

The Symbolic Meaning of the Nuei Rasan Tradition among the Kaur Community in Bengkulu Province

Fadel Ilham Susanto ^{a,1,*}, Hertika Sari ^{b,2}, Rossi Delta Fitranah ^{c,3}

^{abc}Universitas Islam Negeri Fatmawati Sukarno, Bengkulu, Indonesia

¹Fadelilham13@gmail.com; ²hetikasarihetika@gmail.com; ³rossi@gmail.uinfasbengkulu.ac.id

* Fadel Ilham Susanto; Fadelilham13@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Marriage in traditional societies is not merely a biological bond and formal legal contract, but a life cycle rich in socio-cultural values and ancestral traditions. This study aims to deeply examine the Nuei Rasan tradition, which lives and is preserved within the Padang Guci community in Selika Village, Kaur Regency, Bengkulu Province. The focus of the study is directed at four main aspects: the procession of execution, functions and purposes, educational values (local wisdom), and religious values contained within it. This research utilizes a qualitative descriptive approach with an ethnographic method. Data were gathered through observation techniques, in-depth interviews with customary leaders and tradition practitioners, and text documentation. The results indicate that the Nuei Rasan tradition is a form of matchmaking deliberation involving customary mediators as well as specific instruments such as down payments and palai money, which distinguishes it from the customs of other tribes. Customary equipment such as tongking, betel leaf, lime, areca nut, and leman are not merely visual complements, but symbols of honor, sincerity, etiquette, and customary legality. Socially, this tradition constructs values of politeness and social order for the younger generation. Theologically, this tradition manifests gratitude to Allah SWT and strengthens harmonious community friendship bonds.

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Introduction

Marriage traditions in various societies are often characterized by ceremonial stages that possess symbolic and philosophical meanings. Traditional ceremonies are generally carried out through several processes that involve families and community members. Every stage of the marriage process reflects cultural values that are preserved and passed down across generations. Marriage rituals often function as media for expressing social relationships, cultural identity, and collective values. Symbolic actions within marriage ceremonies are considered important because they convey messages regarding social responsibilities and cultural expectations. Traditional marriage practices also serve as

mechanisms for maintaining social harmony within communities. The existence of symbolic elements in marriage traditions creates opportunities for deeper cultural analysis (Albayina, A., 2021).

Communities in Indonesia demonstrate rich cultural diversity in the implementation of marriage traditions. Different ethnic groups maintain unique customs and ceremonial practices according to their local cultural heritage. Marriage traditions among Indonesian communities frequently represent the integration of social, cultural, and customary values. Traditional ceremonies in Indonesian societies often involve symbolic objects, verbal expressions, and ritual practices that contain specific meanings. These cultural elements function as representations of beliefs and social norms within communities. Cultural practices associated with marriage continue to survive despite changes caused by modernization and globalization. Traditional marriage practices therefore remain important subjects for cultural and anthropological studies.

Communities in Sumatra possess diverse traditional marriage systems that have developed according to local cultural backgrounds. Marriage traditions among Malay communities and neighboring ethnic groups demonstrate various ceremonial characteristics that reflect cultural identity. Traditional ceremonies in these communities involve a series of activities that emphasize family relationships and social obligations. Marriage customs within Sumatran communities frequently include deliberation processes and formal family interactions before the marriage contract is conducted. Traditional practices within these communities also contain philosophical values related to respect, social ethics, and family harmony. Cultural values embedded within marriage traditions continue to be preserved by local communities. The continuity of these traditions demonstrates the significance of cultural heritage in social life (Astuti, S. Y., 2023).

Kaur Regency in Bengkulu Province possesses various cultural traditions that remain closely connected to community life. Local communities continue to preserve customs that regulate social relationships and traditional ceremonies. Marriage traditions among the Kaur community represent one aspect of cultural life that reflects local values and beliefs. Traditional wedding ceremonies within Kaur communities include several stages that are conducted according to customary regulations. Each stage of the marriage process possesses specific meanings related to social and family values. Traditional practices among Kaur communities continue to exist despite the influence of social and cultural transformation. Cultural preservation within these communities indicates strong collective awareness toward maintaining local identity (Changga, S. 2018).

The Padang Guci community in Selika Village continues to preserve one traditional practice known as the Nuei Rasan tradition. Nuei Rasan constitutes an important stage within the traditional marriage process among the Kaur community. The tradition involves the participation of family representatives in a formal process of communication and deliberation. The prospective groom's family appoints individuals who act as representatives during the traditional meeting with the bride's family. This process functions as a medium for establishing social relationships between two families before marriage takes place. Community members consider this tradition important because it reflects social ethics and cultural values. Nuei Rasan therefore represents a significant cultural practice within the marriage tradition of the Kaur community.

Nuei Rasan contains symbolic elements that are expressed through verbal communication, social interaction, and ceremonial procedures. Symbolic practices within traditional ceremonies generally function as representations of particular meanings and values. Symbols often serve as communication instruments that convey cultural messages

to community members. Symbolic elements within traditions also reflect social expectations and collective understandings within communities. Community interpretations of symbolic practices may vary according to cultural contexts and social experiences. Cultural symbols therefore require deeper interpretation in order to understand their meanings comprehensively. Symbolic analysis provides an important approach for understanding the values embedded within traditions (Efendi, Z, 2020).

Studies concerning traditional marriage practices have been conducted from various perspectives including social, anthropological, and cultural approaches. Existing studies often focus on the implementation process, social functions, and cultural values of traditional ceremonies. Research regarding symbolic meanings within local traditions remains relatively limited in certain cultural contexts. Studies specifically examining the symbolic dimensions of the Nuei Rasan tradition among the Kaur community are still rarely found. Limited scientific documentation concerning this tradition creates a gap in cultural understanding and academic discussion. Research on symbolic meanings is necessary to strengthen the preservation of local cultural knowledge (Fauzi, A., & Rahman, A.,2025). Further studies therefore remain important for developing broader cultural understanding.

This study aims to analyze the symbolic meaning of the Nuei Rasan tradition among the Kaur community in Bengkulu Province. The study seeks to identify symbolic elements contained within the traditional process and examine their cultural meanings within community life. The analysis focuses on understanding the values represented through traditional practices and social interactions (Octaviani, 2022).. Cultural meanings embedded in traditions are expected to reveal broader perspectives regarding community identity and social relationships. Findings from this study are expected to contribute to cultural studies and symbolic anthropology. The study is also expected to provide scientific documentation regarding local traditions within the Kaur community. Research on the Nuei Rasan tradition may strengthen efforts toward preserving cultural heritage and local wisdom.

Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with ethnographic methods, focusing on exploring the meaning, behavioral patterns, and social construction of a local cultural phenomenon. The research was conducted in Selika Village, Padang Guci District, Kaur Regency, Bengkulu Province. The location was selected based on the consideration that the Selika Village community still maintains the authenticity and continuity of the Nuei Rasan tradition in their wedding cycle. Informants in this study were selected using a purposive sampling technique, with key informants being the Selika Village Traditional Leader (Mr. Jailani), community leaders, and actors who had been directly involved in the Nuei Rasan procession. Data were collected through three main techniques: in-depth interviews to explore philosophical and historical values; participant observation to directly observe the procession and the traditional equipment used; and documentary study of local customary texts and records. Data analysis was conducted interactively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation (data display in narrative and tabular form), and conclusion drawing or verification.

Results and Discussion

1. The Implementation Process of the Nuei Rasan Tradition in the Kaur Community

The Nuei Rasan tradition represents an important stage in the traditional marriage process among the Kaur community in Bengkulu Province. The tradition is carried out before the formal marriage agreement and serves as an initial process of communication between two families. Community members regard this tradition as an essential cultural mechanism that regulates social relationships before marriage takes place. The implementation of Nuei Rasan reflects the collective values maintained within the local community. Traditional practices associated with marriage continue to be preserved because they are considered part of cultural identity. The continuation of this tradition demonstrates the commitment of the community toward preserving inherited customs. The implementation process of Nuei Rasan therefore becomes an important aspect of social and cultural life among the Kaur community (Pratama, I., & Hidayati, 2025)..

The implementation of Nuei Rasan involves several family members and community representatives who participate in the traditional process. Family elders commonly occupy important roles during the implementation of the tradition. Traditional figures and respected community members may also participate in the process when necessary. Community members believe that the involvement of elders contributes to maintaining social harmony and cultural values. The presence of family representatives reflects the importance of kinship relationships in traditional marriage practices. Participation from multiple individuals also strengthens collective responsibility within the process. The involvement of these actors demonstrates the social character of the Nuei Rasan tradition.

The initial stage of the Nuei Rasan tradition begins with preparation conducted by the prospective groom's family. Family members usually discuss the purpose and readiness of the traditional visit before the process takes place. Preparatory activities include determining the individuals who will represent the family during the meeting. Family discussions are considered necessary because decisions are commonly made collectively. Community members perceive collective agreement as an important element within traditional practices. Preparatory activities also reflect the values of cooperation and family unity. The preparation stage therefore functions as an important foundation before the implementation process begins (Prayoga, D., & Mujiburahman, 2023)..

The next stage involves the visit of the prospective groom's family to the residence of the prospective bride's family. Family representatives conduct the visit according to local customary practices that have been passed down through generations. Community members consider this meeting an important event because it marks the beginning of formal communication between two families. The meeting generally occurs within a respectful and structured social atmosphere. Family representatives follow cultural norms that regulate attitudes and communication during the interaction. Social etiquette occupies an important role during this stage of the process. The visitation stage therefore functions as a medium for establishing formal social relationships (H, D. M, 2021)..

Communication during the Nuei Rasan process occurs through verbal interaction and formal conversation among family representatives. Community members employ polite expressions and culturally appropriate language during discussions. Respectful communication reflects social values that emphasize courtesy and harmony. Verbal expressions used during the process frequently contain symbolic messages and cultural meanings. Communication practices within traditional ceremonies function as mechanisms for reducing misunderstandings between families. Community members believe that respectful communication contributes to successful social interactions.

Communication therefore becomes an essential component within the implementation of the tradition (Julizun Anwar, I., & Mugiyono, 2020).

The implementation process also includes a deliberation stage that focuses on discussing matters related to marriage arrangements. Family representatives exchange ideas and expectations regarding the future marriage process. Discussions may involve matters associated with social responsibilities and customary considerations. Community members view deliberation as an important mechanism for reaching mutual understanding. Collective discussion reflects the cultural value of consensus that continues to exist within traditional communities. Deliberation activities strengthen cooperation and social relationships among participants. The deliberation stage therefore becomes an important element within the implementation process.

Social interaction during Nuei Rasan demonstrates the significance of family relationships within Kaur society. Family members interact not only as individuals but also as representatives of broader kinship networks. Community members believe that strong relationships between families contribute to harmonious marriage arrangements. Traditional practices therefore function as mechanisms for strengthening social bonds among participants. Social relationships established during traditional ceremonies may continue beyond the marriage process itself. Interaction within the Nuei Rasan tradition also reflects the communal character of local society. Social interaction therefore constitutes an important dimension within the implementation process .

The implementation of Nuei Rasan also reflects the preservation of cultural values inherited from previous generations. Community members continue practicing this tradition because it represents an important component of local identity. Cultural values embedded within the tradition include respect, cooperation, responsibility, and social ethics. Community members perceive these values as important principles for maintaining harmonious relationships. Traditional practices also function as educational mechanisms for younger generations regarding cultural norms. Cultural transmission occurs through continuous participation in traditional activities. The implementation process therefore contributes to maintaining cultural continuity within the community (Puspita, T. J, 2021). .

The implementation process of the Nuei Rasan tradition demonstrates that marriage practices among the Kaur community involve more than ceremonial activities. Traditional processes represent social mechanisms that strengthen relationships between families and communities. Community members continue preserving these practices because they contain important cultural meanings and values. Traditional implementation also reflects collective awareness regarding cultural preservation. Social interactions occurring within the tradition contribute to maintaining social harmony within the community. Traditional ceremonies therefore function as important cultural institutions within community life. The implementation process of Nuei Rasan ultimately represents an expression of local wisdom that remains relevant within contemporary society.

2. Symbolic Meanings Embedded in the Nuei Rasan Tradition

The Nuei Rasan tradition contains various symbolic meanings that are closely related to the cultural values of the Kaur community. Symbolic meanings within traditional practices represent collective understandings that have developed through long historical processes. Community members perceive symbols as important elements that communicate social and cultural messages. Symbolic meanings within marriage traditions often appear through verbal expressions, social interactions, and ceremonial procedures. Traditional communities generally preserve symbolic elements because they reflect

shared values and beliefs. Cultural symbols also function as mechanisms for maintaining social order and collective identity. The symbolic meanings embedded in the Nuei Rasan tradition therefore become an important aspect of cultural interpretation (Sutriani, E., & Rahman, A, 2021)..

Respect represents one of the fundamental symbolic meanings contained within the implementation of the Nuei Rasan tradition. The process of visiting the bride's family symbolizes appreciation toward family dignity and social status. Community members consider formal visitation as an expression of honor toward the family receiving the proposal. Traditional procedures followed during the process demonstrate social manners that are valued within the community. Respectful attitudes shown during communication also indicate acknowledgment of family authority and social roles. Symbolic expressions of respect function as important mechanisms for maintaining harmonious relationships. The symbolism of respect therefore becomes an important value represented in the tradition (Utomo, B., Sarwono, S., & Purwadi, A, 2019).

Kinship relationships also emerge as an important symbolic meaning within the Nuei Rasan tradition. Marriage within traditional communities is frequently understood as a union between two families rather than only two individuals. The participation of family representatives reflects the collective character of social relationships in the community. Family involvement symbolizes the importance of maintaining interconnected social networks. Traditional interactions conducted during the process strengthen emotional and social ties among family members. Community members perceive kinship as an important foundation for social stability and family continuity. The symbolic meaning of kinship therefore occupies an important place within the implementation of Nuei Rasan.

Deliberation constitutes another symbolic meaning represented through the Nuei Rasan tradition. Discussions conducted between family representatives symbolize collective decision-making and mutual understanding. Community members perceive deliberation as an important value for resolving social matters peacefully. Traditional discussions indicate that decisions should be achieved through communication and agreement among participants. Deliberative practices also symbolize equality and respect toward different opinions. The process reflects the social value of collective participation within community life. Deliberation therefore functions as an important symbolic element within the tradition.

Responsibility appears as another symbolic meaning reflected in the implementation of Nuei Rasan. Family representatives involved in the process symbolize social obligations toward the future marriage relationship. Community members understand marriage not only as a personal commitment but also as a collective responsibility involving families. Participation within traditional procedures demonstrates awareness regarding social duties and cultural expectations. Symbolic expressions of responsibility encourage individuals to recognize their roles within broader social structures. Traditional practices therefore communicate values related to accountability and commitment. Responsibility becomes an important symbolic meaning contained within the Nuei Rasan tradition (Wijaya, H., & Kusuma, A, 2025)..

Unity also represents a significant symbolic meaning expressed through traditional interactions. The meeting between two families symbolizes efforts to establish social harmony and shared understanding. Community members believe that unity creates a stable foundation for future family relationships. Traditional ceremonies frequently function as social spaces where collective relationships are strengthened. Interactions occurring during Nuei Rasan symbolize cooperation and togetherness among participants. Community members continue preserving these values because they

support social cohesion within local communities. The symbolism of unity therefore represents an important aspect of the tradition.

Social ethics are also symbolically represented within the Nuei Rasan process. Community members apply specific behavioral norms during communication and interaction. Traditional procedures symbolize expectations regarding appropriate social conduct and interpersonal relationships. Cultural expressions used during the process demonstrate values associated with politeness and moral behavior. Social ethics within traditional communities often function as guidelines for maintaining harmonious interactions. Symbolic actions within ceremonies therefore reflect broader principles of social conduct. Social ethics become another important symbolic element embedded within the tradition (Sutriani, E., & Rahman, A, 2021).

Commitment emerges as a symbolic meaning reflected throughout the implementation process of Nuei Rasan. The formal interaction between family representatives symbolizes serious intentions regarding the establishment of marriage relationships. Community members interpret ceremonial participation as an expression of readiness and dedication. Traditional procedures indicate that marriage involves long-term obligations rather than temporary arrangements. Symbolic expressions of commitment strengthen confidence between the two families involved in the process. Community members perceive commitment as an essential requirement for maintaining family stability. The symbolic meaning of commitment therefore occupies an important position within the tradition.

The symbolic meanings embedded in the Nuei Rasan tradition demonstrate that traditional practices contain values beyond ceremonial activities. Symbolic elements within the tradition function as representations of collective beliefs and cultural expectations. Community members continue preserving these symbolic meanings because they contribute to maintaining social harmony and cultural identity. Traditional symbols also serve as mechanisms for transmitting values to younger generations. Cultural meanings contained within traditional practices strengthen the continuity of social and cultural life. Symbolic interpretation therefore provides a broader understanding of the role of traditions within community contexts. The Nuei Rasan tradition ultimately reflects the rich symbolic dimensions of Kaur cultural heritage.

3. Social and Cultural Values of the Nuei Rasan Tradition in Maintaining Community Identity

The Nuei Rasan tradition contains social and cultural values that continue to play an important role in maintaining community identity among the Kaur people. Traditional practices are often preserved because they represent collective experiences and inherited cultural systems. Community identity is formed through continuous interaction with values, customs, and social practices that have developed over time. Cultural traditions frequently function as important elements that distinguish one community from another. Traditional practices also strengthen social cohesion and reinforce shared understandings among community members. Cultural values embedded within local traditions continue to influence social behavior and community relationships. The existence of the Nuei Rasan tradition therefore contributes significantly to the continuity of cultural identity within Kaur society (Julizun Anwar, I., & Mugiyono, 2020)..

Social relationships represent one of the central values reflected in the implementation of the Nuei Rasan tradition. Traditional ceremonies involve interactions between families and community members through collective participation and communication. Community members perceive social relationships as essential

components for creating harmonious community life. Traditional practices strengthen emotional ties and create stronger connections among participants involved in the marriage process. Social interactions established during ceremonial activities frequently extend beyond the immediate marriage event. Community members continue to value these relationships because they support long-term social solidarity. Social relationships therefore become an important value maintained through the Nuei Rasan tradition.

Kinship values also occupy an important position within the social structure of the Kaur community. Marriage traditions within traditional societies often involve broader family networks rather than only individual relationships. Family participation in the Nuei Rasan process symbolizes the significance of collective responsibility and social support. Community members believe that strong kinship relationships contribute to social stability and family harmony. Traditional practices also function as mechanisms for strengthening relationships between different family groups. Kinship values within local communities continue to be preserved because they support collective social life. The Nuei Rasan tradition therefore serves as a medium for maintaining kinship values within society.

Mutual cooperation represents another important social value reflected in the implementation of Nuei Rasan. Community members commonly participate in preparing and supporting traditional activities associated with marriage ceremonies. Collective participation demonstrates cooperation among individuals in achieving common objectives. Community members understand mutual cooperation as an important social principle within everyday life. Participation in traditional activities also strengthens feelings of togetherness and social responsibility. Cultural practices associated with cooperation continue to survive because they support harmonious social relationships. Mutual cooperation therefore becomes a significant social value maintained through the tradition.

Respect for social norms and cultural ethics also appears within the Nuei Rasan tradition. Community members follow specific behavioral rules during interactions and ceremonial processes. Traditional values encourage individuals to demonstrate politeness and appropriate conduct toward others. Social behavior within traditional ceremonies reflects broader ethical principles that regulate interpersonal relationships. Community members perceive these ethical values as important elements for maintaining social harmony. Cultural norms within traditional practices therefore function as guidelines for community behavior. Respect for social ethics consequently becomes an important value represented within the tradition (Julizun Anwar, I., & Mugiyono, 2020)..

Cultural preservation represents another significant value embedded within the Nuei Rasan tradition. Community members continue implementing traditional practices because they are considered important components of local heritage. Cultural traditions function as mechanisms for transmitting values and knowledge from one generation to another. Participation in traditional activities allows younger generations to understand local customs and cultural identity. Traditional practices also contribute to maintaining awareness regarding the importance of preserving cultural heritage. Cultural preservation therefore becomes an important aspect of social continuity within the community. The Nuei Rasan tradition serves as a medium for sustaining inherited cultural values.

Community identity within Kaur society is strongly influenced by the continuity of traditional practices. Traditional ceremonies frequently function as expressions of collective identity and cultural uniqueness. Community members identify themselves through shared values and inherited cultural systems. Traditional practices also create a sense of belonging among individuals within a social group. Cultural identity remains

significant because it distinguishes communities from other cultural groups. Community members continue preserving traditional values because they reflect historical experiences and collective memories. The Nuei Rasan tradition therefore contributes to strengthening community identity within Kaur society (Changga, S. 2018)..

Social changes associated with modernization and globalization have influenced many aspects of traditional life. Cultural transformation frequently creates challenges for maintaining inherited traditions within local communities. Community members sometimes experience changes in attitudes and lifestyles because of external influences. Traditional values may gradually decline when younger generations become less familiar with cultural practices. Community awareness regarding cultural preservation therefore becomes increasingly important. Traditional practices that continue to survive demonstrate collective efforts toward maintaining local identity. The continuity of the Nuei Rasan tradition indicates the resilience of cultural values despite social changes (Astuti, S. Y., 2023)..

The social and cultural values embedded within the Nuei Rasan tradition demonstrate that traditional practices function beyond ceremonial purposes. Traditional ceremonies represent social mechanisms that strengthen relationships and preserve collective identity. Community members continue maintaining these traditions because they contain important meanings and values for social life. Cultural values associated with traditional practices contribute to maintaining harmony and continuity within society. Traditional activities also serve as educational media for introducing cultural values to future generations. Social and cultural dimensions therefore become important elements within the preservation of local traditions. The Nuei Rasan tradition ultimately functions as a cultural foundation for maintaining the identity of the Kaur community.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that the Nuei Rasan tradition among the Kaur community in Bengkulu Province represents an important stage in the traditional marriage process that contains various symbolic meanings and socio-cultural values. The tradition symbolizes respect, kinship, deliberation, responsibility, unity, and commitment, which function as essential elements in maintaining harmonious relationships within society. The social and cultural values embedded in Nuei Rasan also contribute to preserving community identity and strengthening local cultural continuity. The study concludes that the Nuei Rasan tradition serves not only as a ceremonial practice but also as a representation of local wisdom that plays a significant role in sustaining cultural heritage and social values within the Kaur community.

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