

# The functions of Mantra in *Main Puteri* and *Wayang Kulit* Performances in East Coast Peninsular of Malaysia

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## Abstract

*Main Puteri* and *Wayang Kulit* (Shadow Play) performances are among the Malay community cultural performances that are still practiced today. These performances still have their own demand in society because it is a form of escapism stand to entertain members of the public. In modernization changes that offers various forms of entertainment, performances of *Wayang Kulit* and *Main Puteri* remained in demand among members of the public. They have a little differences with entertainment nowadays because they have some mantra (spell) elements, namely the pronunciation in the form of rhythmic poetry or prose which contains elements of magic and practiced for good purposes or otherwise (Haron, 2007). Studies made by focusing on the use of mantra's in both performances of *Main Puteri* and *Wayang Kulit*. The study was conducted on three groups, namely group Sri Campuran, Suara Emas (*Wayang Kulit*) and Seni Warisan Melayu Group (*Main Puteri*) are actively performing around Kelantan and Terengganu. Researchers have used two main techniques of data collection which are interviews and observations participation. The findings showed a mantra applied in every performances, held mainly at the beginning and end of the show. Function mantra is for the safety of players and spectators.

Keywords: *Main Puteri*, *Wayang Kulit*, Magic, Mantra, Culture

## Introduction

Culture and society are inseparable entity. Both of them become a unity that reflects each other. Society is a group of peoples that functions as agents or representative of a culture while a culture is a content of the society itself (Kling, 2005). Each society has its own culture and the same situation applied in Malay society. According to Taylor, culture is a complex whole that

includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, attitudes, laws, customs, other abilities and behavior that possessed by peoples in a society members (Yusuf, 2001). Based from these definitions, generally we can state that culture is a people's lifestyle that can be learnt and possessed from one generation to another. One of the stressed items in this paperwork is regarding art.

"Art" came from Latin word that defined by skills, way or method. Art covers a big discipline of knowledge including dance, music, dramas, architecture, weaving, earthenware, and craft (Sundara & Letchumanan, 2004). When it comes to performing arts, it covers the aspects of dances, music, traditional theatre that can be revised as a form of entertainment, ritual and medication (Ghouse Nasuruddin, 2010). According to Ali (1996), Malay society arts include elements from song, dance and drama. The combination of those three reflects the value of great culture of the society that blends in it.

There are varieties of Malay culture traditional performances such that had been practiced since ages. Among of the performances are *Mak Yong*, *Ulik Mayang*, *Main Puteri*, *Wayang Kulit*, *Kuda Kepang*, *Dikir Barat* and many more. Most of these traditional performances started as a form of escapism at the beginning that purposely to enlighten someone with a sadden heart and to fill some loop in their free time. Other than just some entertainment, traditional performances also act to fulfill the ritual function such as *menyemah kampung*, *kesyukuran*, *bernazar* and medicine (Ghouse 2010). The origin of the ritual came from Malay society beliefs were based on animism. People from that aged believe that nature has an extraordinary force or spirit that linked with animals, trees, mountains, sea and others. The ritual practices usually bond to *jampi*, *mantra* and *serapah* (some kind of spell) that act as a connector or link between the reality and mystic world. The phrases in the spells had been created by the society members that involved in the rituals of worships, ethnic custom, healing the patients, puppet performances, stage performances, dances and more (Amran 2007).

*Main Puteri* and *Wayang Kulit* are among the cultural performances in Malay society that still actively practiced in the region of Kelantan and Terengganu. Both of these performances still have their own demand among the society members because it is different from today's modern entertainments that linked with mantra usage. Before the researcher explains in detail about the usage of the mantra, we need to understand what is the meaning of *jampi*, *mantra*, and *serapah*. According to Piah (1989), for the Malay society, the word *mantra* is seldom used because they tend to use the term *jampi* and *serapah*. The term of *mantra* includes *jampi*, *serapah*, *tawar*, *sembur*, *puja*, *seru* and *tangkai*. His view was supported by Dollah (2007), that *mantra*, *jampi* and *serapah* have the same meaning that are the words that have mystical powers. Based from all those statements, the conclusion is *mantra* refers to all kinds of phrases that contained in poetry or rhythm that have magical elements and practiced for goodness or the opposite intention (Haron 2007). Through all the elaboration, this paperwork will discuss about the magical elements which is the practical of *mantra* in *Main Puteri* and *Wayang Kulit* cultural performance that still active throughout the region of Terengganu and Kelantan.

### **Main Puteri Performance**

*Main Puteri* is one of the Malay society traditional cultural performances that included as an alternative in traditional medication. This performance is the heritage of their ancestor from generation to generation and it is compulsory to inherit this performance to younger generations. According to Hashim Awang and Zaleha Abu Hassan (1985), *Main Puteri* is a medio-theatrical-ritual that is very popular in Kelantan region once and often being held as a theatre performance or medical treatment.

Yaacob (1993) stated that *Main Puteri* as a medical ritual of Kelantanese indigenous psychotherapy method that had been practiced for generations involving two things analyzed the disease and the way to treat it. According to Wazir Jehan (1983), *Main Puteri* ritual shows there are action taken and collaboration do exist from community to the following disease. He also added, the local community also actively involved indirectly in healing process. It is believed that the present of community members in the ritual can create a suitable atmosphere for patient healing process.

In addition, there are also deeper researches related to *Main Puteri* performance that stressed out people's theory about personality. Laderman (1988) stated in his book, *Wayward Winds: Malay Archetypes and Theory of Personality in the Context of Shamanism* elaborate that *Tok Puteri* actually helps his patients to overcome the illness through his self-conscious. His patients do not possessed any spirit outside of their bodies. The situation that actually occurs to the patients is they were taken by the shaman to a world where they know the wind in their inner-selves (innerwinds). The wind is a reflection of someone's personality. He added most of the illness that treated through the *Main Puteri* are the windy illness that used to occur and sourced from the type of their personality called *Angin Dewa Muda*. In the relationship, he saw *Main Puteri* as a bridge that needed for someone to solve their problems in personality.

According to Barbara Ismail (2013) in her book *Princess Play*, through *Main Puteri* performance, it can solve the murder incidents that occur among Kelantan's society. It is applied when traders in local society had been killed without any clues and reasons. The ritual had been held by requesting a helping hand from mystical creatures and they found out that the actual reason for their death are the usage of sorcery that had been used by one of the traders for caused from hatred and revenge.

### **Wayang Kulit Performance**

*Wayang Kulit* defined as a performance of shadow from puppets carved from leather and the images of the puppet project out to the white cloth screen using lamp or other sources of lights. This performance is one of the first Malay traditional forms of drama and also authentic Indonesian drama originated from land of Java and spread to Malaya peninsular in the Malacca Malay sultanate era.

This form of art is called as Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity and has its own and unique ways in delivering a story to its spectators (Abdullah 2003). This situation indicates Malay Society has a high creativity in creating fun entertainment ways and not a boring one. Based on the basic term, *wayang* refers to a play that was played by using puppets or some specific forms of some dramas. *Wayang Kulit* is one of the traditional theatre form that still exist till today by using shadows to represent some characters in its play. *Wayang Kulit* had been a favorite entertainment for about five centuries ago. However, starting from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this performance began to face its competitors from the progress of theatre art and local drama performances.

*Wayang Kulit* is a form of foreign entertainment that had been localized in Malay culture. According to Gullick (1987) there are two categories of play that had been performed and they are Siamese play and Javanese play. Siamese play had been played in the state of Kelantan, Kedah and some areas in Terengganu, while the Javanese plays are dominate more the west part of Malay Peninsula. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *Tok Dalang* normally had been invited to perform the play for some specific reasons. For example, in a function such as wedding and other functions, the villagers will invite *Tok Dalang* to perform the *Wayang Kulit* play.

At the beginning, *Wayang Kulit* had a close spiritual connection with religion rituals and actions (Nong 1988). This kind of *Wayang Kulit* performance was not for entertainment but purposely more on spiritual aims such as to soothe the dead ancestor spirits. During this time frame, the belief of the spirits existence in each object until required the worshipping ritual were still strong in Malay society. As the results, many spiritual rituals were believed were needed to connect the reality world and the mystical world that were known as magical ritual.

### **Usage of Mantra in Malay Culture**

The mantra usage in Malay community is said to have existed in tandem with animism practiced since pre-Islamic times (Windstedt 1981). It was started with animism and followed by folk stories that told us the details of events such as the magical weapon that could change the face of men, men who have supernatural powers that also can defeat the enemy, and nature can be bewitched (Noriah 2007). Through these stories, magical is practiced in the form of a specific invocation of the mantra, along with the action and usage of objects. Mantra normally practiced by practitioners of magic is believed could make them communicate with the supernatural world as a shaman or healer. Shaman uses supernatural powers to get help through mantras, prayer and sacrifice.

In the community, the mantra is very well known and used by shaman for the purpose of healing and faith healing. Mantra is a kind of speaking in prose or poetry traditionally inherited by generations of previous society. Members of the public at the time was said depends a lot on the elements of the supernatural in their lives. The elements of an embodiment of the occult practices of the incantation could act to divert the forces of evil that infects a person (Mohammad&Ratna et.al 2014). Healers who practice this mantra usually honored on a par

with medical doctors who treat patients in the present. For example, someone interrupted by supernatural beings are usually saved through mantra's reading by a shaman who is believed to be able to connect themselves with the supernatural world. Mantra is said to be a genre of traditional poetry of the earliest in the community and is believed to be practiced in almost all aspects of life. However, the discussion in this paper focuses on the use of mantras in faith healing and medication such as 'Main Puteri' and 'Wayang Kulit'.

### **Research Methodology**

The research area is centralized in two states which are Terengganu and Kelantan. For the *Main Puteri* performance, it is represented by Seni Warisan Melayu group from Padang Luas village located at Jerteh, Besut, Terengganu while for the *Wayang Kulit* performance, Suara Emas group from Kemasin village located in Bachok, district had been chosen as the representor. The choice is made from both groups because of they are the groups that still active in *Wayang Kulit* and *Main Puteri* performances compared to the others.

The informants selected in this paperwork are from the *Main Puteri* group members such as *Tok Puteri* who is better known as Pak Su Rani with a few more group's members and also the group's member of *Wayang Kulit* which is *Tok Dalang* who is better known as Pak Mat. This selection was made based on the persons who can give full cooperation and information wanted during this research had been undergone. The highlighted issue in this paper is the usage of mantra in *Main Puteri* and *Wayang Kulit* performance. This paperwork had been done to know how far the mantra usage in *Main Puteri* and *Wayang Kulit* existence nowadays.

This paperwork uses the field study approach which is the most important method in information gaining process. This method needs the researcher being together with the studied group which is the Seni Warisan Melayu group and Suara Emas group. Wan Salihin and Mohd Shaladin (2004) stated field research method is defined as qualitative research that intended to gain descriptive information from informants through observation, analysis and phenomenon conclusion. The researchers were using two techniques to gain data through field study which are participating observation and interviews.

Observation technique has its own advantage in its capability to gaining precise information. Through observation, the information gained are from direct experiences the researcher experienced where they can obtain unexpected information. Through the participating observation, it had fulfilled the information needed by the researcher because the main focus on this research is to collect a few mantras contained in *Main Puteri* and *Wayang Kulit*. At the early stage of observations, the researcher made its own assumptions from what it had seen. To complete the information finding, interview technique had been done to get the real valuation of what had been studied.

The interview had been done to gain as many as information from the main informants, *Tok Puteri* and *Tok Dalang*. Interviewing is an important technique to collect qualitative data

(Marohaini 2004). This method produces information gathered being more precise than the information collected from others data collecting method (Yusof 2004). The interview enables researcher obtains information from *Tok Dalang* and *Tok Puteri* by asking questions related with the conducted research. Through the interviewing process, the research information obtained directly by the researcher from the informant. The interview process will be conducted based on the given questions in the research, whereby each questions will be categorized according to smaller themes to ease the conducted interviewing process and ease the data collecting process obtained by the researcher.

The last technique used by the researcher was document analysis. Document analysis is a technique that can explain the happening phenomenon with more details and it had been the basic or trustworthy to the results of the research. In this case, the researcher will explain the related aspect with the mantra usage in tradition cultural performances including *Main Puteri* and *Wayang Kulit*. A few types of documents that will be reviewed are books, articles, research reports and webpages that connected with *Main Puteri* and *Wayang Kulit*.

### **Mantra's functions in *Main Puteri* and *Wayang Kulit***

In the Malay society, *Main Puteri* and *Wayang Kulit* performances still have their own demand from the society's members and it made these performances as one of the entertainment choices these days. Both of these performances differs from modern entertainments because it is linked with Malay ancient beliefs which is the animism that involving mantra usage in its performances. The usage of the mantra is widely spread once during the time where they still did not introduced to religions. The Hindu's influences arrival into the Malay world is very deeply blended, not being easily expelled although they had convert into Muslims. The contrary between animism beliefs, Hinduisme and Islam is vividly seen especially in divinity concept that resulted many aspect had been mixed in Malay society daily life including the mantra recites. The usage of performances that mixed with the animism and Hindu-Buddha influences had shown the syncretism elements in Malay society (Kasimin 2007).

Normally, the *Main Puteri* performance started with *basmallah*, *kalima*, *suratul fatihah*, *suratul kursi*, prayer to god, prayer to the four angels; *Jibrail*, *Mikail*, *Israfil* and *Izrail*, prayer to the prophet's p.b.u.h close companions; Umar, Usman, Abu Bakar and Ali. After the pray for the four prophet's p.b.u.h companions finished, the mantra recites will takes its place *Membuka Panggung* (Opening Mantra), *Bertabik* (Bertabik's Mantra) and *Menutup Panggung* (Clourse Mantra). Reciting of these three mantras is said as the symbolic to ask for the player and the spectator safety protection during the held of the performance. Mantra *Membuka Panggung* recites by *Tok Puteri* as follows:

*Aku nak kerat turun ke pantai bumi,  
Ke atas belakang dunia,  
Nak mengadap yang dikatakan,  
Nenek Kuning, orang besar,*

*Di atas bumi, Di atas belakang bumi,  
Hei juga Awang Hitam seri panggung,  
Aku nak buka panggung asal panggung mula,  
Hei juga biar baik, ucap biar molek,  
Kerana sebab jaga seorang jaga semua,  
Jaga Kecil Dewa Muda,  
Jaga Awang Pengasuh,  
Awang Si Jambul Lebat,  
Hei Semar perlawanan Turas,  
Aku nak buka panggung asal panggung mula,  
Hah! (hempaskan beras kunyit sebanyak tiga kali)*

I want to cut down to earth shore,  
On the back of the world,  
To meet the one whom to be said,  
Yellow grandmother, great people,  
On the earth, On the back of the earth,,  
oo... also Awang Hitam the charm of stage,  
I want to open the stage, the beginning of the stage started,  
Oooo. Also must be good, speech must be nice,  
Cause because protect one protect all,  
Take care of young small god,  
Take care of Awang Pacifier,  
Awang the dense hair,  
Ooo.. Semar the fight of Turas,  
I want to open the stage, the beginning of the stage started,  
Hah! (throw the yellow rice three times)

After the opening stage had been recited, Mantra *Bertabik* will come after it by *Tok Minduk*.  
*Mantera Bertabik* as follows:

*Bismillah hamba, Kalam belum dirancang,  
Dakwat belum hancur, Loh Mahfuz belum tersurat,  
Awal belum terletak, Awal belum jadi,  
Bumi belum terhampar, Langit belum terungkap, Laut belum berlabuh,  
Di dalam gelap gemulat, Di dalam kelam kabut,  
Di dalam asyik maksud, Jin pun belum jadi,  
Dewa pun belum jadi, Syaitan pun belum jadi, Iblis pun belum jadi,  
Dahulu Allah, kemudian Rasul,  
Dahulu Rasul, Kemudian Nabi,*

*Dahulu Nabi, kemudian Adam,  
Dahulu Adam, kemudian Auliya,  
Dahulu Auliya, kemudian Saksi,  
Dahulu Saksi, kemudian Hamba,  
Selat teringat ibu di bumi, Bapa di langit,  
Hamab tunduk ke bumi ala jemala,  
Hamba lengok ke langit arong jemarong,  
Jaga! Jaga! Bapa Ali akbar nama bapa,  
Salam salam ibu di bumi, Alialma nama ibu.*

Bismillah from me, words still not in stake ,  
The ink still not demolish, Loh Mahfuz still not stated,  
Beginning not in place, beginning not occur,  
Earth still not created, sky still not shown, sea still not there,  
In the very dark, In the hustle bustle,  
In the preoccupied meaning , The genie still not form,  
The lord still not there, satan still not there, Lucifer still not there,  
Start from Allah, then Rasul,  
Start from Rasul, then prophet,  
Start from prophet, then Adam,  
Start from Adam, then Auliya,  
Start from Auliya, then witnesses,  
Start from witnesses, then servants,  
Selat mother on earth, father in sky,  
me down to earth ala jemala,  
me look at the sky arong jemarong,  
cautious! cautious! Father of Ali akbar name of father,  
regards, regards of mother on earth, Alialma name of the mother.

To indicates the closing of Main Puteri ceremony, *Tok Puteri* will recites *suratul Fatihah*, *suratul Insyirah* and followed by the Mantra *Menutup Panggung* recitement.

*Bismilahir Rahmanir Rahim, senang minduk di kaharullah  
senang peteri di jalan awal yang asal panjak,  
pengantin senang di geta sariumbang bersama umbang,  
asal umbang di jitung rapak di jerai sembilan,  
aku nak hantar segala dewa nobat sakti, gong gendang dewa indera wangsa,  
canang kelenang jangan seorang bawa, tak tentu hala dan tak tentu ragam,  
sudah aku tolak pada permainan yang asal, permainan yang mula,  
asal permainan yahudi balik kepada yahudi,*



*maka taktala peteri dan minduk,  
dan juga panjak pengantin, masing tersenang  
disarung yang asal disarung yang mula sudah bertalak dengan tiga talak  
ucap dengan tiga ucap, ucap dengan ahdiat wahadiat, ucap dengan berkat kata  
La ilaha illallah, Muhammadar Rasulullah, Oh lepas.*

Bismilahir Rahmanir Rahim, easy minduk at kaharullah  
Easy to princess in the early road the origin of panjak  
The bride get easy at geta sariumbang with umbang,  
Origin of umbang at jitung close to nine jerai,  
I want to sent all the magic nobat, drums of indera wangsa lord,  
Don't anyone bring the canang kelenang , lot of confusion, lot of madness,  
I had already decline the originate play, the starting game,  
The play originate from jews back to jews,  
While the princess and minduk,  
And also the bride throne stil easy ease  
sheath origin that started it divorce worn by three divorces  
recite with three recite, recite with ahdiat wahadiat, recite with the barakah words  
La ilaha illallah, Muhammadar Rasulullah, Oh let it go.



Picture 1: The Stage Opening Ceremony with mantra reciting had been done outside the house, in a hut.



Picture 2: The Stage Opening Ceremony with mantra reciting had been done inside the house.

The *Wayang Kulit* performance needs *Tok Dalang* to held an opening stage ceremony before starts the story-telling. It had been done in the *Wayang Kulit* performance that brings the traditional stories which is stories adapted with Ramayana Epic. The “opening stage” and “closing stage” rituals that had been these traditional theatre unique features had been change nowadays. The existence of shirk elements in the mantra contained in the ritual came from the ancestors beliefs ages before of the mystical creatures existences. The usage of this kind mantra still keep on continued for the traditional *Wayang Kulit* performances. The following mantra is the opening stage mantra recites by Pak Cu before the performance started:

*....Rak cat ta ya doho bucat buce san nati nata saga sager  
 ake tati lima perga rine pinok pinang rod oho  
 anak wog tajas boh salah ketika angin salah musim ribok salah  
 Pereyen bertogo togo dikaki langit.  
 Rak ta cat ta ucak cannot bohol badaho oya  
 banggawa yang pujok memuok rayumah  
 rayu adoh mengadoh maja ar cak ta  
 telahkan menjelma diri dalam nogoro yang ke empat iya iya doho.  
 Ya ya doho iya iu keripan ya ya keripan iya iya.  
 Gonggelan iya iya singa sari siapa bersakti  
 kegembiraan anak raktu karipan yang digelak.....*

...A young man had reach its time to marry/afford to marry /to be in love with a girl

A man/family went proposing to marry the young girl  
The time was incorrect to propose; wrong timing and it is the monsoon season  
Therefore, lots of people gathered to ask for forgiveness ritual because of the rejected proposal  
The young man angered as the result of his rejected proposal from the girl's family  
The family beg to the young man to be patient resulted from the rejected proposal  
Begging to the young man had be made a lot of time but he still insist for revenge  
The fourth state had appeared in his body/the young man will get his revenge for the rejected proposal  
The young man will get his revenge no matter what were the consequences/aim will legalize any action  
The young man ask who's magic are stronger / his anger was like a magical lion/ immensely tough  
Get his revenge to satisfy his feeling foe the bravery of the girl's family to rejected his proposal.....

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Interview with Pak Cu, 2013)

The mantra's recite is a part of speech by *Tok Dalang* during the stage opening ceremony. Eventhough it is still uncertain clearly what is exactly meant in this mantra, *Tok Dalang* stated that the mantras is related to a story that will be presented by *Tok Dalang* whereby it becomes a source of spirit for the storytelling which is delivered in shadow play. The mantra's presence issue in shadow puppet play is something difficult and hard to explained to outsiders. It is because the learning of *Wayang Kulit*, the relevant rules of reciting the mantra can not arbitrarily be told to the public (Osman 2002).

After the *Wayang Kulit* performance of story-telling finish, the stage closing mantra also being recited as the same the *Main Puteri* play.



Picture 3: Tok Dalang recites the mantra in the Wayang Kulit Opening Ceremony.

### Conclusion

Mantra is believed as a local heritage that had been practiced in Malay society before the outside Hindu-Buddha influences applied which causes the mantra's were infused with those religions god's name. The spreading and the acceptance of Islam religion in Malay society had caused the assimilation process in the mantera reciting occur that it was started with *Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim* and ended with *La ilahailallah, Muhammadur Rasulullah* sentences especially for those contained in Malay performances. Mantra's reciting in these both performance have its own significant because it was believed can give the protection and safety toward all the players and the spectators starting from the beginning until the end of the performance. It is clearly that Mantra is said as the agent of protection to ask for safety and the prosperity in life from the disturbance of the mystical creature or devastating black magic. Clearly, *mantra* is the best example of sinkritisme culture that had gone through the blending and compounding process that have variety of elements and it picturised mantra is always in reforming process over time.

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