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Lemambang of the Sandau Ari

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ABSTRACT

Sandau Ari is one of the rituals performed by the Iban. *Sandau Ari* plays a significant role in the social, economic, believes and politics of the Iban people. *Sandau Ari* is unique because it can only hold by someone who had received guidance's from *Petara* or spirit via the dreams. The *Sandau Ari* is a request for a blessing ritual before embarking on a journey or as blessings for career. The symbolic of *Sandau Ari* ritual is a sign of appeasement to the *Petara* or gods. *Lemambang* plays an important role in *Sandau Ari* on guiding the longhouse community. Although, the role of *Lemambang* has diminishing after the arrival of Christianity, but it still maintains the core believes in Iban. Thus, the important of the need to study and understand the rituals itself. Nonetheless, these rituals will remain as the sacred discourse for the Iban in the future.

Keywords: Religion, *Lemambang*, rituals

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INTRODUCTION

Sandau Ari

Sandau Ari is one of the rituals in the Iban belief system. It considered as a small celebration or 'Gawai Mit' compare to the 'Gawai Dayak'. The *Gawai Dayak* is a celebration of a good harvest, meanwhile *Sandau Ari* serves as a ritual. In the past, the *Sandau Ari* ritual only held when someone receive a sign through dreams. The guidance from *Lemambang* or shamans is vital to ensure the right interpretation for the one that will lead the head-hunting activity.

The *Sandau Ari* ritual takes a half day to prepare and will completed by the afternoon. The ritual will need sacrificial animal such as a pig. The use of pigs as sacrificial animals in rituals and rites is important in any *Gawai* (Figure 1). The pig accepted by the Iban as an essential offering that represents their belief, shared experience and ideas. Besides that, there is also an altar with religious offering placed on saucers or *Piring*. The preparation of the *Sandau Ari* is conducted by the *Lemambang* as they are the only ones who have the abilities and knowledge to conduct the ritual. The purpose of the offering used to communicate with the ancestor spirit and gods or *Petara*. According to Alcorta and Sosis (2005), the Iban believe that their dead ancestors are incorporeal gods spirits capable of being in all places at all times, demand sacrificial offerings and can visit the living. The Iban believe that worldly prosperity is the result of a number of beneficent spirits who watch over their interests and whose favour can be gained through certain rites and offerings (Nyual and Dunn, 1906). Only with the help of the