

The Function of Timorese Gong Music in The *Tfua Ton* Ritual Ceremony in Napan Kefamenanu Village

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Article Info

Article History:
 Recived 26 October
 2018
 Accepted 15 July
 2019
 Published 15
 September 2019

Keywords:
 Ritual Ceremony,
 Tfua Ton, Timorese
 Gong Function

Abstract

Tfua Ton is a ritual ceremony carried out by the community in Napan Village to ask for rain and soil fertility to *Uis Neno* (God) and *Uis Pah* (deceased ancestors). In the ritual there is a Timorese Gong instrument that has an important role in it. The gong consists of *Tonu mese*, *Ote* and *Kbola* and one drum (*Ke'e*). The purpose of this study is to analyze the function of the Timorese Gong Music in the *Tfua Ton* Ritual Ceremony. The method used in this study is qualitative interpretive with phenomenological approach. Data collection techniques with observation, interview and document study techniques. Check the validity of the data by using data triangulation, researcher's triangulation, triangulation of theories, methods and techniques. For data analysis, the researchers used the theory of music function from Allan P. Merriam with stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion (verification). The results of the study are Timorese Gong in the *Tfua Ton* ritual have an important role in it and have become a part of traditional rituals. Timorese Gong In the *Tfua Ton* ritual has several functions, including functioning as aesthetic appreciation, as entertainment, as an emotional expression, as communication and education, integrating society, as an endorsement of social institutions and religious rituals. Timorese Gong can function to show the existence, character and identity of the Dawan people in Napan Village. The results of this study can provide understanding and increase knowledge to the people of Napan Village and the younger generation to better understand Timorese Gong music in the *Tfua Ton* ritual, besides it is expected that the Napan Village community will continue to preserve and maintain Timorese Gong music as one of the traditional music of the society.

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p-ISSN 2252-6900

e-ISSN 2502-4531

INTRODUCTION

Each region has different traditions and beliefs, one of which is in Napan Village. People in Napan Village believe that life is inseparable from customs. This custom is believed to be a distinctive form of indigenous culture that can form the pattern of life of the community towards a prosperous life. Koentjaraningrat in (Triyanto, 2018, p.1) explains that humans as social beings, cannot live their social life without being united in a collective unit by mutual agreement to form a system of customs that binds and becomes a shared identity as an institution to interact sustainably in carrying out life and living.

Traditional ceremonies are inheritances that have been given by ancestors and become a tradition, in the Napan village there are several traditions that are often carried out, such as traditional wedding rituals, death rituals, reception of guests, ceremony of traditional houses and *Tfua Ton* (Asking for rain and fertility). One of the rituals carried out by the Dawan community is *Tfua Ton*. The *Tfua Ton* rite is a traditional ceremony that has been inherited from an ancestral culture that has been handed down from generation to generation.

According to the beliefs of Napan's people, the *Tfua Ton* rite was addressed to *Uis Neno*, known as *Uis Neno Mnanu*, who was identified as the sun (*manas*) and *Uis Neno Pala* which means God of the land. *Uis Neno Mnanu* is the Lord of the sky, He is the one who shines (*apinat*) which means flaming, (*aklahat*) which is He who created everything.

Traditional music is music that has traditionally been inherited hereditary from one generation to the next (Banoë, 2003, p.289). In the *Tfua Ton* ritual ceremony there are traditional musical instruments that play an important role in it namely Timorese Gong. The people in Napan Village have believed that when Gong is sounded, the ancestors and the guardians of the local area will come together with them. In addition, Timorese Gong in the *Tfua Ton* ritual ceremony was also sounded as a

sign of respect for the ancestors and the Gods who occupied Napan Village.

Timorese Gong is divided into *Tonu Mese* which is one small gong, *Ote* which is two medium gongs and *Kbola* which are large gongs and one drum (*Ke'e*) which serve as accompaniments and tempo determinants (Carmeneja et al 2017). In *Kenduri sko*, Tauh dance is a ritual to call ancestral spirits through the strains of drum music, and also the singers (Pranata & Ikhsan, 2018). Timorese Gong is always required to be played, because before starting the ritual *Tfua Ton* Gong must be sounded. From the explanation it is explained that Gong is part of the ritual. The Gong is a sign that the ancestors and guardians of nature have been present with them, in addition to giving a sign that all the necessary equipment and traditional elders who have an important role in it have gathered to carry out the ritual.

What makes researchers interested in conducting this research is in traditional rituals such as the celebration of traditional houses, marriages, ordination of new priests in the Catholic Church, without Timorese Gong these activities can be carried out. What is the difference is that in the *Tfua Ton* ritual Timorese Gong must be sounded. The presence of Timorese Gong music in the *Tfua Ton* Ritual Ceremony is a unique and interesting cultural phenomenon. It is said to be interesting because the local community is still functioning the Timorese Gong nowadays. Timorese Gong itself was always played during the ritual ceremony of *Tfua Ton*.

Related to the function of Timorese Gong in the *Tfua Ton* Ritual, this is in line with the writing of the work (Karyawanto et al 2018) which explains that the ritual function of Oklek music is carried out with the aim of rejecting unwanted spirits or exorcists, to reduce and eliminate the disease the community must sound Oklek music by surrounding the village or certain places. This is also in line with research (Mahdi, 2014) that the function of traditional arts Tong-tong prek is a music that gives positive responses to the community and becomes part of the wealth of Indonesian cultural arts.

Based on the phenomenon that occurs, researchers are interested in conducting a research because there are several fundamental reasons, they are: 1) Timorese Gong in the *Tfua Ton* Ritual Ceremony has a shape, and functions that are symbols of internal and external identity or that distinguish between Napan and other ethnic communities, 2) besides being the identity of the community, Timorese Gong in the *Tfua Ton* Ritual Ceremony needs to be preserved and developed, 3) Timorese Gong in the *Tfua Ton* Ritual Ceremony contains several universal values such as cooperation, mutual respect, social interaction and so on which can be used as a basis in designing character education models, 4) no studies have specifically examined the shape and function of Timorese Gong in the *Tfua Ton* Ritual Ceremony, 5) researchers were interested in describing and analyzing while introducing and promoting Timorese Gong in the *Tfua Ton* Ritual Ceremony

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with an interdisciplinary approach. Bogdan & Taylor (1997) in (Sumaryanto, 2007, p. 75) that qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from people and observed behavior. To get data related to the problem, researchers used data collection techniques by means of observation, interviews and document studies. The study was conducted for approximately one month on April 1 - May 1, 2019 in Napan Village, North Bikomi Sub-District, North Central Timor Regency. Checking the validity of the data by using data triangulation, researcher's triangulation, triangulation of theories, methods and techniques. For data analysis, researchers use data reduction, data display, and conclusion (verification).

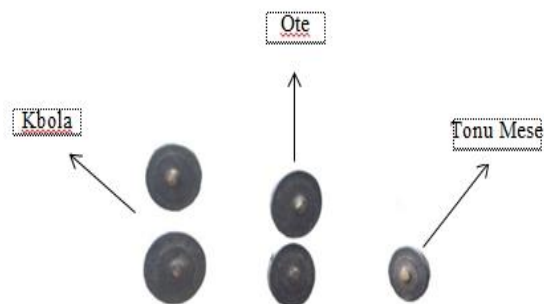
The research design used in this study is phenomenology, the science of events, manifestations or phenomenon itself as experienced by humans (Simatupang, 2013, p.

74). To analyze these problems researchers use the theory of musical functions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Shape of Timorese Gong

Timorese Gong is a type of rhythmic musical instrument belonging to the idiophone group, a musical instrument whose source of sound comes from the body of the instrument itself. The way to play this instrument is to be beaten using wood. In this musical instrument playing, good skills are needed so that it can produce good sound and can form the harmonization of each gong that is sounded. Each Gong consists of several parts, namely *Tonu mese* which are small sized gong, *Ote* two medium sized gong, *Kbola* two large sized gong.



Picture 1. The Arrangement of Timorese Gong Musical Instrument

The rhythm produced by Timorese Gong is one of the expressions that want to be conveyed through symbols to the ancestors and to others. Rhythm is repetitive sound repetition. Rhythm is always related to physical movements, sounds, language, songs and tone movements produced by musical instruments (Prier, 2018, p. 185). This instrument is played repeatedly from the beginning to the end with a tempo and a changing rhythmic punch (not fixed). Next, the researchers will explain the forms of rhythmic patterns from Timorese Gong, as followed:



Picture 2. Rhythmic Patterns of Timorese Gong Musical Instrument

Tfua Ton Ritual

Tfua Ton is one of the traditional ceremonies carried out by the Dawan community once a year. The Napan society interpreted *Tfua Ton* as a new year for farmers. The Atoni know the new year based on the Atoni tribe background. The method of calculating the new year is based on observations of the weather, especially on natural events and phenomenon. It is important to know the final period and the beginning of a year circle. The Atoni people call the new year "*Tfua Ton*" which is carried out every year in November.

At this *Tfua Ton* celebration, the Atoni people carry out a rite that describes all the lives of the farmers. In short, the *Tfua Ton* rite is the greatest rite in the culture of Atoni people in general and in particular. As for special signs to start the new year, for example in the eastern Miomaffo region, they know *Ulton*. *Ulton* consists of two words, namely *ulan* means rain, and *ton* means year. *Ulton* means the first rain to plant corn at the beginning of the rainy season.

This rite is done with the aim of asking for rain and soil fertility so that it gets good results. Before the customary elder conveyed the customary speech, the Gong had to be sounded. It aims to greet the deceased ancestors and call them to come sit and come together with them. And this is a sign of communication to tell them that the ritual will begin soon.

In the ritual ceremony there are several interrelated functions between myths and also as a symbol, among others, as a medium of community friendship which is held annually (Fahmi et al., 2017). Timorese Gong music in the *Tfua Ton* ritual consists of six functions based on the theory that are used such as aesthetic appreciation, entertainment, emotional expression, communication and education, community integration, and religious rituals.

Timorese Gong in the *Tfua Ton* Ritual Ceremony as Aesthetic Appreciation

The Dawan community, especially in Napan Village, loves culture, tradition and traditional music in the village. To feel a sense of excitement, joy and sorrow is always done with traditional traditions, one of which is the application in terms of wanting to get sufficient needs, especially in fulfilling life in the family. The Timorese Gong played in the *Tfua Ton* ritual ceremony is one way to express all the burdens, joy, happiness that was felt at that time.

At the past, to express a sense of happiness, joy and sorrow, the people always sounded Gong on the full moon night. At parties such as weddings, win in battles / fight, even every time they always sounded Timorese Gong. When they were sad or happy, the gong was always played.

Until now as aesthetic appreciation the gong is only played during traditional events. Thus, it can be concluded that the gong is now change, which was once free to play anytime and anywhere now only played during ritual ceremonies related to their customs. Gong, which was once free to play, has now changed, even at the reception, marriages must be preceded by traditional rituals.

The Napan community was very enthusiastic, especially in appreciating Timorese Gong musical instruments, not only during traditional ceremonies but at other events such as, thanksgiving for marriage, thanksgiving for the new priests, the opening of traditional houses. When you hear the music there is someone who feels sad and remembers their families who have died.

Timorese Gong in The *Tfua Ton* Ritual Ceremony as Entertainment

In addition to appreciation, Timorese Gong in the ritual ceremony can also function as entertainment. The gong is played when the customary elders convey the customary languages and after performing the ritual at the Peak of Batu Napan which is the end of the ritual process. After the ritual took place they also played a Timorese musical instrument as an expression of gratitude for getting a good harvest in the previous year.

Related to its history, Timorese Gong was once played during the victory in war. The women welcomed men who went to the battlefield by playing a Timorese Gong musical instrument and combined it with a dance called Gong Dance. In the colonial era the gong was only played at the victory party against the invaders who wanted to take control of their territory. As explained before, that in the past without such rituals, Gong could be played at any time. The community used to use Gong to party and function as a dance accompaniment called Gong dance.

Accompaniment of Timorese Gong as a way to get rid of boredom, fatigue in their bodies and can arouse the in their souls, especially as a beginning to plant crops. Therefore, Timorese Gong can provide its own pleasure and satisfaction. In the ritual *Tfua Ton* Timorese Gong is played with a very fast tempo and monotonous rhythmic punch from beginning to end. The blow symbolizes joy and happiness.

Timorese Gong in the *Tfua Ton* Ritual as An Emotional Expression

Emotional expression is one of the expressions that contain certain meanings and aims, for example a smile that can interpret something that is when they are communicating may hide their original feelings a little while still smiling (Kurniawan, 2015). From these explanations emotional expression is not only through gestures and facial expressions but also punches or rhythms from traditional musical instruments that give their own meaning and aim.

Timorese Gong is one of their expressions and enthusiasm in an effort to defend their territory from invaders, as has been explained before that in the colonial era Gong was used as a communication that was to preach the existence of danger. Since ancient times Timorese Gong has grown and developed in the Dawan society, especially in the Napan Village, North Central Timor Regency. The majority of the life and work of the Napan Village community is farming, trading and raising livestock. To fulfill all their needs depends on the yield and their livestock. Therefore, the Napan community is inseparable from the customs, one of which is the *Tfua Ton* ritual which is carried out every year before farming, in order to request rain and soil fertility and protect plants and livestock from pests.

Emotional expressions of humans have differences depending on the interpretation of something that they see, to express their feelings of joy, sorrow, pleasure, feeling touched, sad, cheerful and happy when they see a show (Rustiyanti, 2014). The Timorese Gong played in the *Tfua Ton* ritual illustrates their joy with the rhythmic punch played. The rhythm shows the distinctive characteristics of the local community which provides a spirit of struggle, strength, courage that is still expressed in every rhythm and sound produced.

Timorese Gong in the *Tfua Ton* Ritual as The Medium of Communication and Education

In this era, technology that continues to evolve has positive and negative influences such as Youtube which functions as a means of communication, among others, they can get interesting information by watching videos, news, and videos that relate to their needs and also have negative impacts such as hoax information that can cause division in the area (Fatty Faiqah et al., 2016).

Timorese Gong in the *Tfua Ton* ritual can function as a communication. The communication is not only carried out by customary elders in delivering customary language utterances to the creators and ancestors but also as a communication between them and

deceased ancestors. The Gong is sounded before the customary elders deliver indigenous languages with the intention of calling and greeting the ancestors and as a tribute to them and to inform them that the ritual will begin soon, so they expect the ancestors to be present with them.

Aside from being a means of communication, Timorese Gong now functions as a means of education. So that the Gong is not lost then, Napan Village community teaches how to play Timorese Gong musical instruments in elementary school. Every final assignment in elementary school teachers often give practice exams by playing Timorese Gong musical instruments and Gong dances.

Besides in formal institutions, non-formal education is also included. In non-formal education to preserve and develop traditional music to the next generations in order to maintain its authenticity (Dodo, 2016). In non-formal education the Napan village community also teaches young people to be able to play the instrument.

Timorese Gong in the *Tfua Ton* Ritual as An Integration of The Community

Social integration or social adjustment is a process of adjustment between different elements, which in social life thus produces a harmonious pattern. Social integrity is a process to maintain the survival of a group that will never be completed continuously. This can be achieved according to several phrases, namely, accommodation, cooperation and coordination (Ikra et al., 2004). The Napan community participated together in building solidarity in the success of the Timorese Gong play in the *Tfua Ton* ritual. In accordance with the function of community integrity as explained by (Merriam, 1964, p.294-304) that a music if played together then unwittingly the music creates a sense of togetherness between players and music lovers.

In an art performance it gives its own satisfaction, especially in community participation, togetherness in groups, various in the same values, the same way of life, to a group in maintaining the same art forms. In order for

all activities to go well it requires cooperation and community participation in the success of the ritual, starting from the preparation, performance until after performance.

From the beginning of the preparation to the end, all the people in Napan Village were involved in it, starting from the village head, the customary elders, the mothers, the fathers until the children took part in it. At the time of performance, it was not only the Napan people who were involved but also Kefamenanu police also took part in it.

Timorese Gong in the *Tfua Ton* Ritual as A Legalization of Social Institutions and Religious Ritual

Timorese Gong was born and developed in the area of the Napan community where the style of life is still tied to very strong traditional traditions, so what they want to do is always preceded by ritual ceremonies. Gong in this case functions as a means of ritual, both as a complement and the main element. As explained by (Tarmizi, 2010) that art and ritual cannot be separated from one another. Both are part of the ritual ceremonies, accompaniment and the atmosphere supporter.

In the ritual *Tfua Ton* Timorese Gong has a main function, namely to greet and respect the deceased ancestors. In the village of Napan the community always uses Timorese Gong during a ritual ceremony as explained earlier that when the Timorese Gong is sounded can call on the souls of the dead and to greet the nature in the village of Napan. Therefore, based on the explanation, the Timorese Gong functions as a means of ritual.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that Timorese Gong in the *Tfua Ton* ritual has several functions including aesthetic appreciation function, entertainment function, emotional expression function, communication and education function, community integration function and function of legalization of social institutions and religious rituals.

From the six functions, it can be concluded that Timorese Gong in the *Tfua Ton* ritual has now undergone changes and developments. To express a sense of joy and happiness with Timorese Gong, it is often played on full moon nights. At present the Gong is only played at the time of customary rituals or related activities Customary rituals such as reception, wedding ceremonies and the ceremony of new priests.

In *Tfua Ton* ritual, Timorese Gong has an important role in it and cannot be separated. Timorese Gong and the *Tfua Ton* ritual are not one entity. Aside from being an entertainment for Timorese Gong in the ritual of *Tfua Ton*, it has mystical power, to call the spirits of deceased ancestors.

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