

**A Ritual Of Finding Gonggong By Using Frying Oil
At Busung Village Of Bintan Island In Riau Arhipelago Province**

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Abstract

Malay people are very well known of their local wisdom that expresses a message of Malay life condition especially in Kepulauan Riau. One of the local tradition is finding *gonggong* by using frying oil. This tradition is one way to communicate and socialize the culture of Malay. The purpose of this research are to find out the function of the rite and to know the meaning of finding *gonggong*. This tradition is almost disappear because many people do not practice this ritual to the next generation so that the researcher tried to identify it by interviewing the informant and joining the activity directly. By doing this activity, there are some function and meaning of finding *gonggong* which are used to preserved the culture of Malay especially in Bintan Island.

Keywords: Ritual, Finding Gonggong, Malay Tradition

INTRODUCTION

Kepulauan Riau is one of provinces that has cultural diversity. This diversity is reflected from the people living in this area. Kepulauan Riau has also many tribes as a group identity. Those are Malay, Chinese, Bugis, Java, Padang, and Batak. The main tribe which reflects the cultural is Malay. According to Sayuti (2005:12) the effort to find the new nation identity on the basis of local wisdom is important thing for the nation culture unification on the basis of archipelago regions identity. In other word, it is very clear that the local wisdom that is on region culture has lived and developed since a long time ago. Therefore, the maintenance and reservation of region culture needs to be done for building the longing of earlier society life, where that thing is measure of nowadays life.

Jim Ife (2002) that the local wisdom is the values that are created, developed, and held out in local society and because its ability to hold out and become life compass of its society. Inside the local wisdom contains various mechanisms and ways to behave, have behavior, and act that are given shape in culture social arrangement.

The form of Malay culture can be seen from the local wisdom. The local wisdom can denote to the local knowledge which has the essence from the fundamental value of cultural tradition and gives orientation to people's conduct or existence (Sibarani, 2012: 114). Tradition implies three meanings: (1) the lore and the process which correlate with a sense of continuity and with shared materials, customs, and verbal expressions that groups of people practiced, (2) the identity creation and confirmation which are relevant to the selection of tradition to reinforce the values and beliefs of the current group's decision and there is a process of "tradition selection" that will give a positive confirmation with regard to sense of identity, and (3) tradition identification to those who still seek their identity (Martha and Martine, 2005).

Trice and Beyer (1984) identified 12 frequently studied cultural forms: rite, ceremonial, ritual, myth, saga, legend, story, folktale, symbol, language, gesture, physical setting, and artifact. Each of these forms holds potentially useful information about a culture; however, most of these artifacts demand an in-depth, long-term research commitment in order to provide a "true ethnographic" account of their use and scope (Trice and Beyer, 1984).

One of the local wisdom of malay is *the ritual of finding gonggong at Busung Village in Bintan Island*. Bintan is one of the district of Kepulauan Riau Province in Indonesia. Bintan Island is also surrounded by the sea so livelihood activities are focused on the sea. Thus

livelihood activities at sea are often associated with the culture of the local community. One of these activities is *the ritual of finding gonggong*. Finding *gonggong* is a way of villagers to preserve the Malay culture. This tradition is highly respected by most villagers. The village of Busung is very close to sea because their living depends on the sea. Some activities are always synchronized with Malay culture. Finding Gonggong is one of an activity to seek the snail. Gonggong is a kind of snail. Seeking this snail is not easy because the number is decreasing every year. Because of the high demands of snail, some people used magic to make seeking easier. This magic is known as mantra. Malay people have known mantra long time ago in oral tradition. Many people of Busung villagers do not use this mantra because some of them do not know how to use this mantra to find snail. For those, they will use mantra with frying oil. Frying oil is one of the tool to seek gonggong. This oil is also an additional to identify snail easily

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Durkheim (1995) argued that ritual practices generate belief and belonging in participants by activating multiple social-psychological mechanism that interactively create the characteristics outcome of ritual. The reference, or object, of ritual is the belief system of a society, which is constituted by a classification of everything into the two realms of the sacred and the profane, this classification is taken as a universal feature of religion.

George Marcus and Michael Fishernote that description and analysis of ritual have been a popular device for organizing ethnographic texts. This is due, they rea-son, to ritual's public nature, whereby rituals are "analogous toculturally produced texts" that can be systematically read to en-dow "meaning upon experience.

The Function of Finding Gonggong by Using Frying Oil

The use of frying oil to find *gonggong* has a certain function. Most of the villagers who use this ritual is older woman. Children can not be allowed to do this ritual because the mantra should be spoken by an adult and have an experience to the magic. The first step to use this frying oil is putting the oil into a bottle. Next, we should spray the bottle. Then, we should spray the oil into the sea water. After spraying, we should wait a couple minutes to see if the *gonggong* or snail can feel the oil.





Besides, Busung villagers believed that there are another functions of using frying oil to find *gonggong* such as:

1. to purify the sea water

Most of Busung villagers considers that frying oil can purify the water. To facilitate the seeking of *gonggong*, the sea water must be clean and clear. It means that the waste is a major factor in the disappearance of *gonggong*. So that, the villagers should maintain the preservation of sea water.

2. to make the waves more calm

it is also believed that the use of frying oil can give the impact of sea waving. The more often they use this oil, the more calm the sea water.

3. to get more *gonggong*

if the villagers follow the ritual properly, it can be assured that they can get more *gonggong* as their livelihood.

The Meaning of Mantra

Some villagers call the mantra as a reading before doing something. In general, researcher found several types of words in the mantra lyrics based on pronunciations and its contents. As for the lyrics of the mantra are as follows:

Bismillahirrahmaannirrahiim
Ae suRot belumpo-lumpo
Ae toho awa? tuRon
Gonggong kulop pegi? mupo
Minya? Tetabo gonggong belubo
Barakat laa ilaha illallah
Muhammadarrasullallah

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From this lyrics of mantra, there are two languages that villagers used namely Malay language and Arabic. There are three parts of saying mantra. Those are opening, content, and closing. The opening of mantra is Arabic because most of the Busung villagers embrace Islam and they believe that everything or something should begin with *Basmallah*. In other words, any activity always begins with the guidance of Islam. The word *Bismillahirrahmaannirrahim* is a prayer to get protection from God and avoid from any danger. It also means that all desires are only God who gives and about human relationship.

The content of this mantra usually consists of four lines.

Ae suRot belumpo-lumpo
Ae toho awa? tuRon
Gonggong kulop pegi? mupo
Minya? Tetabo gonggong belubo

The meaning in English:

The dry sea water a lot of mud

The low tide we go to the sea

Gonggong are much in the mud

Spray oil in the sea water so that gonggong will come out

If we analyze the meaning of *Ae suRot belumpo-lumpo*, it means that when sea water is low tide, it has much mud so that it is a good time to seek *gonggong* in the mud. *Ae toho awa? tuRon* means the chance of people to go to the sea and prepare to seek *gonggong*. While, the meaning of *Gonggong kulop pegi? mupo* indicates *gonggong* are in the mud. The mud is a place of *gonggong*. Then, *Minya? Tetabo gonggong belubo* is a command to spray the oil into sea water in order to make *gonggong* come out of hiding.

The last part of mantra is the closing. This closing remarks uses Arabic such as *Barakat laa ilaha illallah* and *Muhammadarrasullallah*. Both of them imply the blessing of God through the intercession of the prophet Muhammad as the apostle of God.

CONCLUSION

The rite of finding *gonggong* contains supernatural powers. There are some functions of finding *gonggong* such as purifying the sea water, making the waves calm, and getting more *gonggong*. Meanwhile, the meaning of this rite is to be close to God in every activity of people who live at Busung Bintan Island.

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