



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i12/15523> DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i12/15523

Received: 02 October 2022, **Revised:** 05 November 2022, **Accepted:** 20 November 2022

Published Online: 07 December 2022

In-Text Citation: (Alfarisi et al., 2022)

To Cite this Article: Alfarisi, S., Purwanto, L., Wulandari, R., & Upadani, I. G. A. W. (2022). The Cepung Lombok Theatre Performance Staging Pattern: Social Relevance of Sasak Society in Performing Arts. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 12(12), 364 – 380.

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Vol. 12, No. 12, 2022, Pg. 364 – 380

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The Cepung Lombok Theatre Performance Staging Pattern: Social Relevance of Sasak Society in Performing Arts

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Abstract

The Cepung Lombok theatre is one of Jero Mihram's masterpieces. An intelligent Sasak Muslim person in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara Province, eastern Indonesia. The invention has sourced a lontar called T tutur Monyeh written by Jero Mihram during the Hindu Karangasem Bali era in western Lombok. Based on the politic-social context and situation, the Cepung Lombok theatre cannot be separated from the social history. Also, the intellectual Sasak during inflaming freedom awareness is constantly related. Each symbol of the performance shown in the Cepung theatre has a close social relationship with each other. The study was conducted using qualitative methods based on interviews with Cepung theatre artists and other important documents. To strengthen the analysis, the Sociology of theatre and literary theories were used. The findings are that the Cepung theatre staging pattern is derived from Islamic values and Sasak culture. The performance staging pattern shows that one of the Sasak people's resistance against injustice is symbolized through the performance staging pattern itself. The resistance is expressed symbolically because the Islamic values and Sasak culture should be well-highlighted to differentiate themselves from the actors of injustice.

Keywords: Cepung Lombok Theatre, Sasak Society, Social Relevance.

Introduction

Theatre studies investigates aspects of theatre performance, anything related to the actors, stage and audience (Harymawan, 1993). The audience, place and performer are important elements in theatre (Iswantara, 2016). The language used in performances is a social creation (Damono, 1979) because society can view the theatre as a social power manifestation and a collective spirit as well as cultural expression (Sahid, 2008).

The social environment of the theatre can be interpreted as a whole that causes the theatre to acquire a social form and function. It also can be seen from the history of the theatre's growth as a representation of society, theatre groups in society, external influences on theatre communities, the relationship between theatre and other arts and the theatre's efforts to continuously create relationships with societies (Yohanes, 2017).

As a social creation as well as a creative work and according to Gell (1998) culture has no existence independently of its manifestations in social interactions, so the source of Cepung's theatre studies is the staging pattern and also lontar Tukur Monyeh itself which is a local literary that contains Islamic values. Lontar Tukur Monyeh was written using a compound of Sasak language between low and middle language. Such use is a signal that the Cepung theatre is a cultural Sasak society product. The language function used in the lontar Tukur Monyeh is to assert the Sasak people identity in developing their own civilization.

The Sasak ethnic is the native and biggest on Lombok island. Most of the Sasak have been Muslim since the 15th century (Jamaluddin, 2011). Whereas Fathurrahman (1998) stated that the Islamic spreader to the Lombok island was Walisongo around the 16th century. Lombok Island is located in the eastern of Indonesia. The name Lombok is found in the *Negarakertagama* manuscript (Decawarnana). The manuscript mention Lombok Mirah is for West Lombok and Sasak Adi is for East Lombok. (Wacana, 1988). As an ethnicity, the Sasak are included in the Malay parentage (Wallace, 1986). Some researchers declared that Sasak is being a Muslims at the same time (Ecklund, 1997; Bartholomew, 1999).

As stated by Ahmad JD, Jero Mihram the writer of Tukur Monyeh is a Sasak intellectual who has a high commitment to Sasak ethnic. This is marked by Jero Mihram's effort to write using his own mother language. Throwing Tukur Monyeh talks about the Sasak society, so the values it carries out are the Sasak identity. H. Jalaluddin Arzaki explained, however, that every value contained in the lontar Tukur Monyeh is an important part of Sasak history. Both are a unity that can provide an overview of how Sasak society was in the past and future (Kuntowijoyo, 1987; Soedarsono, 2002).

Related to the Cepung theatre relevance, Heddy (1988) said that art is the expression, embodiment, symbolization and feeling of human views. So, art could be associated with political situations or activities, ecology, various changes that are happening, and with others. The importance of Cepung theatre in the Sasak society can be seen in their response to the values contained in the lontar Tukur Monyeh (Alfarisi et al., 2021). This follows the pattern of Cepung theatre performances which are seen using the Sasak ethnic local wisdom. Because art doesn't separate from the human aspect as an artist and the culture that is used as a behaving reference (Selamet, 1999). Levinson and Melvin have said that art is part of the culture (in Musa Asy'ari, 2001). For example, the tradition of pinje panje, which is the tradition of reciprocating poems in Lombok or reciting poems with answers, also known as continuous questions, answering each other. In social reality, pinje panje is often used not only to express someone's feelings but must be reciprocated by the interlocutor (Mahyuni, 2004). Pepaosan is also available in Cepung theatre. It is a tradition of reading lontar by the Sasak people in

social ceremonies. The main provision of the pepaosan is that pepaosan itself, the reader, and the responder to reaction to the reading like a choir, and some act as narrators.

The explanation above shows that the Cepung theatre has a contextual relationship with the Sasak society. With regard to this contextuality (Yudiaryani, 2002), it can be said that there are two aspects that are interrelated with each other. First, the Cepung theatre is the first traditional performing arts in Lombok which is considered to have fulfilled the requirements as a theatrical offering. Among other things, it has scripts, entertainers, and audiences for the show. The second is refer to Marco de Marinis mentioned that ((in Yudiaryani, 2008), the Cepung theatre is directly related to the society that owns it. That is Sasak society itself.

The Lontar recited in the Cepung performance is Lontar Monyeh written by Jero Mihram, an Islamic scholar who wants to develop Islam through stories and is loved by the Lombok people Island....

From the above, it clearly shows that Lontar Monyeh in the Cepung theatre performance is actually based on Islamic philosophy, and was composed with the aim of developing religion (Ahmad, 1983).

Suardie (1999) has stated that reciting lontar is Sasak society's habit and it's a strong reason as a forerunner of the Cepung theatre. Muhidin (1976) also mentioned that the structure of Tuter Monyeh described the Sasak people's behaviour. Thereafter, Banded and deBoer (1981) mentioned the Cepung theatre as Cakepung. They have stated that Cakepung is in Karangasem Bali and in Lombok. In their insight, Cakepung is performed through rhythmic vocal sounds. Sudirga has explained that Cakepung in Karangasem Bali is an acculturation between Bali and Lombok cultures. Sudirga (2005) also mentioned that the Cakepung occurs in the Balinese rather than the Sasak calls it Cepung theatre. Sudirga also clearly states that the Cakepung theatre performances in Karangasem Bali are sourced from Tuter Monyeh.

How the Cepung theatre got its name is not known for sure, However people's guess is from the accompanying sound that goes: CHECK-CEK-CEK-CEK-PUNG. The sound is like a gamelan, but performed with the mouth (Ahmad, 1983). The word "Cepung" actually comes from the voice or sound of a traditional musical instrument (gamelan) imitated by the Cepung theatre performers, such as "Cekpung-cekpung-cekpung-cekpung" and with others. Voiced over and over again. Over time this sound changed to "Cepung" until the present (Suardie, 1999).

The description above further confirms that Cepung theatre is performing arts produced in Lombok by the indigenous Sasak people. Another thing is that Cepung theatre is used to spread Islamic values. The issue of Cepung theatre has a context beyond that such as politics and its role in fostering the patriotic spirit of Sasak society, showing the function and important role of Cepung theatre in Sasak society, which emphasizes the relationship with each other.

Furthermore, the article's objective is to describe the Cepung Lombok theatre performance staging pattern and to analyse the Sasak society's relevance with the Cepung Lombok theatre performance staging pattern.

Methodology

The study was conducted by analyzing the text-lontar that manuscript Tuter Monyeh as the main source for the Cepung theatre creation. After that, it continues by analyzing the performance staging patterns to find the Cepung theatre performance relevance to the Sasak Society. The study has also been conducted through observation and interviews with selected informants from Sasak society leaders, senior Cepung theatre artists, and Sasak art and culture analysts.

Because Cepung theatre is rarely performed, the observations that have been conducted are mostly the researcher's involvement in the daily life of Cepung theatre practitioners. This continuous involvement method is considered useful because Cepung theatre activists indirectly demonstrate one by one Cepung theatre performances that in their perspectives, what that presented throughout the observation contains similarities to real performances. Documents, photos and videos of Cepung theatre performances at the West Nusa Tenggara Province (NTB) State Museum, Indonesia, are also important data because can provide sufficient information to perform a comparative analysis with the interview data that has been obtained. Based on the comparative analysis, it was found that there is one thing in common that is strong enough to summarize the findings of the study.

Although the research based on the lontar TUTOR Monyeh and the Cepung theatre performance was conducted using qualitative methods, used Sociology of theatre to analyze Cepung theatre relevance and literary reading for the lontar TUTOR Monyeh analysis. Both were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the relevance between Cepung theatre and the Sasak society.

Results and Discussions

The Staging Patterns and the Meanings

The stage layout supports the place creation, time, and situation or atmosphere. Sahid (2016) said, the stage is where the performance takes place and where the interaction between the scripts, director, and actor is displayed to the audience. At the stage, all plays are performed to make the audience common understand the meaning of the story being told. To convey this purpose, theatre artists process and arrange the stage in such a way as to achieve the desired purpose.

The discussion on the Cepung theatre staging pattern covers everything related to the Cepung theatre performance. Furthermore, it can be said that the staging pattern of Cepung theatre does not change despite the different place, type, time and context of the performance. Even if there is a change, it only revolves around the sitting position of each Cepung theatre performer. However, the standard staging pattern is maintained according to the conventional staging of Cepung theatre.



Figure 1: The Cepung theatre performances composition that is more frequently used (Source: Photo reproduction by the author)

Before the show begins, usually the leader Cepung theatre performers are called pemace (main reader) take the role. First, the pemace takes a sitting position, then makes a

composition that is adapted to the conditions of the performance venue. After that, pemace placed the Tukur Monyeh script right in front of him. The starting cue of the Cepung theatre performance is not specified, because as a general motion the performance starts is when all the Cepung theatre performers have taken their seats in their respective places. These are prepared performance places by society or that one organized the performances.



Figure 2: One of the standard compositions is Cepung theatre players facing each other.
(Source: Photo reproduction by the author)

In principle, all Cepung theatre performers sit facing each other, at least they sit together facing the pemace. The pemace always has a central position and is directly facing to the audience. This kind of position is necessary because the reaction of the Cepung theatre performers takes place throughout the performance.

Switching positions with each other practically never happened. The change of position is called a static shift, which is a change of position at most through the indication of the rotating body and using several body levels in each player's place. This can be referred to as dynamic body composition. The ability of Cepung theatre players to create a dynamic body composition is what causes the beginning sitting position to become the closing sitting site. In the end, the audience only sees the changing body composition, not the seating position of the Cepung theatre performers.



Figure 3: The Cepung theatre's performers face each other in their position
(Source: Photo reproduction by the author)

What is very interesting is that the position of Cepung theatre players facing each other can be back-to-back and face-to-face, both among the players and with the audience. This can happen because Cepung theatre performers are given the prerogative to wholly traverse their respective venues. So what happens next is that Cepung theatre performers sometimes surround each other to create dynamic body movements, dynamic singing and energetic vocal rhythms.

After several body explorations and dynamic vocals are shown, if returning to the beginning Cepung theatre performance structure is needed, the power is in the hands of the pemace. In this case, pemace, used the technique of changing the structure or choosing different songs according to the Tukur Monyeh script. However, in each song, it is possible to return to the same dramatic structure with different emotional intensity as it adapts to the type of song being performed. More precisely, although the plot of Tukur Monyeh is straight, for the sake of performance, Cepung theatre performers may return to parts that are necessary to repeat without ignoring the content of Tukur Monyeh's script.

There is no prohibition of repeating a structure or returning to a part that has been passed if it is intended to reinforce or clarify the Tukur Monyeh structure content meaning. Normally, this kind of incident depends on the audience because the audience also has full power to control the Cepung theatre's dramatic structure. However, after the pemace starting with the new part in the structure, other Cepung theatre performers responded with a more varied dramatic structure as a dynamic reaction in the assembled performance.

The Cepung Theatre Performance Structure

In general, there are three parts of the Cepung theatre performance pattern as will be described below.

Called opening as the first. The opening performance of the Cepung theatre is brightened up by playing simple rhythmic music which is "ginanti and gending "ngempul" or "plentong". In the opening part, the flute plays an important role, because the flute guides the Cepung theatre players to betabeq, that is, the pemace leads all the Cepung theatre players to ask for permission from the audience through songs that contain apologies if there are some offences. The attitude continued an introduction to all the players through an acknowledgement that Cepung theatre performers do not have any abilities if compared to the audiences. In this section, pemace also conveyed that if there are people in the audience who are more capable such as the occult, do not make a mess of them for the smooth performance of Cepung theatre.

The second part is memace which is reading which is after the opening part which is felt to be sufficient. Then pemace opens the Tukur Monyeh script. The reading starts from the beginning and follows the composition of the Tukur Monyeh script. In this segment, the pemace plays an important role in determining the order and choosing which songs to perform. The pemace position is very important because it is responsible for guiding other Cepung theatre actors to construct theatrical performance that has a dramatic structure.

In determining which song to read, the pemace is not compulsory to read the Tukur Monyeh script in sequence. For example from verses one, two, three and so on. However, it is also adapted to the condition of the audience and the reaction to the songs performed by other Cepung theatre performers. This means that, in the middle of the song Tukur Monyeh which is being recited by pemace, other Cepung theatre actors will insert different songs that are other than Tukur Monyeh. Surely the smart reaction is ingenuity in relating Tukur Monyeh to the current context of the audience. These songs are normally taken from songs that are

already very familiar among society. Then having had adequate, the pemace once again took over the dramatic structure by returning the song to Tukur Monyeh.

The dramatic structure of the Cepung theatre performance is also determined by the type of song that is read. If the song is about sadness, the choice of sound and movement will follow the emotion of the song being recited. This includes blowing the flute and playing the fiddle. Thus, the pemace's task as a controller of the dramatic structure becomes very prominent because of the Cepung theatre performance standard rules that must be sourced from Tukur Monyeh. Likewise when the performance is almost to end, pemace immediately took the role to enter the final part of the Cepung theatre show.

Another exciting thing is that once in a while, the Cepung theatre performers stop while the performance is in progress. This scene is not organized. It happens suddenly and instinctively. For example, Cepung theatre performers take drinking water that is usually provided near their seats. Some also take snacks to fill their stomachs which are also supplied with a drink of water.

This pattern occurs in two ways, depending on the situation and circumstances. First, the Cepung theatre performers continue their performance without having to stop just because they feel full and hungry. If this method is chosen, the pemace takes on the role of selecting a song that can only be recited without having to be followed by the flute and fiddle players. If the performer is about to pause, the player in charge immediately takes the role after the pemace starts the break song. On this occasion, the penyarup (other calling to Cepung theatre players) will personally take improvisation the song opened by the pemace not only to wait for the Cepung theatre players to finish the break but also to entertain the audience with the crispy song. And then, Cepung theatre performers take adjustments to each other in order to maintain the performance intensity.

The second way is to pause the presentation. As before, this temporary suspension was also conducted by pemace. Cepung theatre players used this time to drink and eat as needed to maintain stamina. However, both methods are still done sitting down. Strictly speaking, even though the Cepung theatre performers stop playing temporarily or not at all, they have been remaining seated. Stand up or leaving their seat is forbidden. Concluding, both of these methods are often taken during all-night Cepung theatre performances.

The final part of the Cepung theatre performance is marked by playing music to the same soft rhythm as the performance at the beginning. Also added are the player's body movements and soft vocals as well. After that, the pemace started a song taken from one and more very popular songs in the Sasak society. However, the deep message contained in the song is still the same spirit as the song during the opening segment. This aims to neutralize the structure of the performance so that all components of the performance (Cepung theatre, performers, audience, and penanggep: someone that organized) can together reflect on the valuable contents that have been staged.



Figure 4: The pemace lontar Tutar Monyeh
(Source: Photo reproduction by the author)

The Cepung Lombok Theater Performance Patterns in Design

The next will be shown 5 (five) Cepung theatre staging patterns often encountered. These five staging patterns are based on adjustments to the number of players and venues. Of course, the designed pattern is not standard. This means that it can still be developed at any time if conditions and places require it and there is capacity creativity player's to create. Nevertheless, in developing the staging pattern of Cepung theatre, it is still necessary to refer to the rules has been set in the Cepung theatre staging as stated above.

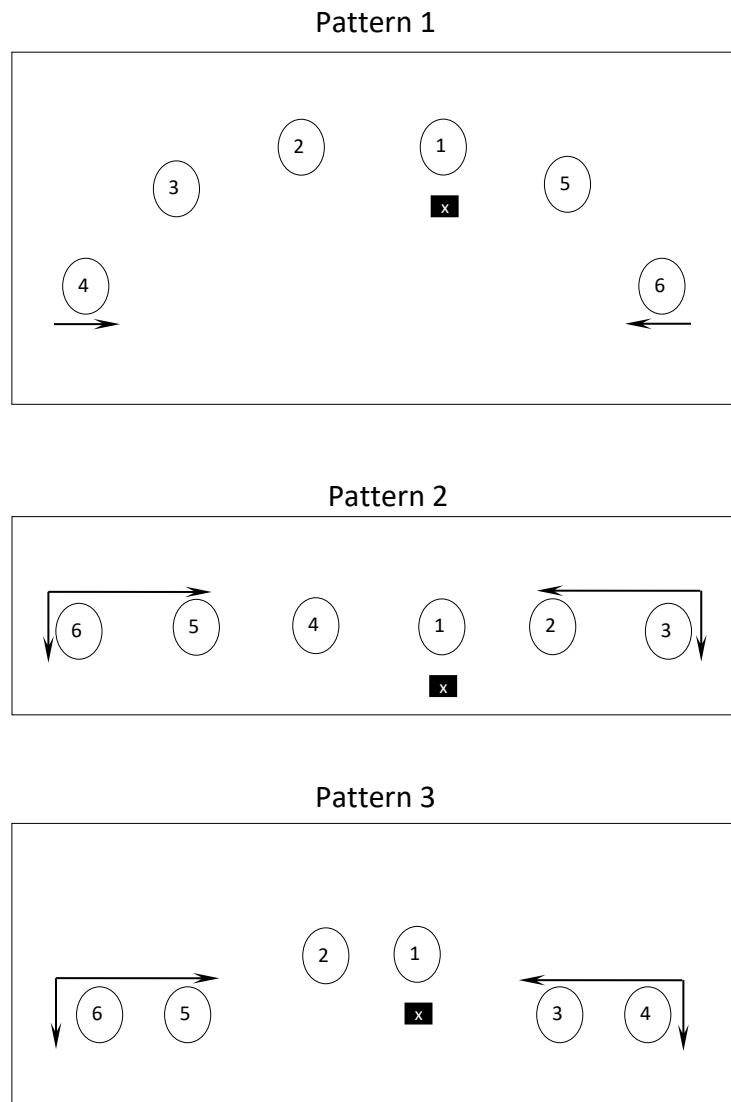


Figure 5: Some Cepung theatre staging patterns
(Source: Design by the author)

To be more comprehensible, the figures above need to explain through the table below.

Table 1

Description of the staging pattern 1, 2 and 3

POSITION	DESCRIPTION
1	The Pemace Tuttur Monyeh script position.
2	The Redep violinist position.
3	The large or small flute player position, either using the hand player flute itself or a flute musical instrument.
4	A player who imitates the sound of a drum or gong position, or imitates other gamelan musical instruments including as a singer (called penembang) including as a player (called penyarup).
5	The player (penyarup) position while dancing and singing (this player usually makes jokes).
6	The player (penyarup) position while dancing and singing (this player usually makes jokes).
X	The place (called Dulang pemace) used to put the Tuttur Monyeh manuscript. This Dulang is created of wood or other materials. Its shapes can be square or other.

Furthermore, there are two other patterns that should be displayed below:

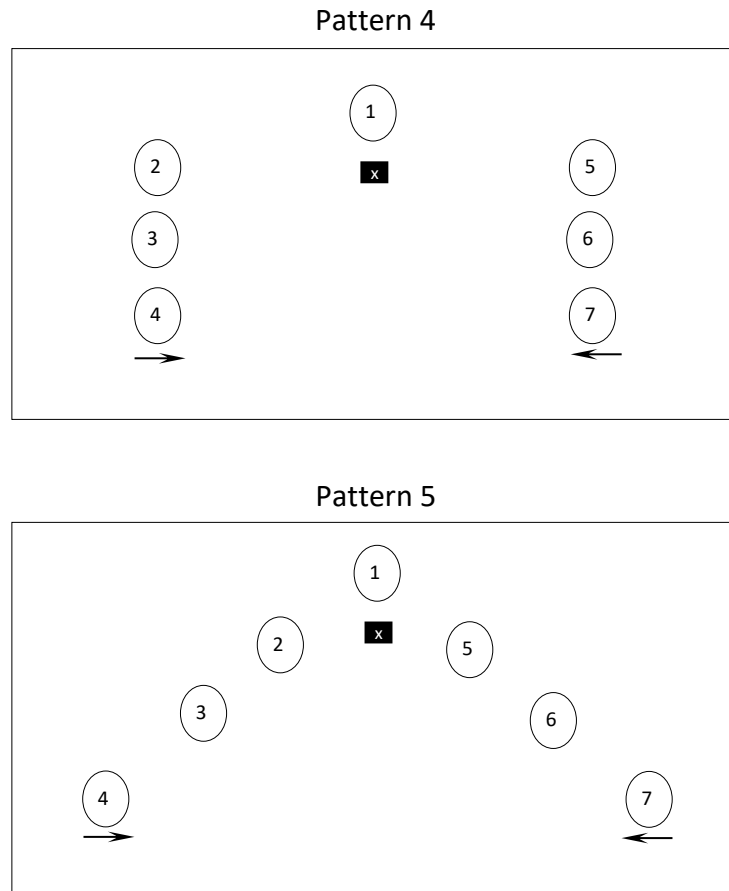


Figure 6: Some Cepung theatre staging patterns
(Source: Design by the author)

Again, to be more comprehensible, the figures above need to explain through the table below.

Table 2

Description of the staging pattern 4 and 5

POSITION	DESCRIPTION
1	The Pemace Tuttur Monyeh script position.
2	The Redep violinist position.
3	The large or small flute player position, either using the hand player flute itself or a flute musical instrument.
4	A player who imitates the sound of a drum or gong position, or imitates other gamelan musical instruments including as a singer (called penembang) including as a player (called penyarup).
5	The player (penyarup) position while dancing and singing (this player usually makes jokes).
6	The player (penyarup) position while dancing and singing (this player usually makes jokes).
7	The player (penyarup) position while dancing and singing (this player usually makes jokes).
X	The place (called Dulang pemace) used to put the Tuttur Monyeh manuscript. This Dulang is created of wood or other materials. Its shapes can be square or other.

As was pronounced before, the Cepung theatre staging pattern above has been adapted to the social and place conditions of the performance venue and based on the Cepung theatre performance habits over the years. Therefore, referring to the pattern above, it is essential to enunciate some conventional things as a habit that cannot be changed in the Cepung theatre performance as follows:

First of all: The seating pemace Tuttur Monyeh position must be on the central side. He was surrounded by other Cepung theatre players. This declared that the pemcae is the core of the Cepung theatre performance. The pemace is confirmed as the conductor of the overall story structure as well as the quality preserver of the Cepung theatre performance. Actually, officially there is no standard and written agreement or rule regarding this matter. However, because it has been happening for a long time, then it is agreed as a custom that needs to be maintained.

The pemace who always sits frontally facing the audience gives the meaning that Tuttur Monyeh should be understood as a view of life and Sasak's values. In the Sasak spiritual context, pemace are seen as a person who has intellectualities and supernatural abilities that are more than other players. Because of that, the pemace should be seated on the other Cepung theatre players' central side. Another meaning is pemace as the centre of passion and the power of values contained in Tuttur Monyeh to be conveyed to the Sasak society.

The second is for performance purposes, although the Cepung theatre player's body position is not straight facing the pemace, one of the Cepung theatre players cannot be at a certain level which makes him appear to be in a higher position than the others. In truth, even pemace are not allowed to sit at a higher level. There is no high-low blocking in the Cepung theatre composition. Actually, it is strictly prohibited. This point is to emphasize that there is no social difference in the Cepung theatre performance. Even though pemace has the power to control the structure of Tukur Monyeh's story and the dynamics of the performance, in this context, pemace is bounded only to maintain the unity of the interesting performance. Should not be in a position to emphasize social class distinctions in the reality of Sasak society life. Strictly speaking, Cepung theatre is an elementary character Sasak people who are very egalitarian in social interaction.

The next one is Cepung theatre players are not allowed to stand throughout the performance. It is also not allowed to move from one seat to another. Even changing seats between players is not allowed. That's why each player is required to explore their respective seats as an acting space. This rule has trained Cepung theatre players to have strong skills in body movement in a circular motion, lowering the body to the floor, body twisting in several motifs, stretching and raising the arms. All of that ultimately shapes a movement that fits the emotions of each story part in the Tukur Monyeh structure.

The prohibition on standing in the Cepung theatre is strictly observed. Even standing up when going on stage at the performance beginning must be done in a short time. The same thing at the end Cepung theatre performance, all the players did not allow to leave immediately their seats. The player should remain in position while relaxing the muscles. Regarding this matter, Mamiq Ambar and H. Jalaluddin Arzaki explained that it was the old Sasak people's character who still held high regard for polite manners. Not only respect humans as touchable beings but also appreciate invisible beings. Briefly, Aswandikari said that the main Cepung theatre message is the Sasak people possess supreme social norms in everything related to social interaction.

Finally, the lontar Tukur Monyeh position should be in front of the pemace. It should not be placed on pemace's thigh and also not be permitted to place level with the actor's sitting, such as on the floor. The Dulang height for placing lontar "Tukur Monyeh" is around 30 centimetres.



Figure 7: Dulang, the place used to put lontar Tukur Monyeh while the Cepung theatre performances.

(Photo reproduction by the author)

Conclusion

Further, it can be concluded, the social relevance of the Cepung theatre performance staging pattern has shown that the Sasak society has a robust social system. Leaders and leadership are a source of social norms that are carried out. *Pemace* is a leader as well as leadership itself. It reflects the Sasak society's view of life about the importance of a leader whose position can be referred to as a daily social practice. In the political context, Sasak leaders take an essential role in determining the Sasak people's collective attitude as reflected in the centralized *Pemace's* role.

The other thing is religious relevance. As a Muslim community, the internal and external Sasak people's character is shaped by Islamic values itself. Tukur Monyeh as a basis for Cepung theatre almost completely Islamic reflects. The religious message delivered has bound the Cepung theatre with the Sasak society as a unity. Reading Tukur Monyeh, apart from being a cultural habit, is also a reflection of Islamic values that appeal to the Sasak society to habituate reading as a source of knowledge, values, and beliefs.

The Cepung theatre performance aesthetically has contributed a staging pattern that goes beyond the arena performance. The arena stage is constructed as a very intimate interaction centre. Although the order brought by Tukur Monyeh is magnificent, the performance staging pattern focused on the interaction that breaks the distance between the audience and the performance. It is similar to the performance studies paradigm. Besides the actor's power, there is the audience's power to interrupt and convey thoughts and wills. Both happened at the same time and of course, equality of both was also found. This situation frequently makes it very difficult to distinguish the distance between the audience and the Cepung theatre performance.

The Cepung's theatre acting style has contributed to developing a unique actor training system. Because actors are not permitted to change positions while performing, they are required to build a method to successfully create dynamic acting. It gave the possibility of the "static body" as a very interesting acting method. The body is required to move dynamically however should be done statically. Likewise in vocal processing. Because the actor imitates the sound of gamelan and flute musical instruments, special vocal methods such as "sound mimetics" are very necessary. These why the "static body" and "mimetics sound" can be seen as Cepung theatre's methodological and theoretical contributions to the theatre development in the Sasak society even wider than that.

Acknowledgements

This article has been awarded to the maestros Ahmad JD, Mamiq Ambar, H. Jalaluddin Arzaki, Ketut Bagiade, H. Fathurrahman Zakaria, Nuradi and H. Ramiun for their great achievement in Sasak culture. Also to Aswandikari for constantly fully giving his thought on Sasak's *lontar*.

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