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## Cultural Threads: ‘Kalembo Ade’ and its Islamic Roots in Bima

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### ABSTRACT

The use of Kalembo Ade as a local identity leaves a concern for its speakers to interpret this expression in a literal sense. This research aims to explore a deep understanding of the local idiom Kalembo Ade both literally and in the context of its use and explore the values implied by the use of the idiom Kalembo Ade in the lives of its origin. By exploring its meaning, this article synthesizes further the significance of the use of the Kalembo Ade in the terms of spiritual values of Islamic roots in Bima. This research uses a qualitative approach based on cultural memory studies by conducting in-depth interviews, enumerating literal meanings through text analysis, and observing the use of Kalembo Ade. The data sources in this research are Bima language speakers (origin), consisting of those from the ethnic of Bima in West Nusa Tenggara, as well as several articles related to the term Kalembo Ade. The research results show that there are several contexts for the use of the term Kalembo Ade in everyday life, including as an expression of gratitude, apology, condolences, and accepting or rejecting a consensus. Some of these contexts were also found to be attached to spiritual values maintained by society regarding manners of behavior and speech (attitude) according to Islamic roots. This research also shows that there are some intentions to preserve local cultural values through the widespread use of Kalembo Ade by the local community.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

What's unique about the Bima language, despite being one of the regional languages spoken in three areas simultaneously—Bima Regency, Bima City, and Dompu Regency—is that it does not have an official expression that directly translates to "thank you." Like many other regional languages in Indonesia, Bima or Nuntu Mbojo has a rich and extensive vocabulary. For instance, the use of prefixes and suffixes goes beyond merely indicating place, direction, emphasis, questions, and so forth. The limitations or simplicity of this language's vocabulary should not be seen as a weakness; instead, it can be enriched through the preservation of values and broader interpretations by viewing it from more diverse perspectives through the preservation of oral traditions (Fahrurizki, 2019).

Literature and oral traditions, according to direct observation, are also one of the important cultural forms that need to be studied and preserved. This is the lifeblood of civilization and the continuity of strengthening the local identity of the Bima community, reflecting on several cultures that have sunk following the burial of civilization due to the eruption of Tambora, namely Sanggar, Pekat, and Tambora itself. For example, the culture and language of Kore, which was the language of the people in the Sanggar Kingdom, now one of the districts in Bima Regency, are threatened with extinction as the number of native speakers diminishes. The only way to maintain and inform the existence of this culture in the broader cultural discourse is through folklore and tales, such as the story of Daeng La Minga, and others (Aksa, 2022).

This writing will not only view Kalembo Ade textually but also serve as a medium for exploring the flow of local culture in Bima influenced by the presence of Islam in its society. This exploration relates to the context of oral traditions as one of the mediums for recording history and witnessing the continuity of the local community's culture. Through literature review and interviews with several speakers of the Bima language or Nuntu Mbojo, to strengthen my experience as a writer who is also a speaker of the language. This aims to answer questions about how Kalembo Ade, with its textual meaning, can blend into various contexts, linked to the advent of Islam and the process of Islamization in Bima, and how the articulation of Kalembo Ade as a form of oral literature becomes a reflection of the values and life philosophy of the local community as expressed in Islamic teachings and the customary laws of Bima.

## **2. METHODS**

This study employs a qualitative approach based on cultural memory studies. Data collection techniques include conducting in-depth interviews, analyzing the literal meaning through text analysis, and observing the usage of the term "Kalembo Ade". The data sources for this research consist of Bima language speakers, primarily from the Bima ethnic community in the West Nusa Tenggara region, as well as several relevant articles discussing the term "Kalembo Ade".

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Islam and Its Cultural Roots in Bima

The process of Islam entry and Islamization in Bima are two different things, in this case they will be reviewed separately. As some findings have not been able to practically explain the exact time of the arrival of Islam in Bima, the review will be separated from the discussion on the process of integration of Islamic culture into local culture through customs and traditions and vice versa. The discussion about the beginning of the entry of Islam found in several references is mostly discussed abstractly, for example, (Haris, 2012) found in his report that there are two opinions about the beginning of the entry of Islam in Bima. The first is as in the Chronicle of Bima or also known as *Bo'* (catatan or record) of the Kingdom of Bima noted that during the time of the 36th king of Bima, Sariese, there was the first contact with Europeans, while the 37th king of Bima, Sawo, was the last king who had not embraced Islam. Zollinger's opinion, later quoted by Braam Morris, states that Islam first came to Bima between 1450-1540, the first sultan of Bima to embrace Islam was Abdul Galir (Abdul Kahir) and the new religion was brought by muballig from Makassar.

According to the *Bo' Sangaji Kai* records, as cited in one of the chapters of the book *Aksara Bima: Peradaban Lokal yang Sempat Hilang* (Siti Maryam R. Salahuddin, 2021), significant events surrounding the arrival of Islamic preachers in Bima were documented, dating back to 1018 Hijri/1609 AD.

*"Hijratun Nabi SAW seribu sepuluh delapan tahun ketika itulah masuk Islam di Tanah Bima oleh Datuk di Banda dan Datuk di Tiro tatkala zamannya Sultan Abdul Kahir"*

Which means "In the year 1018 Hijri since the Prophet's migration, Islam entered the land of Bima, brought by Datuk from Banda and Datuk from Tiro during the reign of Sultan Abdul Kahir." This record provides a crucial reference point for the initial arrival of Islam in Bima, especially when correlated with historical data on the introduction of Islam in Makassar. The histories of these two kingdoms are often intertwined, as documented in various sources. Additionally, this record serves as a guideline for tracing the origins of the dialectical relationship between the Bima Customary Law (Hukum Adat Tanah Bima) or HATB and Islamic legal perspectives, as explored in the manuscript *Naskah Hukum Adat Bima dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam* (Siti Maryam R. Salahuddin, 2017).

Furthermore, in the same book, Siti Maryam—who is a descendant of the Bima Sultanate and a key figure in the preservation of Bima's manuscripts, history, and local culture—explains various contexts related to the relationship between the two legal systems. She notes that in 1611, the HATB became effectively implemented, permeating every aspect of society. Sultan Abdul Kahir mandated that the entire government and the people adhere strictly to the true principles of Islamic law. An important finding is that Islamic teachings were able to coexist seamlessly with the pre-existing way of life, dating back to the pre-Islamic era of the king (Henri Chambert-Loir, 2012).

Moreover, this strength was further underscored by the "Lange Politiek Contract," a political agreement between the Dutch and the Kingdom of Bima, which affirmed the non-interference of Dutch law in Bima's court system. Bima maintained its own customary court (Landraad) grounded in Islamic law. This illustrates how the integration of customary law with

Islamic values continued to evolve, adapting to changes within the kingdom's structure, the sultanate, and even into the post-independence era, (Abdullah, 2015).

Further exploring the integration process of traditional values with Islamic principles, as cited from (Anwar Hasnun, 2020) in the book *Mengenal Orang Bima dan Kebudayaannya: Lukisan Singkat Terhadap Kepribadian dan Kepemimpinan Nggusu Upa, Nggusu Ini, Nggusu Waru, Nilai Luhur Maja Labo Dahu*, dan *Filsafat Hidup*, which briefly discusses the pre-Islamic beliefs held by the Bima people and other demographic aspects. This examination reveals how the discourse on *Ti Pehe* or Pamali (taboos) and prohibitions, as well as myths rich with cultural significance, can be linked to Islamic teachings. For example, a practical instance of this is the pamali that states "*Ti Pehe Wi'i Ono Oha Di Pingga*," which means it is forbidden to leave rice leftovers or not finish food. This relates to the value of avoiding wastefulness. Another example is the belief among some people that it is not permissible to eat fish and eggs, or chicken and fish, on the same plate, which relates to the value of moderation in eating to avoid greed. These examples support the findings by Tawalinuddin Haris on the arrival of Islam in Bima, reinforcing it through the discussion on strengthening Islamic values as expressed in the oath "*Mori ra made kai hukum Islam*" during the inauguration of the first sultan, Abdul Kahir I, on July 5, 1620. Additionally, the book reviews the *Rawi Nae Tolu Kali Samba'a; Upacara Ua Pua, Aruraja Toi, and Aruraja Nae*, which are the three major celebrations in Bima: the Maulid Nabi (Prophet's birthday), Idul Fitri, and Idul Adha (Malingi, 2016).

### 3.2 The Trajectory of Local and Localism As The Way of Life

There are few forms of Bima's cultural arts that have been preserved and maintained. Learning from neighboring peninsular cultures, Bima faces significant challenges in safeguarding its heritage. For example, the near extinction of the Kore language, once spoken in one of Bima's districts, highlights this issue. This area, historically a kingdom alongside Tambora, Pekat, and Dompu, has seen the near disappearance of both its language and culture, largely due to the catastrophic eruption of Mount Tambora in 1815, which decimated two-thirds of the surrounding civilization. The dwindling number of native speakers and the lack of local cultural and linguistic integration in education are also contributing factors to this decline, (Tawalinuddin Haris, Susanto Zuhdi, 1997).

The challenges facing the Bima language and culture are similarly significant. Although the Bima language is widely spoken and has a large number of users, preserving the language is crucial for maintaining the cultural values embedded within it. Both tangible and intangible aspects of Bima's cultural heritage face ongoing challenges, which are intertwined and affect various dimensions of preservation.

If examined closely, the local culture and traditions of Bima are deeply rooted in oral traditions that have evolved since the advent of Islam and have continued to adapt to cultural developments. The oral traditions of the Bima people can be seen as the lifeblood of their cultural and traditional heritage. For instance, *Nggahi Co'i* in marriage ceremonies, or *Kapatu, Patu Cambe*, and *Patu Bale* in the art of Biola Gambo music, exemplify this. The ongoing evolution of these traditions, reflecting the influence of Islam in Bima, is also evidenced by the *Nggahi Tua* in the *U'a Pua* ceremony, a part of the Maulid Nabi celebration, and the Islamic values found in the Patu Dali and other tales (Nurnazmi & Maksum, 2023).

Oral traditions are the lifeblood of culture, not only being an integral part of the evolving traditions but also representing the daily transactional language of the community, inspiring the flow of life values within society (Oktaviany et al., 2022). The role of oral traditions in reflecting the values and local identity of Bima has been documented by several Bima cultural researchers (such as some of the books cited in this paper). This is further supported by direct interviews with local community figures. For instance, during my observations of the use of Kalembo Ade and snowballing questions about the role of literature and oral traditions in regulating local morals, the majority of respondents emphasized the need to preserve and explore forms such as *Mpama*, *Kapatu*, and *Rawa Mbojo*. This sentiment is echoed by messages from fellow researchers through a chain conversation, with some expressing a strong interest in integrating the study of *Kapatu*, *Mpama*, and other oral literature into the local curriculum in formal education in Bima.

These findings have driven me to continue exploring and piecing together the interconnected aspects of how oral traditions must be preserved. They are not only vital for safeguarding existing traditions and culture but also for maintaining the entire spectrum of life values. The locality and uniqueness of Bima are rich with philosophy, poetic expression, and romanticized sayings woven into daily language. This becomes an identity, essence, and a culture that can be upheld and cherished anywhere and at any time.

### 3.3 Understanding The Context of ‘Kalembo Ade’

To understand the purpose of using the phrase ‘Kalembo Ade’ in daily life, it is essential to consider the contexts that influence its usage. Simply put, the phrase ‘Kalembo Ade’ comprises two root words: ‘Lembo’, meaning large or broad, and ‘Ade’, meaning heart. The prefix Ka at the beginning adds emphasis to the act of making ‘Lembo’ and ‘Ade’ into a unified phrase. The role of Ka here can be easily understood as similar to the function of Me or Kan in Indonesian, which transforms ‘Kalembo Ade’ from an adjective (big heart) into a verb in ‘Kalembo Ade’ (having a big heart/enlarging the heart). This simplicity allows the phrase to function fluidly in various contexts. Although the Bima language lacks an official word or phrase for "thank you" or "you're welcome," Kalembo Ade can convey both meanings simultaneously, (Mbojoklopedia, 2024).

The phrase ‘Kalembo Ade’ also serves various functions depending on the situation. In Bima, people often use Kalembo Ade to express regret when making mistakes. For example, "*Kalembo Ade Ro Waura Kaiha Ba Nahu Marumu*" translates to "Sorry for disturbing your sleep." This phrase can also be used to politely ask for permission, offering a more respectful tone compared to directly asking a question (Ismail, et. al, 2022).

Beyond expressions of thanks, responses, and apologies, Kalembo Ade also functions as an expression of condolences, reflecting regret over someone's loss and showing care for others. For instance, the phrase "*Kalembo Ade, Nawa Ra Woro Ruma Mpa di Bade, Aina Ipi Kalao Kaiba Ade*," which translates to "Be patient. Only Allah knows about life and existence after death; don't linger too long in sadness," conveys sympathy and encourages resilience. This not only shows concern for the recipient's feelings of loss but also legitimizes the integration of Islamic values into the evolving linguistic and cultural landscape of Bima. The term Woro is used in Bima to define one of the pre-Islamic beliefs, meaning "Spirit" or "Ancestor," which has now been incorporated alongside Islamic values (Arafiq, 2020).

In field observations of the use of 'Kalembo Ade', another function was identified: it serves as an expression of acceptance or rejection. This function is closely related to its role in apologizing, where it can imply a rejection when followed by an opposing statement, similar to the previous context of requesting permission. For example, "*Kalembo Ade, Wunga Wara Dirawiku, Watipu Loaku Bantu Ke,*" translates to "Sorry, I'm currently working on something and cannot assist." Here, although *Kalembo Ade* carries a similar meaning to "sorry," it provides a more subtle way of declining. Similarly, in "*Kalembo Ade re, Sandede Mpa,*" meaning "Sorry, that's all," it expresses approval while politely emphasizing the inability to fully meet the other person's expectations.

Thus, *Kalembo Ade* is also frequently used in farewell situations. Whether parting after a long or brief encounter, 'Kalembo Ade' functions as a farewell expression, similar to saying goodbye. Given these various functions, it becomes evident that 'Kalembo Ade' cannot be simply interpreted as a single phrase with one meaning derived from its root words. Instead, its versatility in different contexts suggests it has a magical quality and significant importance within the Bima lexicon. Previous research has further reinforced 'Kalembo Ade' as a unique expression, representing the identity of Bima's diaspora across various regions in Indonesia and beyond. The fundamental functions of 'Kalembo Ade' as a form of oral literature, along with supporting references, will be synthesized into a discussion to explore its usage and its role as a philosophical concept in life.

### 3.4 Oral Traditions and 'Kalembo Ade' As The Philosophy of Life

Among the various functions of literature and oral traditions in a culture, as outlined in the book *Mengenal Sastra Lisan Daerah Bima* (Anwar Hasnun, 2018), one of the key aspects is the educational role of Bima's oral literature. This includes pieces of poetry, proverbs, and expressions such as *Mpama Kade'e*, *Nggahi Bale*, and *Nggahi Tua*, which serve as linguistic tools in daily interactions and are linked to specific situations and contexts as forms of learning. Many sayings offer life lessons, such as *Hi'i Sanggi'i Peke Satako*, which means "a piece of meat and a bone," symbolizing the advice to live harmoniously (whether in partnerships, families, or kinship), with unity and mutual love. This is also related to the concept of kinship, reflecting the philosophy of *Weha Rima*, which emphasizes mutual assistance, cooperation, and collective effort in working together.

This is closely related to the context of *Kalembo Ade* as an expression of patience. In both small and large contexts of living together, *Kalembo Ade* is essential for upholding the philosophies of *Hi'i Sanggi'i Peke Satako* and *Weha Rima*, as well as concepts like *Kasama Weki* and others. The core challenge here is to be patient and resilient while managing one's ego in various situations (Bulan, 2011).

The second function is oral literature as a tool for disseminating Islam. This relates to how poems and advice in Bima language convey religious values, including commands, prohibitions, and practices of religious rites. As cited by (Anwar Hasnun, 2018), one example of advice in the form of *Kapatu* is:

*Sarumbu Mamaru Kai Dawara Mori*  
*Sarumbu Dihanta Ndeu Mada Tikandoa*  
*Mango Woo Malai Nono Wati Loa*

Which translates to: "A lifeless body sleeping, a body bathed with eyes closed, thirst and hunger, even drinking is impossible." This reminds us of human helplessness after the soul has departed from the body, where everything left behind becomes meaningless. It signifies that the most valuable aspect of our time is what we have accomplished and left behind during our lifetime. This also reinforces the role of *Kalembo Ade* as a means to achieve such values.

Another function of Bima's oral literature is its social role. This function reinforces the previous two by regulating the social life of the Bima community. Many proverbs and philosophies within *Nggahi Bale*, *Nggahi Tua*, *Nggahi Kalondo*, and others play a crucial role in preserving and even facilitating the continuation of the existing culture. For instance, the role of *Nggahi Kalondo* in wedding ceremonies is inseparable from the *Khitbah* process before the *Akad* (marriage contract) is performed. A practical example is the expression "*Bela Dimabale, Labo Di Malabu*," which literally translates to "a friend will throw, a companion will anchor." In terms of values, it reflects how we should choose our friends, as in Islam, this is a serious matter: "You are your friend's religion, so your religion is your friend's religion." All these elements align with the philosophy of *Kalembo Ade*, which serves as a guideline for maintaining social life.

Another crucial function deeply embedded in community life is the preservation of Bima's oral traditions through entertainment. In Bima, one such form of entertainment that is still enjoyed is *Kapatu Mbojo* within the *Rawa Biola Gambo* music. This musical tradition is not only a source of amusement but also closely linked to other functions, as the lyrics of *Rawa Mbojo* (Bima songs) often convey advice, social narratives, and humorous anecdotes, sometimes touching on themes of sexuality, as seen in *Kapatu Cambe*.

Equally important is how Bima's oral literature and traditions serve as a source of historical knowledge and cultural development. Many forms of *Kapatu* and *Mpama*, including *Mpama Kade'e* and *Mpama Pehe*, function as both entertainment and cultural preservation mediums, often embedding historical narratives within their philosophical and poetic expressions. As noted by Anwar Hasnun (2018), numerous historical facts are preserved in Bima's oral literature, including *Kapatu*, *Kande*, *Mpama Kade'e*, *Mpama Pehe*, *Rawa Mbojo*, and other forms of oral traditions. There is a pressing need for a long-term mission to further explore Bima's oral traditions and work on preserving these local discoveries within both formal educational settings and domestic realms.

To clarify the role of these functions, it is important to highlight that the implementation of *Kalembo Ade* as a life value practiced by the Bima community is also supported by various findings. For instance, Sahrain and Irawan in their linguistic research on the function of *Kalembo Ade* as a speech act found that its use in daily life can serve as a medium for conflict resolution (Sahrain & Irawan, 2019). This is evident in how *Kalembo Ade* functions in representing politeness and courteous expressions, reflecting a consensus to avoid symbolic violence in communication. This has been widely observed in everyday use among the community and has proven effective in reducing conflicts.

Since the arrival of Islam in Bima, the local community's fervor for the religion has been so intense that Islam has become a central aspect of life. According to Muhammad Mutawali (2019), Islamic law and local customs are akin to "*nawa labo sarumbu*" (soul and body) for the Bima people, mutually accommodating each other to create a complementary way of life. Similarly, the implementation of spiritual values through the concept of "*Kalembo Ade*" in Bima's

religious life not only provides a pragmatic understanding of 'Kalembo Ade' but also integrates its Islamic values into its practice.

The term "Kalembo Ade" also embodies the values of patience, refraining from holding grudges, and forgiving others' wrongdoings or mistakes. As illustrated in QS. Āli 'Imrān (3): 137, which states: "(They are) those who spend in ease and hardship, who restrain their anger, and who pardon the faults of others. Allah loves those who do good." This verse signifies that Allah will bless His mercy upon those who forgive others' mistakes and refrain from retaliating against wrongdoing. Additionally, the use of "Kalembo Ade" serves as a medium for strengthening social bonds or in Islamic term known as "silahurrahm", as outlined in QS. Al-Mā'idah (5): 54, which says: "Those who maintain what Allah has commanded to be maintained (such as family ties), fear their Lord, and fear a bad reckoning." This verse emphasizes the importance of maintaining social ties with others and with God by adhering to His commands, avoiding His prohibitions, and being mindful of the consequences of one's actions on the Day of Judgment.

These explanations indicates that the meaning of Kalembo Ade is holistic and universal, specifically serving as a life philosophy grounded in Islamic teachings and values. It reflects an ongoing integration within daily cultural practices, where values—though potentially conflicting—can also interrelate and complement each other.

## CONCLUSION

The term Kalembo Ade is used as a cultural expression in Bima society. The findings show that Kalembo Ade is used in various social contexts, such as expressions of gratitude, apologies, condolences, and in the process of accepting or rejecting an agreement. In addition, the meaning of this expression is closely related to spiritual values rooted in Islamic teachings, reflecting the manners and ethical behavior of the Bima people. The research also revealed the local community's efforts to maintain and preserve local culture through the use of Kalembo Ade. In addition, the study of local idioms from the perspective of culture and spirituality provides a deeper insight into the relationship between language, culture and religion in Bima society. Thus, understanding the role of language as a symbol of local and spiritual identity, as well as providing references for further research in the fields of language, cultural anthropology, and religious studies.

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