



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Tiger and Spirituality in West Sumatera: Conservation Context

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ABSTRACT

Tigers have become part of the lives of Sumatran people. As part of the living system, tigers also have an impact on society. These impacts include the relationship between humans and nature, spirituality and culture. Through an ethnographic perspective, this article explains the ways in which people in West Sumatra relate to tigers and the social life that is influenced by the results of the relationship. This research also uses a non-human agency perspective, which sees tigers as an agency that changes human life. This article base of WWF 'Program since 2019, field research was conducted in West Sumatra. Every two month went to filed and conducted interview with local people. Based on the results of the research, it is known that for the people of West Sumatra, tigers are relatives (kinship) who are respected by being called Datuk, Inyia, and Orang Tua. These terms are socially used by the community to refer to tribal chiefs and old people. Tigers also have an impact on social, cultural and religious life in West Sumatra. There is tiger martial arts, tiger "ilmu", spirit, and so on. People also have rules when in the forest to respect the existence of tigers. Knowledge about tigers is passed down from generation to generation.

INTRODUCTION

This study conducted to find the relationship between tigers, culture, and spirituality in the people of West Sumatra associated with conservation purposes. This is important as part of a conservation strategy, not only for an important species but also for the habitat of a protected species (Bisson, 1995; Griffiths, 1999; Samad, 2003). In previous studies conducted in adjacent landscapes, tolerance of tigers by humans was also investigated (Struebig et al, 2018), the power of belief in tigers (McKay et al, 2018) and intentions to hunt tigers and other animals in the Kerinci Seblat and Jambi landscapes St. John et al: 2018). It is important to involve the local people and its spirituality in environmental conservation efforts. Local people, with their experiences of interacting with the environment, carried out over many years and passed down from one generation to the next, have formed a 'culture' based on the environment. This can be seen from the perspective, behavior, rituals, and other local institutions found in the community related to relations with the environment (Shaw: 2013).

Among the close relations between humans and tigers in Sumatra is by making tigers part of them. The people of Sumatra in general and West Sumatra in particular give a title that is appreciative and respectful of tigers. People call tigers Datuk, Angku, Inyia, and Orang Tuo. For the community, tigers are part of the ancestors that must be respected. These titles can also be

interpreted as an effort from the community to include tigers as part of their family. In the family system in West Sumatra, Datuk, Angku, Inyia, and Orang Tuo are names for the leader.

In its development, the community also received ideas, views and spirits from Islam that had long entered and developed in West Sumatra. The doctrines of Islam, which are sourced from the qur'an and hadith, meet with the culture and tradition of the community, which is sourced from the experience of interaction with the environment (Ashadi, 2019; Peletz, 1995; Ridhwan, 2017). The meeting of these two "poles" brings out to new views in society, not only about the ethics of relationships with others but also relationships with the environment. Views on nature, which were originally based on experience, began to be supplemented with arguments from the scriptures, both theological arguments and shariah legal arguments. Including relation and views about tigers. In their interaction with tigers, the people of West Sumatra not only use religious arguments but also use environmental ethics inherited from their ancestors. Based on findings in the field, people include tigers in the extended family. In this context, people usually call tigers "Ninik" or grandparents. For this reason, the concept of kinship is important to be included in this research. By elaborating kinship, tigers are part of the nuclear family whose existence is important and must be maintained.

In the context of Sumatran society in general, tigers have their own place. Realizing the importance of tigers that have "participated" in building the culture and spirituality of Sumatran society that has been intertwined for hundreds of years. Sumatran tigers have shaped landscapes, plantation and agricultural systems, belief systems or spirituality and cultural symbols for the people of Sumatra. Continuous interaction over a long period of time forms a shared space between humans and tigers. The space itself is not only in the form of physical boundaries, but is the result of dynamic human construction (Levebre, 1991).

To look at the relationship between humans and tigers in the context of conservation, an important framework for our thinking and work is to see tigers as "agency" or non-human agency. This is important for looking at the interactions between humans and tigers. Non-human agency has been discussed by academics (Haraway, 2008; Ingold, 2007; 2013; Kirksey et al, 2010; Sharif, 1995; St. John et al, 2018; Linkie et al, 2018; Strang, 2023). To conserve or protect tigers, we need to position tigers as anchors that connect space and human action. Tigers have power that humans can use to respond back. The power that exists in tigers in certain situations 'forces' humans to take actions that are in accordance with the object. Another thing to look at is the category of "place". Cultural studies so far seem to have abandoned locality. Researchers have been looking at globalization. In fact, humans are bound by spatial areas in which there is an interrelationship between knowledge and place, so knowledge is local (Geertz, 1983).

The studies of culture often overlook the "place-ness" aspect of the cultural process. In globalization studies, culture is no longer considered dependent on place, a fixed spatial location. Spatial and cultural boundaries are blurred (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997; Marcus, 1995). Places and localities are often defined as small nodes or points of global connectivity. As a result, these studies often overlook the constitutive aspects of place and locality in shaping culture and human experience. Place is an important category for understanding culture, language, economics and politics because culture sits in a place (Escobar, 2001).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This research was conducted in West Sumatra, specifically in areas that buffer the Batanghari Landscape. (figure 1). This research is part of the World Wild Fund (WWF-Indonesia) Tiger and Spirituality Project on the relationship between spirituality and tigers in Sumatra. The project, which began in 2019, has allowed us to interact with communities in the Batanghari Landscape. Since 2019, every two months we have traveled to Nagari to interview communities. During these 1-2 week visits, we are in nagari across West Sumatra.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with informants. In this study, the informants were Datuk, Wali Nagari, Ulama/Buya, Ninik-Mamak, and people who often enter the forest. Interviews were also conducted with several young people aged between 18-30 years. In this research, the informants were first categorized. There are two categories, namely key

informants and ordinary informants. Key informants are Datuk, Wali Nagari, ninik-mamak and people who are considered to have "tiger knowledge", while ordinary informants are the general public in the village

In the data collection process, we explored information related to belief systems or spirits related to tigers. In this effort, it is necessary to build trust or trust from informants to researchers. First, we approached one of the key informants. When one of the key informants trusts the researcher, the next step is to approach other key informants. During the interview process, the first key informant always accompanied and became a bridge, not only to explain the purpose of the research but also the local languages. In this study, the role of the Wali Nagari was also important, as part of guaranteeing the informants' trust in the researcher. Although not always accompanying the researcher, the Wali Nagari informed the community of the researcher's arrival and urged them to provide assistance in the form of appropriate answers. Nevertheless, some informants still "hide" their knowledge related to tigers. The reason is that it is very confidential and personal. In addition, matters related to tigers and spirituality are in some cases very sensitive in the community. Upon encountering such situations, the interviews were discontinued.

The key informants, in terms of social structure in the community, are the administrators of the KAN (*Kerapatan Adat Nagari*), at the nagari, district or regency levels. Kerapatan Adat Nagari is a local institution that has existed for a long time. KAN functions as an institution that resolves various disputes in the community. The KAN management consists of Ninik-Mamak in a Kaum or extended family. Datuk is the designation and title of a person, whether within the family, clan, or nagari. Datuk is a figure who is considered old in age and in "lineage" is also considered the most worthy to "represent" a family.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To look at the relationship between tigers and Sumatran society, it is important to look at Sumatra Island as a place where the relationship between humans and tigers occurs. Place is an important factor of cultural expression (Escobar, 2001). West Sumatrans consider that settlements inhabited by humans essentially belong to tigers. Historically, humans cleared forests for settlements, agriculture and plantations, as well as other life-supporting infrastructure in tiger range locations.

Realizing that the place where they live is "owned by tigers", the community builds a relationship with tigers. People believe that their ancestors made a "covenant" with tigers when clearing land. In the agreement, humans occupy "tiger property" and will respect the lives of tigers. Vice versa, tigers provide a place for humans to use and respect human life.

The agreement between tigers and humans was already made when humans began to occupy the island of Sumatra. The agreement was "renewed" when Islam entered and spread to Sumatra. According to the community, a Companion and relative of the Prophet Muhammad, Ali bin Abi Tholib, once came to Indonesia, including West Sumatra. Ali bin Abi Talib was a person who had broad religious knowledge and high magic. People believe Ali bin Abi Tholib came to Sumatra to preach. While in Sumatra, not only the people but also the tigers in the forest came to learn from Ali, some even believe that one of Ali's children turned into a "tiger". Stories about Ali bin Abi Talib are also found in the people of Cirebon and West Java.

The stories that exist in the community related to tigers are social constructions as a form of human respect for tigers. Besides through stories, people also give respect by referring to tigers as Inyia, Datuk, Angku, and Orang Tuo. Terms used by the community to refer to socially respected figures in society. In the social environment of West Sumatran society, a grandfather is a figure of advanced age and lineage. Datuk organizes the social life of the community.

In the social structure of West Sumatran society, the smallest social organization is the family (Family) which consists of father, mother and children. Above this organization there is a kaum (Cluster of Family) which consists of several families. The size of a kaum depends on whether there are many members of a family. Above the "kaum" is the suku (clan) which contains several kaum or clusters of families. Each tribe has a datuk or similar designation. This person is

considered to represent the interests of the tribe, resolving disputes and other roles. Usually a Datuk comes from the oldest member of the family, both in age and status. His position is highly respected.

The designation of the tiger as a *datuk* is a reference to the topmost hierarchy in the social structure of West Sumatran society. As a Datuk, tigers also have descendants. Because it cannot trace its "status", every tiger is a Datuk who has made a "covenant" with the ancestors of a nagari. As part of kinship, the community does not distinguish between humans and nature, both are equal and respect each other. Humans respect nature and nature respects humans by providing good crops. Some informants even believe that if a tiger attacks humans or livestock, it is certain that the human has behaved inappropriately towards nature.

People believe that the respect given by humans to tigers has an impact on human life itself. The tiger reciprocates the human attitude by helping humans. The assistance provided by tigers to humans takes the form of protecting human agriculture and plantations from forest animal pests. People believe this, because many have witnessed tigers on their farms and plantations. Another assistance provided by tigers is to provide a way when someone is lost in the forest. I got many stories of experiences of being lost in the jungle and saved by tigers from the community. The Tiger's way of giving the way is by giving signs in the forest. By reading and following the signs, people will find a recognizable path so that they can safely reach home.

From the various stories we obtained. When lost in the forest, people will usually say, either silently or verbally, "Datuk, I am lost and please show me the right way". After verbally saying this, it is not long before you hear the roar of a tiger or the sound of a twig breaking. The tiger or Datuk has provided the way by breaking branches or small trees. Tigers also protect people from various dangers when they are in the forest. These dangers include attacks from other animals and other dangers. Tigers often also help by signaling other tigers entering the village or forest area and when natural conditions are dangerous such as a disaster. With these signals, people are cautious and prepare for various possibilities.

From their many experiences interacting with tigers, the people of West Sumatra developed social tools to maintain these relationships. "Against Datuk, Loss of Pusako". This is one of the proverbs in the local language, which means that fighting a Datuk or an old man will lose his heirloom, self-esteem, or honor. This proverb is also used by the community in relation to tigers. His status as a Datuk makes the tiger occupy a high social status and should not be resisted. In addition, according to informants, the community also has its own social ethics with tigers, both when in the forest and in the village. Among the prohibitions we encountered in the field are; Breaking wood with the knee, Taking water with the pot, must use a dipper or other tools, violating religious rules, Takabbur or speaking arrogantly, both in a social context and abilities due to experience in the forest, Not being naked, Sticking sticks or wood into the base of other dead wood, Cutting / splitting wood that has been burned, Throwing burnt wood marks, When sleeping in the forest, the position of the legs should not be bent and do not put hands on the forehead.

In addition to prohibitions, people must also perform certain actions as a form of ethics in dealing with tigers. The tiger is a symbol of the rules that must be obeyed. Among the ethics when in the forest are; Giving our hunting products to the tiger. If a deer hunter has managed to catch a deer, then some parts of the deer are taken a little for the tiger. Such as neck skin, legs, ear parts and so on. Secondly, if you are fishing, usually fishing, and feel the presence of a tiger, then you must give some of the results to the tiger. The fish to be given by the tiger should not be touched by hand. Third, if a tiger enters the village, there must be introspection from the community. Some people even make efforts by feeding the tiger. The food given is boiled eggs. In the boiling process until it is served in Limeh or a container made of banana leaves. The number of eggs must be odd, 7 eggs, 5 eggs, and three eggs.

Sumatran People and the Categories of Tiger

The people of West Sumatra have categorized tigers. These categories are made based on human experience interacting with tigers. Based on the results of interviews, it is known that there are several categories of tigers in West Sumatran society. The first is the tiger as an animal that lives in the forest. This tiger is believed to be a living being who is willing to give its "power" to humans. By humans, the area is used as fields, gardens, rice fields, and settlements. This tiger is known as the Sumatran Tiger (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*). Tigers, as a component of the natural biota of Sumatra, are often involved in "conflict" with humans and experience survival pressures due to deforestation and hunting by non-local people (Wadham, 2020).

The second categories of tigers are tigers made flesh or the embodiment of knowledge. This tiger comes from an ordinary tiger that turns into an immortal tiger. People call this category of tiger Panglima. People believe that in the forest there is a black tiger with a large size. This tiger is feared by all tigers in the forest. The third category is the tiger as "ilmu" or spiritual power. For the community, in the past it was common to have "ilmu" tiger. With this power, a person will teleport or travel far but traveled in a short time. Tiger "power" can also be in the form of martial arts moves. To obtain this knowledge, one must make various efforts or inner temptations that are quite hard. Tarekat or tirakat in their terms. Someone who has this knowledge, when he dies, the "power" that manifests in the form of a tiger will come to his family. One informant claimed to have been visited in a dream by his uncle who had died and had tiger "power". Since then, he claimed to have always been accompanied by a tiger.

The three categories of tigers help the community. If there is a disturbance to humans from tigers, then humans must introspect, of course there is a wrong action so Datuk must be present and remind humans. People believe that tigers help them by protecting their rice fields from pests such as pigs. Tigers often walk around rice fields. His presence certainly keeps pigs from destroying rice plants.

The relationship between humans and tigers, although ethical, is dynamic. Sometimes tigers pounce or prey on humans and sometimes humans hunt tigers (Wadham, 2020). People see that humans are pounced upon by tigers due to several factors. In the past, one of the central figures of the West Sumatran community and included in the Nusantara ulama network, Sheikh Burhanuddin Ulakan (Azra, 1994) as a child was pounced on or "fought" with a tiger (Royyani, 2021). According to informants, Sheikh Burhanuddin was pounced upon by a tiger as a child because he was "testing" the tiger martial arts he had learned.

Regarding people who are pounced by tigers, according to the community, apart from being destined to die by tigers, usually people who will be eaten by tigers have signs. This is known as Mantiko or a kind of curse. According to the community, in the past, tigers once put spit in a spider's nest. Whoever is hit by the spit, then the child or grandchild of the person who is hit will be pounced by the tiger. To eliminate the mantiko, a ritual is performed by the tiger handler. Usually the handler will recite incantations interspersed with Arabic, Qur'anic verses, sholawat and also the local language. The incantation is recited by holding a basil leaf (*Ocimum basilicum*). The leaf is rubbed on the mantiko mark, which is a small red circle at the back of the neck. After the basil leaf is rubbed, thorns will come out like porcupine quills. When all the thorns have come out, then the person is considered free from mantiko. People affected by mantiko will change their rhythm of life, always sleeping during the day and unable to sleep at night. In social interactions, when a person affected by mantiko meets other people, they always lower their faces, not daring to meet face to face. With such signs, the person affected by mantiko will immediately look for a tiger handler to remove the mantiko that is in him.

In the case of tiger attacks on humans, this is considered a violation of the rules. Although the human perspective is that humans should introspect on their mistakes, tigers also make mistakes and must be punished. According to the informant's experience, the handler will usually cast longing or seduction spells. The guilty tiger will usually come accompanied by its herd. But only the guilty tiger enters the trap, the herd only watches from the top of the hill. After entering the trap, the guilty tiger will be put to death.

Sumatran people and Tiger: Entering Nature to Culture

One of the concerns in conservation issues that many people concentrate on is the relationship between humans and nature. Studies on the relationship between humans and nature continue to be conducted with various perspectives. Environmental problems are basically relationship problems (Kessler, 2019), especially with nature. Improving relationships with nature is important for improving the relationship between humans and nature. However, when discussing the relationship between humans and nature, there is less attention to the more-than-human aspect, namely seeing from a non-human perspective (Kessler, 2019).

Regarding the relationship between humans and tigers in West Sumatra, people view tigers as an important part of themselves. The existence of tigers creates traditions, beliefs, and ethics of relationships with nature. People believe that when tigers come to the village, humans have behaved badly towards nature. In this context, the tiger is an agent that not only changes social relations but also relations with nature.

When it comes to the beginning of the relationship between humans and tigers, there are various stories, depending on the place. But generally, the stories relate to a "covenant" between humans and tigers. There are stories of when humans or old pioneers of settlements were in the forest, either for hunting or other purposes, encountering a tiger that was being crushed by a large log. The tiger had tried to break free from the crush of the wood, but his efforts were never successful. In a desperate situation, a human passes by. On the one hand, the person wanted to help, but on the other hand was afraid of the tiger that could pounce on him. Then, an "agreement" was made that the tiger would be saved but later it could not disturb him and his descendants. The tiger agreed. There are also stories in the past, humans and tigers did coexist, but still disturbed each other. The tiger leader one day wanted to feel the human heart. Datuk or the human leader at that time immediately looked for tactics so that a way was found, namely replacing the human heart with the heart of a bitter-tasting forest banana. On the agreed day, the tiger came to the settlement to eat the human heart. Then, Datuk gave the banana heart stew. After eating it, it tasted bitter and since then the tiger did not want to eat humans because it was considered bitter.

In the context of relationships with nature, humans can communicate with various biological species in the forest, including tigers. People believe that they can communicate. Nollman (1987) conducted experiments with music in order to connect and communicate with various wild species. His experiments showed that the sound of the music he played could invite certain species to come to the place where the music was played. People have long had relationships with the natural world around them, including tigers. This forms the structure of thinking, beliefs, traditions, behaviors, and constructions of thinking towards nature (Feldt, 2012). For other people, the construction of tigers may be wild animals, wild animals, fierce and so on. But for people in West Sumatra, the construction of tigers as a product of history and has become part of their culture views that tigers are animals that must be respected, not savage and wild, and other constructions that are different from people outside.

In people's view, tigers are living creatures that have rights like humans. Tigers have the right to live, feed, and breed without interference from humans. This concept of equality in rights is adopted by urban communities in relation to ornamental plants and pets (Byrne, 2010). Through a non-human perspective, Byrne (2010) sees the need for humans to view other living beings as equal in rights. There is no dualism in the relationship between humans and nature (Haila, ²⁰⁰⁰), as practiced by the people of West Sumatra in their relationship with tigers. In the conception of the Sumatran people, the tiger is the first animal that has territory in an area. As the "holder" of territorial authority, tigers must be respected. The form of respect carried out by the community is by making tigers as "*inyiak*", "*datuk*", "*parents*" and their ancestors. As the first "holder" of authority before humans in an area, the community also considers that tigers have the same rights as humans.

Tigers not only have the right to coexist with humans, but also to get food from nature and from humans, and tigers also have the right to be respected. With this view, it has an impact on respect for tigers. Based on the results of interviews, it is known that people call tigers Datuk, Inyiak, Orang Tuo, and Angku. People use these designations when they are in the forest or under certain conditions, while when in ordinary conditions, they sometimes refer to them as "tigers". There is

not enough valid information about when these designations were applied to tigers. Informants generally said that tigers are one of the animals that occupy the top strata. They have been in the forest or a place that was later turned into fields, gardens, rice fields or settlements by humans.

Viewing the relationship between tigers and humans with the concept of kinship has not been done much. So far, anthropological studies on kinship are still concerned with social relations (Donner & Goddar, 2023; Holy, 1996; Nollman, 1987; Panossian, 2023). Kinship is an anthropological terminology to explain various social relations. The kinship system is important for humans to relate to social, political, economic and other relations (Donner & Goddar, 2023). In relations with fellow humans, the conceptualization of kinship is carried out in relation to new relationships, access to technology, economics, politics and so on (Holy, 1996). Kinship as a variety of communication between people (Nollman, 1987). Kinship can also be used as a differentiator between "self" and "the other". This is related to kinship as a symbol and structure (Panossian, 2023). In fact, the new argument offered by Wilson (2022) regarding the importance of kinship in social life still focuses on relationships between people. Wilson has not yet explored kinship in relation to non-human life.

Nevertheless, an attempt to make nature a kinship was made by Dunkley (2023) through the citizens Science project to look at the relationship between humans and rivers in London. Looking from a non-human perspective is also done by (Kiik, 2018). According to him, it is important to highlight local values and views of nature, and to emphasize biodiversity as an important factor in protecting the environment with perspectives on plants and animals that are important in global conservation issues through social and other scientific data. The concept of kinship is starting to be used in looking at environmental issues such as climate change, global warming, environmental damage, species loss offered by Whyte (2021) who considers the importance of making time as kinship. As is done by local communities in various parts of the world. The concept of kinship can clearly be used as a perspective to see human and non-human relations carried out by Strang (2023) clearly emphasizes the importance of making non-human species as relatives, as individuals, and as reciprocal creative partners in life together.

Islam, Spirituality, and Sumatran People

Years of interaction with nature and its components have led to an attitude and perspective that nature is part of humans (Ridwan et al, 2019). This awareness gives birth to behaviors that respect nature and its components. In academic language, this is commonly referred to as traditional wisdom and traditional knowledge. Such life experiences create social institutions that continue to be passed down from one generation to the next.

There are dynamics in people's views and actions regarding their relationship with nature. These dynamics can be based on life experiences when interacting with nature or from interactions with other people or views, including religious views (Ashadi, 2019). New experiences enrich the view of nature and its components. This is also the result of interaction with beliefs from the Islamic religion. Islamic views help shape people's perspectives and relationships with nature, especially with tigers. Life experiences and guidance from religion strengthen people's respect for nature (Ashadi, 2019; Peletz, 1995; Ridhwan, 2017). *Adat bersendi Syara* and *Syara bersendi Kitabullah*, which is one of the adages in West Sumatran society, is an example of the manifestation of the inclusion of Islamic values and views on customary practices in the community.

Islam developed and became part of the life of the people of West Sumatra in the same period as other regions. In West Sumatra, several ulama figures in the past established intellectual networks with other ulama in other regions. For example, Sheikh Burhanuddin Ulakan (1646-1692) in Pariaman was a student of Sheikh Abdur Rouf As-Singkili in Aceh (Azra, 1994; Royyani, 2021). One of Abdur Rouf As-Singkili's students was Sheikh Abdul Muhyi of Pamijahan, West Java (Christomy, 2008). Sheikh Burahanuddin opened a surau or Islamic college in Pariaman. This place became a reference for many people to study.

The scholars and practitioners of tarekat contributed so that religious views became part of the community's way of life (Ridhwan, 2017). Tariqah and Sufi views on the relationship between humans and tigers in West Sumatra can still be found. Based on the results of interviews with the

community and religious leaders, it is known that tigers are considered as living beings and are equal to humans, have rights, including the right to learn and recite the Koran. According to the caregiver of Pesantren Muhammad Sheikh Muhsin, his father had tiger students who regularly recited the Koran at night. Likewise with the pesantren of Sheikh Haji Rafi'I, the tiger not only recites the Koran but also becomes a friend who helps. Sheikh Muhsin himself was a follower of the Syattariyah Order, a friend of Sheikh Burhanuddin Ulakan (Hayati, 2021). Both are students of Sheikh Abdur Rouf Al-Singkili, one of the central figures in the network of ulama in the Nusantara (Azra, 1994).

The ulama, in addition to preaching to develop the teachings of Islam, also practiced the dhikr of tariqah. In some areas, Sufis play a significant role in developing communities, such as in South Sulawesi (Putra, 2021), Pamijahan, Tasikmalaya (Christomy, 2008). Sufis are commonly known as wali, people who are considered close to God (friend of God) and become a bridge between the community and God, including assisting the ruler (Bruinessen, 1996). The wali also have privileges that are not possessed by ordinary people (karomah). Among their privileges is the 'ability' to read signs in nature.

In the Syattariyah order, there is a view of wahdatul wujud, which is the unification between the servant/creature and God. The teaching of wahdatul wujud (unity of being) was developed by Ibn 'Arabi, a great Sufi who died in 1240 AD (Schmidt & van Swaay, 2021). In the concept of wahdatul wujud, all living beings have equal rights and must be respected because they are all manifestations of God (Arabî, 1980). Ibn Arabi's views are based on the Qur'an (Chodkiewick, 1993).

The adherents of the Syattariyah Order view nature as "brothers" because it comes from one Creator, namely Allah. With such a view, the adherents respect nature as they respect themselves. Like what the Sumatran people do to tigers who respect and honor them. It is strongly suspected that the community's view is a "trace" of the teachings of Tarekat Syattariyah developed by Burhanuddin Ulakan, Sheikh Muchsin, and his students who are widely spread in West Sumatra.

CONCLUSION

The people of Sumatra in general and West Sumatra in particular have long coexisted with tigers. Both can live in harmony without disturbing each other. Tigers have shaped various life behaviors, cultures, and even religious views. *Pencak silat* tiger, tiger science, and the title of respect made by humans towards tigers show this.

For the people of West Sumatra, tigers are not foreign and wild animals that threaten human life. Tigers are brothers, relatives, even grandfathers who must be guarded and respected. Humans and tigers maintain and respect each other. Being brothers with tigers can ensure that rice fields and fields are protected from attack by destructive animals. For tigers, humans are friends who ensure their survival in the forest. Community views on tigers/species are commonly adopted for conservation strategies in other places and other species.

The conservation efforts by relying on the beliefs and spirituality found in the surrounding communities are more effective in restraining the rate of damage and extinction. Cases in West Sumatra regarding the relationship between humans and tigers show that people not only protect protected species but also make them part of the social life system. Tiger poaching is carried out by people outside the nagari, even outside Sumatra. Communities also need to be involved and strengthened in conservation efforts.

The spirituality of religion also needs to be considered. So far, what has been studied is the formal legal aspect of religion (sharia), not yet looking at the aspects of theology and asceticism that exist in religious teachings. As in West Sumatra, the strengthening of the inclusion of tigers in the socio-cultural system of the community is strongly influenced by the teachings of Sufism in the tariqats, especially Syattariyah. This and other Tariqahs are very respectful of nature and living things in this universe.

Acknowledgements

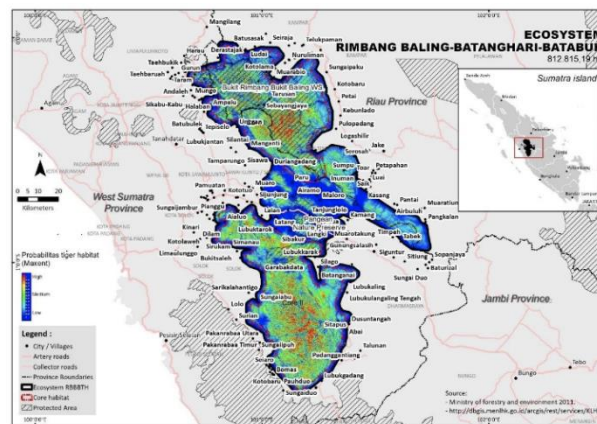
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(Figure of Batanghari Landscape, Sumatera)



Figure 2 (Feeding the tiger)