

## Analysis of The Meaning of “Mehamat Man Kalimbubu, Metenget Ersenina, Metami Man Anak Beru” in the Tradition of Rakut Sitelu in the Karo Community

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### Abstract

Indonesia is a country that has a diversity of ethnic groups totaling 1,340. One of them is the Karo tribe who live around Deli Serdang Regency, Binjai City, Medan City, Stabat, Dairi Regency and Karo Regency. The Karo tribe has a kinship system concept called "rakut sitelu" which is one of the elements of "sangkep nggeluh". Within the rakut sitelu kinship system, there are terms familiar to the Karo people, namely "Mehamat Man Kalimbubu", "Metenget Ersenina", and "Metami Man Anak Beru". These three terms are still firmly held by the Karo people and are part of the rakut sitelu. This research aims to reveal the meaning of the three terms and how they are correlated with the rakut sitelu tradition. This research design uses qualitative methods with data collection techniques through interviews, observations, and documentation studies. This research contributes to enriching the study of Karo culture, especially the rakut sitelu tradition. The results of this study are expected to be a reference for future researchers who want to further study the rakut sitelu tradition in Karo society. The results of this study which the meaning of mehamat man kalimbubu is respect for kalimbubu, metenget ersenina is maintaining social harmony and metami man anak beru is pampering or loving.

**Keywords:** Kinship System, Rakut Sitelu, Communication Style



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### INTRODUCTION

Cultural diversity is one of the uniqueness that exists in this world with various ethnic groups around the world, as well as the diversity of Indonesian culture. Tedi Sutardi (2020: 9-10) argues that cultural diversity is a whole system of ideas, actions, and various human works in social life that humans acquire from the learning process. We, as Indonesian citizens, cannot deny that the existence of the Indonesian state itself produces countless diversity, ranging from ethnic diversity to language. In essence, Indonesia's cultural diversity comes from various local cultures that continue to grow and develop in their communities. As time goes by from era to era, cultural development has a role and function to increase the nationalist spirit. This is because local culture contains social values that need to be applied by each Indonesian community itself. Nawari Ismail (2011) explains that local culture is all ideas, activities and results of human activities in a community group in a certain location. The local culture is actually still growing and developing in the community and is agreed upon and used as a common guideline. Koentjaraningrat (1990: 180) argues that culture according to anthropology is a whole system of ideas, actions and human works in the context of community life that are made property of humans by learning. As it is known that culture is the result of ideas, ideas and materials that are inherited from previous generations to future generations. Culture produces traditions that have beliefs and human values that aim to guide the lives of

future generations. In every society there must be interaction between one another in interacting also has a culture and tradition.

In various tribes there are beliefs that are adhered to by the people in the tribe. Many meanings are contained in each tradition adopted by the tribe. Likewise with the Karo tribe, there are traditions that are still inherent, believed and carried out by the Karo tribe. One of them is in terms of kinship, where in Karo society there is the term "mehamat man kalimbubu, metenget ersenina, metami man anak beru", or what is commonly called rakut sitelu. We often hear this term in Karo society, especially during events such as weddings and so on. The term "mehamat man kalimbubu, metenget ersenina, metami man anak beru" is a tradition of kinship greetings in Karo society called rakut sitelu. Rakut sitelu is a kinship system that regulates the position in customs in Karo society which is divided into three namely kalimbubu, sukut, and anak beru. Rakut is a bond, si is a connective word, while telu is three. Rakut sitelu is also called daliken sitelu which means three stoves (Daliken: stove stone, Sitelu: three), Fitriani (2018). Rakut sitelu is almost the same concept as the Dalihan na Tolu kinship system, which is used as a guideline and even as a philosophy of life for the Batak people, especially the Toba and Mandailing Batak. So, rakut sitelu is three ties that form a system of social order in Karo society. This system makes Karo people bound to one another, belonging to each other and respecting each other.

Behind the terms "mehamat man kalimbubu, metenget ersenina, metami man anak beru", there is a deep meaning, one of which is during the wedding party. The term is often associated with traditional responsibilities. For example at a wedding, if at the time of the wedding the food served to the guests is less delicious then the blame is the berunya child. At the time of the wedding party accompanying the family who held the wedding party throughout the event was senina, especially the parents of the bride and groom who held the wedding senina must always accompany. Especially when facing kalimbubu, as we know kalimbubu in Karo society is highly respected and kalimbubu is often interpreted as God who is visible. If a family is having a wedding and one of the rakut sitelu is not present then it will be the talk of the town. In other words, kalimbubu, senina and anak beru are interconnected. If someone holds an event, for example a wedding, the family must ensure that all three must be present. If just one of them is not present, it will not only become a topic of conversation but the family relationship can also be damaged. Moreover, if the anak beru holds a traditional event and the kalimbubu is not present, the event will not begin. The kalimbubu will be picked up and invited to the event so that the event can begin. If the kalimbubu holds an event, then wherever it is or however far it is, the child beru must come and vice versa. If the event has not been completed, both kalimbubu, senina and anak beru cannot leave the event, meaning that until the event is completed kalimbubu, senina and anak beru cannot go home or leave the event.

The placement of kalimbubu, senina and anak beru depends on whose side they come from. It could be that the husband is the kalimbubu while the wife is the anak beru. But it doesn't matter which party it comes from, because the duties and responsibilities remain the same whether as kalimbubu, senina or anak beru. Over time, the concept of "mehamat man kalimbubu, metenget ersenina, metami man anak beru" has been eroded. Likewise, the essence of the meaning and relationship between the three began to lose its existence. The times have diluted the views and insights of the public (outside the Karo community) about this unique kinship system. Many people still do not know about the culture of the Karo tribe who settled in the Karo highlands. This Karo-style kinship culture is so unique and interesting that it must be preserved and passed on to the next generation. However, due to the onslaught of globalization and the times, many young people, especially gen-z, do not know the elements of Karo culture. One of the factors is the influx of outside cultural influences without a filter and

the presence of immigrants who have different ethnicities and cultures so that cultural acculturation occurs. If left unchecked, the concept of "mehamat man kalimbubu, metenget ersenina, metami man anak beru" which is part of the rakut sitelu kinship system of the Karo tribe will disappear completely. In today's advanced era, we may think that the term "mehamat man kalimbubu, metenget ersenina, metami man anak beru" is just a term to call or mention people in the Karo community's kinship system, but actually the term contains a very deep meaning or meaning, which is related to the responsibilities carried out by each person, whether he is a kalimbubu, senina or anak beru. manner.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This type of research is qualitative research because the data is in the form of words, sentences, and pictures. According to Sugiyono (2022), qualitative research is research based on the philosophy of postpositivism used to research on natural object conditions where the researcher is the key instrument. This research focuses on a cultural phenomenon found in Karo society, namely Rakut Sitelu. The data source is the subject where the data is obtained. This research uses primary data sources and secondary data sources. Primary data sources in this research are traditional elders who know about Rakut Sitelu by conducting direct interviews. And secondary data sources in this research were obtained through library studies, namely by conducting literature studies through books, articles or other sources regarding Rakut Sitelu. Data collection techniques in this study are observation, interviews, and documentation. Where researchers will record events, things, information or characteristics of some or all elements of the existing community. The data analysis technique used in this research is thematic analysis technique. In this data analysis technique, the interview results are transcribed into written text. Then it is read repeatedly to record ideas, impressions, and preliminary findings. After that, code identification. The text is divided into small meaningful segments and coded for each segment. Codes that have similar meanings are grouped into larger themes. After that, the meaning of each theme was explained and interpreted in relation to the research problem.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Concept of Rakut Sitelu in Karo Society**

The Karo ethnic community that inhabits the northern highlands of Sumatra is one of the ethnic groups in the archipelago. Ethnic Karo as a community unit has a concept of life that regulates the relationship between one another. The concept is passed down from generation to generation orally, in motion, symbols, written, and artifacts through a long process. The concept has become the life guide of the Karo ethnic community to this day. To understand Karo ethnic society, one must first understand Sangkep Nggeluh. Sangkep Nggeluh means the wholeness of a person's life. What is meant by wholeness is the elements in the customs that govern Karo society. If a Karo ethnic community does not have Sangkep Nggeluh, that community can be said to have not legally become a Karo person. for immigrant communities who settle and marry Karo people, someone will be found Sangkep Nggeluh. In the Sangkep Nggeluh of the Karo ethnic community, there are several elements that determine Sangkep Nggeluh, namely: Merga Silima, Tuter Siwaluh, Perkade-Kaden Sepuluh Dua Tambah Sada and Rakut Sitelu. Karo people recognize eight speeches namely: Sembuyak, Senina, Senina Sipemerren, Senina Siparibanen, Anak Beru, Anak Beru Minister, Kalimbubu, and Puang Kalimbubu. These eight speeches are called Tuter Siwaluh. Tuter Siwaluh will give rise to Perkade-kaden Sepuluh Dua Tambah Sada. Perkade-kaden Sepuluh Dua Tambah Sada is derived from the word perkade-kaden which means fraternal relations in the social structure,

ten two plus sada means there are twelve types of fraternal relations in the social structure, and plus sada is defined as outsiders who enter the system of the social order structure of the Karo community and to the ancestors of the Karo community who have died. The Ten Two Perkade-Kaden are Bulang (grandfather), Nini (grandmother), Bapa (father), Nande (mother), Bengkila (the husband of the father's sister), Bibi (the father's sister), Mama (the mother's brother), Mami (the wife of the mother's brother), Impal (the mother's son), Silih (the husband of the sister), and Bere-bere (the daughter of the sister). Merga si Lima, Tuter Siwaluh and Perkade-kaden Sepuluh Dua Tambah Sada are bound and summarized by the Rakut Sitelu system. Rakut Sitelu is a kinship system that organizes positions in customs in Karo society which is divided into three namely Kalimbubu, Sukut, and Anak Beru. Rakut is a bond, si is a conjunction word, while Telu is Three (Darwin Prinst, 2006). So, Rakut Sitelu is three ties that form a system of social order in Karo society. This system makes the Karo ethnic community bound to one another, belonging to each other and respecting each other.

### **1. Kalimbubu**

- Kalimbubu Tiers. Kalimbubu-Puang Kalimbubu-U-Puang Ni Puang
  1. Kalimbubu: is the brother of our wife's side, our father, our grandfather, our son, our brother (the brother of our wife's sembuyak senina).
  2. Puang Kalimbubu: Kalimbubu of kalimbubu (singalo bere-bere nande)
  3. Puang Ni Puang: Kalimbubu of Puang Kalimbubu (singalo perkempun nande, soler)

#### **a. Types of Kalimbubu**

1. Kalimbubu Tua Taneh/Simajek Lulang: the merga who became the kalimbubu of the first person to establish a village.
2. Kalimbubu Tua Kesain: the kalimbubu who first founded our Kesaina.
3. Kalimbubu Tua Jabu: Kalimbubu starting from grandfather onwards.
4. Kalimbubu Bena-Bena/Simajek Dalikan: Kalimbubu father.
5. Kalimbubu Jabu/Simupus: brother (descendant) of our mother.
6. Kalimbubu Simada Dareh (only available for women): Merga from her father's lineage.
7. Kalimbubu Sierkimbang: the brother (descendant) of our wife.
8. Kalimbubu Siperdemui: all kalimbubu (by marriage) of the sukut, sembuyak and senina.
9. Kalimbubu Sisendalanan ras Kalimbubu: kalimbubu Sepemerren, siparibanen extended family, kalimbubu sendalanan ras kalimbubu sepengalon.
10. Kalimbubu Karang: according to Karo custom, when a person moves to a village, he is obliged to find his seninanya in that village. Then the kalimbubu seninanya is the kalimbubu karanya.

#### **b. Titles of Kalimbubu at the Marriage Feast (Nereh-Empo)**

##### **Female Party (the Nereh)**

1. Kalimbubu Singalo Bere-Bere: kalimbubu Simupus woman 1 (sisereh), or often called kalimbubu sierkimbang bapa sisereh.
2. Kalimbubu Singalo Perkempun: kalimbubu of kalimbubu Singalo bere (Puang Kalimbubu).
3. Kalimbubu Singalo Perbibin: sister of the bride's mother (sisereh) Today these three kalimbubu are called Kalimbubu Telu Sendalanan.

##### **Male Party (si Empo)**

1. Kalimbubu Singalo Ulu Emas kalimbubu sierkimbang bapa si empo or kalimbubu simupus si empo.

2. Kalimbubu Singalo Ciken-Ciken (Kalimbubu Perkempun): kalimbubu of kalimbubu Singalo ulu emas Singalo
3. Kalimbubu Singalo Perninin: kalimbubu of kalimbubu Singalo Ciken- Ciken (Kalimbubu Singalo Perkempun)

## **2. Senina**

A senina is a person who is of the same merga but of a different branch from us.

- a. Senina Kuranan/Biak: A person who is elected from the senina, one or more (suspended) and who is hereditary.
- b. Senina Sepemeran: A person who is our mother's relative.
- c. Senina Siperibanen: The person who is our wife's sister (of the same age).
- d. Senina Sendalanen: the person who marries our impal or whose impal we marry; one Bere-bere mamana, one Kela mamina Sendalanen nandangi kalimbubu. (erkiteken kalimbubu).
- e. Senina Sepengalon: A person whose bere-bere marries our daughter or whose daughter marries our bere-bere.

If in a village there is a merga with only one branch , it is also common to take a biak senina from the same branch from another kesain.

## **3. Anak Beru**

Anak Beru is the offspring of our sister or the person who married our sister.  
Tier Beru Children

1. Anak Beru: A person who marries our sister or a descendant of our sister.
2. Anak Beru Minister: the beru child of a beru child.
3. Anak Beru Pengapit: the anak beru of the minister's anak beru. (There is also mention of Anak Beru Singikuri, but according to the author after receiving input from elderly traditional leaders and after reading several traditional books in addition to understanding, Anak Beru Singukuri is Anak Beru who does not go directly to Sukut, but only follows his siblings who become Anak Beru.

### **a. Types of Children**

1. Anak Beru Tua Kuta/Kesain: the merga who became anak beru at the time a village was founded (the first anak beru to establish a village/ kesain).
2. Anak Beru Tua/anak beru Tua Jabu: Children starting from grandfather onwards.
3. Anak Beru Singerana: who is appointed/determined/suspended from a Anak Beru Tua Jabu, and is hereditary.
4. Anak Beru Ceekoh Baka/ Anak Beru Dareh: The biological child of our sister (blood descendant).
5. Anak Beru Cekoh Baka Tutup: The anak beru cekoh baka who initiated the marriage.
6. Anak Beru Jabu/ Anak Beru Mas Pedemuken: A person who marries our daughter/child of Sukut. (because of marriage).
7. Anak beru Niampu / anak beru Niangkip: The person who marries the daughter of our sembuyak senina.
8. Anak Beru Singikuri: An indirect anak beru, but a relative of a anak beru. So he became a anak beru because he followed his brother who became a anak beru.

### **What is the relationship between Kalimbubu, Senina, and Anak Beru in Rakut Sitelu?**

Kalimbubu, senina and anak beru are very closely related. In the Karo community in North Sumatra, this kinship system is known as "Rakut Sitelu" or "Sangkep Sitelu" which means

"Three Ties" or "Three Complete". The system consists of three main components: kalimbubu, senina and anak beru. Kalimbubu is the male sibling of the mother or the giver of the virgin. Kalimbubu is (the party that gives blood) in the Batak toba ethnicity, kalimbubu is the same as bone. Kalimbubu is also called dibata ni idah (visible God). Kalimbubu is so honored in the traditional ceremonies of the Karo tribe. Kalimbubu is given special honor and given a "noble" place. The concept of kalimbubu as a visible God is due to their duties and responsibilities which are identified as advisors in Karo tribal worship, in other words, the kalimbubu group has the task of overseeing the entire event in Karo tribal worship. Guarding means ensuring to the sukut (host/party owner) that the event can run according to what has been agreed. Meanwhile, anak beru is a "servant" or party who does the work of the sukut (host) in traditional ceremonies or worship rituals. Anak beru is a group that is in the same clan as the party owner or a certain merga family (but a woman, if senina was laiki, anak beru is a woman). Anak beru has the task of organizing the deliberations/runggu, the obligation of anak beru to serve kalimbubu as a form of respect and reward for the marriage that unites them, especially in traditional rituals and daily needs. Anak beru organize the deliberations, they will bridge the ongoing discussion between kalimbubu, senina and anak beru. Everything that is discussed is then recorded by the anak beru so that they know what to do. Then they prepare the party food, which means preparing cooking utensils, buying cooking utensils, cooking and serving them to the audience.

In addition, they must deliver news/invitations when there will be a feast/congregation to the closest family, the invitation for the implementation of the feast/congregation must reach the relatives/brothers and must not be delivered because in general the Karo people are very sensitive if they are not invited directly. Another duty of anak beru is to organize and schedule family meetings, when there is a matter to be conveyed to the closest family they also have the responsibility to convey it and become a peacemaker for their kalimbubu. When there is a dispute between kalimbubu and other people, anak beru must be the peacemaker, because anak beru is the closest relative of the kalimbubu. The important role of anak beru in the structure of Karo ceremonies is because they are the success team during the ceremony. Karo people love their anak beru because they play an important role in Karo traditional ceremonies from the beginning to the end of the event. This group has a very good social kinship system that allows it to develop into a form of identity. They make the relationship between Karo people very close. Therefore, Karo people live very close together and take care of each other. Senina is generally associated with the group responsible for the entire sukut ceremony (the party owner). Senina means one opinion or one word, in other words, senina/sembuyak are the family's mouthpiece/speaker when the ceremony takes place. They take part in accompanying the family who will carry out the worship. Senina is taken from someone who is in the same clan as the tribe/owner of the party, even though they are not siblings. Basically, the senina/sembuyak is a group that has a close bond with the people who carry out the party. They are the ones who will be responsible for the customs carried out by their siblings. When viewed from their role, the party owner is obliged to maintain and maintain brotherhood towards this group because they are his representatives and are the closest family of the party owners.

Therefore, these three components will always be related to the lives of the Karo people. Whatever the Karo community's activities, be it misfortune, marriage or even disputes, these three components must be present as a kinship system that helps each other. This symbolizes that Karo people need each other, so it can be concluded that rakut sitelu is the root of interaction in the context of society. Other than that, they are also social actors that have been structured in the life of the Karo community, although not organizationally but culturally,

especially in the self-awareness of each individual Karo person. Therefore, Karo people in general are able to position themselves as to what role they play and what their duties are in a Karo tribal gathering. All the ties between these three social groups go on and on. So it is very necessary to have maturity when being among one of these social groups. From the theoretical explanation above, we can conclude that the three social groups in rakut sitelu cannot be seen as a cultural structure alone, but rather a social glue in the Karo tribe. We don't just respect the kalimbubu at worship, we don't just care about the senina when there are problems with the kalimbubu or others, we don't just love the anak beru at worship. All of this is based on the fact that these three cultural and social groups have the same basic needs that are experienced in the wider sphere of life in order for rakut sitelu to become a social force capable of maintaining the social system that exists between the three groups. In other words, these three groups are the guiding force for Karo people wherever they are.

### **What is the meaning of the terms "Mehamat Kalimbubu, Metenget Ersenina, Metami Man Anak Beru In Rakut Sitelu"?**

#### **Mehamat Man Kalimbubu**

The meaning of mehamat man kalimbubu in the Karo kinship system means respect for the kalimbubu. In the Karo tribe, kalimbubu is a very respected person. There are some who believe that kalimbubu is the same as God, which means that here kalimbubu is really respected and respected by his children. From the interview we conducted with the customary leader in Bulan Jahe Village, kalimbubu is the giver of women and is highly respected in the Karo kinship system. Karo people also believe that kalimbubu is the bearer of blessings so that kalimbubu is called Dibata Ni Idah (visible God). In addition, the kalimbubu does not look at the caste, meaning here that no matter how high the position of the child beru, he still respects his kalimbubu. This is evident from the excerpt of the conversation that has been carried out, namely: "kalimbubu is a king, if the child is a regent, and the kalimbubu is a pedicab driver, the child must still respect the kalimbubu. If we disrespect the kalimbubu then we are fighting God". Kalimbubu always gets top priority, the anak beru (the group receiving the wife) will not dare to precede the meal before the kalimbubu starts it, likewise when finished eating, the anak beru will not dare to close the plate before the kalimbubu finishes eating, if this is not obeyed it is considered impolite. In terms of advice, all advice given by kalimbubu in a family meeting is input that must be respected. The term mehamat man kalimbubu still applies in Karo society today. Although it is not as strong as it used to be, Karo people still respect their kalimbubu.

#### **Metenget Ersenina**

Metenget ersenina in Karo society emphasizes the importance of consistency in maintaining good relations, respect for traditional values, solidarity, mutual cooperation, social harmony, and kalimbubu has an important role in the kinship structure in Karo society. Metenget means "to endure" in this context it can show how to maintain the importance of maintaining a stable and consistent relationship with ersenina "close relatives". Ersenina can support and help in any situation and in any activity. In Karo customs, customary values and traditions are very important. Metenget ersenina means respecting and actively participating in traditional ceremonies, respecting the decisions and advice of the kalimbubu. Metenget ersenina play an important role during traditional Karo ceremonies such as weddings, deaths, they assist in preparing and carrying out the ceremony and ensure that all family members support each other and work for the ceremony to run smoothly and in accordance with tradition. Metenget ersenina also has the meaning of maintaining social harmony, which means that solving a problem must be peaceful, maintaining good communication between kalimbubu,

and ensuring that all families feel valued and supported. Metenget ersenina have loyalty to kalimbubu to always be present and help when kalimbubu need them. The metenget ersenina's care can be shown through their genuine concern and supportive attitude towards their kalimbubu.

### **Metami Man Anak Beru**

The word metami literally means "loving". It is usually applied to parents who treat their children very well or to someone who is giving to others. The word metami also relates to the act of giving: giving attention, giving affection (loving), pampering or giving something to others. Anak beru is the person or family who took the girl child. Therefore, the male family must metami to the family that took their daughter. If we look at the term "Dibata Niidah" conveyed by anak beru to their kalimbubu, it is because the kalimbubu is the source of life for them. It is the kalimbubu who gives women (who give birth to new generations), land (a place to live and work), crop seeds and poultry seeds (business capital), beds, cooking utensils, machetes, hoes (means to support a better life). Our ancestors gave the task of metami to anak beru probably due to several factors. One, because kalimbubu owns the land and wealth, while anak beru is a newcomer to kalimbubu's village. Secondly, so that the anak beru will love the woman they love. Third, so that the anak beru is strong to be the helper, defender, and support of his kalimbubu family. The metami attitude towards the beru child has been shown from an early age. For example, a woman who is 7 months pregnant will be prayed for by the kalimbubu with the event "Mbaba manuk mbur man anak si natang tuah (mbesur-mbesuri)". In this event, the kalimbubu will spoil his daughter and/or son-in-law with special food and even at mealtime, they come first and only after they are full do the kalimbubu and others eat. This will not happen on other occasions, because usually at other traditional ceremonies it is always the kalimbubu who is privileged. When the child born is a boy, the kalimbubu is the one who prepares the long cloth and the haircut to the river, all financed by the kalimbubu. Likewise, when the child grows up, his mama (his mother's brother) will spoil him with various gestures and gifts. It is not uncommon for a child to get more affection from his mama than from his own father. That is why, when a boy does not marry his mother's daughter, he will be brought by his parents to his mother's family with a full meal to apologize. During the ceremony, the boy will also plead with his mother to consider his future wife the same as his mother's daughter.

### **CONCLUSION**

In the Rakut Sitelu kinship system of the Karo community, the terms Mehamat Kalimbubu, Metenget Ersenina, and Metami Man Anak Beru contain philosophical meanings that reflect basic values in maintaining social harmony and family relationships. Mehamat Kalimbubu to teach the importance of respecting Kalimbubu (the giver of daughters) as a respected figure and considered the bearer of blessings in the family. Kalimbubu are treated with high respect regardless of social status, as they are believed to be a symbol of spiritual and social power in society. Metenget Ersenina to emphasize the importance of maintaining a close and harmonious relationship with Ersenina (close relatives). This includes mutual aid, solidarity and cooperation in traditional activities. Ersenina plays a role in supporting the family in various situations and maintaining harmony and resolving problems peacefully. Metami Man Anak Beru implies the love and attention given by Kalimbubu to Anak Beru (the recipient of the daughter). This attitude reflects Kalimbubu's responsibility in supporting Anak Beru's welfare, both materially and morally, as a form of reciprocal relationship that strengthens family ties. The three terms reflect the basic values in Rakut Sitelu that aim to create social balance, strengthen family ties, and maintain harmony in social life among the Karo ethnic group.

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