community both socially and spiritually. The method used is a qualitative descriptive method. The results of this study show that Symbols such as goats and buffaloes represent different levels of sacrifice and purification, adjusted for the weight of the offense. Goats for general cleansing and expressions of gratitude, while buffalo for serious offenses that require total purification and a deep restoration of honor. Guma (machete) symbolizes the firmness of customary law and the power to break the negative bonds caused by violations. Traditional plates, white ceramic bowls, and trays function as symbolic containers that represent agreement, purity of intention, and togetherness in the process of solving problems, as well as being a place to hand over fines or offerings. Meanwhile, the white cloth emphasizes aspects of purity, peace, and sincere intentions to start a new chapter. Finally, the dowry (customary fine) is a symbol of accountability and compensation, which affirms the recognition of wrongdoing and the commitment to restore the dignity or loss that has occurred.

**Keywords:** *Bentu and Meaning, Kaili Customary Sanctions*

## **Introduction**

Semiotics is a science that studies signs and meanings in one expression. This is in line with the opinion (Nurma Yuwita, 2018) Semiotics is a science or method of analysis to study signs. In the context of customary sanctions Study semiotics, it is particularly relevant to analyze symbols in customary sanctions because semiotics allows us to understand how signs, whether they are objects, actions, or rituals, function in conveying meaning in social and cultural contexts.

Traditional symbol theory refers to the understanding and analysis of symbols contained in the traditions and culture of the community, which serves to convey certain meanings and strengthen group identity. Customary symbols, which can be objects, actions, or words, are analyzed through a semiotic approach that divides symbols into icons, indexes, and symbols, each by showing meaning and relationships used as symbols that have a specific meaning. To make symbols widely accepted, humans use everything that can be found in nature and around them as the origin of a symbol and then give meaning to the symbol.

Understanding these symbols is important for the preservation of traditions that may be endangered, as well as for exploring the meanings and values that underlie customary practices and rituals. (Main, 2022) Symbols that appear and are carried out in a tradition certainly have their own meaning and contain instrumental values that are interesting to be researched and known so that their existence can be preserved.

Symbols in customary law play a very important role in reflecting cultural values, social identities, and norms that govern people's behavior. Each symbol, be it a specific ritual, object, or practice, contains a deep meaning and serves as a representation of the community's traditions and history. Each symbol, such as a traditional ceremony, traditional clothing, or ritual object, has a deep meaning and is often related to the history and traditions of the community.

Application of customary law Givu There are categories related to the tongue. Namely the Mbivi sala, sala baba and sala sumba. The sanctions given can be in the form of light, medium, and even heavy givus. The category of sanctions given depending on the legal impact caused by customary law is one of the symbols of social status, having a very decisive position to reveal a person's status in the Kaili tribal community, especially the aristocratic group Squirt, because the severity of the sanctions and the number of fines can reflect the status of the community. According to (Siregar, 2018) customary law is a legal system that is known in the social life environment in Indonesia and the country.

Givu reflects the Kaili people's value system that maintains social and environmental harmony, with the symbols used in the punishment serving as a tool of cultural education and a reminder of the importance of tradition. Another peculiarity lies in the role of symbols in sanctions, which are not only a sign of offense but also as a way to strengthen the collective identity of people and their relationship with supernatural forces. In addition, these customary sanctions also face challenges in the era of modernization, so it is important to analyze how they

remain relevant and accepted in the context of social change.

Givu's research on the Kaili tribe is unique in that these sanctions are not only related to the violation of social norms, but also involve spiritual aspects and human relationships with nature. Symbols in customs have special characteristics that distinguish them from other symbols in cultural and social contexts. First, customary symbols have contextual meanings that depend heavily on the culture and social situation in which they are used, so understanding the symbols requires knowledge of the cultural background. Second, these symbols serve as representations of a group's values, norms, and identity, as seen in wedding ceremonies that reflect family values and love. In addition, traditional symbols have a strong social function, strengthening group cohesion and building collective identity through ceremonies and celebrations that involve the entire community.

Research conducted. The first research was conducted by (Abdul Wahab, 2020) with the title "Symbolic Analysis in the Baliya Jinja Ceremony on the Customs of the Kaili Tribe". The second research was conducted by (Siti Aisyah, 2020) with the title "The Influence of Kaili Customary Sanctions on the Behavior of the Kaili Community. The titles of the theses "Symbolic Analysis in the Baliya Jinja Ceremony in the Customs of the Kaili Tribe" and "Analysis of Symbols in the Sanction of the Kaili Customs" have significant similarities and differences.

Both emphasize the analysis of symbols, seek to understand the meaning and function of symbols in the cultural context of the Kaili Tribe, and are rooted in the customs and traditions of the community. Nonetheless, the scope is different; the first title focuses on the symbols that appear in the Baliya Jinja ceremony, while the second title is broader, covering symbols related to customary sanctions that reflect social norms and consequences. In addition, the aspects analyzed are also different, where the first title is more focused on rituals, while the second title highlights the application of sanctions and their impact.

The methodologies used in both studies may also vary, with descriptive and interpretive approaches to symbolic analysis in ceremonies, whereas symbolic analysis in customary sanctions may involve case studies or interviews with indigenous figures. The two thesis titles "The Influence of Kaili Customary Sanctions on the Behavior of the Kaili Community" and "Symbol Analysis in Kaili Customary Sanctions" have significant similarities and differences. Both focus on the cultural context of the Kaili Tribe and highlight customary sanctions as a key theme, with the aim of providing insight into aspects related to those sanctions.

However, the scope of the analysis is different; The first title emphasizes the influence of customary sanctions on people's behavior, so that it focuses more on the impact and consequences of these sanctions, while the second title delves deeper into the symbols contained in customary sanctions, with an interpretive approach to understand the meaning of symbols. In addition, the methodology used is also different, where the first title may use a quantitative or qualitative approach to measure the influence of sanctions, while the second title tends to use

a more in-depth qualitative approach. The purpose of this study is to describe the form of symbols contained in kaili customary sanctions and describe the meaning of symbols in kaili customary sanctions.

## **Method**

The type of research used in this study is descriptive qualitative research, which aims to explore the meaning, function, and role of symbols in the implementation of customary sanctions in the Kaili community. This research will use an in-depth interview approach with indigenous leaders and communities, participatory observation in traditional ceremonies, and documentation studies to analyze the symbols used in customary sanctions, such as clothing, rituals, or certain objects.

Through this approach, the research is expected to be able to systematically describe how the symbol strengthens traditional values, enforces social rules, and influences the behavior of the Kaili community in maintaining social and moral balance. By applying semiotic studies, this study describes the symbols used in traditional ceremonies, which not only function as signs, but also reflect the beliefs and values embraced by the community. The customary sanctions applied are often related to these symbols, serving as a form of education and reminder of applicable norms, not just punishment.

Data analysis techniques that can be used include semiotic analysis, thematic analysis, and discourse analysis. Semiotic analysis is used to identify and interpret the symbols in customary sanctions, unearthing the meanings contained in the signs used in the ritual or sanction process. Meanwhile, thematic analysis helps researchers to discover the main themes that emerge from the data, such as the values or social norms that are maintained through the symbols. Discourse analysis focuses on how these symbols are discoursed in traditional narratives or stories, as well as how these discourses reflect social structures and power in Kaili society. To ensure the validity of the analysis results, the data triangulation technique can be used by collecting information from various sources, such as interviews, observations, and customary documents, and comparing the results to find consistent patterns

## **Result**

Based on the results of observations and interviews, the researcher obtained several symbols of customary sanctions as follows.

**Date: 01**

*Bengga* (buffalo)



Buffalo in the Kaili customary sanction is not just an ordinary "fine". It is a complex symbol that reflects the value system of the Kaili society that values dignity, honor, spiritual balance, and the enforcement of justice through sacrifice and confession.

**Date: 02**

*Work* (Traditional)



Reflects courage, manliness, and strength. Apart from being an agricultural tool and weapon, this machete is also often used in traditional ceremonies as a symbol of honor and social status.

**Date: 03**

*Tovau (kambing)*



The giving of goats can be a symbol of peace between the disputing parties. This indicates that the issue has been resolved and both sides agree to continue living side by side peacefully.

**Date: 04**

*Tray (Tray)*



Dula, as part of customary objects, has a symbolic meaning that customary violations bring consequences and there must be efforts to restore the balance that has been disturbed by such violations.

**Date 05** *Suraya (piring Adat)*



Kaili traditional dishes are not only food containers, but also symbols of noble values upheld by the Kaili people.

**Date: 06**

*Gandisi* (White Cloth)



The white cloth symbolizes purity, peace, and cleansing from mistakes or violations of customs.

**Date: 07**

*Tubu Mputi* (White Bowl)



The white bowl in the customary sanction of Kaili, especially in the context of Baliya Jinja, is not only a container, but also an important symbol associated with purity, purification, and healing efforts from evil influences.



**Date: 08**

**Sudakana (Mahar)**



Sukadana, in this case, refers to the handing over of a sum of money or objects as a form of fine or compensation paid by the party who violates the customary to the aggrieved party, or to the customary institution. The payment of sukadana is one of the stages in the implementation of customary sanctions, which aims to restore the social balance disturbed due to violations.

## Discussion

Givu nuada or customary sanctions are something that is accepted as a result of violations of customary values and norms that apply in society. Customary sanctions are imposed on anyone who violates customs, including from *the Madika* (nobles / kings), *ntina*, (traditional leaders and stakeholders) to *ntodea* (the general public). The purpose of this customary sanction is to provide the cultivation of ethical values, which is intended to protect all citizens from arbitrary acts and uncommendable actions.

This section presents findings obtained from field research on the symbols contained in customary sanctions kaili. These findings were obtained through participatory observation and in-depth interviews with key informants, including stakeholders and community leaders who have knowledge of customary sanction practices. The presentation of this data is grouped based on the identification of the form and meaning of customary sanctions of kaili.

### A. Symbol Form in Kaili Customary Sanctions

Here are some of the symbols commonly used in Kaili customary sanctions, along with their explanations:

#### 1. Farm Animals

In the Kaili customary sanctions, livestock such as buffaloes, cows, goats, and chickens play a very important role, not only as material fines, but also as symbols that are rich in meaning and an integral part of the customary recovery process.



The symbols are as follows:

**Date: 01**

*Bengga* (buffalo)

In the customary sanction of Kaili, the buffalo has an important role as a symbol and object used in customary fines (Nigivu) and heavy or light levels (Nisompo). Buffalo is considered a sacred creature and is often used in various traditional rituals and is a symbol of a leader or traditional figure (Maragau/Madika). The use of buffalo in customary sanctions shows that customary fines are not only in the form of inanimate objects, but also involve living beings that are considered to have sacred value in the Kaili society.

**Date: 02**

*Tovau* (kambing)

In Kaili customary sanctions, goats are often part of the fine or compensation given to the aggrieved party for a customary violation. The amount and type of sanctions, including the use of goats, depend heavily on the type of violations and agreements within the Kaili indigenous people. Goats here are not only farm animals, but also have social and symbolic value in the Kaili custom.

## **2. Heirlooms and Customary Equipment**

Heirlooms in Kaili customary sanctions refer to objects that have sacred value and are related to customary law, especially in the context of resolving customary sanctions. These objects are not just artifacts, but also symbols of strength, authority, and enforcement of customary norms.

The symbols are as follows:

**Date: 03**

*Work* (as usual)

In the context of the customary law of the Kaili Tribe, customary sanctions (givu) are applied to customary violators, including those from the nobility to ordinary people. The goal is to uphold the customary values contained in the law, and the sanctions given must be in accordance with the applicable customary territory.

**Date: 04**

*Suraya* (piring adat)

Customary plates in Kaili customary sanctions are a form of object used as a means of payment for fines or punishments in resolving customary problems. Traditional plates, which are usually made of ceramic or porcelain, have symbolic value and are part of the customary objects used in various ceremonies or dispute resolution.

#### **Date 05**

*Tubu mputi* (white ceramic bowl)

Bowls are not directly mentioned as objects of sanctions in the applicable customary rules. However, the bowl can be part of the object used in the implementation of traditional ceremonies or as a symbol in traditional rituals, where violations of the rules related to these objects can lead to customary sanctions.

#### **Date: 06**

*Tray* (tray)

Dula in the Kaili customary sanction is a tray or tray, which is a container made of copper or brass, which is often used as a tool to store or serve food, or other objects. In the context of Kaili customary sanctions, dula has a meaning as part of an object that is handed over as a fine or punishment for customary violations.

#### **Date: 07**

*Gandisi* (white cloth)

The use of white cloth in the context of customary sanctions is one aspect of the system  
a wide and rich tradition of meaning.

### **3. Bride price**

In the Kaili customary sanctions, the dowry, which in the Kaili language is called "Givu", is not only a gift in marriage, but can also be a form of sanction for the violation of custom. Givu in the context of customary sanctions, Kaili has several different functions and forms, depending on the type of violation committed.

#### **Date: 08**

*Sudakana* (mahar)

Sudakana, in this case, refers to the handing over of a certain amount of money or objects as a form of fine or compensation paid by the party who violates the custom to the aggrieved party, or to the customary institution. The payment of sukadana is one of the stages in the implementation of customary sanctions, which aims to restore the social balance disturbed due to violations.

### **B. The Meaning of Symbols in Kaili Customary Sanctions**

The meaning is the meaning is **the interpretation or understanding we give to something**, which then shapes the way we see and interact. The analysis of symbols in the customary sanction kaili has several diverse meanings that are analyzed and get results according to their use. The following are some of the meanings contained in the kaili customary sanctions.

## **1. The Meaning of Buffalo in the Sanction of Kaili Custom**

In the customary sanction of Kaili, the buffalo has a very deep symbolic meaning, beyond just an ordinary sacrificial animal. The presence of buffalo in customary sanction rituals signifies the weight of serious violations and a great impact on the social and spiritual order of the community. The buffalo symbolizes the ultimate sacrifice made to purify grave transgressions, expel negative traits, and restore tainted honor. This large animal is a representation of the collective efforts of the community to achieve deep reconciliation and restore the damaged communal balance, ensuring that harmony and customary integrity are maintained for the sake of common survival.

## **2. The Meaning of Goats in Kaili Customary Sanctions**

In the customary sanction of Kaili, goats have an important symbolic meaning, although they differ in seriousness from buffaloes. Goats are often used as a representation of self-cleansing from lighter mistakes or stains, as well as as an expression of gratitude or the fulfillment of promises. The presence of goats in customary sanction rituals symbolizes an effort to remove the negativity or misfortune resulting from the offense, with the aim of restoring the disturbed spiritual and social balance. The meat distributed to the community is also a symbol of reconciliation and the sharing of sustenance, reaffirming social ties among community members.

## **3. The Meaning of Parang Adat in Kaili Customary Sanctions**

In the customary sanction of Kaili, guma (machete or machete) holds a strong symbolic meaning, going beyond mere sharp weapons. Guma symbolizes the firmness of customary law, justice, and the power to restore the broken order. Its use in customary sanction rituals is not for physical violence, but rather as a marker that the violation has cut off or damaged community harmony. Guma can also symbolize the breaking of negative ties or the expulsion of bad influences arising from violations. The presence of guma emphasizes that customary decisions are final and have the power to restore balance and maintain the dignity of customary in the community.

## **4. The Meaning of Traditional Dishes in the Sanction of Kaili Customs**

In the customary sanction of Kaili, the traditional plate has a rich and profound symbolic meaning. This plate is not just an ordinary container, but a representation of the determination, unity, and agreement of all traditional members in resolving a case. Its presence in sanction rituals is often a place for placing fines or offerings, which symbolize surrender and acceptance of customary decisions. The traditional plate also symbolizes purity and openness, showing that the dispute resolution process is carried out in a transparent and fair manner, in

order to restore harmony and balance that had been disturbed in the community.

### **5. The Meaning of White Ceramic Bowls in Kaili Customary Sanctions**

In the customary sanction of Kaili, white ceramic bowls have a deep symbolic meaning. The white color on ceramics symbolizes purity, purity of heart, and sincerity in the process of solving problems. This bowl is often used as a container to place customary fines or offerings that are more spiritual or symbolic in nature. His presence shows an intention to cleanse oneself of guilt and repurify the murky relationship caused by the offense. The white ceramic bowl also symbolizes the hope for the restoration of balance, peace, and openness to re-establish harmony in the community after the customary sanctions are implemented.

### **6. The Meaning of Tray in Kaili Customary Sanctions**

In the customary sanction of Kaili, the tray (large tray or tray) has a significant symbolic meaning. The tray symbolizes a collective container that accommodates mutual agreements and customary decisions that have been agreed upon by all stakeholders. Its presence in sanction rituals is often the basis for placing various customary fine objects, such as money, rice, or other offerings, all of which symbolize a commitment to solving problems and acceptance of the consequences of a violation. The dulang also represents togetherness and communal responsibility, where every member of the community witnesses and supports the process of restoring harmony. More than that, the tray symbolizes the hope for balance and order that will be created again after the customary sanctions process is completed, in order to maintain the survival of the indigenous people and the Kaili people.

### **7. The Meaning of White Cloth in the Sanction of Kaili Custom**

In the customary sanction of Kaili, white cloth has a very deep and rich symbolic meaning. The white cloth symbolizes purity, purity, and sincere intentions in the process of cleansing and restoration. Its presence in customary sanction rituals signifies a desire to remove stains or mistakes that have occurred, both physically and spiritually. The white cloth is also often used as a symbol of peace and reconciliation, indicating that the parties involved are willing to turn a new page and end the conflict with a clean heart. In some contexts, white cloth can be a marker of self-purification for offenders, symbolizing the hope that they will return to the right path and be accepted back into the community without burden. Overall, the white cloth in the Kaili customary sanctions represents a collective effort to restore harmony, balance, and cleanliness of relationships in society.

### **8. The Meaning of Dowry in the Kaili Customary Sanction**

In Kaili customary sanctions, dowry (in this context more appropriately referred to as customary fine or customary compensation, although the term "dowry" in the modern sense refers more to a wedding dowry) has a deep symbolic

meaning as a form of accountability and compensation for the offense that has occurred. This dowry symbolizes the restoration of dignity or immaterial losses suffered by the aggrieved party or the community as a whole. More than just material value, dowry in this customary sanction affirms the recognition of wrongdoing on the part of the violator and his willingness to pay the "price" for the violation of order or norms. This is an attempt to restore social and spiritual balance, as well as to prevent the recurrence of similar violations in the future. The dowry became a symbol of reconciliation, where its surrender marked the end of the dispute and the resumption of harmonious relations between the parties to the dispute within the customary framework.

## Conclusion

An analysis of the various symbols used in the customary sanction of Kaili shows that each element has a deep and interrelated meaning, forming a complex value system. Kaili customary sanctions do not only function as punishments, but as a holistic process that aims to restore balance and harmony in the community, both socially and spiritually. Symbols such as goats and buffaloes represent different levels of sacrifice and purification, adjusted to the weight of the offense. Goats are for general cleansing and expressions of gratitude, while buffalo is for serious offenses that require total purification and a deep restoration of honor. Guma (machete) symbolizes the firmness of customary law and the power to break the negative bonds caused by violations.

Traditional plates, white ceramic bowls, and trays function as symbolic containers that represent agreement, purity of intention, and togetherness in the process of solving problems, as well as being a place to hand over fines or offerings. Meanwhile, the white cloth emphasizes aspects of purity, peace, and sincere intentions to start a new chapter. Finally, the dowry (customary fine) is a symbol of accountability and compensation, which affirms the recognition of wrongdoing and the commitment to restore the dignity or loss that has occurred.

Overall, this symbol system reflects the philosophy of the Kaili people that upholds togetherness, justice, and balance. Each symbol is a reminder of the importance of maintaining the customary order, purifying oneself from mistakes, and rebuilding harmonious relationships for the peaceful survival of the community. This shows that the customary sanction of Kaili is a form of education and rehabilitation, not just punishment, which is rich in the noble values of the ancestors.

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