

BLENDING WORSHIP: MAENA DANCE TRADITION

Sudirman Lase^{1*}, Testi B. Zebua², Irwansyah³ Apriliana Lase⁴

^{1,2,4} Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Tarutung, Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

³ Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan

E-mail: Sudirmanlase@gmail.com^{1*}, testizebua@gmail.com², Irwansyah@uinsu.ac.id³, prilils023@gmail.com⁴

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Abstract

The Nias community is unique and has a different cultural culture from other regions in North Sumatra. One of the unique things done in the traditional celebration of marriage/wedding by doing activities in the form of dances is called Maena. Maena is a traditional Nias dance with a simple movement pattern that is easy to learn. Maena is usually performed by a group of Sanötöi Maena (poet/singer) and ono maena (dancer). The research gap of this study is to focus on applying the value of local wisdom and religious values to the BNKP worship system on Nias, which has never been studied by previous research. The research was conducted in Gunung Sitoli, Nias Island, North Sumatra. The theoretical framework in this research is ethnography and data collection techniques use observation, interviews, video documentation and content analysis. Additional data information was obtained through observations and interviews with the Nias community. The traditional dance in the offering procession during worship at BNKP is a combination that creates a combination of local wisdom by involving culture by providing elements of a blend of church music so as to instill familial religious values at BNKP. Maena is the choice in the process of adopting local wisdom involved in worship at BNKP. The people of Nias feel inner satisfaction when they participate in making foot and hand movements and singing maena songs, this is a form of joy.

Keywords: *Maena, Nias community, Traditional, BNKP, Nias Culture*

INTRODUCTION

The Nias community is unique and has a different cultural culture from other regions in North Sumatra. One of the unique things done in the traditional celebration of marriage/wedding by doing activities in the form of dances is called Maena. Maena is a traditional Nias dance with a simple movement pattern that is easy to learn. Maena is usually performed by a group of Sanötöi Maena (poet/singer) and ono maena (maena member/dancer). The simple movement pattern combines hand swinging and foot stomping in rhythm. There are generally two main patterns in maena movements: tölu sagi (triangle) and öfa sagi (rectangle). Both patterns are performed with singing and the movements are counterclockwise. The word maena cannot be translated as a specific meaning; maena is defined as a folk song accompanied by dance.

The term maena in the Li Niha Dictionary: Nias - Indonesia, means: "Maena is a typical Nias dance with song, usually performed during weddings or welcoming guests. As a joyful dance, maena is performed together or en masse. In its development, maena dances have been performed in Christian worship processions. This form of maena is a local wisdom value that is collaborated in worship, especially in the procession of taking offerings by combining Nias Dance with the song Yae Zumange in the procession of taking offerings with lyrics and styles that provide a unique feel with simple movement patterns through a combination of hand swinging movements and foot stomping in harmony with the nuances of traditional music in taking offerings.

The existence of the maena tradition in the chanting of offering songs is a unique blend that is a form of local wisdom against the individualist culture that has developed in society following the development of modernity. In the context of this research, knowledge about maena with ethnography. Tradition is the form of local wisdom realized by preserving the traditional wisdom of ancestors related to the natural environment, sources of life, and the creator. A tradition is an anonymous form, unknown who first started it because traditions are hereditary. Initially, a tradition was only carried out by important people such as kings, village officials, religious leaders, and community leaders and then influenced to survive in the community because a tradition contains many

Sudirman Lase *et al*

spiritual values that can be exemplified and understood deeply. In this case, the religious tradition of tradition is the reality of being to know the existence of the creator (God). In the context of religion, tradition is a hereditary legacy that continues and continues to run along with the times. This belief must be understood because tradition is a meaningful reality, ironic with a religious context emphasizing ritual behavior rather than individual piety and social strife (Basir, 2013: 69-78). The above statement aligns with tradition and a habit carried out from generation to generation that is still carried out in society through the assessment or assumption that the existing ways are the best and most correct. It is also in line with the notion of tradition that everything is learned, and tradition is the process of doing something called ritual. Ritual is a tradition that in its implementation has its own way and in tradition is usually full of religious values. It can be seen from the traditions in Nias culture, which until now are still maintained and implemented by the Nias community, especially the application of this tradition to the style of worship at BNKP.

The research gap of this study is to focus on applying the value of local wisdom and religious values to the BNKP worship system on Nias, which has never been studied by previous research. The application of blended worship in instilling traditional values, especially the offering dance, which adopts the maena dance in each song. This dance is used while collecting offerings to the church altar. In this case, the researcher sees several aspects with an ethnographic approach whose observations and results are observed directly from the original adherents of the culture. The theoretical framework in this research is ethnography, which introduces or explains and discusses evidence-based practices as seen in the illustrative Fanehe Maena dance in the procession of services at the BNKP congregation. Maena is inseparable from the key to music and dance. In the dance, there are movements, which form a rectangle (*öfa sagi*), and the legs form a triangle (*tölu sagi*); both arms are swung back and forth so that during the Maena performance, this movement is repeated from the beginning to the end of the song being sung. Several characters will emerge from this dance that shows offerings to people and God, forming a unity known as *fasembata*. In the context of this research, knowledge about maena with ethnography is applied theoretically and framed by a video interpretation analysis study with the idea of evidence-based practice in the field, which will be explained in the next section.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Maena Dance as Local Wisdom

Tradition is the form of local wisdom realized by preserving the traditional wisdom of ancestors related to the natural environment, sources of life, and the creator. A tradition is an anonymous form, unknown who first started it because traditions are hereditary. Initially, a tradition was only carried out by important people such as kings, village officials, religious leaders, and community leaders and then influenced to survive in the community because a tradition contains many spiritual values that can be exemplified and understood deeply. In this case, the religious tradition of tradition is the reality of being to know the existence of the creator (God). In the context of religion, tradition is a hereditary legacy that continues and continues to run along with the times. This belief must be understood because tradition is a meaningful reality, ironic with a religious context emphasizing ritual behavior rather than individual piety and social strife (Basir, 2013: 69-78).

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theoretically and framed by a video interpretation analysis study with the idea of evidence-based practice in the field, which will be explained in the next section.

Maena for Nias People

Maena is part of traditional Nias culture in the form of a communal dance, which was part of traditional wedding ceremonies before it was danced in church. Maena is a development of past community traditions, which have been preserved as Nias culture. Originally, it was an expression of gratitude from the Nias community for success in something such as: harvesting, erecting *goŵe* (ancestor statues), or getting game. So, the Nias community held an *oŵasa* (feast), attended by everyone in the area and the surrounding area. Many men would be doing *faböli hae* (cheering, jumping for joy) in a large field, and from this came the four-faceted movement that was later done regularly. This is the origin of the maena dance movement. The maena dance is performed together by men and women and is usually preceded by a rhyme (adapted to the theme of the event) by the *sanutunö* (speaker), and greeted with a maena verse (*fanehe maena*) by the maena dance participants.

The movements performed in maena are simple but enthusiastic through rhythmic foot stomps and hand movements, with movements back and forth, left and right, and moving counterclockwise. The formation or shape of the line of dancers usually varies, in the form of a circle, triangle, square or other shape. In the current development period, the patterns and movements of maena are widely varied, but still maintain the original basics of maena movements. Regarding costumes, dancers usually wear traditional Nias clothes, but in entertainment events they usually use free costumes while maintaining the value of modesty. Maena, as mentioned above, was part of Nias cultural customs before it was danced on church holidays. Basically, this maena dance was danced as a form of joy or joy of the people in the past for something expressed in the form of dance and song verses. Now maena is a dance commonly found at church celebrations, including in church parties in welcoming guests, even in commemorating church holidays, maena is often a competition. The joy and enthusiasm of the congregation is indeed a value in itself from this maena. It is as if there is a strong urge and invitation to join in stomping, dancing, and cheering every verse of the song.

Concerning the assumption that maena is not included in traditional Nias dance because of the use of modern musical instruments (keyboards), according to several informants, maena remains a traditional dance of the Nias community. This is reasonable, namely because maena was born in the context of traditional society in the past, and this dance continues to exist until the latest developments. This means that maena has always used traditional musical instruments such as *aramba* (gong), *göndra* (drum), *faritia* (canang), *famerua*, *tamburu*, and others. However, given that nowadays not many people can use such traditional musical instruments, and even the production of musical instruments is no longer sustainable, the transition to using keyboard musical instruments is an option for Nias people. The informants agreed that culture is dynamic, following the direction of the times, but not changing what is the essential basis of a maena dance.

This change, which is specific to musical accompaniment, keeps the meaning and value of the dance. Accompaniment music with a faster tempo and a large variety of tones, adds to the enthusiasm and enthusiasm of the dance participants, which is a dance of joy or joy. Maena poems danced at traditional events such as weddings and maena danced at church celebrations have differences in the song lyrics. The patterns and movements of the maena are the same, so the verses adjust to the activities that are taking place. At traditional weddings, both the rhymes and songs usually praise the bride and groom and the guests, life stories, and their respect for guests. Meanwhile, in the celebration of ecclesiastical days, it usually contains song verses that lead to praise to God, expressions of gratitude, and lyrics that allude to or are related to the celebrated pastoral day. The maena poem is the chanting of the song when the maena movement is performed. The essence and purpose of the poem the *sowatö*/guest delivers are to honor and praise the guests and the groom for being considered very worthy of being a woman's partner. Usually, the person dancing includes verses that humble and exalt the guest, emphasizing the worthiness of the guest and the groom to the bride. On the other hand, the main verses sung during ecclesiastical celebrations are full of praise to God. It also contains exhortations following the theme of the celebration. At Christmas, the poems tell of God's love for humanity who gave His only Son to redeem humanity from sin and advice to pass on God's love to others.

The meaning and value of the Maena dance for society

Nias community, it is agreed that there is a certain inner satisfaction when participating in making foot and hand movements, and singing maena songs, where this cannot be measured in anything. When an event or celebration is not filled or closed by dancing together, it feels as if something is incomplete. The Nias people, who

BLENDING WORSHIP: MAENA DANCE TRADITION

Sudirman Lase *et al*

were born on the principle of togetherness, could be the reason behind what is felt when there is no maena dance in an activity. This is why the maena dance is an embodiment of togetherness and unity for those who do it. Maena, which is a dance that is usually performed on certain occasions, especially joyful events, has meaning for the people of Nias, namely

1. Value of Togetherness. The maena dance focuses on togetherness in carrying out its movements, as a mass dance. The togetherness that is formed is the willingness to combine each other's movements, according to the tempo of the accompaniment and the maena song. It requires a strong sense of mutual cooperation to make the dance a success, so that it has value to be enjoyed. Togetherness may have started to be cultivated from the beginning of the maena practice, as preparation, or it could even be formed in the maena which is carried out spontaneously.
2. Value Equality. When performing the maena dance, everyone will dance side by side together at the place where the dance is performed. Maena brings the value of equality, where when you take part in it there is no difference between one another, both in terms of profession, position/rank, and class. The goal that is pursued together is to rejoice and be happy together. Thus, through the maena dance, every layer or element in society can become closer to each other because of the value of equality it brings.
3. Value of Unity. The unity that is formed in the maena dance is the nature of one feeling, wholeness, and close relationships between one another, as well as emphasizing the collectivity nature of society. In this case, mutual trust in each other is highly expected to be able to become one, respect each other, and be encouraged to be responsible and considerate of others. Amaedola Proverb) Nias which describes this unity is: "Aoha noro nilului wahea, aoha noro nilului waoso. Alisi tafadaya-daya, Hulu tafaewolo-wolo (light burdens are carried together, light loads are lifted together, our shoulders are equally elevated, our backs are equally aligned)." 58 This emphasizes that maena dance requires unity, not alone but through cooperation and mutual trust in each other.
4. Fourth, the meaning of joy and entertainment. Joy is indeed the reason this dance was created. Joy because of something, which is then cheered cheerfully in the maena dance. Happiness includes everyone who participates in this dance. Apart from that, of course this is also entertainment, both for individual enjoyment and for other viewers to enjoy.

METHOD

This research was conducted in Gunung Sitoli, Nias Island, North Sumatra. The researchers considered choosing the research location because this location is the BNKP head office and the location of the original adherents of Nias culture, as well as the first church established in Nias and subsequently spread across several locations in North Sumatra, Indonesia. The research method used in this research is the ethnographic method with qualitative descriptive methods. Data collection techniques use observation, interviews, video documentation and content analysis. Additional data information was obtained through observations and interviews with the Nias community. The population and sample size in this study focused on the congregation at the BNKP Gunungsitoli church, Nias. North Sumatra. The research was conducted from May to June 2023. The number of informants met was ±6 active participants who were pastors and traditional leaders who were permanent congregations at BNKP Gunungsitoli.

Data collection was carried out through participant observation, long-term in-depth interviews with informants and video recording. Observations of the BNKP congregation were carried out by observing conversations between community leaders using interview techniques with congregations and cultural figures (Ismawati, 2016). Referring to Wilson and Chaddha (2009), there are two characteristics of ethnography, (1) Research is conducted in a natural setting, without treatment, (2) Researchers carry out video recording. Then Wilson stated that the ethnographic method examines behavior that occurs in certain social situations, including behavior that is shaped and limited by that situation, plus people's understanding and interpretation of their experiences (Wilson & Chaddha, 2009). Ethnography is a research method that is based on observing a group in a natural environment compared to research that emphasizes the formality of discussing topics that have been arranged in such a way (Gunawan, 2018).

The data analysis technique used in this research is worship performance video interpretation analysis. By applying ethnographic theory which classifies observation categories and creates codes that have been determined as something that will be identified as reasons that have been tested, then supported by explanatory methods of interviews with active participants. As for several codes in applying data analysis in this research, the researcher has divided them based on movement categories and the meaning of each movement when delivering offerings during the worship procession in the BNKP congregation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Process of Implementing Maena as a Local Wisdom Value in Offerings

In the process of making offerings at the BNKP Church, there are several stages that must be carried out before the offering is placed in the middle of the church altar. In this section, the officers will take steps to provide instructions to the congregation, starting with giving the first offering to the last offering given by each congregation. The process of giving offerings by each congregation will close with a final offering session by the officers. At the stage of the offering procession which is carried out to get to the altar, the offering procession is carried out with the maena dance. Maena dance is an oral tradition used to convey cultural values in the BNKP worship style. The cultural values contained in the maena movement in offerings are a reference to the values and norms that describe the Nias people as a society that is wise and wise in applying noble values in their life of worship.

The implementation process involving local wisdom can be defined as a form of knowledge, belief, understanding, insight into practice and ethics that guides someone to create harmony and peace between nature, humans and God. Based on the results of the interpretation, this form of offering shows a holistic dimension that reflects balance that places God as the highest substance. In ethnographic form, the harmony of the maena dance in the performance at BNKP is presented as follows

Table 1. Worship Performance Video Analysis Interpretation

Preparation Performance	Dance & instruments	Description
	<p>Opening movement <i>Ya'e zumange fasömbata, ma'öhe sumange Yehowa. Iramatua: Reff: Ma'andrö khöU fahowu'ö zumange ni'o hema khö-Mö.</i></p>	<p>As a form of reflection of religious values, it creates harmony between humans and God. A form of initial praise and respect for the creator. Expressions of gratitude</p>
	<p>First footsteps <i>Ya'e zumange fasömbata mabe'e soroi ba dödöma. Reff: Ma'andrö khöU</i></p>	<p>The movement means there is a balance between God's commands to humans.</p>



First hand steps

*Ya'e zumange fasömbata
buala si'otarai Nama.
Reff: Ma'andrö khöU*

Praise or delivery to the creator. This movement shows that God is above everything. it means, there is an essence of religious value that expresses gratitude for the blessings given by the creator.



Offering worship

*Ya'e zumange fasömbata,
boto, noso, ba fa'aurima
Reff: Ma'andrö khöU*

The situation illustrates love and hope, namely giving offerings as a form of gratitude and hope for the never-ending love of the Creator.



Foot movements

*Ya'e zumange fasömbata,
lö irugi zomasi dödöU.
Reff: Ma'andrö khöU*

The form of movement from behind means a representation of solidarity from humans walking together to make offerings to the creator.



Giving offerings to the altar

*Ya'e zumange fasömbata,
ma'aohasi gölö Zo'aya.
Reff: Ma'andrö khöU*

The final part is a form of human interpersonal relationship that comes to the creator, who surrenders self-integrity and obedience.

Maena Cultural Traditions and Implications for BNKP Worship

The people of Nias still maintain their own local wisdom. Local wisdom is the cognitive ability to act or behave towards events wisely because local wisdom is a cultural tradition that is reflected in local culture such as traditions, proverbs and life mottos. Local wisdom can be seen as thoughts, feelings, character, attitudes and advice that are beneficial for human life. Understanding local wisdom will make souls more virtuous. Local wisdom in the community will give birth to the traditions of each tribe, one of which is the maena tradition. A tradition that the people of Nias still maintain to this day. The application of maena has already been implemented at the BNKP church with elements of the maena cultural tradition being applied through offerings at BNKP to create a traditional feel that gives joy, which means there is a welcome from the religious side in applying the maena concept to the offerings. Yae Zumange is used as a form of joyful response to God as the creator.

The choice of Yae Zumange songs follows the concept of local wisdom that has long existed among the people of Nias. Local wisdom, which is a cultural tradition, is the result of human creativity. It should be preserved, because local wisdom adhered to by the community is a basic cultural value that is realized in the order of life such as human activities which are a real reflection of social interaction and implemented in human life. Then form creativity in maintaining it. Creating maena in collaboration with the worship system at BNKP produces new order and values in society such as harmony, kinship and tolerance for cultural differences. The implications of this game arise from people's awareness which ultimately integrates into everyday life. The form of maena is a thought based on preserving the artistic potential that has long been born in the Nias traditional community. This art form presented by BNKP is the maena dance. Tempake (2022), the art of dance is an expression of the soul which is formed in a movement with a certain rhythm and has a beautiful value that can be enjoyed. This form of expression is the choice of offering that is applied in the middle of the BNKP worship procession. This offering is an implication of what is done in the church, the application of maena, which means a form of gratitude. In the book of psalms, it is explained that praise is at the center of Christianity. The inclusion of cultural elements is complementary. The importance of acceptance in the procession of offerings in worship is a form of emphasis on expressions of love, elements of praise wrapped in a combination of spirituality, emotion and intellect with the style of worship.

Blended Worship and Maena

The existence of maena still exists only in the BNKP church. From the start, its existence did not invite pro-con polemics from the congregation or from several tribal churches spread across North Sumatra. The existence of maena formed in the BNKP worship system shows activities related to aesthetics and fulfilling the taste for cultural beauty which is identified with art. The worship style used by BNKP in delivering offerings is different from that used by GNKP, OUNKP, AMIN, GNKPI and even Catholic churches. BNKP has its own characteristics. The worship process is not only multi-cultural, but multi-modifying as blended worship. This provides a good understanding of how blended worship can influence congregational life. In this study, the researcher looked at one alternative in uniting the congregation and having a church that grows, one of which is the application of blended worship by selecting praise and worship songs that make the congregation remember the culture and characteristics of the culture they have.

Worship that pleases God is not only for the congregation, but also for everyone, including new visitors, and all nations in the world. Worship must be evangelical and missional. The offering procession on the maena in the middle of worship at BNKP is an alternative that is still used today. The idea of applying maena to the offering procession is very familiar to today's congregation. In a positive perspective, the use of maena traditions to introduce offerings helps the congregation experience traditional and contemporary worship styles. The choice of music in the maena accompaniment also emphasizes traditional worship music. This implies that cultural traditions and theology are forms that can be collaborated because they mutually influence each other. Blended worship is a union that bridges the congregation with a worship style that is aligned with cultural and social traditions. In other words, the transformation of BNKP worship is a multicultural worship./The maena tradition still exists amidst today's globalization. The maena tradition is a form of social solidarity for society that can generate moral values and togetherness. From a religious point of view, maena is acceptable so that its presence in the midst of the church is a form of harmony between culture and religion that can coexist.

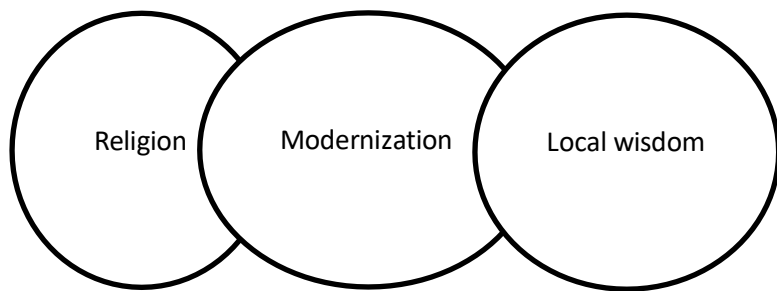


Figure 1. Relationship Maena Traditions and Globalization

Nias community feel inner satisfaction when they participate in making foot and hand movements and singing maena songs, this is a form of joy. When an event or celebration is not filled or closed by dancing maena together, then there is something incomplete in the procession of event activities in the Nias community. Because for the Nias people, who were born on the principle of togetherness, all joyful activities must be accompanied by maena. This playing activity is an outpouring of togetherness and unity. Until now, the existence of maena still exists in the midst of current globalization, even people who have migrated still apply this maena at every event.

The view of maena in modern times is that it is not just an entertaining dance but rather a form of unity because there is a value of equality created which aims to not discriminate between one another for maena players. This has become an adoption for BNKP to answer the phenomenon of maena being involved in worship processions. A maedola (Proverb) from Nias that describes this unity is: “Aoha noro nilului wahea, aoha noro nilului waoso. Alisi tafadaya-daya, Hulu tafaewolo-wolo (light burdens are carried together, light loads are lifted together, our shoulders are equally elevated, our backs are equally aligned). In this way, how can the existence of maena still be accepted in this era of globalization without ignoring the existence of religion which still coexists in society? In this way, the realization of local wisdom wrapped in the presence of the church in the community makes the social life of the community instill the values of norms, knowledge and ideas of community beliefs that are acceptable.

CONCLUSION

The traditional nuance in the offering procession during worship at BNKP is a combination that creates a combination of local wisdom by involving culture by providing elements of a blend of church music so as to instill familial religious values at BNKP. Maena is the choice in the process of adopting local wisdom involved in worship at BNKP because this is related to how norm values are still rules that are inherent in the lives of the Nias people which form respect for the creator with the flow of the offering dance which is the choice for forming self-expressiveness with every movement shown. Blended worship with the culture involved in the church aims to represent individual relationships with fellow congregants and create a relationship of acceptance between culture and the church.

Apart from preserving Nias traditions, maena is a form of establishing harmonious relations which is carried out together with the Yae Zumange song guide to create strength and calm between the congregation and the church. Yae Zumange's praise becomes the basis that merges the nuances of customs and worship processions into one unified whole. The simple movement pattern of the maena in the offering is supported by the praise of yae zumange as a symbol that implies the Nias people and their culture are still present in the midst of the modernization era, and this tradition is even well accepted by the church. How can religious values be combined with cultural customs to create an interesting combination of worship and the church becomes a forum that helps preserve that culture.

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