RIJOQ: VOCAL MUSIC OF DAYAK BENUAQ FROM KUTAI, EAST KALIMANTAN

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Received: June 2013. Accepted: Februari 2014. Published: Maret 2014

Abstract

RIJOQ, a Dayak Benuaq vocal music, has been passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition for hundreds of years. When and how it was founded, developed and preserved in the Dayak community remains questionable. But according to some research done by scholars, RIJOQ has its origin from Dayak Bawo, a tribe living in the borderlines between Central, South, and East Kalimantan. RIJOQ is normally performed during festivities, such as: initiation, reconciliation, menugal (rice planting) and potong kerbau (buffalo slaughtering). RIJOQ’s texts have very deep messages which are considered still relevant to today’s life context. On the one hand, it speaks about the horizontal relationship—human beings and their fellows, and human beings and its nature—; and on the other hand, the vertical relationship—human beings with their Creator. The primary concern of doing this research is to preserve RIJOQ as written and recorded documents. So far, this research has been successful in notating and recording five kinds of RIJOQ, that is Peket Muat Bolupm (working together to build lives), RIJOQ Patuk Ajer (advice), RIJOQ Natal Tautn Bayuq (Christmas and New Year), RIJOQ Isiq Asekng Sookng Bawe (the expression of a man’s feeling who is falling in love with a woman), and RIJOQ Lati Tana Orekng Tepa (forests and lands are disappearing and gone). But this paper is not intended to discuss these five kinds of RIJOQ. Isiq Asekng Sookng Bawe is chosen as it is the oldest and the most difficult RIJOQ among the rest.

Keywords: RIJOQ; Dayak Benuaq; Bekeleeu

INTRODUCTION

In general all Dayak tribes were the descendants of Chinese immigrants that emigrated from Yunnan in South China (Commans, 1987, p. 3-4). No wonder that some names such as Apui, Bi Lung and Kun Dung Ga which are very common in South China also used as Dayak’s names in East Kalimantan (Soemargono et. al, 1992, p. 12). Some scholars believe that Dayak Benuaq was a mixture between Malay, Weidoide and Mongoloide, and characterized by some physical similarities. Ahmad Yunus concludes that Dayak Banuaq originated from the borderlines between Central Sulawesi and Serawak, Malaysia (Yunus, 1992, p. 31). The Ahmad Yunus’ conclusion is supported by some similarities found in these two areas, particularly tools used for cultivating the field, battling, hunting the animals, burying the dead bodies, and worshipping the souls of their ancestors.

In their original place, Dayak Benuaq was formerly called “Luangan”. Due to geographical situation and the pressure
brought by an Iban tribe from the Northern area, Dayak Benuaq has been forced to move to East Kalimantan. In their new home place, they called themselves "Benuaq", which possibly came from the word "Benuaqkn", a name of their new place.

According to their belief, Benuaq is associated with Ningkah or Nyingkah Oloo, a figure of demigod (Dyson, 2008, p. 16-17). The descendants of Nyingkah Oloo spread from the riverside (close to Samarinda, South Kalimantan) to the upper course of Mahakam, a place known as Gunung Lipan (Centipede Mountain). On this mountain, Nyingkah Oloo built his home, a place where many poisonous centipedes were living (Dyson, 2008, p. 19-20).

Nyingkah Oloo was married to a Bugis woman, named Dayaang Beliaant. However the name of Tenggarong as the capital of Kutai palace did not come from the Bugis words "tangga arung" (king’s ladder), but from "wakaai engkaruukng" (Benuaq words meaning wooden root that is frequently used for a fireplace when the people are working together to build their new city). Benuaq people call Tenggarong with "tengkaruukng".

Rijoq

Dayak Benuaq sing their songs in the social and the religious events. The texts of these songs are written in the high literary language that only can be understood by the language experts. Every singer who wants to master the texts and the songs used in the religious events should go through a ritual process.

According to Septianus B., Dayak Benuaq’s songs are divided into two, that is sacred and secular. The sacred pieces are in the form of magic formula or sung story that only can be performed during the religious rites. Some kinds of secular pieces are: dodo (sung poetry or fairy tale), dequg (poetry or fairy tale similar to dodo but sung in the faster tempo), look (songs used during the kampong thanksgiving ceremony), lengot (similar to look but written in different rhythm and notation), and rijoq (a traditional poetry that is sung during special or wedding ceremonies).

The History of Rijoq

None of the Rijoq players know when Rijoq was born, but they all are convinced that Rijoq has been passed down from generation to generation for hundreds of years. F. Setianus B., Rijoq is truly convinced that Rijoq was originated from Dayak Bawo living in the borderlines between Central, South, and East Kalimantan (now is known as North Barito district). North Barito once was known as a tribe with high cultures and so much influenced by Hindu. This tribe is well known as the creator of noble literatures, such as metaphors, aphorism, fairy tales, and Rijoq.

According to the mythology, all joyful arts including Rijoq have its origin in bekeleu ceremony. This ceremony began with the victory of Tatau Mukng Batuqo-ver the Aput Pererawetn village. After the battle, Tatau Mukng Batuq got a serious illness although beliatn ceremony had been offered. One day, Tatau Mujaaq Tuhaaq, Batuq’s father, had a dream. In his dream, an old man with white hair telling him that Batuq’s illness was a result of nayuq’s and tiger’s curse. The spirit of nayuq and the tiger got mad at Tatau Mukng Batuq for not holding pesengkeet nayuq ceremony as a thanksgiving over the victory he had achieved. This old man, then suggested Batuq’s father to hold a bekeleu ceremony to expel the evil spirits that were sent by nayuq and the tiger (Madrah, 1997, p. 136).

Bekeleu ceremony has marked the beginning of all joyful Dayak arts, including Rijoq. It has become a strong reason why performing Rijoq during the times of sorrow will result in buhotn (struck down by death) (Irwanto, 2010, p. 63).

Dayak Benuaq has adopted a lot of Dayak Bawo literatures, e.g. rijoq and beliatn ceremony. It was possible because Dayak Benuaq did a lot of travels to other Dayak kampongs. Another reason is Dayak Benuaq lived side by side and intermixed with Dayak Bawo.
The Functions of Rijoq

Rijoq is usually performed during joyful ceremonies. It is first an amusement for the performers itself, particularly during menugal (sowing the rice seed), buffalo slaughtering, or when the women preparing the logistic for menugal (Irwanto, 2010, p. 63), or when the women picked up doyo leaves for making ulap doyo (piece of cloth made of leave doyo fiber). The making process takes quite a long time because the fibres should be separated first from its leaves before drying and spun). Later, Rijoq is also sung during the initiation, such as: birth, marriage, expelling calamity (nalutn tautn) and peace ceremonies (nuak mi’kaat lait). Nalutn tautn is ceremony aims to expel the disaster caused by incest, so that the farmers may harvest rice.

The Lyrics and the Forms of Rijoq

Rijoq is a speech literature—a kind of literature that has been passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition, for instance, a traditional poetry—that is sung without any music accompaniment. Therefore, a Rijoq singer is required to be able to show his/her musical ability. In this present day, Rijoq is no longer an unaccompanied song, but it has been furnished with musical instruments such as: sapeq, guitar, drum set, synthesizer, sulking (a wooden flute that’s rarely found in the performances today). Its verse comprises of two couplets with each line ends with a rhyme. Its texts speak about the relationships between human beings and its Creator, human beings with their fellows, and human beings with its nature. At the beginning Rijoq was written in an archaic Benuaq language, but later to adjust to the situation, Rijoq’s texts use modern language.

Rijoq is sung by one singer or two alternates. Rijoq has a unique ornament that usually placed on the syllables that are located at the beginning or in the middle, and never in the end of a song phrase. The main feature of Rijoq is the absence of refrain. It has a lyrical melody, tempo which is relatively constant throughout the song, and quite a complicated rhythmic pattern. The skill of the singers will determine the complexities of its Rijoq’s rhythmic pattern. In the other word, the more skilful the singer, the more complicated the Rijoq’s rhythmic pattern will be.

Rijoq Isiq Asekng Sookng Bawe (The expression of a man who is falling in love with a woman)

Rijoq Isiq Asekng Sookng Bawe has three motives (figures 1, 2, and 3) and all texts are set in the strophic form.

![Figure 1. Rhythmic Motive 1 Rijoq Isiq Asekng Sookng Bawe](image)

![Figure 2. Rhythmic Motive 2 Rijoq Isiq Asekng Sookng Bawe](image)

![Figure 3. Rhythmic Motive 3 Rijoq Isiq Asekng Sookng Bawe](image)

Rijoq Isiq Asekng Sookng Bawe is also decorated with some ornaments which in Western notation similar to acciaccatura, trill, and slide (figure 4). Isik Asekng Sookng Bawe is considered as an old Rijoq and demands high skills of its performers. This Rijoq is performed without any accompaniment so singer’s creativity and musicality are required.

![Figure 4. Rijoq Isiq Asekng Sookng Bawe’s ornaments](image)
sentence dodoi dinang ayoq sayang which does not have any meaning is added to complement the existing melody. Its texts talk about the love between a man and a woman. This Rijoq may be performed by male and female singers as a responsorial.

The message of this Rijoq: love relationship is a holy one and it is not merely about sexual relationship. Every Dayak person should understand the true meaning of love and should find his/her partner seriously.

Empit incatn mungih ori

Kakatn mungih manan langit akuq lilikng langit
dodoi dinang ayoq sayang langit akuq lilikng langit
Kami kemkepm mungih kami
Elokng mungih bungaq kami akuq kemkepm lei kami
dodoi dinang ayoq sayang kami kemkepm lei kami

Empit incatn mungih ori

Oroq mungih manan langit kuq lilikng lei langit
dodoi dinang ayoq sayang langit akuq lilikng langit
Kami kemkepm mungih kami
Ituq mungih bungaq kami akuq kemkepm lei kami
dodoi dinang ayoq sayang kami akuq kemkepm kami
Empit incatn mungih lewekng

Epuq mungih manan langit akuq lilikng langit
dodoi dinang ayoq sayang langit akuq lilikng lei langit
Asekng kemkepm mungih asekng
Elokng mungih bungaq kami asekng akuq kemkepm lei asekng
dodoi dinang ayoq sayang asekng

Empit incatn mungih lewekng

Oroq mungih manan langit akuq lilikng lei langit
dodoi dinang ayoq sayang langit akuq lilikng langit
Asekng kemkepm mungih asekng
Elokng mungih bungaq kami asekng akuq kemkepm lei asekng
Empit incatn mungih ori

Dodoi dinang ayoq sayang asekng

Ayo butuq mungih umaq
Amen mungin bungaq konaq akuq masengkonaq
dodoi dinang ayoq sayang konaq akuq masengkonaq
Ruku bere mungih ruku
Ayoq mungih alukng ruku akuq bere lei ruku
dodoi dinang ayoq sayang akuq bere lei ruku

Empit incatn mungih lewekng

Ayo botuq mungih suru

Aweq lekaq nyalaq akuq nentakng lei nyalaq
dodoi dinang ayoq sayang nyalaq akuq nentakng lei nyalaq
Ruku bere mungih ruku
Ulatn mungih olukng ruku akuq bere lei ruku
dodoi dinang ayoq sayang ruku akuq bere ruku

Empit incatn mungih ori

Meaning:
A sparrow perches on a house post
I wish to wander around the sky
Holding hands together
To find the flowers to hold on
To find a girl to marry

A sparrow perches on a house post
To walk far away circling around the sky
To walk far away to all destinations
Holding hands together
That is the flower to hold on
This is the girl that is ready to marry
A sparrow perches on a rice winnow
Have travelled circling around the sky
Have travelled to all destinations
Sweetheart
To find the flower
Sweetheart
To find a girl, my heart desire
A sparrow perches on a rice
Winnow
To walk far away circling around the sky
To walk far away to all
destinations
Sweetheart
To find the flower,
Sweetheart
This is the girl, my heart desire
Sweet potatoes in the field
If the flower agrees
If the flower does not mind
to meet
Could we meet directly?
Let us make a promise to meet
Sweet potatoes in the field that has
been burned
There is nothing wrong
There is no need to feel shy and
guilty
to meet
We are about to meet
We will meet immediately

CONCLUSION

The deep moral message of *Rijoq*'s
texts is still considered relevant to today’s
context. *Rijoq Isiq Asekng Sookng Bawe* is
just an obvious example of how a hun-
dred-year text could bring a strong mes-
sage to today’s people who are ignoring
the holiness of love. This research is just
a beginning indeed. Many remain hidden
and covered. Hopefully, this research will
stimulate other researches which try to in-
ventories and to preserve *Rijoq* as a com-
pleted written document.

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Appendix

Rijoq Isiq Asekng Sookng Bawe

\[\text{音乐谱}
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