

**FORM AND MEANING OF *TI'I KA* DISCOURSE
IN *MBASA WINI* RITUAL OF RONGGA ETHNIC
IN FLORES**

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ABSTRACT

This article describes the results of research on the form and meaning of *Ti'i ka* discourse (TD) that is the food offering ritual to the ancestors in *mbasa wini* rituals in Rongga ethnic of Flores. *Mbasa wini* ritual is the new-year ritual of traditional agricultural in Rongga ethnic. Theoretical framework to guide is cultural linguistic supported by discourse, symbolic interactions and hermeneutics theories. This research is a descriptive study based on the philosophy of phenomenology. The location of the study is in the distribution of Rongga ethnic region with the main location in the Sambu Village sub-District of Kota Komba, East Manggarai regency. Methods of data collection are observation, interviews, and documentary studies. The data collection technique is recording and note-taking. The main data sources are Rongga ethnic residing in Sambu village that were represented by four key informants. The data were analyzed qualitatively using induction method.

The results showed that the form and meaning of TD is unique in the context of the situation of *mbasa wini* ritual and socio-cultural context of Rongga ethnic. The specificity of the form is characterized by the use of complex sentences as meaning container that exposed Rongga ethnic conceptualization of the world. Type meanings include religious meaning, social, economic, and aesthetic. Religious significance related to the conceptualization of the existence of God, the spirit of ancestors, and nature spirits. The social significance is marked by the presence of people gathered as rituals participants and communication between them by using language of Rongga as a medium. Economic significance with regard to the economic system that was involved by Rongga ethnic is agricultural and farming systems. Political meaning is marked by power differences between ritual leaders and rites participants. Aesthetical meaning is reflected in the use of phonological parallelism in the form of assonance, rhyme, and alliteration. It is recommended that the Government of East Manggarai district document TDMW in printed and electronic, as well as the Rongga ethnic to make the mechanism of inheritance through *mbasa wini* rituals regularly and intensively every year.

Keywords: forms, meanings, Ti'ika discourse, mbasa wini ritual, Rongga ethnic

1. Introduction

Rongga ethnic is one of the minority ethnic in the district of Kota Komba, East Manggarai regency, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), with a population of about 8,000 people from 11 957 residents of sub-District of Kota Komba. In addition to the number of the population, Rongga ethnic identified as minority ethnic because they do not have the same power and the opportunity to participate in Manggarai ethnic group as the dominant group (Arka, 2013: 75). Rongga ethnic is spread over several villages in the Village Tanarata, Watu Nggene Village, Bamo village, and the village of Komba. The number of tribal (clan) which are included in the Rongga ethnic is as much as 22 ethnic tribes, namely Liti, Motu, Laja, Iowa, Nggeli, Savu, Raghi, Sera, Sui, WIO, Naru, Nggenga, Nggejo, Signs, Roka, Ramba, Ria, Kewi, Pau, Poso, Langgo, and Wake (Sumitri, 2005: 36).

Ethnic Rongga has its own culture with the unique pattern as a marker selfhood and distinguishing feature of Rongga ethnic. The specificity of the cultural patterns of Rongga ethnic is reflected, among others, in the *mbasa wini* ritual. Lexically, the word (verb) *mbasa* means 'spark' and the word (noun) *wini* means 'seed' which refers to the seeds of plants such as maize (Java) and rice (acres). In line with the background of socio-cultural context of Rongga ethnic, *mbasa wini* ritual is a ritual sprinkling of chicken blood on the seeds before planting in the garden in the new planting season. *Mbasa wini* ritual is the new year of traditional agricultural rituals of Rongga ethnic. Judging from the structure, *mbasa wini* rituals supervise some kind of ritual as a subordinate element and one of them is a *Ti'i ka* ritual. Lexically, the word (verb) *Ti'i* means 'give' and the word (noun) *ka* means 'eat'. Based on the background context, the *Ti'i ka* ritual is ritual of offering food to the ancestral spirits in order to inform the ancestral spirits that they want to celebrate the *mbasa wini* ritual. *Ti'ika* ritual is conducted at night in a traditional house as the opening of core ritual of *mbasa wini*. Types of animals for the offering are two red roosters that are slaughtered and grilled/burned.

With regard to several matters reviewed above as the background of thought, this study presented specifically and deeply concerning form and

meaning of *Ti'i ka* discourse (hereinafter abbreviated TD) spoken in *Ti'i ka* rituals as part of a *mbasa wini* ritual of Rongga ethnic. Researchers are interested in doing this research because of the form and meaning of the TD in *mbasa wini* ritual has distinctive characteristics in revealing the Rongga ethnic conceptualization of the world. However, most of the people in Rongga ethnic, especially the educated younger generation, are no longer accurately grasp the characteristics of form and meaning of TD in the *mbasa wini* ritual. In addition to these reasons, the study was done also because there has been no research that specifically examines and in depth of form and meaning of TD in the *mbasa wini* rituals as an identity symbol of Rongga ethnic.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study rests on the culture linguistic theory of which it is supported by several related theories, including the theory of discourse, symbolic interactionism and hermeneutics.

2.1 Linguistic Theory of Culture

Linguistic culture is one of the theoretical perspectives in cognitive linguistics that examines the relationship between language, culture, and the conceptualization of a society. Linguistic culture examines language through the prism of culture to discover the cultural conceptualization of knowledge embedded in a public forum. The use of language as a reflection of the cultural conceptualization of a society reflected in the discourse because discourse clinging to the language in its use as a means of communication (Palmer, 1996: 10-26; Foley, 1991: 3-5).

The basic concept that became the platform of thinking in linguistic culture is language, culture, and conceptualization. In the perspective of cultural linguistics, language is understood not only as a cultural activity, but also the cultural elements. The understanding framework is related to de Vito (1970: 7), which defines language as a system of symbols that is reflexive, systematic, structured and used by humans as citizens of a community to catalog objects,

events, and their relationships in the world. Language is a container in which the meaning lists conceptualization of culture that includes an overview perspective of community groups citizens concerned to the world. The conceptual framework is interwoven in a single overall unity with cultural meanings that make up the map of knowledge shared by the community concerned. The knowledge map contains a factual picture of the world that's going on and that the symbolic object of which the referent only exists at the level of ideational or contained in the knowledge map of the community group residents concerned. As with the words or language terms, words or culture terms have broad definitions with diverse meanings framework (Kaplan and Albert, 1999: 4). Therefore, the concept of culture which becomes the guide of thinking in this study refers to the concept of culture in social anthropology that defines culture as the premise that organizes his thoughts and feelings, knowledge maps, and a system of symbols and meanings (Ochs, 1988: 5). The main focus which is the target of the study is related to meaning because the meaning relates to culture as a form of symbolic world as a place where a variety of mental and cognitive load in the form of knowledge, beliefs, norms, and values are produced, and stored (Cassirer, 1987: 63-68). Culture is the whole meaning, values, customs, ideas, and symbols that are applicable in the reality of life of a community (Kaplan and Manners, 1999: 124). According Sutrisno (1990: 60), culture is a world of meaning and values that are communicated through symbols. The meaning is the content view of life of a society and values mean something valuable that is used as a guide and a decent of living teaching. The symbol refers to a set of agreed mark used by the culture supporting community and serve as a means for them to represent and describe the specific entity. Symbol is conventional, but it can be organized, recorded, and communicated (Odgen and Richards, 1972: 9).

2.2 Theory of Discourse

In the perspective of culture linguistic, according to Bustan (2005), discourse is a meaning container that contains a set of norms and values that connect the language forms with the socio-cultural context which underlie the use

of language in a communication event. The relation between language forms and context is framed in such a way by the speakers in question to be a discourse as a venue for the process of producing and interpreting meaning. In line with the presence of the discourse as dialectic between events and meaning, Ricour (1966) defines discourse as a language event or languages in use.

2.3 Symbolic Interactions

Symbolic interactionism is used as a theoretical perspective in this study because the main focus in symbolic interactions is to find the meaning behind the sensual. Behavior and human interaction can be distinguished as shown through meaningful symbols (Muhadjir, 1998: 135). Referring to Blumer (in Mulyana, 2002: 72-73), the three major premises used as a bridge of thinking in interpreting the meaning is as follows: an individual responds to something symbolically appropriate with limitation they gave to his situation faced; meaning is the result of social interaction that is negotiated through language; and the meaning interpreted by the individual may change from time to time as the situation changes in the social interaction. The three premises were further elaborated by the method of ethnographic semantics because the primary focus of the method is to understand the system of cultural meaning in the language. Language and meaning are understood as a cultural reality, as disclosed by Spradley (1997: 23) that the language not only serves as a tool to communicate the reality, but also a tool to construct reality. Since the reality is always ambiguous, then the interpretation of the mechanism must be done in depth in order to reach a level of understanding of the cultural conceptualization shown in the map of knowledge of society.

2.4 Theory of Hermeneutics

Hermeneutic theory is used in this study because the idea of the meaning is the fundamental concepts in hermeneutics. According to Palmer (2003: 9), hermeneutics is the study of understanding, especially the understanding of the meaning of a text as the description of the human impression toward the work

(Bungin, 2005). According to Bleicher and Gadamer (in Ochs, 1988: 20), meaning is obtained through a complex interaction between the speakers and commentators, including the conditions of production and interpretation of meaning. The interpretation is the meaning deconstruction endeavor that is still shrouded in a text. Symbols in the form of words and language are the meanings explicitness, so that hermeneutics aims at removing the mystery from a symbol that is done by lifting the veil on the forces of the unknown and hidden in those symbols. Therefore, according to Geertz (2001: 382), the analysis of culture is not just studying the problem of meaning as a pure charged symbols or system symbols. Cases on customs or public behavior should be observed for cultures find its articulation through the flow of behavior or social action as a reflection and expression of the cultural system.

3. Research Method

This study is descriptive research that is based on the philosophy of phenomenology. In harmony with its philosophical foundation, this research is based on factual data and the data is described as it is and is in accordance with the reality found in the time of the study. The location of the study is the Rongga ethnic region distribution, with the main location is in the sub-Village of Sambu the Tanarata village territory. Methods of data collection are observation, interviews, and documentary studies. Recording and note-taking techniques are applied in the data collecting. The main data sources are the people Rongga ethnic who inhabit sub-Village of Sambu, Tanarata Village, as the main location of the study, which are represented by two key informants. Referring to the view of Faisal (1990: 44-45), Spradley (1997: 35-52), and Sudikan (2001: 9), the main criteria for the selection of key informants were as follows: (1) has a relatively broad insight and in-depth knowledge about the relationship of language, culture, and conceptualization Rongga ethnic, as reflected in the characteristics of form and meaning the TD in *mbasa wini* rituals; (2) adult males aged at least 40; (3) physical and mental health; and (4) community leaders. The data were analyzed qualitatively using induction-conceptualization, meaning that the analysis of the

data move toward abstraction and the concept of locally-ideographic about the form and meaning of the TD in *mbasa wini* ritual. The process and mechanism of data analysis is conducted on an ongoing basis since the beginning of data collection to the report results of this research was completed. The results of data analysis are made by the researcher were negotiated and discussed with the key informants in order to obtain compliance with the conceptualization of culture mentioned in their knowledge map of form and meaning of TD in the *mbasa wini* ritual.

4. Results and Discussion

In line with the focus and scope of the targeted aspects of study, the form and meaning of TD in *mbasa wini* ritual of Rongga ethnic was presented and described in this section.

4.1 Form of TD in Mbasawini Ritual

The characteristics of TD forms in *mbasa wini* ritual is peculiar appropriate with *mbasa wini* ritual specific context of situation and socio-cultural context of Rongga ethnic. The distinctiveness as distinguishing characteristic peculiarities of TD in *mbasa wini* ritual form can be viewed and listened to on a few fragments below.

- (01) *Renge* *meu* *embu nusi* *ndia* *kami* *dhet* *manu*
 listen you ancestor now we hold chicken
nunu *meu* *ramba* *tau* *ti'i* *kamu* *meu bhate*
 inform you so that make give you all
- (02) *Li* *ma'i* *ika* *hake* *manu* *ndia*
 Let's come to eat meat chicken this
Ramba *ma'e* *menge* *bhate* *meu* *embu* *woso*
 so not hungry all you Ancestor many
- (03) *Denghi* *ne* *kami* *ana* *embu* *Woso*
 ask by our children grand children a lot
Li' *Ti'i* *ka* *rebha,* *bhagi* *ko* *pawa*
 Let's give that good for That good

- (04) *ndia Tara dhete kamu manu*
 This Because hold you a chicken
tau Nunu meu embu nusi
 want to tell you ancestors
- (05) *komba Ndia kami tau adha*
 evening This we hold customary
ko Adha kau mbasa wini
 That is customary you wet seed
- (06) *Ramba nggoti ne mula bhate one Uma kami*
tau
 in order planted with plant all in Kebun kami
 want
dhengi ne kami mai sama po'o nake manu ndia
ka
 beg with we Let's together Sit Meat chicken this
 eat

As shown on the above data, the fragment (01) is a multi-storey complex sentences formed from two clauses, that is *Renge meu Embu Nusi* 'listen ye the ancestors' as the main clause and *kami Ndnia dhete manu* 'Now we hold the chicken' as an subordinate clause . the main clause is in the form of imperative sentence that is characterized by the use of words (verbs) *renge* 'listen' as a predicate that is distributed at the beginning of a sentence or the word precedes the position of (second person plural pronoun) *meu* 'you' as the subject. The word *meu* is in apposition with *embu nusi* 'ancestral spirits' as the recipients of the message are to assume the role as intercessor request they convey to the Lord. The essence of the content of the message is that the ancestral spirits willing to hear petitions that they convey. The narrative a prayer request begins with the slaughter of a red chicken as a means of offering, as seen in the clause *ndia kami dhete manu* 'Now we hold the chicken' in order to feed the spirit ancestors. Multilevel complex sentences in the second row consists of two clauses, namely *Nunu meu* 'Tell you' as the main clause and *Ramba tau Ti'i kamu meu bhate*. 'In order to feed you all ' is as a subordinate clause. As mentioned above, the word *meu* 'you' in the first clause and the second clause is both plural pronouns refers to ancestral spirits as the recipient of the messages conveyed in the sentence or clause.

Fragment (02) is a compound sentence with the main clause is *Li ma'i ka hake manu ndia* 'Come eat this chicken meat' and the subordinate clause is *Ramba ma'e menge bhate meu embu woso* 'to make you all the ancestors less hungry'. The main clause is in the imperative sentence which is characterized by the use of words (particle) *li* 'come on' in combination with words clusters (serial verbs) *mai ka* 'come eat' as predicate and noun phrases (NP) *hake manu ndia* as objects. Judging from the essence of the message contents, the sentence is to invite the ancestral spirits to come and eat the chicken they dedicate together to keep the spirits not hungry. Invitation was disclosed in the clause of *Ramba ma'e menge bhate meu embu woso* 'to keep you all the ancestral spirit not hungry'. This clause is in the mode of hortative which is characterized by the use of words (function word) *Ramba* 'in order / so' as a hortative marker that is preceding group words *ma'e menge* 'do not be hungry' as a predicate. The group *ma'e menge* consists of words (function word) *ma'e* 'don't', which serves as a negation marker that function as companion category that precedes the word (verb) *menge* 'hungry'.

In the conceptualization of Rongga ethnic, ancestral spirits are mystical association with its own hierarchical structure in line with the order of birth so as to ancestral spirits were called *Embu woso*. Word cluster *Embu woso* is a Numeral noun phrase (Num-NP.) that is constructed from the word (noun) *Embu* as constituents of the head and the word (Numeral) *woso* as subordinate constituents. Noun phrase is in apposition with the word (second person plural pronoun) *meu* which refers to all the spirits of the ancestors. The above fragment implies transcendental reconciliation with the ancestral spirits and Rongga ethnic social reconciliation by referring to the ancestral pattern of behavior as a reference.

Based on the reality of textual form, physically the appearance of Fragment (03) is a parallel compound sentence formed from two related independent clauses syntactically and semantically. The two independent clauses are *Dhengi ne kami ana Embu woso* 'Request with our children and grandchildren a lot' and *Li Ti'i ko rebha, bhagi ko Pawa* 'Let's give the good, for the good'. The first clause has the imperative mood characterized by the use of words (verbs) *dhengi* 'requested' of which the distribution precedes the subject *kami ana Embu*

woso. The word cluster *kami ana Embu woso* is formed from the word (first person plural pronoun) *kami* 'we' with its apposition *ana Embu woso* 'a lot children and grandchildren'. This apposition is a noun phrase (NP), which is formed from the noun phrase (NP) *ana Embu* 'children and grand children' as the head constituents of the word (adjective) *woso* 'a lot' as subordinate constituents. Noun phrase (NP) *ana Embu* is formed of the word (noun) *ana* 'child' as the head constituent and the word (adjective) *Embu* 'grandchild' as subordinate constituents. The essence of the content of the message is a request to the ancestral spirits that are all willing to hear grandchildren's plea (*ana Embu woso*) conveyed. The second clause is a compound sentence formed from two clauses, namely *Li Ti'i ko rebha* and *Bhagi ko Pawa*. *Li Ti'i ko rebha* clause 'Let's give a good' has imperative mood that is characterized by the use of words (particles) *li* 'let' the distribution precedes the word (verb) *Ti'i* 'give' and followed by adjective phrases (F-adj.) *rebha ko* 'good' as the object / complement. The use of the word (particle) *li* reinforces the meaning of the message in the form of the good things (*ko rebha*) as an object / complement of the word (verb) *Ti'i*. The clause *Bhagi ko Pawa* 'For good' in imperative mood that is characterized by the use of words (verbs) *bhagi* 'for' and the distribution is in the initial position precedes the word (second person plural pronoun) *kami* 'we' that undergoes ellipsis. Both clauses above are in the elliptical sentence (incomplete sentence) as a result of the integration of clauses *Li Ti'i ko rebha* and clause (*Li*) *Bhagi ko Pawa*, with elliptic words (both plural pronoun) *kami* as subjects. This pronoun was originally distributed in the middle position between words (verbs) *Ti'i* as the predicate and the word (adjective phrase-FAdj.) *Ko rebha* in the first clause and the word (verb) *baghi* as the predicate and the word (adjective phrase.) *ko Pawa* in the second clause, in addition to the elliptic words (particles) *li* in the second clause. Both clauses relate lexico-semantic because the word (verb) *Ti'i* is synonymous with the word (verb) *bhagi* and word (adjective) *rebha* is synonymous with the word (adjective) *Pawa*. The essence of the content of the message is a request to the ancestral spirits so willing to share the good things like fertility and plant growth in the rich harvest fields so they do not experience food shortages (Sumitri, 2005;

Se et al, 2012).

Fragment (04) is a complex sentence that appears in the indicative mood. The compound sentence is made up of clauses, i.e. *ndia tara dhete kau manu* 'It's because you hold the chicken' as the main clause and the clause *Tau nunu meu embu Nusi* 'Want to let you know of ancestral spirits' is a dependent clause. The essence of the message conveyed in the main clause is a goal they sacrificed chickens in ritual *Ti'i ka* is to inform the ancestral spirits that they would celebrate *mbasa wini* ritual as a sign that the new season is about to begin.

In contrast to some earlier fragments, fragment (05) is a single sentence in the indicative mood. The essence of the content of the message is to inform that the ancestral spirits on this night (*Komba ndia*) they carry out traditional ceremonies (*adha*), the ceremonial *mbasa wini*. The traditional ceremony was held not of their volition themselves, but follows the rules of cultural heritage. *Mbasa wini* rituals is understood as a form of respect for the Rongga ethnic ancestors.

Fragment (06) is a coordinative sentence which is formed of two independent clauses, namely *tau nggoti Ramba, ne mula bhate one uma kami* 'To be willing to planting, transplanting all in our garden' and *Dhengi ne kami mai sama po'o, ka nake manu ndia* 'Request to let us sit down together, eat this chicken. "the first clause provides information to the ancestral spirits that they want to plant in all the land they have and the second clause contains a request to the ancestral spirits to sit together to eat chicken offerings.

4.2 The Meaning of TD in the *Mbasa Wini* Ritual

In line with cultural conceptualization of Rongga ethnic, TD in *mbasa wini* ritual implies a set of meanings that reveal the essence of the message of Rongga ethnic view of the world, both the world that in fact occurred and symbolic world. Based on the conceptualization embedded in the knowledge map of Rongga ethnic, meaning strokes of TD spoken in the context of *mbasa wini* ritual include religious, social, economic, and aesthetic.

4.2.1 Religious Meaning

The religious meaning of TD in the *mbasa wini* rituals related to the conceptualization of Rongga ethnic about the existence of God and the ancestral spirits. God and the ancestral spirits are understood by Rongga ethnic as supernatural powers or superhuman powers that determine the existence, viability and sustainability of their lives as human beings and society. Although not expressed explicitly, in the conceptualization of Rongga ethnic, God is understood as a supreme being because he is a major deity which is the goal of all petitions that they convey, no exception is delivered through the TD in *mbasa wini* ritual. In the conceptualization of Rongga ethnic, ancestral spirits is understood as an intermediary prayer requests to God. As shown in the data (01) and (04), the conceptualization of Rongga ethnic of the existence of ancestral spirits reflected in *embu nusi* expression as an adjective attribute to ancestral spirits or ancestors in the language of Rongga.

4.2.2 Social Meaning

As well as cultural discourse that is spoken in the context of other rituals, TD manifested in the context of *mbasa wini* ritual Rongga ethnic has social effectiveness with the content of a particular social significance. Stripe of social meaning in TD of the *mbasa wini* rituals is marked by a gathering of people who assume the role as rituals participants and eat together as a vehicle for reconciliation among them, in addition to the face to face language of communication among them by using language of Rongga as a medium. In addition to carrying out communicative function, Rongga language they use in the context of the ritual situation implies that the integrative function of integrating them as an ethnic group originating from the blood and the home of the descendants of the same parent.

4.2.3 Economic Meaning

In line with ritual situation context that plays as the background, TD manifested in a *mbasa wini* ritual context imply economic significance of the agricultural system that was involved in Rongga ethnic. Although not expressed explicitly, the agricultural system that was involved by Rongga ethnic is dry land farming systems with the main types of crops grown are maize and rice.

4.2.4 Meaning of Political

Political meaning is characterized by the difference in power among the leaders and participants of ritual rites. Ritual leader who once served as a central speaker of TD has a higher power than the structure of the rite participants. Differences in the structure of power were temporary because it only applies during the TD's narrative takes place. After a whole series of *mbasa wini* ritual activities carried out, the men concerned have equal status with other citizens.

4.2.5 Meaning of Aesthetic

In line with the reality of textual form that looks physically, aesthetical meaning of TD in the *mbasa wini* rituals is not so prominent. Aesthetical meaning is reflected in the use of phonological parallelism form of assonance, rhyme, and alliteration. As shown in the data (01), the assonance type used is symmetric and asymmetric assonance structure. The symmetrical structure of assonance is reflected in the phenomenon of vowel phonemes model *e-e* in the word *renge* 'hear' in partner with the words *dheté* 'hold'. Asymmetric assonance structure is reflected in the phenomenon of vowel phonemes show *a-u* in the word *kau* 'you' in partner with the words *manu* 'chicken'.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

As the crystallization of the main ideas presented above, some conclusions can be put forward. First, the form and meaning of TD in the *mbasa wini* ritual of

Rongga ethnic has distinctive characteristics. Second, the peculiarities of language form of the TD *mbasa wini* is characterized by the use of complex sentences as the means of organizing meaning that reveal the essence of the message of Rongga ethnic conceptualization of the world's. Third, according to the conceptualization of Rongga ethnic, TD in *mbasa wini* ritual implies a set of meanings which consists of religious meaning, social, economic, and aesthetic. Religious significance is related to the conceptualization of Rongga ethnic about the existence of God and the ancestral spirits. The social significance is marked by the presence of people gathering, and the communication among them by using Rongga language as a medium. Economic significance associated with dry land farming system that was involved by Rongga ethnic. Political meaning is characterized by differences in the structure of power among ritual leaders and participants of rites. Aesthetic meaning is reflected in the use of phonological parallelism in the form of symmetric and asymmetric assonance structured.

5.2 Recommendations

Seeing that the form of TD in the *mbasa wini* ritual is a means of storing meaning that exposed Rongga ethnic conceptualization of the world, some suggestions can be put forward through this study. *First*, it recommended that the Government of East Manggarai district document the TD of *mbasa wini* ritual in printed and electronic form for the sake of preservation and retention of its existence as a means of storing meaning that reveal the Rongga ethnic conceptualization of the world. *Secondly*, it is suggested that the citizens of Rongga ethnic make the mechanism of inheritance of TD through annual *mbasa wini* rituals regularly and intensively according to the rules of the ancestors.

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