

RERA WULAN, THE SUPREME BEING OF LAMAHOLOT
PEOPLE. ITS CONCEPT AND COMPREHENSION
AS GLEANED FROM THE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT
AND PRACTICES OF THE PEOPLE

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the Faculty of the Graduate School
University of San Carlos

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Anthropology

by
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This thesis entitled "RERA WULAN, THE SUPREME BEING OF LAMAHOLOT PEOPLE. ITS CONCEPT AND COMPREHENSION AS GLEANED FROM THE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT AND PRACTICES OF THE PEOPLE," prepared and submitted by Frans Amanue in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS IN ANTHROPOLOGY, has been examined and is recommended for acceptance and approval for ORAL EXAMINATION.

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To My Parents

who have taught me

the raran and koda

of Rera Wulan

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Lamaholot denotes that cultural group populating most of the area known as Flores Timur, a sub-province (regency) in the Indonesian administrative system. Administered by a bupati (regent), Flores Timur is part of Nusa Tenggara Timur, one of the provinces constituting the Indonesian unitary state.

As a political entity, Flores Timur covers the eastern part of Flores island and the outlying islands around: Adonara, Solor, and Lembata (formerly Lomblen).

Majority of the people of Lamaholot are Catholics with Moslems numbering a little less. Despite these established religions folk-religion still persists and influences many aspects of their life: birth, death, agricultural affairs, etc. As a matter of fact, in addition to practicing Catholicism or Islamism with their respective doctrines and obligations, the people of Lamaholot also continue to practice certain rituals in praying for recovery from sickness and to prevent misfortunes. They still maintain and care for special places set aside for

praying and offering sacrifices. In particular, when some crisis threatens their human existence, they feel inclined to look for escape in the realm of folk-religion in addition to, or instead of, the inspiration of Catholicism or Islamism. This is the background of the study.

The Organization of the Study

The whole study is organized into six chapters.

The first two chapters function as the Introduction. Chapter I describes the framework, review of related literature, problems of the study, assumptions and hypothesis, importance of the study, scope and limitation of the study and research method. Chapter II deals with the setting of the study aiming to provide a general picture about the area where this study is conducted, its people with their socio-cultural, economic and political background.

Chapter III presents the religious background of the people of Lamaholot. It consists of two sections. Section A relates their concepts or religious ideas recorded through observation, story-telling and interviews. Section B shows how these ideas influence the daily life of the Lamaholot people, how they are lived