

Representation of Ampang Limo Myth Through Journalistic Photography

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – Ampang Limo not only plays an important role as an apex predator in the tropical forest ecosystem, but also has deep spiritual and cultural dimensions. It is revered as a symbol of strength and courage in various myths, and is considered to have supernatural powers. This study explores the mythical representation of Ampang Limo, the local name for the Sumatran Tiger in Minangkabau, through journalistic photography

Methodology/approach – This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological method to understand the meaning behind the narrative of the Ampang Limo myth. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation

Findings – It was found that journalistic photography can be an effective visual medium to illustrate the relationship between reality and mythology, strengthen cultural narratives, and encourage the preservation of this species

Novelty/value – The integration of phenomenological approaches and visual exploration, especially photojournalism, has not been widely used in the study of mythology and the conservation of the Sumatran tiger.

Keywords: Journalistic Photography; Sumatran Tiger; Mythology; Conservation.

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INTRODUCTION

Ampang Limo has many stories colored with spiritual dimensions. Narratives that tell about myths about it, continue to exist. Ampang Limo is the name for the Sumatran Tiger in Minangkabau (Nurwani & Martozet, 2022). It is considered a charismatic and respected animal and there is a growing belief in the perception of supernatural powers in certain parts of Ampang Limo's organs such as fangs, skin, bones and nails. (Suryanda et al., 2017) which for a long time already deeply rooted (Lestari & Efendi, 2017). It is considered to have mystical abilities which then lead to it becoming an object of belief for some groups in society, especially among shamans and adherents of traditional beliefs to carry out shamanic ritual practices. (Lubis et al., 2020) to be used as raw material for traditional medicine (Serving, 2021; Ramadhanty et al., 2018).

The myth of Ampang Limo is one of the rich and interesting cultural aspects to review. This animal, which plays a role at the top of the food chain, is not only known as one of the critically endangered big cat species (Rani & Sinamo, 2016), but also as a symbol of strength and mystery in

various folklore and local beliefs, especially in Minangkabau. The myths that emerge around Ampang Limo often reflect the complex relationship between humans and nature (Fatiha et al., 2023), and create a narrative that describes how the Minangkabau people then respect and protect it.

A long history of beliefs and stories colored by the spiritual dimension of Ampang Limo (McKay et al., 2018). It also includes moral values, life lessons and spiritual experiences passed down from generation to generation. Heable to live side by side with humans even since the 1600s (McKay et al., 2018). In local culture in Minangkabau, Ampang Limo is often depicted as the embodiment of a village guardian creature (Adu et al., 2019) which is sacred and is even considered as the embodiment of the souls of ancestors, even the incarnation of ancestors, Cindaku is one example (Malacca, 2015). These myths that continue to develop, not only serve to express respect for Ampang Limo, but also to provide experience and understanding of the importance of maintaining local cultural heritage and conservation.

Ecologically, Ampang Limo is one of 9 (nine) tiger subspecies in the world. Of the nine subspecies, three of them are owned by Indonesia, namely Ampang Limo, Bali Tiger and Javan Tiger. (Wibisono & Pusparini, 2010). After the Bali and Javan tigers were declared extinct, Indonesia now only has one tiger subspecies, namely the Ampang Limo. (Rani & Sinamo, 2016). Based on Government regulations No. 7 of 1999, Ampang Limo is a protected animal and is included in Appendix I category with critical status or critically endangered (Wulan et al., 2022).

To represent the myth of Ampang Limo and explore the socio-cultural values contained therein, the journalistic photography method is used as the main basis by using phenomenological science based on the sequence of data and information collection procedures, contacting sources, approaching, analyzing and executing images so that the resulting visuals are in accordance with the target to be achieved and have aesthetic value. Representation of the Ampang Limo myth through journalistic photography, capturing cultural narratives embedded in community groups and becoming a medium in the form of visual storytelling that is able to bridge the past and the present. (Johannsen, 2019). The photographs that were successfully captured in this research also highlight the significance of myths in local identity, showcasing existing traditions and beliefs, and strengthening the interaction between reality and mythology that can be clearly illustrated through photographic works. (Park & Kwon, 2021) so that it will strengthen previous research and enrich photographic works related to the Ampang Limo myth. Next, researchers are interested in finding out what meaning is conveyed by the shutter button through journalistic photography.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Representation of the Ampang Limo Myth

Representation itself is related to the use of signs. It is defined as the process of physically recording ideas, knowledge, or messages. More precisely, representation is defined as the use of signs (images, sounds, and so on) to re-display something that is absorbed, imagined, or felt in physical form.

Ampang Limo

Ampang Limo—the nickname for the Sumatran Tiger in Minangkabau—has a deep meaning. It is often considered a symbol of strength and courage and a sacred creature with spiritual value or dimension. (Delfi & Oktayanty, 2022). Ampang Limo also refers to the Sumatran Tiger's status as a respected ruler of the forest. In Minangkabau folklore, Ampang Limo is also often depicted as a supernatural creature in the form of an ancestral manifestation.

Journalistic Photography

Journalistic photography has great potential to represent the myth of Ampang Limo visually in the form of strong photographic works because journalistic photography functions to document real events, stories, or situations to provide information to the public. (Wardana, 2017). Journalistic photography has the power to capture important moments, convey messages, and evoke emotions in a

way that is immediate and universal. (Hendrians et al., 2023). Through his experience, journalistic photographers can create strong visuals and emotions through the use of proper lighting, composition, and techniques, so that their work can touch the hearts and minds of many people (Joshi et al., 2011; Sverrisson, 1998).

METHOD

This research design uses a qualitative research design. (Sastra et al., 2024) with a phenomenological approach. This approach was chosen because it aims to understand the deep meaning of a phenomenon, in this case, the Representation of the Ampang Limo Myth Through Journalistic Photography. This research is located in Padang City, Agam Regency, and Pasaman. The types of data in this study consist of primary data, namely data obtained through interviews and observations of previously determined informants totaling 4 people, and secondary data. Furthermore, the research instruments used are 1. in-depth interview guides or guidelines, which contain a list of questions (information) that will or need to be collected. 2. Recording devices, such as recorders, cell phones, and DSLR cameras used to record interview results or observation results. The data collection methods used are observation, interviews, and documentation. Data collection techniques through interviews, documentation, and observation (Budi Hangar, 2023; Moleong, 2018; Sugiono, 2016). While data analysis techniques namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing and verifying conclusions. (Emzir, 2012).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Dimensions of Traditional Culture and Historiography

The cultural dimension and traditional historiography have a very close relationship. Traditional historiography, as historical writing that developed before Western influence, is greatly influenced by the cultural context of society at that time. (Sincerely, 2019. Traditional historiography can also be called historical writing that developed before the influence of modern scientific methods, which is generally characterized by palace-centricity, magical religiosity, and regionalism. (Husna, 2024).

The use of certain parts of the Sumatran Tiger's organs in traditional medicine has long been practiced, especially in China. Some organs that are often sought for treatment include the gallbladder, fangs and bones of the Sumatran Tiger. (see figure 1)



Figure 1: Sumatran Tiger Bones

(The process of compiling the skeleton of a Sumatran Tiger cub estimated to be 6 months old at the West Sumatra Natural Resources Conservation Agency office, Maninjau Resort, Tuesday, February 9, 2021. These bones are evidence confiscated from the disclosure of an illegal trade case on the black market. Photo / Andri Mardiansyah)



Figure 2: Fragment of Sumatran Tiger Fang

(A fragment of a Sumatran tiger's fang that was successfully secured from the conflict location in Jambak Village, Binjai Village, Tigo Nagari District, Pasaman Regency, Sunday, February 4, 2024. For some community groups, tiger fangs are believed to have supernatural powers that can protect themselves from the threat of danger and increase self-confidence. Photo / Andri Mardiansyah)

Journalist, The Sumatran tiger is a species of tiger found only on the island of Sumatra, Indonesia. It is seen as more than just a wild animal, this tiger has a deep cultural and historical dimension, reflecting the close relationship between humans and nature. There are many legends of stories that are colored with spiritual dimensions. The were-tiger or better known as Cindaku, Pusa-Pusa Harimau, two examples related to mythological traditions that are still well inherited until now. (see figure 3) :



Figure 3 : Tiger Grave

(Two traditional figures in Sontang Cubadak Village, Padang Gelugur District, Pasaman Regency, West Sumatra, recite prayers beside the grave of a dead Sumatran Tiger, October 26, 2023. The dead Sumatran Tiger is believed to be the incarnation of their ancestors who must continue to be respected. Photo / Andri Mardiansyah)



Figure 4 : Tiger Pusa-Pusa

(Idon (37 years old), a resident of Jorong Taratang Tunggang, Nagari Binjai, Tigo DistrictNagari, Pasaman Regency, West Sumatra shows birthmarks of tiger cubs on the nape, Wednesday, October 25, 2023. Photo / Andri Mardiansyah)

Perception of Threats to the Existence of Ampang Limo

Perceptions about threats to the existence of Ampang Limo are very important to understand because they affect conservation efforts. These perceptions vary among various groups, from local communities living side by side with Ampang Limo, the government, and conservation organizations to the general public. (Edorita & Zulwisman, 2021. Understanding different perceptions is a crucial step in today's conservation efforts. Effective collaboration and communication between all stakeholders(Daulay & Hidayat, 2017) is very important to address these threats and ensure the sustainability of Ampang Limo as a top animal. (Ganesha & Aunurohim,2) in the future goes well.

The information presented by various sources also helps build a more holistic understanding of the situation. Officers of the West Sumatra Natural Resources Conservation Center: The existence of the Sumatran Tiger is increasingly being threatened by various threats, shrinking habitat, and decreasing population. There are many records of conflicts that lead to death. The threat of illegal hunting to habitat encroachment, makes the population of this endemic animal of the island of Sumatra continue to shrink. According to IUCN data, it is currently estimated that there are only less than 600 adult individuals left struggling to survive in the wild. Even though it has an important role in the balance of the ecosystem it must be preserved so that it does not become extinct and cause an ecological disaster.



Figure 5: Sumatran Tiger Evacuation

(A Sumatran tiger managed to enter a trap set by officers from the Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA), West Sumatra in the oil palm plantation area of Jambak Village, Binjai Village, Tigo Nagari District, Pasaman Regency, Sunday, February 4, 2024. This female Sumatran tiger was forced to be captured and evacuated after being involved in a conflict with humans on January 2, 2024. Photo / Andri Mardiansyah)

Ecological Significance

Ecological significance refers to the importance of an organism, species, population, community, and ecological process in maintaining the balance and function of an ecosystem. This significance can be seen from various aspects, such as the role in the food chain and food web, contribution to ecological processes, maintaining biodiversity, and providing ecosystem services.(Firnanda et al., 2020). Therefore, ecological significance is very important to understand in conservation and environmental management efforts. Understanding the role and function of each organism and ecological process in the ecosystem, of course, helps us to maintain the balance and sustainability of the ecosystem. The loss of ecological significance can hurt ecosystem function and human welfare.(Suba & Marzaman, 2024). Therefore, it is important to maintain biodiversity and healthy ecosystems.

Local community: Ampang Limo is a subspecies of tiger endemic to the island of Sumatra that has a very important ecological role in maintaining the balance of the tropical forest ecosystem. As an apex predator, Ampang Limo is not only a marker of ecosystem health, but also contributes to the sustainability of the forest as a supporter of the lives of many living things, including humans. (see figure 6)



Figure 6: Sumatran Tiger

(A Sumatran tiger named Putra Singguluang is in an enclosure or semi-natural cage at the Sumatran Tiger Rehabilitation Center (PR-HSD) of the ARSARI Djojohadikusumo Foundation undergoing a rehabilitation phase aimed at improving hunting instincts and maintaining the natural characteristics of life in its natural habitat, Thursday, June 3, 2021. Andri Mardiansyah)

CONCLUSION

Ampang Limo, the local name for the Sumatran Tiger in Minangkabau, is not only a species that plays an important role in the ecosystem as an apex predator, but is also full of spiritual and cultural dimensions. Ampang Limo has a critical status according to Appendix I (CITES) and is a symbol of biodiversity that must be protected. In addition to its role in maintaining the balance of the ecosystem, Ampang Limo has deep historical and spiritual value. Since ancient times, this animal has been part of the Minangkabau cultural narrative, with legends and myths that have been passed down from generation to generation. This tiger is also considered to have mystical powers that are reflected in the community's belief in its body organs, which are often used in shamanic practices, rituals, and traditional medicine. However, this belief has encouraged illegal hunting that threatens the sustainability of this species. Conservation efforts are very important, not only to maintain the existence of Ampang Limo as a key ecosystem species, but also as a guardian of the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Minangkabau people.

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