



## **THE LOCAL WISDOM OF THE TELUK NAGA COASTAL COMMUNITY, TANGERANG IN THE CREATIVE WORK OF THE SONG KRAMAT KAREM GAMBANG KROMONG**

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### **Abstract**

Kramat Karem is one of the repertoires of Gambang Kromong songs whose lyrics describe the historical eruption of Mount Krakatau in 1883. To understand natural disasters, apart from weather forecasts, people need to understand the local wisdom of their ancestors in preserving nature. After the eruption which created the tsunami at Jakarta and Lampung, the ancestors of Betawi felt the need to share these historical events in saga stories and traditional songs. The song's lyric contains local wisdom regarding natural events and is passed on to the next generation to preserve nature in everyday life. Unfortunately, these days only a few can understand such songs. This study aims to examine the relationship of the text in a cultural context and the function of socializing local wisdom through the song. This research uses qualitative methods so that naturalistic, basic, and profound things can be obtained more accurately. The data collected through literature studies, interviews and observations in the community were analyzed using ethnomusicological theory and social anthropology, which help analyze the function of music in a cultural context. This study is expected to produce recommendations for coastal communities to appreciate and pay close attention to natural phenomena through local wisdom in the song Kramat Karem. In addition, the results of this study also become a trigger and impetus for local communities to strengthen traditional music as a medium of communication and socialization of local wisdom.

**Keywords:** Gambang Kromong, Local Wisdom, Coastal Communities

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Teluk Naga, Tangerang is one of the suburbs of Jakarta whose residents mostly are ethnic Betawi and Chinese crossbreeds. They are often referred as Benteng Chinese and lived in the Benteng area along the Cisadane River which flows into the Java Sea. This area is prone to flooding due to the overflowing Cisadane River into the Java Sea. In connection with floods and natural disasters, Kramat Karem is one of the repertoires of Gambang Kromong songs whose lyrics are a description of the historical events of the 1883 eruption of Mount Krakatau in the Sunda Strait. The song's lyric has some journalistic report and information about tsunami along with the local wisdom in form of rhymes. These rhymes are the source of Gambang Kromong's lyric. Gambang kromong is a traditional Betawi community ensemble which is the result of a mixture of indigenous and 'Chinese' cultural elements, which have been inherited for more than 280 years. At the beginning of its development, the songs that were sung by the gambang kromong were Chinese songs. These songs are used to entertain guests at parties. Musicians and singers consist of Chinese and indigenous people, and the guests who come are mostly Chinese. In such a



situation, indirectly, gambang kromong music functioned as a means of communication between the Chinese and the natives at that time [16].

In 1950s, the government of Indonesia banned Chinese cultural arts for the reason of nationalism. At that time, the Barongsai, a lion dance culture in the Chinese crossbreed's community disappeared and many of the Chinese-cultured gambang kromong songs began to be forgotten. During the reign of President Abdurahman Wahid in the 2000s, the implementation of the Presidential Instruction was canceled, but in fact a generation has been uprooted from its cultural roots [17]. Other thing that makes many songs forgotten is the long progress which has resulted in social and cultural changes. According to the author's observations, the rhymes containing local wisdom and advice have shifted a lot, and the songs that are sung are witty and romantic.

What kind of local wisdom values are useful for coastal communities in the Kramat Karem song? How does the Gambang Kromong singer's creativity include rhymes containing local wisdom values in the Gambang Kromong song? This makes the writer compelled to write an article entitled the local wisdom of the coastal community of Teluk Naga, Tangerang in the Creative Work of the Song Kramat Karem Gambang Kromong. This study aims to see the values of local wisdom in the song Kramat Karam in the Betawi community. The results of this study can be used as a reference to restore the function of local wisdom values in the Kramat Karem song in the life of the coastal Betawi community.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a multi-disciplinary ethnomusicological approach and looks at the problem through the eyes of music and anthropology. Seeger [19] differentiated between the two approaches, describing the anthropology of music as studying the way that music is a "part of culture and social life", while musical anthropology "studies social life as a performance," examining the way "music is part of the very construction and interpretation of social and conceptual relationships and processes. In this study, the author uses qualitative research so that things that are naturalistic and basic can be obtained both through observational literature and interviews in the field. In a qualitative approach, researchers have a work plan or implementation guideline to collect opinions, responses, information, data, and information in the form of descriptions or descriptions in expressing and answering problems. The qualitative approach emphasizes the researcher as an instrument, maintains the reasonableness of the context, and emphasizes the process [1]. Observations and interviews were limited to the Betawi community in Teluk Naga, Tangerang and some old recordings of the song Kramat Karem of Gambang Kromong from the same area. Another sample is a 24 years old singer representing the younger generation of Gambang Kromong who recorded his songs for broadcast on YouTube.

## DISCUSSION

Society' local wisdoms are people original knowledge in an area that are useful for regulating the relationship between humans, nature and the creator. According to Hunaepi et al [11], local wisdom is the perspective of a society that is used as a rule or habit so that it becomes entrenched. In addition, local wisdom can be understood as ideas, values, local views that are wise, full of wisdom, of good value, which are embedded and followed by community members. Betawi's people have several local wisdoms that can be seen from traditional cultures including music, dance, food and traditional rhymes. According to Alan P. Merriam [2] in his book entitled *The Anthropology of Music*, music is studied in the context of culture or the study of music in culture. Music is also studied in relation to human behavior. These facts can be used to explain why such music can be used to support certain activities, and without such music the cultural activities in question will be

less meaningful in their implementation. Merriam [2] also said that the function of music in a socio-cultural context is as a communication tool. Through music, good values can be conveyed, religious values or beliefs, and values about decency or norms through melodies and song lyrics from singers to listeners.

Gambang Kromong is a traditional musical ensemble that developed in Betawi society. This music is the result of a mixture of elements of indigenous and 'Chinese,' culture. Etymologically the naming of the gambang kromong comes from the gambang, a xylophone musical instrument and the kromong musical instrument with the addition of drums, kecrek, and gongs. Besides Betawi musical instruments, Chinese musical instruments were also added, namely ningnong, cio tauw trumpet, tehyan, kongahyan, sukong [12].



Figure 1. Gambang Kromong Rindu Malam  
[Source: Private Documentation]

According to an article entitled Krakatau 1883 Disaster, from the Disaster History Literacy portal, National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB), Mount Krakatau erupted on August 26, 1883. At that time more than 36,000 people died as a result of a volcanic explosion that generated a tsunami. At that time the ship Charles Bal was sailing near the island of Krakatoa. The dark atmosphere and rumbling sounds made the atmosphere scary. That afternoon it rained large and hot pumice stones. The sound of a loud explosion was heard up to 4,800 kilometers away and the sound was heard as far as Rodriguez Island, Mauritius in the Indian Ocean. The pressure wave from the eruption radiated around the world up to 5 days after the eruption. The shock wave after the last and largest eruption reverberated around the world up to seven times and the height of the resulting smog was estimated at eighty kilometers (Suryadi: 2010).

Suryadi is a philologist from Leiden University, after he conducted comprehensive research for approximately two years and after 125 years had passed, ancient manuscripts about the Lampung Karam verse were found in different places in lithographic form stored in six countries namely England, Netherlands, Germany, Russia, Malaysia and Indonesia. Suryadi transcribed the ancient script, namely the Arabic-Malay (Jawi) script into Indonesian. The narration is in the form of a rhymes consisting of 375 stanzas and each stanza has 4 lines of sentences. Journalists' reports in the form of poetry have many aspects of humanity and humanity. The scriptwriter, Muhammad Saleh, who experienced the tsunami disaster, then moved to Singapore. The first manuscript was published in November 1883 (Suryadi: 2010).

Noise people in the country  
 Saying the ship is coming fire  
 Then walk the fairies  
 Turns out Krakatoa has a sound (stanza 14)

There appeared above,  
 in that astral murk,  
 A luminous display much like fireworks, Indeed, dear sirs,  
 striking fear in the heart,  
 For the calamities that Allah might import. (stanza 21)

According to Ruchiat in Attas [20], in the 1920s there was a famous designer, Jian the blind, who performed the Kramat Karem play with Persian rhythms, and the Kramat Karem poetry. Furthermore, Kramat Karem rhymes has gone back and forth in line with cultural changes in society, but starting in the 2000s, there have been more studies on Kramat Karem rhymes. These rhymes are performed in the form of gambang rancag and Betawi folk speech theater called gambang rancag. In December 2015 at a Betawi cultural event in Cikini, Central Jakarta, Yayah Andi Saputra from Sanggar Plampang Hikayat Betawi changed and performed the rhyme Kramat in 37 stanzas, each stanza having 4 lines.

Apart from being uttered in the gambang Rancag, the rhymes of Kramat Karem are also sung separately in the accompaniment of the gambang kromong ensemble. Gambang Kromong in the Tangerang Coastal community. Masnah or Pang Tjin Nio is the maestro of the classic Gambang Kromong song who was once a primadonna in the 1960s. She was born in Banten, 1925 and died in 2014 at the age of 89 years. Coming from a Chinese Chinese crossbreeds' family. Her father is Chinese and her mother is native Indonesian from Mauk, a coastal area north of Tangerang, Banten province. Being a singer from the age of 14 until the end of her life, Masnah mastered many gambang kromong songs. In the 1960s Masnah was very active on stage, at that time there were only a few Gambang Kromong singers, so her name was quickly recognized in Jakarta and Banten. Her success was able to make her buy a house. Her career had stalled in the 1980s due to a ban from the government, and reappeared in the 1990s. The recording studied by the author is the recording of Masnah singing the song Kramat Karam to the accompaniment of the gambang Kromong Irama Jaya, led by Jami'an. This recording was made by Paragon Records in 1978 which was uploaded by the Gambang Kromong *Irama Masa Lalu* Group on YouTube. Masnah's version of the song Kramat Karem still contains many stories of the eruption of Mount Krakatau. When this song is sung with Betawi speech theater, this song is combined with very strong moral messages, a creative way in sharing values of life.

Ini pantun Kramat Karem

Gunung Meletus rasanya serem sayang di sayang  
 Angin keguguran sayang serem sayang disayang  
     Angin keguguran sayang serem sayang adik disayang  
 Kalau mata payah ngantuk pala ngga mau merem (stanza 1)

Lagu kramat yang kebanjiran

Gunung meleduk berwates lampung  
 Karangnya pecah sampai karangnya ngapung sayang di sayang,  
 kenapa gelombang nona ombak kacau tu sayang di sayang  
 Aer dilaut sampai ombak kacau sayang di sayang  
 Air di laut sayang masuk di kumpang (Stanza 2)

Kramat karem tiada banding

Dari kramat karem kita nuju ke Jakarta  
Wasisir laut ke kapak kapal sayang disayang  
Kramet kebanjiran orang berserak pada sengsara jiwa disayang  
Kramat kebanjiran orang berserak pada sengsara jiwa manis aduh sayang (stanza 3)

Aih Kramet karem kebanjiran Kramet sampe hujan abu

Kapal abis dilanggar sama belombang  
ikan di laut sampe nyangsang di cabang sayang di sayang  
Ikan di laut sampe pada tarbang hati disayang, Ikan di laut memang pada terbang  
Jiwa manis abis pikiran, rumah abis pagernya ngambang (stanza 4)

Kramat karem abis-abisan

Yang tua yang muda semua orang bawa buntelan, kramat karem ini lagunya

Mendung-mendung memanglah juga keringetan  
Tau cobek cobek kenapa pada pecah tuan disayang  
Kalau saya bingung saya sampelah keringetan adik disayang  
Adik saya bingung sampe keringetan (stanza 5)

Sayang di sayang tau dewek deweknya kagak pecah, kramat karem abis abisan

Gunung sindur ada pasirnya kuning  
Talo udang dikasi mayat sayang di sayang  
Kurang tidur saya rasanya pusing sayang di sayang,  
Kurang tidur saya kepala pusing (stanza 6)

Kramat karem ini lagunya

Wayang sepanggung ada pasang pelita  
Peras jahe ada ambil patinya sayang disayang  
udah tanggung saya buat cerita ati dijiwa, udah tanggung saya buat carita sayang di sayang  
Asal baik ati budinya (stanza 7)

Kramat karem yang penghabisan

This is Kramat Karem's rhyme

Mount Eruption feels scary, my dear  
The wind of miscarriage, dear, scary, dear, dear  
The wind of miscarriage, dear, scary, dear sister, dear  
If your eyes are tired, you don't want to brake  
The flooded sacred song (stanza 1)

The volcano explodes with water in Lampung  
The corals are broken until the corals float, dear, dear,  
why is the wave, miss, the waves are chaotic, dear, dear  
Water in the sea until the waves are chaotic, dear, dear  
The water in the sea unfortunately enters the village (Stanza 2)  
Kramat karem is incomparable

From kramat karem, we go to Jakarta  
Wasisir the sea to the ax of the ship, dear dear  
Kramet flooded with people scattered on the suffering of the soul dear



Kramat flooded with people scattered on the misery of a sweet soul, oh dear (stanza 3)

Aih Kramet karem is flooded with Kramet until it rains ash

The ship has been violated by a wave  
the fish in the sea until it sat on the branch, dear, dear  
The fish in the sea arrive at the flight of the heart, dear, the fish in the sea do fly  
Sweet soul out of mind, house after floating pager (stanza 4)

Kramat karem completely

The old and the young, everyone brings bundles, this is the song Kramat Karem

Cloudy clouds are also sweat  
Do you know why it broke, dear sir  
If I'm confused, I sample the sweat of my dear sister  
My sister is confused until she sweats (stanza 5)

it's a shame, it's a pity to know that the dewek dewek didn't break, the Kramat Karem was gone

Mount Sindur has yellow sand  
Shrimp talo is given a corpse, dear, dear  
My lack of sleep feels dizzy dear dear,  
lack of sleep gives me a headache. (stanza 6)

Kramat karem this is the song

The stage puppet has a set of lights  
Squeeze the ginger, take the starch, dear dear  
It's my responsibility to make the story of the heart in the soul, it's my responsibility  
to make the story of love to you  
The origin is good at heart (stanza 7)

The last Kramat karem



Figure 2. Foto Masnah Singing accompanied by Gambang Kromong Setia Nada  
[Source: Foto Masnah, Website reference [5]]

According to Souw the gambang kromong group successor and from the author's observations, not all gambang kromong singers have poetry books of rhymes in Betawi society, but there are also some other singers who have memorized rhymes. In the Betawi community, there are also many singers who have the ability to be creative in rhymes. The event of the eruption of Mount Krakatoa is written in the Betawi Malay dialect. The author's analysis of the lyric of the Kramat Karem song, sung by Masnah (1978), the singer expressed his fear of Mount Meletus describing how terrible the event was and even though it has been more than 130 years it still remains in the memories of the coastal communities who experienced it as well as what was told from generation to generation (stanza 1). She also said that her eyes were sleepy and could not be closed (stanza 2). In this song there is also geographical knowledge and information that the erupted mountain borders the province of Lampung (Stanza 3). The singer conveys this because she comes from Tangerang, Banten province in the Northwest of the city of Jakarta. Furthermore, she said that clouds were indeed sweating (stanza 4), this sentence instigated one of the local wisdoms of the Betawi ancestors regarding weather warnings before an earthquake. In stanza 5 the singer says that he is experiencing a lack of sleep and he feels dizzy. In this stanza there is local wisdom about traditional medicine to squeeze ginger until the essence comes out. This verse also teaches that when you don't get enough sleep, you get dizzy and the Betawi culture teaches that ginger extract is a panacea for colds. In other rhymes, there are still many texts that contain local wisdom, but nowadays most of the younger generation who sing the song Kramat Karem no longer see these ancestral rhymes. According to Sumitra, one of the informants who sings the gambang kromong in Betawi community events, nowadays it is rare for people to know about these rhymes. From several cultural events whose musical performances are uploaded on YouTube, the author noticed that some of the songs of Kramat Karem by the author of Sumitra are love-themed rhymes, one example of which is the following:

Long fir Long Hair  
 If I come to the island of Java, I will love you  
 I dream of sleeping in a sweet soul bed  
 I dream of sleeping in a sweet soul bed protect baby  
 One pillow two heads, Kramat Karem was flooded.

According to Sumitra, the singer interviewed by the author, he did not know that there were books containing Kramat Karem's poetry, and in principle the songs he studied were songs that he often listened to and learned by imitation. In the song Karang karem there is an initial and final melodic form that he understands, but the rhymes that are sung have melodic freedom which he learns by listening and imitating.

For traditional people, music is a medium of communication that can be responded directly to community activities. Such as the music of the Nias, Dayak, Mentawai tribes and other traditional music which has a very central role in the life cycle of traditional communities from birth ceremonies to death ceremonies. Therefore, music that used to have similar functions and strengths should be revitalized integrally along with supporting cultural factors around it. According to Shepherd, music in relation to humans creates an integrative and relational fabric that is at the core of the human socialization process itself [10]. Music has an energy that moves people to respond directly either through words or body language. The relationship between music and humans creates a relationship that is at the core of the human socialization process. This power is very much felt in traditional music where music is integrated in people's live. This phenomenon has disappeared in the life of modern society which is secular, homogeneous, rationalistic, bureaucratic, and capitalist. Musical communication in traditional societies has been distorted, but it still can be corrected if the community that owns the culture can be creative and re-enter the values of local wisdom that had been eroded. In general, creativity is defined by the power

or ability to create, and includes the fluency of responding to a problem, the ability to adapt, original thinking, and the ability to think Integrally (Suhaya: 2016). In the context of rhyme creativity in the song kramat karam, water and disaster are inspirations in sharing local wisdom for the next generation. According to Senge [15] existing knowledge needs to be managed properly so that it can be used to produce different behavior patterns and this can be utilized by today's gambang kromong singers. Continuous learning in performing arts groups and in society aims to enrich knowledge and practice of traditional performing arts in the long term. A unity of system thinking provides the most effective mental model for personal mastery, team learning, and the realization of shared vision can produce structure behavior and changing underlying structures can produce different pattern of behavior" [15]. Learning traditional culture in society should maintain original values so that when art is strengthened and returned to the community, the art can still contain the values and philosophies that are expected [18].

## CONCLUSION

The song Kramat Karem has verses that contain local wisdom and can be learned by the younger generation of heirs to the gambang kromong culture. This study produces recommendations for coastal communities to appreciate and pay close attention to natural phenomena through local wisdom in the song Kramat Karem. The results of this study are also a trigger and impetus for local communities to strengthen traditional music as a medium of communication and socialization of local wisdom. Traditional performing arts are not only placed on the stage, but can be reaffirmed in the context of the culture of the community that owns it. For related government agencies, if it is carried out in parallel, it can support community efforts in the creative industry and government programs that promote ecotourism.

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