

## TRADITIONS AND MYTHS OF KAJANG PEOPLE IN SOUTH SULAWESI

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### ABSTRACT

*The research aimed to elaborate the myths following traditions in explicit connection with the Kajang indigenous people's dwellings and way of life. The existence of Kajang indigenous people was known for preserving their traditions with austerity. Clinging to their traditional belief system, Pasang ri Kajang was used to protect their sacred forest and natural environment. Some myths still seemed relevant and took part actively in their everyday lives. This was an empirical qualitative research, with the researcher directly visiting the location to experience the cultural situation and the people of Kajang. First-hand experience, photographing, hand sketching, interviews, and focus group discussions were employed to collect data. Analyzing the characteristics of the Kajang area from the maps, narrative analysis for the interview, focus group discussion, sketches, manual notes, photographs, and cross-analysis from literature studies resulted in the difference between inner and outer Kajang. It is found that eight practical conducts closely related to the myths are elaborated, such as oral communication, no electricity, no clay roof tile, no footwear, no colorful clothes, no decoration or modern material, orientation of buildings, and odd numbering and time calculation. Some limitations and suggestions are also presented.*

**Keywords:** traditions myths, Kajang indigenous culture, built environment

### INTRODUCTION

The Kajang indigenous people are known for their faithful adherence to the indigenous law, *Pasang ri Kajang*, and the act of conserving sacred forests and natural resources (Gising, 2023). Belong to Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, the Konjo area is divided into Highland Konjo, Coastal Konjo, and Tana Toa, where the Kajang people live (Imran & Sabarrang, 2022). They only speak Konjo dialect (Faisal, Aksa, & Samad, 2012), a mixture of Bugis and Makassar dialects. Figure 1 shows that Tana Toa belongs to the Konjo area in South Sulawesi.

The term 'indigenous' is used in the research to explain the original characteristics of Kajang, instead of 'traditional', to contrast with the modern or 'outside' influence. Two famous researchers have been dedicated to indigenous architecture and ethnographic studies: Roxana Waterson and Amos Rapoport. Pointing to her perception of built form in Southeast Asia, indigenous architecture refers to local

culture, i.e., the symbolic elements of architecture and cosmologies, as opposed to colonialism or European influence (Waterson, 1990). Traditional buildings are known as full of rituals and symbolism from the start of their construction to the decorations and the number of their parts (Waterson, 1990). Rapoport, in his famous statement, emphasizes that the meaning in built form lies in people, "people want their environment to mean certain things", the symbolic meaning of nature latent and associational (Rapoport, 1982, in Waterson, 1990). He later talks about the important role of culture that links people and the environment, which deals with symbolism (meaning), artifacts, technology, the built environment (which he writes about), religion, magic and myth, ritual and performance, art, music and dance, and so on (Rapoport, 2005). Further, he acknowledges that one cannot study only buildings without their inhabitants and their possessions and furnishings, i.e., material culture, and how user groups are mostly affected by culture and make 'irrational' choices (Rapoport, 2005).

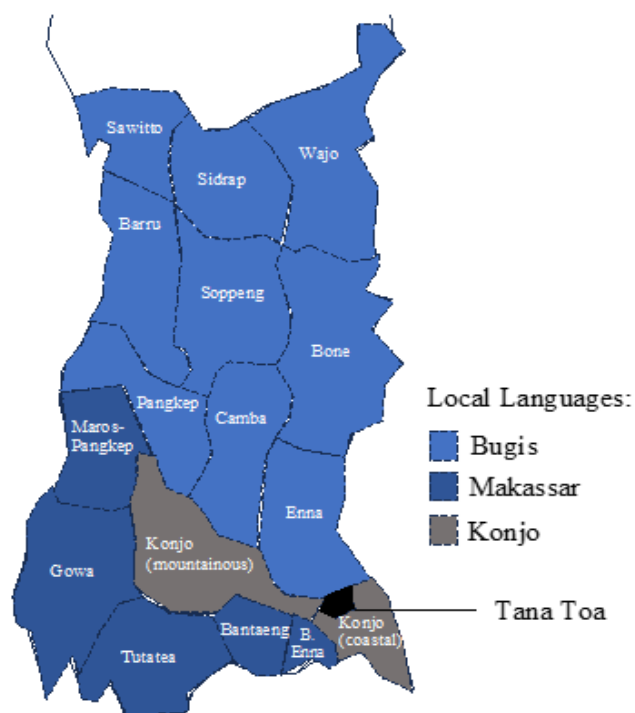


Figure 1 Tana Toa Belongs to Konjo Area in South Sulawesi (Imran & Sabarrang, 2022)

Myths are said to be the main motivation behind every ritual of house construction in many regions of Indonesia in astoundingly similar ways related to the

spirit of ancestors to reside and give blessings to the new house (Waterson, 1990). In contrast to ‘modern’ religion, myths are suggested to have more meaning in the culture of society (Bakri, 2018). Myths are the expression of man toward mysterious and powerful nature, which becomes part of local wisdom, and the power of myths results from the relationship between humans and the whole planet (Takwim, 2021). Myth is a traditional story, especially concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, typically involving supernatural beings or events (Apple Inc., 2023). Myths are part of the intangible culture of local wisdom, which carries the ‘indigenous’ value. Traditions and myths thus become important parts of this research on indigenous culture and architecture.

Previous studies have mentioned the meta-empirical aspects of cosmology, i.e., myth and mysticism; the Kajang people’s belief system is explained relatively closely compared to the ‘modern’ religion, Islam (Sahabuddin & Hildayanti, 2023). Most recent and relevant studies associated with the construction of the Kajang houses mentioning *Pasang ri Kajang* as the ultimate guide to the built environment of the Kajang people also do not elaborate on the myths in clear and explicit ways (Table 1). There are no explicit connections between the practical way of life or housing construction and myths. The myths are mostly related to the religions and ceremonies and are associated with forest preservation.

Table 1 Recent Studies Related to Kajang Settlement and Way of Living

No	Themes, Authors, & Year	Research Objectives & Methods	Analysis & Results
1.	<i>Pasang ri Kajang</i> and forest preservation (Kamaluddin & Mustolehudin, 2020)	Detailed meaning in <i>Pasang ri Kajang</i> to the forest preservation. Qualitative interviews to informants in four villages.	<i>Pasang</i> has straight-forward meaning to guide the people in how to conduct and treat human and nature.
2.	Settlements based on <i>Pasang Ri Kajang</i> (Osman, 2020)	Concept of Kajang settlement based on <i>Pasang ri Kajang</i> : location, vegetation, public facility, and road networks. Descriptive qualitative, purposive sampling interview.	Descriptive analysis to interpret <i>Pasang ri Kajang</i> to the standard of residential housing policy. Settlement areas comply with <i>Pasang ri Kajang</i> : basic housing facilities and sustainability concepts.
3.	Local wisdom in spatial planning (Takwim, 2021)	Association of <i>Pasang ri Kajang</i> to the concept of spatial arrangement of the whole settlement.	Text interpretation and zoning analysis. <i>Pasang</i> is the main source of concept in land divisions and control.
4.	Reflection of <i>Pasang Ri Kajang</i> in traditional settlements (Erawati, Lewa, & Thosibo, 2022)	Determine the form of settlements and cultural forms that reflect the values of <i>Pasang</i> . Observation, site survey, and interview with locals.	Descriptive analysis and classification. Traditional belief system: sacred areas of settlement; sacred parts of the house to store food & objects of worship ceremonies.
5.	Healthy homes of <i>Ammatoa</i> (Abidah, Yahya, & Rauf, 2022)	How <i>Pasang ri Kajang</i> embodied in the <i>Kajang Dalam</i> houses. Qualitative methods to investigate culture, beliefs and behavior.	Redrawing ten houses in Benteng hamlet. Identical form, local terms, anthropometric measures, house activity, and water management.
6.	Cosmology in life and architecture (Sahabuddin & Hildayanti, 2023)	Identifying the cosmological concepts in architecture and daily life. Descriptive-qualitative analysis with phenomenological approach.	The five religious activities, the three primary deities, some rituals related to Patuntung belief system. Three zones of forest: sacred, boundary, public.

Table 1 Recent Studies Related to Kajang Settlement and Way of Living (Continued)

No	Themes, Authors, & Year	Research Objectives & Methods	Analysis & Results
7.	Calculation system of <i>Bilang Allo</i> based on <i>Pasang ri Kajang</i> (Gising, 2023)	Explaining the phenomenon of calculating time about circulation or planting season and nature conservation. Descriptive qualitative approach: interview, observation, focus group discussion, recording, documentation, elicitation.	Seven steps of analysis. Seven calculation system of <i>Bilang Allo</i> : Good and bad days, animal behavior, natural symptoms, rainfall, the moon, changes in weather & air temperature, and in plant morphology.

One research about the myth and punishment of theft in Kajang is conducted through interviews with the *Ammatoa* and the selected local informants, and literature studies (Rais, 2017). The researchers play an important role in descriptive qualitative analysis, i.e., elaborating, describing, and explaining the research problem. Another research on the settlements influenced by *Pasang ri Kajang* employs a qualitative approach from a survey by purposive sampling and interviewing public representatives: *Ammatoa*, the village's chief, the hamlet's chief, and other respected people, in descriptive analysis (Osman, 2020). Mostly, phenomenology seeks interpretation and explanation of personal experiences involving intuition, analysis, and illustration (Sahabuddin & Hildayanti, 2023).

As the core of the belief system in the Kajang area, *Pasang ri Kajang* originated from the myths and has become inseparable in conducting their everyday activities (Gising, 2023). The research fills the gap by clarifying the position of traditions and myths to the physical or material culture. A setting comprises a milieu, defining a situation where ongoing and predictable behavior occurs (Rapoport, 2005). Furthermore, the milieu and its behavior are linked by rules regarding what is appropriate and expected in the setting. These rules are specific to the setting and the situation that it define. All of these phenomena are culturally extremely variable.

The research aims to elaborate on the myths of the Kajang people in explicit connection with their traditional dwellings and ways of living. Three research questions guide the analysis and result: (1) What traditions and myths are connected directly to how the Kajang people live and build their houses? (2) What is the difference between inner and outer Kajang regions in keeping with the traditions?

## METHODS

There are nine Hamlets in Tana Toa, of which 200 houses are each. Balagana and Jannaya belong to outer Kajang; Balambina, Lurayya, Sobbu, Benteng, Pangi, Bongkina, and Tombolo belong to inner Kajang (Figure 2).

This is an empirical qualitative research, with the researcher directly visiting the location to experience firsthand the cultural situation and the people of Kajang. The researcher reached Tana Toa in Bulukumba Regency from Makassar in 4-5 hours

travel by bus on 6-7 October 2023. The researcher stayed overnight at the head of Balagana Hamlet House on the following day after visiting the *Ammatoa* house (Figure 3). The interview was conducted in the *Ammatoa* house in inner Kajang, Benteng hamlet, and with the head of the Balagana hamlet in outer Kajang. The researcher also interviewed some villagers, observed the surrounding area, and stayed at the chief house in outer Kajang one night. The researcher had a group discussion with elders and the apparatus in the chief's house. Literature study helps verify the traditions and myths surrounding the life of the Kajang people, which are present and ruling their everyday life about their built environment.

Overall, the data-gathering methods for the empirical qualitative research are: (1) First-hand experience to observe the natural and cultural settings and perceive how the villagers' behavior, manners, and way of communication in their natural settings toward outsiders and each other. (2) Photographing and hand sketching are interchangeable. In inner Kajang, when photographing is prohibited, sketches and notes are necessary. (3) Interviews are done mainly with respected people, the *Ammatoa*, the village chief, and some random villagers, both males and females, whomever the researcher met along the way. (4) Focus group discussions are held with researchers from other universities in a workshop and informally along the journey.

The analysis focuses on the main idea of the traditions and myths that imply the everyday life of the Kajang people. How inner and outer Kajang differ from anticipating the influence of modern technology and information regarding their built environment. Since the researcher is the main instrument for analytical interpretation, narrative analysis is employed to analyze texts and visual materials. Narrative analysis keeps stories intact as a collective way of constructing reality (May, Griffin, & Seale, 2012). Cross-analysis is essential to recognize similar themes across cases found in numerous studies (Ladany, Thompson, & Hill, 2012). In short, the analysis in this research consists of three steps: (1) Analyzing the main characteristics and relative position of the Kajang area in South Sulawesi and redrawing the maps from various studies; (2) Narrative analysis of the results of the interviews, focus group discussion, sketches, manual notes, and photographs from the first-hand observations; (3) Cross-analysis of the belief system of Kajang people from literature studies.

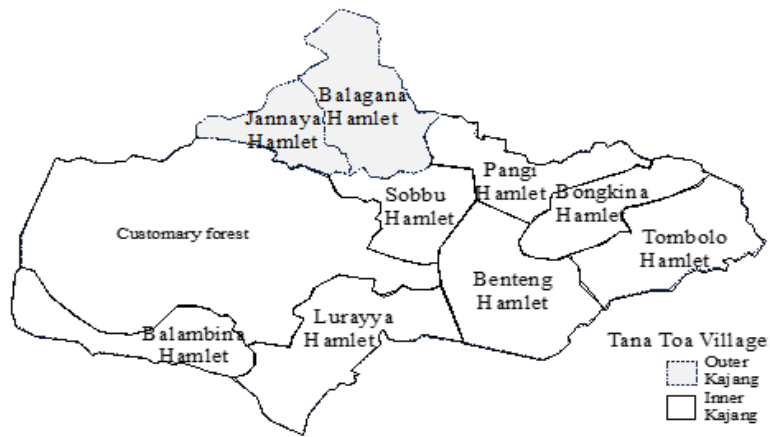


Figure 2 Inner and Outer Kajang of Tana Toa Village, Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi Province

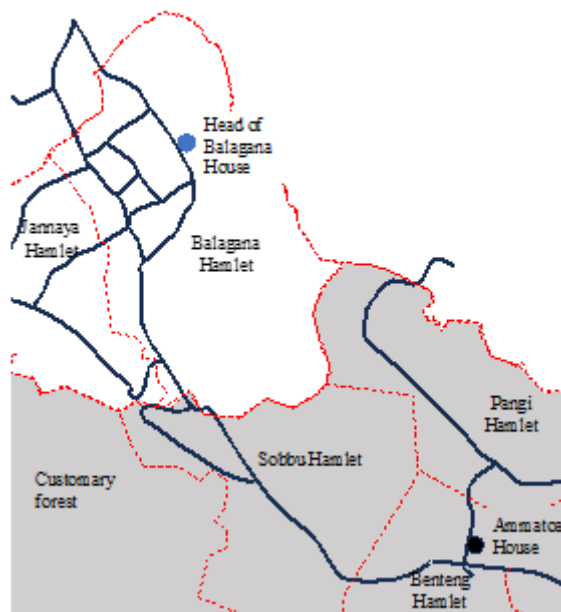


Figure 3 Location of the Chief House in Balagana and Ammatoa House in Benteng

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The first myth tells that Tana Toa is the first land that appeared on earth, called *Tombolo* (shell), which later expanded to other lands, where the origin of the first kingdoms emerged (Takwim, 2021). *Tana Toa* means the earliest ground, inherited from their predecessors (Rais, 2017). Concerning the myth that *Tana Toa* is the first land that appeared, that first ground becomes a sacred forest (*borong karama*). This sacred forest is completely prohibited by humans and even animals unless they are involved in rituals such as the inauguration of *Ammatoa* and the *Pa'nganroang* ceremony (Rais, 2017). The myths say that if a man enters the sacred forest, he cannot get out; even if they could exit, they will die. Animals such as dogs, when they can escape, cannot bark. No one absolutely can cut down a tree (Nisa et al., 2023). This sacred forest is officially protected by the Indonesian government

as a conservation area only recently in 2016 (Isfawani, Junaeda, & Sumilih, 2022). They believe the forest is a passageway for a deceased to heaven from the earth. Touching a thing belonging to somebody else is also prohibited as they believe it contains a spirit.

During visits, there is a sacred big tree and a sacred stone inside the traditional market in outer Kajang (Figure 4), which could serve as a landmark in the area. Some stones are sacred and have different meanings depending on their shape, such as flat, ring, and scratched stones, similar to menhir for worshipping God during the megalithic era (Erawati, 2016). The children say not to touch the stone when they happen to be there.

A strict message is delivered before entering the inner Kajang: No touching unattended things, no questioning things they do not belong to during the visit, no swearing or bad words are allowed, and no dirty and bad thinking is allowed. While entering

the village in inner Kajang, the researcher is more deliberately greeted by the sound of nature. As walking through a rough path full of stones with bare feet, a strong sound of forest beetles comes from the left side. A moment later, it is heard one dog barking or howling from the direction ahead. Meanwhile, on the right side, the sound of other animals, such as four-legged animals in a group, makes a restless sound; it is an unfamiliar sound to people from a non-natural environment. To identify the sound of nature, one must live inside the natural environment, let nature govern, and freely express oneself. On the first steps of entering, these sounds seem more heightened, as if it is greeting. Perhaps because the visitors are in a big group of people, it makes them 'feel' uneasy, alert, aware, and on the lookout as one guarding their territory.



Figure 4 A Sacred Stone & Tree behind the Traditional Market, Outer Kajang (Author, 2023)

*Pasang Ri Kajang* is the indigenous laws passed down by *Ammatoa* about the perception, cognition, and attitude of the Kajang people in implementing simplicity and preserving their natural environment (Misbah & Adriyan, 2020). The first rule is to keep the earth with its living being in it: the sky, man, and forest. The second rule is when cutting down the tree in the forest, the rain will reduce, the water source will reduce, the forest will call the rain, the root will widen the water source, and the leaves will call the rain. The third rule is when they want to cut down one tree in the forest under the permission of *Ammatoa*, the most prominent leader of the Kajang people (Nisa et al., 2023). They have to prepare beforehand to plant two trees until they grow mature.

In response to the improvement and changes in the community, some rules, such as nine pasal, are allowed to be added to *Pasang ri Kajang*. According to the interview, the nine pasal (clauses) are pragmatic and added along the way; thus, *Pasang ri Kajang* bears the meaning of a thousand directions (*seribu*

*jurusan*) (Ammatoa, 2023). These nine clauses contain practical applications of how to handle crimes, which is breaking the harmonious relationships with nature and among men and women. This fact confirms the reasons why *Pasang ri Kajang* is still relevant today (Takwim, 2021) to ensure a harmonious life for the Kajang people (Misbah & Adriyan, 2020; Kaltsum & Muhammad, 2022).

Tana Toa is also where the first man came to live. *Tana* means the ground, and *Toa* from *Tau Wa* means man and his belongings. There are at least two different myths about the first human: *Turie' Akrakna* (the God Almighty) commanded *Batara Guru* (the master teacher) to inspect the Earth; he reports after returning that man is needed on the Earth; while riding on a bird with two heads called *Koajang*, the origin of *Kajang*. The myth says that Ammatoa is the first human descended from *Turie' Akrakna* to the world, the Kajang people believe, to the place where they reside. Since he is appointed magically and secretly as part of the myth of origin from Kajang, who is for a lifetime, Kajang people pay allegiance to *Ammatoa*, their sacred and highest spiritual leader (Takwim, 2021).

As a leader, *Ammatoa* is responsible for guiding the Kajang people to preserve the traditions of *Pasang Ri Kajang* (Kaltsum & Muhammad, 2022) as the source of information, education, and technology (Andriani, Nurlala, & Ramli, 2022). However, the current surge in information and modern communication technology is unavoidable (Abdullah, Cangara, & Tang, 2014). *Ammatoa*, the man from Tana Toa, rules alongside his children as apparatus: as the head of the agriculture called *Galla' Pantama*, the head of rituals in charge of the penalty of *Pasang Ri Kajang* as *Galla' Kajang*, the spokesman of *Ammatoa* as *Galla' Puto*, as the representative of *Ammatoa* to the outsiders as *Galla' Lombo'*, and governing the fishery and marine as *Galla' Malle'leng* (Kaltsum & Muhammad, 2022; Husain, Puryanti, & Setijowati, 2021).

Inner Kajang is called *Ilalang Embayya*, where modernization is banned, the taboo area (Syamsurijal, 2021), while outer Kajang is called *Ipantarang Embayya*, where the people are free to use electricity and embrace modern technology (Andriani, Nurlala, & Ramli, 2022). Only around the 1990s when the local government incorporated knowledge of *Pasang ri Kajang* into the school curriculum, the people of inner Kajang finally opened to the 'outside' world and allowed their children to receive modern education. First schools are built near the border gate of inner Kajang (Kamaluddin & Mustolehudin, 2020).

The second myth tells the story of an honest person who could avoid a burning iron crowbar when asked to grab it during an investigation. A real thief/culprit could be caught when their hands get burnt. This ritual of a burning crowbar (*Tunu Panroltik*) is one of the rituals to catch the theft; incense burning (*Tunu Passau*) and taking an oath (*Patunra* or *Sumpah Pocong*). The tradition regarding the laws is ruling over the Kajang people. However, man could be

rebellious or neglectful. To anticipate that the laws from indigenous laws, the religious beliefs, and the governmental enforcement are now these threefold laws imposed into the lives of the Kajang people, particularly in inner Kajang. During the interview, there is no confirmation that those offenders ever are proven to lie and punished, but there is a story of a theft where all suspected persons are compelled to hold a burning crowbar in a ritual to prove the stealing of seeds in a company area outside inner Kajang. Even though at that moment the real culprit is not found among the audience, it is considered effective since there are no more reports of theft or forest destruction. This happens in Batu Nilamung, based on an interview on 20 December 2016 (Rais, 2017).

Ammatoa has said that once a lawbreaker gets caught and is proven wrong by the indigenous belief system (*Patuntung*), the ‘modern’ religious system (Islam), and the police (national government), they should prepare even for the death penalty (Ammatoa, 2023). This justifies the religious belief of the inner Kajang people is rooted strongly in their predecessors, the Pasang, the message of the first human of Tana Towa. Islam arriving later from the ‘outside’ world comes second, even though at the moment both the inner and outer Kajang people mostly follow Islam, among any other world religions, to some degree where they fit the way of life (Takwim, 2021). The myths originating from traditional beliefs are still strong to keep them from any harmful human intentions and guard their afterlives (Bakri, 2018). Table 2 shows punishment in *Pasang Ri Kajang*.

Table 2 Punishment in *Pasang Ri Kajang*

No	Violation	Penalty/Value	
		Object	Money (in million)
1.	Wood cutting ( <i>anna 'bang kaju</i> ), honey ( <i>tunu bani</i> )	Double pay	1
2.	Rattan ( <i>annatta uhe</i> ), shrimp ( <i>rao doang</i> )	Double pay	2
3.	Rape	1 cow	44
4.	Unwanted pregnancy	1 horse	33
5.	Walking together man-woman	1 goat	12
6.	Thievery	Double pay + police arrest	6, 8, & 12
7.	Lying	<i>Pocong</i> oath or holding a burning iron bar	

The third myth says man should be humble and live a simple and modest life far from greed because life today is the journey to the afterlife. There are songs for the death ritual based on the myth that

death is a life journey hereafter, and their life period will determine their happiness in the afterlife (Bakri, 2018). This brings people to the restriction of clothing to black or dark color (the dress or sarong and the head turban *Passapu*). The people of Kajang, both in inner and outer Kajang, now could wear colorful clothes, though black clothes are maintained by a few elderly and respected people. According to the interview, the black and white clothes represent night and day, and symbolize human eyes (Ammatoa, 2023). There are no explicit imperative rules in *Pasang ri Kajang*, but the fact that in contrast to colorful clothes, black and white fashion fits the definition of a simple way of life, mentioned in *Pasang ri Kajang* as *Tallasa tuna na Kamase-mase*; a message to ‘live modest and unpretentious’ (Takwim, 2021). Self-made black or dark *sarong*, called *Tope Le'Leng*, is woven by the Kajang women and worn by men and women, particularly during rituals or ceremonies (Figure 5). The respected male wears a black head turban *Passapu*, symbolizing leadership or adulthood (Figure 6) (Isfawani, Junaeda, & Sumilih, 2022). The people in inner Kajang are all barefoot, while only very few are barefoot in outer Kajang. Barefoot means for them to stay connected to the ground, feel the ground, and be cleansed by it, especially during rites.



Figure 5 Older People Mostly Wearing Dark Sarong, Both Men and Women (Author, 2023)



Figure 6 Respected People Wearing Dark Sarong and Head Turban *Passapu* (Author, 2023)

Four prohibitions are regulated inside *Pasang Ri Kajang*, i.e., wood cutting, honey collecting by burning the bees, shrimp collecting, and rattan collecting (Ammatoa, 2023). Violating the laws will immediately incur punishment. Each violation has

specific consequences, strictly imposed according to its traditions and beliefs. For instance, raping a girl, which costs one a cow, is meant to propose to a girl in marriage in addition to the *Panai* money offered by the bridegroom to spend on the wedding procession (Andriani, Nurlela, & Ramli, 2022). Overall, there are threefold punishments by the laws: *Ba'bala* or whipping, *Tunu Panroli* or holding a burning iron bar when the suspect is in denial, and *Tunu Passau* or burning incense when the suspect is avoiding the sentence. Those who are not lying will pass *Tunu Panroli*. Otherwise, a pocong oath is imposed on the person suspected of lying while wrapped in burial clothes (Wazzan, 2018).

The fourth myth is to keep their connections to the earth. This explains why all villagers in inner Kajang are not allowed to wear sandals or shoes. Outsiders or visitors are also required by foot or horse since motorcycles and cars are prohibited (Andriani, Nurlela, & Ramli, 2022). During a brief barefoot walk in inner Kajang, even though the researcher's team felt a bit of pain in their soles, no one complained, and the villagers looked happy as it is part of their healthy habits. Even the children could run up the rocky and hilly ground without any footwear with smiles on their faces. When some kids pass by, after playing with water with their wet clothes, they greet by saying "Halo". Some other adults reply with greeted with the local language for asking for permission, "Tabek". They just reply, "Iyek" meaning yes. Half of the way to the *Ammatoa* house, it passes a small creek where the children and several women are seen playing and washing themselves. The same myth that man should be barefoot applies to the houses' pillars. They should be planted directly to the ground, implying that the ground or earth is the source of life and to keep the connection to the earth (Sharon & Paranoan, 2020). Table 3 shows daily products or mannerism in Kajang.

Table 3 Daily Products or Mannerism

No	Tradition	Outer Kajang	Inner Kajang
1.	Black or dark woven sarong or <i>Passapu</i> (only male)	Elderly and village officials, and few people in general	Only elderly and village officials; common people are free to wear other color
2.	Earthen- ware or basket for household called <i>Tepa</i>	Modern and electronic devices for cooking and eating utensils	Plus aluminium and plastic cookware and utensils allowed
3.	Barefoot	Modern footwear allowed	Everyone is barefoot (no footwear)

(Source: Observation & interview, 2023)

In the interview, the *Ammatoa* mentions that their rice stored under the roofs is abundant and enough

for three years. Along the way, entering or leaving the inner Kajang, people are seen carrying a bundle of rice grains in a round shape, which researchers had never seen before. Both in inner and outer Kajang, the rice bundles are tied in round shapes, which is pleasing to the eye. Some traditional food is prepared only for rituals, such as *Songkolo*, which is made from steamed black sticky rice (Ardiyanto & Saleh, 2019).



Figure 7 *Abattasa Buhung Toa*, cleaning old well (Kemenparekraf, 2022)

Ceremonies and beliefs support the life of Kajang people in their everyday lives. Some important ceremonies and belief systems surrounded by myths are *Andingingi*, *Abattasa Buhung Toa* (Figure 7), *Pappasang*, *Tallasa Kamase-Masea*, *Benteng Tinanang*, *Panganro*, and *Patuntung* (Table 4). *Andingingi* is a ceremony to pray together in the sacred forest to appease or before any disaster occurs. *Patuntung* is derived from *Tuntung*, meaning 'searching for the truth' (Erawati, 2016), or 'guidance' (Takwim, 2021). *Tallasa Kamase-Masea* is a set of values believed to be godly to represent man's relationship to God (Nisa et al., 2023). The houses are grouped into *Benteng Tinanang*: three houses of parents (front right), a guest house, and the main house surrounded by living fences of trees, or sometimes stone fences (Lewa, 2018). *Pa'nganro* is a special ceremony to choose a new *Ammatoa* three years after the death of the late *Ammatoa*. The candidates must enter the customary forest and stay there until one of them is chosen by nature (Ahuluheluw, 2018). *Patuntung* is the indigenous belief in God which they call *Tu Rie'A'ra'na* (Andriani, Nurlela, & Ramli, 2022). Their belief is especially expressed during the death ceremony (Misbah & Adriyan, 2020).

The females of Kajang play an important role in everyday lives and rituals, as mentioned during the interview. Girls must skillfully weave the black sarong called *Tope Le'leng* to be eligible for marriage (Figure 8). According to the interview, they must master sewing skills and make drinks. When guests come, and the host likes them, they boil water to prepare

the drink to keep them company. When the current *Ammatoa* died, for three years, an *Anrongta*, a female in the *Ammatoa* family who is not necessarily the wife of the deceased *Ammatoa*, is tasked with preparing the *Ammatoa* election procession and also filling the temporary position until the next *Ammatoa* is elected. The important role of *Anrongta* reflects the respect for females as the mother and leader's representative (Kaltsum & Muhammad, 2022).

Table 4 Ceremonies in Inner Kajang

No	Ceremony	Explanation
1.	<i>Andingingi</i>	Ritual that uses 40 water sources
2.	<i>Abattasa Buhung Toa</i>	Cleaning together the old well
3.	<i>Pappasang</i>	The source of teaching to simplicity and modesty
4.	<i>Tallasa Kamase-Masea</i>	Simplicity life, dependent and preserving the nature, humble, obedience, and sincere
5.	<i>Benteng Tinanang</i>	Three houses of the core family are surrounded by a living fence made of trees
6.	<i>Panganro</i>	Ceremony to choose the new <i>Ammatoa</i>
7.	<i>Patuntung</i>	Indigenous belief in God

(Sources: Ahuluheluw, 2018; Lewa, 2018; Misbah & Adriyan, 2020; Kemenparekraf, 2022; Andriani, Nurlela, & Ramli, 2022; Nisa et al., 2023; Ammatoa, 2023)



Figure 8 A Mother, Weaving a *Tope Le'Leng* (Author, 2023)

The fifth myth links to the choosing of the *Ammatoa*, the highest leader of the Kajang people. This position is not inherited nor passed down to their descendants. The next *Ammatoa* would be decided through some magical, sacred, and secretive ways (Rais, 2017). Among the three candidates chosen by the people after the three years of absence, there should be only one. They are asked to enter the sacred forest and stay for a certain time. Then, during their stay, a chosen chicken is released into the forest, and whoever the chicken approaches will be the next *Ammatoa*. Likewise, the act of choosing the *Anrongta* during the three-year absence is also mysterious, but

in a different manner, which is not revealed in detail during the interview. According to the interview, the *Anrongta* is not necessarily the wife of the deceased *Ammatoa* (Ammatoa, 2023), despite her being chosen to represent the *Ammatoa*'s responsibility while preparing for the new *Ammatoa* and conducting the inauguration after the one is to be elected (Husain, Puryanti, & Setijowati, 2021). After three years, one of the *Ammatoa*'s apparatus will take over, and the *Anrongta*, who was previously chosen, will also act as the adviser of the ruling *Ammatoa* (Kaltsum & Muhammad, 2022).

Regarding the house construction (Table 5), materials, and how houses are built, one spiritual leader is appointed and trusted by the house's owner to choose the appropriate time to start the construction. This leader is called *Uragi*, not just the head of carpentry, as people believed (Dassir, 2008; Ramadhani & Abdullah, 2021), but possesses a magical power (Gising, 2011). Still, *Uragi* is more of a spiritual leader for every ceremony (Ardiyanto & Saleh, 2019) happening in the house once it is built, which is particularly related to good timing and the best moment to commence something. Each house will follow the measurement of the owner (Sam, Wikantari, & Yudono, 2012), which is quantified by the *Uragi* (Ramadhani & Abdullah, 2021).

Table 5 House Construction and Design

No	Design	Outer Kajang	Inner Kajang
1.	<i>Uragi</i>	Appointed spiritual leader for the house construction and other rituals happening at the house later on	
2.	Material	Modern and industrial-made resources (zinc roof)	Natural raw and local resources (thatched roof)
3.	Measurement	Following the body proportion of the head of the household	
4.	Orientation	Building facing the street and west (Qibla)	Building facing the sacred forest in the west
5.	Construction method	Tied and crossed with nails mixed with wooden bolts	Tied without iron nails, only wooden bolts
6.	Ornamentation	Railings, roofs, gates, interiors, etc, were painted in bright color	No color, no ornament; everything was natural and practical

(Sources: Ramadhani & Abdullah, 2021)



The orientation of the buildings varies depending on the groups and their surrounding topography (Erawati, 2016). The living spaces are divided into zones from macro to meso, where several houses are grouped. Mostly, the houses in outer Kajang naturally follow or face the streets that are covered and hardened with asphalt and Qibla, as some of their people follow Islam (Ahuluheluw, 2018) and are open to modernization. However, the houses in inner Kajang and some traditional houses in outer Kajang face the west to the sacred forest; some research says that facing the mountain of Lompo Banttang (Abdullah, Cangara, & Tang, 2014) and following the area's higher topography, such as the hill's top (Erawati, 2016).

The materials and components of traditional Kajang houses are constructed from thatched roofs supported by wooden or bamboo planks; the house pillars of wood which are using the same material to construct the Pinisi ship, the Bitti wood (Ramadhani & Abdullah, 2021), which is another local name called *Jati Nugini*. The houses in inner compared to outer Kajang are simple, almost devoid of decoration and ornamentation (Ramadhani, 2022), reflecting the spirit of *Kamase-masea* (Dassir, 2008; Ardiyanto & Saleh, 2019). The only difference is the additional terrace at the front part of the house in outer Kajang at the end of the stairs. Recently, some of the interior and materials of the houses in outer Kajang have completely changed, close to modern houses, even though the type of the building still follows the three parts of a house on stilts: head, body, and foot (Sharon & Paranoan, 2020).

The sixth myth says there is an odd number in every knock and part of the house structure. The odd number is related to the wisdom found in nature. Such

as the number of steps should be odd, the number of beams should be odd, the middle pillar is sacred, and others. One research accurately records numbering to discern the time calculation called *Bilang Allo* from the natural changes (Gising, 2023). They predict the weather, when to carry out their daily activities in the field, perform rituals, and so on, by observing nature. Their perception comes from the changes in plant life, moon, sun, and stars, the animal's behavior, the weather's temperature, and types of rainfall, which are rooted in the traditions and myths of their predecessors (Gising, 2023).

The seventh myth says the earth above the head indicates the burial, meaning death prohibiting earthen roof tiles (*atap genteng*) from covering the houses. These indigenous laws derive from myths, which have been proven to strongly urge that a direct connection with the ground is required to ensure a solid and blessed life. Therefore, houses in inner Kajang never use earthen roof tile. Even in outer Kajang, they chose zinc roofs. Pillars are to be directly planted deep into the earth, just as a tree is planted on the ground. However, people in outer Kajang believe it does not nullify the meaning of the connection to nature. In inner Kajang, erecting the pillars by placing them on the stones is forbidden (Nisa et al., 2023), even though, according to *Pasang ri Kajang*, it is not directly instructed verbally (Takwim, 2021). Using curved and slanted pillars is also for more practical reasons and proven scientifically, but it has another meaning that a house is also alive by using natural material (Ramadhani & Abdullah, 2021). The proportion of the house comprises a head, body, and foot (Lewa, 2018), projecting accountability toward God, man, and nature (Sharon & Paranoan, 2020). Figures 9, 10, 11, and 12 show the differences in houses in Kajang.



Figure 9 House in Outer Kajang (Author, 2023)



Figure 10 House in Outer Kajang in Close Resemblance to Inner Kajang (Author, 2023)



Figure 11 The Wooden House Construction in Outer Kajang (Author, 2023)

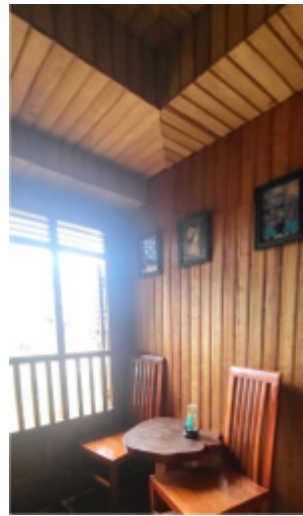


Figure 12 The Modern Houses in Outer Kajang (Author, 2023)

In Kajang, Tana Toa, a sense of security and assurance is strengthened by *Ammatoa* as the most prominent leader (Nisa et al., 2023) through the principles of *Kamase-Masea* (Husain, Puryanti, & Setijowati, 2021) and implementation of *Pasang ri Kajang* (Abdullah, Cangara, & Tang, 2014). The settlement arrangement, people's lives, and their thoughts are kept simple and to the point of how they should avoid it. The problem of the modern world seems far away. The simple life and humble attitude keep the people from ascension, strife, and jealousy. As they focus on how nature nurtures and provides food, they learn to respect and protect nature by modifying it minimally or completely preserving it, as nature preservation is needed to preserve life (Syamsurijal, 2021). How people build their houses practically depends on how the natural constellation works, which is represented by calculating the time by *Uragi*. *Uragi* is not only a professional carpenter and house constructor (Dassir, 2008) who possesses magic and experience in building houses (Gising, 2011) but also leads other spiritual ceremonies in the houses he builds (Ardiyanto & Saleh, 2019). They learn to wait for the season to do anything, from gathering and harvesting the food to building houses. Their reliance on their spiritual advisor represents how religion and

belief are not always connected to politics, but more practically to assist how one lives, from birth to their preparation to leave this world. The concept that one's life will end one day keeps them from living more than people and nature can afford. Living enough is the core of modesty, represented in barefoot, wearing black or white color (Isfawani, Junaeda, & Sumilih, 2022), and their houses are similar in shape, material, and orientation to the west (Misbah & Adriyan, 2020). There is no greed because it is punishable by the force of nature. *Pasang Ri Kajang* imposes that lawbreaking is punishable by man and nature. Simple law in a chaotic world is the local wisdom people need as part, if not the only, source of education (Abdullah et al., 2020) to protect them from uncontrolled development and modernization (Istiwati, 2016).

## CONCLUSIONS

The research concludes that traditions and myths are inseparable in the everyday life of the Kajang people. Through *Pasang ri Kajang*, meaning massage in Kajang, similar to revelations, it is binding to the community members in Tana Toa. Dire consequences befell in the form of illness or

drought should one violate it, to the point of death. Thus, living in modesty and harmony with nature is the underlying concept of Kajang indigenous culture. Sacred areas and taboos followed by rituals and ceremonies have been their communication method to protect their lives. They believe that keeping a strong relationship between man and nature gives people a sense of happiness, tranquility, harmony, and health. Citing myths becomes part of the guidance, warning, and punishment in conducting their everyday living activities.

Some of the related myths to the conduct noticeable in inner Kajang, of which some loosely followed in outer Kajang, are, first, oral communication. Since the message to the *Ammatoa* to his predecessors is passed down verbally, written expression is taboo. Second is no electricity. Nature is living and of spiritual beings. Electromagnetic devices can transmit waves that can disturb their existence. Third is no clay roof tile. Under the ground is for the dead. Living humans covered by a roof made of earth means they are dead. Fourth is no footwear (barefoot). They are keeping in connection with the earth as the source of life. Fifth is no colorful clothes. Even though nowadays only elderly and respected people still comply, this is related to the simplicity of life. Sixth is no decoration or modern material for the house construction and tools (except kitchen utensils). Natural materials will keep the connection with nature intact. Seventh is the orientation of all buildings to the west's sacred forest. The myth is that the sacred forest is where the first ground appeared. Eighth is odd numbering and observing the changes in nature to calculate and determine a good time to conduct everyday activities, rituals, travelings, etc.

Beyond any religious belief, humanity, ambitious economic gains, and all advanced technology and products of intellect, the Kajang people have learned how to live in harmony with nature. In response to the increasing issue of climatic conditions, post-COVID-19, and other global issues, the result of this research hopefully will inspire greatly to the simple but practical way of living despite the rapid modernization, realizing that the ancestors have profound and thoughtful wisdom regarding sustainability in nature and human life.

Some limitations and suggestions for the research are, first, the language barrier. There is a disadvantage during interviews and focus group discussions as the author could not confirm information immediately. Second, refraining from using electronic devices has become a real challenge. Photographic memory and sensibility, hand sketches, and taking notes are the needed skills. Third, the research on indigenous culture is worthwhile. One could obtain refreshing moments in addition to gaining timeless knowledge of ancient wisdom. Fourth, working with a multidisciplinary approach, such as religious, social, psychology, and linguistics, is important and encouraged for more holistic results. Fifth, similar man-nature studies on other indigenous people in

Indonesia are highly encouraged to cultivate our cultural richness and the wisdom of sustainable life.

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