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## **The Deities' Influence in the Dawan Tribe's Oe Kana Ritual: An Arnold van Gennep Analysis**

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**Abstract:** The Dawan tribe is the largest of population in Timor Island. This tribe have a concept of divinity that is different from other tribes. This research aims to examine the concept of divinity in the Dawan tribe through the *Oe Kana* ritual. The ritual *Oe Kana* is one of many rituals that show how the Dawaness adore their God. This research uses quantitative analysis of scientific sources related to the theme of the writing. In this research, Arnold van Gennep's study is applied with three approaches: pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal, to understand the *Oe Kana* ritual. This research finds that there are two concepts of divinity known, namely *Uis Neno* and *Uis Pala*. In addition, the Dawan tribe also has the figure of *Bei Nai* as an ancestral spirit. The Dawan tribe honours *Uis Neno* and *Uis Pala* as life givers in their daily lives. They also give each god's mention: *Uis Neno*, dominant is the sky or heaven (high god), *Uis Pala*, dominant on earth (low god). This classification means the place of power. *Bei Nai* have central point of honour in the Dawans tribe. He makes some connection to *Uis Neno* and *Uis Pala*.

**Keywords:** *Oe Kana, Uis Neno, Uis Pala, Bei Nai, Arnold van Gennep.*

## **Introduction**

Indonesia has many official religions, namely Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism (Naisali et al., 2024). These six major religions have their concept of god. For example, in Islam, God is known as Allah SWT, who is the only God worthy of worship. Allah SWT is described as all-powerful, all-creator, and all-loving (Leki et al., 2024). Christianity (Catholicism and Christianity) recognises the concept of God having three persons: Father, Son (Jesus Christ), and Holy Spirit. These three entities are considered to be one God (Tarapandjang et al., 2024). Hinduism recognises the concept of Brahman, who is the ultimate reality and is not personified by anything (Salosso et al., 2024). Buddhism recognises the concept of Nirvana. Where this concept is not a divine entity but a place of happiness, freedom from suffering, and enlightenment. Confucianism has the concept of the Supreme Lord as the supreme and abstract God (Don Harrison Kadja et al., 2023).

In addition to the six official religions, Indonesia has local beliefs that have their concept of divinity for each tribe. According to Patsun (2018), there are various forms of the concept of divinity in local beliefs in Indonesia. He summarises them in several concepts of divinity: Dynamism, Animism, Polytheism, Monotheism, and others. People, driven by the desire to understand reality beyond reason, created the concept of a supernatural power (Sasmita et al., 2022). This figure, according to Herbert Spencer, is believed to be the creator and ruler of life and death. In every culture, including Indonesia, this figure is known by different names and attributes. (Jebadu, 2009)

The different names and attributes reflect the diversity of beliefs and traditions that develop in each society (Rizki et al., 2024). These beliefs are then passed down and adapted over time, resulting in various interpretations and understandings of the deity or God. It is important to remember that this concept of divinity is inseparable from the social and cultural context in which it develops (Saehu et al., 2024). Each society has its way of understanding and interpreting the existence of this divine figure, which then influences their behaviour, values and traditions.

The Dawan tribe in East Nusa Tenggara has its gods, namely *Uis Neno* and *Uis Pala* (Yusdani et al., 2023). This indicates that the Dawan Tribe has the concept of a polytheistic god. This affects the way they view the divine figure that transcends everything. In addition to these two gods, *atoin meto*, another term for the Dawan tribe, refers to the figure of a deceased spirit as an ancestor. The presence of *Bei Nai* has indeed influenced the way *atoin meto* worship *Uis Neno* and *Uis Pala* (Pujiono et al., 2021). This is found in the way rituals and prayers are formulated. One of these rituals is the *Oe Kana* ritual. This ritual provides a perspective on how they see and understand *Uis Neno*, *Uis Pala*, and *Bei Nai* (Arwani & Djahamao, 2024).

## **Research problem**

The research problem of this *Oe Kana* Ritual is that we have not found any articles or scholarly works on its legal and philosophical aspects; scholars have not combined these elements to contribute to understanding this ritual. They focus primarily on the anthropological aspect. For them, this topic is not relevant for analysis in this era. They cite two reasons: the *Oe Kana* ritual is merely an activity of harvest, and the concept of divinity is present in other rituals.

## **Research Focus**

Therefore, this article looks at the *Oe Kana* ritual specifically. This research uses Arnold van Gennep's theory of three ritual stages: pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal. From this stage, we can know the process and each person who joins this ritual. On the other hand, we can find how the Dawan tribe adore their gods. Hopefully, we can find out the concept of divinity in the Dawan tribe.

## **Literature Review**

Since 2017-2023, many studies have focused on the *Oe Honis* tradition. Here are six articles that talk about the *Oe Honis* tradition, the Atoni Tribe, and the concepts of *Uis Neno* and *Uis Pah*: First, Yohanes Kornelius Ethelbert, Muhammad Rizki Pratama, and Didimus Dedi Dhosa, with the title 'The Tradition of Nono, Ume and Uf Atoni Meto in Timor and its Relevance to Public Sector Organisational Culture', analysed the activities of the Atoni Tribe to *Uis Neno* and *Uis Pah* in the *Oe Honis* tradition (Wang et al., 2022). They found that the Atoni tribe's relationship with *Uis Neno* and *Uis Pah* is akin to a client-patron relationship. The Atoni depend on *Uis Neno* and *Uis Pah* as divine entities that provide protection and maintenance in their daily lives. This research examines these close ties during the planting season. Where the Atoni Tribe will perform the *Oe honis* tradition to invite *Uis Neno* and *Uis Pah* to provide good results (Yulianingsih et al., 2024).

Second, Research by Hendrikus Nayuf and John C. Simon with the title 'Sacred Trees and Trees of Knowledge: An Ethno-Theological Study of Atoni Pah Meto and Genesis 2:16-17'. This article examines the role of *Uis Neno* and *Uis Pah* in influencing the relationship between the Atoni Tribe and the universe. They explain that Atoni knowledge comes from the intimacy of maintaining the environment in water, land and air. The largest tribe on Timor Island needs to maintain, nurture and protect (and worship) *Hau* and *Oe Honis*. In this way, the Atoni can communicate with *Uis Neno* and *Uis Pah*, the source of knowledge (Pujiono et al., 2021). As a result, researchers found that the Atoni's virtue comes from respecting the environment, and *Uis Neno* and *Uis Pah*, in turn, bestow their power upon them (Toruan et al., 2021).

Third, Sanhedri Boimau studied the historicity of the *Oe Honis* tradition. This study was written under the title "Values in the *Oe Honis* Legend of the Babuin Village Community, TTS Regency". This study aims to provide an understanding of the life values of the *Oe Honis* tradition. In addition, Sanhedri Boimau explained the meaning and significance of this tradition from its root words, *oe* (water) and

Honis (life), which means from the Atoni tribe's pilgrimage to understand Uis Neno and Uis Pah. He found the paradigm of Oe Honis' historicity that shapes the character of life from one generation to the next (Paga et al., 2022).

Fourth, research by Hendrique de Jesus with the title "The Concept of Fua Pah of the Dawan People as the Highest Form in Comparison with Mircea Eliade's Thought". He found that the Atoni tribe worships the highest thing in the world. Hendrique de Jesus emphasised that there are two persons, Uis Neno and Uis Pah. This research found the way the Atoni tribe communicates with these two figures by calling Uis Nitu. The Atoni see Uis Nitu as an intermediary between humans and Uis Neno and Uis Pah. The Atoni tribe performs the Oe Honis Tradition by calling Uis Nitu to convey requests to Uis Neno and Uis Pah (Syah, 2023).

Fifth, in the book "The Art System of the Dawan Ethnic Community in South Central Timor Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province", I Putu Kusuma Yudha, I Wayan Rupa, and Anak Agung Gde Rai Griya explained that the Oe Honis Tradition runs well when using Bete (male sarong) and Tais (female sarong). This use shows the diversity of creation by using Uis Neno and Uis Pah. The Atoni believe the use of this regional clothing also determines the depth of the relationship with Uis Neno and Uis Pah in the Oe Honis Tradition. In addition to the relationship with Uis Neno and Uis Pah, the use of Bete and Tais strengthens the sense of brotherhood of the Atoni Tribe in the Oe Honis ritual. I Putu Kusuma Yudha, I Wayan Rupa, and Anak Agung Gde Rai Griya vertical (with Uis Neno and Uis Pah) and horizontal (fellow Atoni Tribe) relations (Oki, 2024).

Sixth, research by Ayu Veronika Somawati with the title "Uis Pah and Uis Neno in the Belief of the Boti Tribe in South Central Timor, East Nusa Tenggara". The Oe Honis tradition gave birth to a communion between the Atoni Tribe, Nature, and Uis Neno and Uis Pah. This communion is an important pillar to foster good values that are built in the Atoni Tribe (Santos et al., 2020). The Atoni Tribe has a Halaika Calendar to hold rituals to build relationships between the three pillars of life. Therefore, the Atoni Tribe explores the values of goodness when holding the Oe Honis Tradition in every ritual (Nasution, 2022).

Previous studies have revealed various aspects of the Oe Honis ritual of the Atoni Tribe. The Oe Honis ritual helps to deepen and provide an understanding of something beyond humans, namely Uis neno and Uis Pala. In this paper, the main study lies in the understanding of divinity in the Dawan Tribe in viewing their Polytheism. More precisely, this study explores the Oe Honis ritual and its implications that shape and maintain the spiritual relationship between the Dawan Tribe and Uis Neno and Uis Pah. Thus, the novelty of this paper is to understand the nature of Uis Neno and Uis Pah in the life of the Atoni Tribe.

## **Research Methodology**

This research adopts an ethnographic approach within the qualitative paradigm, focusing on the cultural and ritual practices of the Dawan Tribe. The literature reviewed includes seminal works on Uis Neno, Uis Pala, and Bei Nai, which provide the historical and cultural

context necessary to analyse the Oe Kana ritual. Arnold van Gennep's framework of the rites of passage is employed to examine the Oe Kana ritual in three distinct phases: pra-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal. Interviews were conducted with key informants, including the *atoin amaf* (traditional leader) and knowledgeable Dawan Tribe members, selected for their deep understanding of the Oe Kana ritual. These semi-structured interviews lasted 1–2 hours and explored themes of cultural symbolism, ritual meaning, and community participation. Informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality was maintained. The combination of literature review and interviews ensures a comprehensive understanding of the Oe Kana ritual by integrating theoretical frameworks with primary insights from cultural practitioners. Data from interviews were transcribed, coded thematically, and analysed to identify recurring patterns and connections with the theoretical framework provided by Arnold van Gennep. A review of existing literature complemented this thematic analysis to triangulate findings.

## Results

### *Dawan Tribe*

The Dawan tribe is the largest tribe on the island of Timor. The word "Dawan" comes from the Belu language. They refer to people in the West Timor region, namely North Central Timor, South Central Timor, Kupang and Oekusi as "Dawan." Dawan means those who live in rural or mountainous areas. Thus, Dawan itself does not come from the vocabulary of the Dawan language. (Jesus, 2021)

The Dawan also refer to themselves as *atoin meto*. The two words come from the Dawan language. The word *atoin* means person or man, and the word *meto* means dry. Thus, *atoin meto* is a dry person. Often, the Dawan tribe adds *pah*, which means region or area, between the words *atoin* and *meto* to clarify the reference to the place. As a result, *atoin pah meto* means people who inhabit dry areas. (Djefri Manafe, 2016)

If you look at the concept of Dawan and *atoin pah meto*, then the mention is correct because the condition of West Timor is mountains and savanna. Rainfall in this area is quite low compared to other areas in East Nusa Tenggara. During the rainy season, the Dawan tribe spends time cultivating gardens and rice fields. There, they build a *sane* (hut) to store work tools and food as well as a place to rest. They will stay in the *sane* until the harvest season for both corn and rice. During the dry season, the Dawan Tribe no longer cultivates the gardens and rice fields. They look for other jobs according to their respective professions while waiting for the rainy season to return. For *atoin meto*, rain and rice fields are the hope of life. (Bas, 2024)(Gual & Kaesnube, 2023)

The rainy season brings joy to the Dawan tribe as they can cultivate their gardens and rice fields. This is the moment they have been waiting for all year. During the harvest season of both rice and corn, they will offer thanks to *Uis Neno*, *Uis Pala*, and *Bei Nai* through the *Oe Kana* ritual. This is so that they can have a good season in the following year. Interestingly, this is still done despite crop failure. This means that the harvest not only

shapes the agricultural mindset but also the concept of divinity. (Bas, 2024)

### ***The Three Stages of the Oe Kana Ritual according to Arnold van Gennep***

Etymologically, *Oe* and *Kana* come from the Dawan language, where *oe* means water and *kana* means name or clan. Thus, *Oe Kana* is the water of a name or clan/family (Mahmud, 2022). In other words, this ritual is only owned and performed by a group of people who are from the same clan. For example, the Sili clan performs the *Oe Kana* ritual at the Sili spring. Clans from other names also have springs and perform their rituals. The ritual is led by the *atoin amaf* (Mentel, 2022). If he is absent, then he can appoint someone as a substitute. The *Oe Kana* ritual is performed when harvesting corn and rice, so the purpose of the *Oe Kana* ritual is gratitude to *Uis Neno*, *Uis Pala*, and *Bei Nai* for the blessings given, especially in terms of harvest and crops (Sutarto, 2020).

This research will use the views of Arnold van Gennep, a Dutch ethnographer and folklorist, best known for his studies of ritual observance in various cultures (Sonnex et al., 2022). One of his works is *The Rites of Passage*. (Arnold van Gennep, 1990.) This book provides a scientific method of understanding rituals. Gennep's thinking provides an analysis of three points in understanding a ritual (Czimbalmos, 2021). Therefore, we will understand the *Oe Kana* ritual in three parts: pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal (Pöllänen et al., 2022).

#### ***Pre-liminal of Oe Kana Ritual***

Gennep writes that this stage is the preparatory stage (Longchar, 2020). Where people have a disposition that has not been transformed, in other words, this stage is referred to as the *rite of separation* (Saefudin, 2024). This means that someone needs to leave old habits to enter the ritual stage. At this stage, the Dawan tribe is still gathered, and the ritual has not yet begun. They may receive preparations or instructions for the upcoming ceremony. Here, the Dawan tribe makes preparations such as cleaning the spring. This aims to clean the area of leaves or branches that litter the spring. In addition, everyone can prepare chickens, fire, and others for the benefit of *the Oe Kana* ritual (Hadley Quadros & Dr. Vatika Sibal, 2022).

The Dawan tribe began to prepare themselves by sitting around the spring—the position of sitting or standing needs to see one's function or task in the ritual. The frontmost position is *atoin amaf*. He is the speaker in the ritual. *Atoin amaf* is not just one person, but can also be many people. Next to the *atoin amaf*, the men or women have family clans. Behind them are people who do not belong to the above groups. This seating formation can change if there is another need.

#### ***Liminal Ritual Oe Kana***

The liminal stage is a transitional or threshold phase where the individual has not fully

transitioned from one social status or life situation to another (Sandi et al., 2023). In this phase, the individual is in between two different statuses or worlds. In ritual practice, the tribe or group begins to perform the ritual process. The stage of transition from pre-liminal to liminal, i.e. starting to deliver the words of the chief (Jessica Darveau, 2021).

This liminal stage is very important in a ritual context as it allows individuals to experience the transition and transformation required before they can be reintegrated into the community with a new status or role. It helps to clarify and contextualise the changes they are experiencing (Dekanipa & Setiawan, 2023).

The following are the steps of performing the *Oe Kana* ritual: first, *ta me'o* (cleansing). Before performing the ritual, the *atoin amaf* delivered a prayer to *Uis Neno* and *Uis Pala* to invite the participants to do the cleansing as follows, "*Uis Neno, Uis Pala, himtokom bin le bale'i nok ho tuakin. Fnekan mankai hai tulu'i.*" [Literal translation: Lord of heaven, Lord of earth, you sit respectfully, we have come with offerings, please accept them]. Then, they clean the area around the spring. However, they were not allowed to touch the water first because they had not yet made ritual offerings to *Uis Neno* and *Uis Pala*. The presence of *Bei Nai* is also taken into consideration. *Atoin Amaf* asks for blessings and protection from *Bei Nai* before stepping into the ritual procession. (Bas, 2024)

Second, the *Oe Kana* ritual. *Atoin amaf* and ritual participants bring candles and chickens to the front of the spring. They start to light the candles and say prayers in the Dawan language, "*Uis Neno, Uis apakaet, hom tok mok Bei Nai es ho lalan, neno ia, ho anhin tam aim he mitiab manko. He has a mapo man panatkai. Homsat mutenab nan hai lalam mnaon in ia.*" [Literal translation: Merciful God, who sits with the ancestors. Today, your children have come here to meet you because you are our protector. You also gave us this long road. After the prayer, they slaughter a chicken. The purpose of this slaughter is to see the cecum (appendix). This appendix determines whether or not the supplication prayer is approved. To know if the prayer is answered, the clue is the position of the appendix, whether it is standing upright or not tied to the large intestine of the chicken. If the prayer is not answered, the cecum is bound to the large intestine. (Bas, 2024)

Third, offerings are made to *Uis Neno*, *Uis Pala*, and *Bei Nai* at the spring. These offerings consist of chicken meat (which is slaughtered by *the Oe Kana* ritual) and rice stored in *tupa* (nyiru) made from the Tuak Tree or Lontar Tree. Then, the *atoin amaf* delivers a thanksgiving prayer as follows, "*Uis Neno, Uis Pala, ho manekat, mtulumankai hai hai bale ana'i. Hai mifnekanki. Bei Nai ok-ok kaisam mito ma kaisam metenab hai molkin. Humanity's heart is full of love for each other. This is the first time I've seen a man who has been in a long-term relationship. You are the only one who can do this.*" [Literal translation: *Uis Neno, Uis Pala*, with your love, protect us (tribe). We always look up to you. All *Bei Nai* should not ignore all our complaints. Protect us from all dangers. Help us solve every problem in life. Protect our children in their studies and work every day. After the delivery of the prayer, the *atoin amaf* began to give offerings to both women and men to sprinkle them into the

water. (Bas, 2024)

Fourth, making offerings to *Uis Neno*, *Uis Pala*, and *Bei Nai* by sowing them in the spring. The Dawan Tribe believes that they also eat the harvest of the Dawan Tribe. Then, someone starts to distribute the offerings to all the Dawan Tribe (participants) to eat. All must eat the offerings because it is a sign of respect to *Uis Neno*, *Uis Pala*, and *Bei Nai* and a sign of brotherhood within the Dawan Tribe. This fifth stage is the end of the *Oe Kana* ritual (Breno Rodrigo de Oliveira ALENCAR, 2023).

Before returning home, the *atoin amaf* calls each name of the ritual participants to return home. This call is a sign of farewell to *Uis Neno*, *Uis Pala*, and *Bei Nai* at the spring. If one does not do so, then one's soul is still in that place. To summon the soul of someone who is still in that place, it is necessary to bring a three-year-old rooster or more than that to perform the soul summoning. Therefore, the *atoin amaf* must summon before returning home. (Bas, 2024)

The process and steps in the *Oe Kana* ritual between one clan and another are the same. Where the process starts from cleaning to going home. However, the difference is in the determination of chicken feathers. Some clans use red-feathered roosters while others use white roosters. This selection is not by the will of each person, but by the instructions of the *atoin amaf*. He shows the chicken feathers based on his vision. (Martinus Sili, 2024)

### ***Post-liminal Ritual Oe Kana***

After the liminal stage, the next stage in the ritual process, according to van Gennep, is the *reincorporation* stage. In this stage, individuals who have gone through the liminal and transformation phase finally return and are integrated into the community with a new status or role (Sherry E. Sullivan, 2021). Van Gennep explains that at this stage, each tribe has progressed or changed from the pre-liminal stage (Ismael Apud & Oriol Romaní, 2020). In addition, the expectations before the ritual can become real (Alcorta & Sosis, 2020).

In the *Oe Kana* ritual, the understanding and hope of the Dawan tribe are answered. Where the Dawan Tribe's relationship with *Uis Neno*, *Uis Pala*, and *Bei Nai* is not just a belief, but a reflection of the richness of culture and traditions that should be preserved, these three entities represent the complex and meaningful belief system of animism and dynamism of the Dawan Tribe. In addition, these relationships provide meaning and purpose to life for the Dawan Tribe.

*The Oe Kana* ritual is not only a spiritual moment and a tribute to nature, but also a means to build awareness and commitment of the Dawan Tribe in protecting the environment. Through this ritual, they not only reflect on their relationship with nature but are also encouraged to take concrete action.

The awareness that grows from this ritual encourages the Dawan Tribe to be actively

involved in environmental conservation efforts. They understand that protecting springs is not only an individual responsibility, but also a collective responsibility. *The Oe Kana* ritual binds the Dawan Tribe community in environmental conservation efforts. With a shared spirit, they work together to safeguard natural resources and ensure their sustainability for future generations—efforts to maintain the ecosystem by planting trees around the spring. In general, they plant Banyan trees. This tree has a high water absorption capacity into the ground surface so that the spring does not dry out. (Usbobo, 2019)

The Dawan tribe also protects the springs by giving a prohibition commonly called *bunuk*. *Bunuk* is a customary prohibition from each clan for anyone not to touch or approach the spring. Usually, they keep a feather of a rooster (chicken from the sacrifice of offerings in the *Oe Kana* ritual) and a coconut. If someone does not follow the prohibition (touching and approaching the spring), then he can get a curse from *Uis Neno*, *Uis Pala*, and *Bei Nai*. This method is effective in keeping the spring water flowing. (Usbobo, 2019)

## Discussion

The Dawan tribe sees that there are entities that influence the universe. The order in the world is governed by a figure that exceeds human abilities. Their ability can move the rainy season into the dry season and vice versa (Agnes M. P. Benu, Serlinia Rambu Anawoli, Hilda Natonis, 2023). They call these entities *Uis Neno* and *Uis Pala*. These two figures rule their respective places. In addition to them, there is also the figure of *Bei Nai*, who is the spirit of a deceased ancestor. They also influence the Dawan Tribe's understanding of seeing something divine (transcendent) as well as being present with them (B. Ahmad, Muh. Nasrum, Siti Hajar Aepu, 2021). The following is an explanation of the three entities.

### *Uis Neno*

The Dawan tribe sees *Uis Neno* as a high god. Indeed, the concept of *Uis Neno* arises from the Dawan language, where *Uis* means king or lord while *Neno* means day, sky and sun. Etymologically, *Uis Neno* means god (in) the sky (Sandi et al., 2023). He rules in the sky. *Uis Neno* is an image of the supreme god who resembles the Sun. He has the power to give light to everyone. In addition, he is also a negative image because he always burns plants, and their leaves fall (Naiheli, 2023).

The Dawan tribe views him as a figure capable of giving life from the sky. *Uis Neno* builds the life of the Dawan Tribe in balance with nature. In reality, he is present by providing rain, bright sun, and others. He even regulates the dry and rainy seasons (Jacob, 2021).

The largest tribe in West Timor expects *Uis Neno*'s intervention when cultivating their plantation (Lapenangga et al., 2020). The presence of *Uis Neno* can help them obtain a bountiful harvest. There are several titles pinned to *Uis Neno* from the Dawan Tribe in the *Oe Kana* ritual: first, *Uis Anaplenat neno tunan* (Lord of the sky ruler above). He has all things above the sky (read kingdom). Second, *Uis Neno Apinat-Aklahat* (God of the sky is burning or flaming). This description explains his figure that illuminates the Atoni Tribe. Third, *Uis Neno amnaut* (God of

the sky who is merciful). Fourth, *Uis Neno* alikin-apeat (God of the sky who creates and organises) (Gual & Kaesnube, 2023). The image of a god who created humans and the universe. He also places each person according to his will (Kumbayoni, 2024).

### ***Uis Pala***

*Uis Pala* can be interpreted literally as "low god" or "land god". In the context of Dawan beliefs, *Uis Pala* symbolises the divine power that manifests in every inanimate and living object (plants) on earth. The Dawan believe that *Uis Pala* also strengthens solidarity and unity among members of the Dawan community (Kosmas, 2021). When they gather in traditional or religious events, it can create a strong bond among the Dawan Tribe (DNM, 2019).

*Uis Pala* is respected and revered as an eternal and loving manifestation of divine power (Sekundus Septo Pigang Ton, 2024). Traditional leaders or atoin amaf often seek blessings and protection from *Uis Pala*. In addition, *Uis Pala* also symbolises the cycles of nature and the changing seasons. In the life of the Dawan tribe, *Uis Pala* is also an inspiration for their art and culture (Taena, 2022). They create songs, dances and other artworks that depict the greatness and beauty of nature, including the important role of the sun in their lives. Through art and culture, respect for *Uis Pala* is not only realised spiritually, but also becomes an integral part of their identity and pride as a tribe that lives in harmony with nature (Solita Seniorita Kase, Fransiskus Bustan, 2024).

The nature of *Uis Pala* in the *Oe Kana* ritual: first, *Uis Pala* anaplenat (The nature of an omnipotent lower god) (B. Ahmad, Muh. Nasrum, Siti Hajar Aepu, 2021). If *Uis Neno* rules in the sky, then *Uis Pala* rules on earth. This omnipotence is associated with the presence of *Uis Pala*, who overcomes all bad things or mas okan (evil) on earth. Second, *Uis Pala* apakaet (The eternal and loving lower god). Atoin amaf often seek blessings and protection from *Uis Pala*. Third, *Uis Pala* amanekat (a lowly God described as having a generous nature). *Uis Pala*'s generosity in providing abundant harvests. He also generously helps the Dawan tribe from hunger (Kikhau & Nenoliu, 2020).

### ***Bei Nai***

*Bei Nai* are not gods like *Uis Neno* and *Uis Pala*, but those who have passed away and live in the mas okan world (spirit world). *Bei Nai* refers to ancestral spirits who are considered to watch over and protect the activities of every human being every day. These ancestral spirits also know all the words and deeds of humans because they are close to humans (Tefu et al., 2023).

The image of *Bei Nai* is an anthropomorphism that has human-like characteristics, feelings, and behaviours. *Bei Nai* can be angry, sad, and happy like humans. For example, in the prayer at the *Oe Kana* ritual, the atoin amaf expresses "kais mito" to *Bei Nai* (Juanto Canceriady Nalle et al., 2022). The Dawan tribe believes that they have a home in the spirit world, so offerings in the *Oe Kana* ritual signify that they also take part in the home (Mentel, 2022).

*Bei Nai* is believed to possess magical powers and wisdom capable of influencing the daily lives of the Dawan Tribe. It is important to note that *Bei Nai's* presence is not only limited to individual spiritual entities but also encompasses the broader relationship between humans and nature. The Dawan Tribe consults traditional leaders to seek guidance and protection from *Bei Nai*, especially before undertaking activities such as hunting and farming (Betty & Nusarasriya, 2020).

### ***Tremendum and Fascinans Experience***

The result of these discussions provides insight into knowing Uis Neno, Uis Pala, and *Bei Nai*. Actually, it is not new for the Dawan tribe to know them. Their titles help them categorise how to worship them. The identity of Uis Neno collaborates with the presence of Uis Pala. Then, *Bei Nai* fulfils the other aspects that are not contained within themselves. Overall, the Dawan worship them, focusing on how to influence human life on earth and the future in heaven.

On the other hand, the Dawan tribe performs the Oe Kana ritual not only to communicate with Uis Neno, Uis Pala, and *Bei Nai*, but also to escape the trouble in their lives, including harvest failure in the next season. In *The Idea of the Holy (Das Heilige)* book, Rudolf Otto explores the nature of religious experience, focusing on the non-rational, emotional, and experiential aspects of encountering the divine (Farid, 2024).

Otto makes the religious experience focus solely on *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. The *tremendum* aspect of the experience evokes feelings of awe, fear, and reverence in the presence of something vastly greater than oneself. It is overwhelming and transcendent. The "fascinating" or alluring aspect of the numinous adds to this experience. Despite the fear and awe, the divine also attracts people with a sense of wonder, love, and longing (Farid, 2024).

From my research, the Dawan tribe performs the Oe Kana ritual because they have tremendous experience in Uis Neno, Uis Pala, and *Bei Nai*. They want them to bless their harvest, not failure. They believe that Uis Neno, Uis Pala, and *Bei Nai* have the power to destroy them. On the other hand, the Dawan tribe gives offerings to them because of their success, because they want to. So, the Dawan tribe aims to perform this ritual because they fear missing the next harvest.

### **Conclusions**

The *Oe Kana* ritual is not just a tradition passed down from generation to generation, but a manifestation of the rich spiritual values held dear by the Dawan Tribe. More than just a celebration, this ritual is a means to establish a close relationship between humans and *Uis Neno*, *Uis Pala*, and *Bei Nai*, the gods and ancestors they worship. These beliefs are not just dogmas that are taught, but are deeply embedded in daily life, guiding their every action and decision (Mason, 2023).

The spiritual values embedded in the *Oe Kana* ritual serve as a moral compass and a source of strength for the Dawan Tribe. Their belief in *Uis Neno*, *Uis Pala*, and *Bei Nai* provides a sense of security and tranquillity when facing various obstacles and challenges in life. They

trust that these deities are always present and guiding them, empowering them to overcome difficult times and recover with renewed vigour.

The Dawan Tribe's firm belief in the gods has also enabled them to maintain the traditions and culture of their ancestors with respect and responsibility. *The Oe Kana* ritual is a symbol of cultural preservation, where noble values and local wisdom are passed down from generation to generation. Through this ritual, the Dawan Tribe not only remembers their ancestors but also strengthens their identity as part of a community rich in culture and tradition.

The rich spiritual values and strong beliefs of the Dawan Tribe that shine through in the *Oe Kana* ritual make it a unique and meaningful cultural window. This tradition not only reflects the Dawan way of life but also offers valuable lessons on the importance of preserving spiritual and cultural values in human life. Amid the onslaught of modernisation, the *Oe Kana* ritual serves as a reminder that humans should not lose their identity and cultural roots.

### ***Suggestions for Future Research***

*Oe Kana* ritual always gives a new experience to explore. It just happens in one moment in a year. That is harvest time. However, the Dawan tribe make it better each time. New research must explore this thing with a new contribution from a different perspective. This research must be empirical research using qualitative methodology. Each member of the Dawan tribe must speak or contribute to the research. At this time, no one takes care of their understanding. This research can give new insight to all people who want to know the *Oe Kana* ritual from the Dawan tribe members. So, this research is always present.

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